Qualitative Research and Learner Development

Table of Contents

Qualitative Research and Learner Development 2
Masuko Miyahara, International Christian University
Patrick Kiernan, Meiji University
Chika Hayashi, Seikei University

Researching the Relationship of Learner Emotion to Language Learning: Issues and Challenges 7
Nicole Gallagher, Toyo University

Serious Leisure: A Diary Study of Self-directed Learning and Motivation in Eikaiwa 20
Daniel Hooper, Kanda University of International Studies

Exploring the Dual Role of Advisors in English Learning Advisory Sessions 41
Ryo Moriya, Waseda University (graduate student)

Exploring the Development of Learner Autonomy from a Postmodern and Social Constructivist Perspective: Prioritising Voices 62
Christine O'Leary, Sheffield Hallam University

Qualitative Research Methods in Second Language Learning:Review and Evaluation 85
Clare F. Kaneko, Keiwa College

Storytelling for Learning and Healing: Parallel Narrative Inquiries in Language Counselling 100
Leena Karlsson & Fergal Bradley, University of Helsinki Language Centre

TEN Qualitative Research Dilemmas and What to Do About Them. 117
Gary Barkhuizen, University of Auckland, New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative Research and Learner Development

Masuko Miyahara, International Christian University
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The theme for this issue, qualitative research and learner development, emerged from our shared questions and concerns about how such research is conducted. When and why do we decide to take a qualitative approach? For us, a mixture of dissatisfaction with the limitations of results provided by quantitative methods on the one hand and an interest in the richness of narrative accounts of experiences of teaching and learning on the other made qualitative research seem more closely related to our practice and interests. In particular, qualitative research seemed intimately concerned with giving voice to the lived experience of teaching and learning. Masuko's research has focused on issues of learner development and autonomy (Miyahara, 2011) giving voice both to her teaching context, where bilingual development is central to her institution's educational philosophy and public identity, as well as her personal development as a bilingual. Her approach to this has been through narrative explorations of learning histories which have allowed her to engage with such slippery topics as emotion and identity (Miyahara, 2015). Similarly, Chika's interests in learner autonomy have involved her in narrative explorations of the voices of learners and teachers through such themes as reflection, professional development (Hayashi, 2010), learner autonomy (Hayashi, 2011) and collaboration (Hayashi, 2014). As with Masuko, an interest in the learning experience, derived both from her own development as a bilingual and from those in her classroom, have attracted her to the richness of qualitative approaches. Patrick's research is concerned with language and identity using narrative and qualitative approaches that give voice to the participants, whether teachers (Kiernan, 2010), learners (Kiernan, 2018) or cyclists (Kiernan, 2017).

Although, as our experiences attest, qualitative research may appear to be personal explorations that occur outside the mainstream of language teaching, the emergence of qualitative research in language teaching research has its roots in the shift away from a preoccupation with teaching methods towards an interest in the learner that dates back to the 1970s. This shift was realised in the emergence of terms and notions such as "learner-centred," "student-centred," "individual," "learner autonomy," "diversity" and "meeting individual needs" which started to dominate the language learning discourse (e.g., Benson, 2007; and see Larsen-Freeman, 2018). The shift that recognizes the centrality of the learner in the learning process has had a great impact on the foundational ideas that shape research and practice in the field of learner development as well as our own personal ideas. This has resulted in what could be termed as a methodological transformation in research evident in the recent increase in the number of research projects taking a qualitative approach (Benson et al, 2009; Punch, 2009). We see this as a healthy development and a maturing of the field of language education as well as a direction to which we hope the papers in this volume may contribute.

Some of the main areas of inquiry that we proposed to potential contributors at the outset of this project include the following:

1. How do we do qualitative research into learner development?

   What are the practical concerns and issues we face in formulating research questions, in the approaches and methods that we use, in the settings that we choose to explore, and in how we gather and analyse "data"? What do we mean by "data" and "analysis" in qualitative research?
2. How do we negotiate the project with learners and other participants?

   What are the roles, relationships and identities of the researcher(s) and participants? How do we include others in qualitative research?
3. How do we write up qualitative research about learner development?

   In what ways do different genres of writing enable or constrain us in writing about qualitative research into learner development?
4. What makes research into learner development "qualitative"?

   What are the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research? What are the philosophical ideas about knowledge and truth that we can draw on for our research?
5. What ethical issues arise and who "owns" the research?

   What happens when ethical purity meets messy reality?

Using these five main questions as pillars for further inquiry, the aim of this issue was not to provide answers, but to delineate and identify the issues pertaining to conducting qualitative research surrounding learner development. With particular reference to the fifth question listed above, one of the overriding issues that we observed throughout the papers is the subject of reflexivity. This topic is addressed explicitly in some of the papers in this issue, while it is embedded in a more implicit manner in others. A researcher's reflexivity, in the broadest sense, is "the ability to be able to self-consciously refer to him or herself in relation to the *production of knowledge* about the research topics" (Roulston, 2010, p. 116). However, this grand definition leads us to ponder questions about the moral and social value and educational relevance of the knowledge that is generated (Ortega, 2005, 2012). As Ushioda (2018) recently stated in her plenary speech at a Psychology of Language Learning conference held at Waseda University, the following questions need to be addressed: *Who is the research for? Who owns the research? How and why do we conduct research? What is the societal and educational value of the research?* Although such questions are pertinent to all research, these should also be the very questions that we should critically examine when we pursue our research in the field of learner development (and for that matter, qualitative research in general). In turn, the answers to these questions determine whose voices emerge in the published research as well as whether this is a single voice or a Researching the Relationship of Learner Emotion to Language Learning: Issues and Challenges (see Gallagher, this issue; Bakhtin, 1973, 1981).

The ordering of the papers is intended to reflect a move from practical issues and "case studies" towards more methodological, theoretical and abstract concerns. In the first paper, "Researching the Relationship of Learner Emotion to Language Learning: Issues and Challenges," Nicole Gallagher focuses on the affective aspects of language learning with a particular focus on learner emotion and explores first-year Japanese undergraduates' emotions in a discussion class she taught over the period of one semester. The written form of narrative inquiry Gallagher employed for this research study helped the students to reflect on their experiences of conducting extended discussions in English on a regular basis, which resulted in identifying both positive and negative emotions that the students experienced during the class. Sharing the challenges and issues she faced throughout the research study, Gallagher sheds light on the use of written narrative inquiry to better understand learner emotions.

Similarly seeking to explore learner experience through writing, Daniel Hooper's paper "Peering behind the curtain: A Diary Study of Self-directed Learning and Motivation in *eikaiwa*" is a diary study conducted at an English conversation (*eikaiwa*) school in Japan. It is a case study with one Japanese student (Haruka) which draws on L2 diary entries in an attempt to identify motivational factors that contribute to her self-directed language learning in the specific educational setting of *eikaiwa*. Hooper analyses detailed descriptions of Haruka's L2 voice narrated through the written diary entries over 6 months and explores Haruka's key motivational factors together with the specific meaning of going to *eikaiwa* school to her. Hooper also relates L2 diary studies to pedagogical issues and argues for the potential use of L2 diary studies in teaching and future studies.

The third article, "Exploring the Dual Role of Advisors in English Learning Advisory Sessions," Ryo Moriya reports on face-to-face advisory sessions conducted with two Japanese secondary school students in a cram school. As a part-time cram school teacher, Moriya engaged in advisory sessions in English on a regular basis over one year. The data gained through one-on-one sessions with the two students are analysed to identify types of teaching and specific incidents observed during the sessions. Moriya examines the possibilities of conducting advisory sessions in English in contrast to the participants' native language (Japanese) and emphasises the necessity of introducing advisory sessions at the secondary school levels.

Christine O'Leary's "Exploring the Development of Learner Autonomy from a Postmodern and Social Constructivist Perspective: Prioritising Voices" discusses the benefits and methodological challenges of researching the development of learner autonomy. Excerpting the data from a case study that she carried out in a UK higher education institution, O'Leary examines the benefits of using a postmodernist approach, demonstrates how it can be applied in practice, and provides new insight into qualitative research on the development of learner autonomy.

In the fifth paper, "Qualitative Research Methods in Second Language Learning: Review and Evaluation," Clare F. Kaneko explicates qualitative research methods together with her reflection of her first-time experience of conducting a qualitative research study. As a student-researcher, Kaneko engaged in an action research project concerning her Japanese university students' use of smart phones in English classes. While describing her own experiences, she shares various aspects of her decision-making processes regarding the research methods, tools, and selection of participants in a chronological order and the struggles and issues she faced throughout the whole research project are discussed in a reflective manner, which will be a significant cornerstone for her future studies.

Our final paper, before the conclusion provided by Gary Barkhuizen, is Fergal Bradley and Leena Karlsson's "Storytelling for Learning and Healing: Parallel Narrative Inquiries in Language Counselling." Both Bradley and Karlsson engage in collaborative writing and demonstrate the narrative nature of counselling and learning, Bradley, linking to the idea of healing, and Karlsson providing an example of how the narrative approach to counselling helped one student with overcoming language anxiety. They describe their language counselling with an emphasis on its parallel nature, which not only helps the learner to overcome difficulties but also leads them to professional development. The dialogic narrative they chose for this paper itself implies the importance of storytelling as well as the powerful role that narrative counselling plays in the field of language counselling and language learning.

Taken together, then, the papers in this volume each offer their own answers to the questions we shared in formulating the theme of qualitative research into learner development. Nevertheless, it seems clear that all of these researchers place a prominent emphasis on the voices of their research participants. Thus, the studies find various ways to capture participant voices, often in narrative form. Gallagher and Hooper both use written assignments as a way to both explore their learner's experiences and build rapport with them, while Moriya

uses recordings. Kaneko's discussion of the problems she encountered using a "think aloud protocol" underline the fact that capturing voices itself is far from straight forward.

Notably, the focus on participants' voices is a very different position from quantitative research where participants' contributions are framed within responses predetermined by the researcher and subsumed as numerical data. This "prioritizing of voices", explicit in the title of O'Leary's paper, also extends to the ways in which the researchers and writers open up their own voices of experience. Bradley and Karlsson overtly share their respective experiences of their counselling and learning context. Kaneko, Hooper and Moriya and to a lesser extent Gallagher and O'Leary also share the experiences and even insecurities associated with tackling a research project that are all too easily glossed over. The negotiation of voices was also something we faced as editors discussing the content and style of papers not only with the authors and reviewers but also with members of the journal's steering group who provided detailed feedback and guidance on the final shape of the papers.

One of the aspirations of qualitative research is that enough of the researchers and participants' voices make it into the published article for readers to evaluate the projects in the light of their own experience. We have certainly enjoyed seeing these papers develop and the voices of the authors and their learners emerge and hope that they prove a valuable contribution to the literature on qualitative research in learner development.

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Editor Bios

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RESEARCH PAPER

Researching the Relationship of Learner Emotion to Language Learning: Issues and Challenges

Nicole Gallagher, Toyo University

In this paper, I investigate the emotional dimension of language learning of students in a discussion class that I taught at Rikkyo University in Tokyo. The Center for English Discussion Class at Rikkyo University provides its first-year undergraduates with a weekly 90-minute English discussion course comprised of seven to nine students per class. While instructing these discussion classes, I observed that students expressed a range of emotion and reacted differently within similar classroom circumstances. This led me to become increasingly curious about how emotion interacts with the process of language learning. In particular, I wondered what we could learn about language learning and teaching by attempting to interpret learner emotion in context. From these questions I developed this study to better understand how emotion affects the processes and outcomes of language learning. This paper also examines the challenges and issues I faced when designing and interpreting a qualitative research study on emotion in the classroom. In the paper, I first review previous and current understandings of emotion in the SLA literature. Then, I document the development and process of this research project, which was primarily conducted through student written reflections on in-class language learning in a weekly 90-minute language class over the period of one semester. Finally, I present interpretations of learner emotion as it relates to the student experience of language learning in the classroom.

本稿では、立教大学英語ディスカッションクラスにおける、学生の言語学習に対する感情的側面について考察する。立教大学英語ディスカッションセンターでは、一年生を対象に一コマ90分のディスカッションクラスを週 1 回提供している。1 クラス7˜9名で構成され、授業中、学生が様々な感情を表現し、同じクラス中でも学生一人ひとりが異なる反応を示した。筆者は、これらの反応を観察し、言語学習と感情の関連性について深く興味を持つようになった。特に、学習者の感情を理解することにより、感情がどのように言語学習の過程と結果に影響を与えるかということをより深く理解するために本研究を行った。本稿では、筆者が第二言語クラスにおける感情についての質的研究を行う際の問題点を明らかにする。まず初めに、第二言語習得における感情についての先行研究を概観し、その後で学生が一学期間毎週記録した内省をもとに行った本プロジェクトについて記す。最後に、学生が言語学習を通して抱く感情について考察する。

Keywords

learner emotion, narratives, reflexivity, qualitative research

キーワード

学習者の感情、ナラテイブ、再帰性、質的研究

It seems quite intuitive that learning a second language involves our emotional selves. Yet, until quite recently, in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), emotions have often been "the elephant in the room—poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought" (Swain, 2013, p. 205). While the role of emotional affect in language learning is becoming increasingly recognized, emotion was an underrepresented area of research in SLA in the past (Swain, 2013). At its beginnings, SLA made use of scholarship from linguistics and psychology that positioned the field in a predominantly cognitive direction, with comparatively little regard for research done in other areas (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). In recent years, SLA scholars and researchers (e.g., Zemblyas, 2005; Benesch, 2012, 2017; Swain, 2013; Douglas Fir Group, 2016) have attempted to rectify this theoretical and research gap in SLA scholarship, drawing on interdisciplinary knowledge from the social sciences, or neuroscience. Increasingly, calls are being made to further incorporate more research on emotion so

that second language learning can be better investigated across various contexts in which it takes place (e.g., Imai, 2010; Swain, 2013; Douglas Fir Group, 2016).

This case study examines how emotion may affect the processes and outcomes of language learning in the classroom. In addition, it explores the challenges that I faced when researching learner emotion in the classroom. I begin by explaining how I became interested in the topic of emotion in the language learning process, and the research questions I have chosen for this study. I then review some depictions of emotion that are characteristic of mainstream scholarly literature in SLA—depictions that have been criticized for misapprehending how emotion affects language learning (see Benesch, 2012; Swain, 2013). In addition, I outline other more recent theoretical understandings of emotion in SLA and describe how social theories of emotions can illuminate the connections between emotional experience and identity and investment in second language learning. While there remains some disagreement on theoretical approaches to emotions, research on emotion in SLA can be enriched through utilizing understandings from multiple disciplines—insights from both recent neurocognitive research, and social theories of emotions that recognize how they are discursively constructed and interact within dynamic, multi-layered social contexts. I then move on to discuss the reflective research approach that I took to investigate learner emotion in my own classroom. Finally, I examine and interpret the emotional expressions that were captured in the students' own written self-reflections, and interpret what these experiences can convey about the experiential side of language learning in the classroom. I conclude with discussing some possible limitations and review some of the study's implications and points for future research.

Thinking about Emotion in the Classroom

I became interested in the topic of learner emotion, and the classroom as a social space where emotions are expressed, withheld or repressed, through my observations of how the students in my classes each had their own personal and unique emotional reactions to a given task. At the time, I was teaching small seminars of English discussion for first-year Japanese undergraduate students in Tokyo. After several semesters of teaching this course, I had noticed that some students were better able to cope with the learning demands of the class than others, and I began to explore whether language learning outcomes of individual learners might be connected to a learner's emotional response (Gallagher, 2017). Any given individual learner's ability to handle the demands of interactive dialogue with others, and the discussion of difficult topics seemed at least partly contingent on elements such as emotional regulation and emotional awareness of others. These observations led me to want to better understand the students' perceptions of the class, and how they emotionally interpreted their own learning and involvement in the class. The study that will be described below is guided by two central concerns. First, how does emotion affect the processes and outcomes of language learning in the classroom? Second, what are the challenges and issues the researcher faced when designing and interpreting a qualitative research study on emotion in the classroom?

Emotion in SLA and the Value of Qualitative Research

Until relatively recently, emotion had been poorly represented in mainstream SLA scholarship, which was comprised of research mostly conducted with quantitative models. A classic example of this is Krashen's (1981) affective hypothesis, which only narrowly examined affect, and limited it to an appraisal of negative emotions like anxiety. Krashen's characterization of affect, and his cognitive tradition of research, arguably left a considerable legacy on how emotion was conceptualized in SLA (Swain, 2013). This can be seen in the proliferation of narrowly defined terms to deal with affective experience, which Pavlenko describes as "a

laundry list of decontextualized and oftentimes poorly defined socio-psychological constructs, such as attitudes, motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, empathy, risk-taking, and tolerance of ambiguity" (Pavlenko, 2005, p. 34). It had been pointed out by other researchers such as Imai (2010) that these limited circumscriptions of affect cannot adequately capture the richness and diversity of emotional experience, and the potential consequences this experiential dimension may have on language learning. Imai (2010) suggests that the influence of other emotions on L2 learning, such as joy, enjoyment, jealousy, surprise, pride, guilt, disgust, and sadness, have not been well-understood or explored in SLA research.

Despite this gap in research on emotion, there are few studies which describe how a range of emotional states affects language learning in the classroom (see Imai, 2010). In order to capture a wider range of emotion and its effects on the learner and learning, utilizing qualitative research methods is invaluable. Specifically, learner-focused research that utilizes a research methodology rich in description, such as narrative inquiry (see Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014), could help to remedy this gap in research on emotion, and deepen our understanding of learners. Through examining narrative accounts in context, researchers can begin to depict more accurately a richer and more complex understanding of emotion, and describe how these experiences might interact with the processes of language learning.

Understanding Language Learning Through Emotion

The Douglas Fir Group describes language learning as "an emotionally driven process at multiple levels of experience" (2016, p. 36). As classroom researchers, there are several arguments for how inquiry into emotion can help to better understand language learning. I will focus on two arguments that pertain to my study in this paper. In this section, I will first describe how researching emotion might help researchers better understand the decision-making and cognition of learners. Then I will discuss how such research can be used to explore the emotional-social space of the classroom.

