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Upcoming Events

- **Asian Conference on Language Learning (ACLL),** Kobe, Japan. April 27-29, 2018.

- **Psychology of Language Learning Conference (PLL3),** Tokyo, Japan. June, 2018.

- **Independent Learning Association (ILA) Conference,** Kobe, Japan. September 2018.

Editorial

Jo Mynard, Kanda University of International Studies, Japan.

The current issue contains five diverse papers from colleagues based in Japan, Pakistan and New Zealand. The contributions examine self access through the lenses of extensive reading, advising, study abroad, and online environments.

The first paper by **Shinobu Nakamura** from Musashi University in Japan examines the implementation of an extensive reading class in terms of effects on students' reading and listening skills. The study reveals some insights into aspects of extended reading program such as intensity, frequency and duration.

The second paper describes a study conducted by **Toshinori Yasuda** from Waseda University in Japan regarding ways to deal with trait anxiety and perfectionism. Drawing on theory and practice, the author suggests some practical skills for advisors who do not have a background in psychological counselling.

Ayesha Perveen from the Virtual University of Pakistan explores the role of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in professional development (PD). The author suggests that MOOCs have potential benefits for ongoing teacher PD in terms of language development and teaching skills and knowledge.

Melissa Huntley Omuro from the University of Shimane in Japan investigates language maintenance in Japanese study abroad alumni. In this exploratory study, the author discovered that students used digital tools and focused mainly on language input. This suggests a preference for technology-based, passive foreign language tools.

In the final paper **Qunyan Maggie Zhong** from Unitec, Institute of Technology in New Zealand provides a single case study showing how a learner's autonomy evolved in online environments while focussing on his learning needs and goals.

Acknowledgments

Notes on the editor

Jo Mynard is the founding editor of SiSAL Journal. She is a professor and the Director of the Self-Access Learning Center at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba, Japan.

Effects and Impact of Extensive Reading in Japanese University English for General Purpose Classes

Shinobu Nakamura, Musashi University, Japan

Abstract

Extensive reading is one of the language learning strategies (LLS) that has proved to have positive effects on students' English ability such as improving their reading speed, reading fluency, and grammatical accuracy. A recent study on extensive reading at a Japanese university assigned students 45 minutes to read graded readers (GR). Unfortunately, most Japanese university English for General Purpose (EGP) courses only meet once a week for 90 minutes. This study looks at ways to implement extensive reading in a typical 90-minute EGP class, and examines the extent out of class extensive reading assignment affects students' reading and listening skills. 43 non-English major university freshman students in EGP course were assigned GR in their free time over a semester. Their improvement of listening and reading skills was measured based on the two TOEIC mock tests at the beginning of the semester and the at the end of the semester. Though the results were not significant, this study led to some insights into the parameters of an effective extended reading program including intensity, frequency and duration.

この研究では 2016 年 9 月から 1 月にかけて 4 ヶ月間行われた授業外多読課題とその効果についての報告をする。多読は英語教育界では英語力を確実に伸ばす言語学習ストラテジー（Language Learning Strategy）として英語教育者及び研究者に広く認知されている。日本の大学の一般教養としての英語（English for General Purposes）の授業で多読を取り入れた成功例として西澤（2012）が週 1 回、授業内で４５分間の多読を４年間続けた研究がある。ところが、日本の多くの大学での一般教養としての英語の授業は週 1 回、９０分を３０回が主流であり、授業時間を多読に費やすことが難しい状況である。そこで多読を授業外課題として 2 週間に 1 回課し、その効果を 2016 年後期の初めと終わりで TOEIC 形式の短いテストを使って測った。２週に 1 冊を１５週間続ける多読では英語力（リーディング、リスニング）には明確な効果は出なかった。しかし、授業外多読が成果を出すために必要な期間、頻度、1 回の多読の時間についての実証実験が今後の課題であるという気づきを得ることができた。

Extensive Reading is a language learning method shown to positively affect students' English proficiency, including reading speed, general language proficiency and improved motivation toward reading (Day, n.d.). Because of the limited number of English for General Purpose (EGP) classes at the university level, the ability to successfully implement extensive reading into EGP classes is limited. Despite the fact that extensive reading (ER) has been shown to be an effective language learning strategy, some researchers point out that extensive reading is not very popular among ESL teachers because it requires a lot of resources and class time (Day &

Bamford, 1998; Gabe, 2009). For example, at my institution which is a middle-sized four-year private university in Tokyo. We offer mandatory freshman 90-minute Japanese General Education English (EGP) courses once a week for 30 weeks over two semesters in the Spring and Fall. Instructors usually choose a textbook based on the focus of EGP classes, such as reading or speaking. If they plan a reading course utilizing the textbook, most of the class time would be spent working on activities from the textbook. Therefore, it is difficult to implement extensive reading in EGP classes.

I have been teaching mandatory EGP reading courses to university first-year students for several years. My classes use a TOEIC preparation textbook for false-beginners in accordance with the curriculum requirements in our institution and are taught using a teacher-centered teaching style. However, students seemed not to be very motivated or showed little improvement on their TOEIC scores. In addition, they were lacking the basic vocabulary or grammar to comprehend short passages or short announcements. Therefore, I decided to implement ER once every two weeks as homework. A bi-weekly scheduled take-home extensive reading activity was decided on to alternate with a vocabulary quiz which was already a part of the course.

How long and how often should ER program in EGP courses be conducted?

Nishizawa and his colleagues (Nishizawa, Yoshioka, & Fukada, 2010) conducted a study measuring the effects of a long-term ER program. The program included 37 university students who participated in a four-year ER program. The students read graded readers (GR) for 45 minutes once a week for 120 weeks. In this study, the researchers concluded that ER programs should last at least two years to bring about improvement in Japanese university students' English proficiency measured by their TOEIC test scores.

In contrast, Mason and Krashen (1997) studied Japanese university students in EGP courses and observed improvement in EFL learners' English skills with only a four-month semester long extensive reading program. The experiment group read graded readers for 90 minutes once a week for a semester. The non-experiment group of students received a traditional teacher-centered English reading course. Both groups took a cloze test of a 1600-word passage with every 10 words erased. Both the experiment and non-experiment groups took the same test before and after the treatment. The average gain of test score in the experiment group was higher than the non-experiment group.

Although Nishizawa et al. (2010) suggested that the ER program should be continued for least two years, Mason and Krashen's study illustrated that a semester long weekly ER program can improve English skills.

How many words do students need to read to improve their English skills?

Though studies differ regarding the optimal number of words that should be read, they tend to agree that students need to engage in regular reading habits over extended periods of time.

Nation (2009) states that because of the nature of learning from reading, developing a successful ER program needs careful planning to take effect. Most of the vocabulary acquisition happens from reading occurred by incidentally encountering expressions repeatedly. Therefore, nearly 500,000 words per year need to be read by learners. In addition, this amount of reading has to continue over several years (p. 50). According to Nishizawa et al. (2010), students who read more than 300,000 words over four years demonstrated significant increase in their TOEIC score. In Mason and Krashen's study, though the number of words read was not reported, participants read an average of 30 books over a semester of fifteen weeks.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 48 first-year students majoring in Economics and enrolled in an EGP course at a Japanese private university in Tokyo. The students were divided into two groups by class. Five students were excluded from data analysis because of their absence on the day of the pre-test or post-test. Of the remaining 43 students, 40 students were male and three were female students. All the first-year students in their major must take a first-year general English course and an English conversation course. Right after they entered the university, they took TEAP (Test of English for Academic Purposes) as a placement test to be placed in three different levels of EGP classes. Their TEAP score ranged from 40 to 83 points which is equivalent to lower than A1 level on the CEFR. Therefore, they were placed in the lowest level EGP class.

Many students felt demotivated when it came to reading in English. They often struggled to comprehend stories even at the easiest level of graded readers and had difficulty passing online comprehension quiz.

Method

TOEIC mock tests were used as benchmarks to establish a baseline and as a post study measure. Since the course was TOEIC based General English lessons, it was reasonable to compare their reading and listening skills before and after the course. In addition, extensive reading has been attributed to English learners' vocabulary gain, and increased reading speed and comprehension (Namhee, 2017). Students were assigned to read at least six graded readers during the Fall semester of 2016 and expected to go through them at a pace of one book every two weeks. The choice of level and the titles of the books were left to students although I gave suggestions of how to choose

the appropriate level of book they would be able to enjoy reading without consulting a dictionary. Books were recorded as "read" only if students passed the corresponding online comprehension quiz. Most students enjoyed the assignment, but some students had a difficult time finishing the lowest level of Graded Reader or passing online quizzes even though they could understand the book itself. As the semester progressed, I could see two groups of students: a highly motivated and independent group and a group that had no motivation and was dependent on their classmates.

The TOEIC mock tests were included in the TOEIC preparation textbook (Tsumatori & Tahira, 2012) the participants had used in their EGP course throughout the academic year of 2016. The pre-test was conducted on the first or second day of the Fall semester as a part of needs analysis and a progress check from the Spring semester. The post-test was given as a part of their final exam. The TOEIC mock tests that the author used for this experiment included 24 listening questions and 26 reading questions. Pre- and post- tests included completely different questions. Students were asked to solve all the reading questions in 20 minutes in both pre- and post- tests. The difficulty of each test was not compared or analyzed in this study.

The graded reader books the participants read were mostly Penguin Readers, Easystarters to level 6 (200 - 3000-word level), which were available at a self-access learning center on campus. The online comprehension quizzes that they had to pass after reading each book were limited to the books that we had in the facility. Most students seemed to check out books from the self-access language learning center because they are more convenient, and online quizzes were readily available. The level and the content of the books were decided by each student.

At the beginning of the Fall semester of 2016, I instructed students on how to choose an appropriate level of graded readers so that students would not choose a book that were too challenging for them. In addition, instruction about how to take online quiz was given. Every two weeks, I downloaded the data of students' quiz result and showed them their progress in class to motivate and encourage students to keep working on the task.

Analysis

At the end of the semester, students had read zero to seven books in total. In terms of the number of words, they read zero to 37,129 words. The average number of words each student read was 8,385.

The number of students whose mock TOEIC test total score (Listening and Reading scores combined) increased before and after the ER program was 19. These students read between 5,000 words to 10,000 words or more. The total number of students whose score decreased was 23 and 1

student did not show any change. The number of words read by the students whose scores didn't improve ranged from 0 to 30,000 words.

Students' average scores decreased from pre- to post- test, dropping slightly from 21 to 20.6. When the scores were analyzed by skills, students' listening scores did not change (average 9.7) but the average reading score decreased by 0.3 points from 11.2 to 10.9.

Table 1

The Difference Between Average Pre-ER Mock TOEIC Test Score and Post ER Test Score

	(A) Pre-ER test score	(B) Post-test Score	Improvement (B)-(A)
Listening Part	9.7	9.7	0
Reading Part	11.2	10.9	-0.3
Total Score	21.0	20.6	-0.4

The chart below shows the score distribution of participants based on the number of words they had read and the gain and loss of pre- and post- test score. Students who read around 6,000 words gained up to 10 points and lost up to10 points. In addition, all the students who read more than 20,000 words lost points. Listening and reading scores were analyzed in the same method but no significant difference was observed from the total score analysis.
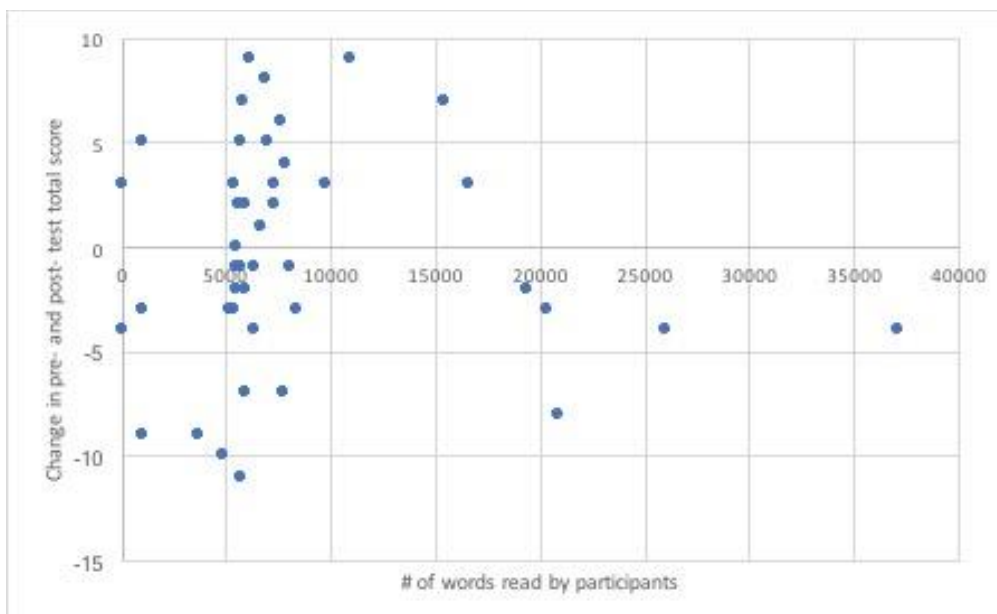

Figure 1. *Number of words read by participants and changes from post- to pre-test scores*

Conclusion

As Grabe (2009) and Day and Bamford (1998) discussed, not many English teachers are in favor of implementing ER programs in their class or curriculum since it takes time and a lot of resources. The present study investigated a short-term ER program and its effect on English proficiency of students, specifically reading and listening skills. However, assigning one take-home graded reader every two weeks for a semester did not show significant improvement in participants' test scores. A clear correlation between the number of words read and the TOEIC mock test scores change was not observed. Regardless of the number of the words students read, some students improved their scores and others did the same or worse. Students who read more words, around 20,000 to 37,000 to be exact, scored lower in the post test. Out of two students who read 0 words, one showed an improvement on their score while the other showed a decline in improvement. In this study, one GR book once every two weeks for a semester did not improve students' test scores. It would seem that the frequency, duration and intensity were not sufficient for these false beginner language learners to show significant improvements on TOEIC type of tests.

Discussion

In previous studies that successfully implemented ER in ESL/EFL classes (e.g. Nishizawa et al., 2010; Mason & Krashen, 1997), teachers monitor students conducting ER in class and provide advice and encouragement. In my study, I gave my students one or two lectures in class at the beginning of semester, but I didn't give any encouragement or advice to individual students since the program was take-home style and comprehension quiz was done online individually. Since I checked the assignment by making sure that students passed the quiz, I could not observe how easy or difficult it was for students to read a GR and pass the quiz. Additionally, in many other ER studies, researchers usually conduct interviews (Nishino, 2007) or collect their reading journal (Mason & Krashen, 1997) to see the changes in students' feelings or attitudes toward ER before and after the experiment. In this study, such a survey was not conducted; however, if I did, I could have observed the change in student motivation toward ER from a different perspective.

Moreover, participants in this study had taken once a week in-class TOEIC-related instruction for fifteen weeks. ER was not the only English input they had had during the semester, so there was a possibility of other English input being the influence of score changes.

To conclude, based on the literature related to this issue and the result from present study, three future research questions came up to my mind. How often do students need to do extensive reading to effectively improve their English skills? How intense should an ER program be? (ex.

frequency of reading) How much instruction and monitoring is needed for students to start reading independently, outside of the classroom?

From this experiment, I have learned that teachers have to commit to make the extensive reading happen in their classroom. When I tried extensive reading as a part of class for the first time, students were excited to try a new method of learning English. However, as they face the difficulty of reading a book in English, some students started to be discouraged. The ultimate purpose of extensive reading, language learners read for pleasure, seemed to be lost. When this kind of mindset occurs, instructors must not give up and find a way to encourage them to keep reading.

Notes on the contributor

Shinobu Nakamura is an Assistant Professor in the British and American Studies Department at Musashi University in Tokyo. Her research interests include English education, self-access language learning, and learner autonomy.

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Psychological Expertise Required for Advising in Language Learning: Theories and Practical Skills for Japanese EFL Learners' Trait Anxiety and Perfectionism

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Abstract

This study aims to introduce the psychological expertise required for advising in language learning (ALL) both in theoretical and practical aspects, focusing on two psychological factors that could frequently cause problems in language learning (i.e., trait anxiety and perfectionism). The first section explains theoretical aspects and, based on its explanations and the results of case studies on Japanese EFL learners, the second section suggests practical skills to deal with the problems caused by those two factors. Although previous language learning studies have focused mainly on state anxiety, the theoretical aspect emphasizes the importance of trait anxiety in ALL, and three kinds of actual skills are suggested: (1) setting a clear framework, (2) applying beneficial aspects of trait anxiety, and (3) viewing trait anxiety objectively. As for perfectionism, the theoretical explanation identifies areas some ALL advisors might easily misunderstand, and two kinds of practical skills are introduced: (1) balancing positive and negative perfectionism and (2) applying the principles of cognitive behavior therapy. Lastly, but most importantly, since advisors are not necessarily trained psychological counselors, they have to be careful about how they use psychological expertise. To avoid erroneous decisions, it is important to maintain client-consultant relationships with veteran ALL advisors or certified psychological counselors.

Keywords: psychological expertise, advising in language learning, trait anxiety, perfectionism, Japanese EFL learner

Advising in language learning (ALL) is an approach that promotes learner autonomy and meets each individual learner's needs (Carson & Mynard, 2012). Although it is a relatively new area of applied linguistics, some basic skills and strategies required for ALL practice have been developed based on specific principles and theories (Carson & Mynard, 2012; Kato & Mynard, 2016; Kelly, 1996). Above all, as Carson and Mynard (2012) illustrate, some principles adopted from humanistic counseling are indispensable for the professional practice. The following features of ALL also reveal this importance: (1) ALL usually occurs as a face-to-face and one-on-one session between a learner and an advisor (Carson & Mynard, 2012), (2) dialogues play a central role in ALL (Mynard, 2012), and (3) an advisor sometimes gains entry deep within a learner's inner psychological world, which includes his or her motivations and emotions (Carson & Mynard, 2012; Tassinari & Ciekanski, 2013; Yamashita, 2015). Additionally, many second language acquisition (SLA)

studies have focused attention on the psychological aspects of language learners (Dörnyei, 2005; Skehan, 1989). Most recently, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) discussed various kinds of influencing factors such as motivation, language aptitude, learning styles, learning strategies, personality, anxiety, and creativity.

