

ISSN 2185-3762

Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal
<http://sisaljournal.org>

Fostering English-Use in a SALC through a Discussion-Based Classroom Intervention

Amelia Yarwood, Kanda University of International Studies,
 Japan

Crystal Rose-Wainstock, Kanda University of International
 Studies, Japan

Michelle Lees, Kanda University of International Studies,
 Japan

Corresponding email address: yarwood-a@kanda.kuis.ac.jp

Publication date: December, 2019.

To cite this article

Yarwood, A., Rose-Wainstock, C., & Lees, M. (2019). Fostering English-use in a SALC through a discussion-based classroom intervention. *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal*, 10(4), 256-378.

To link to this article

http://sisaljournal.org/archives/dec19/yarwood_et_al

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Please contact the authors for permission to re-print elsewhere.

Scroll down for article.

Fostering English-Use in a SALC through a Discussion-Based Classroom Intervention

Amelia Yarwood, Kanda University of International Studies, Japan

Crystal Rose-Wainstock, Kanda University of International Studies, Japan

Michelle Lees, Kanda University of International Studies, Japan

Abstract

Self-access learning centres (SALCs) are spaces in which learners are provided with access to resources that can assist them in achieving their goals. Within the SALC at Kanda University of International Studies, there is a wide range of resources available to students. However, a prior in-house study (Yarwood, Lorentzen, Wallingford, & Wongsarnpigoon, 2019) indicated that the resources were not being fully utilised by the students. The aim of our intervention study was to explore how targeted discussion topics could be used in classroom settings to assist non-English major students in feeling supported in their autonomous use of English within the SALC context. Data were collected in the form of a post-intervention survey, and focus group interviews. The data were then analysed using Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT), a sub-theory within Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 1987). Our findings suggest that the intervention fostered feelings of competence in both students' English abilities, and their ability for self-reflection. Feelings of competence combined with support from peers motivated a portion of students to increase their use of English within the SALC. While many students felt that the intervention had helped them to increase their use of English in the SALC, the majority of students were uncertain about the effectiveness of the intervention. We will present several possible reasons for these findings.

Keywords: Self-access, intervention studies, self-determination theory, awareness-raising

Self-access learning centres (SALCs) are spaces in which learners are provided with access to resources that can assist them in achieving their learning goals. Learner autonomy at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) follows a sociocultural view of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001) in which learning is mediated by interactions with others. An autonomous learner by KUIS' current definition is thus a learner who through reflection, develops a level of awareness and control of their learning processes, and therefore makes informed choices about their own learning (Learner Autonomy: KUIS definition, 2012).

In recent years, the SALC at KUIS has begun to explore the possibilities offered by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1987) to better understand how we are supporting the autonomy of our language learners. In 2018, research was conducted using Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT), a sub-theory within SDT, to get a better understanding about our students' views on whether the SALC was successfully creating an autonomy-supportive environment that fostered English-language use (Asta & Mynard, 2018; Yarwood, Lorentzen, Wallingford, & Wongsarnpigoon, 2019). One finding from this research was that students felt that changes in their autonomous use of English in the SALC needed to come from within themselves. For example, "When I go to the SALC, I get passive posture and I want [to be] more active" (Yarwood et al., 2019, p. 244). Comments like these suggest that language learners are aware of their capacity for autonomy, but for unspecified reasons struggle to behave in accordance with their desires. Given that self-access learning contexts require learners to volitionally engage with the resources available, it was determined that the development of interventions may be beneficial in supporting learner autonomy. However, since attendance in the SALC is not mandated, issues of reach became apparent when brainstorming possible interventions. To ameliorate this issue, the first author, a member of the SALC staff, contacted members of the English Language Institute (ELI) to collaborate on a classroom-based intervention. The purpose of which was to support students' use of English in the SALC through autonomy-supportive, awareness-raising discussions in the classroom.

In the first part of the paper we outline our rationale for choosing a classroom-intervention, as well as the theoretical framework used. In the second part of the paper we provide the methodology and details of the intervention, while the third section highlights our three main findings. We conclude by calling for more teachers to investigate how classrooms can become autonomy-supportive environments that foster self-awareness and encourage the use of self-access resources.

The interactive relationship between the SALC, ELI and students

Our SALC building is a large, two-story, open-plan complex designed to offer staff and students a range of learning environments from individual study spaces, conversation lounges; otherwise known as Yellow sofas, and ICT-equipped classrooms. These classrooms act as bases for many of the ELI's compulsory and elective English courses, while many of the SALC's

physical spaces are utilised for classroom presentations and the conversation and academic support services provided by the ELI (For more information see Burke, et al., 2018).