Investigating emotion can inform us more intimately about learner cognition. Swain (2013) argues for a reappraisal of cognition in SLA that recognizes the centrality of emotion in all cognitive processes. Historically, emotion and cognition were deemed to be two separate, distinct processes—a legacy of Descartes, and the western philosophical traditions up through the Enlightenment (Damasio, 1994). Such traditional models of the mind that divide emotion and cognition have come to be regarded as incorrect (Swain, 2013). Swain points to recent research in neuroscience which suggests that emotions are "integral and inseparable" (2013, p. 193) aspects of cognition. This is crucially linked with research on language learning because often researched cognitive processes such as "thinking, knowing, attending, processing information, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making" (p. 196) are, in fact, conducted through a highly integrated emotional-cognitive brain. Swain argues for research into emotion through narratives where "the centrality of emotion and its connections to cognition becomes evident" (ibid.). In this way, narratives can illuminate the intersections of emotion, self-perception and decision-making for language learning researchers, for instance how students may make decisions situated in particular emotional states. Later in this paper, I evaluate how emotion might connect to student cognition.

Poststructuralist and social theories of emotion argue that emotion is a social phenomenon—culturally bound and constructed through language. Social perspectives on emotion can perhaps inform us about the complex dynamics in a classroom. SLA researchers (Zemblyas, 2005; Norton, 2013) have taken up poststructuralist approaches to develop emotional descriptions of the classroom and the learner's relationship to language learning and society. Poststructuralism conceives of the individual within her relationship to the social world with lan-

guage playing a central role in the social construction of an individual's identity and sense of self (Norton, 2013). Drawing on the work of feminist scholar Christine Weedon (1997), Norton describes how identities are constructed discursively: "language not only defines institutional practice but also serves to construct our sense of ourselves—our *subjectivity*" (2013, p. 4). Based on Foucauldian ideas of discourse and historical specificity, subjectivity is always "socially and historically embedded" (ibid.). In Zemblyas's (2005) work on teacher emotion, he describes how "genealogies" of emotion connect to a person's identity and these "trajectories of emotional experiences are positioned and position teachers to know and feel in certain ways" (p. 98). Zemblyas's description of teacher emotions in the classroom is useful in articulating how emotions can drive us to express or think in certain ways. In other words, behavior can be partly dictated through our social histories and emotional memories of emotion. In addition, he interprets the social space of the classroom as an emotionally interacting space, an unclear web of interactions and memories that may affect each individual differently. Finally, Zemblyas describes classrooms as being dictated by emotional rules, rules that are established by a given institution, and that affect how an individual may experience a classroom (2005). While Zemblyas's ideas about emotion in the classroom offer insight on how emotion functions between individuals, where learner and teacher emotion is located, expressed or withheld, they also suggest the value of researching emotion in order to understand the social context of the classroom. By situating emotion within its varied social context, social factors that might be influencing language learning can be better examined by researchers looking at individual classrooms.

Background and My Approach to This Study

This study is guided by two central concerns. First, how does emotion affect the processes and outcomes of language learning in the classroom? Second, what are the challenges and issues the researcher faced when designing and interpreting a qualitative research study on emotion in the classroom? I will first outline details about the research context, and then I will describe the particular approach I took in the study.

The participants in this study are eight students who I taught in one section of a year-long first-year undergraduate course at Rikkyo University in Tokyo. Each of these students had completed an average of six years of formal English training in junior and senior high schools and obtained a TOEIC score between 280 and 480 by the start of the course. In general, the undergraduate students at this level have had little experience taking English-speaking classes that require speaking in English for an extended period of time. Therefore, the university discussion course I taught would have been their first experience to participate in extended pair and group discussions. In these small 90-minute English discussion classes conducted entirely in English, all of the students are required to participate actively in English discussion. Each class is organized around a predetermined discussion topic and a functional language point or communication skill, with the course emphasizing output and interaction to encourage fluency and the development of pragmatic competence. The course has a unified curriculum, and incorporates an in-house textbook and syllabus designed within the Center for English Discussion Class at Rikkyo.

As my main interest in this study is to investigate how emotion was affecting learning in the classroom, I decided to conduct research on what my students were feeling during class. In the spirit of narrative inquiry, I wanted to investigate how students articulated their experiences in the classroom in *their own* emotional terms. I did not want to impose a discussion of emotions from the outset at the risk of framing the discussion too narrowly, or separating it from its relevant context. Considering what might be the most non-intrusive way to

learn about their emotional expression in class, I chose to use an in-class reflective writing activity. I thought that having students write reflections provides an opportunity to examine how learners were interpreting their own experiences of language learning in the classroom. I also thought that it could empower students by giving them a chance to express their own thoughts on taking the discussion class. However, one concern I had about asking students to write reflection papers was that they might withhold how they feel for various reasons like concern for their relationship to me as their teacher, or personal discomfort with expression. Ultimately, I realized that I could not predict how much students would disclose. I could only assume that some students might be more open than others and that writing reflections could be a good way to also understand how open students would be emotionally.

I have adopted a reflective approach to the evolution of the research process in an effort to remain responsive to the particular situation and needs of the learners in this study. When I started to plan this research study, it seemed necessary to be flexible and allow the design of the study to evolve as I gathered more information and experience with the class. Miyahara (2016) describes this attitude of a researcher as reflexivity, an "ongoing self-awareness" (p. 90) that results in "greater sensitivity to subjectivities of both the researcher and the participant" (p. 90). At the outset, I was not sure exactly how the students would respond to their involvement in the research or what kind of data I would be able to collect. As a result, I decided to establish an approach that would allow me to adapt the task in order to improve the richness of the data. To this end, I kept a teaching journal throughout the semester and tried to write down my observations and reflections after each class. Writing helped me to organize my thoughts, and keep track of the changes that I observed in class with the students and their development. For instance, I made notes on when would be a good time to assign the next written reflection or how I might modify the writing prompt for a given class. Here is an example from my journal:

> "The students are becoming more competent and confident in their discussion skills, so in the next class I should have them reflect on their own progress so far in the course".

This self-reflection was a tool that kept me refining and reassessing the project as it unfolded, and helped me confirm to myself what was an appropriate and fair approach to the research with the students. It became a concern of mine to ensure that the students were engaged in meaningful reflection themselves. I also found opportunities to discuss my ideas about the study with some of my peers. This also became an important part of the reflective process that I went through during the study.

The Study Design

Throughout a 14-week semester, students periodically wrote short written reflections on their experiences of conducting extended discussions in English. Narrative inquiry, whether conducted through writing or interviews, is beneficial to understanding complex phenomena, and it provides us with a window into learners' thoughts, emotions, and ideas (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). In addition, individual accounts of learner experience can illuminate how differently individual learners might experience the same class. The students would write for three minutes at the end of a given class and were provided with the option of writing in either English or Japanese. As the students were permitted to write in their L1, they had a freer range of expression and the capacity to articulate their thoughts, feelings, and strategies more fully within the time constraints of the short activity. Furthermore, the students could reflect on their own language development and performance immediately after the experience in class. Written narrative, more specifically, is an active site of development for and by the writer, it "organizes life—social relations, interpretations of the past, and plans for the future" (Daiute

& Lightfoot, 2004, p. xi). Consequently, narrative as a classroom research methodology can also be an empowering cultural practice, where learners are given the time and the personal space to reflect and interpret their own experiences. Through writing their own reflections, learners can reflect on their developing L2 identities and potentially find ways or develop strategies to become more deeply invested in their own learning. Darvin and Norton emphasize that, "it is through desire and imagination that they are able to invest in practices that can transform their lives" (2015, p. 46). In this respect, using written narratives as a class activity seemed to me to be a meaningful form of inquiry that could help both learners and teachers better understand and reflect on the emotional processes involved in language learning.

In the beginning of the semester, I observed all 13 of my class groups and chose four groups to pilot the writing activity during the third week of the course (the third time the class met). Each of these classes had low-intermediate English proficiency. At the end of the last English group discussion, the students had three minutes to reflect on the question prompt, "What are your reflections on today's class?" After reviewing the student writings of each class, I chose one class group with whom I would continue the reflective writing study. I thought that, by narrowing down the study to one class, I could focus more closely on tailoring the classroom component of the research activity more carefully to the particular circumstances of that class.

The class group that I chose had a strong rapport with one another, with a variety of personality types and a mix of genders in the class. The openness of some of the members in the group, along with the extreme shyness of one member, seemed particularly promising in terms of the diversity of ideas they might express in their reflection papers. These personalities were part of what persuaded me to choose this particular class. I was also particularly interested in how this activity could be useful for students who were using English to express their ideas in extended discussion for the first time, and so I selected lower intermediate classes to focus on. Very few students in the first-year course at the lower intermediate level have had the opportunity to discuss topics in their previous English language education in Japanese high schools, or had experiences using English outside of the classroom. I wanted to see if the reflective writing activity could be a useful tool for students to process their own thoughts and feelings about speaking English for an extended period of time for the first time, and whether it might benefit their investment in the language learning process in some way.

While the students were aware that I read their reflections, this activity arguably provided a more personal space for students to express their thoughts and feelings about their progress in class. They could explore their emotional experiences of the class in greater detail without fear of losing face in front of their peers. As classrooms are perhaps shaped by emotional rules (Zemblyas, 2005) that determine how and what students can express, a writing activity seems to be a less restrictive practice for personal expression in the classroom. While students may not feel comfortable talking about themselves personally with their teacher or their classmates, writing gives them a less confrontational means of expression. Finally, the scope of the task was relatively unstructured, providing students with the choice to write about what concerned or interested them—specific aspects on the course, their general development of English-speaking ability, or their own personal strengths, achievements, or perceived limitations. Personalization could likely serve as a catalyst for students to set their own personal goals, which are meaningful to them according to their own understandings of their needs.

As I mentioned earlier, I determined when to use the activity during the semester through a process of observing the students and making notes in my journal from week to week, as well as discussing the activity informally with several of my colleagues who teach the same

course. By applying a flexible activity schedule and modifying the activity, I tried to maximize the usefulness of the writing activity for the students, and gain a more diverse set of narrative accounts about learner emotion.

Results and Analysis

At the outset of this study, it was difficult to predict how the students would respond to the activity and whether it would become an effective learning tool for the students. Dörnyei (2007) describes the nature of qualitative research as interpretive, emergent, and iterative. In that spirit, I refrained from making decisions about how I would approach the analysis of the students' written reflections in the initial stages of the study. I also wanted to interpret the learners' emotions in a context relevant to them, so I waited until I read the data before determining a way to interpret them. In total, the students wrote their reflection responses in class six times over the 14-week semester. After reading, transcribing, and translating the students' writing from Japanese into English, I noticed that students often described the emotions they experienced when trying to speak English and participating in the discussion class. I also observed that some of the students' written responses were more reflective than others, and some individual students seemed to write more and take a more reflective approach to the activity than others. For instance, some students would describe something that happened previously in order to understand something more clearly. Through this reflection, these students may be articulating some reasons for why something occurred, imagining ways to improve themselves, or change some disagreeable state in the future.

Table 1. *Eri[i]'s entries)*

What are your reflections on today's class? (week 3)	Since my vocabulary is small, it was often the case that English would not come out and I would be stuck for words. To have a discussion, I have to speak in order to express my opinion so it is very difficult.	ボキャブラリーが少なく、英語もなかなか出てこなくて話が詰まってしまうことが多いです。ディスカッションは自分の意見を相手に伝わるように言わないといけないのでとても難しいです。
How do you feel about your progress so far? (week 5)	Since I know the function phrases, I was able to use them a little. However, when I was nervous, my mind would go blank so I want to be able to always use them.	会話表現を知り、少し使えるようになりました。しかし、緊張すると真っ白になるので常に使えるようにしたいです。

1. i A pseudonym.

What are your reflections on today's class? (week 7)	It's very difficult to understand the unclear border between reasons and examples. As well, without thinking about my ideas beforehand, I wouldn't have been able to have a smooth discussion with this week's topic. It would be good if I could take less time to put my ideas together and was able to participate in the discussion without pause. The phrases are getting longer and the type of phrases are increasing, so I want to try my best to memorize them by heart so that I can use all of them in discussion.	理由と例の境が曖昧になってしまいとても難しかったです。また今回のトピックは事前に意見を考えておかないとスムーズにディスカッションが出来ないな。。。と思いました。意見をまとめる時間をなるべく減らして途切れずにディスカッションができるようになればいいなと思いました。フレーズも長くなり、種類も増えたので、頑張って覚えてきちんと使えるようにしたいです。
How do you feel about today's discussion test? (week 9)	Compared to the last discussion test, this one went more smoothly. The other group members helped me a lot by following along with my ideas and responding to what I said with reactions. I would like to be able to speak more fluently by using longer phrases, and stop using Japanese English.	前回のディスカッションテストよりはスムーズに出来たと思います。グループのメンバーがフォローをしたり、リアクションをとってくれたのでとても助かりました。長いフレーズでも役に立つものがあるので日本語英語ではなくもっと流暢に言えるようにしたいです。
How do you feel about your ability to have a discussion in English? (week 12)	When compared to at first, I can now give my own opinion. However, I often cannot think of the right words, or use the phrases that I had wanted to use. When I speak out, I will be careful not to forget these things.	自分の意見を言うことが初期に比べるとできるようになったと思います。しかし、単語が出てこなかったり、次に使おうとしたフレーズを使えなかったりすることがよくあります。発言する時になると忘れてしまうので気をつけたいです。
Do you feel comfortable to speak in English? How does it compare to the beginning of the semester? (week 14)	Since taking discussion class, my listening ability has improved a little. However, I have a small vocabulary, and since I cannot compose sentences in the moment, I cannot have a smooth conversation.	ディスカッションクラスを受講してから、リスニングの力が少しつきました。しかし、ボキャブラリーが少なく、文の構成が瞬時にできないことから、スムーズに会話ができるようになりません。

In Table 1, you can see an example of Eri's responses over the course of the semester, which she had written originally in Japanese and was later translated into English. While very shy in class, she was particularly reflective in her responses when compared to some of the other students and she seemed to take it as an opportunity to think about what she would like to change in the future. Sometimes she would set goals for future improvement. For instance, in week 7, she reflects on her inability to say what she wants to say in the moment, and then suggests a strategy to improve her involvement in the future:

> It would be good if I could take less time to put my ideas together and was able to participate in the discussion without pause. The phrases are getting longer and the type of phrases are increasing, so I want to try my best to memorize them by heart so that I can use all of them in discussion.

On the other hand, some students would write things like "It was fun" or "It was difficult", but they did not elaborate why they felt those ways. This seemed to suggest that they were less engaged or invested in the writing activity.

Since the main aim of this study is to better understand the emotional dimension of learning for these students, below I have analyzed the emotions the students described in their written responses. Before taking a thematic approach to categorizing the data of the study, I read through all of the student responses, and isolated passages where students recalled their experiences of learning using emotionally descriptive language. I then grouped the responses into four general categories of emotion that I observed in the students' writing: (a) moments of anxiety and relief, (b) moments of dissatisfaction, (c) moments of optimism and pride, and (d) moments of enjoyment. I chose the labels based on what seemed to best encapsulate the experiences that the students described in their writing. Within these more general categories, I also chronicle some other emotions that were depicted in the students' experiences.

Moments of Anxiety and Relief

It has long been noted in SLA literature that anxiety likely influences the processes of language learning (Imai, 2010). In this study, I noticed that the participants in the study often described their anxiety as the first part of a two-phase process. They would often depict a phase of anxiety that is followed by a phase of relief. For example, one student wrote "since the number of phrases we are using has increased since the last test, I was anxious about whether I could do well, but thankfully the discussion could go smoothly with the cooperation of the others around me". In this case, it seems it was easier for the student to express her anxiety after her concerns had been alleviated, and the original situation had changed. In another case, a student reported in week 14 about his anxiety at the beginning of the course: "At first, the fact that I needed to speak English, made me very anxious, but over time, I got used to speaking English." In previous responses he had not explicitly discussed his anxiety. This suggests that he became willing to discuss the worry only after it had dissipated. This delay in acknowledging anxiety suggests that students may not always feel comfortable articulating or expressing their emotions if it could make them feel vulnerable. If students feel uncomfortable or anxious in class, they may withhold or repress this information.

Moments of Dissatisfaction

Students sometimes articulated feelings of frustration in situations where they thought they were unable to successfully participate in class discussion. At the end of the semester, one student acknowledged his dissatisfaction with the size of his vocabulary: "Certainly, it's fun to use English. However, there were many times where I felt frustrated because I did not have enough vocabulary to express myself." As this was the last class, it is impossible to interpret whether this feeling of frustration could have any effect, positive or negative, on his future learning. In another situation, perhaps such frustration could lead to demotivation, or might be a turning point to change tack for the learner, depending on how the student reflects or interprets the situation. This might suggest that coping strategies could be useful to navigate such negative emotions like frustration. For instance, one student in particular (Eri from Table 1) would often express dissatisfaction with her performance, and then respond to her

discomfort by establishing a goal or strategy to improve her performance or speaking ability in the future: "…I often cannot think of the right words, or use the phrases that I had wanted to use. When I speak out, I will be careful not to forget these things." It seems that, in some cases, isolating some negative performance could help these students make decisions about how they might improve in the future. As long as Eri remains invested in improving herself when she notices something she is dissatisfied with, it seems her negative perceptions could have some positive impact on her language learning success in the future. In other words, she used her negative self-perceptions to motivate herself to improve to what she imagined would be a better behaviour or state. In conclusion, these observations suggest that emotions can affect, and may even inspire, learners' decisions and plans for future language learning.

Moments of Optimism and Pride

In some instances, students would take pride in their improvements and reminisce positively on their achievements. One particularly outgoing student was able to talk about her successes confidently after the second speaking test in week 9. In these speaking tests, students must conduct a 16-minute discussion in small groups on a given topic question: "I was pleased that I could ask for examples, ask questions to deepen the discussion, and use reactions." As the students take three speaking tests throughout the semester (in week five, nine, and thirteen), they have an opportunity to monitor their improvement. Students are required to demonstrate their mastery of discussion skills, generally done through the use of functional language phrases in the discussion of a provided topic. From this limited data, there is no way to know how this may affect her in the future, but she may have a higher appraisal of her abilities to succeed in the class. Another student more explicitly connected his achievement in class with future goal-setting and devising a strategy to further improve his English: "Even though it is just a small improvement, I am using more vocabulary words when I try to speak English, and so I would like to improve my English speaking skills in this way." This moment of achievement might suggest that through his success, this learner developed confidence in his own ability to guide and monitor his own language learning process. These positive emotions of self-regard might lend themselves to an increased effort or dedication to the language learning process. In another case near the end of the course, a student identified how through her own efforts, she was able to overcome her fear and feelings of nervousness to speak out in class:

> Since I didn't know how to convey my ideas in the beginning, I didn't have courage to say my opinion, but when I do try to say something, I learned that others can understand me. Because of this, I could speak a number of times without feeling nervous. Not only with English, but now I can also speak to people to whom I first meet.