As stated above, some ALL sessions run smoothly with the focus on learners' psychological aspects. This means that advisors need to develop some psychological expertise as part of their skills to deal with problems caused by psychological factors. Furthermore, the following frequently seen situations also reveal the necessity of the expertise: (1) each language learner has, to a greater or lesser degree, some kind of psychological problem as a person, (2) these problems may sometimes emerge in an ALL session as they are often inseparable from language learning, and (3) advisors should occasionally explore such problems through the session. Although some skills and strategies in ALL practice are already based on psychological findings, other invaluable expertise still remains to be adopted.

The present study suggests psychological expertise required for ALL advisors both in theoretical and practical aspects, focusing on two important psychological factors (trait anxiety and perfectionism), which might cause some problems in language learning. Hence, first, theoretical explanations are provided based on previous studies, followed by some suggestions for practical skills to handle problems caused by those two factors, putting together pertinent theories and data from case studies.

Incidentally, most advisors are not trained psychological counselors. This has two important implications. First, while expertise in learners' psychological aspects is quite useful as stated above, not all advising sessions are related to serious psychological problems. Therefore, it is not a requirement for the job. Second, advisors, as non-trained counselors, have to be careful about how they use psychological expertise, or they might find themselves in serious situations that could leave the learner with lasting psychological damage. For example, because some advisors try to use the learner's anxiety to benefit the learner (e.g., as motivation for subsequent learning processes), they may want to discuss detailed episodes of anxiety. However, this dialogue itself might be a traumatic experience to the learner if the advisors do not have the appropriate skills to handle anxiety. Thus, to avoid erroneous decisions, it is important to maintain a client-consultant relationship with veteran ALL advisors or certified psychological counselors.

Theories

As a part of psychological expertise, this section introduces theoretical explanations of trait anxiety and perfectionism based on previous research in psychology and language learning. The theories will also help enhance understanding about the subsequent practical skills section.

Trait anxiety

In psychology, the concept of anxiety has been separated into two inter-related characteristics: *state* and *trait* anxiety (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970). While the former refers to "the transient, moment-to-moment experience of anxiety as an emotional reaction to the current situation," the latter is explained as "a stable predisposition to become anxious in a cross-section of situations" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 177). In other words, while state anxiety focuses on the *situation* that causes people to become anxious, trait anxiety indicates individual differences in the extent to which a *person* can be anxious.

Interestingly, most previous research in language learning has mainly focused on the situational aspects of anxiety ever since Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) suggested the concept of *foreign language anxiety*. For example, Horwitz (2001) viewed language anxiety as a relatively independent factor, displaying only low correlations with general trait anxiety, and MacIntyre (1999) defined it as "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (p. 27). Furthermore, in Horwitz's (2010) review of research on language anxiety, there were not many studies that focused on trait anxiety. These viewpoints are indispensable as they successfully distinguish language anxiety as a situational concept that occurs in language learning from more general anxiety based on each individual's personality. However, on the other hand, there surely are some language learners who experience trait anxiety, whose influence on language learning cannot be ignored. Above all, because trait anxiety has been regarded as a personality factor (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), it can emerge as a core identity of each language learner during ALL sessions. For example, if a learner is extremely sensitive to evaluation from others in daily life, trait anxiety will also influence his or her classroom learning with other students. It might then serve as strong motivation in language learning, when he or she tries to overcome the personality factor. On the other hand, it could also serve as a negative reason by letting him or her avoid the learning process. In order to handle these practical issues, advisors should obtain more knowledge about trait anxiety.

Perfectionism

As for the second factor, perfectionism, there are some key points regarding how it is defined and conceptualized (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). The present article explains the concept based on the Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R), which is a well-developed and frequently used scale to measure perfectionism (Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001). The APS-R includes three subcomponents: *discrepancy, high standards*, and *order* (Slaney et al., 2001). Discrepancy is defined as the subjective perspective of the non-accomplishment of personal goals and objectives, including such measurement items as, "My performance rarely measures up to my standards" and "I am hardly ever satisfied with my performance." High standards refer to a tendency toward high self-achievement and include such items as, "I try to do my best at everything I do" and "If you don't expect much out of yourself, you will never succeed." Order is defined as the tendency to prefer one's own work and includes such items as, "I am an orderly person" and "I think things should be put away in their place."[1] Based on these three subcomponents, the first half of this section introduces two points ALL advisors might misunderstand, while the second half explains why psychological expertise with regard to perfectionism is needed for ALL advisors.

The first point that ALL advisors could easily misinterpret is that perfectionism does not necessarily mean a person does things perfectly. As can be understood by the discrepancy factor, some perfectionists set unattainably high standards. For example, if learners are obsessed with having native-like abilities as a language learning goal, although they cannot attain it due to its difficulty, this obsession possibly indicates typical perfectionism in language learning. In other words, perfectionism does not only mean attainment of perfection, but also includes a psychological tendency to strive for perfection. The latter should be emphasized, particularly in language learning, as some studies have reported that such a tendency has negative influences on language performance (Fujio, 2010; Kang, 2006; Pishghadam & Akhondpoor, 2011).

The second point is that perfectionism has both positive and negative aspects. In an oft-cited early paper, perfectionism is separated into *normal* perfectionism and *neurotic* perfectionism (Hamachek, 1978). The former is defined as, "striving for reasonable and realistic standards that leads to a sense of self-satisfaction and enhanced self-esteem," while the latter is "a tendency to strive for excessively high standards and is motivated by fears of failure and concern about disappointing others" (Flett & Hewitt, 2002, p. 11). Referring to the APS-R, the two types of perfectionism are distinguished from each other based mainly on the discrepancy score (Nakano, 2009). Thus, if learners are often satisfied with their

accomplishment of personal goals they are normal perfectionists, while if they are usually frustrated with their self-perceived accomplishment in their language learning, they could be neurotic perfectionists.

The latter half of this section describes two reasons why psychological expertise for perfectionism is needed, referring to the previous studies in language learning. There is a dearth of literature on the relationships between perfectionism and language learning (Flett, Hewitt, Su, & Flett, 2016). In addition, two types of biased viewpoints have been identified in the literature. First, most of the studies have focused on the influences of perfectionism on second language (L2) performance (e.g., accuracy or fluency in L2 speech; Fujio, 2010; Kang, 2006; Pishghadam & Akhondpoor, 2011). However, there are very few studies on the relationship between perfectionism and autonomous behavior, which most ALL programs try to pursue (e.g., goal setting or learning strategy selection). Thus, some advisors might suffer from the difficulties caused by perfectionism if they do not have sufficient knowledge.

Second, previous research seems to have exclusively indicated the negative consequences of perfectionism. As stated above, perfectionism could also work as a positive force in language learning. For example, when learners set a realistic learning goal and achieve it perfectly, they can become proficient learners with high self-esteem. Therefore, in ALL practice, advisors may sometimes have to accept learners' perfectionism as part of their core character and should be knowledgeable about using its positive aspects to enhance language learning. For these two reasons, it is important to discuss the psychological expertise necessary in knowing how to handle perfectionism.

Practical Skills: Suggestions from Case Studies

This section suggests practical skills for dealing with trait anxiety and perfectionism that could be useful in actual ALL service. It introduces two case studies, the results of which are interpreted based on the theories explained above to suggest practical skills.

Methodology

Context. The ALL service took place at a four-year university in Japan. The university does not have official self-access learning centers that are open to all students, but some of the faculties have started their own ALL services. The ALL service in this study was developed by the researcher in a faculty that did not offer any ALL services. The researcher was an advisor, who visited some English classes and explained the ALL service in order to

recruit learners. He clearly mentioned that although the ALL service would be offered as part of a research project, it was designed to maximize the benefit to each language learner. His explanation also included the fact that while the target language was English, the ALL service would be offered in Japanese. The total number of 162 students who were interested in attending the ALL service voluntarily completed an application form. From among the 65 students who could exchange several email messages with the researcher about their motivation to voluntarily participate in the ALL service, 20 learners from diverse backgrounds with regard to their majors, gender, and grades were finally selected by the researcher. The learners were not rewarded for participating in the research because the researcher wanted to avoid motivating them to learn English just for a reward. They all provided informed consent to participate in the research project. After all the learners completed the ALL service, two learners who seemed to have the characteristics of trait anxiety and perfectionism were selected for this case study.

      Participants. The participants comprised two learners of English and one advisor, all of whom were native speakers of Japanese. The learners were typical Japanese EFL learners. Although they had English classes in elementary school, one attended just a few times a year and the other attended twice a month. Thus, the amount of English input they had received in elementary school was quite limited, and they only started to learn English earnestly in junior high school. They had also never been abroad before participating in the ALL service.

      Learner X (indicated as X: Trait anxiety). X was a female first-year non-English major who was aware of her trait anxiety. Initially, she joined the ALL service saying, "*I get very nervous when I try to have oral communication in English.*" However, as the ALL session progressed, she said, "*I don't really like to communicate with others even in Japanese,*" and "*I think I am usually too sensitive to others' evaluation in various situations.*" These features can be interpreted as trait anxiety, which can be applied to more than just her English learning. According to the placement test conducted in the university,[2] her Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) Listening & Reading score was equivalent to the range of 500 to 550,[3] which could be classified as A2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Colloquium on the English Four Skills Qualification Examination, 2017).

      Learner Y (indicated as Y: Perfectionism). Y was a male first-year non-English major who occasionally strived for high-standard achievements. He was aware of his perfectionism, which was revealed mainly in his learning goals and strategies. For example, he made the following statements: "*In listening practice I usually want to listen to audio CDs*

thoroughly, including word by word sounds, although I know I can't follow the speed of the audio in that way," "*When I check model answers of a writing textbook, I usually try to remember all the paraphrased expressions introduced,*" and "*I am sometimes not satisfied unless I analyze the detailed part of grammar rules deeply.*" In addition to these features, once he started to learn English, he spent considerable time on his learning, as he tended to go through the lengthy learning processes outlined above. As a result, he sometimes took a long time to start studying, because he felt reluctant imagining the cognitive burden of his subsequent "perfect" learning process. His TOEIC Listening & Reading score was equivalent to the range of 575 to 625 as well[3] (B1 in the CEFR).

Advisor (indicated as A). The advisor/researcher obtained an MA in psychology and worked as a psychological counselor. After studying abroad for one year, he changed his major to applied linguistics and English education and completed another MA in education. The advisor developed and conducted the ALL service in this study after participating in advisor training programs.

ALL service. The ALL service in this study was conducted one-on-one in person with individual participants and the advisor, and all the advising dialogues and tasks were carried out in Japanese, the first language (L1) of both. To maintain confidentiality, it was conducted in a dedicated interview room. The service comprised seven 60–90 minute sessions and took place twice a week. In each session, the advisor wrote down main ideas raised in ongoing dialogues and tasks on a whiteboard to share them with each participant more easily. Incidentally, while there were several useful advising tools such as questionnaires, visual aids, and activity sheets (e.g., Kato & Mynard, 2016), the present study viewed a *task* as a sequence displaying the learners' engagement, introduced by a specific tool. For example, a questionnaire that investigates each learner's personality aspects is still just a tool. On the other hand, advisors may provide instructions on how to use the questionnaire, ask learners to respond to it and share their results, and encourage them to monitor and control the influences of personality on their language learning. In this study, this is when the series of learners' actions or exercises related to the questionnaire became a task.

In this ALL service, while the advisor allocated each specific task in a particular session, flexible dialogues in line with each participant's needs still played a central role. For example, although learners were usually required to share the results of the personality questionnaire in the first session, the dialogues, if necessary, could still be flexible enough to go beyond topics related to the questionnaire. Furthermore, each session was designed such

that there would be sufficient time for free dialogues that were not related to any tasks. Therefore, the ALL service can be regarded as semi-structured. Table 1 shows each task with a brief explanation of its purpose and Table 2 shows the session number during which each task was conducted. The semi-structured allocation was based on Vygotsky's (1978) idea of scaffolding and empirical data from a pilot study. The goal of the semi-structured manner was to provide learners with the maximum benefit from the limited number of sessions. For example, as shown in Table 2, in the first session, learners completed their learning goals and questionnaires, which provided them with a trigger to identify the direct or indirect factors impacting their language learning. In the second session, they thought more about the effects of indirect factors through a task called "thinking about self." In the third session, their ideas about direct and indirect factors were summarized into a meta-view called the "mapping self."

Table 1. Tasks Conducted in the ALL Service

Task	Purpose
Learning goal	To help learners set their own long-term and short-term learning goals
Learning log	To let learners log their actual learning (content, time, and reflection)
Questionnaire	To help learners know their own metacognitive abilities, self-esteem, cognitive styles, personality, willingness to communicate (WTC), motivation, and beliefs as language learners
Thinking about self	To help learners think more deeply about individual factors influencing their own learning
Mapping self	To help learners gain a meta-view of their own learning by connecting direct factors (e.g., learning goals, learning strategies) with indirect factors (e.g., personality, environmental factors)
Reviewing learning strategies	To help learners use various types of language learning strategies
Thinking about well-being	To help learners think about their well-being through English learning

Table 2. Tasks Allocated in Each Session in a Semi-Structured Manner

Session	Allocated tasks
1	Learning goal, Learning log, Questionnaire (pre)
2	Learning goal, Learning log, Thinking about self
3	Learning goal, Learning log, Mapping self
4	Learning goal, Learning log, Reviewing learning strategies
5	Learning goal, Learning log, Thinking about well-being (the first step)
6	Learning goal, Learning log, Thinking about well-being (the second step)
7	Learning goal, Learning log, Questionnaire (post)

Analytic procedures (reliability and validity). The researcher implemented four practices to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. First, he triangulated the data by using various methods of collection. The main data were the recorded dialogues of each session. Two additional data sources consisted of each learner's handwritten or typed responses to each task and the notes on the whiteboard written by the advisor during each session.

Second, to check the reliability of what the learners mentioned in the sessions, the advisor asked them to respond on a 10-point scale questionnaire after the last session (1 = *no* to 10 = *yes*). For the questions, "Could you go through the ALL processes without lying about your true feeling?" and "Could you tell the advisor what you feel and think as it really is?" both X and Y provided a rating of 8, while for the question, "Did you trust the advisor?" X provided a rating of 10 and Y provided a rating of 9. Considering that they voluntarily completed all seven sessions, it was likely that each participant had built a good rapport with the advisor. In conclusion, these responses could serve as evidence for the reliability of what each participant mentioned in the ALL sessions.

Third, the researcher created a data matrix based on each participant's raw data. Developing a matrix is generally regarded as a useful way to find patterns in raw qualitative data (Sato, 2008). Additionally, Sakurai (2005) suggests an important criterion for the validity of qualitative data stating that each participant's story or behavior at a particular point should be consistent with those at another point. In order to check the validity, the researcher created a matrix in which the columns displayed a topic that was raised during the ALL sessions (e.g., trait anxiety and perfectionism) and the rows indicated each session number (1 to 7). From this it became apparent that X's trait anxiety and Y's perfectionism were consistent topics throughout the sessions.

Fourth, the researcher discussed interpretations of the data with colleagues. Qualitative research should appropriately represent the meaning and the world in which people actually live. Therefore, interpretations should not be based only on one researcher's idea (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994). Accordingly, the researcher first developed his own interpretations and, second, asked his colleagues including a professor, English teachers, and postgraduate students who majored in applied linguistics and English education to engage in a brainstorming session about the researcher's interpretations. Based on this discussion, the researcher modified his original interpretations. The practical skills suggested in this paper are based on these modified interpretations.

Suggested practical skills for trait anxiety

Setting a clear framework. The first skill for trait anxiety is to set a framework and clearly demarcate the area in which each ALL service could work. For several reasons, ALL sessions sometimes progress beyond the scope of English learning. Some learners might heavily rely on advisors in a comfortable environment, based on the good rapport between them in a dedicated interview room. Additionally, some advisors might delve too deeply into the private lives and inner beliefs of learners while tackling problems such as trait anxiety, because these problems could occur not only in English learning but also in their daily lives. However, if learners depend excessively on advisors, it may violate the ALL goal of creating an autonomous learner. Moreover, another concern is that ALL advisors who are not trained psychologists are likely not qualified to respond to such sensitive topics beyond the scope of English learning. Therefore, it is very important to set a framework for the topic areas that can be handled within each ALL service. In other words, learners and advisors should reach a consensus about the kinds of matters that fall within the scope of ALL, and advisors should make as much effort as possible to avoid straying beyond that framework during each session.

According to the following statements, X seemed to have relatively high trait anxiety in a cross-section of situations. She did not like communicating in either English or Japanese and usually experienced a high level of fear of negative evaluation from people around her.

X: *"After all, I don't really like to communicate with others even in Japanese."*
   "When I speak in English, the situation gets even worse."
X: *"I usually feel afraid of betraying someone's expectation."*
   "I feel that type of fear more strongly when learning English, since it is my favorite subject. I think others expect me to show high performance in English."
X: *"When I remember my past failure, not only in English classes, the memory rushes into my mind as a flashback… my mind is filled with the embarrassing experience."*

Her words also reveal that trait anxiety had a great impact on her English learning as well as on other situations. Therefore, the advisor tried to cover this issue in the ALL service. To avoid going beyond the scope of topics that the ALL service can handle, the advisor set a framework using the following metaphor:

> A: "*Please imagine a kettle filled with boiling water. That is your feeling of anxiety. Sometimes it can be explosive when you have a flashback of a past failure. It will be the role of psychological counseling to keep the temperature down to 80 degrees Celsius. On the other hand, this ALL service can put a lid, called 'confidence', on the anxiety improving your English skills, although it cannot directly lower the temperature.*"

X accepted the framework represented in the metaphor without any complaints.

