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Edited by Jo Mynard

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Cover page: The SALC at Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University, Japan

Editorial

Jo Mynard, Kanda University of International Studies, Japan

Welcome to issue 7(3) of SiSAL Journal, which is a general issue. It contains two full papers, one conference summary edited by Hisako Yamashita, and four papers that form the sixth part of the language learning spaces column edited by Katherine Thornton.

Regular Papers

The first paper was contributed by Seanan Clifford who is based at Keimyung University in South Korea. The author presents a qualitative multiple case study in order to explore online spaces associated with three physical self-access centres (SACs) in higher education institutes. The author was particularly interested in understanding how the online spaces were perceived and valued by stakeholders. As a result of the research, it became apparent that there were differences in opinions between staff and users. The findings show that the SACs mostly focused on their physical environment and neglected their online presence.

The second regular paper is by Yukari Rutson-Griffiths based at Hiroshima Bunkyo Women's University, Japan and Mathew Porter, based at Fukuoka Jo Gakuin Nursing University, Japan. The authors add to the growing literature related to the roles and the discourses of language advising by taking an in-depth look at the dialogue. Using conversation analysis, the authors examine advisor-learner interaction and uncover how a shared understanding is reached during an advising session. This is done by analysing an excerpt of the dialogue dealing with advice giving. The authors suggest that more research examining authentic dialogue using conversation analysis will contribute to the professional development of advisors in the future.

Reviews

The reviews section is edited by Hisako Yamashita and there is a review of a recent event in this issue. The event was the *International Conference on Self-Access* (Encuentro Internacional de Centros de Autoacceso, EICA) which took place in Mexico City in August 2016. Each of the five plenary speakers collaborated to the paper by providing a summary of their talks and some general reflections.

Language Learning Spaces: Self-Access in Action

The theme of the newest instalment of the *Language Learning Spaces: Self-Access in Action* column edited by Katherine Thornton is attracting users to learning spaces. In her introductory article, Katherine Thornton gives a brief overview of ways in which SACs currently attract users. She then goes on to summarise the three contributions in this issue which come from Simon Bibby, Kym Jolley and Frances Shiobara at Kobe Shoin University in Japan; Satomi Shibata at Tokoha University, also in Japan; and Marc LeBane, Mariel Schilling and Austin Harris at Lingnan University, Hong Kong.

Acknowledgments

Notes on the Editor

Jo Mynard is the founding editor of SiSAL Journal. She is an associate professor and the Director of the Self-Access Learning Centre at Kanda University of International Studies in Japan. She has been involved in facilitating self-access language learning since 1996.

Self-Access Centres in South Korea: Online Space Values

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore what three physical Self-Access Centres (SACs) in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Daegu, South Korea do for their online space and how online space is valued by stakeholders. Findings show that these SACs have more or less exclusively focused on their physical environment while neglecting their online potential, resulting in technologies and online spaces (Social Network Services (SNS), websites and Learning Management Systems) being under-utilized. There are differences in values placed on online spaces between staff and users with key concerns being: efficacy and effort, need, awareness-raising, reach, and selection.

Keywords: Self-Access Centres, Korean universities, online space, values, learner autonomy

Self-Access Centres (SACs) today can be seen as physical and online spaces outside of the classroom environment providing support and resources to students, promoting learner autonomy and facilitating language learning. (Murray, Fujishima, & Uzuka, 2010). In this paper, I will show that three SACs in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Daegu, South Korea have more or less exclusively focused on their physical environments while neglecting their online potential. This has resulted in technologies and online spaces being under-utilized; creating a gap between current SAC learner needs/wants, current SLA foci, and the focus and direction of SAC management. To do this, I will explore what the SACs currently do for online space and look at how online space is valued by staff and users.

Before turning to the case studies, I will present a summary of SAC development in relation to a South Korean context, with particular focus on reasons for implementing SACs in HEIs; linking students, pedagogy and technology. An explanation of SAC online spaces will then be given along with an argument for their importance. Limitations to the study will also be stated, with implications for future research and practice.

The Origins of Self-Access Centres

From the late 1960s, theoretical research into teaching methodologies formulated and explored humanistic notions of the self: Rogers (1969), Freire (1972), Illich (1973), Knowles, (1975) and Gomes de Matos, (1986), adopting new approaches to traditional teaching methodologies, turning away from teacher-led learning frameworks to more learner-led, learner-centred approaches to second language acquisition. This focus on the learner, on learner autonomy; "the ability to take control of one's own learning" (Holec 1981, p. 3), has led to an abundance of theoretically based research supporting learner autonomy inside and outside the classroom. Beginning in the late 1960s, one practical way to approach learner autonomy outside the classroom was the establishment of SACs (Cotterall & Crabble, 1999; Gardner & Miller, 1999) with the first SAC being established by the CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues) at the University of Nancy, France in 1969 (Gremmo & Riley, 1995).

The pedagogy of these SACs was grounded in the European political environment of the time and perceptions of "what education should look like" (Reinders, 2012, p. 1). These included the empowerment of learners to take control of their own learning and with appropriate pedagogical support from SACs (Morrison, 2008), learners could engage in self-reflection, enabling individual life-long learning and personal growth. This was supported further by Benson & Voller (1997) when they stated: "Self-access centres are now widely regarded as the most common way in which institutions implement the development of learner autonomy." The work of Gardner & Miller (1999), *Establishing self-access: From theory to practice* with four SAC case studies from Malaysia, Hong Kong and the UK, has added significantly to SAC theory and development across the world, particularly in Asia.

So, within Asia, have SACs in South Korea come about the same way? Did they also arise from similar pedagogical perceptions?

How Self-Access Centres came about in South Korea

While this pedagogy (relating to SACs) was not part of the discussion in South Korea in the 1970s, there were changes and innovations happening in English education policies; policies which would lead to, in the National Curriculum of 1997; a focus on student-centredness, communicative competence, and globalized readiness: with English being the "international language of commerce and technology" (Morrison, 2008, p. 126).

The establishment of SACs in South Korean HEIs began post the International Monetary Fund crisis 1998, in 2001 with the specific intentions of creating cross-cultural communication environments, where domestic and international students could meet and to some extent increase the autonomy and globalized readiness of Koreans, realizing the foci of the 7th National Curriculum. The establishment of these SACs coincided with two governmental international student recruitment and management policies; the Quantitative Expansion Period (from 2001 to 2007) and the Qualitative Supervision Period (from 2008 to 2011). The first policy saw a large increase in international students in HEIs and the second policy focused on regulation, as universities could not cope adequately with the high numbers of international students (Bae, 2015, p. 331).

The trend in establishing SACs in HEIs was a calculated move, not only dealing with English education policies, but also with "higher education marketization" (Ghazarian & Youhne, 2015, p. 477). HEIs needed to increase revenue post the global financial crises of 1997 and 2008. So, SACs in HEIs were established to attract international students and ready Korean students for the job market, killing two birds with one stone.

Parallel to the establishment of SACs in HEIs in South Korea there has been a focus, beginning with the governmental White Paper on Adapting Education to the Information Age (Suh, 2000), and of successive South Korean governments to bridge education and Information Communication Technology (ICT). This focus has sought to create the "competent person" someone who is "creative, autonomous, open and cooperative" (Suh, 200, p. 11). The ultimate goal – to reach "Edutopia"; "an open and continuing education society based on ICT" (Suh, 2000, p. 11).

So, with this focus on attracting international students, SACs (approximately 27 exist in HEIs in South Korea today, (Schuit & Thwaites, 2015)) were established to

provide unique spaces where students (international and domestic), pedagogy and technology could come together, facilitate personal growth, empowerment and life-long learning.

However, according to Reinders (2012, p. 4) SACs worldwide in general "have missed the boat on social and web 2.0 technologies." This point is further strengthened by Mynard's (2012) and Rubesch & Barrs (2014) statements that SACs should be a combination of simultaneous physical and virtual spaces to support learners and that the "virtual components both complement and enhance the physical SAC while adhering to the core principles of self-access" (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014, p. 47).

So, have SACs in South Korean HEIs missed the boat too and furthermore, what are online SAC spaces and why are they important?

What are Online SAC Spaces and Why are they Important?

Through the use of technology online SAC spaces can offer "anytime, anywhere virtual and digital delivery of learning" (Dofs & Hobbs, 2016, p. 72), breaking away from the four walls of physical space, providing users with "content provision, language learning support and additional types of support" (Lázaro & Reinders, 2007, p. 3). They can be seen as spaces "allowing learners much greater freedom in when, where, what, and how they study" (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014, p. 43), spaces that can "liberate self-access learning from its physical confines by vastly opening up the volume, velocity and variety of resources available to the learner" (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014, p. 43), allowing "increased affordances for autonomous learning" (Reinders & White (2011, p. 1).

With the "general proliferation of mobile devices and social networking services being used by the students" (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014, p. 43), the need for online SAC spaces can be seen as important, in that they fit the digital practices of students, can act as bridges to physical SACs, facilitate blended learning, promote learner reflection and increase learner autonomy (Mynard, 2011; Schwienhorst, 2008; Ulitsky, 2000; Vanijdee, 2003), reflecting the true nature of self-access learning. The physical SAC space can be enhanced by online SAC spaces (with tools such as Social Network Services (SNS), websites and Learning Management Systems (LMS)) which allow "for new and creative ways to foster a self-access learner community and to promote a centre's events, services,

resources, and facilities. Furthermore, it allows for archiving and hosting in-house learning and promotional materials" (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014, p. 47).

This literature review has direct implications for this study with results showing that in a South Korean context, SACs were established to bring people, pedagogy and technology together; that SACs should have online spaces, utilizing a number of tools and technologies to further promote learner autonomy and assist users in their second language acquisition needs. To answer if SACs in HEIs in South Korea have missed the boat, a number of questions need to be addressed.

Research Questions

This research aims to address the following questions:

- What do three HEI SACs in Daegu, South Korea do for online space?
- How is their online space valued by staff and users?

Methodology and Methods

A qualitative multiple case-study, employing descriptive observations and semi-structured open-ended interview questions within a Constructivist paradigm was used to explore three current HEIs SACs in Daegu, South Korea, with the purpose of understanding what SACs do for their online spaces and how their online spaces are valued by stakeholders.

Data Collection and Participants

Data were collected from three HEI SACs and seven stakeholders in Daegu, South Korea. Participants and SACs were all given pseudonyms to protect identities. For a full summary of SACs, participants, roles and backgrounds, adapting earlier work by Morrison (2008, p. 135), please see Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of SACs, Participants, Roles and Backgrounds

Self-Access Centre	Role	Pseudonym	Background
SAC 1	SAC Director	John (US born, Native Speaker (NS), male)	A very experienced EFL teacher and SAC director since 2006
SAC 2	SAC Staff	Mike (US born, NS, male)	An ex-coordinator of a SAC (2014) and a very experienced EFL teacher.
SAC 3	SAC Coordinator	James (Korea born, Non Native Speaker (NNS), male)	A new SAC coordinator (2015) and experienced university administration staff.
	SAC User	Bill (Korea born, NNS, male)	An undergraduate student and a regular SAC user since 2015
	SAC User	Vicky (Korea born, NNS, female)	An undergraduate student and a regular SAC user since 2012
	SAC User	Rebecca (Germany born, NNS, female)	A graduate student and a regular SAC user since 2013
	SAC User	Susan (China born, NNS, female)	An undergraduate student and a regular SAC user since 2014

Data were collected in three stages:

1. Description of SACs (Physical Observation – SAC 1 / 2 / 3)

2. Interview with three SAC staff members (Director – SAC 1 / Staff – SAC 2 / Coordinator – SAC 3)

3. Interviews with four SAC users (two Korean students and two International Students - SAC 3)

In Stage 1, physical observation of each SAC took place, with written notes and photos were taken of location, furnishings, technology, resources, and materials, etc.

In Stage 2, SAC staff was first contacted through email with an introduction/explanatory letter, a consent form and the interview questions. All three interviews took place separately in the various SACs. The semi-structured open-ended

questions for staff were previewed by two current SAC staff (in the researcher's context) and the semi-structured open-ended interview questions for users were piloted on one regular SAC user (in the researcher's context). The interviews lasted 30-40 minutes, with the same semi-structured open-ended questions asked, with room for expansion etc. The interviews were recorded using the Voice Record app for iPhone.

In Stage 3, the researcher's own context was looked at. The four participants are regular users of the SAC. Staff at the information desk in the SAC was asked to find four students interested in being interviewed, with three stipulations:

1. Two were to be Korean students, and two were to be International students
2. They should have been at the university for over one year.
3. They should have a high command of written, spoken and aural English. (as the interview would be held in English, without translation offered, due to time constraints)

The staff found six students and they gave me their KakaoTalk IDs. (KakaoTalk is a free South Korean instant messaging application for smartphones and KakaoTalk ID is an "identification username used in place of a phone number" (Kakaotalk, 2016) for users to search and add friends.) From there I contacted the six students, and after checking their English proficiency levels, through face-to-face meetings in the SAC, four were suitable. The nationalities of the four students were Korean, German and Chinese. Following this, the four students were given consent forms and the same semi-structured open-ended interview questions to read over. The students were given a couple of days to read over everything and then contact me, if they were willing to go ahead with the interviews. I also made myself available for any questions they needed to ask in this time, through Kakaotalk or face to face. Individual interviews were set up with the students; all interviews took place in the SAC, in a private room. The interviews were recorded using the Voice Record app for iPhone.

Data Analysis

In Stage 1, (Description of SACs - physical observation), extensive descriptions were written on all three SACs adapting criteria from earlier SAC case study research by

Gardner & Miller (1999), with particular focus given to *SAC Online space*. Gardner & Miller's SAC typology (1999, pp. 59-63) was also used to delineate SAC type. In Stages 2 and 3, the interview sets, recordings were transcribed using https://transcribe.wreally.com/, using the dictation function. (i.e. listening to the original recording on headphones, and then repeating into a microphone with the speech being turned into text. After transcription, NVivo was used, collecting quotes, with iterative coding of common themes throughout both sets of recordings (staff and users) with findings then being analysed using a Framework Method Matrix (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013) and then presented.

Findings

I will present findings based on descriptive observation and interview data on three HEIs SACs in Daegu South Korea, looking at:

- SAC physical space (descriptive observation)
- SAC online space and staff values (interview data)
- SAC user online space values (interview data)

SAC Physical Space

Summary tables of SAC descriptive observations, including physical space can be found in Appendices A, B & C. The data is presented following a strict set of criteria, adapted from Gardner & Miller's (1999) SAC case study research.

1. Type of SAC
2. Physical space
3. Reasons for establishing a SAC
4. Staffing and management
5. Use of SAC
6. Counselling
7. Materials and activities
8. Assessment and evaluation

Staff: Online Space and Values

John (Director, SAC 1)

(From personal interview, March 21, 2016)

The SAC has a Facebook page, but this is rarely used (it was in the past, but now, less so – the last post was July 18, 2014) "*We have a Facebook page but it's just not that active…I think we actually have to go back to it…. that's kind of the extent of what we're doing online in terms of like a virtual space*" (John, 2016). The university's Foreign Language Institute (FLI) homepage is where users can find information and notices about the SAC, and where to register for the English Language Clinics (ELCs). There is no specific SAC website, or online language learning materials/resources. This is partly due to previous experience with using an online program in the past with English readers, through Moodle (in the FLI) and John's beliefs: "*everything that I've seen about creating a virtual space in terms of things like chat rooms or messages going about it doesn't merit the effort with the payoff that you get*" and "*I have to balance the reality all administrative duties and what people are doing here with the potential for that to be successful*" (John, 2016). The lack of an online space is also due to the nature of student capacity and SAC user use, "*I think we are okay, as you can see we have so many students in here, if we really try to go out and blanket to get more we would be too crowded we wouldn't be able to handle a greater influx of students*" (John, 2016). It was mentioned in relation to the possibility of using a SAC LMS like Moodle that "*I don't think it would be that successful it's possible that it would but it doesn't seem like that's the way students are using this place students*" (John, 2016).

Mike (Staff, SAC 2)

(From personal interview, March 21, 2016)

The SAC has an active Facebook page (using the FLI Facebook page, the last post was May 30, 2016), but a virtual presence that engages students would be: *heightened and more beneficial, dynamic - ours is probably largely one-way, we haven't necessarily moved to the next step of making it more dynamic*" (Mike, 2016). The University's FLI homepage is where in the future users can find information and notices about the SAC; *an online registration system has been advocated*" (Mike, 2016). At present due to a

recent initiative, students can find information regarding the ELC through faculty using a specific (FLI made); "*PowerPoint talking to the students directly*" (Mike, 2016). There is no specific SAC website. There is a YouTube channel with ELC videos and worksheets (created by 2 FLI teachers), helping learners with grammar, listening, reading, writing, and speaking. There are no other online language learning materials or resources; "*no [online resources] I would not say those different resources are not needed, I would say that is not the focus right now… have other priorities*" (Mike, 2016).