SALC staff members, or Learning Advisors (LAs), offer support to students through advising sessions in which intentional dialogue is used to encourage learners to reflect, and take charge of their learning (Kato & Mynard, 2016). It is also the role of LAs to support ELI teachers through SALC-orientations and classroom workshops on aspects of self-directed language learning. From these interactions, students become familiar with the LA assigned to their classes, and this can encourage them to book advising sessions. As such, there is a highly interactive relationship between the SALC, the ELI, and the students.

Our intervention aimed to utilise these existing relationships in order to help students create stronger links between the classroom and the resources available outside the classroom. As mentioned, use of the SALC is not mandated, however, all students do pass through the building for their English classes. We felt that if students were given opportunities to discuss their learning then they might develop greater awareness of their needs, and how the SALC might support those needs, while simultaneously being encouraged by their peers.

Basic psychological needs theory

The aims of our intervention aligned with the concept central to the SDT approach. That is, that the satisfaction of basic needs is a necessary condition for optimal development and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). While researchers have suggested the inclusion of other basic psychological needs such as meaning and self-esteem (Andersen, Chen, & Carter, 2000; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 2000), the need for competence, relatedness and autonomy stand steadfast at the heart of BPNT (Ryan & Brown, 2003). In the interest of clarity, a brief explanation will be provided for each of these needs.

Competence is the sense an individual has of being capable. It is suggested that individuals need to engage in challenges so that they may develop the skills required for mastery, and therefore able to experience feelings of effectance (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Competence may be exemplified in an individual's curiosity and wonder. For example, when language learners question the connotations of words to get a sense of their nuance.

Relatedness deals with the feeling of being connected to others in your community (Ryan & Deci, 2008). In a language learning context, this may include teachers, learning advisors,

classmates, or exchange students. It may even include those on the periphery of the formal educational experience such as parents, friends, and potential employers, since each of these individuals can affect the feeling of connection and belonging learners desire.

Autonomy in SDT is similar to the definitions already presented. The need to self-regulate experiences and actions (Ryan & Deci, 2017), is central and so too is the sense of volition. A key difference lies in the view that not all intentional actions are truly self-regulated or autonomous, but rather may be regulated by external or internal pressures (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Autonomy is thus when an individual acts in a manner that is fully-informed, self-endorsed, and congruent with their internal values and interests.

Awareness and needs satisfaction

Needs satisfaction according to Ryan and Deci (2017) is facilitated by autonomy support. Autonomy support in SDT literature is framed as a responsiveness to the perspectives and concerns of individuals within our care, meaning we as LAs and ELI teachers should be providing our students with opportunities to share and discuss their experiences as language learners, as well as their fears and concerns. It also suggests that we should be providing opportunities for reflection so individuals can gain greater awareness of their internal and external desires. This awareness then acts as a foundation for autonomous learning behaviours that are consistent with individuals' values and basic needs. Furthermore, individuals who lack the ability to self-reflect and self-organise have been shown to have a lower capacity for autonomously regulating their behaviours than those who have gained insights from self-reflection (Deci & Ryan, 2000, Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Awareness does not occur in a vacuum. Within our SALC/ELI context, interactions between teachers and students, or student to student interactions are considered spaces for awareness to grow and develop.

Methodology

The intervention

It is common practice for many English classrooms to start their lessons with warm-up conversations. By adapting the warm-up conversation activity to suit the aims of this study, we were able to find a place for raising awareness without adding to teacher preparation time. When

deciding the contents of the discussion prompts, we referred to advising notes kept by the first author. These notes were compiled over the course of the previous academic year and detailed issues KUIS students commonly discussed regarding their language learning and use. From these notes we generated 28 discussion prompts and selected 14 to use in the intervention (Appendix A). Of these 14 prompts, five were related specifically to the SALC, three related to classroom situations, five were applicable to both the SALC and classroom environments, while one focused on the desire to study overseas. We anticipated that the prompts would elicit active peer-to-peer discussions since the situations described were ones familiar to KUIS students. Additionally, we made a deliberate decision to not limit the prompts to the SALC. Not all students use the SALC, so we did not want to limit students' ability to participate in the discussions. To further support the students' output, scaffolding in the form of information questions was provided, as can be seen in Figure 1.