It is a very important responsibility for advisors to keep dialogues and tasks within the framework. In other words, advisors should have a better understanding about the boundary between what they should and should not do or what they can and cannot do. They should consult other professionals if they feel they are crossing the boundary into the area that they should not or cannot enter. Thus, advisors need to maintain a client-consultant relationship with other experts, such as veteran advisors and psychological counselors. As a prominent example, if advisors notice very high trait anxiety that could have a fatal impact on the learner's daily life, they would need to refer him or her to a psychological counselor.

Applying beneficial aspects of trait anxiety. Anxiety has both beneficial and inhibitory values (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The second skill is to apply the beneficial aspects of trait anxiety to English learning. Among learners who show high trait anxiety, some keep focusing on the anxiety possibly because it is an important core emotion both with regard to their English learning and their entire life. Therefore, one of the important roles of advisors is to think about how to apply the core emotion in more beneficial ways.

Before suggesting practical skills, a prerequisite should be emphasized here. As trait anxiety is a core emotion, advisors should recognize their learners' experience with anxiety. In other words, advisors should respect the meaning learners are trying to explore with regard to their own anxiety and the efforts they are making to deal with the emotion. Additionally, advisors should help learners find a positive use of the core emotion and encourage them to take responsibility for this process. Considering X's case, the meaning that she found for her trait anxiety was that it was an emotion she should overcome. Thus, trait anxiety strongly motivated her to engage in actual English learning processes. The following quote she made at the beginning of the ALL service represents her determination:

> X: "*I will have to take an English oral communication class in the next semester and I know that I will surely feel anxious in that class. I really want to overcome my anxiety before the class starts.*"

The advisor tried to respect this determination as much as possible because he thought it reflected a very important meaning she had in relation to her trait anxiety. In addition, as stated above, her trait anxiety could have been strongly influenced by her relationships with others. Based on these features, the discussion below divides her English learning into two parts and suggests more effective ways to make her trait anxiety work positively.

The first refers to the learning process that X could go through alone without experiencing strong trait anxiety. In such a learning process, advisors may have to actively help her seek out more effective learning strategies that would fulfill her desire to overcome trait anxiety. Actually, in X's case, she was able to use various types of learning strategies quite actively, which included reading aloud, shadowing, and vocabulary building in a TOEIC textbook, and watching TED Talks[4] and animation movies. She learned English almost every day during her 91 days of participation in the ALL service, missing only four days. Her average learning time was 5 hours 1 minute per week, according to her learning log.

The second part was the learning process with others, on which trait anxiety had a powerful impact. While X was actively engaged in the first type of English learning, she remained hesitant to tackle oral English communication. In such a situation, advisors may have to take a different approach. With regard to the second type of learning process, this section introduces her efforts and achievement, which occurred from the fourth through the seventh session.

The fourth session:

X: "*I think that I have to tackle actual oral English communication if I really want to improve it. The learning processes that I currently go through are like swimming practice on land. I think I need to look for an opportunity for actual communication.*"

"*Though I would still feel anxious, I could relax a little more when I am in one-on-one conversation.*"

As a response to X's comments above, the advisor suggested demo lessons of a one-on-one online English conversation school via Skype.

The fifth session:

X: "*I created my account for the online conversation school, but I am still hesitant to try the demo lesson.*"

The sixth session:

X: "*I booked the demo lesson once, but I canceled it immediately because I got really anxious.*"

"*So, here I want to promise you to take at least one lesson by the next ALL session.*"

The seventh session:

X took a demo lesson as promised and said,

X: "*Before taking this ALL service, I didn't even imagine that I could take a lesson for English conversation. Although I was really distressed during the lesson, I am now very happy as I successfully experienced an online conversation.*"

Unlike the first process, the advisor waited for her to raise the topic of the Skype lesson herself, because he believed that it would be a more effective approach in such a case. More specifically, he believed that X should be responsible for her own decision about the lesson and understood that she may need a long time to overcome her anxiety. When she stated in the sixth session that she promised to take at least one lesson, the advisor was deeply moved. X could finally take the demo lesson and successfully boost her self-confidence, putting "the lid" on her anxiety.

The common finding in both the first and second process is that advisors should not regard anxiety as a negative feeling that has to be removed immediately. Learners should sometimes retain their anxiety to use as a driving force for an actual learning process (the first process), and they should acknowledge their anxiety as an emotion that brings a feeling of accomplishment and progress when they successfully overcome it (the second process).

Viewing trait anxiety objectively. The third skill allows learners to form an objective view of their trait anxiety, which can help control them more appropriately. This

section discusses one of those skills that learners could use relatively easily, based on X's case.

One of X's problems related to her trait anxiety was that she was sometimes upset when she was called on in her English class:

> X: "*In my English class, I am obsessed with making sure that my answer is correct when I am going to be called.*"
> "*When what I didn't expect happens… for example the teacher skips the student before me, I sometimes can't say anything due to my anxiety.*"

For this, the advisor suggested an "anxiety indicator" that included a 10-point self-evaluation scale. The advisor gave her the following instruction, "*Evaluate the extent of your anxiety right before you are called in English class* (1 = *not anxious at all* to 10 = *very anxious*), *and remember that it is O.K. if you make a mistake when your anxiety is over 7.*" X kept the "anxiety indicator" in her pencil case and used it during class. She told the advisor in the sixth session:

> X: "*Thanks to the anxiety indicator, I feel less nervous and more calm than before.*"
> "*I think I can see my subjective panic more objectively while I quantify the extent of my anxiety.*"

This episode implies that a simple self-evaluation scale could be useful to keep learners' subjective psychological reactions at a distance. In X's case, she could successfully stay away from her subjective upsetting feelings and, as a result, it seemed to alleviate her strong trait anxiety.

Suggested practical skills for perfectionism

Balancing positive and negative perfectionism. As mentioned in the theories, perfectionism has both positive and negative aspects. If learners strive toward reasonable standards for their own goal attainment they will probably be successful as well as confident, while if they have a tendency to strive for excessively high standards, neurotic perfectionism would have a negative impact on their learning processes. The situation would be much simpler if all learners easily became the positive perfectionist, but that is not the case.

Therefore, the first important skill is to help learners reach the most balanced point between both aspects.

Y recognized himself as a perfectionist, stating, "*I have very black-and-white thinking,*" and "*Maybe, I am a perfectionist.*" This section introduces two problems he demonstrated in the ALL sessions to describe the advisor's attitude toward perfectionism and suggest both direct and indirect types of skills. In the first problem, the advisor noticed that Y seemed to be affected by high, somewhat unrealistic, standards, which had a negative impact particularly on his learning goals and strategies. It would not be too far-fetched to say that he was not very good at tolerating ambiguity and stopping at the point of balance. For example, he said:

> Y: "*In listening practice I usually want to listen to audio CDs thoroughly, including word by word sounds, although I know I can't follow the speed of the audio in that way.*"
> "*I am sometimes not satisfied unless I analyze the detailed part of grammar rules deeply.*"
> "*I try to transcribe model answers in my writing textbook to memorize new words and phrases, but I am obsessed with repeatedly writing it down, even when I find just a few parts that I failed to memorize.*"

With regard to the second problem, he also had a tendency to spend too much time once he began learning English, as he usually wanted to undergo the thorough learning processes described above. He told the adviser:

> Y: "*I cannot be motivated to learn English when I don't have enough time.*"
> "*I don't think two hours are enough.*"

However, there were not many opportunities for Y to use such a large block of time. Thus, his decreased motivation did not allow him to begin his learning smoothly.

For these problems, the advisor tried to keep the following two attitudes: (1) accepting his perfectionism as part of his core identity, and (2) focusing mainly on excessively high standards that should be changed into more realistic ones. Based on these attitudes, the advisor tried to take direct and indirect actions to solve Y's problems. For

example, as for how to use the writing textbook mentioned above, the advisor directly and clearly told Y:

> Y: "*I would have to acknowledge that I know three times is enough, but I cannot help but write repeatedly when I find mistakes.*"
> "*As a result, I sometimes cannot cover other parts I have to do.*"
> A: "*That is a very important point you should consider. If you understand that you usually experience this result, I strongly recommend that you stop after three times.*"

In addition, he tended to spend a great deal of time because he usually wanted to learn thoroughly once he began the process. After some tasks in the ALL service, he became aware that "*I should quickly start what I should do using my spare time more effectively.*" Then, Y and the advisor worked together to find learning strategies that Y could use even in a small amount of spare time, and they created his schedule as concretely as possible.

Of these two attitudes, the former serves to illustrate that the learner's excessively high standards were challenged directly, while the latter indicates that the standards were redirected toward a more balanced point in an indirect manner.

Consequently, these efforts have slightly but surely changed Y's balance of perfectionism. For example, in the sixth session, he said:

> Y: "*Now, I think I can partly be realistic instead of being a perfectionist, if I try.*"
> "*I can avoid focusing too much on details when I listen to audio CDs.*"
> "*I can do my homework more quickly than I thought if I try to use my spare time.*"

On the other hand, he also told the advisor:

> Y: "*I cannot help but check unknown words. If I don't find them on my dictionary, I still get too distracted with those words.*"
> "*I still like the perfectionistic style of the learning processes, as I can become confident with my English on that way.*"

As revealed by these statements, he still had some perfectionistic tendencies, as it was one of his core identities. The advisor remembers Y's air of both confidence and self-degradation when he said, "*I think I am really meticulous.*"

Applying the principles of cognitive behavior therapy. The last part of the discussion introduces a principle from a psychotherapeutic method that could be useful in ALL practice, namely cognitive behavior therapy (CBT). In simple terms, CBT is based on the idea that if people change their thinking, their emotions and behavior will also change. More specifically, it is based on the "cognitive model, which hypothesizes that people's emotions, behaviors, and physiology are influenced by their perception of events" (Beck, 2011, p. 30). In other words, "[t]he way people feel emotionally and the way they behave are associated with how they interpret and think about a situation" (Beck, 2011, p. 31). One type of those perceptions, an evaluative thinking mode called *automatic thoughts* often arises rapidly and briefly, and people most likely accept these thoughts uncritically, believing that they are true (Beck, 2011). For example, after a learner develops his or her English learning plan by listing all the things to be done, he or she might conclude that "it is impossible for me to finish all of them" as an automatic thought. However, if the learner stops in the middle of the thought and becomes aware that "I will be okay if I walk through the list one by one. That is the way I have taken in the past similar situations," he or she could modify his or her perceptions of the event and offset the effects of automatic thoughts. As a result, the learner may be able to step into a more effective learning process. The basic principle of CBT works for modifying the interpretations contaminated by automatic thoughts.

As stated in early findings about language learners' beliefs, each learner has a different set of beliefs (Horwitz, 1988), which sometimes become powerful automatic thoughts. Hence, ALL advisors should provide necessary modification of each learner's interpretation if it is affected by such beliefs.

Y's comment, "*I want to become a native-like English user,*" indicated that the native-like norm stayed in his mind as a distinctive belief about his English learning.

Y's native-like norm may be influenced by the English education he received in Japan, as it views native English as the model of a good English user. However, in addition to that, Y's perfectionism drove him into an automatic thought that led him to believe blindly in native-like English. Because the norm could motivate him to study harder, the advisor had to ensure not to deny it without thinking about its advantage. However, in Y's case, as the norm

possibly interacted with his perfectionism, it seemed to work as an unrealistically high standard for his learning goal. The following statements can be regarded as evidence of this:

> Y: "*I usually want to listen to audio CDs thoroughly, including word by word sounds.*"
> "*When I check model answers of a writing textbook, I usually try to remember all the paraphrased expressions introduced.*"

Prompted by this, the advisor showed him another possibility to move the balance from a negative point toward a more positive one.

When Y raised the topic of native-like English in the dialogue, the advisor introduced the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). ELF is defined as a "'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth, 1996, p. 240). The concept of ELF indicates that native-like English does not always have to be the ultimate learning goal. In fact, as English becomes an international language, the systematicity, creativity, and legitimacy of ELF has been recognized as another important norm challenging native speakers' English (Park & Wee, 2011). The advisor tried to form an alternative perception in Y's mind by indicating, "*Native-like English is not your entire learning goal, but rather a part of it,*" which could replace his automatic thought.

Eventually, Y said:

> Y: "*Since I am Japanese, my English pronunciation might not necessarily be perfect.*"
> "*Probably, the most important thing is to convey what I want to say instead of being obsessed with the detail of the English language.*"
> "*After I have done the ALL sessions, I now think I should be more relaxed instead of trying to reach native-like English. I am happy to feel that way.*"

Needless to say, the concept of ELF should not provide plausible reasons for giving up on making effort. Advisors should be careful of this potential negative effect, as ELF is sometimes regarded as an acceptance of lower English proficiency. Reflecting Y's case, one thing to be emphasized here is that while advisors should carefully assess whether the norm of native-like English has a negative impact, they also should be careful to not demotivate learners from working harder.

Conclusions and Future Directions

The present study discusses the psychological expertise required for ALL advisors, focusing on trait anxiety and perfectionism. As Carson and Mynard (2012) illustrate, principles derived from humanistic counseling are necessary for ALL professional practice, which is quite different from the traditional style of language learning. As ALL sessions include processes that can provide a deep understanding of learners, some general topics can emerge beyond the scope of language learning. Although ALL advisors should set a clear framework that can keep learners and advisors within the appropriate boundaries, advisors should have broad knowledge of a wide range of topics outside the scope of language learning. For example, they might need to have extensive knowledge about psychological group dynamics such as the family relationships of learners, social issues that concern the current young generation, and political issues such as the influence of the Japanese government's Course of Study on English education. ALL is a relatively new area that is expected to become more sophisticated. Therefore, researchers and practitioners should work together and have further discussions on the expertise that ALL advisors should develop.

Notes

1. The measurement items introduced here are cited from Nakano (2009), who developed a standardized Japanese version of the APS-R, as the participants of this study were typical Japanese EFL learners.

2. The placement test consists of four sections to evaluate English knowledge and listening ability that are frequently used in situations such as daily life, school life, and business settings. The first to fourth sections evaluate the followings: (1) knowledge of vocabulary, (2) knowledge and use of phrasal expressions, (3) listening ability to understand the main idea, and (4) listening ability to understand specific information, respectively.

3. The TOEIC is "an English language proficiency test for people whose native language is not English. It measures the everyday English skills of people working in an international environment" (Educational Testing Service, 2013, p. 2). As the placement test measures different English performance than that assessed by the TOEIC Listening & Reading, the converted scores should still be regarded as rough indications of English proficiency.

4. According to the official website, "TED is a nonpartisan nonprofit devoted to spreading

ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks." The website archives a large amount of movie presentations on various topics, which could be useful for learning English.

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Role of MOOCs in Pakistani English Teachers' Professional Development

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Abstract

The paper takes up one of the least researched areas in Pakistan i.e. the role of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for professional development in general and the capacity building of English teachers in particular. Although MOOCs are getting popular in Pakistan, the majority is still unaware of the concept especially those who teach in traditional face-to-face mode. As many second language University teachers have not attended any MOOCs, convenience sampling was used for data collection. Only 32 respondents completed the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire on Cronbach alpha was 0.83. The results show that the number of Pakistani English teachers responding to the survey who attended MOOCs either partially or completely, was very low. Therefore, of course, the number of MOOCs attended by each was also very low. However, whoever attended and whichever MOOCs were attended, the teachers found them quite beneficial for their overall professional development, be it language improvement or teaching skill set development. The researcher recommends the use of MOOCs in classrooms which is only possible if more English Language Teaching MOOCs are available and teachers attend a variety of MOOCs. The researcher also highlights the need to develop Pakistani MOOCs with a national flavour.

Key words: MOOCs, teachers, professional development, capacity building, second language acquisition

A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is an online course available for a large number of participants and is open for all without any specific enrolment procedure or fee requirements. However, in order to obtain a verified certificate, participants need to pay in some instances like Coursera MOOCs which was not the case in the past as MOOCs began as an overall free education initiative. However, a parallel free version without a certificate still exists. In spite of some developments that have taken place so far, MOOCs are a relatively new phenomenon in online education with only nine years of history. With the first MOOC initiation in 2008, they became more popular from 2012 onwards. The New York Times declared 2012 as the MOOC year (Pappano, 2012). MOOCs provide the opportunity for free education to anyone anywhere in the world. Beginning with the initial endeavours with Connectivist MOOCs known as CMOOCs, Harvard and MIT X MOOCs have also been established. Whereas CMOOCs are connectivist in nature, providing students with opportunities to connect with each other and construct knowledge themselves, X MOOCs are offered in a traditional way with video lectures, assessment activities and even discussion

fora built in one Learning Management System (LMS) type platform. Recently with the expansion in the platforms offering MOOCs, special consideration is being rendered to the development of an improved instructional design for MOOCs. Although MOOCs were originally aimed to support those students who do not afford formal university education, mostly professionals made use of the opportunity. A recent study by Seaton, Coleman, Daries, & Chuang (2014) contends that most of the X MOOCs participants are teachers.