James (Coordinator, SAC 3)

(From personal interview, March 28, 2016)

The SAC has active Facebook and Twitter accounts (lasts posts June 3, 2016); "*promoting the programs and other things like field trip or parties and learning things based on students can easily see what's going on in the lounge*" (James, 2016). The SAC also has a SAC specific website where students can find information, enrol as SAC members, see and register for Language Clinics; "*we are still developing the website and usually we provide some information about the programs … we are developing the e-learning system on the website and (soon) we can upload files and videos or materials all the classes, and the students can easily see and share materials*" (James, 2016), but "*the students are not familiar with our website compared to our home page* (University website) *or Facebook*" (James, 2016).

James does see that an online space is important, in that; "*there are also limitations like we have limited (physical) space for all the students, and if we have the virtual space like eLearning or other things we can provide some valuable materials and other things to the students like more students, not just in the university, but to other centres*" (James, 2016), and that possibly in the future an online space for the local community could be; "*effective*" (James, 2016). Also, it was suggested that the SAC should follow Social Network Service trends to attract and advertise the SAC to students: "*If we just operate our own website not using like the Facebook of the Twitters it's going to be more difficult to introduce to the students, so we may use the most popular SNS at that time, so I cannot say it should be like Facebook or Twitter. Now Instagram actually, not Facebook*" (James, 2016). It was also noted that (in relation to using technology in

the SAC) it is the; "*21st century…people just bring the smartphone or other devices, so visual things, convenient things, games…would be more kind of like popular.*" (James, 2016) The University's homepage also has a link to the SAC website and is used for advertising. There are no specific online-language learning materials or resources.

Users: Online Space and Values

Bill (Korean, SAC 3)

(From personal interview, March 28, 2016)

Bill who came to the SAC two years ago is aware of the SAC website and Facebook page/group and he believes that the SAC Facebook is "*very useful*", because every semester; "*every year students attend this school and if they interest in making friends, foreign friends, they have to sign Facebook and know what they do, when its closed, when its reserved*" (Bill, 2016).

Bill thinks that having an LMS such as Moodle would be useful, especially in relation to Korean and international students wanting to learn and share videos and links about their country's culture, food or language.

Bill would like to see the SAC introducing Skype and Snapchat, focusing on an online "*chatting space*" (Bill, 2016). Bill also talked about using SAC online spaces to advertise the university to prospective international students; "*I think you have to focus on Twitters, I mean, you know and then every semester, probably every semester, we go to another country and then they come here, before the come here, they would like to know about our school*" (Bill, 2016).

Vicky (Korean, SAC 3)

(From personal interview, March 28, 2016)

Vicky is aware of the SAC's website, unaware of the SAC's Twitter, and does not use Facebook for privacy reasons. Vicky is an Instagram and Twitter user and would like to see the SAC having an Instagram presence; "*If there are more SNS, International Lounge SNS ID, and then I can connect easily and know more fastly, information, International Lounge has lots of festivals no, events. Facebook these days, there are too many strange people on Facebook, so Koreans or Chinese use Instagram or Twitter. I*

think the hottest SNS in Korea nowadays is Twitter" (Vicky, 2016). Vicky values the idea of an online SAC space in relation to sharing information and easy access; "*information is the most important thing because the year announcement is too hard to find and also it's hard to out announcements all over the university*"(Vicky, 2016).

Vicky would like to see a SAC Moodle and for the SAC to bridge the physical Language Clinics with an online Language Clinic; "*how about connect with the ... program or other learning programs in physical space and online space?*" (Vicky, 2016). Vicky would also like to see the SAC using "*Hellochat*" (Vicky, 2016).

Rebecca (German, SAC 3)

(From personal interview, March 28, 2016)

Rebecca is aware that the SAC has a Facebook where students can "*be kept up to date of what will happen*" and that there is a SAC website where; "*you can apply for Language Clinic classes*" (Rebecca, 2016). Rebecca values the SAC having an online space (especially Moodle), in the future because "*sometimes you want to share some information, so it would be a good platform to share some things, some documents for example*" (Rebecca, 2016). Rebecca highly values the idea of students sharing User Created Content online through a SAC Moodle; " *I think it would be a great idea for example for learning languages, that would be a great idea to share some content, some contacts, some exercises, those kind of stuff*" (Rebecca, 2016). Rebecca would like to see the SAC website being developed more, specifically in terms of Moodle; "*where we can share a lot of things*" and Instagram "*maybe we can share some pictures. So, you could advertise events on Instagram again*" (Rebecca, 2016). Rebecca would also like to see the SAC listing; "*learning resources online, maybe like vocabulary apps, something like this*" (Rebecca, 2016). Rebecca would also like to see the SAC having its own Youtube Channel, so that the SAC could make videos of events and activities; "*you can just make a short movie and people see it and might think that's fun, maybe I want to go next time*" (Rebecca, 2016) instead of posters, but Rebecca is also unsure if it would be useful or popular for the lounge.

Susan (Chinese, SAC 3)

(From personal interview, SAC 3 User, Susan, March 28, 2016)

Susan is aware of the SAC Facebook and that the SAC posts a lot of information there but she would like to see posting in different languages (other than English), so that the SAC can attract other students. Susan would also like to see more detailed posting on Facebook, relating to activities and events, who can attend, what is going on; " *will have some activities but we don't really know what will happen here, like they have some international weeks, what do they really do"*(Susan, 2016). Susan values the SAC having an online learning environment and would like to see the SAC uploading video material to the website (and linked through Facebook), with videos advertising some of the programs, professors (tutors) and SAC users; "*I think we can take a video of the professor or some people who always come here, take a video of them",* using these videos to advertise the lounge, professors and users to other students *(Susan,* 2016). Susan would also like to see a SAC Snapchat so that users can post something and connect; *"like took a video of people and upload it, like I'm here, so come to the SAC. Facebook is for everyone, but Snapchat you can add people"* (Susan, 2016).

Discussion

Online space

What do three HEI SACs in Daegu, South Korea do for online space and how is their online space valued by staff and users? The use or non-use of online space in these SACs vary, and is dependent upon values placed on each environment by management and the practicalities of setting up and running these spaces. From the findings, online space can be grouped into Social Network Services (SNS): Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat; Websites: University websites and SAC specific websites; and Learning Management Systems (LMS): Moodle.

The SNS and websites used with these SACs mostly deliver information and advertising; indeed, SACs should in this day and age have websites that provide: "at the very least, basic information such as contact details, opening hours, and answers to frequently asked questions" (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014, p. 44). However, the three SACs do lack LMSs, with almost no online language learning resources and materials, with the

exception of the YouTube channel (SAC 2**)**. SAC specific websites and Moodle can enhance physical SAC resources and materials. They can lead to extensive online resource banks, provide online interactive support, and facilitate social and linguistic communities of practice. These online spaces can act as bridges for users to engage with physical SACs, extending access and allowing learners to truly engage in self-access.

Online Space Values

A number of shared online space values came to light from the findings and are discussed below: *efficacy and effort, need, awareness-raising, reach* and *selection.*

Efficacy and effort

As mentioned earlier, the effort taken to select, set-up, run and maintain online SAC spaces (especially Moodle) is just impractical from the standpoint of some staff. The workload is too much, and the outcomes too limited. But according to the users in this study, the advantages of online spaces are highly valued; there is a need and a desire to use these spaces (Instagram, Twitter, Moodle, etc.) and that language acquisition, through the use of appropriate online tools can both improve and be more enjoyable for users, with enjoyment being the "most powerful external factor which positively effects behavioural intention through usefulness" (Vrielink, 2009, p. 25).

But, the larger problem of staffing still exists. With workloads split between two or three jobs, staff turnover and outside influences such as family or study, it is difficult to be fully committed to both the physical and online spaces of SACs. These divisions in responsibilities can lead to a dilution of quality, and the effort needed to run physical and online spaces can be jeopardized by universities trying to save money by sharing out workloads amongst staff and students. Indeed, this is echoed by Esch (1989) when she mentions that those responsible for funding need to understand not only "what it takes to set up and run a successful self-access system but also why self-access is a fundamental requirement of language learners at all levels and in all learning environments" (p. 83).

Need

What has become evident in this study is the gap between SAC staff online space values and user needs (all four users in this study see the need for such spaces, especially Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Moodle). This gap has likely arisen from lack of dialogue and evaluation, and what was mentioned before, belief and university support. There needs to be an understanding by those running SACs that online spaces "have value for both the institutions they represent and the learners they serve" (Rubesch & Barrs, 2014, p. 47).

Awareness-raising

Some staff and users see the value and need of online spaces for raising awareness of SACs, through university websites, Facebook and Twitter. Other staff and users are, for the moment, comfortable with not raising awareness as this would cause overflow and they are quite happy to advertise through posters and their university homepage. Awareness-raising though is not just related to advertising, it should make users aware of other learners, other resources, other tools for learning and exchange. This can be done through connected technologies and shared networks, notably Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat.

Reach

An interesting finding which arose from some users and some staff was the idea of online SAC spaces (Twitter) reaching out to those further afield, providing channels of communication to incoming students from abroad, local communities and global university centres. To promote universities and to ready possible future students (orientation, culture, language, networks), Twitter could play a significant role.

Selection

The selection of what to have in an online SAC space is not easy (SNS, LMS, websites, Wikis, Quiz/Surveys, etc.), especially with ever-changing technologies, issues of access, user preferred practices, learning outcomes and varied activities (UNSW, 2015). To overcome this difficulty, constant discussion with users, collaboration with

technicians (if there are any), and evaluations of technologies are needed; one size does not fit all.

Limitations

This study has been localized and is reflective of certain practices that are currently ongoing in HEI SACs in Daegu, South Korea. Findings therefore may not reflect the true nature of online SAC space in HEI in South Korea as a whole.

Also, data were collected from users in the researcher's context (SAC 3) but there was no possible access to users in SAC 1 & SAC 2, so findings of users in SAC 3 may not be reflective of users in SACs 1 & 2.

Future Research and Practice

Today, SAC spaces are continuously changing with the times. Some have moved away from the individual focus, to more community centred spaces, where users have a say in the running of the SAC (Curry & Mynard, 2014, p. 5). Others now and in the future may decrease in physical size and increase in online space, with "a combination of online and in-person interactions that might take place in a physical space, a virtual space or a combination of the two" (Curry & Mynard, 2014, p. 5).

SAC 3 has its foundations in the physical space; a space where students (the most valued resources) meet up and share stories, ideas, and cultures. This SAC also needs online space, one which matches the needs and practices of SAC users, allowing the SAC to go beyond its physical parameters.

In a follow up paper (Clifford, forthcoming) I will present practical ideas on how to bridge physical and online spaces, addressing the differences in values found in this study. A number of suggestions and strategies will be presented concerning: *staffing, training, evaluation, technologies* and *budgeting.*

Summary

This qualitative multiple case study explored what three physical SACs in HEIs in Daegu, South Korea do for their online spaces and how online spaces are valued by stakeholders. Findings show that these SACs have more or less exclusively focused on

their physical environment while neglecting their online potential, resulting in technologies and online spaces (SNS, websites and LMS) being under-utilized, creating value mismatches between current SAC learners and SAC management. The reasons for this neglect are varied, and practical suggestions on how to bridge these spaces will be discussed in a follow-up paper.

Indeed, these SACs have, to a degree, missed Reinders' "boat" (2012, p. 4); however, it is hoped that through further research, dialogue and evaluation, these SACs can realize their online potential, match the values and needs of their users, bridge spaces, and facilitate greater learner autonomy and language learning.

Notes on the Contributor

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Appendices

Appendix A

Summary Table: SAC 1 Descriptive Observations

Type of SAC:	*Boutique* – primarily caters for students in the Foreign Language Institute. *Supermarket* - a variety of reading materials (mostly periodicals and readers), small in quantity, plus a whiteboard, pens, newspapers *Technology shop* – 4 computers, a TV, a projector and screen, headphones and two or three laptops that can be borrowed by users.
Physical Space	3 areas: 1 large bright modern open area, with chairs and tables, a computer area (four computers and one printer), a resource area (periodicals), a multiple cell-phone charging dock, a headphone collection point, a coffee area, a stage with a projector/screen, a large widescreen TV, a notice board and an information desk and two smaller rooms, with glass walls. 2 is a study room, with a table, chairs and TV. 3 is used for an English Language Clinic (ELC), with table and chairs (with a portable whiteboard if needed).
Reasons for establishing a SAC	To develop English language skills and learner autonomy.
Staffing and management:	A Director of the Foreign Language Institute (FLI) in charge of the SAC. A Coordinator (Responsible for budgeting) Four part-time student staff (help SAC visitors and run the SAC) Seventy-six tutors (contracted FLI tutors who work at the SACs ELC)
Use of SAC:	The SAC is open to all students and staff in the university. Students are encouraged to use the SAC by their teachers, especially the ELC.
Counselling:	Students can receive English language help at scheduled times (around 5 students per hour) and also when teachers are free (i.e. no student is in the ELC - students can drop in if needed.) The administrative team is also on hand to help with any problems, mostly through the Korean language.
Materials and activities:	All periodicals being in English. Advertising and notices are in Korean and English. Materials are commercially produced, except for assignments used in the English Language Clinics. There are no daily or weekly activities scheduled in the SAC, except for the ELC. Upon occasion, there are parties to promote cross cultural interaction, such as Halloween and Christmas parties.
Assessment and evaluation:	Assessment and evaluation: ELC users are evaluated in terms of their overall grade, with grades given for attendance and efforts made. Other students (drop-ins) can ask for feedback from teachers in the ELCs. Students in the larger and study room spaces are not evaluated or assessed.

Appendix: B

Summary Table: SAC 2 Descriptive Observations

Type of SAC:	*Boutique* - primarily caters for a certain group of users, those who attend the English Language Clinic (ELC) - in a smaller room within the larger space. *Technology shop* - there are TVs in the larger space and one computer in the smaller room.
Physical Space	2 areas: one, a large modern open area, with chairs and tables, a small information desk and widescreen TVs and two, a small room, used for the ELC, with a large glass window, two tables and chairs and a computer; "there is not a strong relationship between a and b" (SAC 2 Staff)
Reasons for establishing a SAC	To provide an ELC; "to do things outside of the four walls of the classroom" (SAC 2 Staff) and a space where students could meet up, chat or study.
Staffing and management:	A Director of the Foreign Language Institute (FLI) in charge of the SAC. A Coordinator (Responsible for the ELC) Part-time student staff (help SAC visitors and run the SAC) A number of tutors (contracted FLI tutors who work at the SACs ELC)
Use of SAC:	The SAC and ELC are open to all students and staff in the university. Students are encouraged to use the SAC by their teachers. The larger area of the SAC is "used by students to meet other students. It's not focused on English acquisition or anything" and according to SAC 2 Staff; "this space is underutilized."
Counselling:	Students can receive English language help; "it's almost entirely English" (SAC 2 Staff) at scheduled times and also when teachers are free (i.e.no student is in the ELC - students can drop in if needed.) The administrative team is also on hand to help with any problems, through the Korean language.
Materials and activities:	Outside of the ELC room, there are very few language learning materials. There are about 10 commercially produced books and one poster, showing information about the ELC. Inside the ELC room, there are some language reference materials, a computer and a whiteboard. Upon occasion, "intermittently" in the larger space, parties and events are held to promote cross cultural interaction, such as Halloween, Christmas parties and speech contests; "to reinforce social and English reinforcing events." (SAC 2 Staff) The larger space is also used for one open access seminar session on one Saturday a semester.
Assessment and evaluation:	ELC users (mostly enrolled FLI students) can be evaluated in terms of their overall grade, with grades given for participation. This is dependent upon the FLI teachers. Other students (drop-ins) can ask for feedback from teachers in the Clinics. Students in the larger and study room spaces are not evaluated or assessed. Users of both spaces are not surveyed in general.

Appendix: C

Summary Table: SAC 3 Descriptive Observations

Type of SAC:	*Supermarket* - provides a lot of materials for users to pick off the shelves, such as Games, Books, DVDs, Newspapers and Periodicals. All materials are labelled and some are levelled for easy access, with instructions on how to use or borrow. *Technology shop* - provides five computers, printing, four TVs, two portable DVD machines and a large screen with a projector.
Physical Space	2 areas: one, a large modern open area, with an information desk, a computer zone, a multi-media zone, a resource zone, a cafe style zone, a traditional seating zone, an outside deck, a kitchen and coffee/snack zone and two, a smaller room for meetings and Language Clinic (LC).
Reasons for establishing a SAC	The SAC was established with the intention of providing a space where Korean and International students could meet up, chat or study; "kind of like a cross-cultural communication space." (SAC 3 Staff)
Staffing and management:	A Director (Dual Role – Assistant Professor and in charge of the SAC) A Coordinator (Responsible for budgeting) 2 Full-time student staff 10 Part-time staff A number of volunteer and paid tutors (professors, students)
Use of SAC:	The SAC is open to all (students, professors, staff and the local community)
Counselling:	Students are able to receive language help at scheduled times within the Clinic hours and also from the staff at the Information Desk. The administrative team is also on hand to help with any problems, through Korean and English.
Materials and activities:	The SAC has a large variety of materials, mostly commercial books with some SAC made materials, covering a variety of languages and fields of study. The SAC also has board games, a lending book, a DVD library, computers, a piano and a guitar. The SAC holds several parties and events each semester, Halloween, Christmas parties, quiz nights, speed-dating, culture presentations etc. The SAC also holds Culture weeks every 2 weeks, with decorations, presentations and languages displayed in the language of the culture week. Some university Departments hold their student nights in the SAC also. The SAC also holds language and culture days for local community children every week or two weeks. There are field trips once a month, open to International and Korean students. In the smaller room, there are SAC made language materials in a variety of languages to aid the LCs.
Assessment and evaluation:	No users are assessed in terms of grading and feedback can be given by LC teachers when requested by users. Students in the larger space are not evaluated or assessed. Users of both spaces are surveyed twice a semester.