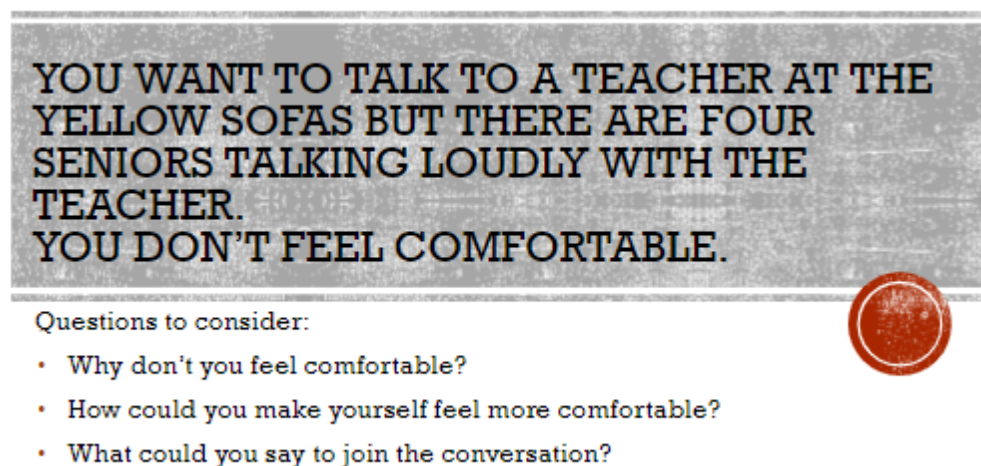


Figure 1. Conversation Lounge or 'Yellow Sofa' Prompt

Over the course of the six-week intervention, we divided each participating class into groups of three to five students to discuss a prompt for 10 minutes. Following this group discussion, we held a five-minute class debrief in which the teacher asked the groups to summarise their discussion and share it with the class. Due to classroom language policies, discussions were conducted in English, with Japanese permitted only for clarification purposes. Students were encouraged to share their own personal stories, and ask questions of each other.

Participants

Our participants were non-English major students enrolled in the first-year compulsory English classes taught by the second and third authors. They received an explanation of the research before being invited to volunteer their consent at the beginning of the semester. For the duration of the intervention 94 students participated, however, only 89 responses could be collected in the post-intervention survey (Appendix B). From the post-intervention respondents, 39 provided responses to the open-ended survey item.

Upon completing the post-intervention survey, our participants were invited to join in focus group discussions with others from their class. While we had fourteen students volunteer, only nine students attended the focus group interviews. Table 1 below provides the details of those participants.

Table 1

Focus Group Participants

Gender	Pseudonyms
F	Yumi
F	Tomoko
F	Ayaka
F	Miyako
F	Tomoko
M	Kouichi
M	Ryusuke
F	Himiko
F	Mana

Survey

We used a survey to gather data about student use of English in the SALC after the intervention. Participants had the option to respond to an open-ended item if they stated the intervention had increased their use of English in the SALC. This item was designed to collect further data regarding student perceptions of how the intervention had increased their use of

English. All survey items were written in English and Japanese, with Japanese translations being verified by a bilingual speaker.

Responses from the open-ended survey item were assigned descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2015) in Excel and analysed in line with the BPNT framework. We worked in pairs to establish descriptions of the codes that were generated until agreement was reached. The agreed upon codes were then used during a second round of analysis.

Focus group interviews

Chosen for their economical method of data collection and adaptability in terms of structure (Dörnyei, 2007), we conducted parallel focus groups with students from each of the participating classes. The decision to allow the participants to act as their own facilitators during the focus group interviews derived from a tendency for lower tier students to focus on the ELI teacher or LA when responding. To mitigate this issue, we printed the interview questions (Appendix C) on A4 size paper and placed them in the centre of the table used during the session. Each question was written in Japanese and English to support students' understanding. As with the survey translations, these were also checked by a bilingual staff member. Participants were instructed to discuss each of the questions for as long as they liked using English as much as possible. Japanese was permitted, but interpretations by the speaker's classmates were requested to assist with data collection. If necessary, we were on standby to assist with facilitation, but otherwise did not participate in the discussions.

We transcribed audio data collected from the focus groups and Japanese translations were checked by a bilingual speaker. We analysed relevant sections of the transcriptions in an Excel document. Codes used for the focus group data followed the same explorative process as the open-response survey items mentioned previously.

Analysis and Discussion

According to the 89 survey responses (Figure 2) collected upon the conclusion of the intervention, 39 students stated that they had begun to use more English in the SALC since participating in the targeted discussion activity.