Teachers' professional development is one of the most important elements for achieving effective teaching-learning processes. It not only helps teachers in their capacity building and improves their teaching practices (Gore & Ladwig, 2006) but also facilitates the learning process of students (Borko, 2004) as teachers should be reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983). The changing dimensions of education have also led researchers talk about the opportunities of online professional development in comparison with face-to-face traditional practices. Killion and Williams (2009) find the opportunities of online professional development as having great potential for improving teaching and learning processes. Brooks and Gibson (2012) consider online teacher professional development (OTPD) as more personally relevant, meaningful and engaging to teachers because of four reasons. First OTPD provides teachers flexibility due to the choice of opting in and opting out of their learning experience; second, it provides the technological facility of being available anywhere, anytime; third, OTPD facilitates connections between teachers, professionals and researchers; and fourth, OTPD provides a reflexive space (Brooks & Gibson, 2012).

The concept of life-long learning which is becoming more popular with MOOCs has always existed in the case of teachers as they need to keep improving and gaining more and more know-how or meta learning about ways of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). CPD is an intensive form of PD as it refers to a personal commitment of professionals to continue improving their professional skills over a lifetime. This helps them to improve and broaden their knowledge, polish their skills and enhance their abilities through training. For this personal commitment they have to be on a lookout for training opportunities in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences, short courses, etc. An English language teacher should adapt him/herself to the latest development and challenges in the domain by reading, collaborating, adapting, researching, joining groups, going to seminars and workshops. For this purpose, however, there are not many opportunities for CPD in developing countries. If there are, they involve a lot of competition and travelling. For CPD, almost all institutions around the world take special measures to keep their staff updated with the latest developments in their respective domains. In English language and literature teaching,

whereas few institutions may take good care of this aspect, mostly such opportunities are unavailable, expensive or not well publicized. Therefore, teachers have to seek them out and paying a good deal of money for them. Even in case of highly ambitious teachers, within the country, no foreign exposure is available in English teaching scenario in Pakistan. How to provide free and effective CPD opportunities to teachers has remained challenging. Some measures by the Government of Pakistan or foreign agencies have been taken but they remain insufficient. For example, Higher Education Commission (HEC) provides trainings to University and College teachers under the banner of English Language Teaching Reforms (ELTR) and Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) facilitates overall training for all teachers. Foreign aided institutions like British Council and US Embassy also facilitate English Language Teachers with training opportunities but many teachers are not familiar of them and they remain restricted to a few especially in main cities. Although HEC has contributed a lot to the CPD of English Teachers in Pakistan in all provinces, but it is mostly restricted to universities and colleges. Still a lot more is required.

In this state of affairs, information and communication technologies seem to be changing the global scenario of world education by moving beyond traditional face to face classrooms and providing access to online education (Perveen, 2015). Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) or Technology Mediated Language Learning can be of great help if teachers are aware of the new technologies and after professional development, train their students too. However, educational endeavours like MOOCs seem to offer great opportunities for all teachers, be they in cities or far flung areas. They allow teachers access to CPD at their homes via a computer or mobile and an internet connection.

MOOCs can help with CPD because they are convenient, may give credit to teachers, improve their teaching by giving them exposure to various teaching styles, help them to use technology in their classrooms, and above all keep them aware of the latest trends and developments in their domains (Hicks, 2015). They can be attractive for teachers because they are free, flexible, adaptable, ongoing, can be used as classroom resources, and therefore, motivate teachers (Marquis, 2013). The teachers in need of CPD can be divided into three groups: 1. those who already have teaching qualification but need to keep pace with latest developments, 2. those who do not have a teaching qualification and need to learn it 3. those who need a reorientation due to change of syllabus etc. When MOOCs can be considered as a platform for CPD, these differences should be kept in mind (Fyle, 2013). CPD should be socially and culturally oriented and should inculcate a culture of sharing amongst teachers

through a community centred approach, so that teachers can reflect upon their beliefs and practices (Barab, Makinster, Moore, & Cunningham, 2001). Gaible and Burns (2005) divide CPD into three types: 1, standardized, 2. site-based, 3, self-directed. Standardized CPD refers to training based approach by making teachers aware of the instructional design either through a face-to-face or online mode. Site based CPD mostly takes place in schools and colleges or training institutions. The facilitators or trainers train teachers about pedagogy in this case. Technology can be a part of this, however. Self-directed CPD refers to teachers' personal efforts to satisfy their self-specified professional goals and is based on individual needs (Gaible & Burns, 2005). MOOCs facilitate the first and the third one but the third all the more as they are self-directed. Self-directed education needs awareness on the part of teachers and that is directly related to motivation.

However, implementation is not as simple as it sounds because awareness about MOOCs in all parts of a country like Pakistan and the motivation on the part of the teachers to attend MOOCs till completion needs a good deal of research. Nevertheless, it is a trending concept and is being introduced in Pakistan. For example, The Regional English Language Office (RELO) of the U.S. Embassy, Islamabad arranged a five-day professional development workshop, English for Specific Purposes MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) Camp in Islamabad (Quaid-e-Azam University) on February 20-24, 2017. Ball State University faculty facilitated training for 40 Pakistani educators on facilitating MOOC study groups and integrating MOOC content into traditional classes, as well as on teaching autonomous learning strategies to students to promote success in online learning environments. The following five Coursera MOOCs were highlighted with a specific emphasis on English for Career Development by this training:

- English for Business and Development
- English for Journalism
- English for Career Development
- English for Media Literacy
- English for STEM Fields

This training combined face-to-face training with online engagement i.e., blended learning to support educators for implementing MOOC-related activities in their home institutions and did not focus on online training entirely. However, this is a rare example and awareness about MOOCs leading to availing their full benefit has still to go a long way.

Although MOOCs can be considered a disruptive trend in higher education, how much they have been beneficial in professional development in particular domains is little researched. In particular, one finds few research studies on professional teacher development in general and ELT professional development in particular. One of the potential benefits can be that teachers do not have to travel which may save time. Other benefits include free access, saving time from lengthy processes and access to latest international developments in teaching and contribution to research and knowledge. MOOCs can introduce teachers to the latest international teaching trends for free and with no entry requirements. However, all these possibilities need to be researched in various countries separately. It is important to explore teachers' awareness of MOOCs, their attitudes towards them and their opinions about the benefits which MOOCs can render especially with reference to their potential about teacher professional development. It is also important to mention that not many platforms have offered professional development or teacher training courses for ELT teachers. Initially, Coursera offered a few courses on English language and literature followed by Edx and then FutureLearn also took the initiative.

This study is an attempt at exploring the impact of MOOCs on English language and literature teachers in Pakistan both from language improvement point of view and indirectly learning from MOOCs' instructional design aspect. Although the number of the participants who responded to the survey questionnaire is small, the positivity about MOOCs in ESL domain turns out to be wholesome. Thus the paper aims to explore opinions about strengths and weaknesses of MOOCs on ESL/ELT and evaluate how beneficial they have been for those who attended it. The study blends three aspects, awareness about MOOCs leading to enrolment in them (this helps determine the motivation required for continuing professional development as that is self-effort), narrowing it down to English teachers in Pakistan and their perusal of new technological developments in pedagogy and having a look at the impact of MOOCs on the continuing professional development of teachers teaching English as a second language.

The study looked for responses to the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the level of general awareness of Pakistani English teachers about MOOCs?

RQ2. Do MOOCs help Pakistani English teachers improve their skills for teaching English as a second language?

RQ3. Do MOOCs help Pakistani English teachers improve their instructional design?

Literature Review

Teachers' professional development is a major concern for educational institutions all over the world. However, getting professional development opportunities on a continuous basis to keep one self up-to-date and motivated is really challenging. MOOCs provide one such opportunity for continuing professional development for teachers on a mass level (Misra, 2018). MOOCs have the potential to not only help for standardized and site based learning but also for self-directed professional development of teachers (Gaible &Burns, 2005). Thus MOOCs can dramatically redirect teachers' professional development in future through capacity building and skill development (Richards, 2014). Dikke and Faltin in their 2015 study found 130 MOOCs available online about teachers' professional development. They were mostly is English and Spanish languages encompassing teaching skills including language teaching, science teaching, use of ICT in classrooms and soft skills (Dikke & Faltin, 2015). The growing increase of MOOCs for professional development determines their effectiveness for CPD as they provide a solution to cost and time related problems teachers face for professional development otherwise (Marquis, 2013). MOOCs can help teacher improve their teaching by observing other teachers teach, joining discussion boards, going through a student feel online, learn anew in a structured manner and avail appropriate resources free of cost (Bali, 2013). Therefore a combination of MOOCs and professional development is a win-win situation altogether (Jobe, Ostlund & Svensson, 2014).

Language MOOCs are a recent development with great potential in an international educational scene where EFL/ESL learners generally do not have exposure to native teachers and may not get admission to foreign universities due to high costs based on currency value differences. MOOCs provide an opportunity of direct language exposure as well as communicative learning because students from multiple backgrounds and multiple first languages interact for learning a new language or improve the previous knowledge of the target language. Thus MOOCs facilitate a multicultural experience that supports learners in enhancing their sociolinguist, psycholinguistic and discourse aspects of the target language. Still, it can be contested and challenged whether MOOCs really help in professional development of second/foreign language teachers because of the instructional design, motivation factors, and quality and dropout rates (Bárcena, Read, Martín-Monje, & Castrillo, 2014).

MOOCs have not been extensively studied with particular reference to second language improvement and need much more research as they can be a potential source of students' language improvement (Anzai, Ostashewski, , Matoane, & Mashile, 2013). One of

the reasons may be the lack of MOOCs on ELT as there is a small number of language learning MOOCs which may be growing in number gradually on various MOOCs offering platforms (Godwin-Jones, 2014). The number is far less in professional development of language teachers. It is not necessary that MOOCs on English language can do the magic as most of the MOOCs even in sciences and humanities are in English language and can help improve English language skills of non-natives by expanding their vocabulary and communication skills (Rybushkina & Chuchalin, 2015). The largest number of MOOCs available currently are in English language (Edlin, 2018). Therefore,, Freihat and al Zamil (2014) consider MOOCs quite effective for improving listening comprehension of EFL students. Wu, Fitzgerald and Witten (2014) consider MOOCs a very useful way of learning domain specific language.

MOOCs are a cost and resource effective means for the professional development of EFL/ESL teachers. They can be very convenient for those who want to improve their language skills (Godwin-Jones, 2014). They can be very useful for lifelong learning; however, the organizations need to consider MOOCs as a valid source of professional development like other degrees so that teachers get more motivated for attending MOOCs (Jobe, Östlund & Svensson, 2014). MOOCs need to be improved on in certain ways for professional development, for example, more opportunities for networking of teachers, accreditation, and the facility of reusing resources for teachers (Seaton et al., 2014). In this regard, professional development variations in face-to face, online and technology-mediated contexts needs to be given consideration as well (Brooks & Gibson, 2012). MOOCs can be beneficial for English literature teachers' professional development too. For example, Manning, Morrison and McIlroy (2014) attended Coursera MOOC 'Fantasy and Science Fiction: The Human Mind, our Modern World' and found it really interesting and useful as the goals of the course were aligned with the researchers' goals of English literature capacity building. They find MOOCs really useful for teachers as they do not clash with their busy schedule and can be attended after university/college schedule (Manning, Morrison & McIlory, 2014)

Method

The target population of this study was all English language and literature teachers in Pakistan. For this purpose, an online survey questionnaire was administered via various Facebook groups, via email, and also in person. The question items were very carefully designed by the researcher to analyse teachers' personal improvement of English language

and literature knowledge as well as professional development. Apart from getting the demographic details of the participants, the questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part investigated teachers' general awareness about MOOCs. The second part inquired about their impact on teachers' four skills for learning and teaching English as a second language. The third part focused on professional development key aspects like lesson planning, selection of material, assessment methods and test item writing etc. Lastly the questions focused on overall usefulness of MOOCs and their adaptation in Pakistani universities either as they are or by developing new MOOCs. The study was not intended to be a small scale study initially as the researcher intended to get at least 100 respondents' opinion, but as many Pakistani English teachers are not familiar with the concept of MOOCs, and did not respond positively, finally convenient sampling was used to gather data. The data for this study was gathered from 2016-17. One hundred teachers were asked whether they have successfully gone through at least one MOOC and only 32 responded positively and filled out the questionnaire.

The results have been presented question by question where it was important to display the options given to the respondents. For the 5-point Likert scale items from strongly disagree to strongly agree descriptive statistics have been used to validate data and interpret results. Co-relation has been applied to further validate the results to see the relationship of MOOCs effectiveness on the overall improvement of the various aspects mentioned in the questionnaire.

Results

The first part of the survey collected demographic details of the participants which are given below (Table1).

Table 1.Demographic Details of the Participants

Age		
21-30	18	56.3%
31-40	12	37.5%
41-50	2	6.3%
51-60	0	0
Qualification		
Masters	7	21.9%
M Phil	21	65.6%
PhD	4	12.5%
Other	0	
Professional Status		
Lecturer	18	56.3%
Assistant	8	25%

Professor		
Associate Professor	2	6.3%
Professor	0	0
School Teacher	2	6.3%
Other	2	6.3%
Gender		
Male	14	43.8%
Female	18	56.3%
Province		
Punjab	26	83.9%
KP	2	6.5%
Sindh	2	6.5%
Balochistan	1	3.2%

The demographic details show that the majority was that of females, belonging to the province of Punjab, with the qualification of M.Phil which is the second highest degree after Ph.D in Pakistan. Most of them fell between the age group 21-30 and were lecturers i.e., in the early years of their career.

The second part of the survey collected participants' opinions about MOOCs experience with particular reference to improvement in English as a Second Language (ESL) and their professional development in this regard. The reliability of the questionnaire was 0.830 (Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.830	17

The first question investigated the number of MOOCs attended. The graph below displays the results (Figure 1).
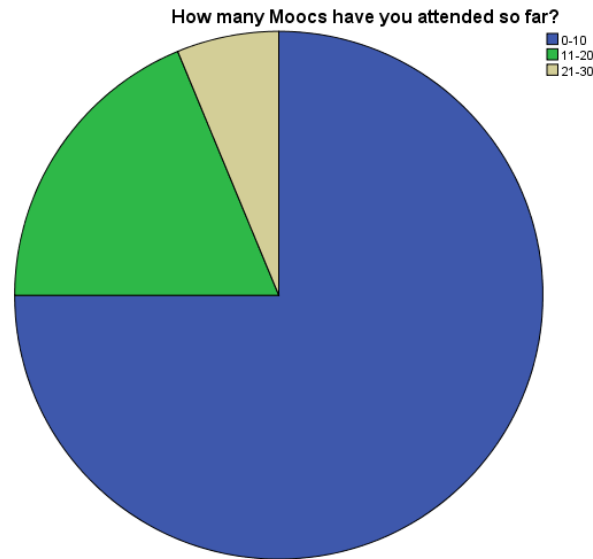
Figure 1. Number of MOOCs Attended

The results display that most of the participants attended fewer than 10 MOOCs.

Question 2 probed how the participants got to know about MOOCs. The graph below displays the results (Figure 2).
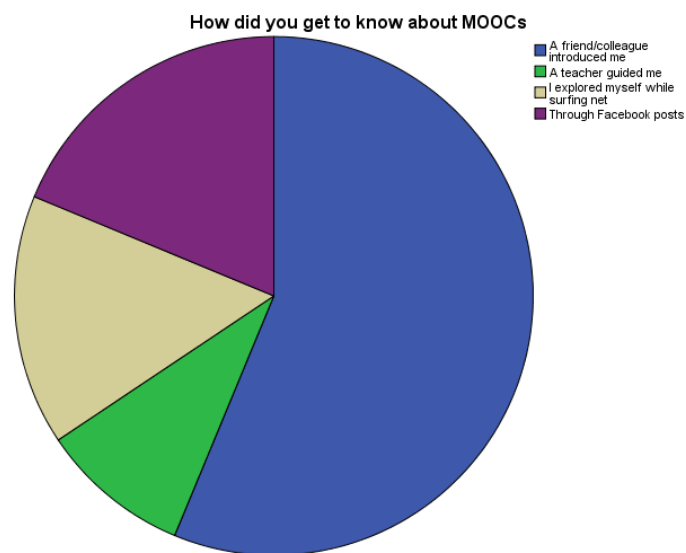

Figure 2: How Respondents Were Introduced to MOOCs

The results show that most of the participants got to know about the MOOCs either from a friend or through Facebook posts.

Question 3 investigated the participants' knowledge about the difference between c and x MOOCs. The graph below displays the results (Figure 3).
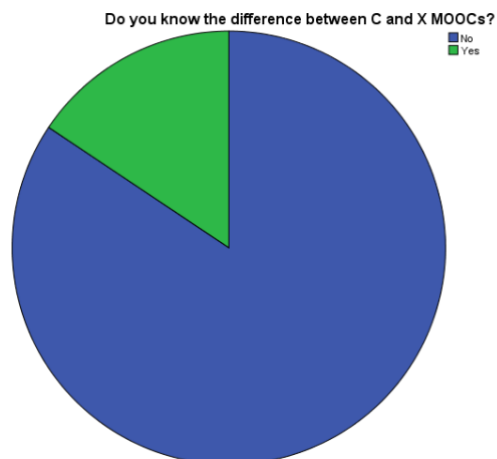
Figure 3: Familiarity with the Difference Between C and X MOOCs

The results show that most respondents were not aware of the difference.

Question 4 asked respondents to state the difference between C and X MOOCs. The graph below displays the results (Figure 4).
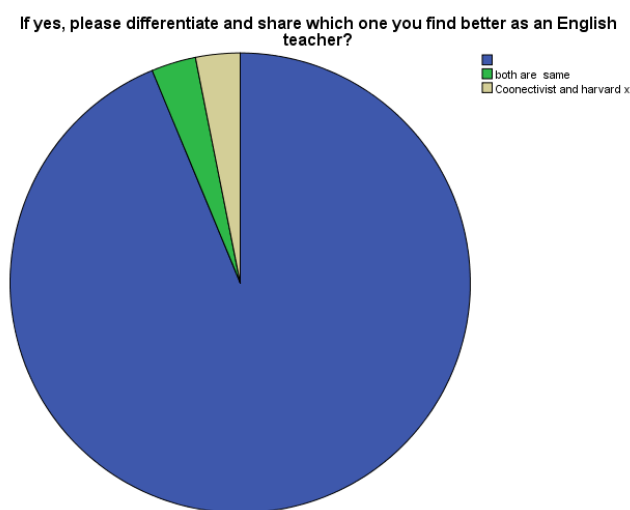

Figure 4: Exact Difference Between C and X MOOCs

Only one respondent knew the difference as shown in the graph.