Advising in Language Learning: Confirmation Requests for Successful Advice-Giving

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Abstract

One of the roles of language learning advisors is to help language learners become more autonomous and one crucial way to achieve this is to facilitate reflection on their learning through dialogues in advising sessions. Although previous studies on advising skills have provided practitioners with invaluable resources for their professional development, more studies on actual interactions can further illuminate the nature of advice-giving to support or better inform existing advising frameworks. This research uses conversation analysis to examine a naturally occurring advisor-learner interaction to uncover how the conversational participants achieve shared understanding. It was found that a series of confirmation requests help adjust and maintain the participants' mutual understanding while the conversation unfolds. The findings of this study suggest that more research examining authentic dialogue using conversation analysis will shed light on uncovering the mechanisms underlying the successful provision of appropriate advice in language learning and consequently contribute to the professional development of advisors in the future.

Keywords: advising in language learning, conversation analysis, professional development

The role of language learning advisors (hereafter, advisors) is often misunderstood by those outside the field of self-access language learning and much has been written to show how the role of advisor (or counselor) differs from that of a teacher (Carson & Mynard, 2012; Gardner & Miller, 1999), which has helped to legitimize and define the field of advising in language learning and support the training of novice advisors. A common misconception about advisors is that they give advice to learners about immediate problems encountered during language study, the kind of assistance that writing centers or classroom teachers already provide. Although it may be the case that immediate problems are addressed during an advising session, one of

the advisor's aims is to encourage reflection about the learning process so that learners ultimately become able to manage their own learning more effectively.

Advisors encourage reflection through dialogue with learners. Mynard (2012) has said that "it is through this mediational dialogue that advisors and learners can work together to uncover expectations, motivational factors, prior beliefs, experiences, individual differences and preferences while helping an individual to reflect, understand and plan" (p. 43). This reflective dialogue, according to Kato and Mynard (2015), can create opportunities for learners to transform their beliefs and lead to further growth.

Advisors use a variety of skills during this reflective dialogue with learners and these skills are usually discussed in terms of their purpose within the discourse (Carson & Mynard, 2012). Descriptions of these skills often consider both the verbal and nonverbal message and usually include reflective skills that help communicate understanding and empathy such as mirroring, paraphrasing, and summarizing (Mozzon-McPherson, 2012; Stickler, 2001). Kelly (1996) listed these and other skills in her influential article introducing macro- and micro-skills for language counseling (Appendix A). In general, macro-skills support the institutional agenda, namely developing autonomy and management of the advising session, while micro-skills are concerned with reflective listening and building rapport with the learner. Kelly's skills have played an invaluable role in advisor training and professional development because they give an idea of what skills advisors can employ to guide advising sessions, connect with learners, and provide appropriate support, and they can also be used as a framework for reflecting on one's advising practice (McCarthy, 2012; Morrison & Navarro, 2012).

There are a number of works by experienced advisors (Kato & Mynard, 2015; Mozzon-McPherson, 2000, 2012) illustrating how skills such as those described by Kelly can be employed in spoken advisor-learner interactions. Within the field of advising in language learning, however, Carson (2012) has called for further investigations into advisor-learner dialogue using "more informed and more in-depth discourse analysis, and the use of other methodologies" (p. 299). Having studied the reflections of advisors on their own advising sessions using Kelly's skills as a basic framework, Morrison and Navarro (2012) also suggest reconsidering Kelly's framework. This paper does not deny the valuable contribution to the field of advising in language learning that previous research into advising skills has provided, but as Peräkylä and Vehviläinen (2003) have found in studies on medical and counselling settings, experts'

knowledge or ideas about interactions in their field can differ from actual interactions and argue that conversation analysis (CA) can contribute to filling that gap.

Conversation Analysis

CA is a methodology for analyzing naturally occurring spoken interaction, as opposed to scripted or idealized discourse. It is often used to investigate spoken interaction in institutional settings such as health care, counseling, and news interviews, and has been used to identify and describe the phenomena of turn-taking, repair, and preference organization. CA begins with an audio or video recording of a naturally occurring spoken interaction which is used to create a detailed transcript that includes paralinguistic features such as pitch, rate, amplitude, and silence as well as nonverbal actions and sounds. Analysts look for recurring patterns of interaction in the transcript that can be used to support the creation of a rule or model to explain the occurrence of the pattern in the interaction.

The distinctive features of CA can be perhaps better outlined by comparing it with other types of analyses. Writing on CA and discourse analysis (DA), Wooffitt (2005) explains that, in general, the focus of studies in CA is "the social organisation of activities conducted through talk" and "the goal of analysis is to examine sequences of interaction, not isolated utterances" whereas DA "is primarily concerned with a broader set of language practices: accounts in talk or texts" (p. 79). He also argues that CA "offers formal analyses at a greater level of detail, and relies upon a distinctive vocabulary of technical terms to capture this detailed organisation" of interactions, comparing it to DA where "the management of interaction *per se* is rarely the focus of research" (p. 80).

Another point which makes CA distinctive is the way in which researchers see the contexts of interactions and how they position themselves as analysts. Wooffitt (2005) points out that one problem with other types of qualitative analyses of interactions is the validity of the researcher's interpretations and accuracy of his or her understanding of objective phenomena. The observer perspective and analytical methodology employed in CA, however, overcome this issue. CA sees contributions to the interaction as both context-shaped and context-renewing, meaning that they can only be understood within the contexts they occur and they go on to shape the context in which the next contribution will occur (Seedhouse, 2005). In CA, the aim of a study is

to "reveal how participants' own interpretations of the on-going exchange inform their conduct" (Wooffitt, 2005, pp. 86-87) rather than to interpret such conduct using outside factors chosen by the analyst. To achieve this, analysts use an emic perspective "to determine which elements of context are relevant to the interactants at any point in the interaction" in order to discover "how participants analyse and interpret each other's actions and develop a shared understanding of the progress of the interaction" (Seedhouse, 2005, p. 166). In other words, analysts examine how participants understand each other by closely observing how participants display their understanding in subsequent turns instead of relying on their own interpretations as observers.

Conversation analysis and advising

Although CA has contributed greatly to the study of spoken interactions in institutional settings, much of the work on advising, let alone language advising, is yet to be seen. However, existing work on advising in other institutional contexts suggests the complex nature of advice-giving. Heritage and Sefi (1992), for instance, in their study on naturally occurring talk between health visitors and new mothers, have shown the ways in which advice delivered by experts can be difficult for their advisees to accept. They explained that in such cases the health visitors tend to initiate advice-giving rather than letting those mothers request advice based on their specific needs, and they rarely acknowledge the mother's competence in parenting. Studying academic counseling sessions, He (1994) reported that the practice of withholding advice, which is sometimes preferred in academic advice-giving settings so as to help advisees make decisions by themselves, might cause a clash of expectations between advisors and their advisees.

Given that the act of advice-giving entails some potential problems, it requires cautious preparation. Analyzing the talk between counselors and students in career-guidance training sessions, Vehviläinen (2001) has argued that *stepwise entry* minimizes the potential resistance of advice. In the course of stepwise entry to advice-giving, question-answer sequences are used by a counselor to seek a student's perspective before giving advice. Her study demonstrated that counselors topicalize some issues covered in the previous talk by asking students questions or pointing out problems, and attempt to elicit students' opinions or ideas regarding these issues. This then enables the counselor to provide relevant and appropriate advice in circumstances where students are considered to be "the main agents" as well as "experts of their own

affairs" (p. 396) and yet counselors' institutional authority coexists. The advisor in the present study also guided the advisor-learner interaction in a somewhat similar manner.

Although the interactional settings mentioned above differ from that of advising sessions, giving appropriate advice to language learners can also require a great deal of interactional work. As will be discussed, it is important that the advice is co-created based on mutual understanding between the two parties. The application of CA to spoken interaction within the field of advising in language learning can illuminate the mechanism by which the advisor and learner achieve or fail to achieve a common understanding of the learner's situation and needs in order for the advisor to provide appropriate advice. Using CA, the authors aim to uncover how the advisor and learner adjust and maintain their mutual understanding during the advising session.

The Data

The data employed for this study is a language advising session that took place in a language center at a private Japanese university. The session is approximately 70 minutes long. At the time of this study, the advisor, indicated as A in the transcripts, had about 10 years of experience as a full-time advisor and had provided professional development training to new advisors. The learner, indicated as L, is a fourth-year education major at the university. Both participants are native speakers of Japanese, and they speak Japanese for the entire session. The conversation was video-recorded throughout the session and transcribed using the convention developed by Gail Jefferson (see Jefferson, 2004). The descriptions of the convention appear in Appendix B, and abbreviations of the gloss translation are in Appendix C. Arrows in excerpts indicate utterances that are significant to the analysis and accompanied numbers show particular steps in the sequence.

At the beginning of the advising session, the learner explained that she wants to become a primary school teacher, and because English is taught at primary school, she would like to know how to study to improve her English and how to use the language center. Two segments of advice-giving were found in the 70-minute conversation, with one not receiving overt acceptance or rejection (Segment 2) and one receiving acceptance (Segment 4). Figure 1 shows a flowchart of the session with the notable events within each segment.
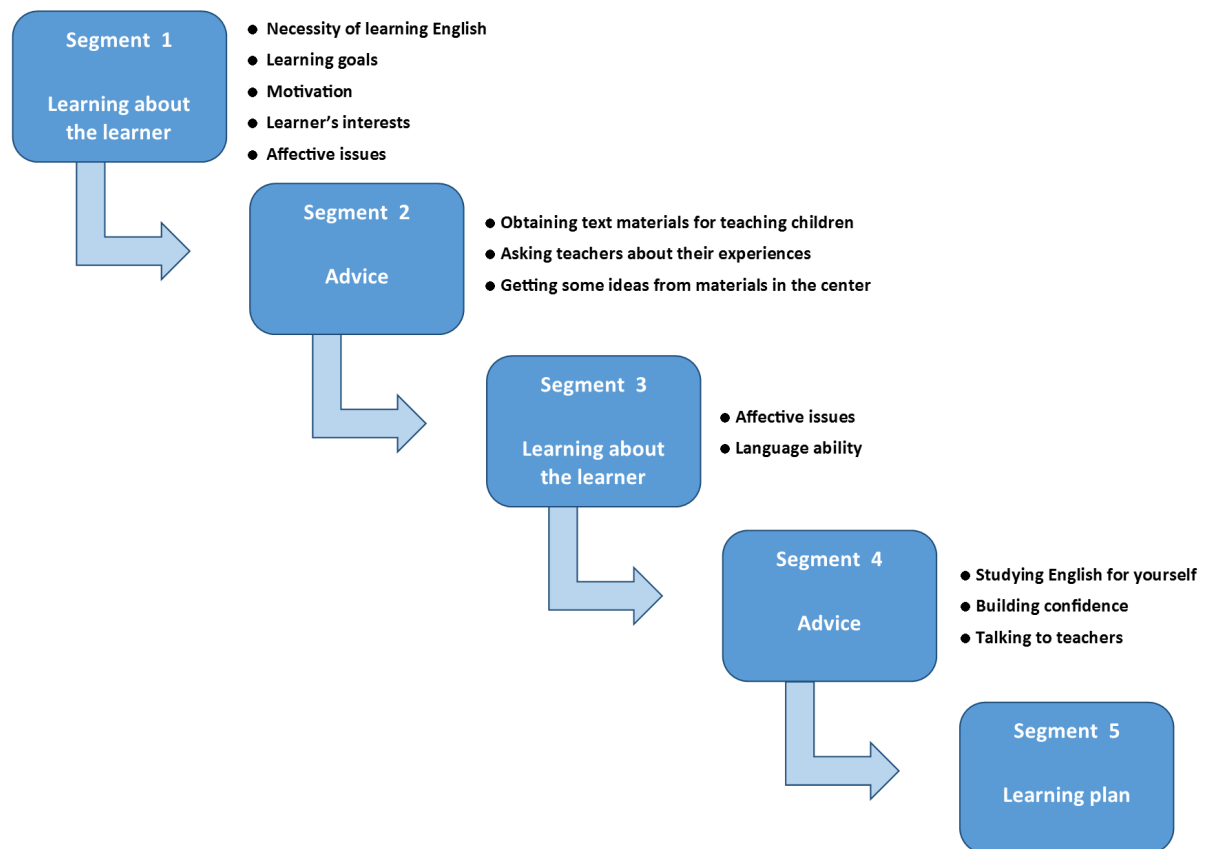
Figure 1. Flowchart of Advising Session

Confirmation Requests

One of the types of stepwise entry to advice-giving Vehviläinen (2001) identified in her study entails a series of question-answer sequences designed to invite confirmation from students, which could result in either confirmation or new information such as an opinion. Peräkylä and Vehviläinen (2003) have argued that in career guidance sessions, it is important that the counselors demonstrate that their advice is built on the elicited information about the student such as their opinions and preferences. By grounding advice in question-answer sequences, counselors give primacy to students' perspectives before providing their opinions on a matter. This way they can interact to provide advice based on students' perspectives to maintain learner-centeredness. Although Vehviläinen's (2001) study identified this pattern within advice-giving segments, the session examined for this study found similar exchanges earlier within the information seeking segments where the advisor requests the learner's confirmation on newly obtained information, the practice of which we call confirmation requests.

Early in language advising sessions, the advisor will guide the conversation to elicit information about the learner's background. This is particularly important because the advisor needs to obtain adequate information to be able to provide support and advice tailored to each learner. This usually includes the learner's learning goals, learning habits, previous learning experience, current language level, degree of learner autonomy, affective issues, motivation and necessity of learning the language. In the advising session examined in this study, the advisor also attempted to gather this fundamental information to understand the learner's needs and offer the most suitable educational support at the time. Although the organization of the advising session, that is transitioning from understanding the learner to giving appropriate advice, may sound rather straightforward, each event is carefully managed through small steps. In particular, the advisor in this study presented her understanding of the previous talk and requested confirmation. She used a series of confirmation requests to ensure mutual understanding between the learner and herself.

The extract from Excerpt 1 contains an example of a confirmation request found in this study. The exchanges occur in Segment 1 (see Figure 1) after the learner (L) told the advisor (A) that she wants to become a primary school teacher and explains the reason why she came to talk to the advisor, namely she wants to improve her English because foreign language education has been introduced in primary schools. She also revealed that her English is not good and she has taken only required English classes at the university, opting out of an elective class offered to education majors. This information provided, the advisor topicalized the fact discussed previously and requested confirmation: "if (you) are going to teach primary school childre- at a primary school, it's a fact English is going to be a requirement in the future¿" (Arrow 1).

```
(1) (HiO01_1_05:18-05:39)

1    A:   1->   demo are da yone: shougakuse-     shouga[kkou de
                but   that CP FP    primary.school.childre- primary.school at

2                                                           [(L
3               starts nodding.)

4    A:   1->   oshieru toshitara,=
                teach       if
                "But, you know (that), if (you) are going to teach primary school
                childre- at a primary school,"

5    L:         =°u::n°
                "Yes."

6    A:   1->   eigo wa (0.4) korekara hissu  [ni natte iku
                English TP      from.now   requirement is.going.to.become

7    L:   2->                                  [°u::n°
                                                 "Yes."

8                                              [(L nods deeply.)

9    A:   1->   wake da[mon ne:¿
                it.is.a.fact    FP
                "it's a fact English is going to be a requirement in the future¿"

10   L:   2->          [(°sou°)
                        "Right."
```

In response to the advisor's request, the learner provided confirmation (Arrow 2). Given the previous remarks, that is the learner has not been studying English recently, and the advisor's response to this with a contradictory starter, "*demo*" (but), the advisor's utterance could be taken by the learner as a challenge. However, the learner seems to agree with what has been projected by the advisor's utterance. This is especially observable from the learner's verbal and nonverbal language after certain words are produced; "*shougakuse[i]*" (primary school children) at Line 1, "*hissu*" (requirement) at Line 6, and "*natte iku wake damon ne*" (it's a fact that it's going to become) at Lines 6 and 9. Having seen an example of how the advisor seeks confirmation, the focus now turns to how confirmation requests such as this one function in subsequent turns.