Do you think you use English in the SALC more since participating in the discussion activity? ディスカッションの活動に参加して以来、SALCでもっと英語を使おうと思いますか。

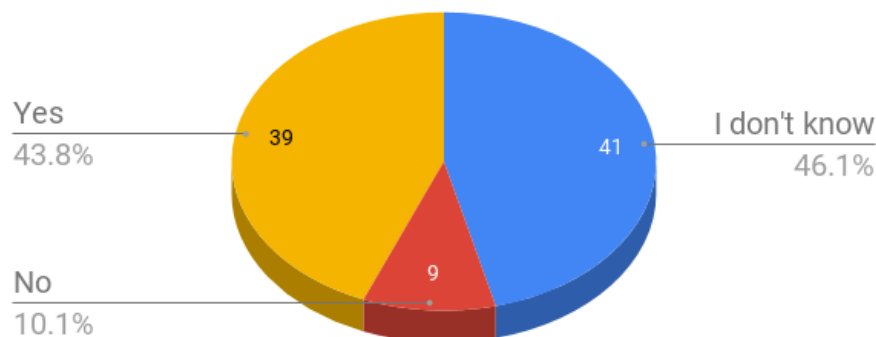


Figure 2. Student Post-intervention Survey Responses

When asked to provide reasons in the open-ended survey question, responses typically included ‘practice,’ ‘confidence,’ and ‘fun’ as key themes.

Discussion 内で SALC で英語を授業外で使う楽しさや大切さを知り、もっと SALC に行き yellow sofa やネイティブの先生たちと会話をして英語を磨きたいと思ったから。 [*I understand the importance of using English in a fun way in the discussion and outside of the class in the SALC, so I want to increase going to the SALC and talking to native-speaking teachers.*]

This is because I got confidence from these activities so I think I can participate in English activities in the SALC more!

ディスカッションをする前より自分に自信がつくから。 [*Because I have more confidence than before we did the discussions.*]

Within a BPNT framework, these responses, in particular, ‘practice’ and ‘confidence’ suggest that the desire to experience feelings of effectance hold a predominant place in the English-speaking lives of our students. As our participants are not English majors, they have fewer structured opportunities outside of the compulsory English courses to develop their

English abilities. Without structured opportunities designed to push students into participating and developing their skills, the onus of proactively creating opportunities for improvement is placed on the learners themselves; many of whom may lack the confidence to self-organise and create the necessary conditions for competence-development. While conducting the focus group interviews, three of the participants highlighted how the discussions helped them to understand the similarities between their own thoughts and those of their classmates. This was especially in relation to the fear of making mistakes and perceived lack of English ability:

During these discussion, I think everyone want to [speak in] English, but afraid of using English, so not only me feel afraid of using English. (Mana)

As I said before, [classmate's name] thinks he is not good at English. And I could reflect on [the] thought that I can't speak in English at all. So [classmate's name] is like me. I thought [the discussion] was the best way for us to think positively and actively. (Himiko)

At first I thought native speakers can't understand me if I don't speak perfect English. But in fact, making mistake is not that big. They can understand me with weird English. (Kenichi)

These comments provide some evidence to suggest that fear of mistakes and perceived lack of English ability may contribute to low confidence, and thereby prevent learners from seeking opportunities to support their own feelings of competence. In the case of Kenichi and Mana, both imply that their confidence was lower prior to the discussion, adding support for the effectiveness of the intervention in terms of supporting the students' need for competence.

In comparison, a smaller number of students (nine), felt that their English use in the SALC had not changed with one student from the open-ended survey stating unequivocally:

ディスカッションに参加しても SALC で英語を使うとは限らないから。
[*Joining the discussion doesn't mean you'll use English in the SALC*]

While some students in the survey may have felt the discussion activity had no effect on their English use in the SALC, there was a lack of certainty among the majority of the students (41 students). The discussions may have supported the students' need to feel competent by increasing their confidence as mentioned earlier, however, as the extract above suggests, supporting competence in the classroom does not necessarily translate into feeling confident and competent enough to engage with a less structured self-access context.

From these results, we suggest that this classroom intervention has the potential to support some students' English use in the SALC. The intervention also appears to have the potential to facilitate students' English use in environments other than a SALC; a finding that will be explored in later sections. The subsequent sections will explore in what ways the discussion activity was autonomy-supportive and how this autonomy-support lead to increased English use in the SALC.