Question 5 asked about respondents' areas of interest for attending MOOCs. The graph below displays the results (Figure 5).
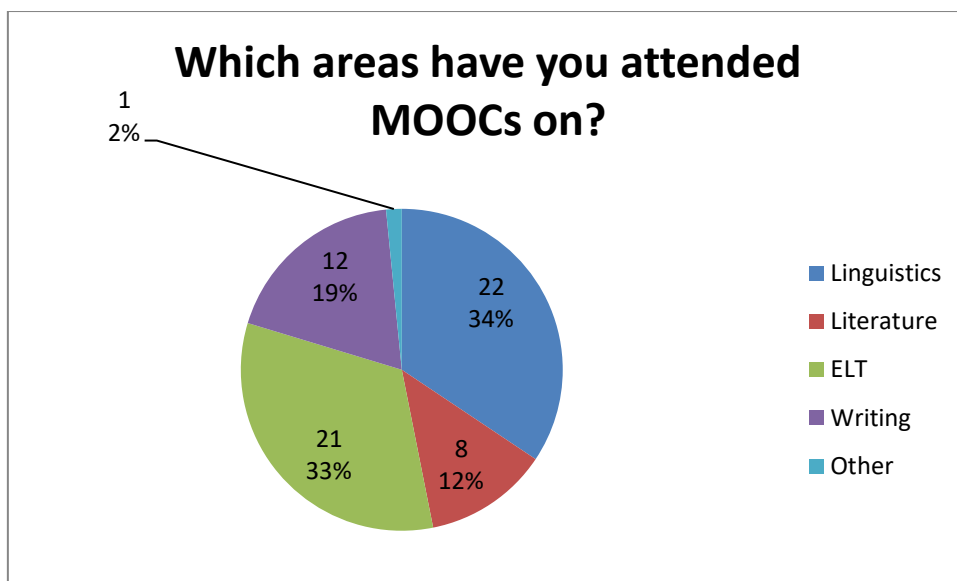
Figure 5. Areas of MOOCs

The results show mixed opinions with most of the participants of linguistics area (34 %) closely followed by ELT (33%). Nineteen percent (19%) chose writing and 12 % literature MOOCs to be attended.

Question 6 probed about skill improvement by MOOCs. The graph below displays the results (Figure 6).
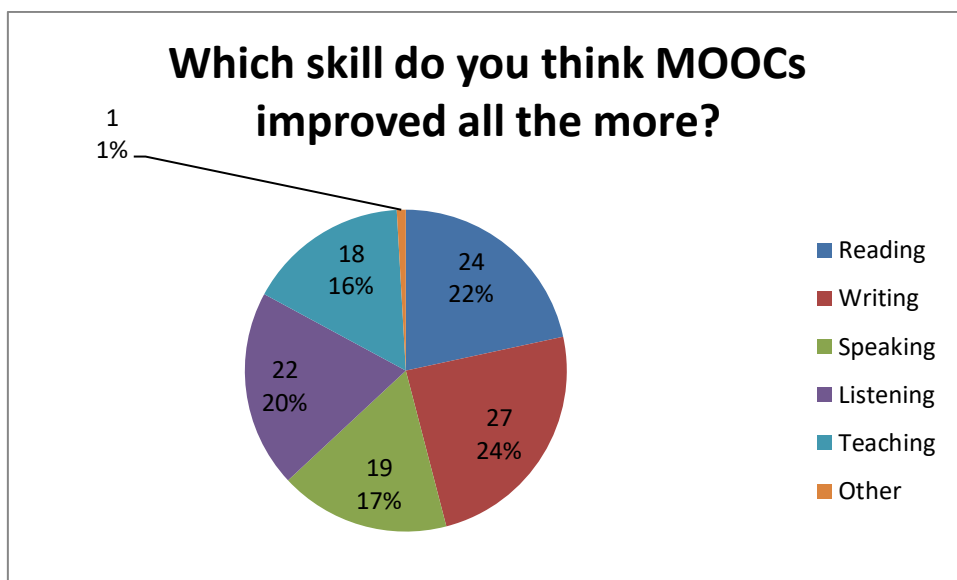

Figure 6. Reported Improvement of Skills

The results show improvement in all areas with writing at top with 24% of teachers mentioning that skill.

Question 7 asked about the improvement of teaching skills in particular. The graph below displays the results (Figure 7).
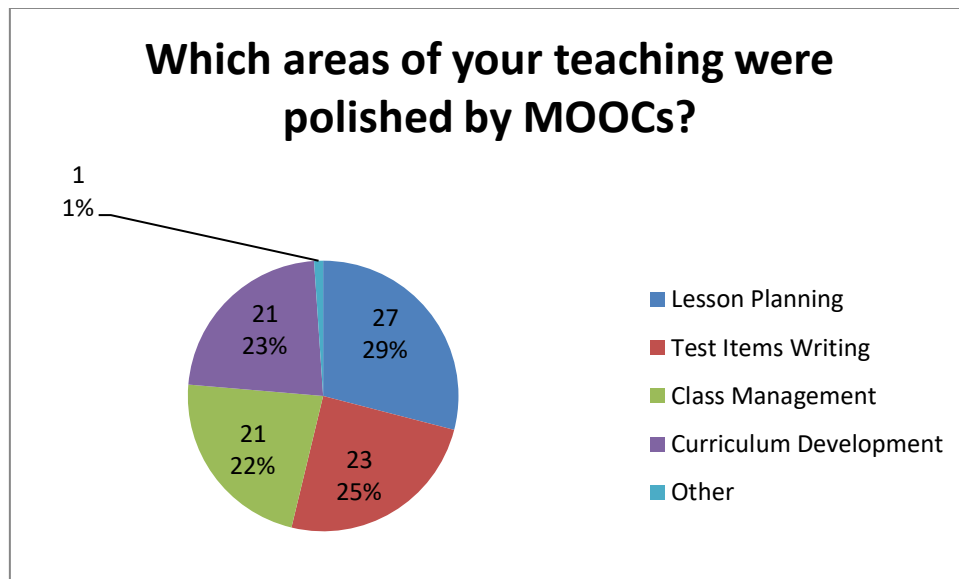

Figure 7. Reported Teaching Skills Improvement

The results show improvement in all areas with minor differences. Twenty nine (29 %) mentioned lesson planning, 25 percent test item writing, 23 % curriculum development and 22% class management.

Question 8 asked about the most useful aspect of MOOCs. The graph below displays the results (Figure 8).
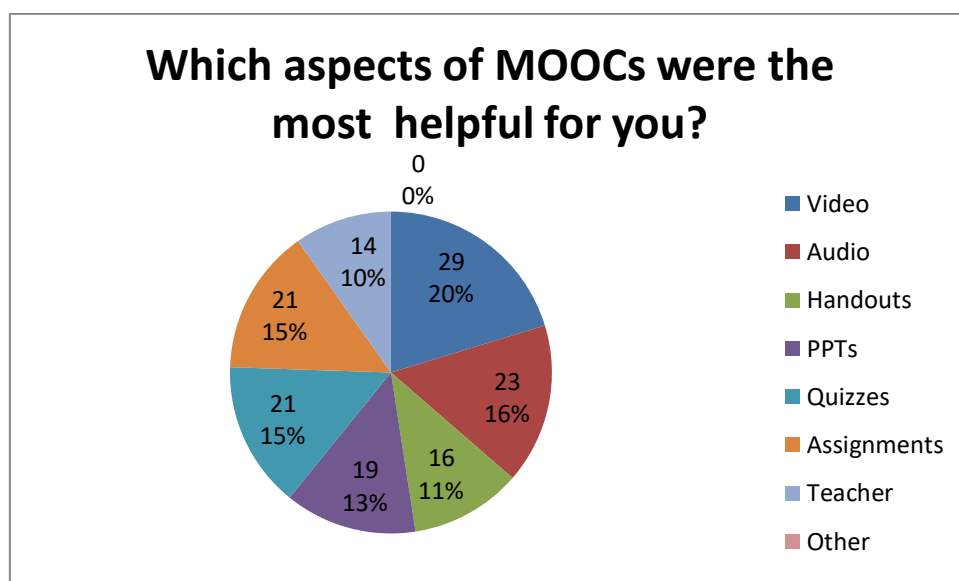

Figure 8. Most Useful Aspects of MOOCs as Reported by Respondents

The results show that the participants found all areas useful but videos were found to be particularly useful as 20% of participants mentioned them. Sixteen percent (16%) mentioned audio lectures, 15% assignments, 15% quizzes, 1 % PPTs, 11% handouts, and 10% the teacher as the most helpful component.

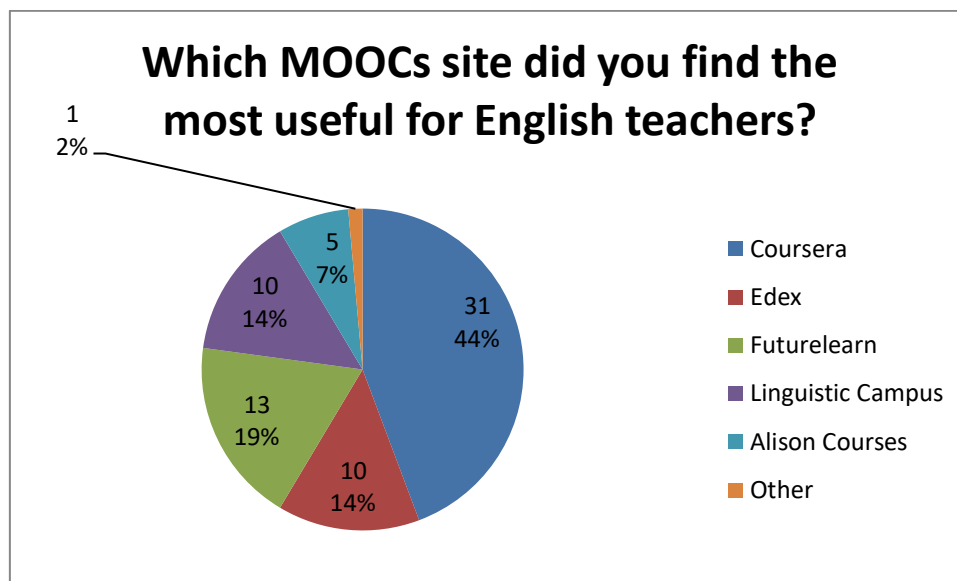Question 9 asked about the best MOOCs platform. The graph below displays the results (Figure 9).

Figure 9. The Reported Best MOOCs Platform

Coursera was the most familiar site with 44% choices. Nineteen percent (19%) chose Futurelearn, 15% Edx, 15% Linguistic Campus, and 7% Alison courses.

The next round of questions was purely quantitative and a 5-point Likert scale was used. The descriptive statistics have been given below (Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Items

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MOOCs are better than Pakistani classroom lectures	32	1	5	4.13	.907
MOOCs helped me improve ESL teaching.	32	3	5	4.10	.700
MOOCs helped me improve English reading skill.	32	3	5	4.00	.718

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MOOCs helped me improve English writing skill.	32	3	5	4.03	.706
MOOCs helped me improve English speaking skill.	32	2	5	3.91	.818
MOOCs helped me improve English listening skill.	32	3	5	4.00	.775
MOOCs should be launched by Pakistani Universities too.	32	3	5	4.22	.659
MOOCs should be recommended to English language students	32	3	5	4.22	.706
MOOCs are great help for keeping oneself up to date to the latest ELT knowledge.	32	3	5	4.25	.672
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The descriptive statistics show that MOOCs helped teachers in improving their language as well as teaching skills.

To further validate the results co relation was determined through the use of SPSS. Below is the description.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation

		MOOCs are better than Pakistani classroom lectures	MOOCs helped me improve my reading skill.	MOOCs helped me improve my writing skill.	MOOCs helped me improve my speaking skill.	MOOCs helped me improve my listening skill.	MOOCs should be launched by Pakistani Universities too.	MOOCs should be recommended to English language students	MOOCs are great help for keeping oneself up to date to the latest knowledge.
MOOCs helped me improve my teaching.	Pearson Correlation	.497**	.533**	.784**	.704**	.843**	.735**	.714**	.528**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002
	N	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32

H0: Moocs do not help improve teaching English as a second language

H1: Moocs help improve teaching English as a second language

As the Sig values are less than level of significance 0.05 so we can say that the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion

The professional status of the respondents reveals that most of them were highly qualified disseminating education at a higher level. The age group of the majority reflects the early career aspiring time period wherein one is in dire need of professional capacity building as well as has the motivation and energy for that too. Therefore MOOCs as a disruptive educational training platform can be extremely helpful as well as attractive for them. The majority of the respondents had attended less than 10 MOOCs, only three had attended more than 10 and one more than 20. Majority of them were introduced by a friend/colleague/ teacher and only two came across while surfing net and one got to know via the social medium of Facebook. This reflects that MOOCs were found quite helpful therefore recommended to others. Except one of the participants, none of them was aware of the different types of MOOCs, which shows that MOOCs as innovative disruptive educational practice were not the interest but learning through them got positive response. The participants don't seem to be much interested in what MOOCs are, how they started, what was the rationale behind them etc. They got introduced to them as free courses and found them good. Therefore, it can be concluded that they are the popular discourse so far disseminated through in person communication and it's only after attending them completely that teachers can formulate some opinion about them. The meta-learning about MOOCs was quite unsatisfactory. One of the reasons for this could be that MOOCs are more researched by e-learning domains.

As far as the domains of linguistics, English language teaching and English literature are concerned, most of the participants found linguistics and ELT MOOCs helpful. There can be three reasons for less participation by literature teachers, one the interest level of the participants for updating knowledge, second the lack of availability of good MOOCs in English literature and third less technology use by literature teachers in the classrooms. Moreover, the frequency of general English language improvement MOOCs is a major reason to interest teacher from the domains of linguistics and ELT. The digital humanities are

still to be popularized in Pakistan and most of the literature teachers are not technology savvy or at least not following MOOCs.

As far as the response to skill improvement is concerned, the respondents felt that writing skill was all the more improved followed by speaking, reading and listening and teaching respectively. It is pertinent to mention here that English is a second language even for teachers in Pakistan. The most popular variety of English being used in the classrooms is Pakistani English. In many instances even bilingualism is also very common as teachers code mix and code switch from English to Urdu and vice versa. As teachers are a product of the same system, their professional development does not mean the improvement of teaching skill set, it also refers to further improvement in four strands of English language. The MOOCs gave exposure to their ears for native spoken English as well to authentic reading material and cross check of written English by multiple nationals. The results explicitly convey that the four basic language skills of the second language teachers required serious improvement which automatically led to the general improvement of teaching skills.

The opinions about teaching skill set improvement reflect that MOOCs improved their lesson planning and assessment question writing skills followed by class management skills and curriculum development. As most of the university teachers in Pakistan begin teaching without a professional training, MOOCs turn out to be free teacher training sources. The presentation of lesson plans and test items developed metacognition in teachers about how to devise instructional design for their classroom. The respondents found all aspects of MOOCs helpful with videos and quizzes on top followed by audio, assignments, PPTs and handouts. The teachers learnt about planning lessons, designing assessment, selecting and managing resources. Coursera was the most used platform by this small sample size followed by Linguistic Campus, Future Learn and Edx. This also reflects the presence of reasonable number of subject specific courses on at least some platforms. Course presentation could be another reason for liking Coursera all the more.

Overall, there was a strong agreement that MOOCs' instructional design was far better than Pakistani classroom teaching in the domains of ELT/Linguistics/Literature as they were interactive. Although assessment was mostly quiz based, the immediate feedback was appreciated. The teachers could also download videos and lecture notes for future use. Above all the respondents found much higher concept clarity than in Pakistani classrooms as they found MOOCs more organized because of carefully and appropriately selected presentation and reading materials. They also got an exposure to native teacher/teaching which was found helpful. Most of them strongly agreed about the improvement of language and teaching skills

as they kept them updated about latest development in their domain knowledge. They also recommended the introduction of MOOCs to all students, its integration in the classrooms as well as attempts by Pakistani universities to launch Pakistani MOOCs as well.

The most interesting aspect of the research was that the respondents highlighted some weaknesses of the MOOCs. Assessment methods based on quizzes and peer assessment were criticized. The due dates or hard deadlines were not liked. The variation in time zone created problems along with the bandwidth issue of their internet connections. They also found no direct interaction with teacher as a major weakness of MOOCs. These points reflect the need to improve the instructional design of MOOCs from teachers' professional development perspective.

The best part was the respondents' inspiration to introduce their students to MOOCs and use the MOOCs in the classroom. This may eventually lead to blended or flipped classroom of which teachers are not still aware. The respondents were imaginative enough to respond positively to the question that Pakistani universities should also jump into developing MOOCs.

Conclusion

The study is significant enough as it traces the level of awareness about MOOCs and thereby the frequency of attending them by English language/literature university teachers of Pakistan. Although it is a small scale study limited to one domain, the results can be generalized to many other subjects as the general awareness level of MOOCs is more or less the same and from a professional development point of view more motivation to attend MOOCs is required. For English language/literature university teachers of Pakistan, it is important to have a native exposure for improving integrated skills as well as teaching skills. This would help them impart better knowledge in their classroom through a better set of instructional design. They can also introduce their students to MOOCs as well as make them a part of their face to face classrooms for blended learning. Students can use MOOCs when they are inside or away from their campus as in flipped classrooms, and discuss the learning from MOOCs with their peers and teachers in the classroom (Manning et al., 2014). Teachers can also incorporate a MOOC or use material from various MOOCs in their classes (Bruff, Fisher, McEwen, & Smith, 2013). MOOCs can turn out to be free teacher training programs of high quality as the current options for ELT trainings are either by Higher Education Commission (HEC) or British Council and Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) which are either paid or based on nominations' tedious procedure. Teachers' must have intrinsic

motivation to make use of MOOCs whether they are popularized by any such funding agencies or not.