Confirmation requests and intersubjectivity

      Intersubjectivity refers to the interactants' participation in the co-creation of meaning and understanding during the interaction. The use of confirmation requests can foster understanding between the advisor and learner as they allow the advisor to demonstrate that they are closely listening to the learner and understand their factual representations or mental situation, and move the conversation forward in a stepwise manner. Let us examine the previous interaction again in Excerpt 1.

```
    (1) (HiO01_1_05:18-05:39)

 1    A:   1->   demo are da yone: shougakuse-       shouga[kkou de
                 but  that CP FP     primary.school.childre- primary.school  at

 2                                                               [(L
 3                 starts nodding.)

 4    A:   1->   oshieru toshitara,=
                 teach       if
                 "But, you know (that), if (you) are going to teach primary school
                 childre- at a primary school,"

 5    L:         =°u::n°
                   "Yes."

 6    A:   1->   eigo wa (0.4) korekara hissu  [ni natte iku
                 English TP        from.now   requirement is.going.to.become

 7    L:   2->                                 [°u::n°
                                                 "Yes."

 8                                             [(L nods deeply.)

 9    A:   1->   wake da[mon ne:¿
                 it.is.a.fact      FP
                 "it's a fact English is going to be a requirement in the future¿"
```

```
10   L:   2->           [(°sou°)
                         "Right."

11                (1.2)

12   A:   3->   to iu ka mou  hissu¿
                QT say  or    already requirement
                "Or rather, it already is a requirement¿"

13   L:         uhuh[hh

14   A:             [huh huh huhh

15              (.)

16   L:   4->   °mou° go roku nen de wa kyoukasho to iu
                already five six   year in TP textbook   QT say

17   L:   4->   ka [atarashii
                or    new
                "(There) already (is) a textbook for fifth and sixth graders, or new"

18   A:             [U::N sou[da yone.
                     Yes   so  CP  FP
                "Yes, that's right."

19   L:   4->                [(hon)
                             "book."

20              (1.7)

21   L:   4->   sou desu  ne [ehhh hehhhh=
                so   CP-POL FP
                "That's right."

22                           [(L nods.)

23   A:                      [(sou da yo)
                              so  CP FP
                             "That's right."

24   A:   5->   =Ehime ken    mo onaji da yone sore wa ne=
                 Ehime Prefecture also same CP FP  that  TP FP
                "It's the same in Ehime prefecture, right? That (situation)."

25   L:         =sou desu  ne: [hehhh
                 so   CP-POL FP
                 "That's right."

26                              [(L nods.)
```

Notice that after the advisor's first utterance "English is going to be a requirement in the future¿" (Arrow 1) is accompanied by the learner's non-verbal agreement (Arrow 2), the advisor rephrases her initial statement to "*mou hissu*" (it already is a requirement) by initiating the utterance with "*to iu ka*" (or rather) (Arrow 3).

It is only after this restatement is also confirmed by the learner (Arrow 4) that the advisor associates this common circumstance in Japan, namely implementation of English education in primary schools, with the learner's own situation by checking if it is the same for the prefecture where she wishes to work. It is observable in this excerpt how the advisor mentions a general fact and gradually, through a series of confirmation requests, moves on to the learner's personal concerns in order to highlight the necessity of studying English.

When considering the delivery, as will be discussed in more detail below, these confirmation requests are effective in the sense that they prevent misunderstanding or mismatching of perceptions, which might consequently hinder the offering of well-informed advice. Unlike casual chats taking place in cafes, the talk in advising sessions has a specific conversational goal as well as time constraints. The talk should move towards its goal, which often is to give informative advice, and in this sense, these confirmation requests help the interaction progress while gaining extra, relevant information and ensuring mutual understanding. When confirmation requests are delivered and responded to, these then allow the conversational participants to deal with additional or more detailed information.

Confirmation requests and interpretations

Having gathered some background information from the learner, the advisor in this study sometimes interpreted the given information and checked her understanding with the learner. Peräkylä (2013) has argued that practitioners in psychotherapy "examine the patient's talk *beyond its intended meaning*" (p. 552), and interpret the utterances to help the participants to work together to construct "new ways of understanding" (Peräkylä, 2005, p. 163). The advisor's interpretation observed in this study functioned particularly to highlight or remind the learner of the necessity of learning English, probe the learner's mental state, and explore the cause of current problems. Excerpt 2, which is taken from Segment 1, shows an example of how interpretation is used. Prior to the excerpt, the advisor asked why the learner wishes to work at a primary school instead of an alternative choice, junior high school. Among other reasons, the learner explained that she enjoyed her teaching training at a primary school, and unlike junior high schools, where a teacher usually teaches one subject, she would be able to enjoy seeing the students learn different subjects. Knowing that

primary school teachers have to teach several subjects including English, the advisor interpreted the learner's situation as somewhat troublesome (Arrow 1).

```
   (2)(HiO01_11_13:49-13:58)

 1    A:   1->   °naruhodo ne:° demo eigo    nashide wa chotto
                 I.see           FP   but  English without  TP  a.little

 2    A:   1->   yatteikenai=
                 continue.to.do-POT-NEG

 3    L:   2->   =u::[n
                 "Yes."

 4              (L nods.)

 5    A:   1->      [tte iu kanjina n da [yone.=kitto ne.
                     QT  it.seems N CP  FP       probably FP
                 "I see. But without English, it seems like that won't be possible,
                 right?  (This is) probably (the case.)"

 6         2->                             [(L nods.)

 7              (0.5)

 8    A:        °u::n°
                "Mhm."

 9              (1.0)

10    A:        °naruhodo.°
                "I see."

11              (1.9) (L nods.)
```

This utterance of the advisor then functioned to highlight and bring back the important issue on the table, that is it would be impossible to become a primary school teacher without being able to teach English. In so doing, this confirmation request allowed the participants to clarify the necessity for the learner to study English and prepare the ground for the advisor to provide advice later in the session.

Excerpt 3, extracted from Segment 3, demonstrates a case in which interpretation embedded in a confirmation request functions to raise possible problems. After receiving some advice on her English learning (Segment 2), the learner asked the advisor whether English is going to be important in the future. Having already given two advantageous points of being able to use English relevant to the learner's situation,

the advisor surmised the intention behind the learner's question and imparted her

interpretation, that is the learner is uncertain (Arrow 1).

```
    (3)(HiO01_20_37:00-37:22)

1   A:   1->   >yappa fuanna n da yone=kitto ne¿<
                after.all uncertain N CP FP    perhaps FP
               "After all, (you're) uncertain, right? Perhaps¿"

2              (0.5)

3   A:         £ehehhh [heh heh£

4   L:   2->           [sou desu  ne hh
                        so    CP-POL FP
                       "That's right."

5   A:         [£heh heh heh heh .hhhhh£ un: (0.6) sou da ne:
                                          mhm         so  CP FP
                                         "Mhm"        "Right."

6   L:         [£heh heh heh£

7              (0.8)

8   A:   3->   >demo yappari< sono: (0.3) fuan:   o (1.0)
                but    after.all    that          uncertainty ACC

9   A:   3->   nuguisaru tameni wa:, (2.2) sukoshizutsu
               clear.away    for    TP            little.by.little

10  A:   3->   yappari: (1.0) benkyou:
               after.all            study
               "But, after all, in order to clear away that uncertainty, after all,
               study little by little,"

11  L:         °n:::::°=
               "Yes."

12  A:   3->   =jibun de mo eigo benkyoushite itta hou ga
                oneself  by too English study          good.to.start

13  A:   3->   (0.2) kitto ii [yone: (0.6) dakara: (0.9)
                     probably good FP              so
               "it probably would be good to start studying English by yourself,
               wouldn't it? So,"

14  L:   4->                  [un
                              "Yes."

15                            [(L nods.)
```

This utterance then enabled the advisor to elicit the learner's feelings towards English learning and address the affective issue presented by the learner. Having established the ground for the upcoming advice, the advisor moved on to suggest what the learner should do to eliminate the uncertainty (Arrow 3).

Excerpt 4 shows another case which includes a confirmation request for a proposed interpretation. Prior to the excerpt in Segment 1, the learner explained that she had become more aware of the necessity of learning English during her teaching training when she had discovered the primary school teacher she was working with was not so good at English. Earlier in the session, the learner explained she had enjoyed learning English in primary school but had no longer felt the same way after junior high school. The advisor interpreted this as a positive disposition towards English and attempted to check her understanding, that is the learner did not hate English all along (Arrow 1).

```
  (4)(HiO01_13_15:20-15:41)

 1   A:  1->  de motomoto eigo   ga  kiraina wakedewanai
              and all.along  English ACC hate        reason-NEG

 2   A:  1->  n da yone¿
              N  CP  FP
              "And it's not like you've hated English all along, right¿"

 3            (0.2)

 4   L:  2->  s::: soo (.) desu  ne.=
              so         CP-POL FP
              "That's right."
```

```
5    A:   3->   =kitto ne.
                 Probably FP
                 "Probably."

6    L:   4->   kitto.
                 "Probably."

7               (.)

8    L:         £u[huh huh huh huh .hhhh£=

9    A:           [£huh hhh .hhhhh£

10   A:   5->   =£>sono< nantonaku sono:[:£
                  well    maybe        well

11   L:                                    [°n::°

12              (0.4)

13   A:   5->   n:: jyuken   benkyou muki      no:=
                    test-taking study    orientation GEN

14   L:         =°u::[n°
                     "Yes."

15        6->   (L starts nodding.)

16   A:   5->       [gakushuu o   tooshite:, (0.5) chotto
                     learning  ACC through              a.little

17   A:   5->   toozakatta tte iu kanji ka[na¿
                alienated       QT  it.seems Q  FP
                "Well, maybe, well, it seems like the focus on studying for
                entrance exams left you feeling a little alienated¿"

18   L:   6->                            [un
                                          "Yes."

19                                        [(L nods.)

20   L:         (°desu ka [ne° )
                 CP-POL Q   FP
                 "(Probably.)"

21   A:   5->             [ne: tsumaranai tte iu riyuu wa(0.8)
                           FP  boring          QT   reason TP

22   A:   5->   okkii to [omou kitto.
                big    QT think probably
                "I think that it is boring is a big reason. Probably."
```

```
23  L:  6->              [n:::::::::::::::::=
                         "Yes."

24                       [(L nods.)

25  A:      un
            "Yes."
```

This question received a noticeable pause followed by an affirmative yet rather indecisive answer with some hesitations (Arrow 2). After receiving the halfhearted answer from the learner, the advisor attempted to request confirmation for the second time (Arrow 3). Having received the confirmation in this hesitative manner, the advisor provided an account for her earlier assumption by explaining that it could be the case that the English education the learner had received in the past was oriented for school entrance examinations and this could be the cause of disliking English after primary school (Arrow 5). In so doing, the advisor presented her interpretation of the cause of the learner's current negative attitude towards English. It was only at this point that the gaps in the participants' understanding of the learner's situation started being filled as the advisor's account received some more affirmative responses (Arrow 6). Unlike the hesitative confirmation after a noticeable pause in Line 4, the learner's responses at Lines 14, 18, and 23 were followed or accompanied by nonverbal agreement and produced before the completion of the advisor's utterances.

The use of interpretation then can be said to function to skillfully shift the focus to topicalize what appears important at the time so as to fill the gaps in the participants' understanding. In particular, as shown with the above excerpts, the advisor was able to highlight the necessity of learning English, shed light on the learner's affective issue, and probe the source of the current problem.

Confirmation requests and repair

In any kind of talk, whether mundane or institutional, it is impossible to maintain error-free interaction. When facing a problem in speaking, hearing, or understanding, participants in the conversation address the problem (Schegloff, 2007), and this practice, termed *repair*, is also often observed in cases where speakers adjust the prior segment where no obvious mistakes are involved (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). By repairing the "trouble source" or "repairable" (p. 363) in appropriate places, the participants manage to maintain or restore intersubjectivity (Schegloff, 2007).

According to Drew (2013), "speakers may change or alter something not because it is factually incorrect, but in order to convey something in a more nuanced or apposite fashion, perhaps with respect to how their turn may be understood, and perhaps also to avoid being (mis)understood in certain ways" (p. 133). Schegloff (2007) has noted cases where questioners repair their own questions when confronting a possible dispreferred response, such as rejection or disagreement, so as to adjust their prior turn to align with the upcoming response.

When checking her understanding during a confirmation process, the advisor also repaired her utterance when the assumption that underlied the confirmation utterance was possibly wrong. Excerpt 5 from Segment 3 illustrates this. After the learner realized that she needed to increase her confidence and the lack of opportunities to speak English was preventing her from doing so, she admitted that she was aware that the situation would improve if she came to the language center to study but she also expressed some uncertainty. Having heard the conflicted thoughts of the learner, the advisor attributed this to an affective issue and asked the learner if she was bashful (Arrow 1).

```
    (5)  (HiO01_22_41:44-42:00)

 1   A:        u:::n sou ne::
                    right  FP
                    "Right."

 2             (0.6)

 3   A:  1->   kekkou hazukashigariyasan?
               quite     bashful.person
               "Are you quite a bashful person?"

 4             (1.6)

 5             (L slowly starts tilting her head.)

 6   A:  R->   ↑sou demo nai¿=
                 so     NEG
               "That's not the case¿"
```

```
 7   L:   2->   =£s(h)ou d(h)e m(h)o n(h)ai£=
                  so            NEG
              "That's not the case."

 8   A:         =£uhuh huh .hhh£ tada chotto eigo ni tai suru
                                  just  a.little  English in.regard.to
                "Just a little, in regard to English"

 9   A:         [sono
                 "Well"

10   L:         [£eigo ni taishi te [mo£ (0.4) koko de (0.2)
                  English  in.regard.to  INT        here  at

11   A:                             [£un£
                                     "Yes."

12   L:         £chicchaku natt(h)e [hehhh hehhh hehhh£
                  small       become
                "In regard to English, I feel small when I'm here (in the
                language center)."

13   A:                             [£a sou souka. hah
                                      oh ri-  right

14   A:         hah .hhh naruhodo£.
                          I.see
                "Oh, ri- right. I see."
```

The question was followed by a relatively long pause (1.6 seconds) which led the advisor to negate her earlier question by asking if that was not the case (indicated with R for repair). This repaired assumption then received an agreement from the learner with exact repetition (Arrow 2), and the learner started to reveal her feelings towards English learning and being in the center where only English is permitted. In the case of a discrepancy in the advisor's perceptions, the confirmation process creates opportunities to adjust discrepancies before moving on to the next step. This process then allows conversational participants to suspend the ongoing talk and adjust the potential misunderstanding at the relevant local places, ensuring the intersubjectivity between them as the talk progresses.

Discussion

One of the goals of advising in language learning is to provide suitable advice, and in order to do so the advisor has to accurately understand the learner's situation and needs based on any relevant information the learner provides. The excerpts shown in

this study suggest that transitioning from seeking information and understanding the learner to giving advice is underpinned by a series of confirmation requests. Having obtained new information or perspective from the ongoing talk, the advisor closely monitored the learner, presented her understanding, and requested confirmation. Additionally, when facing the possibility of misunderstanding, assumptions underlying the advisor's confirmation requests were repaired to maintain intersubjectivity.

Advice-giving is not a straightforward undertaking. In the session we observed, the advisor's first attempt at advice-giving was met by silent rejection, which led the advisor and learner to readjust the course of the interaction. After more talk, the advisor made a second advice-giving attempt, which was successful. As a result of this advice, the learner met with a teacher in the conversation lounge once a week during the semester to practice spoken English on a range of student-selected topics. This might seem quite far from the learner's initial inquiry about using English in her future career as an elementary school teacher, but the learning plan addressed the learner's concerns that were revealed and confirmed in the interaction with the advisor. This learning plan was based on personalized advice and was co-authored by the learner, who reflected on her English learning experience, beliefs, and goals with an experienced guide. Our finding suggests that the advisor's use of confirmation requests helped them to assure mutual understanding and maintain a learner-centered perspective during this session.

A secondary aim of this paper was to contribute a new perspective to the body of knowledge and beliefs about the skills used by advisors. It is undeniable that Kelly's skills are particularly useful as a framework for helping novice advisors become aware of the types of techniques which can be used during an advising session and for analyzing one's own reflections as a form of professional development. However, Kelly's skills cannot provide an explanation for the actual interaction that takes place between the advisor and learner and it is doubtful that this was Kelly's intent.

What does this new perspective bring? For example, Morrison and Navarro (2012) suggested an additional macro-skill — clarification — which they identified in 6 out of 14 professional development reflections of advisors who were using Kelly's skills as a framework to analyze one of their own advising sessions. They explain:

> This macro-skill could be realised by any or a combination of micro-skills such as paraphrasing, attending, summarising, concluding, restating, or questioning. By interacting to clarify and specify meaning, both the learner and LA [learning advisor] ensure they understand each other.

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> Clarification could be instigated by either participant but it would go some way to ensuring the dialogue progresses in a direction both participants understand.

Our findings support their proposed macro-skill and provide evidence from an emic perspective of what Morrison and Navarro describe based on their analysis of advisors' reflections. This interactional description together with a description of the technique from the advisor's perspective could help novice and experienced advisors alike to understand how clarification is achieved. This result illustrates one way in which, as Peräkylä and Vehviläinen (2003) stated, CA can be used to refine practitioners' understanding of interactions in their field.