Competence and relatedness

As the data have suggested, students' feelings of competence appeared to be a central concern during the discussions. During the focus groups, when asked which of the discussion prompts were most memorable, five of the nine participants selected the prompt connected to the 'yellow sofa' (Figure 1 above), a lounge area where students are able to sit and chat with ELI teachers, international students or other KUIS students. Interacting on these sofas is considered desirable but difficult for many students due to various affective factors, including issues of confidence or social dynamics (Burke et al., 2018). Within our own study, evidence of these affective factors limiting opportunities to improve English skills in the SALC were apparent:

I haven't used the yellow sofa yet. Yeah, I want to join them. But you know [it's] difficult. Many many native speakers. So I get pressure. (Kenichi)

I tried to talk with the people who were sitting in yellow sofa but I couldn't cause I was scared to talk with them. There is only one person who [I] know in the yellow sofa so I couldn't. I need more confidence to talk with them. (Himiko)

The yellow sofas are clearly memorable to the students which offers an interesting insight into the interplay between students' need for competence as well as relatedness since the yellow sofas appear to simultaneously represent a challenge and a community. The people who converse at the yellow sofas become part of an English speaking community perceived as being courageous, outgoing, or capable as shown in Yumi's comment below:

I was interested in visiting yellow sofa. And at the time, my friend talk to me about yellow sofa. I was surprised because she went to yellow sofa alone. So it was surprising for me. Her talk was impressive for me.

Yumi indicated later that despite feeling inspired by her friend's decision to go to the yellow sofa, she had not personally been able to take the same actions. When asked what difficulties they faced while doing the discussion activity, the following comment was made by Miyako:

I didn't like the yellow sofa one because I don't go there. And if there are four senior students talking the teacher, I won't join them.

Miyako's comment implies a lack of membership to the yellow sofa community in relation to her position as a younger member of the university cohort. However, she continues by stating:

Yellow sofa is difficult. Sometimes [I] go upstairs and there are many seniors students so I have I didn't have a chance but after this discussion [Classmate's name] and [Classmate's name] and me went to yellow sofa. So I think this discussion is difficult but it is nice to go to.

While the exact role of the discussion prompt in precipitating the action is unclear, Miyako's comment does show that the support of peers may encourage learners to take proactive steps to join communities. This may be especially important when membership to an individual's

desired community first requires the intimidating perception of that community to be modified or completely nullified.

While the desire to gain membership to a community that represents a degree of competence was visible within the data, other instances of relatedness need satisfaction were also found. In particular, the role of peers in creating a community of learners who support each other to identify strengths, weaknesses and provide encouragement for proactive learning behaviours. When the focus group interviewees were asked to explain the importance of their classmates' belief in their abilities, 'relatedness' appeared in a quarter of the coded responses. These responses illuminated students' desires to be part of the learning community as a supporter or role model to their classmates:

If my classmates believe me. If I could improve my English skills, I think I could work harder. Because if nobody says that I could improve it, I won't have the power to do it. I'm not good at speaking and liking English. So I want to depend on some great student. (Miyako)

I think this was about my responsibility for learning English but I think if each student believes each other. We grow up. (Himiko)

From these responses we can see that the support of peers appears to satisfy students' needs for connection and belonging, and encourages them to work towards the development of their English skills. A benefit of the intervention appears to lie in the provision of opportunities for students to further this connection. Furthermore, due to the nature of the discussion prompts, it provides a chance for students to support each other through the pinpointing of areas for improvement:

Each of people have good [point] and weak [point]. I think you don't know your weakness? Maybe you don't know or you don't realise. So only friends, we can advise your weakness. We can encourage some of our friends. (Ryusuke)

This form of awareness-raising whereby peers identify the strengths and weaknesses of their classmates in a supportive manner to encourage personal growth highlights the benefits of

discussion-based interventions such as ours in promoting feelings of competence and relatedness.

Supporting autonomy

The data highlights the importance of relatedness and autonomy, with the students feeling that they have a support network and community in which they can share their experiences and concerns. The data positively show that during the discussions, the students acted autonomously through their increasing self-awareness and ability to identify the skills that they had, the actions they had taken, and the actions they felt they needed to take in order to continue to develop and grow as learners. We believe that this led to an opportunity for reflection as it may have assisted the students in developing their level of awareness and control as a learner, which appears to have led to some action. Examples of this were recorded during the focus group interviews, where students shared the impact of the discussions, and any changes they had identified, with regards to the way that they learned or used English in the SALC:

Before this discussion, I decide to use LPP or academic support area once a week and [gets out paper schedule] I make this graph and [write the] name and topic and comments [I get] from there and before discussion I sometimes forgot to using there but after discussion I probably use once a week. (Ayaka)