The study calls for future research, for example, seeking students and teachers' perceptions about MOOCS in other disciplines, the suitability and need of developing Pakistani MOOCs with national flavour, the cultural sensitivity of available MOOCs for all countries and in particular Pakistan. Experimental studies about the effectiveness of blended learning or a flipped classroom by using MOOCs inside or outside the classroom should also take place to measure the improvement in English language right away. The design aspect of professional development MOOCs is not a much researched area (Vivian, Falkner & Falkner, 2014), so more research needs to be conducted in this area too.

Limitations of the Study

The study includes few participants and although the data collection was aimed to be simple random sampling, when people were asked about their awareness about MOOCs, the response rate was very low. Initially the sample size was to be selected from the universities but due to the low response all English teachers i.e., universities and colleges were selected for convenience sampling. Moreover, literature courses were also made a part of the study. With an increase in the number of TEFL/ TESOL MOOCs paid specializations by Coursera and increase in English language courses by Futurelearn in 2016, another study with large data set should be conducted. However, the researcher believes that results for English language teachers can be generalized as MOOCs have been viewed very positively. Also with the introduction of a paid feature, motivation for attending MOOCs would remain low. However, more awareness about MOOCs and measures to enhance motivation for constant capacity building through MOOCs is required.

Notes on the contributor

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What Now? An Exploratory Analysis of Language Maintenance in Japanese Study Abroad Alumni

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Abstract

This paper examines the language maintenance strategies that naturally occur in Japanese university students who have returned from studying abroad. Often, immersion programs are seen as motivational tools and end goals for foreign language acquisition, thus this research seeks to find the answers to three questions: Do Japanese university students naturally develop maintenance strategies after studying abroad? If so, what are they and how can they be organized? Is there a connection between recency of studying abroad, duration, and the number of strategies developed? In this exploratory analysis, nine students were interviewed on their study abroad experiences, and the number and type of maintenance strategies they developed. A majority of students reported using digital tools and focusing on the input language skills, suggesting a preference or an availability of technological, passive foreign language tools. These findings provide a strong foundation for further, more expansive quantitative study.

本稿は海外留学から帰国した日本人大学生における言語維持方略に関する調査である。集中プログラムの多くは、動機付けの手段や外国語習得のための最終目標としている。本調査では３つの課題を明らかにして行く。１．日本人大学生は海外留学後、自然に言語維持方略を発達させているか。２．仮にそうだとしたら、日本人大学生は何をどのように体系化しているか。３．海外留学の期間・新近性と方略の量の間には関係性はあるか。本調査分析では９名の大学生を対象に海外留学の経験、、言語維持方略の数と種類に関するインタビューを実施した。学生の大半はデジタルソースの使用とリーディング及びリスニングの言語スキルによるインプットに重点を置くこと、テクノロジーを好むことあるいはその利用についての示唆、受け身的な外国語活動について報告した。本調査結果は今後さらに広範囲な量的調査への基礎を提供するものである。

Keywords: Japanese university, study abroad, language maintenance, exploratory research

Throughout much of foreign language education in Japan, students are encouraged to study abroad, especially if they are in rural areas with little opportunity to interact with speakers of other languages. Studying abroad acts as effective motivation for acquiring a language while also providing an immersive environment that provides students with an expedited increase in communicative abilities (Coleman, 1997; Freed, 1998). However, this experience is often seen as the final step of students' foreign language studies. Thus, when students return to their home countries, what should come next in their language education is not clear. Their time abroad has allowed them to surpass classmates and returning to the possible homogeneous environment of their classrooms may not offer chances for returning students to use and further develop their newly improved foreign language skills.

Statement of the Problem

A common source of motivation in ESL classrooms is studying abroad in English-speaking countries, where the deeply engaging surroundings naturally foster a spike in ability. Conversely, there is little research on the atrophy of language skills once students return to the environments of their own countries and the maintenance that is required to keep their foreign language skills at a functional level. While metropolitan areas may have more diverse populations that offer social opportunities for practice, rural communities often lack the international demographic that provide these interactions.

Research questions

This study primarily identified the strategies university students use for language maintenance so that the results may lay groundwork for further research. Once maintenance strategies are observed and recorded, further research can determine both the proliferation and the effectiveness of such techniques. This explorative research used qualitative interviews of Japanese students in a rural university who have studied abroad and since returned to rural Japan to address the following research questions:

1. Do students naturally seek out strategies of maintaining their foreign language in their home country after studying abroad?
2. If so, what strategies do they use to maintain their foreign language?

Literature Review

In the last century, much of the world has seen an increase in the need for multilingual citizens, so much so that many countries now have years of foreign language as a part of their compulsory education, often starting as early as elementary school. In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology (MEXT) requires English as subject for a minimum of eight years, starting in the fifth year of elementary school. In addition, many universities have begun to require tertiary study as well. Teachers and students alike are aware of the limitations of studying a foreign language in one's own country; for every hour spent in a classroom, exposed to a target language, many more are spent surrounded by a language the students have already mastered.

Megumi Hirai's article on the motivation of studying abroad shows that Japanese students believe the act of studying abroad to be an ideal solution for the shortcomings of foreign language classrooms (2014). Not only can the prospect of international travel be appealing and motivational, but it also provides valuable, real-world context and application for language learners. Giving students the opportunity to visualize themselves in concrete environments surrounded by the target language; the motivation to improve in that language is much more applicable than for learners who have no intention of functioning in the language outside of the classroom.

Beyond mere motivational applications, however the immersion that studying abroad offers is one of the most effective methods of not only acquiring the target language, but also the understanding of the importance of communication (Hardison, 2014). In the studying of a foreign language, where there are few definitive measures of proficiency, studying abroad works as a very effective and concrete end-goal. For some who view it as the culmination of their studies, it is a valuable growing experience. For others, it is an effective source of internal motivation.

Though the benefits of studying abroad and using one's target language in an immersive environment are undeniable, there are unique challenges students face when returning to their home countries (Slobodova, 2013). Once students experience sharp increases in their foreign language capabilities, oftentimes their previous foreign language courses become remedial. The gap in ability between students who have studied abroad and their classmates with no firsthand experience can lead to not only social complications but also to an inability to find the requisite

surroundings in which to practice and maintain acquired foreign language skills (Shimmi, 2016). Once a student's study abroad program ends, if s/he is left without an environment with which to challenge their new abilities, then those skills, left unpracticed, will naturally begin to atrophy.

Since being able to function in another language is often the primary goal for studying a foreign language, the prevention of language attrition must become a priority for a foreign language student. This is not as severe a problem in immersive environments as the constant interaction in the language itself acts as stimulation, (though specific parts of the language may deteriorate if neglected). Organizations that actively utilize people with foreign language skills, like the United States military, have begun to assemble language maintenance programs and incentives for soldiers who have taken the time to expand their linguistic arsenal (Bott, 1995). These organizations have identified that long-term investments of time and care are needed to keep these valuable foreign languages functional, particularly when the majority of the environment does not consist of the target language. Most of the time, this is self-initiated and executed out of pure internal motivation, as many workplaces do not offer opportunities for the development of this specific skill (Valmori, 2016).

In academic settings, university students are often encouraged and rewarded for their efforts abroad through scholarships and credit hours, but the systems put into place for post-study abroad support focus on how to utilize the experiences in future careers and less on the retention of language and communication skills. With the internal motivation that studying abroad can inspire, combined with the learning strategies of their formal education and the survival strategies of being immersed in a foreign language, students have thus far been required to independently develop responsibility for language maintenance.

Design and Methodology

Participants

Participants attending a rural university in western Japan were recruited in conjunction with the university's international student services to volunteer their time in an opportunity to speak about their study abroad experiences. They were informed that their responses would be recorded and that anything they wished to be redacted would be removed from the study. Permission forms were deemed unnecessary as the participants gave verbal consent and the questions were not personal or intimate in nature.

The sample pool consisted of nine Japanese students attending university full-time who had participated in university study abroad programs. Three participants were male and six were female, with an age range of 19-24 ($M = 20.78$). Five participants had studied abroad in English-speaking countries, two in South Korea, one in China, and one in Belarus. Time spent abroad ranged from three weeks to two and a half years and recency of homecoming ranged from one month to two years (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Breakdown of Participant Study Abroad Experience.

Year in University	Target Language	Country Visited	Time Abroad (in weeks)	Time Since Homecoming (in weeks)
Senior	Russian	Belarus	26	104
Senior	English	Australia	36	52
Sophomore	English	USA	4	4
Sophomore	English	USA	4	4
Junior	English	Australia	3	36
Sophomore	English	USA	4	4
Senior	Korean	South Korea	125	25
Senior	Chinese	China	42	104
Senior	Korean	South Korea	28	7
		Average =	30.22	39.56

Table 2. Participant Demographics.

	Mean	St. Dev	Variance	Min	Max
Age	20.78	1.72	2.94	19	24
Time Abroad	30.2	38.7	1497.69	3	125
Time Since Homecoming	39.56	41.35	1710.03	4	104

Interviews began with demographic questions addressing age of the student and country of study. Answers were recorded simultaneously by the interviewer, a member of university staff who had no influence on students' academic standing, focusing on the number and types of maintenance strategies reported. Interviews were conducted in English or Japanese, depending on student preference. Predictably, the five students whose target language was English requested English interviews, while the remaining four interviews were conducted in Japanese.

Non-demographic questions were intentionally open-ended in order to avoid leading responses. Clarification questions were used for eliciting details concerning exact strategies, execution, and methods. Occasionally, open-ended suggestions of non-mainstream studies were indirectly offered (i.e. "How do you use social media to study your target language?"), as students were likely to categorize these activities as social or entertainment and without language-maintenance value. Interviews ranged from twenty to forty minutes and participants were given the option to be interviewed in English or Japanese, often resulting in a combination of the two.

Coding

Once the interview responses were collected, the frequency of maintenance strategies was noted and divided into two different categories for the purpose of identifying patterns: language skills and medium. The four essential language skills —reading, writing, speaking, listening (SIL, 1999) —are often identified and accentuated in Japanese classrooms and it is thought that students may approach language maintenance in a similar manner.

Additionally, the variety in the media of study materials emerged naturally as a method of organization. Media was divided into three categories; digital, paper, and interpersonal. Digital encompassed software and online resources; paper consisted of textbooks and physical materials, and interpersonal involved interactions with other people.

Software

Google Sheets, an online spreadsheet program, was used for identifying variables, coding qualitative data, calculating central tendency and correlations, and producing charts and graphs from data results. A descriptive statistics calculator was used for analyzing the demographic data (Herria, 2016).

Case Study – Sakura

Sakura (pseudonym) is a fourth-year English Education major who lived abroad for one year between her second and third university years in a large city in Australia. Contrary to joining a study abroad program directly, she went on a working holiday visa with the intent purpose of enhancing her English ability in preparation for her future career. With her academic background in English and educational studies, she was very aware of the linguistic opportunity this provided her and was determined to make as many gains in communicative competence as she could.

During her stay in Australia, she worked as an assistant in a Japanese classroom and soon found herself drawn to the institutional differences between the Japanese and Australian educational systems and the different expectations on teachers as a result. This interest led her to interact primarily with other young adults in the educational field, only a few of whom had Japanese language ability.

Upon her return to the University of Shimane, Sakura decided that she would enroll in as many English courses as possible to maintain her English that she felt had grown exponentially during her year abroad. She was delighted to find that her comprehension of the native speaking professors was much stronger and reliable than her previous experiences, but struggled with finding level-appropriate peer conversation. Due to her linguistic strengths, she participated often in courses, but was frustrated with the lack of in-depth practice and review she had grown accustomed to in Australia. In the second half of her junior year and the beginning of her senior year, she found that graduation requirements were restricting her ability to pursue further English courses. Once her class load became primarily Japanese, she noticed a sharp decline in her listening and speaking abilities.

To supplement this change in academic environment, Sakura sought out English media as a way to maintain skills she felt were waning. She renewed connections with friends and co-workers from Australia via various social media websites and applications. She also began to take advantage of university-provided materials such as English graded-readers, weekly newspapers, and the self-access language center where she engaged in weekly conversation practice, and ultimately endeavored to write her undergraduate thesis in English.

When asked about opportunities outside of the campus, Sakura felt that there was little she could find. She would gladly assist the occasional English speakers at her part-time job, but

the demographics of the rural Japanese area resulted in a very low occurrence of spontaneous interaction. While she sought out English media, her student budget limited her to the free national public broadcast television channels, which offer only a few programs in languages other than Japanese.

Summarily, Sakura felt that English attrition was a natural result of returning to a country where it was not the primary language. While she was unhappy with the decline in her language ability, she was satisfied with the steps she had taken to increase the amount and variety of her language input. Ultimately, she would like to return to Australia, or go to the United States, as she sees English ability as a valuable life skill, and strongly feels that living abroad is the most effective way to continue language development.

Results

The total number of language maintenance strategies used by participants was calculated by differentiating the means of study. Using Facebook, for example, counted as one strategy regardless of how participants used it, and target-language classes were counted as one strategy, despite the number of classes participants were enrolled in. Textbooks and novels were counted as two strategies, as the nature of the study method was deemed separate, as well as the separate video techniques of watching movies and watching English-language channels on YouTube. Of the nine participants, all used at least one language maintenance strategy with the maximum number of strategies being eighteen ($M = 9.63$).

The Four Skills

First, participant strategies were divided into the four basic language skills. The input skills of listening and reading were the most prolific: thirty-three uses of listening techniques and thirty-two instances of reading strategies were reported. In the writing category, the reported number of uses was nineteen and speaking had the fewest reported at only nine occurrences. The total number of coded responses amongst the four skills was ninety-two. Overall, the most reported language maintenance strategy was listening to music in the target language.

The thirty-three techniques of listening practice were spread over six categories with the most commonly reported being music and the lowest being tied between listening to CDs that accompanied language textbooks and Japanese language-learning television programs (Figure 1).

Reading techniques were spread over eight categories, with the highest occurring being reading textbooks and posts on Facebook, and the lowest being reading novels (Figure 2).
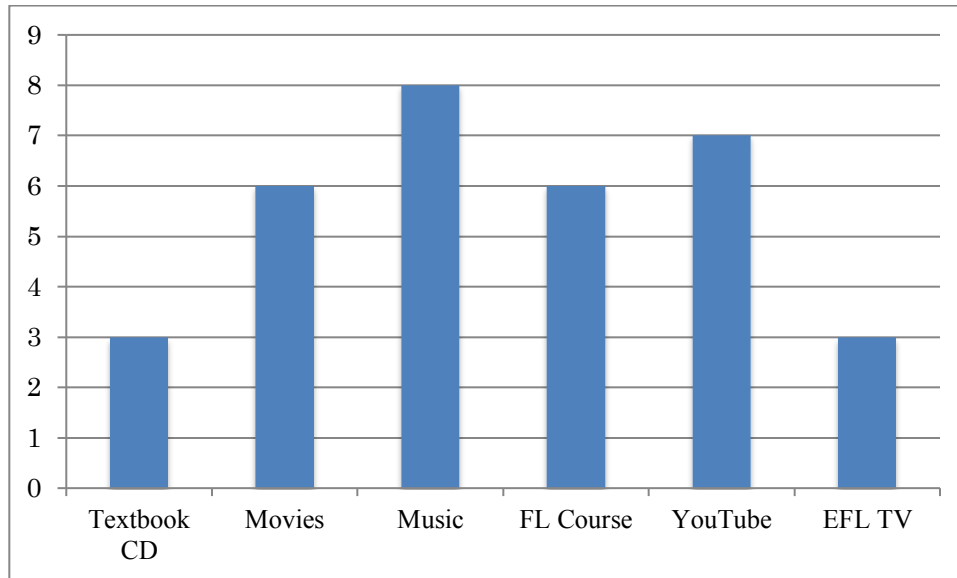

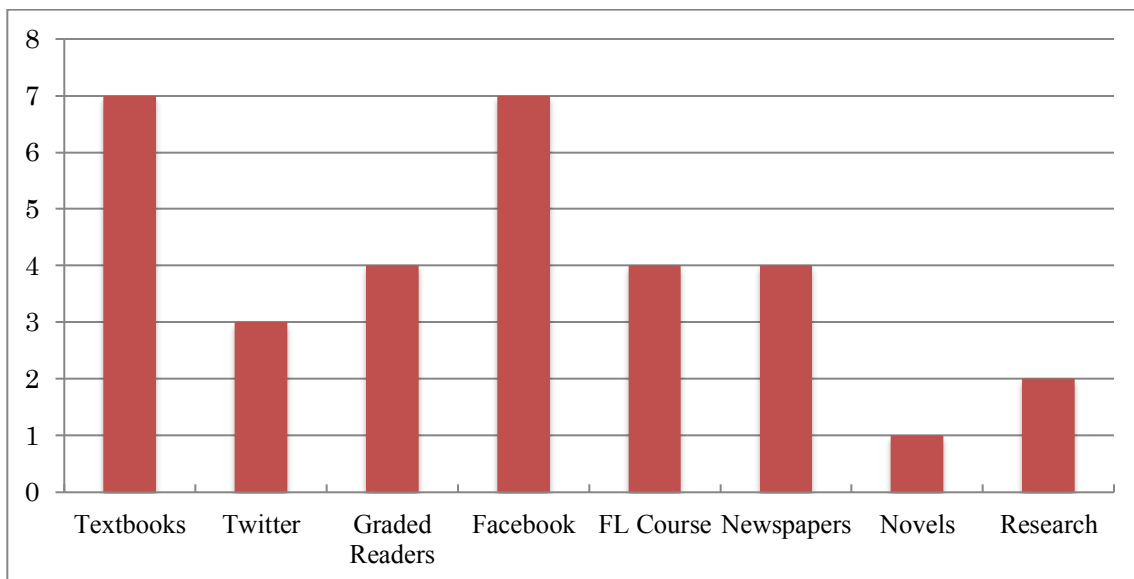Figure 1. Reported Listening Maintenance Strategies.