We can see that her positive experience of overcoming her fears had an impact on her identity. She now saw herself as someone who could take more risks and she described her emotional response as changed, as not always experiencing nervousness when meeting someone new. These emotional confrontations in class led to personal growth and transformed her fear. Where she presumably felt shy or nervous to talk with people she first met, she is now able to take more risks and speak out. It seems that through such positive learning experiences in class, the student had altered her self-image and the kind of emotions she would experience in social interactions. Similarly, at the end of the course in week 14, another student projected her classroom achievements onto a more ambitious goal of talking with people who are not Japanese (and presumably do not speak Japanese): "I feel comfortable to speak in English better than before. I have gotten a little confidence to speak with foreigners." It seems

that learners' experience of accomplishment and pride can help them expand their self-image and change their behavior, as well as affect the way they perceive their social environment.

Moments of Enjoyment

Students often described enjoying the class and the learning experience. At the beginning of the class, one of the students described how he was pleased with the class atmosphere and held high expectations for the class with his classmates:

> Even though I don't have confidence to speak well, it was very fun. Since up until now I have only studied English for the university entrance examinations and other students were my competitors, I think learning together with other people who are earnest will be good. I like the atmosphere of this class.

One student described her appreciation for and happiness with the social atmosphere created by the others in class by week 10, "Everyone is kind and I am extremely happy that everyone tries hard to try and understand my idea". Norton (2000) suggests that it is invaluable for social environments to be experienced as accessible for learners, in order for them to become more invested in a language learning experience. In the classroom, it seems that the joy that students took in communicating and interacting with their classmates could be a motivating context for this particular social context. Feelings of intimacy and closeness, or feeling a sense of community, may all be beneficial emotional states for investment in classroom language learning. These learners' accounts of happiness and gratitude for their classmates, suggest they would find it easier to invest in the language learning experience in this particular classroom context.

Discussion

Utilizing student written reflections to research the emotional landscape of language learning helped me to more intimately understand how the learners were experiencing the class. Through this process, this has had a positive effect on me as a teacher, as I have become more aware and sensitive to the diversity of learners' experiences in the class. The research itself became a catalyst for reflecting on the language learning process in the class. For example, after reading through and transcribing the student responses, I would often find myself discussing with other instructors in my department what students had described in their writings. It was a personally enriching process to reflect on the experiences that the students shared.

In this study, the learners' written accounts capture a range of different emotions: anxiety, frustration, a sense of accomplishment, hope, and enjoyment. I argue that, by noticing and reflecting on these emotions, teachers and researchers can better understand the social nature of language learning, how experiences might be shaping student identity, and how learners might be making decisions about language learning. Reflecting on my own research process, I wonder what the students would think of my interpretation of their emotions. In the future, I would like to create opportunities for participants in such research on emotion to be able to read and comment on my interpretation of their emotions as a way to validate how I interpret their experiences. As well, as some students were reflecting more actively than other students, it may be beneficial to explore what can help learners be more self-aware and reflective when using written reflection in a class.

Through the experience of using this writing activity in class, I came to better understand the benefits of creating opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning. While not

all the students seemed equally invested in the process of reflection, some students' writing demonstrated an engagement in a process of self-awareness and goal-setting. Through reflection, they were making decisions about the future, imagining how they might grow, and devising new learning strategies. On the other hand, it was also interesting to consider why some students were less reflective or less open to talking about how they were feeling. I wondered—were they simply less interested in the reflection process, or did they feel less inclined to openly share their thoughts in this way for other reasons (related to factors like disposition, culture, or gender expectations)? Indeed, it is hard to suggest a reason as the sample set of eight students is so small. While I could draw on a richer data set from the more engaged students, it was also an important insight to notice these differences in investment and emotional response among individual learners. However, if the aim is to ensure that the research process is a meaningful experience for the participants, it seems that having students volunteer as research participants would be more likely to produce results that could show the value of reflection in managing and better understanding emotional states.

Conclusion

At the outset of this study, I wanted to focus on emotion in order to better understand how emotion might be affecting learners and language learning, and what kinds of emotions might be salient in the classroom. Through the study, I could point to several categories of emotions that seemed relevant to the Japanese language learners in this classroom context. However, as the data collection was quite limited in length and scope, it is difficult to draw firmer conclusions about the outcomes of these emotional descriptions of language learning. I would strongly argue that a richer data collection set is required to better understand how different emotions might be affecting the language learning process. This might be conducted either through more extensive writing samples, or through interviews. Secondly, as Swain (2013) suggests, emotion cannot exactly be separated from cognition or the social sphere. In future studies, examining more holistically the relationships between emotion, cognition, and the social would be useful. However, as this topic is quite expansive, it might be more appropriate either to focus on particular aspects of the relationship of emotion to cognition or the social sphere, or to conduct smaller case studies that can afford to research the emotional aspects of experience in more depth. Finally, my approach to this research topic, study, and paper has involved an ongoing, and quite personal evolution. As I came from a place of not knowing what many of the answers were with regards to investigating emotion, conducting in-class research, developing a qualitative study, writing up a qualitative study, and writing the revisions for this paper, I find myself left with doubts about what I have accomplished or contributed. I ask myself whether this is enough. While I do not have the knowledge to answer that question myself, I do recognize that I am closer to understanding what might be better research approaches to learner emotion. What's more, I am now much better prepared to join discussions about doing qualitative research.

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Review Process

This paper was peer-reviewed by the following contributors to Issue 2: Leena Karlsson and Fergal Bradley. It was also blind peer-reviewed by members of the Learner Development Journal Review Network. *(Contributors have the option of open or blind review.)*

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RESEARCH PAPER

Serious Leisure: A Diary Study of Self-directed Learning and Motivation in *Eikaiwa*

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While English conversation (*eikaiwa*) schools are widespread in Japan, little research exists on learner motivation in these settings. This exploratory study based on one learner's L2 diary entries and reflective comments investigated the motivational factors contributing to her self-directed language learning efforts while studying at an *eikaiwa* school. In this study, I also sought to evaluate the potential pedagogical applications of learner diary writing in *eikaiwa* as well as the practical affordances and constraints specific to that context. The data revealed that the learner's motivation was influenced by a variety of interrelated social and personal factors. There was also evidence that suggested that although simple enjoyment was an important factor for her motivation to learn, she also showed signs of significant investment in an imagined community. Furthermore, in contrast to some academic studies portraying *eikaiwa* as a site for hedonistic "casual leisure" rather than linguistic development (Kubota, 2011), the participant engaged in an extensive amount of self-directed learning along with an impressive degree of metacognitive self-awareness. This, along with several points of crossover between English learning and Hawaiian culture—a central element of her self-identity—suggested that her self-directedness represented an example of "serious leisure" or a "leisure career" (Stebbins, 2007). Regarding the secondary focus of the study, the diary writing process was found to fulfill a number of practical pedagogical functions such as maintaining student-teacher communication and providing opportunities for meaningful production of the L2.

英会話学校で英語を学ぶ学習者が増えているにもかかわらず、このコンテキストにおいての学習者動機付けの研究は数が限られている。本研究は、英会話教室に通うある 1 名の学習者対象に、彼女が日記に記した内容や内省的なコメントから自律学習に影響を与える動機付けの要因を明らかにしたものである。。さらに本研究では「日記」を一つの教授法と捉え、その実用化の可能性も追求した。本探究の結果から、学習者の動機付けの要因は相互的に作用する様々な社会的、個人的要因に影響を受けていることがわかった。また、この学習者にとって「単なる楽しさ」は学びの上で重要な学習動機の要因であるが、それと同時に、imagined communityへの「投資」(investment)の兆しもデータから示された。遊び的な要素を多く含むと捉えられてきた英会話学校の学習環境（Kubota 2011年）とは対照的に、さらに、当該学習者の英語学習は彼女のメタ認知的な認識を示し、自律学習者としての道を辿っていたことが本研究からみてとれる。さらに当該学習者は、英語学習と彼女の自己アイデンティティでもあるハワイ文化が重複しつつもあるが、象徴しているStebbins(2007)がいうところの「本格的な娯楽」(serious leisure)または「娯楽キャリア」(leisure career)を象徴していることもわかった。本研究の第二の焦点はその研究方法にあり、日記を書くプロセスは生徒と教師間のコミュニケーションを維持するだけではなく、外国語教育においては実践的かつ教育的効果を促進する場を提供できることが明らかになった。

Keywords

diary, motivation, self-directedness, identity, eikaiwa

キーワード

日記、動機、自己志向、アイデンティティ、英会話

This paper describes an exploratory study that emerged from one private conversation school (*eikaiwa*) student's self-directed efforts to develop her English proficiency through writing L2 diary entries. Encouraging language learners to write regular diary entries in their L2 can not only provide significant practice time for production of the target language, but can also open up a "private dialogue between a student and teacher" that can be "about almost anything that the learner would like to know or discuss" (Peachey, 2004). Greater opportunities for learners to have rich, meaningful contact with the target language outside of a formal classroom space would arguably be one of the most desirable prospects for language teachers in most, if not all, EFL context educational institutions. Furthermore, gaining insight into the myriad influences on learners' fluctuating motivational states could

provide educators with tools that could be used to bolster and sustain their learners' efforts as self-directed learners away from the confines of the classroom.

Using diaries as a means of gaining insight into the individual experiences of teachers or learners is especially valuable within *eikaiwa* schools as they arguably represent a context overlooked within Japanese English education and research. Tensions created from opposing business and educational concerns within these institutions (Bossaer, 2003; Hooper & Snyder, 2017; Nuske, 2014) mean that the *eikaiwa* context is distinct in many ways from the traditional conception of an educational institution (Kubota, 2011). However, despite the reported idiosyncrasies that in some ways set *eikaiwa* apart from established conceptions of "school" or "education," Seargeant (2009) maintains that *eikaiwa* schools are in fact the "most visible context in which the actualities of language learning within Japanese society clash with current trends and recommendations in contemporary TESOL theory" (p.94). Due in part to a marginalized position "at the bottom of the EFL hierarchy" (Nagatomo, 2016, p. 56), the experiences of language learners and teachers in this context have largely been absent from academic inquiry (Lowe, 2015).

One area that is often central to diary studies and that has received very little attention in *eikaiwa* is self-directed language learning (SDLL). In SDLL, responsibility for decision making is given over to the learner, "with or without a variable degree of participation" by another party, such as a teacher, who may act as a "helper in response to requests for information or advice" (Holec, 1996, pp. 89-90). Both pedagogical practice and action research relating to SDLL are desperately underdeveloped in *eikaiwa* with schools often unaware of the role of out-of-class study (Brown, 2005) and the benefits SDLL can offer learners, including more developed meta-cognitive skills and greater motivation and confidence (Du, 2013; Victori & Lockhart, 1995). Furthermore, schools and students alike have been known to passively resist the notion of autonomous learning as it arguably runs counter to the business model of mainstream *eikaiwa*: language acquisition as easily consumable product (Hooper, 2017; Makino, 2016; Sapunaru-Tamas & Tamas, 2012). Learner diaries can stand as an expression of SDLL as well as potentially providing a teacher or researcher insight into what factors might influence language learning motivation (Matsumoto, 1989). Due to the relative lack of academic attention towards *eikaiwa* students, what influences their language learning, and their degree of self-directedness, diary studies could be a valuable tool in bridging the gap in this particular context.

This study examines the diary entries of one self-directed learner in a small *eikaiwa* school. The learner, of her own volition, completed one English diary entry a day over approximately one year while attending regular weekly classes at the school. As an *eikaiwa* teacher, I felt that this represented a truly exceptional case of self-directed study in a context with little extrinsic pressure from the classroom or the institution as a whole. The diary entries were subsequently examined for themes related to the student's motivation for SDLL and language learning in general. SDLL was identified as an area of interest in this study due to the lack of research in the *eikaiwa* context and the relatively low degree of engagement in SDLL by *eikaiwa* students (Brown, 2005; Hooper, 2017; Makino, 2016). The student was subsequently given several opportunities to explicitly reflect on the process she engaged in when writing the diary, what insight she gained into her learning style, and how she was able to sustain her out-of-class efforts over an extended period of time. In this study, I endeavored to gain insight into the motivational processes behind this learner's self-directedness and the potential benefits of diary writing as a pedagogical tool. In addition, I attempted to document the process of conducting learner focused research in an *eikaiwa* setting.

Through highlighting the unique constraints involved and proposing approaches to circumvent them, it was hoped that this investigation might encourage others to explore the possibility of conducting more learner-focused research in *eikaiwa*.

Learner Diary Studies in Research and Pedagogy

Learner diaries have been used to give learners opportunities to reflect on language learning success and to allow them to explore learning strategies and emotional states (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik, 2014). In the fields of TESOL and SLA, introspective (diary writer as researcher) and non-introspective (researcher investigating a diarist-learner) diary studies have provided glimpses into elements of language learning usually obscured from direct view such as motivation, anxiety, identity, cultural sensitivity, and learner perceptions of instructional methodology (Carson & Longhini, 2002; Hilleson, 1996; Iragui & Lindsay, 2015; Peck, 1996; Porto, 2007). Rather than producing generalizable results that can be applied to language learning in a wider sense, diary studies offer a means of gaining a deeper, highly contextualized understanding of individual learners' needs and behaviors that "objective" tools like questionnaires and observations fail to register (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Iragui & Lindsay, 2015; Tanaka, 2009).

There is a distinction, however, drawn by Bailey (1991) between an "ordinary" diary written by a language learner where there is no control over content and the explicitly reflective "learner diaries" used in more formal diary studies. Additionally, a number of educators and researchers claim that due to the primary reflective goal of "learner diaries," language corrections should not be made, the diary may be written in the learner's L1 or L2, and they must be written as close as possible to the learning time they are referring to (Bailey, 1991; Peachey, 2004; Rubin, 2003). These points predominantly address utilization of learner diaries as a formal research instrument and strive to lessen some of the concerns of researchers regarding diary usage due to inherent validity and subjectivity issues such as the issue of diarists' perceptions or memories being unreliable (Tanaka, 2009).

In contrast to the formal SLA-focused research previously described, some diary studies exist that shine light upon the value of diary writing as a more practically focused pedagogical tool serving as an avenue for productive language practice and a means to review previously studied material. Vajirasarn (2014) conducted a study in which 17 Japanese university students were asked to write a one-page journal in English that reflected on their language learning experiences in which the students were allowed to write general diary entries about daily life, yet received explicit instruction to focus on describing their language learning. Finally, a post-semester questionnaire revealed that, for many students, the journal represented a useful means by which to review the lesson content as well as a valuable opportunity for writing practice. One student in the study responded that the journal writing was beneficial in three different ways: as a means of reviewing lesson content, as writing practice, and as a means of communicating with the instructor.

> I think writing (a) journal is useful to my learning because I can review what I learned today and practice writing. It becomes a chance to think back (on) the lessons. Moreover, I feel that I can make conversations with my teacher every lesson. Though it is demanding for teachers, language learners can get benefits from the journals. (Vajirasarn, 2014, p.115)

Contrary to the Vajirasarn's expectations, the students that participated in this study perceived the practical aspects of journal writing (recollection of lesson content and opportunities for written self-expression in English) to be of greater value than solely reflecting on their own learning strategies. This is relevant to this study in that it reflects Haruka's initial motivation for writing her diary—an opportunity to review lesson content and to write in English about topics that personally mattered to her.

Vajirasarn's findings are reflected in Pierce's (1994) diary study of adult immigrant language learners where it was found that, despite students being told that they could write their

entries in their mother tongue, the participants "were adamant that they wanted practice writing in English, and asked for regular feedback on their writing progress" (Pierce, 1994, p. 23). Furthermore, the researcher stated that although other studies recommend that language in diary entries should not be corrected, her participants specifically requested feedback on grammar issues. Finally, she claims that, if implemented in a supportive classroom environment with a reduced teacher-student power differential, teachers may be surprised at the level of writing students produce.

Focusing more on learner motivation, Matsumoto (1989) carried out a diary study of a Japanese college-level student with the intention of exploring what factors influenced the learner's L2 classroom learning experiences during an eight-week ESL program in the United States and how the act of keeping a diary may have facilitated that learning. Through this approach, Matsumoto sought to examine the dual purpose that diaries can potentially serve by identifying how learner diaries can be used as a tool for teachers and researchers to identify what is going on with learners "behind the scenes" in terms of motivation, anxiety, or self-image, while simultaneously acting as a guide or tool for the learners themselves.

In terms of the act of diary keeping being an effective practice for language learners, this study, to a certain extent, mirrored Vajirasarn's (2014) findings, stating that "most of the benefits of journal-keeping rest on those of the act of writing itself" (Matsumoto, 1989, p.187). It was suggested that the act of diary writing allows the learner to organize their thoughts and explore their achievements and problems within the learning process. However, this study proposes that any learner diaries would have to be compulsory assignments as it is unlikely that they would commit to written reflection of their learning experiences by their own volition. The findings from Vajirasarn (2014), Pierce (1994), and Matsumoto (1989) suggest that diary writing may be perceived by learners as beneficial purely as a means of expressing themselves in written English. In addition, the act of reflecting on their learning in written form, while certainly providing researchers with a rich source of data, may primarily serve learners as a valuable record of errors and experiments with language as well as broader struggles and victories in the target language.