Finally, since this is a single study using data from a single session, we are left wondering if the mechanism identified in the sequences here would be found in sessions with other participants, a series of sessions with the same participant, participants who do not share the same first language, or sessions conducted by a different advisor. In fact, one of the strengths of this study, that it uses a session conducted by an experienced advisor, is a weakness as well, as we cannot conclude that the phenomena discussed here is characteristic of all experienced advisors while not characteristic of novice advisors. More studies with different participants will be able to validate our finding in the future.

Conclusion

This study took advantage of the characteristics of CA, which presupposes that the functions an utterance carries can only be determined by observing the consequences of what the utterance actually does in the conversation. In this light, the purpose of potential future research may be to uncover other mechanisms that underpin advisor-learner interactions and determine what implications these mechanisms have on the successful provision of advice. We hope this paper will find a place in advisor training and professional development schemes just as other CA studies have influenced the training of experts in other fields such as Heritage and Maynard's (2005) contribution to the training of medical students based on authentic interactions between doctors and patients. Despite its limitations, we also hope this example of how CA can contribute to the field of advising in language learning and these unanswered questions will stimulate more research on language learning advising using CA in the future.

Notes on the contributors

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Appendices

Appendix A

Kelly's (1996) Macro- and Micro-Skills of Language Counselling

Macro-skills	Description	Purpose
Initiating	Introducing new directions and options	To promote learner focus and reduce uncertainty
Goal setting	Helping the learner to formulate specific goals and objectives	To enable the learner to focus on a manageable goal
Guiding	Offering advice and information, direction, and ideas; suggesting	To help the learner develop alternative strategies
Modelling	Demonstrating target behaviour	To provide examples of knowledge and skills that the learner desires
Supporting	Providing encouragement and reinforcement	To help the learner persist; create trust; acknowledge and encourage effort
Giving feedback	Expressing a constructive reaction to the learner's efforts	To assist the learner's self-awareness and capacity for self-appraisal
Evaluating	Appraising the learner's process and achievement	To acknowledge the significance of the learner's effort and achievement
Linking	Connecting the learner's goals and tasks to wider issues	To help establish the relevance and value of the learner's project
Concluding	Bringing a sequence of work to a conclusion	To help the learner establish boundaries and define achievement.

Micro-skills	Description	Purpose
Attending	Giving the learner your undivided attention	To show respect and interest; to focus on the person

Restating	Repeating in your own words what the learner says	To check your understanding and to confirm the learner's meaning
Paraphrasing	Simplifying the learner's statements by focusing on the essence of the message	To clarify the message and to sort out conflicting or confused meanings
Summarizing	Bringing together the main elements of a message	To create focus and direction
Questioning	Using open questions to encourage self-exploration	To elicit and to stimulate learner disclosure and self-definition
Interpreting	Offering explanations for learner experiences	To provide new perspectives; to help self-understanding
Reflecting feelings	Surfacing the emotional content of learner statements	To show that the whole person has been understood
Empathizing	Identifying with the learner's experience and perception	To create a bond of shared understanding
Confronting	Surfacing discrepancies and contradictions in the learner's communication	To deepen self-awareness, particularly of self-defeating behaviour

Appendix B

The Conventions for Transcribing Conversations

.	Marks falls in intonations
,	Marks intonation which slightly rises or indicates the continuity
?	Marks rises in intonation
¿	Marks half-rising intonation which falls in between ',' and '?'
↑	Marks a rising intonation shift
word:	Marks the sound of the word is stretched
[	Indicates where overlap begins
(number)	The length of pause which lasts more than 0.2 seconds
(.)	A pause which lasts less than 0.2 seconds
(*Italic*)	Non-verbal actions
(word)	Transcriber's guess
<u>word</u>	Indicates that the utterance is emphasized
(h)	Indicates aspiration in word
.hh	Audible in-breath
hhh	Audible out-breath
=	Indicates that next utterance is followed without interval
°word°	Indicates that the utterance is produced quietly or whispered
>word<	Indicates the utterance is produced quickly
£word£	Indicates smiley voice
wor-	Indicates a cut-off word

Appendix C

The Abbreviations Employed for Gloss Translations

ACC	Accusative
CP	Copula
FP	Final particle
GEN	Genitive
INT	Intensifier
N	Nominalizer
NEG	Negative morpheme
POL	Polite affix
POT	Potential affix
Q	Question particle
QT	Quotative particle
TP	Topic particle

New Scenarios in Autonomy for Foreign Language Learning: Conference Summary and Reflections

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About the Event

The *International Conference on Self-Access* (Encuentro Internacional de Centros de Autoacceso, EICA) was held at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM) from the 4th to the 5th August, 2016. The conference theme in Spanish was *Nuevos escenarios en torno a la autonomía del aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras* which translates as 'New scenarios in autonomy for foreign language learning' and was attended by approximately 280 delegates. Most delegates were based in Mexico and were mainly working in one of the numerous university or school-based self-access centres around the country. Others were classroom teachers interested in learner autonomy and how it can be fostered in their contexts.

In this short paper, each of the plenary speakers will share a summary of their talks and this will be followed by some brief reflections on the event in general.

The purpose of the event was to provide a venue and opportunity to share experiences and open up the creative dialogue on self-access learning between professionals working in Mexico and overseas (the conference website is http://cele.unam.mx/eica). The official conference themes were:

- Autonomous learning, materials design for autonomous learning,
- Evaluation of self-access - including courses, resources, and advising services,
- Technology for the development of languages,
- Advising and learner autonomy.

Summaries of the Plenary Sessions

Plenary 1: Taking Stock and Moving Forward: Future Recommendations for the Field of Self-Access Learning

Jo Mynard, Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan

I was honoured to be invited to give the opening plenary talk at the conference and decided to begin by acknowledging some of our achievements spanning the five decades of self-access learning. I then went on to broaden the definition as although those of us in the field understand the recent developments, this does not always get communicated to colleagues not closely involved. My (draft / work-in-progress) definition, drew on definitions by Gardner (2011) and Reinders (2012). In addition, I would like to acknowledge Benson (2016) for the last-minute shift from my original term 'learner-centred' to 'person-centred' which reflects important recent thinking in the field of language teaching and learning. The definition will no doubt change in the coming months, but the one I presented at the conference was:

> Self-access facilities are person-centred social learning environments that actively promote language learner autonomy both within and outside the space. Students are provided with support, resources, facilities, skills development, and opportunities for language study and use.

After suggesting a definition, I presented seven focus areas for the coming years which were: technology tools, social dimensions, learner involvement, names of our facilities (i.e. SAC, ILC, etc.), advising, emotions/affective factors, and evaluation. One question I posed to the audience early on in the talk was "As students can now access anything they like via their own devices outside a self-access centre, are SACs still needed?". The audience and I were in agreement: Yes - more than ever! Although resources can be accessed easily, other aspects of self-access remain crucial and need to be developed in the coming years in order to support learners in their ongoing endeavours, i.e. supporting them in navigating the opportunities, managing the process, and reflecting on their language learning; providing access to social learning environments; and providing the emotional support so that they can persist in their language learning.

Plenary 2: Repensar los Centros de Autoacceso de Lenguas en la Era Digital [Rethinking Self-Access Centres in the Digital Age]

Marina Chávez Sánchez, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City

In my plenary talk I gave an overview of the present situation of forty self-access centers in Mexico, which I gathered from detailed interviews with their coordinators regarding infrastructure, organization, and academic issues. I included around one third of the centres in Mexico in my sample. As I presented the data I made a comparison between the present state and that of 1998 when SACs were still being established in public universities throughout the country.

Then, I went on to present four ideas that my findings inspired me to think more about. The first one related to how self-access centers have matured especially concerning academic matters. The second idea related to the way SACs in Mexican universities have developed their own identities and varied ways of implementing SALL. The third one, referred to the still scarce presence of digital technologies in the centers as a means to provide opportunities for greater interaction and collaboration in social learning environments. I then elaborated on the idea that self-access centers continue to be valid and beneficial to our learners because of the diversity of services, resources, contents and activities they provide. Above all, they are still relevant because they promote language learner autonomy.

Finally, I mentioned some of what I consider are the present areas of opportunity for self-access centers. Mainly, building a concept that reflects the evolution of autonomy that sees language learning as a social process; increasingly mediated by technology and powered by mobile devices; happening outside the classroom (and the center) in virtual spaces. This updating of the concept should give thought to learner training that meets learners' new habits, needs and interests in the globalized world, and to changes in the physical spaces in order to encourage new study and work dynamics where the learner can produce and co-produce content and knowledge.

To conclude, I presented a preliminary version of a website of self-access centers in Mexico that is intended to incorporate information from the centers. I invited the audience to participate in describing the facilities, the organization and the way they promote learner autonomy. The website will be ready shortly and will include interaction tools that will facilitate collaboration among centers.

Plenary 3: Interest Development and Self-Regulated Learning

David McLoughlin, Meiji University, Tokyo, Japan

The purpose of my plenary talk was to highlight the importance of learner interest as a factor in the initiation and maintenance of self-regulated learning behaviours. As outlined in my introduction, models of self-regulated learning have tended to focus on learner motivation in terms of goals: how much value individuals assign to goals; and the expectations they have of achieving them.

I explained that my interest in interest had come about as a result of a study of how students in a self-directed learning setting at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) stayed motivated (McLoughlin & Mynard, 2015). The results had shown that choosing interesting resources and activities was the most prominent factor helping students maintain motivation. The results were a reminder that not all learners are goal driven and that we need to encourage the development of learner interest as a way of triggering and sustaining motivation.

As I wanted the audience to reflect on the relevance of interest to self-access settings, I raised a question that we returned to throughout the talk: *In your self-access context, how can learner interest be triggered, maintained, and allowed to develop?*

The first part of the talk was about triggering interest. I defined interest as a knowledge emotion. It is one of the positive emotions, but it is distinct from the emotion of joy. I discussed interest in terms of appraisal theories of emotions, which state that our emotions are caused by our subjective (and largely unconscious) evaluations of stimuli. The emotion of interest has its own pattern of appraisals: a novelty-complexity evaluation and a comprehensibility evaluation (Silvia, 2008). At this point I asked the audience to consider whether the resources and activities on offer at their self-access centres are likely to trigger learner interest, either in use of the target language or in topics they can explore further through the target language.

Next, I explored the difference between situational interest (where interest is triggered on a particular occasion) and the enduring trait of individual interest. I talked about the importance of offering learners the opportunity to reengage with resources or activities they have previously found interesting. Do our self-access centres allow learners to reengage with interesting content or activities, thereby maintaining interest?

Finally, I looked at how situational learner interest can develop into an individual interest where interest is largely self-generated rather than simply being triggered by external stimuli (Hidi & Ainley, 2009). Do our self-access centres offer the level of support - through advising, for example - that can assist learners in reaching this phase of interest development?

The motivation to reach goals may not be enough to sustain long-term engagement; the motivation that comes from interest is vital (Sansone et al., 2012). Our self-access centres should reflect this by offering opportunities for learners' interest to be triggered, maintained and developed.

Plenary 4: La Formación del Aprendiente Hacia la Era Digital [Shaping the Learner in the Digital Age]

María de la Paz Adelia Peña Clavel, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City

My main concern when I was invited to participate as a plenary speaker in EICA 2016 was choosing a topic that would be of interest for both experienced advisors and those who have just begun to practice this new role in self-access centres. After thinking about it carefully and reflecting on how technology has become part education and our daily lives, I made up my mind to speak about *learning to learn* since I consider that everything that occurs in a self-access centre revolves around metacognition.

In my plenary talk I used the metaphor of a trip to illustrate the changes of learning to learn through the years from past to present. The tour began with the islands of the past where I pointed out that some activities of learner training had been used even before self-access centres came into the picture. The next stop was to show how learning to learn began its real development as a methodology with the emergence of Self Directed Learning, the establishment of self-access centres, and scholarly interest in developing students' learner autonomy. Then, learning to learn, though still guided by the advisor, started making students gain more awareness in the process of learning, more responsibility for their learning, and therefore, more efficiency in learning.

Finally, I presented my reflections and a proposal about what I considered learner training should become in the digital era. I focused on how emergent pedagogies and technology have changed teaching and learning paradigms. So I discussed three aspects: content, dynamics, and the interaction between the two that should be taken into account.

Content should focus on developing students into critical researchers of content on the web. This way they can cope with the large amount for resources and information offered so that they can choose wisely. Learners should learn abilities and competences that allow them to adapt to the constant growth of knowledge and to deal with unknown and unexpected situations. Above all, we should also focus on the learner as a person and consider emotional factors.

I concluded that learning learner training should be anywhere, anytime and always available so that students can make use of it when needed and allow them to personalize it according to their needs. Learner training, just like self access, should become more social and collaborative, a space where advisors and learners learn from each other. Learner training has not changed its aim to make students become more efficient and autonomous learners, but it has become more important since autonomous students can learn whatever they need so that they can cope with what the future holds for them.

Plenary 5: Language Learning Beyond the Classroom: Access all Areas

Phil Benson, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

As I have not been working actively in self-access language learning for some years, the EICA conference was a great chance for me to catch up on developments in the field and the excellent work that is going on across Mexico. There have been a number of changes over the years among which two stand out to my mind. The first is the way in which so many centres have shifted from an individual language study orientation to much more 'sociable' approaches that favour both spoken language and the use of languages for authentic communication. By 'sociable', here, I am thinking particularly of the ways in which centres make use of space, design activities, and involve students in ways that first and foremost encourage sociability. The second is the way in which language advising has grown to the point where it has virtually become a distinct area of practice that both supports and reaches beyond self-access. UNAM is certainly a leader in the professionalization of language advising in Mexico and the wider world.

My own plenary did not directly address these issues, but instead focused on issues in recent research on out-of-class learning that I believe are largely supportive of self-access and language advising. The presentation was organised around two arguments. The first argument

was that adult learners can develop high levels of foreign language proficiency without classroom instruction. This argument is not widely accepted in the second language acquisition research community, and indeed the counter-argument has often been used as evidence of the necessity of instruction. However, there has been a steady trickle of research over the years that has shown that language learners who do achieve high levels of proficiency often attribute this to out-of-class learning. I also highlighted two recent studies that present compelling evidence on this point. Sockett's (2014) study shows that large numbers of French university students who are not formally learning English, are actively engaged in informal use of English online and learn English through informal use. Cole and Vanderplank (2016) is a particularly compelling study because it shows how Brazilian adult learners who had learned English informally outside the classroom not only achieved very high levels of proficiency, but also outperformed a comparable group of classroom instructed learners on a number of tests of proficiency.

The second argument was that people do not achieve language proficiency 'in the classroom' or 'outside the classroom'; instead, they develop it in language learning environments, in which classrooms and sites outside the classroom often play complementary roles. Although the language learning environments for individuals studying at a university in Mexico are likely to have much in common, each individual constructs their own particular environment based on their perceptions of environmental affordances and their own agency in learning. From this perspective, a self-access centre may be *one* site among the many that make up an individual's language learning environments and the challenge for the centre is to organise its resources, activities and advice such that they offer affordances that complement those offered elsewhere in the environment. This is a challenge that, on the evidence of the EICA conference, self-access in Mexico is very well equipped to meet.

Conference Cultural Program

In addition to almost 60 presentations, participants enjoyed some excellent and varied cultural events. The conference opened with a performance by opera singer Vanessa Velasco Martínez who was accompanied by pianist Alejandro Ramírez. At the end of the first day, there was a musical performance of pieces from around the world by *Ensamble de Cuerdas ECO*. On day 2, delegates were invited to participate in a tour of the famous UNAM campus which is a UNESCO site built on volcanic rock and full of fascinating architectural gems and murals. There were also two gastronomy demonstrations.

General Reflections

Jo Mynard

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and came away feeling inspired and energised by the many conversations I had and connections I made over the two days. For me, some common themes emerged. Firstly, there was a general sense of transition; as if we have reached an important turning point in the field. Many colleagues in Mexico are involved in updating their centres, many of which were established in the mid 1990s. This poses many challenges and hard work ahead, but I was inspired by the enthusiasm and energy that people shared. Secondly, social processes came through in almost every conversation I had. Students and advisors are no longer satisfied with a SAC as an independent study space and many colleagues are reconceptualising their centres as social learning spaces. Thirdly, I was impressed with the creative use of technology tools being used in self-access in Mexico. Colleagues are using technology tools to offer self-access courses, provide a 24/7 space, run *teletandem* (virtual language exchange) sessions, manage portfolios, and track learner progress. Finally, I really liked the focus on multilingualism. In Mexico, SACs include support for many languages and support not only students majoring in those languages, but also those students who are learning another language as a "luxury" (Benson, 2016) and are often extremely motivated to seek out opportunities in a SALC. All in all it was an excellent event and hopefully one that I will have the chance to attend again in the future.

About the Contributors

Phil Benson joined Macquarie University as Professor of Applied Linguistics in 2014 after more than 20 years as an academic in Hong Kong. His background is in TESOL and he has taught English in Japan, Malaysia, the Seychelles, Kuwait and Algeria.