Figure 2. Reported Reading Maintenance Strategies

Of the nineteen writing strategies spread over six sub-categories, the most common technique was texting/e-mailing classmates, with the least reported being diary-keeping (Figure

3). The most reported speaking strategy was target language class enrollment and the least reported was talking with tourists using the target language (Figure 4).
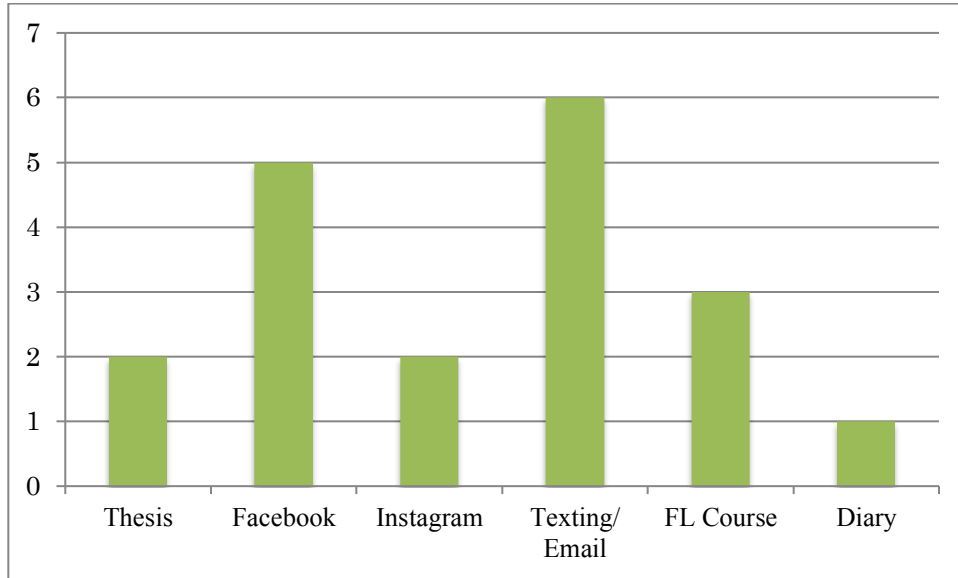
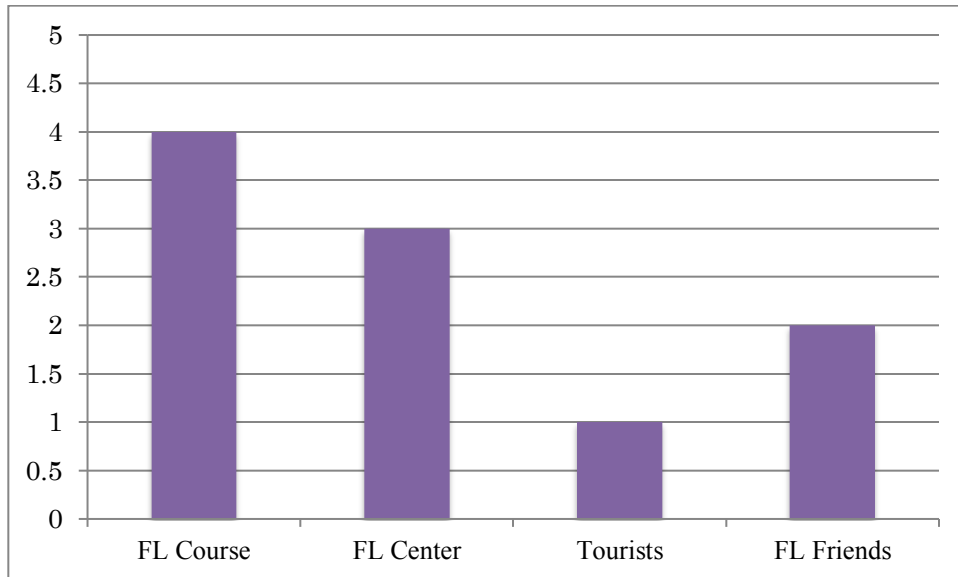Figure 3. Reported Writing Maintenance Strategies

Figure 4. Reported Speaking Maintenance Strategies

Medium

      Strategies were also divided into the medium of the strategies: digital, physical, or interpersonal. Digital consisted of anything utilizing computer or smartphone software and applications as well as TV. Books and CDs were classified as physical, and interactions with people that did not occur through digital means were classified as interpersonal. Each medium was only counted once (i.e., posting and reading posts on Facebook, while accounting for two language skill techniques would only be classified as a single digital strategy). A total of sixty-five strategies were coded using this system of organization.

      Physical strategies had a total of sixteen occurrences, the most prolific being the use of textbooks (Figure 5). Sixteen uses of interpersonal strategies were reported, with the most reported being interacting with professors in the target language (Figure 6). Digital strategies were the most commonly reported with a total of nine separate techniques and thirty-three total occurrences. The most popular strategies were Facebook and YouTube, used by all but two participants (Figure 7).
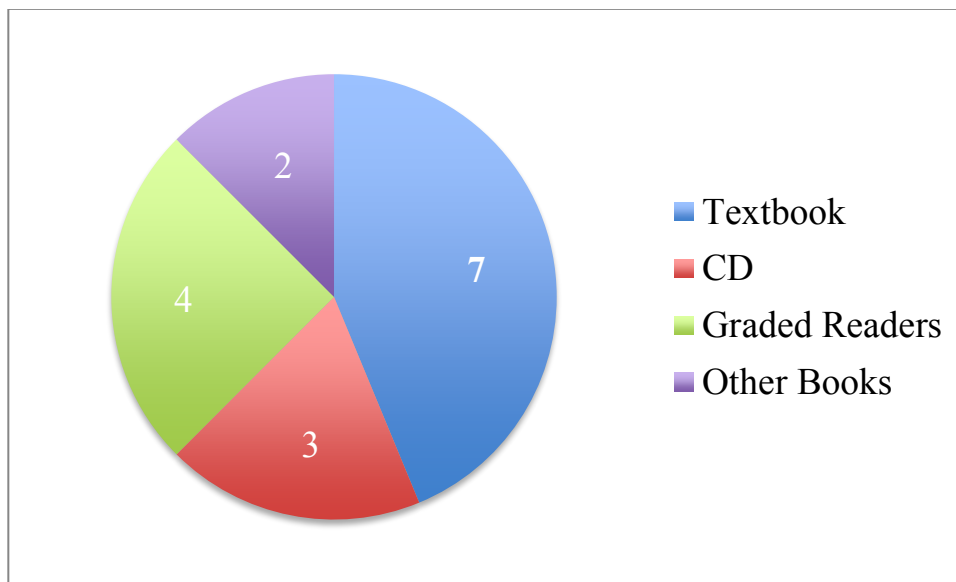

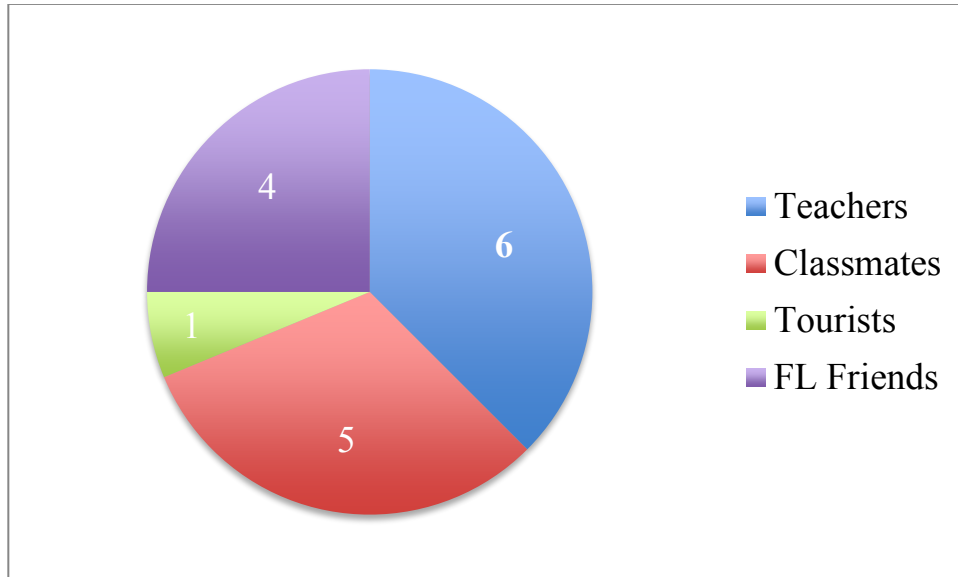Figure 5. Reported Physical Language Maintenance Strategies

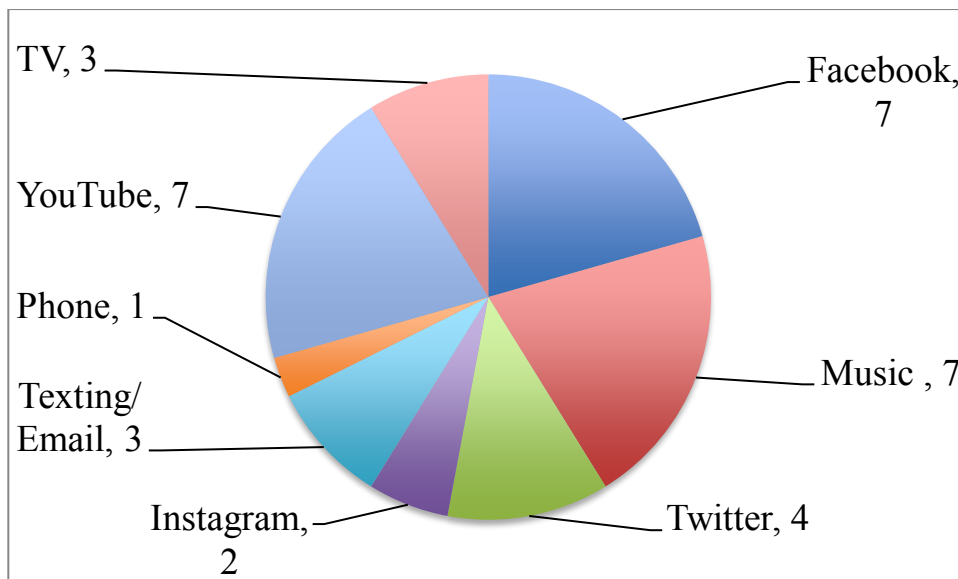Figure 6. Reported Interpersonal Language Maintenance Strategies

Figure 7. Reported Digital Language Maintenance Strategies

Analysis

The descriptive data support the idea that Japanese university students develop their own language maintenance strategies after studying abroad with 100% of participants employing at least one technique of foreign language practice. Modal calculations show that the most common

reported strategies are digital in medium and are focused on the input skills of listening and reading. The most prevalent of individual strategies were music, Facebook, foreign language classes, and YouTube. Possible relationships between study abroad time, recency to the program, and amount of strategies recorded were unable to be identified, as inferential statistics did not identify statistically significant results with this sampling.

Based on these results, it is likely that study abroad alumni naturally, that is of their own initiative, seek out foreign language resources in an effort to maintain foreign language skills they have gained while studying abroad. This implies that students are both aware of foreign language progress they have made as well as the possibility of the decline of their foreign language abilities in their home countries.

Discussion

Students overwhelmingly utilized the input skill-based strategies of reading and listening. At this point in the research, it is difficult to suggest if this is due to an unequal amount of resources dedicated to these skills over speaking and writing or if it is a reflection of the Japanese education system and its focus on input methods in the foreign language classroom (Butler & Iino, 2005).

Similarly, it is difficult to say if the reasoning behind the large number of digital strategies is due to the familiarity between students and technological applications for higher education (Bulman & Fairlie, 2016), the wide range of digital strategies available, or the low monetary threshold that digital services such as social media and YouTube video hosting offer when compared to the cost of physical study materials.

Limitations

Although valuable information about the presence of language maintenance strategies was identified, there were some unavoidable limitations. Due to time and budget constraints, this research was conducted on only a small percentage of the population of Japanese study abroad alumni. Additionally, the logistics of the interview structure further restricted the students who could be surveyed to those who were physically on campus and able to attend a half-hour session.

The voluntary nature of the population resulted in a rather large spread of experiences in study abroad target language, length abroad, and recency in returning to Japan. This diverse sample pool led to equally diverse results, making it difficult to accurately identify specific patterns in strategy construction and use. In order to generalize results for larger groups and reveal more specific interactions between study abroad alumni and language maintenance strategies, an increase in participants as well as a narrowing of the type and recency of study abroad program should be carefully considered.

Further Research

As this is an exploratory look at language maintenance strategies after studying abroad, the size of this sample makes it difficult for this data to be considered statistically significant as well as to be reliably applied to a larger population. However, despite the wide range of experiences in participants, the presence of maintenance strategies in all participants shows the need for further, more expansive research on a larger sample size.

Once a more complete demographic profile of post-study-abroad language maintenance strategies has been constructed, the next logical step is to focus on the strategies themselves and determine the effectiveness of the various types of foreign language maintenance. With more data and a clearer picture of what students need once they have returned from their study abroad programs, universities will be able to take steps to provide the support and systems needed to maximize foreign language acquisition in students who have studied abroad.

Notes on the contributor

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1) Where did you study abroad?

2) When did you study abroad? (month/year)

3) How long were you abroad?

4) What changes did you notice in your [target language] ability while studying abroad?

5) Since returning to Japan, what changes have you noticed in your [target language] ability?

6) Currently, how do you study reading in your [target language]

    a) writing?

    b) listening

    c) speaking?

7) In what other ways do you use [target language]?

The Evolution of Learner Autonomy in online environments: A Case Study in a New Zealand Context

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Abstract

With the advent of technologies, language learners are faced with unprecedented opportunities and a wide range of alternatives to engage with in their self-directed learning. However, a review of the literature indicates that studies investigating how learner autonomy is shaped and reshaped in online learning environments are under-researched (Reinders & White, 2016). Using a case study method, the primary objective of this study is to examine how a learner engaged with technology-mediated environments to meet his learning needs and goals and how his autonomy evolved in online environments. A qualitative analysis of the interview data collected at two different timescales reveals new developments in the learner's autonomous learning. Instead of using limited online materials, the learner became a critical user of multiple online sources. Additionally, the learning conditions he was exposed to in New Zealand fostered an interdependent and social dimension in his autonomous learning. By the end of this research study, he was also found to be more capable of regulating his self-directed study. The results corroborate the argument that the notion of learner autonomy is fluid and dynamic, suggesting that apart from psychological factors of the learner, environmental factors, e.g. the guidance from the teacher and learning conditions also play a critical role in the formation of different dimensions of learner autonomy.

Key words: learner autonomy; online environments; language learning; case study

Learner autonomy which requires a transition from teacher-control to learner-control is viewed as a prerequisite for success in learning. The shift of locus of control to learners reflects changes in education towards a more learner-centred teaching and learning where learners are expected to assume greater responsibility for, and take charge of, their own learning. With the advent of technologies, learners are faced with unprecedented opportunities to conduct independent learning. Educational technologies, e.g. Moodle, Blackboard, Screencasting, MOOCs etc. (see Bustamante, Hurlbut & Moeller (2012) for details) have extended learners' access to learning into their own time and space. An examination of the literature indicates a clear need for a study investigating how learners engage in the self-initiated use of technologies to facilitate their language learning (Reinders & White, 2016). This research study aims to fill in the gap in the literature, examining how learner autonomy intertwined and evolved with the modal affordances of technology-mediated environments.

This study is significant in theory and practice. Theoretically, the empirical evidence provided by the study will contribute to our understanding of different facets of learner autonomy in online environments and throw light on affordances of technologies for learner autonomy. More practically, findings from the study may help educators develop appropriate curricula and create optimal learning conditions for learners to exercise agency in their learning.

Review of Literature

Understanding learner autonomy

Despite a unified recognition of the importance of learner autonomy in education, there is little consensus in terms of its definition. The first and most frequently cited definition was proposed by Holec (1981) who defines learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). There are two key elements in this definition. First, it is the association of autonomy with an attribute of learners. That is, learner autonomy is perceived as a personal trait that an individual possesses; other environmental variables, e.g. learning contexts, the role of teachers, teaching methods and tasks design etc. are disregarded. Another dimension is the degree of taking control. In his view, "autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining the purpose, content, rhythm, and method of their learning, monitoring its progress and evaluating its outcomes" (p. 3). In recent years, criticism has been levelled at this notion of autonomy. It is argued that the selection of tasks and materials requires expert knowledge and expertise; thus most of the characteristics and traits attributed to the "autonomous learner" would merely represent a romantic ideal which does not align with reality (Illés, 2012).