Learner Motivation in *Eikaiwa* and the Need for Research

In *eikaiwa* contexts where learners are not formally required to engage in any out-of-class learning, it can be difficult to persuade learners to keep explicit reflective diaries. *Eikaiwa* represents one context where students are in fact "clients" and often hold significant power over instructors (Bueno, 2003; Bueno & Caesar, 2003; Hooper & Snyder, 2017). Taken from Bueno and Caesar's (2003) collection of *eikaiwa* teachers' narrative accounts of their professional lives, one teacher while describing the expectations of employees in a chain *eikaiwa* highlights in a tongue-in-cheek fashion the customer-centered, retail-esque approach that pervades the industry:

> Remember the golden rules (who can forget). Total Customer Satisfaction. The Customer is Always Right. Yes! Just like WalMart! That was it! Whatever the customer wants, the customer gets. (Bueno, 2003, p. 103)

Furthermore, a number of studies concerning learners within this specific context demonstrate that rather than a desire for SLA, the primary impetus for enrolling in *eikaiwa* schools is the desire for an entertaining, hobby-type experience. Also, in many cases, students wish to avoid an academic style of learning or out-of-class study (Kubota, 2011; Sapunaru-Tamas & Tamas, 2012).

Kubota's (2011) study of *eikaiwa* students and their motivation for attending classes indicated that participants identified a variety of factors outside a commitment to improving language development as reasons for enrollment. *Eikaiwa* was posited in this study to be a form of "casual leisure" (Stebbins, 2007) where students were often "unable to articulate their clear purpose of learning *eikaiwa*" (Kubota, 2011, p. 480) and were largely attending classes to socialize or for temporary exposure to "a captivating space removed from learners' daily life" where "white native speakers are constructed as an exotic icon to be consumed" (Kubota, 2011, p. 486). Several other accounts of *eikaiwa* learners reinforce Kubota's findings (Brown, 2005; Hooper, 2017, Makino, 2016). Relating more specifically to opportunities for self-directed language learning, Brown (2005) found that staff and students in a large chain *eikaiwa* were often unaware that materials for out-of-class study existed and, even after learners were introduced to resources (e.g., graded readers), few utilized them consistently. Makino (2016) attempted to encourage greater student engagement in out-of-class study in another *eikaiwa* by providing a number of free online resources for vocabulary study; however, student buy-in was extremely limited and participation quickly dwindled.

Although *eikaiwa* represents a multibillion-yen industry in Japan (METI, 2005) and despite the fact that such schools can be found in every major town or city in Japan (Bailey, 2007), research on learners and teachers in this context is relatively sparse. A study by Lowe (2015) found that of 134 articles published in *JALT Journal*, *eikaiwa* schools featured in only three studies. The limited attention that this educational sector has received in the literature can be explained in a number of ways. One factor may be that of image. Due to its overtly commercial nature and due to a lack of properly-trained teachers, some researchers and commentators have likened *eikaiwa* to the fast-food industry (Appleby, 2014; McNeill, 2004) and, while often exhibiting no more serious problems than Japanese compulsory English education, it is at times perhaps viewed as "somehow crasser because it is private enterprise" (Makino, 2015). Another more practical issue is related to access for researchers. In Kubota's (2011) study, she experienced several occasions where schools refused her access to their students or teachers. Kubota encountered many obstacles in getting permission to collect data from larger, franchised schools and was, instead, forced to approach participants through more casual, personal connections. A further explanation for the proportionally small amount of research coming from the *eikaiwa* classroom may stem from the type of teacher that inhabits it. Many *eikaiwa* teachers are young, relatively untrained, and their time in Japan, or indeed within English education in general, is often fleeting and on "the bottom rung" of professional Japanese ELT (Bueno & Caesar, 2003; Nagatomo, 2016).

The above accounts of *eikaiwa* classrooms and learners depict the industry as a site of mere *edutainment* far removed from the real "*eigo*" or serious English study taking place in Japanese universities and schools (Nagatomo, 2016; Hiramoto, 2013) and, due to a variety of factors, it is largely absent from most academic enquiry in Japan. That being said, the economic scale of the *eikaiwa* industry, as well as the responsibility it carries as one of the sole post-tertiary points of contact for Japanese people wishing to start or continue their language studies means that more research and development is necessary in order to better understand the attitudes and motivations of learners in this setting.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. What key motivational factors can be identified from the learner's diary entries and how were these factors influential in sustaining the learner's self-directed language learning?

2. What considerations emerge relating to the viability of learner diaries as a pedagogical tool and for learner-focused research in the *eikaiwa* context?

These research questions were selected as it was believed that they would provide insights into both the pedagogical and research potential of learner diary writing. Perhaps more importantly though, it was also decided that the unique characteristics of language instruction in *eikaiwa* schools made it vital that any findings or implications be firmly rooted in the *eikaiwa* context.

Haruka

The participant (Haruka) was an *eikaiwa* student in her mid-forties who was attending one weekly hour-long conversation class as well as regularly attending an additional 25 minute "mini-private" class roughly once every two weeks. She had enrolled at the school in October 2015, approximately six months prior to the beginning of her diary writing, and had early on expressed a desire to engage in out-of-class learning via vocabulary flashcard apps and extensive reading with graded readers that I provided. Haruka was a homemaker and mother who also ran classes teaching Hawaiian and Tahitian dance and culture in her free time. She had one son, a high school student, who was preparing to take his entrance examinations for university during the time she was writing her diary. Also, at the time of this study, she was studying Hawaiian culture and language and was extremely invested in working towards gaining an official qualification to teach classes in this field. Apart from English classes attended as part of her compulsory education approximately 25 years earlier, Haruka had no experience of studying English before enrolling in the *eikaiwa*. When she initially enrolled, she was informally evaluated by the school and placed in a class for beginner students. Her personality could be described as extremely positive, energetic, and outgoing. Four other members (two male high school students, one male university student, and a female full-time worker) attended a set group class with Haruka and she quickly built friendly relationships with everyone. On March 6th 2016, Haruka began submitting daily written English diary entries for me to read and check for lexico-grammatical accuracy each week directly after class. Haruka initiated the diary writing and there were no prompts from the teacher related to desired content or any explicit requirements for reflection. Haruka's diary writing continued until February 9th 2017 when I completed my contract at the school.

Motivation for the Study

Approximately six months into Haruka's diary writing, it became clear that she might represent a fascinating and exceptional example of self-directed language learning that stood apart from much of what I had experienced in *eikaiwa* teaching. Subsequently, she was asked to consent to use of her diary as research data for a project on motivation. After securing (written) consent, Haruka provided past diary entries from which copies were made of each daily entry. At the end of the diary writing period in February 2017, she agreed to fill out a reflective questionnaire in Japanese (Appendix 1) on her experiences writing the diary. Then, in May 2017, Haruka was asked to reread her diary and answer some reflective questions on what she had learned from reading her own entries (Appendix 2). All of this L1 data was translated using an online professional translation service. In addition to the diary entries, Haruka completed two reflective questionnaires which were also examined for references to emergent diary themes as well as her thoughts and attitudes regarding the diary keeping process, self-directed study, and her experiences in the *eikaiwa* class. My positionality within this study is perhaps somewhat unorthodox due to its evolving nature throughout the research process. This study was initiated due to recognition of Haruka's commitment to her

self-directed study that occurred when I was her teacher. The data collection therefore took place in this setting. However, data analysis and the development of any conclusions from that data took place after I had left the *eikaiwa* school and had started work in another institution. Therefore, it must be taken into account that this study comes from the perspective of both teacher and researcher.

Examining Haruka's Diary

In total, Haruka wrote 337 diary entries from March 2016 to February 2017. From this raw data, 75 entries (22.6%) containing any reference to language learning were set aside for further analysis and subsequent coding for emergent themes. Nine recurring themes were identified through this process:

1. self-analysis/ monitoring of learning strategies
2. teacher-related
3. classmate or social group-related
4. enjoyment/fun
5. Hawaiian culture/hula
6. her son's studies
7. progress
8. anxiety
9. problems/difficulties

One external coder was employed to code an additional copy of the data according to these nine themes. The external coder was consulted and any disagreements over coding were discussed until a consensus was reached. Upon finalizing the coding, the frequency of each theme was calculated, with one or more mention per daily entry counting as one. Therefore, if enjoyment/fun was mentioned at least once in every entry (75), the frequency would be marked as 75 (100%).

Findings

Table 1. ***Frequency of themes coded from Haruka's diary entries***

Theme	No. of entries
Self-analysis/ monitoring of learning styles and strategies	44 (58.6%)
Enjoyment/fun	35 (46.7%)
Problems/difficulties	35 (46.7%)
Teacher-related	32 (42.7%)
Progress	20 (26.7%)
Anxiety	19 (25.3%)
Hawaiian learning/hula	18 (24%)
Classmate/social group-related	17 (22.7%)
Son's studying	9 (12%)

From the nine thematic codes identified during the first phase of coding (Table 1), upon discussion with the external coder, two categories were identified relating to factors that were

perceived to be underpinning Haruka's learner motivation - 1) Language learning as social practice and 2) English as "fun", "life", and "serious leisure" (see Table 2). Language learning as social practice was comprised of the three main social influences that appeared to be influencing Haruka's language learning—me (her teacher), her classmates, and her son. The second category was comprised of two elements that were perceived to have been influential on her view of English learning as a form of "serious leisure"—the role of enjoyment/fun and her interest in Hawaiian culture/ hula.

Table 2. ***Coding for Analysis of Research Question 1–Haruka's Motivation***

Haruka's Motivation	Themes
Language learning as social practice	teacher-related, classmate/social group-related, son's studying
English as "fun", "life", and "serious leisure"	enjoyment/fun, Hawaiian learning/hula

In order to address what purposes Haruka's diary entries served as a pedagogic or research tool, in the same manner as in Table 2, the coded data was analyzed together with the external coder to identify any salient categories that may have existed (Table 3). It was interpreted that two categories could be seen in the data. One category was centered on the idea of her diary being a line of communication with me (her teacher) based on instances where she attempted to relate problems she experienced, concerns about class, and expressions of gratitude to me. The second category was defined as her diary acting as a point of contact with English outside of the *eikaiwa*. The coded data for this category largely consisted of Haruka analyzing her engagement with English inside and outside of class and writing down her ideas on learning strategies she intended to try.

Table 3. ***Coding for Analysis of Research Question 2–Learner Diaries as Pedagogic and Research Tool***

Learner Diaries as Pedagogic and Research Tool	Themes
Diary as line of communication	problems/difficulties, teacher-related, progress, anxiety
Diary as point of contact with English	self-analysis/ monitoring of learning styles and strategies

In the following section, I will present and discuss excerpts from Haruka's diary entries and reflective questionnaires in an attempt to address my first research question:

Research question 1. What key motivational factors can be identified from the learner's diary entries and how were these factors influential in sustaining the learner's SDLL?

From my interpretation of the coded data, two salient themes relating to her motivation and self-directed learning emerged from her diary entries:

1. Language learning as social practice
2. "Fun", "life" and "serious leisure"

Language Learning as Social Practice

A consistent vein that ran through all Haruka's entries was the vital importance of human relations for her language learning. One of the most common themes that emerged from the diary was her perception of me as an influential figure in her learning development and motivation. Often she referred to me as a friend rather than an educator and it was often my personality or attitude rather than just my teaching approach that she marked as a source of motivation.

> *I got vitality very much by talking with Dan! I felt that I love his personality very much. I'm thankful for his kindness and his pleasant lessons.* March 17th 2016

> *I participated in the Tuesday class of Dan for a makeup lesson today. I was nervous until I went for the lesson, but I didn't have any problems. Because there was Dan, I felt relieved and was able to enjoy.* August 2nd 2016

Of course, because Haruka knew that I would be reading these entries, there is an indication that she wanted me to understand the degree of importance my presence or support for her learning experience held. Furthermore, her reflective responses showed that the support of a trustworthy teacher was essential for her continuing her English studies.

> *It's hard for me to study by myself. Speaking English is communication for me. To keep studying, I need some support from someone I can rely on. If I have that study environment, I think I can continue studying.* Reflective Questionnaire 1, February 2017

In addition to her perception of the teacher as a key influence, her *eikaiwa* classmates were also shown to be important figures with whom she wanted to create bonds through a shared educational pursuit. Throughout the year, Haruka fostered these relationships through actions such as chatting after class and bringing in snacks for everyone to share.

> *I feel that it is special about the encounter with people and I'm thankful for the encounter with my classmates. They are not only the classmates and are people who are special to me.* October 8th 2016

> *I prepared a Halloween gift and handed it to my classmates. Because everyone seemed to be delighted with it, I was very glad too. This is my gratitude to Dan and my classmates. Always thank you everybody.* October 28th 2016

One student in particular, Masaki, gradually became an important peer to Haruka because he attended her son's high school, was highly motivated, usually sat next to her in class, and often stayed behind to chat with her after the class had ended.

> *I'm talking with Masaki after the English conversation class every week. Though he is the same age as my son, he is my friend and he is a younger person than me but is a very reliable friend. When I talk with him, I can get a lot of something. Because he helps me in the class, I can have lessons always happily. Thank you Masaki.* October 21st 2016

Here she once again highlights the importance of, not only the teacher but also, her classmates in creating an atmosphere where she felt comfortable pushing herself and interacting with others using English.

> *I was able to want to speak English more and more because I had a good teacher and good classmates who listened my talk. And because they listened properly to my English and also understood so I was able to continue studying English. I think that it is my motivation.* Reflective Questionnaire 2, May 2017

Haruka's diary entries revealed an additional social relationship outside of the English school that also may have played a role in sustaining her language learning motivation. Her son, a high school senior, was preparing for his university entrance examinations and Haruka made several references to the demanding schedule that he had to endure in order to gain acceptance to a good university. She expressed determination to provide both practical and moral support throughout.

> *My son took many tests at cram school this morning. He takes many tests not only at high school but also at the cram school! Because he plays soccer too, it is very hard. So I want to support him anytime. And I want to study English and Hawaiian language hard for me together with him.* April 24th 2016

Several of her entries suggested that she may have viewed her own language study efforts as a way of providing motivation or moral support for her son. Moreover, Haruka stated that his hard work was a source of inspiration and encouragement that aided her in her own endeavors as a language learner.

> *I'm feeling that it is really hard for him and I respect him. Because he makes an effort, I'm thinking that I must make an effort too!* October 29th 2016

The relationships that Haruka had with her teacher and her classmates were perhaps the most decisive factor in her experience as a language learner and permeated, in different ways, many of her diary entries. Through her diary one can observe various instances where Haruka displayed a clear sense of investment in the classroom community. For Haruka, her classmates and teacher acted as role models, confidants, counselors, and most importantly, friends. Even social relationships entirely detached from the *eikaiwa* were influential in sustaining her motivation. The effort that her son was making in preparing for his university entrance exams also inspired Haruka to push herself harder with her own studies. Furthermore, the presence of Masaki, who was at the time experiencing the same trials as her son and was very close with her, may have acted as a bridge between their (Haruka and her son) dual endeavors.

English as "fun," "life," and "serious leisure"

One characteristic of the *eikaiwa* class experience that Haruka appeared to deeply value was the idea of learning being "fun". In her diary entries, she often claimed that speaking English was pleasurable for her and that English conversation or communicative tasks that I prepared were more enjoyable than textbook exercises. Although on one level we can see that Haruka tends to favor communicative tasks and free conversation over grammar-focused textbook activities, this represents only a very limited snapshot of what drives her as a learner and indeed as a person.

> *I talked with everybody and I could learn English and really enjoy it. When I could talk in English, it was very fun.* May 27th 2016

> *I was tired from my English conversation class and my brain didn't work, but the lesson was very fun as usual.* August 5th 2016

As was discussed in the previous section, many entries further support the idea that social relations in the classroom were important for Haruka in creating an atmosphere where she could enjoy her English learning. On numerous occasions, her enjoyment seemed to stem purely from interaction with myself or her classmates rather than resulting from a specific task or methodological approach.

> *Though a lot of English words don't come out smoothly yet, it is very fun to talk English with Dan.* September 29th 2016

> *Because I was able to meet everybody, I was very glad. And it was a very enjoyable lesson.* August 19th 2016

Haruka's reflective responses further supported the interpretation that she believed that both "fun" and membership in her social group were central to her learning motivation.

> *At first I think that it is important that oneself enjoys study English. It is because I can't continue it if it isn't fun. And a teacher is really important to me because it's up to teacher what kind of lesson to do. I had a good teacher and classmates. It is very important to me that whom do I meet there. Not only I learned English with them, but also the life. I want to learn English as the life, don't want to learn English as the study.* Reflective Questionnaire 2, May 2017

The final two sentences of Haruka's reflection are interesting because they raise the importance of language learning to her as being inseparable from interpersonal relationships and the world beyond the classroom. Her opposing categorizations of "English as (the) life" and "English as (the) study" suggest that she sees the existence of two types of English learning—one for communicating and creating relationships with others and one for academic purposes. Her apparent desire to learn English for communicative, rather than academic, purposes had been suggested in a number of her diary entries.

> *Until now, I didn't want to speak English as much as possible, but now I want to go to a foreign country and want to speak English.* June 2nd 2016

> *And I will continue to study English so I will be able to speak English well. Then I meet many special people and want to make friends more.* January 1st 2017

This distinction between study and life also runs parallel to the perceived dichotomy within Japan between "*eigo*" (academic, test-focused study reminiscent of Japanese junior high school/high school English education) and "*eikaiwa*" (communication-focused English learning that is often taken up as an extra-curricular activity or hobby) (Nagatomo, 2016; Hiramoto, 2013). Haruka's rejection of English as "study," that seemingly runs counter to the significant amount of time she spent developing her own linguistic competence, may therefore instead represent a rejection of the "*eigo*" she encountered during her formal education.

The importance of socializing in tandem with language learning is also raised in Kubota's research on *eikaiwa* schools where it was found that the classroom was largely a hobby-like setting more for "socializing with like-minded people" than "developing linguistic skills as an investment to raise cultural capital" (Kubota, 2011, p. 480). In the case of Haruka, however, rather than taking precedence over linguistic development, it could be argued that the social interaction in her classes instead acted as a catalyst for enhancing and maintaining her motivation for language learning.

A final significant influence in Haruka's life and indeed on her language learning that is observable in several diary entries is her deep passion towards Hawaiian culture. As mentioned previously, Haruka works part-time as a teacher of Hawaiian dance and culture as well as studying for further qualifications in this area. Through her diary entries the profound impact this passion has on her daily life is clear and at times can be seen as crossing over into her efforts learning English. There were also a number of occasions where Haruka attempted to integrate her dual interests of Hawaiian and English learning in order to motivate herself further.