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David McLoughlin is an associate professor in the School of Global Japanese Studies at Meiji University in Tokyo. Among his research interests are causal attributions in language learning motivation and affective factors in language learning motivation.

Jo Mynard is an associate professor and the Director of the Self-Access Learning Centre at Kanda University of International Studies in Japan. She has been involved in the field of self-access language learning for 20 years and has worked in Ireland, the UK, Spain, the UAE and Japan.

María de la Paz Adelia Peña Clavel is an associate professor and an advisor at the self-access center in National Autonomous University of Mexico. She has been working in self-access for about 20 years. Her research interests are learner training, autonomy and teletandem.

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Promoting Engagement with Language Learning Spaces: How to Attract Users and Create a Community of Practice

Katherine Thornton, Otemon Gakuin University, Japan

The three institutions featured in this instalment have all shown considerable success in raising user numbers in recent years. In order to attract users to a language learning space (LLS), a number of factors need to be present. Potential users need to be aware of the existence of the space itself, and know its location. They need to have some knowledge of its functions, and feel that it has the potential to fulfil at least one of their needs as a language learner (Heigham, 2004). Then, they need to feel inspired enough to step into the unknown and have the confidence to enter and engage with staff and other users (Gillies, 2010). The space needs to have a welcoming atmosphere, and the interactions the learners have should provide them with a good balance of success and challenge in order to convince them to return and become regular users.

The authors of the papers in this instalment explain the initiatives they have introduced to encourage more learners to come through the door, and the ways they have tried to make students feel that there is a place for them in the LLS.

Simon Bibby, Kym Jolley and Frances Shiobara at Kobe Shoin University in Japan describe how they have seen numbers at English Island, their English conversation space, increase nearly 70% over a single year. They attribute this rise to several factors. Firstly, their recruitment procedures deliberately aimed to have a variety of staff: full-time and part-time faculty who would be known to many students, and younger staff closer in age to the students who work exclusively in the centre. Gillies (2007) has shown the importance of familiarity with staff as a factor encouraging usage. In order to create a welcoming atmosphere, people skills were particularly emphasised in the recruitment process, rather than putting a narrow focus on qualifications. The authors show how students were given basic personal details about the conversation lounge staff through flyers and how staff were encouraged to make connections with students at social events, in order to encourage them to join conversation sessions.

The paper emphasises not only the importance of attracting new users into the centre, but on the conditions which must be in place for them to become regular users. All staff were given an orientation which emphasises the importance of people skills, and how to run conversation sessions in a supportive manner. They attribute the rise in user numbers to the staff's success in providing a relaxed and supportive atmosphere during the conversation sessions, encouraging students to return regularly.

Satomi Shibata at Tokoha University, also in Japan, describes the success she has had in creating a community of practice among English majors who initially showed little intrinsic interest in learning English. With little desire to study abroad or use English in their future employment, the author succeeded in creating a reading community through linking the SAC with the Extensive Reading (ER) programme in first year English classes. While many centres offer graded readers, and many English programmes incorporate extensive reading, Shibata has gone beyond this model and created a whole community of practice around ER. She emphasises the need for students to have a specific purpose to use an LLS, and for them to go through an acclimation period (Shibata, 2012) before they become full members of a community of practice, and demonstrates how ER can provide the springboard to this, with short book-borrowing visits leading to supportive conversations between users and staff about book choices and reading. These conversations can turn into advising sessions about language learning, which lead learners to engage with other aspects of the SAC, such as materials and conversation sessions. In this way, many learners have developed an intrinsic interest in learning English, with some of them studying abroad and even becoming SAC staff.

Marc LeBane, Muriel Schilling and Austin Harris describe the system at the independent learning centre at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. Similar to the situation at Kobe Shoin University, they emphasise the effectiveness of having staff of a similar age to the students, Visiting English Tutors (VETs), who run several programmes focusing on academic learning programmes for English skills. While the staff at Kobe Shoin had little success with mandated usage of the conversation lounge, a detailed independent learning programme for all freshmen which includes participation in several academic learning programme sessions, has been successful at Lingnan, in emphasising the importance of independent learning. The other factor the Lingnan team identify in their success in raising attendance numbers is their eagerness to embrace new technologies to reach potential users. Through Facebook,

Instagram and tailor-made YouTube videos, staff at the centre are able to both advertise their services and also engage students in English learning activities. The online sphere is regarded as not only a forum through which to attract users into the physical centre, but also a virtual extension of it, with online learning materials developed through a collaboration with other Hong Kong universities.

These papers illustrate that different practices work in different contexts. Whether to require LLS usage remains a contentious issue. Lingnan has had some success mandating usage of their academic programmes as part of their learner training unit for freshmen (although the authors admit that more needs to be done to attract third and fourth year students), whereas at Kobe Shoin mandating usage of English Island had a negative impact on the existing users and no noticeable uptake of voluntary usage. In an earlier study, Rose and Elliott (2010) also demonstrate some benefits of mandated attendance, in terms of greater awareness of how to use the space and higher levels of satisfaction and comfort, but no claim is made about increased voluntary or sustained usage. Maybe this greater understanding of the space itself is the biggest advantage of some kind of mandated usage or orientation period, which, when combined with some of the other features mentioned in these articles, can result in otherwise one-time visitors (or non-users) becoming full members of a language learning community.

This penultimate instalment of the column focuses on PR and attracting users, necessarily placing emphasis on the importance of getting learners through the door. While SALL practitioners will know that measuring student numbers is only one way of many to judge the success of a language learning space, it remains that "head-counting statistical data" is the most commonly scrutinised aspect of self-access for most institutional management teams (Morrison, 2005, p. 270), and of course, the starting point for any centre to build a community of learners.

The final instalment of the column will focus on initiatives to evaluate the impact of a language learning space on its users. While this is a notoriously difficult task (Gardner, 1999; Reinders & Lazaro, 2008), the authors will describe different initiatives that they have undertaken to evaluate aspects of their learning centres.

Notes on the Editor of the Series

Katherine Thornton has an MA in TESOL from the University of Leeds and is the founder and Program Director of English Café at Otemon, a self-access centre at Otemon Gakuin University, Osaka, Japan, where she works as a learning advisor. Prior to her current position, she worked as a learning advisor at Kanda University of International Studies, Chiba, Japan. She is the former president of the Japan Association of Self-Access Learning (JASAL), and a regular column editor of Studies in Self-Access Learning (SiSAL) Journal. Her research interests include self-access centre management, advising for language learning, and self-directed learning.

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Increasing Attendance in a Self-Access Language Lounge

Simon Bibby, Kobe Shoin Women's University, Japan

Kym Jolley, Kobe Shoin Women's University, Japan

Frances Shiobara, Kobe Shoin Women's University, Japan

Abstract

Scheduled class time for students in tertiary language classes is limited, and is likely insufficient in itself to enable students to attain second language mastery (Nunan, 1989). Provision of language practice can be expanded outside regular class time through various means, including self-access centers. However, without effective marketing and management, and effective teaching staff, such facilities risk low participation rates. The current paper discusses the provision of an English language conversation lounge facility at a Japanese university in the light of a 69% increase in student attendance for the year 2015-16. The discussion is initially situated in the need for extra language study outside regular class time. A brief description of the language center is then given. The focus of the present paper is to note recent changes, and to consider effective practice for increasing attendance and for improving participation.

Keywords: self-access conversation lounge, Japanese higher education

The three authors of the current paper all teach at a Japanese university conversation lounge called 'English Island'. After a 69% increase in student attendance at the lounge during the academic year of 2015-16, we assert that for self-access centers to be effectively utilized by students, thorough marketing and an effective staff roster are essential. The present paper discusses key aspects of effective conversation lounge management in four sections. Firstly, the authors situate the discussion in a language study context, asserting the need for extra language practice time outside regular classes. Secondly, institutional context is provided, with a brief description of the facility. Thirdly, the authors note multiple recent improvements and consider how to optimize attendance and participation. Finally, the paper closes with final thoughts and advice regarding effective practice.

Making the Case for a Language Lounge: Increased Language Exposure and Practice

Classroom time alone appears insufficient for language students to fully develop their English competence (Nunan, 1989). 2,200 classroom hours has been suggested (Jackson & Kaplan, 1999) as a necessary lower limit for students learning linguistically 'distant' languages. However, students only have an estimated 630 hours of English language provision in their regular schooling prior to university (Honna, 2008), delivered largely via grammar-translation methodology (Gorsuch, 2001). Therefore, even assuming effective curricula and teachers, motivated students, and a modicum of assigned homework, insufficient total hours appear allocated to language study in tertiary institutions to bridge this gap. A self-access language facility can offer such a bridge, giving additional target language exposure and practice in a non-formal setting where students can further develop a sense of community and can learn in an experiential and social manner (Murray & Fujishima, 2013; Oblinger, 2006).

Overview of the Self-Access Language Facility: English Island

Institutional and curricular context.

Kobe Shoin Women's University is a small private women's university in western Japan with various departments, including English, Japanese Language and Culture, Psychology, Child Development, and Fashion. Regarding the study program of English majors, there are two streams from first year entry. The first stream incorporates study abroad, of either one or two semesters, as an integral element. In the second stream, students may opt to apply for study abroad, and some do so, but it is not required. The conversation lounge discussed herein is open to students of all faculties, not just either of the two streams of English majors.

The self-access facility was established in 1986, to offer extra speaking practice for students. We are told the lounge was named '*English Island*' to present a distinction from the routine and formality of the regular English curriculum classes. The room has magazines for students to borrow and read, but the main activity of the lounge is that of English conversation, which takes place around a centrally situated large round coffee table – a round table being the optimal shape for facilitating conversation (Taylor, 2014). English Island is open from 10:40 am until 2:40 pm on

weekdays, during the teaching semester. There is no reservation necessary, and students are free to visit the lounge at any time it is open and to stay as long as they wish. Students are also welcome to eat and drink in the lounge. The facility is staffed by eight 'native' English speakers who are full-time faculty, part-time university teachers, or teachers recruited to work only at the facility.

Tips for Optimizing Student Attendance and Participation

A deliberate decision to change: Focusing on boosting numbers

In Academic Year 2015-16, student attendance numbers at the self-access conversation lounge, English Island, increased by 69% on the previous year, as can be seen in Figure 1, due to various interventions by the coordinators.
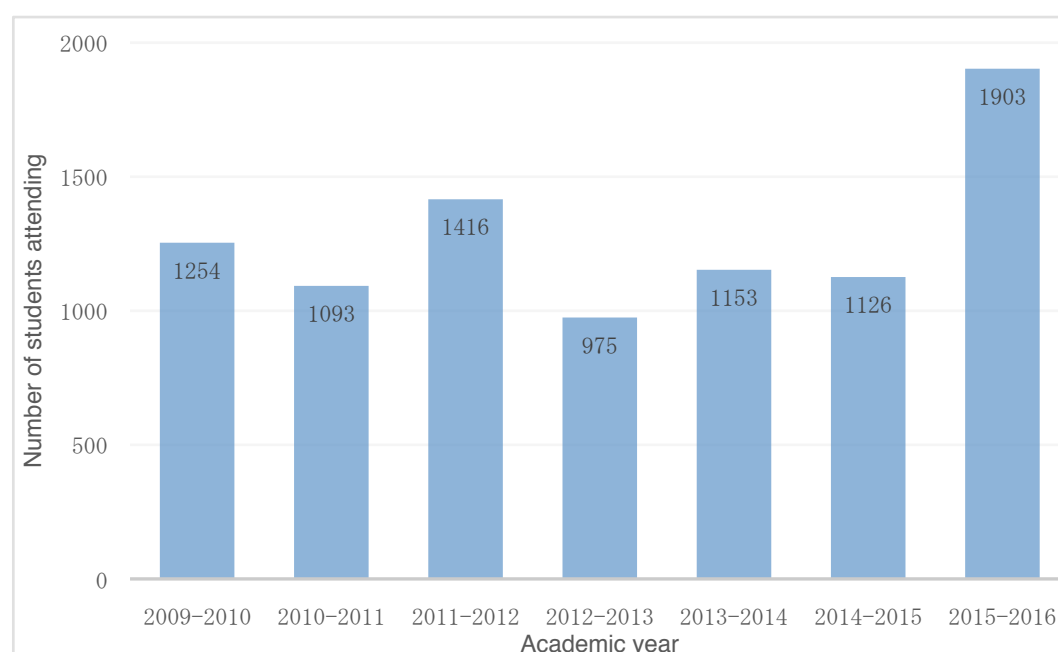

Figure 1. Total Number of Attendees in English Island in an Academic Year

Here it is necessary to note the internal budgeting reality that has informed the recent push by coordinators to improve attendance. In order to retain university funding for English Island, the staff responsible need to justify the use of the lounge in terms of student attendance numbers. However, other than 2011-12 when attendance was mandated, numbers appeared low. Therefore, in order to be assured of retaining funding for the facility and continue offering students the benefits of the necessary extra language practice, enhanced by group interactions (Bygate, 1988;

Pica & Doughty, 1985), peer support, and role models (Murphey, 1998; Ruddick & Nadasdy, 2013), coordinating staff felt a need to increase attendance numbers.

Identifying the issues

Students were surveyed in two first-year English classes in 2015 to try to identify reasons for non-attendance at the self-access lounge. Students noted two key issues: firstly, many students claimed they did not know where the lounge was; secondly, students expressed a lack of confidence as English speakers and thought they needed to have high existing levels of communicative ability before they could go to the lounge.

How then to address these two issues - to raise awareness of English Island and to encourage students to attend for the first time, particularly those with lower levels of speaking proficiency?

Promotion of location on campus

The conversation lounge is located on the ground floor, next to the main path in the center of a relatively small campus. The facility was initially positioned on the fifth floor of one of the classroom blocks but was moved five years ago, in 2011, in an effort to make it more visible and easily accessible for students. However, as noted above, some students still did not know the location of the lounge. This feedback encouraged facilitating staff to try to improve marketing, via improved communications, campus tours (which from 2015 are now part of the syllabus for all first year students), and events. It should also be noted that the visible location helped students to remember the location once introduced. As such, we assert that while even a highly visible location still requires marketing to promote awareness of the location on campus, an easily accessible location certainly helps to complement this.

Teaching staff

The teaching roster in English Island is balanced amongst full-time faculty, part-time teachers, and teachers who only work in the conversation lounge. Though there remains an institutional requirement to use some full-time faculty, there is some flexibility, and in 2015 the coordinator opted to move toward using more part-time teaching staff within English Island.

New English Island staff are native English speakers and experienced language teachers with at least an undergraduate degree. The majority have a Masters degree. In hiring and in scheduling staff, the more recent emphasis since 2015 has been on people skills rather than on qualifications or obligation. New hires are provided with an orientation by the English Island coordinator, wherein the typical happenings, including likely numbers and levels, are explained. Two aspects are emphasized: the purpose of the facility and the non-formal approach utilized in order to build an atmosphere separate to that of the students' formal studies.

This recent staff adjustment and hiring of part-time teachers for English Island sessions appears to have had a significant impact on increasing participation. For example, one time slot covered by a new teacher saw an increase from 51 participants in 2014 to 150 in 2015. Overall, we suggest that staff who may be perceived by prospective participants as approachable, amiable, and easy to talk to are needed in conversation lounges such as English Island. The choice of teachers is fundamental in terms of attracting and retaining students.

Marketing and communicating facility and events: Multiple modalities

Events can be an effective strategy in introducing the lounge to students as potential attendees, and we have sought to improve marketing of the facility and of events since 2015. Typical cultural events such as Halloween and Christmas parties are now advertised three ways: via internal mail, posters, and digital screens around the campus.

Regarding internal mail, students are sent emails several days in advance to give initial notice of the event, with a follow-up reminder sent on the morning of the event. Reminders are sent in simple English, with a Japanese version below.

Hard copy posters for events are placed on faculty noticeboards around the campus, plus one in English Island itself. From 2015, a digital version was also posted on several screens around campus, which display revolving ads of campus events and activities.

Advertising the facility schedule and teachers

For regular conversation sessions, posters are displayed around the university with a photo of each teacher in the appropriate session time, as well as the national flag of each teacher's home country. A box of flyers is also included next to the

posters. Flyers are also handed out to all new first year students, in their first English class. Noting the data on respective time slots across the years, we suggest that the relationship between particular students and teachers can have a strong impact on when and how often certain students attend regular sessions. For this reason, we assert it is beneficial to retain a fixed schedule for teachers across the academic year.

Getting students in

Prior to the 2015 changes, other attempts had been made in order to increase attendance at the lounge. Notably, mandated attendance at English Island was tried in Academic Year 2011-2012. While mandating attendance did raise bare numbers, as can be seen in Figure 1 (1093 in 2010-11 to 1416 in 2011-12), teachers complained that a number of students only came to fulfill attendance requirements, did not speak in English, and never returned. Teacher feedback indicated this to be detrimental to efforts to stimulate conversation, demotivating for other students, and harmful for teacher morale. This feedback from our staff accords with the findings of Chung (2013), who notes that students forced to attend self-access centers to fulfill class requirements did not feel motivated to continue attending after the course was finished, and of Adamson, Brown, and Fujimoto-Adamson (2012), who noted that when attendance is mandated, students liken it to homework, are less motivated, and no longer attend once the obligation is removed.