More recent discussions consider autonomy to be a relative term (Nunan, 1996), contending that autonomy is not a product ready made for use or merely a personal quality but a process (Benson, 2007). It is argued that autonomous learning is achieved when certain conditions are obtained. These include psychological factors (e.g. learning strategies, motivation, and attitudes, etc.) on the part of the learner and also environmental factors like an appropriate task design, optimal learning environments, a political power structure, etc. (Hamilton, 2013; Oxford, 2008). This view of learner autonomy acknowledges that autonomy "is learned at least partly through educational experiences [and interventions]" (Candy, 1991, p. 115). Benson (2001) offers arguably the most comprehensive definition of autonomy as "a multidimensional capacity that will take different forms for different individuals, and even for the same individual in different contexts or at different times" (p. 47). This definition includes both personal and contextual dimensions of autonomy,

highlighting the fact that the notion of autonomy is complex and dynamic. This study adopted this dynamic view of learner autonomy in the investigation, focusing on the evolution of a learner's path toward autonomy in online learning environments.

Affordances of educational technologies to learner autonomy

Originally coined by Gibson, the term, 'affordance', has appeared with increasing regularity in a wide range of academic discourse. Gibson (1979) defines an affordance as "what it *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill … It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment" (p. 127, italics by Gibson). An affordance is thus seen as properties of the environment relative to an active, perceiving organism in that environment. According to Van Lier (2000), what becomes an affordance depends on "what the organism does, what it wants, and what is useful for it" (p. 252). An affordance exists as long as the person (or animal) can take the necessary actions to utilize it.

A number of scholars (e.g. Benson, 2011; Reinders & White, 2011; 2016) have recognized the enormous potential of technologies for language learners to exercise control over their own learning and to enhance the learner's freedom of choosing. Learners, for instance, can work at their own pace and choose their own place and circumstances to conduct to their learning. The extensive range of online learning materials means that learners could select what is valuable and worth doing according to a personally held criterion. Additionally, educational technologies expose language learners to a digital, social environment where they could engage in the real world and meaningful interactions with native speakers. Technologies such as video-conferencing software make it possible to speak in real time even if separated geographically. Other related online tools such as discussion forums and online chat environments, provide language learners with sociable, collaborative and authentic learning opportunities where they can work collaboratively and take joint responsibility for learning (Chan & Chan, 2011; Cheng, Paré, Collimore, & Joordens, 2011; Little, 2001). Murray (1999) predicted that educational technology is an effective purveyor of learner autonomy.

Whilst technologies have the potential for facilitating learners to conduct autonomous learning and propelling a shift from learners being a passive recipient of content knowledge, the actualization and effective utilisation of the technology-based learning environments hinge upon the active learner and other environmental factors, e.g. tasks and curriculum design. A review of the literature indicates that it is not clear how language learners engage in the self-initiated use of technologies to afford their language learning. Furthermore,

investigations of learner autonomy as a dynamic construct have largely ignored in scholarship. Using a case study method, the primary objective of this research is to address the research question: What changes occur in the learner's self-directed learning in online environments as a result of the new learning context, New Zealand? In order to answer the question, two subsequent questions were addressed: (1) how does the learner conduct his self-directed learning in technology-mediated environments in China? (2) how does the learner conduct his self-directed learning in technology-mediated environments in New Zealand?

Current Study

Justification of the case study research method

As afore-mentioned, the purpose of this qualitative inquiry is to examine the way a learner conducted his autonomous learning in online environments in two different contexts and detect the evolution of learner autonomy. To this end, the case study research method was employed. As this inquiry was exploratory in nature, seeking to provide an in-depth understanding of learner autonomy rather than extrapolate findings to other populations and contexts, it is hoped that the richness and depth of data this study generated will advance our understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and lead to "a full and thorough knowledge of the particular" (Stake, 2000, p. 2).

The participant and context

This inquiry was part of a multi-case investigation into language learning using technologies. It took place in the Department of Languages of a tertiary institution in New Zealand. The learner chosen for this report is Yong, because the data generated from him were more illuminating to the research question under investigation.

Yong was a 34-year-old male student from China. When the first interview was conducted, he had just been to New Zealand for 4 weeks. Yong started learning English from primary school and continued until he completed his Bachelor's Degree in Business in China. After graduation, he had worked for a company for a few years before he resigned to set up his own business. Having operated the business for several years, he decided to re-examine his career focus and chose to pursue a qualification in Professional Accounting in this institution in New Zealand. Due to a lack of language competency, he was required to complete an English programme before he was eligible to be enrolled into the degree course. His long-term goal was to "secure a job and settle down in New Zealand" (Interview I) with his family.

The English programme he was studying in was called English for Academic Purpose (EAP) at level 4. According to New Zealand Qualifications Authority (n.d.), "this qualification is at a level comparable to the Common European Framework of Reference mid B2". The programme documents of the department revealed that a full-time student had 16 contact hours per week in the classroom and they were also expected to do 16 hours of self-directed study per week. In order to graduate and obtain a level 4 certificate, a full-time student needed to study two credit-bearing courses, each worth 30 credits over 18 weeks. The focus of one course was on academic skills. To pass the course, students needed to sit a battery of 8 summative assessments and complete a research project. Another course targeted at oral and text skills, requiring students to complete on-going ePortfolio assessment tasks which were spread over the semester. The ePortfolio consisted of 2 self-reflection tasks and 16 inter-related, topical, skills-based tasks with 4 tasks for each of the following four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. These tasks entailed considerable collaboration among students; therefore, teachers usually used in-class time to set up groups and to explain task requirements. Students would then complete these tasks outside of class in their own time individually and collaboratively. By the end of the semester, students needed to upload all their completed tasks onto their personalized Google site, the platform chosen by the programme for the ePortfolio assessment. The present study focuses specifically on the process of completing these ePortfolio tasks.

Data collection procedures & instruments

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the results, two in-depth interviews were conducted on different timescales over a period of 20 weeks, with each lasting approximately 60 minutes. Both interviews used semi-structured, open-ended interview guidelines. The first interview tapped into the learner's online learning experiences in China while the second one focused on the New Zealand context. Interviews are a particularly suitable method for capturing the complexities of an individual's experiences. Although the same core interview guidelines were used, the format was kept flexible to allow the conversations to develop naturally and extensively and to enable the participant to guide the format and content. Subsequent questions were also added to the interview guidelines following the first interview for further information. Both interviews were conducted in English and were recorded with the permission of the participant. Additionally, course documents, the ePortfolio tasks, learning appts and websites, were also used.

Data analysis

The principle of qualitative data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) was followed to analyze the data collected. I started with open coding the first set of data. This involved affixing codes to the units of analysis in the data which could be single words, short phrases, complete sentences, utterances or extended discourse. The open coding was then followed by category construction where I grouped the codes denoting similar themes or concepts into tentative categories. They were then tested against the second set of data to see if the tentative categories exist and held up. When new tentative categories were identified, I re-examined the previous case and added the new provisional categories to the subsequent data analysis. This was a process of recursive analysis where data were read repeatedly; new codes were added until saturation had been reached, i.e. no new themes were found, and salient themes, categories or recurring patterns began to emerge. During this process, I stayed close to the data collected without imposing pre-conceived framework or structure on the data. The research question was frequently referred to and literature was revisited.

Drawing on Lincoln and Guba (1985), I used a number of measures to ensure credibility, transferability, and dependability of the qualitative analysis. These included (1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation; (2) rich and thick description; (3) member checking where each interview transcript was returned to the participant to check its accuracy, and his comments were incorporated in the data analysis.

In order to capture both patterns and examples, this report will balance the summary and quotation (Morgan, 1988) and the quotes will be taken directly from the data without the researcher's attention to the grammatical and linguistic errors in order to present the data in its entirety.

Results

The objective of this study was to investigate changes in a learner's path towards autonomy in online environments. In order to detect developments, I compared his online learning activities reported in the first interview (relating to China context) with those reported in the second interview (relating to New Zealand context).

Table one compares his self-directed learning activities in online environments in two different contexts. A closer examination of the data gathered revealed the following three new developments in his autonomous learning.

Becoming a critical user of multiple online resources

A noticeable development in his online learning was associated with his wider use of resources. As aforementioned, although Yong had started learning English since primary school, he "almost forgot all of it apart from some simple English vocabulary" (Interview I) due to a lack of English contact in his social and work environment in China. The prospect of changing his career direction and settling down in New Zealand with his family drove him to resume his English learning. To this end, he decided to resort to computers and the Internet for assistance and to do self-directed learning rather than adopt the traditional face to face mode of learning. He first sought advice on the best way to learn English using a popular Chinese Internet search engine, *Baidu*. He identified an online article written by a renowned Chinese teacher of English who argued that the best way to learn English was to receive sufficient inputs from listening and reading before putting in efforts to productive skills in speaking and writing. In Yong's view, the arguments presented by the teacher were "acceptable", "fascinating and different from the grammar-translation methods" (Interview I) that he used to be exposed to during his school years. He decided to follow the advice offered by this particular teacher. Reflecting on the journey, Yong felt that the advice he received from this teacher was very helpful and useful at that time and guided him through "to find out the way how other people learned English" (interview 1). Having decided the method, he then used the Internet as a learning resource centre for his self-directed English language learning. In order to improve his listening, he followed a link given by this online teacher and listened to free online listening materials. According to Yong, the listening materials covered a wide range of topics: "some is about life and businesses. Some introduce America" (Interview 1) and "the speaker read the article in two speeds, slow and normal" (Interview I). Following the advice of the teacher, he also bought a book online on pronunciation and a book series on vocabulary to improve his vocabulary size.

In the second interview, Yong reported that he had become "a more competent user of many online materials" (Interview II). His self-directed online learning included engaging in asynchronous online discussion forums on Moodle, the learning management system used by the department, using Google sites for his ePortfolio tasks and Quizlet to work on his vocabulary and spelling. He also learned on the course how to use the library databases to identify academic resources for his research. In addition, teachers on the course recommended a wide range of online resources and websites relating to language learning and language testing; hence, his online learning activities were no longer limited to listening and vocabulary exclusively but were extended to include all four language skills, academic study skills, and IELTS specific exercises. He commented that the variety of resources

recommended by his teachers enabled him "to consult different sites to seek advice on a variety of topics to suit my own learning needs whenever I identified a weakness in my learning or set a new goal" (Interview II).

Whilst Yong followed the advice and using online resources provided from one locally available expert in China, in the new learning context of New Zealand, he was exposed to multiple points of views and resources from across the globe. He had transformed from a limited online learner to a multi-source user and most important of all, he was able to explore resources available and make learning decisions on his own.

Table 1

Comparison of Yong's Self-directed, Online Learning Activities in China and New Zealand

	China	New Zealand
Activities	- Using Chinese search engines - Following the advice from a single online teacher - Purchasing a single set of learning materials - Using the online materials to work on his pronunciation, vocabulary and listening - Downloading free, online listening materials - Reading online materials on the best way to learn English - Learning alone and at home without plans	- Using English search engines alongside with Chinese search engines - Seeking advice from a variety of sources - Using a variety of ESL websites, e.g. ESL English Café, BBC radios and watching videos onYouTube to improve his listening - Reading articles from online magazines, ESL websites on best way to learn English - Purchasing second hand books online using TradeMe - Using data bases and library search engine to meet his learning needs - Using free online materials to prepare for IELTS exams - Connecting and chatting with other fellow students and friends using social media, e.g. "Wee chat" - Working in the library with other fellow students - Reflecting on strengths and weaknesses in his English - Initiating learning basing on his reflections - Planning and organizing his self-directed learning time

Becoming a collaborative online learner

Another evolvement was related to the way Yong conducted his self-directed learning. At the outset of the study, Yong reported that due to his introverted personality, when he was in China, he conducted all his self-directed learning in a home environment, in isolation and on his own. He described himself as a person who "was not good at social" and "learning outside home makes me feel nervous" (Interview I). He recalled when he was at school in China, his routines were to "attend class in the mornings and complete homework alone at home in the afternoons" (Interview I).

However, in the New Zealand context, teachers embraced learner-centred, constructive approaches to teaching and learning (Programme handbook). As described in the preceding section, the completion of the ePortfolio tasks entailed students working collaboratively and interdependently. For instance, they needed to do jigsaw readings and listening in groups. They were also required to give a group oral presentation and complete group seminar discussions for their speaking tasks. Their writing involved online peer-editing and contributing to online group forum discussions. As the course progressed, in the second interview (in week 20), Yong reported having spent considerable amount of time with his fellow classmates working collaboratively online or face to face in the library. He regarded himself as a highly competent user of computers, therefore he was always available to help other students who had problems with computer skills, e.g. setting up their Google sites, uploading completed work to the Google sites, sharing work with peers and using other digital tools. On the other hand, he considered speaking to be the weakest link in his language skills for which he received considerable support from his fellow students.

Yong started as a solo, independent learner working in isolation but towards the end of the study, he added a social dimension to his autonomy. He was not only able to take charge of independent learning on his own but also to work collaboratively and interdependently with others to attain a common goal. Yong seemed to benefit from this supportive community of learning. This may contribute to his positive and favourable view on working collaboratively:

> I like working with other students. It's a good thing that you can help other people. Secondly, it's good for me to practice speaking English. Especially, I enjoy reading opinions on the discussion board. Sometimes their views are different from me but I could learn from them. (Interview II)

Becoming a more capable manager and organiser

The final change was related to his use of metacognitive strategies. Reflecting on his learning in China, he described a typical learning day in China like this:

after the class I go home straight. I will do my homework after lunch. After that, sometimes I relax; sometimes I listen to music; sometimes I surf the Internet and at other times I chat with friends online. (Interview I)

He further commented that he tended to plan too much when he was in China. As a result, he could not implement and nor complete his plans. This made him "feel like a loser" (Interview II). It appears his learning activities in China were largely dictated by the course demand and teachers' requirements, and his self-initiated learning took place ad hoc without pre-planning and organization.

In comparison, the last interview revealed that he became more capable of managing time and planning his learning. He reported dividing his self-directed learning time into four blocks: completing course-related assignments, then engaging in self-initiated online listening which was then followed by self-initiated online reading and IELTS preparation. He allocated 2 hours for each activity and followed his plan through. Yong commented:

I think I have changed my time management skill. In China, I can't focus on study and I always think about other things. I can't finish what I planned to do. But now through this semester I think I can manage my time better. (Interview II)

When asked the reasons for the development, he attributed this transformation to the course structure and teachers' guidance:

This course helped me a lot. On this course, we have a lot to do. If I don't plan well, I will not complete work on time. Also, our teachers teach us how to manage our study. They asked us to write reflections and think about our learning. (Interview II)

Yong started as an ad hoc planner and follower of teachers' decision and had transformed to be a confident manager, capable of making decision about his own learning.

Discussion

The notion of affordance suggests a way of seeing the world as a meaning-laden environment which offers countless opportunities for actions (Hammond, 2010). Undoubtedly, technologies have offered unparalleled potential for language learners to conduct independent learning. However, affordances only define potential effects and they are not actual ones. The key to unlocking their potential is not the technology itself but the active learner. Learners have to stay active in order to detect the value of technologies and make decisions to fulfil the potential that the online environments have created for them (Van Lier, 2004). Evidently, Yong revealed different aspects of behavioural indictors as an autonomous learner. In both contexts, he took an active role and utilised learning

opportunities afforded by technologies. He was able to set up his goals for learning, made queries online, evaluated resources he identified on the Internet and made decisions about his learning. The technology-mediated environments served him as a resource centre where he could search and select materials for his self-directed learning, as a learning advisor/consultant that guided the direction of his autonomous learning and as a social platform where he engaged in academic discourse with peers. The benefits he received from this digital world attributed significantly to his ability to chart the path of his own learning.

Secondly, autonomous learning is by no means guideless and teacher less learning. It is essential that teachers create a learning condition whereby control over learning can be exercised by the learner and where the learner has the possibility of assuming responsibility. Basing on constructivist views, Savery and Duffy (1995) suggest four principles for technology-enhanced learning conditions: (1) learning is an active and engaged process. (2) learning is a process of constructing knowledge. (3) learners function at a metacognitive level. (4) learning involves social negotiation. The learning environment that Yong was exposed to in New Zealand seemed to meet these typical conditions which may have contributed to the evolvement of different dimensions of learner autonomy during Yong's trajectory, particularly collaborative autonomy. As mentioned in the preceding section, the course was structured with an expectation of students conducting a minimum of 16 hours' self-directed learning per week. For these self-directed study hours, the course required learners to complete 16 different on-going learning tasks, most of which learners had to work collaboratively with other peer students in their own time. The course structure and tasks on the course seemed to have created optimal conditions for fostering collaborative autonomy (Little, 2001). Similar findings were also reported in other studies (Beseghi, 2017; Lee, 2011; Sánchez-Gómez, Pinto-Llorente, & García-Peñalvo, 2017) where they revealed that learning tasks using social technologies can promote social interdependence and collaboration. Consistent with previous studies (e.g. Nguyen. 2012; Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011; Ribbe & Bezanilla, 2013), the results generated from this study favoured such an approach whereby teachers set some resources and the structure for activities and then learners produce a product. This seems to create conditions where learner autonomy could be fostered and promoted.

Conclusions

This case study reveals that Yong, acting as an active agent, availed himself of the unprecedented learning opportunities that technologies provided for him. From the

psychological perspective, he demonstrated his ability to make decisions and take control of his learning by setting goals and selecting his own materials. However, environmental factors also played a critical part. Other facets of learner autonomy evolved in his trajectory, e.g. collaborative autonomy, multi-resources user, and better manager, would not have been made possible without the optimal learning conditions he was exposed to. This finding suggests that instructors are instrumental in the formation of learner autonomy. Teachers need to create a learning environment/condition which is conducive to autonomous learning and where learners can excise their agency in learning, which should become a major target in a course design (Ribbe & Bezanilla, 2013).

Whilst this study may shed some light on the dynamism in learner autonomy, findings from a single case make a wider application difficult. Future studies could examine a larger sample size accompanied by a triangulation of data. Additionally, this study suggests that the learner exercised more autonomy owing to the course structure and task design. Future studies could investigate this further by comparing the effectiveness of different learning tasks on the formation of other dimensions of learner autonomy.

Notes on the contributor

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