> *I learned Hawaiian language in the first class. I learned articles, singular and plural form of nouns, and adjectives today. I was able to understand the difference between English words and Hawaiian words.* March 20th 2016

> *I decided to read a Hawaiian book to study both English and Hawaiian culture. Though it is a difficult book for me, I'll try it!!!* April 3rd 2016

Haruka also found that improvements in her English ability afforded her greater opportunities to engage with the world of Hawaiian culture more deeply through shared language. She also started to notice benefits from studying the two languages simultaneously and she was able to transfer many of the skills she had learned from English class into her Hawaiian language learning.

> *I could understand a little English that Kumu (Hula teacher) used today.* March 27th 2016

> *(about Hawaiian language classes) "It is very difficult unlike English. However, I think that I can understand both more because I'm learning English too! I'll study hard more to understand both.* September 16th 2016

As Haruka's entries show, although the pure enjoyment derived from her *eikaiwa* classes was an important factor for her, on a deeper level, she saw her English learning increasingly as an expression of her "life". Furthermore, various facets of her English learning had arguably begun to permeate her endeavors as a student of Hawaiian culture and may have actually afforded her greater opportunities to engage with that adopted imagined community.

One of the most influential reasons for carrying out this study on Haruka's SDLL and language learning motivation was due to her approach being so markedly different to the majority of students I encountered in my *eikaiwa* classes. Just as in Kubota's (2011) study, a great many students were not attending the classes to develop their English language/conversation skills but rather as a simple pastime where they could socialize with foreign instructors or like-minded people. Haruka's case, while by no means generalizable, arguably resembles a different type of mindset to the "casual leisure" (Stebbins, 2007) found in Kubota's study and the majority of my own *eikaiwa* experiences.

"Casual leisure" is described as an "intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable core activity, requiring little or no special training to enjoy it" (Stebbins, 2007, p. 38). Haruka's references to fun and enjoyment throughout the diary may represent to some an indication that her approach to her *eikaiwa* classes was in fact merely hedonistic and more "casual." However, this fails to take into account the hours of solo out-of-class language study that she engaged in of her own volition and the clear emotional investment she had in her linguistic development and the continuation of her learning community. Just in the same way that her Hawaiian culture study had become an integral part of her identity, permeating almost every facet of her life, her English learning had become more akin to "serious leisure."

Stebbins states that "serious leisure" is "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that people find so substantial, interesting, and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (Stebbins, 2007, p. 5). The position of the learning of Hawaiian culture and language in Haruka's life constitutes both a leisure and actual career as she taught hula and culture classes as a part-time job. One can also observe how her English learning gradually fed into her Hawaiian leisure career in a number of ways (Figure 1). Her developing English skill and motivation allowed her greater access to her English-speaking Hawaiian culture teacher, afforded her opportunities to study both areas simultaneously through English-language books on Hawaii, and improved her understanding of the linguistic structure of the Hawaiian language. In this way, her English learning became another complementary form of "serious leisure" that ran parallel to her engagement in Hawaiian culture. In addition, the relevance of English to her Hawaiian studies and the access it provided to her hula teacher could mark it as a "regime of competence"—a skill that is marked as valuable and that affords enhanced participation in a particular community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 6). Haruka's remarkable motivation in *eikaiwa* could therefore be seen as an example of "investment" (Norton, 2001) linked to desired membership in two imagined communities: a community of English speakers (Kubota, 2011) and a community of experts on Hawaiian culture.

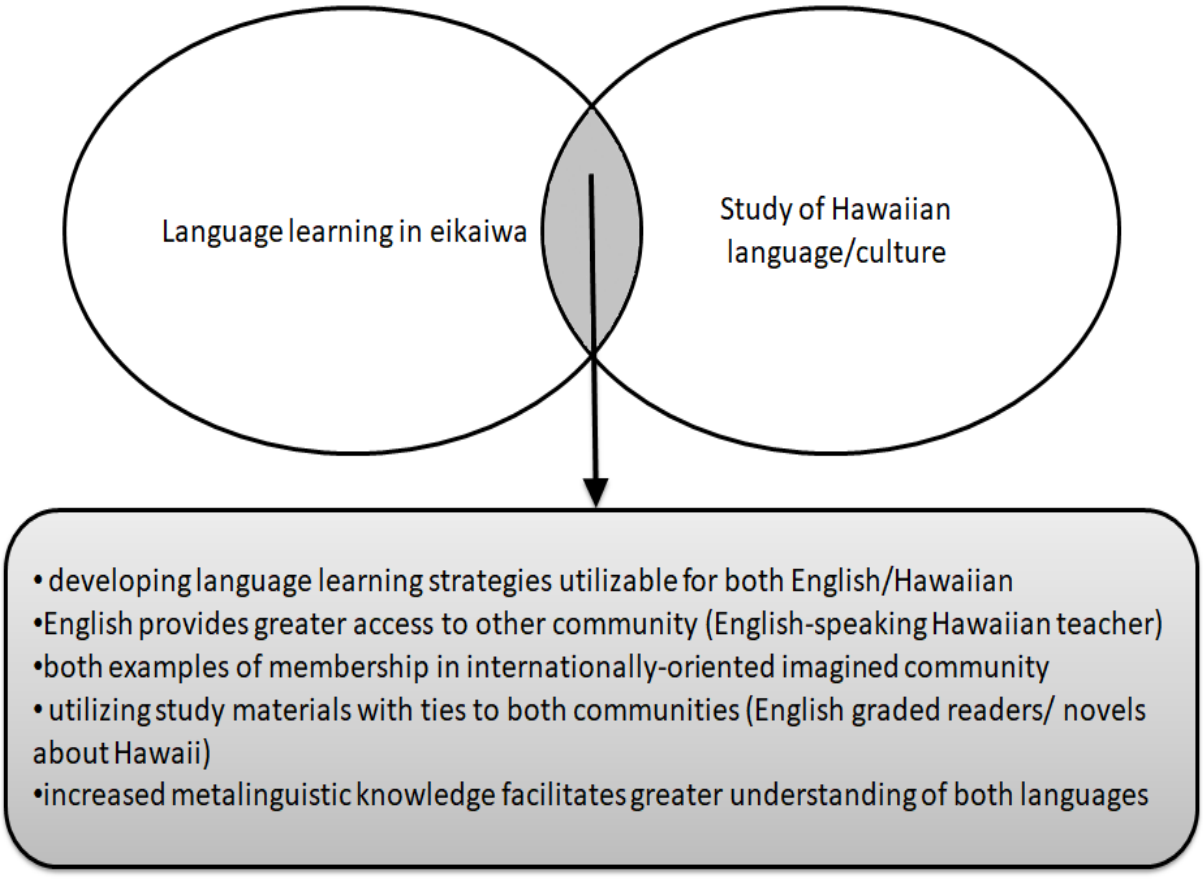

Figure 1. The interrelation of two forms of "serious leisure"

Haruka's diary entries, therefore, reveal that her motivation for language learning, both in and out of class, was mediated by social ties and responsibilities that she marked as valuable. Furthermore, rather than existing as a formalized academic subject tied to the classroom,

English learning was perceived as an enjoyable means of expression where she could further deepen existing and new social ties in a wider international community. Development in her English ability also acted as a means of facilitating a "leisure career" based on her investment in an imagined Hawaiian cultural community.

In the following section, I address my second research question:

Research question 2. What considerations emerge relating to the viability of learner diaries as a pedagogical tool and for learner-focused research in the eikaiwa context?

My analysis of identified two salient roles that diary writing fulfilled in her context as an *eikaiwa* student in Japan.

1. A line of communication with her teacher
2. A point of contact with English outside of class time

Diary as line of communication

A sizeable number of diary entries included references to problems or anxieties that Haruka was experiencing in her daily life, through her self-study attempts, and within her participation in the *eikaiwa* class itself. As Haruka knew that I would be reading entries weekly, one possible role of the diary may have been that of a sounding board as she was able to reveal insecurities or concerns to me that in a regular class setting might otherwise go unnoticed.

> *I had an English conversation class at night, but I was very tired and I couldn't really think. Besides I could not do the homework too. I beg your pardon Dan. I want to finish homework till the next class!!!* April 28th 2016

Sometimes these entries addressed me directly whereas on other occasions she spoke about me in the third person even though it was understood that only I would read the diary. These third person references to me were often quite personal or complimentary and perhaps the altered perspective created a degree of distance when relating these more emotionally weighted sentiments.

> *Then Dan might leave (school's name) and might become a university teacher, I heard it and felt really lonely. But I know it is a very splendid thing for Dan! but I was shocked. Dan is a No.1 English teacher for me and this class is my favorite class too.* May 20th 2016

The diary also potentially served a more practical purpose in that it allowed Haruka to communicate what she perceived to be her weak points and what areas she may have wanted to spend more time on during class. Moreover, one can see in this type of entry examples of reflection and self-analysis that traditional learner diaries explicitly attempt to elicit.

> *It is the past participle which I am weak in that I am studying now! Because I am unable to memorize grammar, it is my weak point. I'll study English little by little from now on and want to learn more grammar. Yeah!* May 26th 2016

> *Studying the textbook is very difficult for me, but English conversation is very fun.* June 9th 2016

These excerpts illustrate incongruence in the perceptions Haruka held regarding the approach she felt was necessary in order to develop her own English proficiency. Despite the fact that these entries were under two weeks apart, she appears to contradict herself, first embracing and then partially rejecting the grammar-centric material found in the class text-

book. These inconsistencies were often addressed within informal advising sessions held with me as her diary entries were being checked.

Although the style of her diary writing diverged from traditional explicitly reflective "learner diaries" (Bailey, 1991; Tanaka, 2009), a great deal of reflection and self-monitoring clearly occurred in her entries. On a number of occasions and with no direction from me, Haruka independently engaged in a significant degree of deep reflection concerning her language learning motivation, anxiety using the target language, the difficulties and successes she experienced, and the value that English held for her personally.

Another key avenue of communication between Haruka and me came not from the diary itself but from the time spent checking her entries for grammatical accuracy after the weekly group lesson. At this time I was also able to discuss some of the points she raised in her entries and hold something akin to a learner advising session (Kato & Mynard, 2016). During these sessions, I would discuss any anxieties or questions that came up in Haruka's diary, offer her encouragement and support, introduce additional self-study resources, and raise open questions designed to stimulate self-reflection. In several diary entries and in her first reflective questionnaire, Haruka marked these communicative feedback opportunities as being central to her continuing to write the diary and expressed gratitude to me for taking extra time to check her writing. As she knew that I would be reading these comments, they may have also served as a means of ensuring my continued support for her out-of-class study.

> *Dan was always looking forward to my diary, encouraging me, and supporting me. That was the most important thing for me. I'm very grateful to Dan who was happy to spend his time for me after class.* Reflective Questionnaire 1, February 2017

The time that I spent with Haruka after the lesson every week allowed me to simultaneously check through her entries and offer my perspective on any reflections or problems mentioned in them. These advising sessions were marked as a key source of motivation by Haruka in her reflections on the process. However, despite the positive motivational effect that these checking/advising sessions may have had on Haruka's learning, on a more practical level, it is important to note that, due to extremely high workloads experienced by many *eikaiwa* teachers, this time-consuming approach may not be viable for busy instructors.

Diary as Point of Contact With English

In the first reflective questionnaire, Haruka stated that what led her to start writing her diary was a desire to improve her grammar which she believed would in turn help her develop her speaking proficiency. The notion of the diary being explicitly reflective was not mentioned at all in her account. Instead, Haruka identified the main benefits of the diary as ease of review and personalized nature of the content.

> *If my speaking is corrected, I can't remember what was corrected later on, so I thought that getting my writing corrected is better. I thought that it would be easy to write and review because writing a diary is writing about myself.* Reflective Questionnaire 1, February 2017

In her second reflective questionnaire, when asked what she noticed about herself as a learner, Haruka claimed that she needed to have continued contact with English in order to maintain her progress and, through this, her motivation. As she generally only met for one hour-long class per week (to which she later added an extra twenty-five-minute private class), she felt that she needed more sustained engagement with English. This desire for consistent contact with English can also be seen in her diary entries as she refers to using vocabulary flashcard apps as well as graded readers and other literature to supplement her in-class

study. In this way, her diary became another means of sustaining contact with English in an EFL environment with few opportunities to do so.

> *I think that it is important that I continue studying. I don't speak English every day. Therefore it is important that I continue studying English and to speak English more. Besides, it is the most important that I enjoy it and do it. It leads to the motivation.* Reflective Questionnaire 2, May 2017

Additionally, Haruka often used the diary to reflect on lesson content as well as her feelings, failures, and successes from her regular *eikaiwa* classes. Entries arguably provided an opportunity to revisit concerns or new ideas that had arisen from the *eikaiwa* classes.

> *I thought about learning English. When I hear the English sentences everybody speaks, I don't think about some grammar. When I understand the English sentences, I choose the words I understand from there and guess.* March 19th 2016

> *I explained the game's rules to everybody in English, but I couldn't do it well. I am worrying whether other people understand my English. I will gain more confidence and want to speak English.* June 24th 2016

Haruka stated that the diary was primarily a way to practice grammar and vocabulary and that her continuing to write entries hinged upon me checking for any language errors she made. Each entry was written completely in the L2 for the purposes of improving linguistic accuracy or complexity. Although this approach ran counter to many of the recommendations for learner diaries found in much of the literature (Bailey, 1991; Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik, 2014; Rubin, 2003), the fact that Haruka dictated the conditions of the diary writing (L2 only, grammar correction) is a result of the power differential that exists between student (customer) and teacher (provider) in *eikaiwa* schools. Despite any resistance a teacher may have to a particular learning approach, in *eikaiwa* the customer often has the final word in what goes on in class. This, of course, can also affect research in an *eikaiwa* setting. The diary was also, through Haruka's wishes, free in terms of content with no prescriptive requirements for her to reflect on her language learning. The fact that Haruka was able to write about whatever was on her mind, rather than answering reflective questions, arguably sustained her motivation as it made writing in English easier while also offering me a window into her life outside of the classroom. Allowing me access to the daily ups and downs in her life further built on our close teacher-student relationship that she valued so much. This might go some way to explaining why Haruka, of her own volition, completed almost a year of daily L2 diary entries with no external pressure whatsoever from her teacher or the school.

Conclusion

Haruka's diary entries and later reflections provided a valuable opportunity to examine and reflect on one learner's motivation and identity, the role of the teacher, and indeed opportunities for even "serious leisure" within the *eikaiwa* context. Personally, I found the use of Haruka's learner diaries as a research tool to be both valuable and problematic. The rich, personal reflections and metacognitive awareness that Haruka included in her diary entries were a compelling data source that revealed a great deal about how individual cognitive and emotional factors shaped her language learning motivation. On the other hand, the close teacher-student relationship that we had caused me a great deal of insecurity and stress as I attempted to separate my roles as teacher, researcher, and friend whilst juggling issues of validity and ethics. Haruka trusted me enough to share substantial amounts of personal information with me and vice versa. At times, during the analysis stage of this project, I became

concerned about where the line was between personal and professional relationship. I sometimes felt guilty that I was unintentionally exploiting the close ties that we had built in order to conduct this study and gain access to her private thoughts and feelings. In this sense, the trust that Haruka expressed as she confided in me through her entries became somewhat of a double-edged sword, providing valuable insights into her learner self while also challenging my positionality as a teacher-researcher.

This study represents just one specific case of language learning motivation and self-directed learning, and is therefore not designed to produce any generalizable results. Haruka was a mature student who had started studying English of her own volition and who exhibited an extraordinary degree of self-directedness and investment in language learning. This, of course, may not be the case with other learners who may not display the same enthusiasm for learner diaries and might lack the same deep insights into their learning orientations, beliefs and attitudes. This study does, however, reveal some encouraging evidence supporting the use of learner diaries in *eikaiwa* as both a pedagogical tool and a source of personal information about learners for use by teachers and researchers alike. Due to the unique nature of learner motivation and the reversed teacher/student power dynamic within *eikaiwa* as well as the relative paucity of studies into the context, it is hoped that this study will stimulate further learner-focused, classroom-level research into *eikaiwa* in the future.

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Peer Review Process

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Appendix A

Haruka Reflective Questionnaire 1 (February 2017) (English translation)

1. Why did you decide to start writing your diary?
   I wanted to study grammar more to speak English. If my speaking is corrected, I can't remember what was corrected later on so I thought that getting my writing corrected is better. I thought that it would be easy to write and review because writing a diary is writing about myself.

2. Was writing a diary helpful to you? If so, why?
   It's been very useful. But it's thanks to Dan's help. If I just write a diary by myself, I never know if my writing is correct or not. But Dan corrected my writing, and I could make use of my mistakes next time. Also, I could pick up some correct grammar and words from it little by little. When I found out I wrote okay, I got more confident.

3. Was writing a diary difficult for you? If so, why?
   It took me a long time to write a short diary because I didn't have much grammar knowledge or vocabulary and I had to use apps and so on. It was really hard at the beginning. But it became fun because I wanted to study grammar and vocabulary and I started to understand them little by little.

4. How did you continue writing your diary every day without giving up?
   I was able to have my own time one day a week, and I wrote the diary then. Dan was always looking forward to my diary, encouraging me, and supporting me. That was the most important thing for me. I'm very grateful to Dan who was happy to spend his time for me after class.

5. Do you intend to keep writing your English diary? If so, could you explain why?
   As I'm not able to speak English well yet, I want to keep writing a diary to improve my English for as long as possible. Because Dan said he would support my diary writing and my study, I'm sure I can keep going. It's hard for me to study by myself. Speaking English is communication for me. To keep studying, I need some support from someone I can rely on. If I have that study environment, I think I can continue studying.

Appendix B

Haruka Reflective Questionnaire 2 (May 2017)

1. What did you learn about your language learning motivation?

- I was able to understand English by talking English about myself.
- I was able to want to speak English more and more because I had a good teacher and good classmates who listened my talk.
- And because they listened properly to my English and also understood so I was able to continue studying English.

- I think that it is my motivation.