I think I came to be able to speak English more natural than past year. For example, I had a conversation with Michelle on the second floor in Academic Support Center on Monday. I could good conversation. A pretty smooth conversation. (Kenichi)

The discussions appeared to have provided the students with the chance to develop their learning communities and strengthen their support network within each class, which for some students appears to have been an important motivating factor. The example from the focus group below shows the effect that this had on desire and we can almost see the student have a moment of self-realisation as they clarify the steps they want to take to develop their competence:

After the discussion, I think everyone '仲良くなる' [*get along*], get along with... ["each other" provided by teacher] Yes. And I think I want to use more English and speaking English. (Mana)

This same student later identifies skill areas that she feels are lacking and we see her take the first steps toward action. As discussed in the section on awareness and needs satisfaction, SDT has shown us that awareness can help build a foundation for autonomous learning behaviour, which we can see in the example from the focus group interviews below:

By talking [about] my learning, I can understand what skills is not enough. Like grammar and word, so it's so difficult to explain. Mmm...私の勉強で何が出来ていないのかを理解するのに楽だ. [*I felt comfortable in terms of understanding what I couldn't do with regard to my study.*] (Mana)

Interestingly, while one student thought that there had been no change to how they learned or used English, their comment demonstrates the benefit that affirmation can have when learners share their thoughts and opinions. It appears that when students share their experiences and they are similar to the experiences of their peers it gives them reassurance. We believe that this can, in turn, support the autonomous decisions they make. In the example below from the focus group interviews, Yumi has noticed that she had the same opinions as her peers, so while it did not have any influence on change, it did appear to act as a reassurance:

I think no. I think because we have almost the same opinions so... So kind of just make sure. (Yumi)

King (2013) showed that students can be self-conscious about how they appear in front of their peers and the need to feel at one with the group, which can have an effect on their desire to act. This was also recorded in a study conducted by Humphries, Burns, and Tanaka (2015), where a student explained how a noticed difference in level with her peers made her feel negative emotions as shown in the quote, “when I was better than the other students, I felt that I was isolated and felt guilty from showing officials my English” (p.171). Such feelings impact on students’ willingness to use English in a classroom setting, interact publicly (outside of the classroom) in English, and their desire to improve, which further illustrates the importance of Yumi’s comment on what she noticed from the discussions.

The intervention appears to demonstrate the importance that affirmation can have on students' autonomy and in supporting the autonomous decisions that they make. The discussions provided the students with the opportunity to understand that their actions and desires were often shared by their peers - facts which previously appeared to have been unknown. We believe that this supported students in developing greater autonomy as it provided them with reassurance. While the students were not able to fully actualise their desired learning behaviours, the support of their peers allowed them to start the self-reflective process and take their first steps. In addition, it helped them to realise that while different students had different skills and learning techniques that may not have mirrored their own, it did not discredit or discourage them from their own learning style. Two examples of this were recorded in the focus groups:

It was useful to make sure how to learn English rather than change it. These are very useful to make 雰囲気 [*atmosphere*]. (Yumi)

Know the various way to learn. Some people are good at memorise words. Other people are good at speaking so I could realise that we can study in the way that, we can still study your favourite way. (Kouichi)

Overall there is evidence that students feel supported and have a sense of community which positively motivated them to begin the self-reflective process. For students like Ayaka and Kenichi this led to an autonomous decision to take action, while for other students like Mana it helped her to identify skill areas that she felt she was lacking in, and consider the first steps toward action. It was clear that the discussions had a positive influence on some students as it helped them to become more self-aware and supported them in exhibiting autonomous learning behaviour. Even with the students like Yumi, who stated that there was no change, it showed that their personal decisions regarding their current trajectories were validated by the community of their peers. This demonstrates the importance of support and affirmation when we look at learners and their autonomy.

English use elsewhere

While the data seem to show the discussion activity had many positive impacts on student experience, namely by creating a sense of community, increasing awareness, and increasing

confidence, as mentioned in earlier sections, some of the data suggest that the activity did not necessarily lead to an increased use of English in the SALC. Some participants suggested that their use of English had increased in class or in other unspecified contexts. The following examples come from the focus group discussions:

Yeah, this increased my time speaking English. In out of class. So that's why I sometimes speak English in my house. Yes, I guess it changed a bit. (Kenichi)

I sometimes discusses these kinds of these topics in Japanese. So I know the opinion in Japanese. So yes, I don't change the thinking. But time of using English is increase. (Ryusuke)

We will discuss in English in the class. And after I suddenly, I began to speak English even when it is out of the class. (Himiko)

These types of responses may indicate that participants felt an increased awareness of their own competence, so their use of English increased in various contexts outside of the SALC. While one participant mentioned using English at home, the others did not indicate in which contexts their English use had increased. Participants have various opportunities to use English outside of the SALC, for instance, through exchanges with language partners and in their classes, so it is possible their increase in English use takes place within such contexts.