Plainly, it is not enough just to get students through the door. There must also be willing participation - and our view is that mandating fails in this regard. Thus, a way to motivate students to attend voluntarily is needed. A focus of recent social events has thus been to motivate students to attend regular sessions of their own volition through initial participation and enjoyment of these events.

In order to try further to encourage attendance at regular sessions, teachers from various session times and days throughout the week are encouraged by coordinators to attend the events. Hopefully, having met a new teacher at such an event, students may feel encouraged to return during a session conducted by this teacher.

Furthermore, as previously noted, a concern expressed by students was the belief they needed to be highly competent English speakers to attend the conversation lounge. For such students, social events offer the chance to observe the varying levels of English practiced at English Island by all students at the university, and to note that

the facility is not just for the more capable senior students after studying abroad, but for all. Additionally, the mix of students at events offers lower level (and often younger) students encounters and interaction with Near Peer Role Models (NPRMs), who can be effective in helping to motivate students and perhaps challenge any current beliefs they may have about their current and future potential L2 selves (Murphey, 1998; Ruddick & Nadasdy, 2013).

However, there remains still the possibility that lower level students may feel intimidated in encounters with more fluent peers. Thus, to ensure that a supportive and inclusive atmosphere for students of all levels is consistently promoted, teachers are oriented to pay particular attention to welcoming, speaking with, and supporting the speaking attempts of new groups of attendees (new students usually attend in pairs and/or small groups) at an appropriate English level at these events and in regular sessions.

Student newcomers: understanding peripheral participation and first-timer nerves

During regular conversation sessions we suggest that it is helpful for the teacher to be flexible in regards to levels of student participation, and coordinators emphasize this when orienting new staff. In order for newcomer students to feel comfortable and hopefully wish to return again, students are welcomed, and a few simple questions are directed to them to show interest. It is understandable that new attendees may just mostly listen, and perhaps give a few brief answers. While students can be lightly encouraged to participate, we suggest it is important that students are not forced to speak. This accords with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation', where any newcomer naturally starts on the edge of an event or situation, then, with steadily increasing familiarity, practice, and confidence, moves more centrally within a situation, offering heightened participation. As students leave, we also suggest that teachers thank students for joining, and encourage them to attend again.

Keeping things relaxed and supportive

Where the environment of a self-access lounge is as relaxed as possible, students are likely to be more willing to communicate (Krashen, 1982). As Noguchi (2015) suggested, students may be more comfortable speaking English in self-access centers than regular classrooms. The authors suggest that the 'teacher' in the room

adjusts their approach from that of a regular class teacher and leader to that of friendly and supportive facilitator. Such adjusted behaviors should work toward reducing the student-teacher power differential, something that Japanese students may be particularly culturally sensitive of (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988), and which may cause a reluctance to interact even in what teachers and administrators may assume to be a 'relaxed' setting, but which students themselves may adjudge otherwise.

Regarding topics of conversation, while it is always useful for teachers to take in a couple of discussion topics, we have found that often the most fruitful conversations, containing multiple turns from the most interlocutors, tend to grow organically from the students' own interests and experiences, and in particular, as Murray and Fujishima (2013) reported, that self-access lounges allow more experienced students to share their overseas language learning experiences, as well as offer advice on job hunting and future career choices to less experienced students.

Managing conversation: Balancing flow and correction

There are several issues for teachers to note when attempting to facilitate communication, particularly with low-level language learners. Noting that students join tertiary institutions after experiencing language classes that remain on a grammar-translation approach, often to the detriment of spoken communicative ability (Honna, 2008), little can be taken for granted in terms of students' ability to converse in the target language. Due to a relative lack of unstructured spoken practice, students may also lack confidence in engaging in any non-formulaic way. Thus, there is a balance for teachers to strike: supporting language output of some lower level students by not correcting too much, which may discourage and demotivate, while pushing more fluent speakers to speak more.

Furthermore, as language learners' interlanguage shifts between stages of development, grammatical errors tend to increase as the need to experiment and restructure their increasing language knowledge grows (Selinker, 1972; Selinker, 1992). Therefore, in general, unless a student explicitly asks for assistance or intelligibility for the group breaks down excessively, we suggest that the flow of conversation not be interrupted. Additionally, other students can be actively encouraged to help each other when needed, instead of the 'teacher' jumping in to correct and help. Hopefully, this allows the more capable students to showcase their

knowledge, thus enhancing their motivation, whilst offering role models of successful language learners to those less experienced.

Suggestions and Advice

This paper has described the English conversation lounge at one university in Japan. The need for the provision of extra language exposure in tertiary institutions is clear, but persuading more students to take advantage can be a challenge. As described within this paper, the number of students attending the self-access center increased by 69% over a one-year period. This was achieved mainly by increasing the publicity and by a judicious use of staff, notably hiring part-time teachers to also work in English Island.

We consider that the most important factor has been the staff working in the conversation center. Teachers are able to advertise the lounge with their own students and attract users by forming friendly relationships and encouraging students to return to subsequent sessions. To aid this, the coordinators of self-access lounges should prepare regular schedules of staff, clearly advertised throughout the institution, preferably with photographs and some introduction of the teachers. We suggest that when choosing staff to work in the center, the emphasis should be on people skills (relaxed, supportive, friendly, patient) not qualifications, while duly noting institutional minimal requirements.

The authors feel these changes have made a large contribution to the recent success in persuading students to enter the lounge for the first time, and in ensuring that the initial learner experience is sufficiently non-stressful, engaging, and fun so that students may be keen to return again and again.

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Extensive Reading as the First Step to Using the SALC: The Acclimation Period for Developing a Community of Language Learners

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Abstract

This paper describes an example of how to bring language learners into a self-access language learning center (SALC) in a Japanese university. A number of factors affect learners' decision making about whether or not they use and continue using the SALC. In the context of lower interest in studying abroad or using English in jobs in the future, it may be necessary to consider setting up a clear purpose for students to come to the SALC. From the reflections on the last five-year implementation of extensive reading (ER), connecting classes and the SALC with an ER system seems to play a significant role in scaffolding their first SALC encounters in the current context, helping them go through the acclimation period leading to not only ER but also other usage of SALC.

Keywords: extensive reading, communities, an acclimation period

Many self-access language learning centers (SALCs) are established for the purpose of helping learners with their language learning, and the pedagogical rationale may vary depending on their associated institutions. Each SALC tries to attract users in its own way: some use advanced technologies (Reinders & Lázaro, 2007), and others implement SALC activities into their curriculum in order to scaffold students' first SALC encounters (Croker & Ashurova, 2012).

In the Japanese university described here, students showed low interest in studying abroad, using English for jobs in the future, or even just being familiar with movies, dramas and music from English speaking countries. Therefore, it was necessary to consider what would attract students to make use of the SALC. As Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) describe in the theory of communities of practice, "groups of people should share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic." It was important to find what would be something that students could share with their friends. Reflecting on the last five-year trial, in the case of the university described in this paper, it turned out to be extensive reading (ER).

The Context

The background of the SALC

The SALC described here was established in 2008 to offer administrative services and to support students with questions related to English. Although there was no official mission statement when it was established, from meetings with university staff, I understood the main aims of the center were to offer administrative services and to answer students' questions related to assignments from the classes they take or to learning English. As an administrative service, the SALC existed to deal with application forms and fees for several language tests and to offer support for the application process for several studying abroad programs. However, from my previous experience running a SALC in another university, I did not consider a SALC as a place only to offer administrative services and to answer questions related to assignments. In accordance with what other researchers in the field of self-access language learning and autonomy have suggested (e.g. Benson, 2007; Gardner and Miller, 1999), I believed that a SALC could be a place where language learners can improve English proficiency and at the same time become autonomous learners with various support. Therefore, I worked on finding a way to re-create the SALC as a place to scaffold autonomous learning and improve students' language proficiency through providing them with advising sessions and other activities.

Details of the SALC and the university

The SALC is located in one of the three campuses of a university in Shizuoka prefecture, Japan, housing different faculties. The campus where the SALC is located is home to the faculty of Foreign Studies with two departments: English, with 100 to 130 students each year and Global Communication, with 60 to 80 students. English major students are expected to focus on the language and cultures of English speaking countries, and Global Communication major students focus on cultures of China, Korea, Brazil and Spanish-speaking countries, rather than learning English. The SALC is open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and available for any students to use.

SALC staff

One full-time administrative staff member has been employed to work in the

SALC since its establishment. Two teachers, including myself, were hired to work in the SALC for two days a week in addition to teaching five to six classes per week. Unfortunately, four years after its establishment, the number of teachers was reduced to one, so for the moment, I am the only teacher working in the SALC. We also employ seven to eight student teaching assistants (TAs), who are third or fourth year students, with high English proficiency along with experience of studying abroad, taking a teacher's license course, or eagerly practicing ER. There is usually one TA on duty from Monday through Friday. However even during busy hours, only one TA is allowed to work each hour because of financial constraints.

Target users

Any student at the university can use the SALC, but more than 90% of users are those who major in English. It may be because more students enroll in the English department and because we have more materials for learning English. We also have study group meetings for 90 minutes a week for other languages, such as Spanish, Chinese, Brazilian Portuguese, and Korean, which are mainly attended by Global Communication students. We also provide books for those language tests, help students to register for tests applications, and support study abroad programs for those related countries. However, as the majority of users are English majors, descriptions in this paper will focus mainly on them.

The English proficiency of the target users

The English proficiency of the English major students varies from 100 to over 900 on TOEIC. Approximately 20% of the English major students decide to take the teacher's license course when they are in the second year, and 30% of them study abroad for one month to eight months. However, based on the brief questionnaire that I distribute in my classes every year and impressions gleaned through casual interactions in the SALC, many are likely to have chosen English as their major because of reasons not so strongly related to English itself. For instance, their siblings graduated from the same department, they wanted to go to a university in Shizuoka but there weren't very many choices, or they simply like English compared with other subjects but do not intend to go abroad or get a job using English. Although they worry about their TOEIC scores, they are not motivated enough to start language learning on their own. Instead,

they prioritize the completion of assignments from the English related classes they take.

Low interest in studying abroad

According to the statistics reported by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan (MEXT) in March, 2016 (MEXT, 2016), the number of university students studying abroad has been increasing. In 2011, 53,991 students studied abroad, and the number increased to 81,219 in 2014. However, the situation was different in our university. Year by year, more and more students show no or little interest in studying abroad or using English in the future. For instance, the actual number of students who studied abroad for six months or more has gradually decreased from 14 students in 2007 to only four in 2015. Such tendency has given me the opportunity to reconsider how the SALC can support students who have no specific purposes to work voluntarily toward improving their English skills or getting more interested in foreign cultures. Without specific reasons and strong motivation to study English, they wouldn't use the SALC voluntarily, so we needed to consider how we could attract and encourage them to step into the SALC.

An invisible obstacle for Japanese students

As I discussed in a previous study (Shibata, 2010), Japanese language learners tend to have an invisible obstacle preventing confident usage of new facilities: students may be curious but not brave enough to step into the SALC on their own without a clear purpose. My research showed that a number of factors affect learners' decision-making about whether or not to use the SALC. Some students believe the SALC is not for them but for specific people: for instance, for those who are studying abroad, or those who have high English proficiency. They haven't yet built up an identity as a member of the SALC community. As Wenger (1998) defines community membership, to be a full member, it is important for students to feel they are in familiar territory.

In another study (Shibata, 2012), I discussed the importance of acknowledging the necessity of an "acclimation period" until language learners are able to use a SALC feeling comfortable, accepted, and competent. Frequent face-to-face casual contacts should remove such an invisible obstacle (Shibata, 2012).

Taking these two issues into account, I planned several activities which would be low face-threatening and have a clear purpose for students to come to the SALC. Of

all the activities tried in the current context, the one with the strongest impact has been ER.

ER to Build a Community of Language Learners

ER practice in our university

ER was first introduced to all the first year English major students in 2011. Students learn about ER in English classes and are required to read extensively outside classes, and the word count they read accounts for 20 percent of the class evaluation. When they become second year students, ER is implemented in only a few classes, so some continue and others quit and sometimes restart voluntarily later. All the first year students are required to keep ER journals (see Appendix), which are checked in their classes. In their ER journals, students write:

- the number of books they read,
- the numbers of words they read,
- the word count and level for each book,
- the title of each book, and
- comments on each book.

When I check their ER journals face to face in class, I have a short conversation on how well they were reading, how they were enjoying it, which book they liked that week, whether they read every day, or whether they had any trouble with ER. Many students ask which book to read next, so I introduce some specific books to them or suggest they should visit the SALC in order to look for suitable books together. If they have some difficulties with ER (and it is difficult to give advice in such a short time during the class), I encourage them to visit the SALC. In both cases, it is only a suggestion, so some students visit SALC right after the class or later the following week, and others don't.

We have almost the same selections of ER books both in the library and in the SALC, approximately 4000 books each. From observation and interactions in the SALC, students seem to prefer the SALC because it is easier to find books, they can receive support to find a certain book, and they can ask more questions related to ER to the teacher, TAs, and their friends.

Now the students in the highest level class read 800,000 words a year on

average, the middle 500,000, and even the lowest read 300,000 words. The majority of the students read more than the ideal amount that was proposed by researchers (e.g. Beglar & Hunt, 2014; Nation, 2009), which is 500,000 words per year, in order to improve English skills. The amount students read has increased substantially since 2011, when students only read 150,000 words a year. Although the proficiency of the incoming students is similar to that of the students five years ago, according to their TOEIC scores, the amount they read has increased drastically. As I discussed in another study in 2015 (Shibata, 2015), having access to books alone does not guarantee that students will read extensively. With a reasonable scaffolding system, many can actually read a decent amount and make ER a habit. There are many factors to help students to read one million words a year (Shibata, 2015), but one of the most important factors is a learner community, where students can receive advice on ER, where they can share pleasure and difficulty of ER, and where they can gather information and receive support for ER and studying English.

ER as a springboard to more engagement with other SALC services

Encouraged by ER, the number of users for other activities has also increased in the last five years. In 2011, our first ER year, we had 18.9 SALC users a day in June for the other usage, not ER, but in the same month in 2016, 77.9 students used the SALC a day for the other usage, suggesting ER has helped encourage students to be interested in more SALC usage. ER is likely to be playing a significant role as the first step into the SALC (a clear purpose to visit the SALC) and repetitive interactions with staff and TAs (an acclimation period).

Interactions typically start from which books students should read next, and then move on to how their ER is going, whether they have any difficulties in ER, and finally progress to what their purposes or goals for language learning are. Such repetitive casual contacts are considered examples of "mico-counseling." In a previous study (Shibata, 2012), I discussed the importance of micro-counseling sessions, which are language learners' casual contacts with teachers or TAs. Micro-counseling sessions may lead students to other SALC usage including macro-counseling sessions, longer and more serious advising sessions. For example, some students ask me only about books for a few months and show no interest in further conversations, but then eventually they ask how to study English. Then I can finally have an advising session

and introduce TAs or other SALC users, or other SALC usage.

One of our TAs is a good example of a multi-purpose SALC user. When he was a first year student, he showed no interest of studying English and didn't work so hard on ER. He asked me how to study English once in the class but didn't end up coming to see me in the SALC for an advising session. However, whenever I saw him borrowing books in the SALC, I greeted him and kept asking how he was doing. When he became a second year student, he asked me to check his progress every week in the SALC. We decided to check how much he read or what level of books he was reading and how he was doing on the TOEIC textbook we chose together. We occasionally had advising sessions, and I introduced English conversation practice sessions and gave him opportunities to talk to TAs and other students in the SALC. Eventually he got interested in studying abroad, went to the US for two months, and came back to be one of our TAs. Now he is a TA and at the same time a SALC user. He asks me for some advice if necessary, participates in English conversation practice sessions, and studies for some tests such as TOEIC, making use of the SALC.

Conclusion

In conclusion, ER could be a springboard to more engagement with other SALC services because:

1. Borrowing books is a low face-threatening activity, so students can come into the SALC with confidence. They have a specific purpose to come and do not necessarily have to talk to anyone if they don't want to until they are ready.

2. Staff and TAs can communicate with students when they check out or return books regularly and frequently, which helps students feel more confident about using the SALC.

3. Students can build a community of language learners through talking to their friends or TAs about books and difficulties they face in ER. They have a chance to meet role models of language learning and to see how other students enjoy or struggle with ER and other language learning activities.

Suggestions and advice

What attracts students really depends on the context and complexity of numerous factors. What is important is to find out what students could have in common to create a community of language learners. As Wenger et al. (2002) emphasize, groups of people should share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic. In the case of the university described here, it was ER, and through ER, students could share not only their pleasure about ER but also difficulties. In addition, students also need an acclimation period to become confident members of a SALC community. Although further research is necessary, the following are suggestions for those facing similar circumstances when they consider conditions for a springboard to engagement to a SALC.