2. What did you notice about yourself as a leaner?
- I think that it is important that I continue studying.
- I don't speak English every day.
- Therefore it is important that I continue studying English and to speak English more.
- Besides, it is the most important that I enjoy it and do it.
- It leads to the motivation.

3. Were these any other points you noticed that were important to you?
- At first I think that it is important that oneself enjoys study English.
- It is because I can't continue it if it isn't fun.
- And a teacher is really important to me because it's up to teacher what kind of lesson to do.
- I had a good teacher and classmates.
- It is very important to me that whom do I meet there.
- Not only I learned English with them, but also the life.
- I want to learn English as the life, don't want to learn English as the study.

May 19 2017

RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring the Dual Role of Advisors in English Learning Advisory Sessions

Ryo Moriya, Waseda University (graduate student)

Although advising in language learning (ALL) is an effective way to promote autonomy among learners of foreign languages, most studies of ALL have been conducted in the students' L1 (first language) to ensure constructive dialogue between the advisor and advisee. The research reported in this article, however, featured a longitudinal focus on the L2 (second language: here, English) in the ALL sessions conducted for this study. Two Japanese secondary school students participated in these sessions, and the social interactions between the advisor and advisee that were co-constructed in English during the sessions were investigated. In the analysis of around 21 hours of audio recording from 19 advisory sessions, three types of teaching were identified. These differed markedly from the general practices that advisors follow. Further, using Activity Theory analysis, it became clear that the teaching types identified resulted from the multiple roles played by the advisor. The transcriptions showed that the L2 advisory sessions enabled certain types of teaching opportunities in addition to the advising that took place. The study sheds light on L2 advisory sessions and points the way for future studies on this subject. In the final section of this paper, I discuss the possibilities for such interactive sessions in English and existing practices of advising for secondary school students who may be struggling to keep up with their English classes.

言語学習アドバイジング（以下アドバイジング）は外国語学習者の自律を促す有効な試みではあるが、多くの研究はアドバイザー・アドバイジー間での建設的な対話を保つために第一言語で行われていた。しかし、本研究ではアドバイジングセッションを第二言語（英語）で縦断的に行い、そこでの特徴に焦点を当て報告した。日本人高校生2名がセッションに参加し、セッション中に英語で共構成されたアドバイザー・アドバイジー間での社会的相互作用を調査した。全19回約21時間におよぶ録音データからセッションを分析したところ、アドバイジング本来の趣旨とは異なる3種類の教授活動が確認された。加えてそれらの教授活動はアドバイザー自身が持つ複数の役割から生じるものであるということが活動理論により明らかになった。本研究に於ける、第二言語によるセッションではアドバイジングと共にある種の教授機会が生じるという結果は、第二言語でのアドバイジングに光を当て、今後の研究への道筋を示している。また、英語の授業についていくのに困難を感じ得る中高生へインタラクティブな英語でのセッションや実際のアドバイジング実践といった可能性についても最終的には論じている。

Keywords

advising in language learning, L2 advising, longitudinal study, advisor—advisee interactions, case study

キーワード

言語学習アドバイジング、第二言語でのアドバイジング、縦断的研究、アドバイザー・アドバイジー間の相互作用、事例研究

For many second language (L2) learners who encounter difficulties, it is particularly important to gain autonomy, which is defined as the capacity of a learner to take responsibility for their learning and manage it themselves (e.g., Benson, 2007, 2011; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Oxford, 2017). Advising in language learning (ALL) is a dialogic, dialectic process that encourages L2 learners to resolve language-related challenges (Mynard & Carson, 2012; Yamashita, 2015). Learners naturally tend to have particular preferences and styles for studying English; however, Japanese secondary schools' English classes have as many as 40 students, exacerbating English teachers' difficulty in following each student's learning. Therefore, methods of supporting language learning among secondary school students tend to be ignored even as student-centered teaching and active learning are attracting greater attention in many educational settings in Japan. These new approaches to learning implicitly require a certain degree of autonomy for students.

Student-centered activities and active learning have their roots in Sociocultural Theory (SCT), which built on the theoretical underpinnings of social constructivism (Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999). SCT comprises two types of interactions: social interaction, or

interactions with interlocutors, and cultural interaction, or interactions with cultural artifacts. From an SCT perspective L2 learners co-construct knowledge through both types of interactions because social constructivism itself does not subscribe to an objective external world, claiming that everything that is known emerges from interactions (Given, 2008). SCT, therefore, is in harmony with student-centered teaching and active learning because social and cultural interactions are encouraged among students. Further, SCT and ALL also exhibit harmony because in one-to-one advisory sessions, both the advisor and advisee spend time attempting to impart information and then gradually come to understand each other. Therefore, in this article, SCT, as a theoretical epistemology, with ALL as its practical instantiation, will be examined through an exploration of advisor–advisee interaction in advisory sessions.

L2 advising would appear to be a reasonable approach to teaching and advising because, according to SCT, social interactions in L2 facilitate L2 learning (Lantolf, Poehner, & Swain, 2018). However, even though Kato and Mynard (2015) exemplified ALL in L2, using hypothetical examples as imaginable sessions, there are few empirical studies. L2 advising might be criticized for overburdening learners although, theoretically, they could make use of copious contextual cues and nonverbal information. For instance, even if an advisee is not accustomed to speaking English, they may try to convey a message through nonverbal communication or incorrect English. Here, the advisor can encourage the student to speak correct English through modeling or supplying missing language or forms. That is, the advisor can be the facilitator of a social interaction that provides mediation and works within the advisee's zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Lapkin, Swain, & Psyllakis, 2010). Language learning, however, was not the primary focus of this study. Rather, L2 advising was investigated as a means of fostering participant autonomy.

Furthermore, although there have been some objections that advising should not be another role played by the teacher (Kato & Mynard, 2015; Mynard & Carson, 2012), the lines between the advisor and the teacher in L2 advising are blurred. The goals of advising and teaching differ in one important respect: the central goal of English teaching is the development of mastery of English by the student, while the goal of advising is to develop the student's autonomy (Mynard & Carson, 2012). Social interactions can take place in L2 advising in second language acquisition (SLA), including clarification, questioning, and negotiation for meaning (Gass & Mackey, 2006; Long, 1996), while cultural interactions can provide affordances for learning (van Lier, 2004). In negotiation for meaning, an advisee receives input and performs pushed output in response (Swain, 2005). By analyzing advisory sessions, it is possible to ascertain whether they include advising aspects alone or also incorporate teaching aspects. Whether advisors restrict themselves to their particular role when coping with the unpredictable occurrences of an advising situation remains to be determined.

This examination has taken a cue from Derrida's (1976) philosophy, a poststructuralist approach, similar to social constructivism in which our knowledge and meaning-making processes are generated within human relationships (Given, 2008). This research approach, guided by theory, is expected to produce results that are applicable to qualitative data analysis. That is, if advisors to some extent take on a dual role in L2 advising, L2 advisory sessions can, in addition to their advisory role, perform the role of regular class teaching (e.g., providing knowledge to advisees and/or developing students' English mastery) if it is shown that they contribute to L2 learning as well as learner autonomy. It is hoped that this implication will take root among secondary school English teachers because they are being encouraged to increase the student centeredness of their classes and to conduct their lessons in English to improve communication skills. Although a student-centered class requires greater student autonomy, advisory sessions could fill the need to help classes to be more active. Therefore, ALL could be brought to more contexts in secondary schools to enrich student autonomy.

Advising in Language Learning

Advising in Language Learning is a generic term (Mozzon-McPherson, 2001) that is divided into two types: one non-transformational (ALL) (Mynard & Carson, 2012) and the other transformational (TALL) (Kato & Mynard, 2015). Transformation here draws on Mezirow's (1991) Transformation Theory and is defined as changes of actions and feelings. As for the relevance of his theory to TALL, it "goes beyond simply providing learning tips to learners but also supports a learner's transformation into a highly aware learner . . . through discourse" (Kato & Mynard, 2015, p. 9). A major difference between ALL and TALL is whether the advisory sessions are structured. To avoid any confusion, hereafter, I will use the term language advising as a generic term and differentiate ALL and TALL as specific types. Moreover, as noted, one of the most important differences between advising and teaching lies in the purposes and the skills required (Mynard & Carson, 2012). That is, the central purpose of teaching is to help develop students' mastery of English by providing knowledge and, accordingly, teachers would acquire skills to manage their classes, for example. On the other hand, the central purpose of advising is to develop students' autonomy and, to achieve this, advisors would need such skills as being silent, giving positive feedback, and empathizing with their advisees (for further details, see Kato & Mynard, 2015). The purposes and skills required for teaching and advising thus imply different roles for students.

In this study, TALL was examined, for two reasons. First, TALL assumes that the role of the advisor is transformational and that both advisors and advisees gradually co-construct their knowledge in advisory sessions. Second, in ALL, advisors are necessarily qualified experts, in practicing psychology, specializing in a specific area of psychology, or working in a profession using knowledge of psychology. Regardless of whether the discussion concerns ALL or TALL, the common purpose of an advisory session is to develop the advisee's autonomy through discussion of their study of English, but the author takes the perspective of social constructivism and then follows TALL.

The prevalence of language advising is growing in higher education in Japan. In addition to the 45 schools listed on the Japan Language Learning Spaces Registry (n.d.), which have provided language advising for students, Waseda University also offers advisory support for learners of Japanese as their L2 (Waseda Nihongo Support, n.d.). Partly because of the different purposes and skills required between teachers and advisors (Kato & Mynard, 2015; Mynard & Carson, 2012), secondary school teachers may have not yet recognized its significance. Many universities with advisory support have advising centers, but secondary schools usually do not. The difficulty in establishing support for language advising in secondary school contexts is perhaps due to the language issue. Kato and Mynard (2015) included many examples of advising sessions, using both imaginary and actual dialogues. They noted that the sessions were conducted in L2 and acknowledged some benefits. The drawbacks included the slow pace of conversation, with the advisees requiring more time than they did in the L1 advisory sessions; however, this did not prevent L2 advising. Instead, the following was found:

> Advising sessions in the target language can be very effective, but an advisor needs to adjust the pace and language to suit the learner. It can mean that everything takes much longer, but that can often be very satisfying for the learners. (Kato & Mynard, 2015, p. 78)

Of course, what is effective in such a context can be interpreted in several ways, including effective practice of English (c.f., languaging; Swain, 2006); more negotiation of meaning (Long, 1996); and increased time spent considering English study, which is cognitively demanding but rewarding (e.g., Lantolf, 2000). Furthermore, Kato and Mynard also refer to increased opportunities for advisees to experience 'aha' moments as an advantage. The mer-

its of L2 advising are entirely understandable, and they may also be conducive to L2 learning. This theoretical perspective on L2 advising will be further explored after reviewing SCT.

Sociocultural Theory

In SCT, the development of human consciousness (from lower to higher forms) cannot occur without mediation, explained as "the lower forms of consciousness . . . are transformed as we engage in activities with others and come to appropriate the meanings available to us in our social and cultural environment" (Lantolf et al., 2018, p. 1). It regards interaction not as a facilitative force of learning but a crucial one, whether the interaction is social or cultural (e.g., Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015; Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2015). That is, both types of interaction contribute to L2 learning, leading many researchers to recognize or reconsider the influence of sociocultural contexts (Sugita McEown, Sawaki, & Harada, 2017; Miyahara, 2015). To understand SCT, social constructivism must also be taken into account (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy, 1999). Social constructivism is among the poststructuralist approaches used in this article, in contrast to post-positivist approaches (Given, 2008; Kramsch, 2012; McNamara, 2012, 2015; Pavlenko, 2002). Post-positivism is congenial to quantitative studies, but social constructivism is generally used in qualitative studies (Ortega, 2012). Although variations of qualitative studies exist and not all necessarily adhere to one epistemological paradigm or another, qualitative studies as a whole broadly assume that learning is complex and dynamic, in a way that aligns with SCT's epistemology. This epistemological stand is similar to Derrida's (1976) view of language, which presupposes that meaning is created or constituted through social discourses and practices. Although Derrida's discussion is quite complex, this study restricts his concept to being one of the perspectives employed to interpret the data. If poststructuralist approaches including Derrida's philosophy and the dual role of advisors in L2 advisory sessions are kept in mind, the interpretive and social constructivist perspectives make the teacher–advisor relationship ambiguous. Following this train of thought, the following research questions have emerged:

1. How does teaching occur in the context of L2 advising?
2. What kind of teaching occurs in that context?
3. In advising, is the boundary between advising and teaching blurred? If so, how? And what might such blurring entail?

Is the expectation that social interaction in L2 will facilitate L2 learning applicable to advisory sessions? If so, could one anticipate teaching to occur in advising settings? If the answer is yes, the distinction between advising (what an advisor does to enrich an advisee's autonomy, encouraging him or her to think for him- or herself) and teaching (the provision of knowledge to develop mastery) would become quite complex. This dual role of advisors has promising implications for language advising in the secondary school context. The procedure outlined below is used to investigate when and how teaching happens and its characteristics. Also given below is the research design and a description of the advisory sessions.

Methodology

This section introduces the overall design of the study, which shares some similarities with a previous study I conducted in which the focus was on advisees' emotions through one year of advisory sessions (see Moriya, 2018). By contrast, this study takes advisory sessions as its main focus.

Researcher's Background and Participants

Whilst undertaking a two-year master's degree in 2016–2018, I worked as a part-time teacher at a cram school in Tokyo. Generally, cram schools specifically train students to achieve good marks on tests while regular schools are not limited to this one aim. Expected to work to satisfy the students' needs, in this cram school the tutors had to adjust their teaching to match their students' levels and weak points, but were otherwise left to manage their classes as they wished. I arranged my classes to suit my students, using my experience of teaching of over ten years. Due to my experience and background in English education, I was trusted to completely manage my classes, and was thus able to conduct TALL sessions in L2.

During the study period, I taught Ai and Yu (pseudonyms; both 16-year-old female Japanese learners of English and voluntary participants in the study) for a 1-year period in one-on-one 1-hour English instruction weekly sessions and conducted around 1-hour TALL sessions monthly. Before beginning the TALL sessions, I informed the subjects of the nature of TALL, the difference between general classes and TALL sessions, and the nature of voluntary participation as required by ethical standards, after which Ai and Yu agreed to participate. Secondary school students were chosen because in previous studies on advising, the participants were mostly college students (e.g., Mynard & Carson, 2012; Tassinari, 2016; Thornton, 2016; Yamashita, 2015).

Superficially, Ai and Yu shared many commonalities: being in the same grade, interested in English, and influenced by a sibling into pursuing English. Having known her for some time, I noticed Ai beginning to concentrate more on English after entering high school because of her bad experience in the entrance examinations. She struggled with English and other subjects as reflected in her advisory sessions (see Appendix A). Yu, whom I had known for a shorter period of time, was more into art as a hobby but enjoyed English, seeing it as a key to traveling abroad, something she loved doing (see Appendix B).

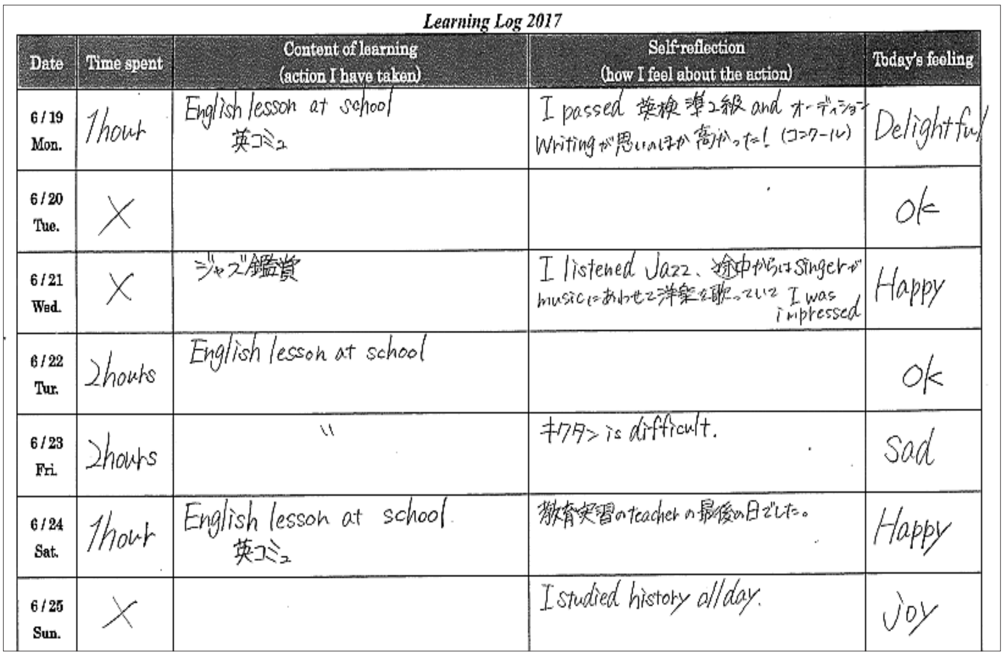
Type of Study

This is a longitudinal study with multiple case studies (Creswell & Poth, 2017), and the data collection lasted from August 2016 to August 2017. In a systematic review, Tojo and Takagi (2017) reported that only 31% (69) of the 226 qualitative studies on applied linguistics that were sampled lasted as much as a year or more. This year-long qualitative study may have produced results that will be of value and significance to the field as well as to the further development of ALL and SCT and their relationship to learners' longitudinal progress.

Data Sources

The study incorporated multiple sources of data (including short questionnaires, wheel of language learning forms, and student-constructed vision boards, to list a few; see Kato & Mynard, 2015) as ALL requires various tools to support advisees in different ways. However, one essential tool for use in advisory sessions is the learning log (e.g., Kato & Mynard, 2015; Yamashita, 2015; see Figures 1 and 2) in which an advisee keeps records of their English study. Every TALL session was audio recorded, and some of Ai's sessions were also video recorded with her prior consent. The audio data amounted to about 21 hours (1,263 minutes over 19 sessions) while the total amount of video data was about 9 hours (568 minutes over eight sessions). Additionally, I took field notes during the TALL sessions and memos during the analyses.

Figures 1 and 2 show Ai's and Yu's learning logs, respectively (for other logs, see Appendix A). These exhibited many contrasts, reflecting their characters.