Conclusion

Our aim in this study was to explore how targeted discussion topics could be used in classroom settings to assist non-English major students in feeling supported in their autonomous use of English in the SALC. From the findings, we feel that there is evidence to support the notion that having students discuss issues related to their language learning among their peers, can support their need for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. In particular, there is evidence to suggest that through the discussions students develop peer communities that promote self-awareness, and foster feelings of competence - not only in their speaking abilities but in their reflective abilities, which work together to encourage English use in the SALC.

While the primary target was to increase English use in the SALC, there was evidence to suggest that the autonomy-supportive nature of the intervention may not have been sufficient. Discussions provided opportunities for increasing self-awareness, but they were limited in terms of time and scaffolding. Learners lacking in the skills to translate desire into action may require more time and assistance to autonomously regulate their behaviours. Future interventions studies may benefit from eliciting student responses as to what measures they feel would help them to take the next steps. Alternatively, students may have developed the self-awareness and autonomous regulatory behaviour we aimed to support, however, it may have led to increased English use outside the SALC, rather than within it. Data showed that the intervention appeared to reaffirm students' current learning methods, however, if these learning methods did not already include SALC usage then it is natural for the students to continue not making use of SALC resources.

The relationship between the SALC and the ELI at KUIS may be unique, however, interventions such as this one offer an insight into possible mutual benefits. If classroom spaces can become autonomy-supportive environments for reflection on language learning, while simultaneously making connections to self-access resources, then more students may feel confident and motivated enough to proactively seek opportunities to use English in these contexts. Likewise, the more students engage with SALC resources, the more they may gain confidence and maintain motivation for their classroom studies. It is our hope that more intervention studies explore the possibilities for a symbiotic relationship between university classrooms and self-access centres. In particular, we encourage teachers to conduct action research within their language classrooms and experiment with different forms of discussions to identify what scaffolds are needed to help students feel supported and capable of enacting their chosen language learning methods. In universities where self-access learning spaces and materials are present, longitudinal studies with a small group could be used to gain further insight into how in-class discussions can lead to greater self-awareness and action. Language learning is no easy feat but by giving our students opportunities to become self-aware in autonomy-supportive environments while simultaneously highlighting the resources available to them, we can hopefully make their journey a little easier.

Notes on the Contributors

Amelia Yarwood is a Learning Advisor at Kanda University of International Studies. She has worked in education in both Australia and Japan. Her research interests include L2 identity and motivation, emotions in language learning, language learner autonomy, and curriculum design.

Crystal Rose-Wainstock is an English Lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies. She has been in the field of ELT for about 11 years with experience in South Korea, the United States, and Japan. Her research interests include educational technology, computer-assisted language learning, learner autonomy, and language assessment.

Michelle Lees is an English Lecturer at Kanda University of International Studies. Her research interests include computer-based language learning and how it may be utilised to help governments achieve their long-term language goals within schools, government policy in language education, and socio-cultural factors that affect SLA.

References

- Asta, E., & Mynard, J. (2018). Exploring basic psychological needs in a language learning center. Part 1: Conducting student interviews. *Relay Journal*, 1(2), 382-404. Retrieved from https://kuis.kandagaigo.ac.jp/relayjournal/issues/sep18/asta_mynard/
- Burke, M., Hooper, D., Kushida, B., Lyon, P., Mynard, J., Sampson, R., & Taw, P. (2018). Observing a social learning space: A summary of an ethnographic project in progress. *Relay Journal*, 1(1), 209-220. Retrieved from https://kuis.kandagaigo.ac.jp/relayjournal/issues/jan18/burke_et_al/
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1987). The support of autonomy and the control of behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(6), 1024-1037. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.53.6.1024
- Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (2000). The ‘what’ and ‘why’ of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behaviour. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268. doi:10.1207/s15327965pli1104_01
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Humphries, S., Burns, A., & Tanaka, T. (2015). “My head became blank and I couldn’t speak”: Classroom factors that influence English speaking. *The Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2(3), 164-175. Retrieved from

<https://caes.hku.hk/ajal/index.php/ajal/article/view/230>

Kanda University of International Studies. Learner Autonomy: KUIS definition [internal document] (2012). Self-Access Learning Center, , Chiba, Japan.