1. Think of a low face-threatening activity that could be a specific purpose for students to visit a SALC with confidence.
2. Think of something that students could have in common with their friends so that students can share pleasure or difficulties.
3. Think of something for which students can visit the SALC regularly and frequently so that they can experience an acclimation period and micro-counseling.

In the case of this university, that springboard has been extensive reading.

Notes on the Contributor

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Appendix

An Example of a Student's ER Journal

NO	日付	シリーズ	タイトル	コメント	YL	語数	総語数
612	11/18	Rylant-1	The Old Woman Who Named Things	★すごい心があったまる話だと思いました。	1.5-2.3	1,222	★ 1,829,036
613	11/22	PR-2-9	APOLLO 13	★アポロ13の実際の話が知れてもかった。	2.4-2.6	8,119	1,837,155
614	11/23	PR-2-51	Simply	★矢豆い話が3つあって楽しかった。	2.4-2.6	7,177	1,844,332
615	11/25	Nate-8	Nate the great and the Fishy Prize	◎久しぶりにNateに戻ってきた。ほのぼのしてて良し！	1.5-2.5	2,601	1,846,933
616	11/26	Nate-9	Nate the great and the Stalks Stupideeed	★Nate かわいすぎる。ほんとにどうでもいいこと事件になる！(笑)	1.5-2.5	2,169	1,849,102
617	11/19〜27	Jacqueline Wilson	Dustbin Baby	★久々にジャクリーンウィルソンよんだ〜。すごい感動	5.0-6.0	38,000	1,887,102
618	11/28	OBWF-1	Japan	★日本についてあまり知らなかったことまで知れて良かった。	2.1	5,354	1,892,456
619	11/28-29	Blume	Judy Blume Are you There God? It's me, Margaret	★女子って感じの話だった。すごい読みやすくて面白かった。Judy Blumeさん好き。	4.0-4.5	30,340	1,922,796
620	11/30-12/1	Blume	Judy Blume Blubber	★学校でのイジメがリアルに描かれててすごいと思った。教員になりたい人におススメしたい1冊。	4.0-4.5	26,941	1,949,737
621	12/2-3	Blume	Judy Blume Deenie	★こんな終わり方すんの〜！？って思った。努力する大切さわかる。	4.0-4.5	33,298	1,983,035
622	12/5	Muth	Zen Shorts	★トトロみたいだった。ピーター先生のおススメの1冊 ✓	2.0-3.0	1,190	1,984,225
623	12/5-6	Blume	Judy Blume It's not the of the world	★Karenのええる取りとか妹の心の変わきとかすごい分かりやすかった。	4.0-4.5	32,209	2,016,434
624	12/7-8	Clements	No Talking	★すごい面白かった。好と男子の対決！！先生たちも苦労してた(笑)	4.0-4.5	23,715	2,040,149
625	12/10	OBW-2	One Thousand Dollars	★お金が欲か。人生でどちらを優先するのかを色んな人の視点で描かれてよかった。	2.6-2.8	4,900	2,045,049
626	12/10-11	PR-3-44	Madame Doubtfire	★すごい面白い話だった。映画気になるから(エいやく見たい)。	3.2-3.4	6,917	2,051,966

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Promoting Independent English Language Learning within an Asian Tertiary Institution: The Lingnan Experience

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Abstract

This article is a self-reflective account of the English Language Support Service (ELSS) at the Centre for English and Additional Languages at Lingnan University in Hong Kong. The article gives a brief background of the Centre's structure, goals, development and the role it plays in student language development. Stressing the importance of self-motivation and independent learning, the article examines the issues the centre has had attracting and retaining students and the on-campus and online promotion used to increase student attendance, self-access, and face-to-face interactions. The article offers lessons-learned and future goals that can be applied to other tertiary institution self-access language centres.

Keywords: Self-Access, Independent Learning, Language Development, Motivation, Student Retention

Background

The English Language Support Service (ELSS) at Lingnan University's Centre for English and Additional Languages (CEAL) is a young, independent learning (IL) centre. The centre opened six years ago, with the goal of bringing self-access to students who may be unfamiliar with IL and reluctant to use English in a social setting. Prior to university, students in Hong Kong attend one of three different secondary school streams: Chinese medium of instruction (CMI), which accounts for 70% of all secondary schools, English medium of instruction (EMI)—20%, or international schools which follow either International Baccalaureate or their own home countries' system. For many students, this Centre may be their first opportunity to improve their productive English language skills through IL, by assessing their own problem areas, developing tailored learning outcomes, and making plans to meet those outcomes.

The Centre is managed by the ELSS Coordinator, who is also a Senior Language Instructor, responsible for the day-to-day management of the centre and training our three Visiting English Tutors (VETs). As an IL centre, it is important to provide students with a consultant or coach to guide them through their learning process (Wielgolawski, 2011).

Therefore, each year Lingnan hires three VETs to work with students. The VETs are recent graduates, TEFL-certified, and come from a wide-range of academic disciplines. Having VETs who are fresh graduates has helped immensely. Being close in age, the VETs and students tend to readily establish peer-to-peer relationships, giving the VETs a unique role, while also enabling them to complete many functions of the traditional outside-the-classroom language learning advisor (Mozzon-McPherson, 2006).

The VETs run four types of academic programmes under the guidance of the ELSS Coordinator: Reading, Speaking, and Writing Assistance Programmes, as well as a Drop-In Centre, housing a computer station and English resource library where students can stop by for casual conversation, specialised English support, or just to read a magazine.

The academic assistance programmes are run daily by the VETs and are designed to help students improve their English through interactive workshops and discussions. All three of these aim to give students a relaxed but focused space to practice their English, gain confidence, interact with native speakers, and improve upon their problem areas.

The Writing Assistance Programme (WAP) consists of one-on-one sessions between a VET and a student, examining the student's writing to identify problem areas, suggest improvements, and provide resources and exercises addressing key issues. The Reading Assistance Programme (RAP) consists of small-group workshops focusing on a range of academic reading skills, such as reading comprehension or understanding meaning from context, to help students improve on common problem areas. Finally, the Speaking Assistance Programme (SAP) consists of three aspects, free-talk, discussions, and structured workshops designed to help students gain confidence speaking through improving their social and academic oral fluency. These are designed by the ELSS Coordinator and the VETs to support the core curriculum and in turn allow students to develop their academic speaking skills, such as argumentative skills (agreeing, disagreeing, acknowledging) while improving oral fluency.

Additionally, the VETs also organize a wide range of social activities, such as movie nights, casual dinners, and weekend outings. Through the various programs offered by the VETs, we intend to build lasting rapport with the student body, empower students to practice English on their own and with their peers, and ultimately offer something to every student, regardless of their interests, motivations, or language abilities.

Challenges and Responses

The biggest challenge the ELSS has faced from its onset has been getting students into the centre in the first place. Many Hong Kong students enter university thinking they possess the requisite language skills to graduate. However, what they do not realise is that they lack the level required to find and keep a job once they graduate (Yeung, 2015). Therefore, demonstrating 'a need for IL' has been an obstacle that the ELSS has exhaustively worked to overcome.

Also, since students today, particularly in Asia, have spent their young lives undertaking a rigorous learning cycle, driven by 'Tiger Moms' and the like, prior to entering university they have focused much of their attention solely on academic success (Kohler, Aldridge, Christensen, & Kilgo, 2012, p. 52). Thus, when students enter university, the new found freedom is often overwhelming and self-improvement is the furthest thing from their minds. Especially in regards to English language learning, many Hong Kong students have spent their entire lives taking compulsory English classes without realising the importance of the language. As far back as 1997, in a study by Gardner and Miller on tertiary level self-access facilities, one Hong Kong participant even described learning English as an "arranged marriage" and argued that it took him over ten years of studying the language to understand its importance (Gardner & Miller, 1997). And sadly, even among the students who do feel productive English skills are important, many may be reluctant to use a self-access centre, out of personal shyness or other reasons.

Seeking to address these problems, and seeing strategic benefit for both the classroom instructors and the centre staff to know what goes on in the classroom and jointly develop learning materials to support each other (Gardner & Miller, 1997), the ELSS has worked intimately with language instructors to encourage self-access. Many of the academic assistance workshops the ELSS offers are specifically designed to support the English curricular content and coincide with the course schedule. As a result, when students struggle with a course, they can attend a workshop or the Drop-in Centre for varying degrees of independent guided practice with feedback, which research has shown to be one of the most important and effective learning methods (Weinstein, Acee, Jung, & Dearman, 2011). Each year, the ELSS Coordinator reviews the course materials and assists the VETs to develop workshops and exercises to extend students' learning.

Likewise, the classroom instructors supplement the efforts of the centre by requiring students to attend its services and programs. Mandatory core English courses at Lingnan

(four courses, 16 credits) have always included an IL component (before establishing the self-access centre, students could only seek advice from their language instructors {if at all}). In 2014, the ELSS, in cooperation with the language instructors, developed an Independent Learner Training unit for the freshman course. This unit introduces students to academic and social English enhancement programs and activities. To pass their first undergraduate English course, students must visit at least two of the four academic assistance programmes and at least one social activity. In the second course, they must attend any two academic or social activities. The aim of the IL requirement is for students to get acquainted with a variety of the ELSS services, habituate English usage among and between their peers, and build rapport with the staff—hopefully extending well beyond the first year.

Although all classes at Hong Kong universities must be taught in English (with some exceptions, such as Chinese language classes, etc.) students only take English language courses per se in the first two years of study. Therefore, attracting year 3 and 4 students remains a major challenge. Lingnan University has begun to recognize this, and last year mandated every class taught in English must attribute a minimum 10% of a student's grade to language proficiency. Even so, without their initial motivation or self-drive, it can be extremely difficult for students to improve upon their language goals (Murphy, 2011). Thus, it is of paramount importance for centre staff to focus on helping students become self-motivated.

Re-designing the IL Unit in the freshman year intends to show students the need to improve their English, and motivate them to attend ELSS programmes, but student sign-in data from 2014-2016 shows only a 10-15% return rate for third and fourth year students. This statistic implies that making it mandatory for students to undertake an IL plan (graded or otherwise) or attaching a percentage of a final grade to English ability in their earlier years of study may not be enough to drive students to seek help and advice later in their academic careers. Thus, the VETs and the ELSS coordinator must avidly work to find alternative means to promote the services.

On-Campus Promotion

Each year, the VETs and ELSS devote significant effort to traditional forms of campus advertising, such as tabling outside the canteen, producing a monthly e-newsletter for all students and designing flyers to be placed on bulletin boards around the various residence halls and academic buildings. Beyond this, however, the Centre has found a number of new

and creative ways to market itself to students, ideally from the first day they step onto campus.

New-staff orientation

In the last two years, the VETs, along with the ELSS Coordinator, have participated in the new staff orientation to get acquainted with other staff. Each year, the ELSS Coordinator gives a presentation introducing the services to new faculty members and stresses the importance of their involvement in the student referral process.

New-student orientation

By holding an "English Salon" during the New Student Orientation period, the ELSS is able to promote its services before the start of the academic year. The English Salon is a one-hour session run by the ELSS coordinator and the VETs, in which the services are introduced, the VETs play an English game with the students, and students are given time to ask any questions they have and introduce themselves to the VETs. Additionally, the ELSS is featured in the Lingnan Student Handbook each student receives during Orientation.

Student handbook

Each semester, the centre produces an ELSS Student Handbook, a 50-page booklet which provides students with information about the language support services and IL resources, as well as the names of the organizers, to help them manage their time. The aim of the handbook is to give students a manual to help decide what aspect of their language learning they want to improve upon in addition to giving them a few options of how to begin their language learning process. The handbook also contains consultation records and notes pages so that students can document their independent learning.

Classroom visits

In the first semester, the VETs visit every English freshman class during the first two weeks to introduce themselves personally, play a video highlighting the most popular services, distribute the ELSS Student Handbook, and advertise their social events for the semester. The classroom visits ensure that nearly all students are aware of the ELSS programmes and have some recognition of who the VETs are.

Online Presence

From the onset, the ELSS development team at CEAL (headed by the ELSS Coordinator) realised that technology was rapidly changing the educational landscape. Particularly for a centre with limits of both space and budget, the best and most progressive choice was to begin developing online resources to meet the demands of our language learners. As the Internet became ever more connected with our students, so did we.

CEAL ELSS website

The CEAL ELSS website is designed as a one-stop-shop for all English Language learning needs. Besides allowing students to connect with the Centre electronically and physically come to our door, this website offers an entire catalogue of IL materials, and learning pathways to improve specific language skills. Lingnan recently completed the Inter-Institutional (with Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong City University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and the Hong Kong Institute of Education) Collaborative Online Self-Access (ICOSA) project to develop a wide range of English language exercises focused specifically on Asian students' language needs. The ICOSA project developed over 1500 ESL and ESP exercises which are now being utilised by students and the general public. In September 2016, the website launched a real-time discussion board, which will give students an online platform to interact with the VETs and other students about English language learning.

Social media

Twenty-first century students are best reached through twenty-first century means. As such, maintaining a strong social media presence has proven necessary for our centre to make lasting connections with large groups of students.

For the ELSS, Facebook has successfully reached many key target populations. The VETs constantly promote the Facebook account via QR-codes in every printed promotional material. The ELSS maintains two Facebook accounts (one individual "Friend" & one official Page). Students who want to "friend" the centre can do so through the individual friend account, while those who do not can follow the official page with no privacy concerns.

The official Facebook page of the ELSS is a platform for the VETs and ELSS coordinator to share relevant academic posts, which promote useful websites and resources for students to use to support their language learning. This page has 741 likes at the time of this writing, and while it does reach a significant audience, it is not the centre's greatest tool.

The individual CEAL ELSS account, which operates on Facebook like any regular user, has over 3,300 friends (more than the entire current undergraduate population of the university). On this account, the VETs share regular posts (Music Monday, VETs Favourites, etc.), photos from every ELSS event, humorous and interesting videos, as well as any other information that the students might find useful. Students are able to post on this page's wall, or use Facebook Messenger to directly contact the VETs, making this not only a platform for promoting the centre, but an actual digital forum, providing distinct opportunities for self-access users. The benefit of that reach, and the instantaneous nature of communication, is immense.

Along with the Facebook pages, the ELSS connects with students through Instagram. This year alone, the ELSS Instagram followers increased from just 11 to over 140, and as the original content grows, we expect to see similarly rapid growth. On Instagram, the VETs share photos and videos, simultaneously cataloguing and promoting their many events and projects. Like any user, the ELSS can cultivate a specific aesthetic, promoting the value of English language learning and thanks to the effective ubiquity of this platform among Lingnan students, we believe it can become a valuable source of outreach.

The ELSS YouTube page, conscious of many students' preference for video over text, serves as a repository of original content designed to assist self-access users. In less than three years, the centre staff have created 65 videos, which to date have garnered over 45,000 views. The videos focus on common problem areas among students, as well as basic language skills. For example, this year the VETs created videos to teach students how to effectively edit papers, create vocabulary cards, and address common grammatical errors. More than any other social media platform, YouTube empowers independent learners. Never before has self-access been so user-friendly, offering students more choice of resources as soon as he or she completes an old one (Sherer & Shea, 2011). By maintaining the YouTube channel, and producing a wealth of original content, the ELSS seeks to contribute to the large and dynamic language learning community that YouTube contains.

Overall, social media has been a great tool to promote the services and share useful information. Through it, the ELSS is able to promote events, communicate with students, and share resources. It is evident, however that an online presence cannot replace the value of working with a VET in person, where students are afforded face to face mentorship to set outcomes and progress can established and evaluated more readily and the risk of miscommunication is lessened (Switzer, 2010). Overall, it would be best for students to combine both conventional and online resources to foster greater language learning.

Conclusion, Advice, and Suggestions

In the 2013-14 school year, before implementing the IL training component in the core courses, the academic services were used 1,713 times by students. After implementing it, attendance increased to 2,448 in 2014-15 and 3,048 in 2015-16. This reflects almost an 80% increase in three years. When looking specifically at the Drop-In Centre, the attendance rate increased by approximately 130% to nearly 1,000 visits this past academic year. This substantial rise tends to suggest that the integration of IL into the course curriculum coupled with the variety of promotional measures undertaken by the Centre seems to have had a positive impact on student attendance.

In order to continue this trend, the Centre must increase institutional awareness to ensure all departments are playing a more active role in promoting the ELSS to support students' learning (Gardner & Miller, 1997). This top-down approach focuses on not only attendance, but also student retention among 3rd and 4th year students. To supplement that goal, we have taken varied measures to foster lasting connections between our students and staff. We integrate a range of new and traditional platforms, which aim to help an even broader range of student needs.

The way students learn has changed and will continue to change, and predicting the future is never easy. New technologies, and new students, continually challenge our conventional education systems to adapt. If we have learned one thing over our young history, it is to be open to change. Although something may have worked in the past—even last semester—it may now be dated and have to be replaced. Maintaining a successful self-access centre means staying up to date on current trends, and always looking for new ways to incorporate them into the existing modes of promotion and education.

Notes on the Contributors

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