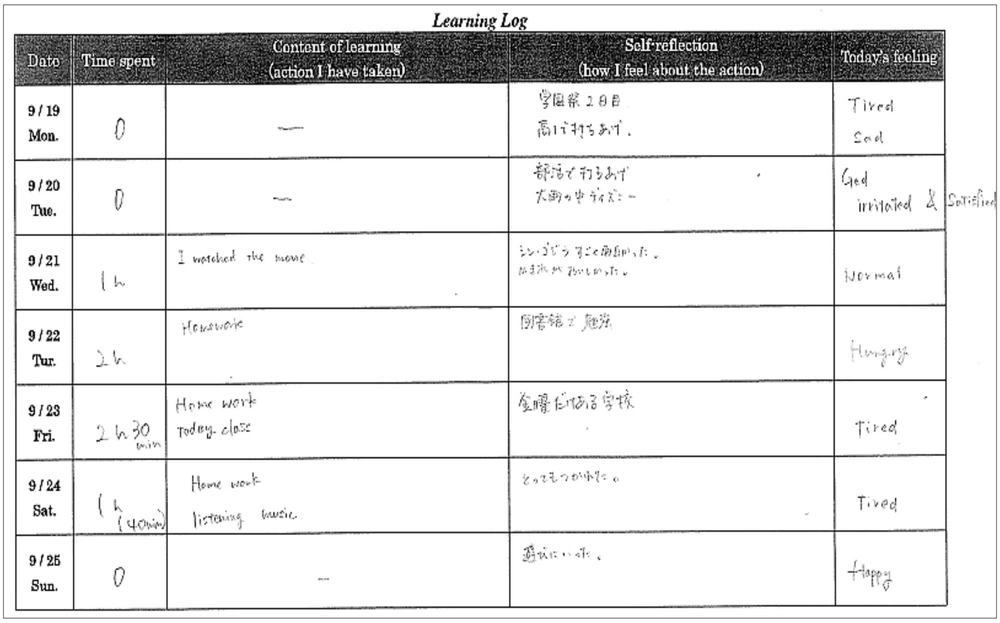


Learning Log 2017

Date	Time spent	Content of learning (action I have taken)	Self-reflection (how I feel about the action)	Today's feeling
6/19 Mon.	1hour	English lesson at school 英コミュ	I passed 英検準2級 and オーディション Writingが思いのほか高かった! (コンクール)	Delightful
6/20 Tue.	X			Ok
6/21 Wed.	X	ジャズ鑑賞	I listened Jazz、途中からはSingerがmusicにあわせて洋楽を歌っていて I was impressed	Happy
6/22 Tur.	2hours	English lesson at school		Ok
6/23 Fri.	2hours	〃	キクタン is difficult.	Sad
6/24 Sat.	1hour	English lesson at school 英コミュ	教育実習のteacherの最後の日でした。	Happy
6/25 Sun.	X		I studied history allday.	Joy

Figure 1. Sample of Ai's learning logs

Although Ai mixed Japanese and English in her entries, she wrote relatively much more and tried to use English as much as she could. Further, to express what she did or thought in her daily life (most of which was about her school life), sometimes she used words that were difficult or previously unknown to her, such as "I learned <u>auxiliary</u> verbs," "I couldn't answer teacher's question asking the meaning of 'particularly' so I <u>ashamed</u>," and "I want to know how to study pronunciation and accent <u>efficiently</u>" (underlining by the author, indicating unfamiliar words found in the dictionary). For Ai, this learning log seemed to operate as a mediational tool (Douglas Fir Group, 2016).



Learning Log

Date	Time spent	Content of learning (action I have taken)	Self-reflection (how I feel about the action)	Today's feeling
9/19 Mon.	0	—	学園祭2日目 [illegible]打ちあげ。	Tired Sad
9/20 Tue.	0	—	部活で打ちあげ 大雨の中ディズニー	Good irritated & Satisfied
9/21 Wed.	1h	I watched the movie.	シン・ゴジラすごく面白かった。 [illegible]	Normal
9/22 Tur.	2h	Homework	図書館で勉強	Hungry
9/23 Fri.	2h30min	Home work Today class	[illegible]ある学校	Tired
9/24 Sat.	1h (40min)	Home work listening music	とってもつかれた。	Tired
9/25 Sun.	0	—	遊びにいった。	Happy

Figure 2. Sample of Yu's learning logs

Yu's learning logs may seem simple but she exhibited many types of emotions experienced in different contexts. Her mixed feelings of "irritated and satisfied" on September 20th, which were about her friends outside school, being a typical example. These emotions may be related to experiences of musical and artistic activity both inside and outside school using her talent in these areas (see Appendix B). For Yu, therefore, her learning logs were used as memos or prompts to prepare to speak in the advisory sessions, allowing her to give the advisor detailed information about different topics as needed. The use of learning logs differed between the two, but in both cases, it was found that the logs provided an affordance for learning (van Lier, 2004).

Study Procedure and TALL Session Procedure

First, the participants were asked to discuss their study of English on school days (see Appendix C) one week before the advisory sessions began. The prompt was given in advance, and the student told when to begin speaking. Then, they were asked questions in English about what they had described. This task was chosen for two main reasons. First, as an advisor, I wished to gain an overview of their English study, and second, as a researcher, I wished to gain a baseline picture of English study procedures and habits before the beginning of the TALL sessions. This task was not used for assessing the advisees' linguistic skills but for eliciting their English learning experiences. For this reason, the prompt was given a week in advance, and the participants were told that there was no time limitation. The week following the completion of this task, the TALL sessions began. The two participants had different numbers of TALL sessions (Ai had 12 sessions, while Yu had 7 sessions), because TALL sessions were not obligatory, and both the students and I could only allot around 60 minutes each week. This availability was altered ad hoc: when the students needed to prepare for a forthcoming exam or ask some questions about English, or when they were not able to come to cram school because of illness or other reasons, advisory sessions could not be held. The frequency of the TALL sessions, however, was not a primary factor. Rather, the goal was to determine whether the participants would become more autonomous in their English study. Finally, a second interview was conducted in Japanese after the study period to ascertain the participants' reaction to the sessions. The procedure of this study and the TALL sessions is summarized simply in the upper part of Figure 3.

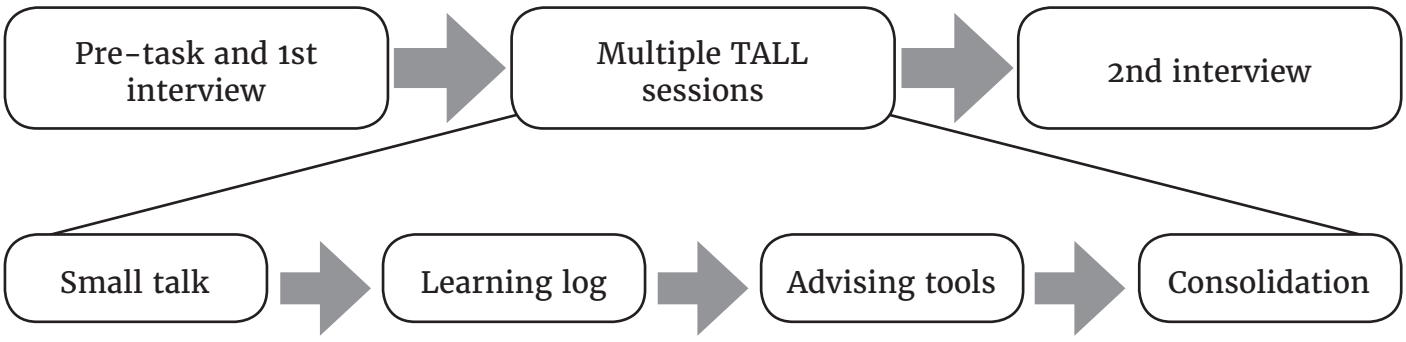


Figure 3. The overall procedure for the whole study (above) and for each TALL session (below)

The lower part of Figure 3 shows how the advising sessions were broken down: within a period of 60 minutes or so, I began the session with small talk in English to break the ice and change the atmosphere into one where speaking English was facilitated. The learning logs were checked at the beginning of every TALL session, and copies were made. After 5 to

10 minutes of talking, I always checked the learning logs first, to understand how each advisee had spent her time since the previous session. As this structure was maintained, the participants were able to prepare what they would say in each session, as was also noted in the pilot study, where one participant used the learning logs as a memo to prepare for L2 TALL sessions, as Yu did (see Figure 2). I attempted to retain the flow of the sessions as much as possible. After the learning logs were checked, if time permitted, an advising tool, from among many created after Kato and Mynard (2015), was used, but if not, the tool was given to the advisee as a task to complete before the following session. These tools included a short questionnaire investigating the advisee's confidence (see Kato & Mynard, 2015, pp. 36–37), the wheel of language learning (e.g., Mynard & Carson, 2012), and vision board (see the actual examples in Appendix B) to list a few (see Appendix D for a summary of these tools).

Data Analysis

To address the three research questions, multiple analytical methods were used. For the first research question, Activity Theory analysis (e.g., Engeström, 2001) was conducted. Activity Theory allows researchers to (a) capture dynamic interactions between participants and the artifacts they use (Battista, 2015), (b) identify and explore gaps or contradictions emerging from the activity (Gibbes & Carson, 2014), (c) understand the context (Battista, 2015), and (d) re-examine interactions in those contexts (Swain et al., 2015). Activity Theory is especially effective for examination of interaction complexity. For investigation of the second research question, thematic analyses were performed, with no predetermined framework, in an exploratory way, to determine patterns. The final research question was addressed with microgenetic analyses (e.g., Gutiérrez, 2008), employing a social constructivist perspective. Microgenetic analyses were used to identify, from a SCT perspective, where learning occurs.

Findings and Discussion

This section has three parts that correspond to the research questions that were previously provided. First of all, to examine L2 advising overall (RQ1), two figures that were created from the data are shown that visually summarize the overall context of the TALL sessions. Further, to provide a more detailed picture of each session (RQ2), excerpts of actual dialogues are provided. Finally, the L2 TALL sessions and the role of the advisor there are discussed, with a combination of findings (RQ3).

RQ1: How does teaching occur in the context of L2 advising?

Activity Theory analyses divide complex contexts into six sub-components: subject, mediating artifacts, objects, rules, community, and division of labor. In this study, the subjects were the participants (i.e., Ai and Yu) and I. Mediating artifacts, defined as the tools used to achieve a goal (Battista, 2015), included learning logs, advising tools, English and Japanese (the L1 and L2), and the gestures used in the TALL sessions. Objects were elicited from tasks (Appendix C), as were other advising tools and dialogue (some objects can be examined in Appendix B). Ai mentioned her objectives for English learning as attaining high scores in English tests, including university entrance exams. Yu was less forthright although she did speak of her expectations of university life. Before the beginning of the study, in the L2 TALL sessions, I explained that I would speak only in English but the advisees were permitted to use Japanese if they encountered difficulty. However, there is a gap between the rule and mediating artifacts because the rule led to Japanese being used in the L2 TALL sessions. Of course, the rule was not strict, with its intention simply being not to force the advisees to be silent. Howev-

er, interestingly, this loose rule had the effect of providing interesting insights. A sense of community was achieved from the dialogue, as Ai and Yu both mentioned their siblings many times, thus adding the family to the community. Finally, a division of labor emerged by examining the two activity systems (Figures 4 and 5).

In this context, the concept of a high school student takes on two roles: first, the participants were students learning something from a teacher, responding to one of my roles as a teacher; second, the participants were young and had not yet graduated from high school (*kouhai*), responding to another role of mine as a graduate student (*senpai*), despite the differences in where they studied. This dual role must be considered in any discussion. Another interesting result that is closely relevant to the study is the multiplicity of roles for both the participants and I in the TALL sessions. Although I was working as an advisor, I was at the same time playing four roles simultaneously at one workplace (i.e., a graduate student, a teacher, a researcher, and an advisor). The participants, for their part, had three roles (i.e., high school students, participants, and advisees). However, neither the advisor nor the students were forced to maintain one specific role, so dynamic changes of roles occurred even within one context, leading unconsciously to the adjustment of the advisor's role. This point is more fully discussed in relation to the excerpt that follows below.

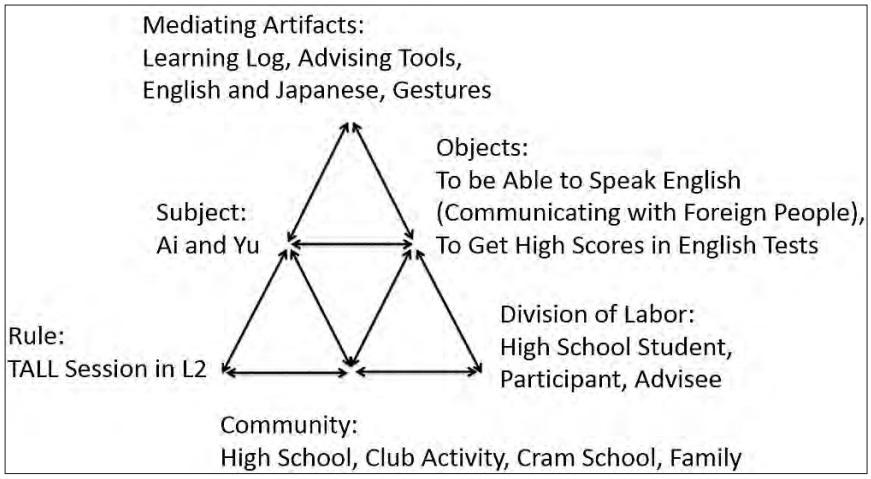


Figure 4. The activity system of Ai and Yu, as determined by Activity Theory analyses, obtained from multiple data sources, including L2 TALL sessions

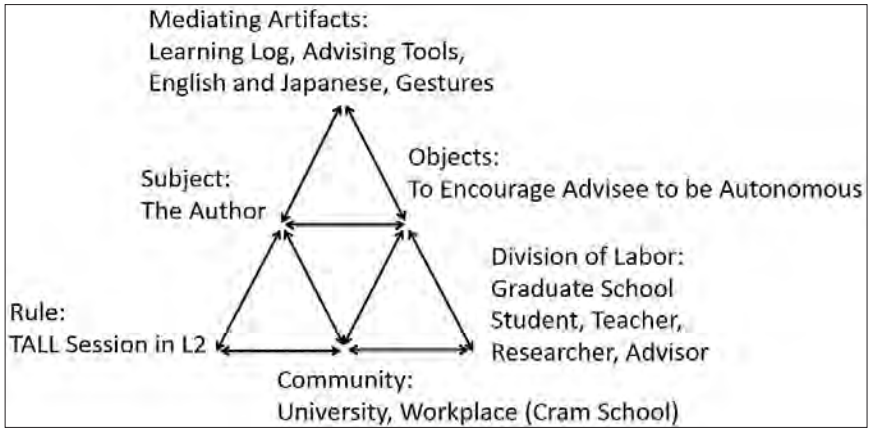


Figure 5. Author's activity system, obtained from data from L2 TALL sessions

RQ2: What kind of teaching occurs in that context?

Inductive coding brought out three types of teaching: feedback, sudden realization, and mini-lectures. Each of these is explained using typical, empirical examples.

Feedback—Translation

Such feedback frequently occurred, especially where the advisee used a Japanese word. Excerpt 1 below, for instance, includes dialogue between Yu and I regarding her English study (following the task in Appendix C). The authentic interactions below occurred in August 2016.

Excerpt 1 (R = Researcher/Advisor, Y = Yu/Advisee)

1. *R: Second point, how have you been studying English since you entered the high*
2. *school. So you started to learn Genius*.*
3. *Y: Yes.*
4. *R: Yeah and then, how to study English using Genius or other textbooks?*
5. *Y: I would I do preparation and hukusyu ("review")*
6. *R: Ah, how to prepare the every English classes?*
7. *Y: Work and textbook's skit and dialogue and sentence, long sentence.*
8. *R: Yes.*
9. *Y: Ah I write this in my note or all sentence.*
10. *R: All sentence.*
11. *Y: In my note I write and yakusu ("translate").*
12. *R: Translate.*
13. *Y: Translate. I translate I translates this sentence.*
14. *R: Into Japanese.*
15. *Y: Like this. (gestures)*
16. *R: Yes.*
17. *Y: Left page, like this. (showing a rough sketch of the notebook's organization)*

*: *Genius* is a textbook published by Taishukan and used in Yu's high school. In her junior high school days, another textbook was used, so I confirmed whether her attitude toward English study had changed.

While there were some clear grammatical mistakes, I did not intervene in all of Yu's utterances because the primary purpose was advising, not teaching. However, the advisor interrupted Yu's one-word utterance *yakusu* (line 11), immediately supplying the English word translate. This kind of feedback frequently occurred for Yu because Yu spoke English without hesitation, even though she did not know certain words. Yu used Japanese words as seen in Excerpt 1. However, the advisor did not (more accurately, could not) respond to each one-word utterance in Japanese, leading to a lack of feedback for the use of the word *hukusyu*, review, in line 5. I found it almost impossible to note and correct all mistakes made by the advisees because he did not have much experience as an advisor in L2 TALL sessions. The advisor did not intentionally teach vocabulary but rather unconsciously provided it as language support. Nevertheless, thanks to his feedback and some repetition by Yu, Yu used the word translate in a later session (in the fifth session, she said "I translated into Japanese"). This process from feedback to actual use shows the advisee learning in a way that harmonizes with

the perspective of SCT because this is precisely the pathway from externalization to internalization (Swain et al., 2015). Other examples of words that I translated into English for the students are given in Table 1, and the examples below were confirmed by memos taken during the analysis as well as by audio recordings.

Table 1. ***Examples of Feedback—Translation***

Session	Japanese word (English word)
First session	*gakki* (instrument)
Second session	*kuuki* (atmosphere)
Fifth session	*kageki* (extreme)
Seventh session	*tokuni* (particularly), *enshutu* (performance), *kojiin* (orphanage), *ka* (mosquito)

Note: These are the Japanese words used by my advisees, and I responded to them in English. In a later session, my advisees used the English words instead.