Kato, S., & Mynard, J. (2016). *Reflective dialogue: Advising in language learning*. New York, NY: Routledge.

King, J. E. (2013). Silence in the second language classrooms of Japanese universities. *Applied Linguistics*, 34(3), 325-434. doi:10.1093/applin/ams043

Lantolf, J., & Pavlenko, A. (2001) (S)econd (L)anguage (A)ctivity Theory: Understanding second language learners as people. In: M. Breen (Ed.), *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research* (pp. 141-158). London, UK: Longman.

Lantolf, J. P. (Ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Pyszczynski, T., Greenberg, J., & Solomon, S. (2000). Toward a dialectical analysis of growth and defensive motives. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 301–305. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2001-03012-009>

Ryan, R., & Brown, K. W. (2003). Why we don't need self-esteem: On fundamental needs, contingent love and mindfulness. *Psychological Inquiry*, 14(1), 27-82. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1401_02

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2008). Self-determination theory and the role of basic psychological needs in personality and the organization of behavior. In O. John, R. Robbins, & L. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 654-678). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Ryan, E. L., & Deci, R. M. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development and wellness*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles, Chicago: Sage Publications.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Yarwood, A., Lorentzen, A., Wallingford, A., & Wongsarnpigoon, I. (2019). Exploring basic psychological needs in a language learning center. Part 2: The autonomy-supportive nature and limitations of a SALC. *Relay Journal*, 2(1), 236-250. Retrieved from https://kuis.kandagaigo.ac.jp/relayjournal/issues/jan19/yarwood_et_al/

Appendices

Appendix A

Discussion Activity Prompts

SALC-specific prompts

1. You want to talk to a teacher at the Yellow sofas but there are four seniors taking loudly with the teacher. You don't feel comfortable.
2. You want to practice speaking in English but your friends don't want to. They keep using Japanese on the English-only floor.
3. You want to book a 15 minute conversation with an ELI teacher. How can you prepare?
4. You want to join a learning community but you don't know anyone who attends.
5. You're talking to the international students. You've noticed they swear/curse a lot. You don't feel comfortable.

Classroom-specific prompts

1. Your teacher speaks quickly, and with a thick NZ accent. It is sometimes hard to understand.
2. Your classmates use a lot of Japanese in class How can YOU change the class atmosphere?
3. You are always stressed about homework

Prompts applicable to all contexts

1. What does it mean to be a 'Fluent Speaker'?
2. Native speakers are better to learn from. Discuss.
3. Speaking skills are more important than writing skills. Discuss.
4. You want to make English-speaking friends. What is the best way?
5. Do you fear making mistakes in English?
6. Your grammar has to be perfect to be understood.

Exchange programme prompt

1. You want to study overseas (abroad) next year.

Appendix B

Post-Intervention Survey Questions

Using English in the SALC SALC では英語を使っている。

Do you think you use English in the SALC more since participating in the discussion activity? ディスカッションの活動に参加して以来、SALC でもっと英語を使うと思いますか。

If you said 'YES', can you tell us why? Japanese or English is okay. 「はい」と言ったら、説明にしてください。（日本語や英語でもいい）

Appendix C

Focus Group Question Guide

Background

1. Describe what experiences you've had thinking about how you learn before this semester.

大学入学以前に、自分の学習方法について考えた経験はありますか？その経験について教えて下さい。

Discussion activity

1. How did you feel when discussing the discussion questions with your classmates?
クラスメイトとディスカッショントピックについて話した際、どのような気持ちでしたか？
2. What were the greatest difficulties you faced when doing the activity?
ディスカッションをしていた際に難しかった事は何でしたか？
3. How useful was talking about your learning? Explain.
自分の学習について話をする事はどう役立ちましたか？説明してください。
4. Which discussion was most memorable for you? Explain
最も記憶に残っているディスカッショントピックはどれでしたか？なぜか説明してください。

English Use

1. How important is it for your classmates to believe in your abilities? Explain.
クラスメイトがあなたには英語を学ぶ能力があると信じる事は、どの位重要ですか？説明してください
2. Did talking with your classmates during the discussion activity change the way you thought about English?
ディスカッションの際に、クラスメイトと話す事で自分の英語に対する考えは変わりましたか？

3. Did talking with your classmates during the discussion activity change the way you actually learned or used English in class or in the SALC?

ディスカッションを通して、クラスメイトと話す事で、その後の授業内外での英語の学習や使用に変化がありましたか？

Opening up the floor

1. Any other comments?

他にコメントがありますか？