Sudden Realization

In both Ai's and Yu's sessions, there were instances of sudden realization. Similar to the understanding of negotiation for meaning (e.g., Gass & Mackey, 2006; Long, 1996), social interactions in L2 result in many opportunities where sudden realization comes into play (Gutiérrez, 2008). For instance, Excerpt 2, given below, is a transcription of a dialogue between Yu and I during the first TALL session. Yu's birthday had preceded the session by a few days, so they spoke about it during the small talk part of the session (see the lower part of Figure 3). This interaction occurred in September 2016.

Excerpt 2 (R = Researcher/Advisor, Y = Yu/Advisee)

1. *R: You became 16. Do you have some feeling when you became 16?*
2. *Y: I don't feel something.*
3. *R: Usual.*
4. *Y: I became I became I became that can…*
5. *R: That can?*
6. *Y: Nani-nani dekiru-youni-natta (having become able to do something).*
7. *R: Ah, what can you do?*
8. *Y: I can get married.*
9. *R: Yeah, of course, because you are 16.*

In line 4, I was not able to understand what Yu wanted to express because of the phrase "I became that can." In response to his question "That can?" in line 5, she used Japanese to express her intention: "*Naninani dekiru-youni-natta*" (having become able to do something) in line 6. I immediately asked Yu to paraphrase her intended message in an easier way: "Ah, what can you do?" in line 7. She faced a difficulty in that she tended to formulate complex thoughts in Japanese that were beyond her English proficiency. Thanks to the advisor's response, she found a suitable word to express herself and simply said, "I can get married" in line 8. This sudden realization appears similar to the feedback expressed in the previous

section, but the most important differences were between teaching occurring as a one-sided or two-sided phenomenon and whether the teaching was in response to a Japanese utterance. That is, feedback occurs only on the part of the advisor toward the advisee, but sudden realization can occur on both sides. This means that by sudden realization, an advisor can also learn to activate their knowledge to provide language-focused feedback for their advisees in an L2 advisory session. In Excerpt 2, the advisor expressed his observation with the interjection "Ah" in line 7, which was a result of a negotiation for meaning (Long, 1996). Increased opportunities to learn occur in determining what advisees want to express or finding words that the advisor was unaware of (which was especially relevant to the advisees' interests) (as a similar case, see Lapkin et al., 2010). Furthermore, feedback occurs as a result of responding to Japanese one-word utterances and noting that the usage of the word is not limited to this particular situation.

Another example of sudden realization as a result of social interaction can be found in Ai's eighth session, in January 2017. In that session, there was a conversation about what good language learners Ai knew (see Appendix D). The purpose of this advising tool is to see how other learners learn their L2. Ai asked her English teacher for examples of language-learning tools and received the response "by seeing foreign movies." Ai informed me of other responses by her teacher and then told me that sitting at a desk is not the only way to study English, and studying English by watching foreign movies also may be effective. Her gradual, co-constructed dialogue was an important way for her to reflect on her English study (Kato & Mynard, 2015). Following this, she reported that she began to watch foreign movies as much as possible. This type of dialogue can therefore result in reflection on or internalization of knowledge as well as smoothing social interactions.

Mini-lectures.

Unlike feedback, the explicit instruction of mini-lectures occurred in Ai's sessions, in particular. This may have been because the advisor responded to her questions as he checked her learning logs, as in Excerpt 3. Ai asked how to efficiently memorize words which have similar spellings and, immediately following the question, I answered with an extended turn which I have called a "mini lecture". The dialogue below occurred in the eleventh session, in July 2017.

Excerpt 3

1. *Researcher/Advisor: This one is "principle" while this word can be pronounced as "principal" (writing down the two words on a whiteboard and pointing at each of them). So principal is kocho (principal), but principle is genri (principle). . . . So you have to make use of...and you have to look at different angles from for example spelling, pronunciation and meaning because this vocabulary includes many information. It's very important. It's one of the way, and my example when I was a high school student was goro (a play on words). I used goro.*
2. *Ai/Advusee: Goro desu-ka? (asking for advisor's elicitation)*
3. *Researcher/Advisor: Yeah, if two words are similar, I used goro.*

This extract illustrates the advisor taking the role of teacher, but this type of mini-lecture often lasted around five minutes and usually occurred only once in one TALL session. Ai's logs in particular included one or two requests or questions per session. These included such topics as "how to learn pronunciation and accent," "how to read English passages faster," and "how to change short-term memory into long-term one." She had had bad study experiences

when she was a junior high school student and so worked hard on her studies and paid close attention to test-taking strategies in anticipation of the university entrance examination. These topics in her learning log reflect her frustration (for further details, see Moriya, 2018).

RQ3: In advising, is the boundary between advising and teaching blurred? If so, how? And what might such blurring entail?

All the data in this study was integrated to respond to the third research question. It should be noted that the advisor dynamically changed his role during the L2 advisory sessions and even within one TALL session. Examination of the excerpts above reveals an iterative shift between advisor-oriented and teacher-oriented roles. In Excerpt 1, I adopt the role of an advisor, and in Excerpt 3 I adopt the role of a teacher. Excerpt 2 is the middle point between the two, where my role resembles the role of *senpai*, or graduate student. A detailed microgenetic analysis of the data sources shows a clear shift from implicit to explicit teaching along the axis of time, but my role changes dynamically in response to interaction with the participants, whose roles vary in complicated ways even within one TALL session. Viewing this from the social constructivism perspective leads to the conclusion that advisors experience difficulty in maintaining their original role in L2 advisory sessions. This may be because, to ensure smooth communication, advisors need to adjust to a changing, complex situation, which requires diverse roles. This adjustment includes shifts into the role of teacher, regardless of whether this is a conscious phenomenon or an unconscious one.

The opportunities presented in social interaction can be sources of learning (Lantolf et al., 2018). For example, feedback, as shown in Excerpt 1, provides the advisee with input; after this, she repeats what she had learned and internalizes the feedback she receives (Swain, 2006). It is difficult to identify sudden realization as it occurs, but many sources of data using microgenetic analysis can triangulate the points where it occurs (Gutiérrez, 2008). This sudden realization bears on what SCT researchers call expanding ZPD (Lapkin et al., 2010), as, for example, in Excerpt 2, with the help of the advisor, Yu develops a simpler way to express herself.

The mini-lecture is the most explicit type of teaching in this context, but advisors do not have to take all such opportunities, allowing the student to develop autonomy. Advisors are expected to gain familiarity with individual differences in motivation, learning strategies, and learning style; however, advisees do not develop this knowledge, because they are not experts in language learning. Sometimes there is a call for an advisor to explicitly show advisees methods of studying English. Ai and Yu both expressed the need for this. Yu observed, "*Zettai-ni yaranai*" ("English classes don't teach how to study English") at the second interview. Ai also noted the following about her English classes: "*Minna chigau-noni, onaji benkyo-wo shite-iru*" ("We students are different, but we all have to study in the same way"). Ai clearly doubted the one-size-fits-all approach, but she had no sense of how to study by herself. Advisors cannot ignore their advisees' expectations: they are eager to learn how to study English, which is not usually dealt with in secondary schools.

A difficulty remains in balancing the roles of advisor and teacher in an L2 advisory session. To avoid communication breakdowns, the advisors' specific role may be blurred. The roles are even partly inseparable: advisors are simultaneously also teachers. In other words, although these roles are apparently contradictory (i.e., teaching emphasizes learners' dependence on teachers as a source of language knowledge, while advising encourages learners to be independent of advisors), there is perhaps a third position of teacher/advisor that recognizes that these two roles are both important and that negotiates the middle way, allowing advisors to perform both indispensable roles.

Conclusion

This study explored the dual role (i.e., teaching and advising) of advisors in L2 advisory sessions. After analyses of qualitative data from multiple sources, it was shown that L2 advisory sessions provide various opportunities for learning and that advisors and advisees change their roles dynamically as a result of encountering complex situations (RQ1). Further, advisors themselves often play a dual role, even within one session, responding to their advisees' needs, because the roles of teacher and advisor are intricately entangled (RQ2). As can be seen from an analysis of the data in this study, it could be impossible to state that "advisors should be different from teachers" (c.f., Kato & Mynard, 2015; Mynard & Carson, 2012) because of the difficulty in providing a clear, dichotomous definition (RQ3).

The significance of this study can be summarized in the following ways: (a) it was a longitudinal study with multiple data sources, (b) involving theoretical and empirical analyses of actual L2 advisory sessions, and (c) within a unique context, different from school and including a significant contribution from high school students. However, there were certain limitations as well. It was expected that a dual role would be found in the advisor's role, but it remains unclear whether there is a similar elasticity among other teachers whether within or outside the unique context of a cram school. Besides, this exploratory study focused on only two female participants, who had the opportunity to attend cram schools, so different findings would possibly emerge from other L2 advisory sessions where advisees are male students with little pre-established rapport, where advisors implement their sessions inside school, and where most of the advisees have a limited L2 proficiency level. The findings in this study may give us valuable insights, but other issues (e.g., gender, age, context, and proficiency) of L2 advisory sessions could also be investigated in future studies. Further, I did not assess the participants' proficiency level or statistically check the teaching received because these factors were beyond the scope of this study. Further research may indicate the emergence of teacher-advisor collaboration within the classroom and its potential advantage, and this exploration may include close investigation of teachers' and students' attitudes toward advisory sessions, examination of the development of autonomy among students, and observation of their utterances.

Finally, since poststructuralism acknowledges the emergence of diversified patterns in our interactions, its epistemological, ontological, and axiological stances shed different light on the value of what was ignored in the past. Hence, poststructuralist approaches allow us to encompass complex discussion of variable targets, simultaneously facilitating a deeper understanding of the given field: learner autonomy to support students both within and beyond classrooms.

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Review Process

This paper was peer-reviewed by the following contributor to Issue 2, Christine O'Leary. It was also blind peer-reviewed by members of the Learner Development Journal Review Network.

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Appendix A

Additional Learning Logs

Learning Log

Date	Time spent	Content of learning (action I have taken)	Self-reflection (how I feel about the action)	Today's feeling
8/1 Mon.	×		Training camp of brass band club. I was practicing "Disney Celebration" So, ディズニーの曲をききたくなった	happy
8/2 Tue.	×		I was practicing "Try Everything"(ZOOTO) 英語版をきいてみたいなと思った。	Sad but Wonderful
8/3 Wed.	×		〃	exciting
8/4 Tur.	3hours	I wrote English words to finish English homework.	To write many English words is very hard. but, ためになったのでよかった	tired but satisfied
8/5 Fri.	2hours	I took an English lesson at じゅくで	Risa (text) is difficult. 一回読んでいるけど。but, Thinking about the contents of story is exciting	fun
8/6 Sat.	3hours	I wrote a long passage about Bean-Throwing Ceremony.	I didn't wrote a long passage 最近 So, It's difficult but, Fortune sushi Roll などの特別な言葉を覚えられたのでよかった。	happy
8/7 Sun.	1hour	宿題の英語のプリント1枚	I went to the waseda university (大学のオープンキャンパス) I was very tired. So, I 宿題の英語のプリントを1枚だけした。	Very tired but exciting

Question for advisor / Comment

Total: 11h / a week

Learning Log 2017

Date	Time spent	Content of learning (action I have taken)	Self-reflection (how I feel about the action)	Today's feeling
5/29 Mon.	1hour	キクタン test at school.	I can't get points. キクタン is difficult.	OK
5/30 Tue.	2hour and 30minutes	English lesson at juku. Study 英検準2級 at Mac.	English communication test review 実力を磨くのもvery important but, とれるはずの点を取れるようにしたい	Happy and Sad
5/31 Wed.	1hour	English lesson at school 英コミュ		
6/1 Tur.	2hour	英検準2級 at juku.	筆記がけっこうできました!	Happy
6/2 Fri.	×			
6/3 Sat.	1hour	English lesson at school. 英コミュ 英検準2級	筆記は、わりとeasy. リスニングが…	OK
6/4 Sun.	×			a little happy

Question for advisor / Comment
効率的に発音・アクセントを覚えるには? それともひたすらつめこむ方がいいのか
Total: **/ a week**

I want to know how to study pronunciation and accent effioiency.

Learning Log

Date	Time spent	Content of learning (action I have taken)	Self-reflection (how I feel about the action)	Today's feeling
11/7 Mon.	2h	today's class H.W, music	・I want to return to yesterday.	Sad
11/8 Tue.	1h30	today's class H.W	・つかれた。 ・いつもと変わらない	Ordinary
11/9 Wed.	2h	class music & H.W	・好きな歌手探していました。	Happy swag
11/10 Tur.	2h	class music, H.W	・勉強しなきゃなぁ 数学やらなきゃ	blue.
11/11 Fri.	3h	class H.W target	・ポッキーの日!	Good
11/12 Sat.	0h	[illegible]	・部活と習い事の後、友達のお母さまとご飯をたべました。8時から…	I'm stuffed
11/13 Sun.	1h 30min	H.W Target	・午前中にやった。 ・習い事	sleepy

Question for advisor / Comment
[illegible]
Total: **/ a week**

Learning Log 2017

Date	Time spent	Content of learning (action I have taken)	Self-reflection (how I feel about the action)	Today's feeling
1/23 Mon.	2 h	Today's class prepared next class	I have a Target test !!	regrettable
1/24 Tue.	1h30	Today's class piepairation .	普通の日だった。	Normal
1/25 Wed.	1 h	Today's class native	I had a speech in nativeclass It is about " Hanetsuki "	tired !!
1/26 Tur.	2 h	class preparation、H.W		happy
1/27 Fri.	1 h	class	集中できなかった。	Sad
1/28 Sat.	3 h	I formed Text " chart "	チャートのテストが近いのでまとめてみたけど、終わらなかった。	
1/29 Sun.	30 h		I listened to " Don't know Why " Norah Jones	Exciting

Question for advisor / Comment	
	Total: / a week

Note: The first two logs are Ai's and the remaining two logs are Yu's. It was inevitable that the logs examined in this paper are the same ones used in Moriya (2018), as most logs included private information.

Appendix B
Vision Board

Note: The first board was made by Ai and the second was made by Yu. After their second TALL sessions, the advisor gave them each a blank sheet of paper with instructions and described the function of a vision board, showing samples on a website (Kanda Gaigo Group, 2015). They were asked to make an original vision board before the next session. During the third session, after the learning logs were checked, they showed me their vision boards and explained their visions.

Appendix C

Prompt Given to the Participants

Describe your English learning experiences so far, and future prospects.
<Discussion points>

- What was the most impressive lesson you took in junior high school?
- How have you been studying English since you entered the high school?
- How will you study English after graduation from the high school?

Appendix D

Summary of Advising Tools

Advising tools (Number of sessions)	Purpose
A: Things I want to achieve in my life (Ai's second session; Yu's second session)	To address many areas (e.g., health, career, and language learning) in the near future
B: Vision board (Ai's third session; Yu's third session)	To visualize their dreams and what they wanted to achieve in the future
C: Wheel of language learning (Ai's fourth and fifth sessions; Yu's fourth session)	To self-rate for the factors (e.g., goal-setting, learning materials, and time management) necessary for language learning

Advising tools (Number of sessions)	Purpose
D: Good language learners I know (Ai's seventh and eighth sessions; Yu's fifth session)	To find out how their friends and teachers learn languages
E: My 2016 & 2017 (Ai's ninth session; Yu's seventh session)	To reflect on the previous year and to imagine the near future

Note: For details on such tools as A, B, and D, see Kato and Mynard (2015). For C, see Mynard and Carson (2012). The author originally created tool E himself. Details can be found in Moriya (2018).

RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring the Development of Learner Autonomy from a Postmodern and Social Constructivist Perspective: Prioritising Voices

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Learner autonomy, defined as the learners' ability to take charge or control of their own learning (Holec, 1981; Benson, 2011), is considered as a key to effective lifelong learning (Dam, 2011). However, the multidimensional nature of the concept combined with the need to access both individual and social constructions or understandings of learner autonomy, from a social constructivist perspective, presents significant ontological and epistemological challenges. Although learner autonomy has been explored using a range of paradigms and theoretical frameworks, no previous studies appear to have examined its development, within a formal educational context, from a postmodernist perspective. This paper aims to discuss the benefits and practical implications of using a postmodernist approach to explore the development of learner autonomy in undergraduate specialist and non-specialist students studying advanced level French in an institution-wide language programme in combination with International Business or other subject areas, within a large UK higher education institution, based on its application within my own PhD study. After considering the background and examining in some detail the learner autonomy construct, the paper discusses the rationale for the choice of methodology and the challenges presented by prioritising voices, within a multifaceted and multidimensional theoretical framework. I show how a postmodernist approach was applied in practice, using a few illustrative extracts from the study. The paper article concludes with some recommendations and considerations of the limitations of such an approach, together with some reflection on the process and outcome of the research, including some implications for practice in a formal educational context.

学習者が自分の学習に責任を持ち、自分でコントロールする能力と定義される学習者オートノミーは生涯学習の鍵になると考えられている。しかしながら、個人や社会的構築物との関係性を伴うその概念の多次元的な性質は、社会主義的な観点からは存在論と認識論への挑戦を提起する。学習者オートノミーとその発達に関しては、さまざまなパラダイムや理論的枠組みから考察されているが、教育分野ではポストモダニストの観点から学習者オートノミーの発達に関して十分な研究が行われているとは言い難い。本稿はイギリスの高等教育で上級レベルのフランス語を専門にする学生とそうでない学生を対象に、学習者オートノミーの発達においてポストモダニストアプローチを用いる利点や実用的意義について考察する。学習者オートノミーの概念の背景を提示し、この概念を構築している要因を詳細に分析した後で、方法論の選択に関して述べるが、それは多角的かつ多次元的な理論的枠組みの中から、「声」(voices)を優先したゆえに表出された方法論である。 そして、本方法論より得られた実際のデータを引用しながら、実践への応用に関しても考察する。最後に教育分野における実践への意義に加え、事例研究のプロセスや成果の省察とともに、本アプローチの限界に触れ今後に向けた提言を行う。

Keywords

learner autonomy, postmodernist research, Higher Education, pedagogy for autonomy, learner voices

キーワード

学習者オートノミー、ポストモダニスト研究、高等教育、オートノミーの教授法、学習者の声

As a key to effective lifelong language learning (Dam, 2011) and learner motivation (Raya & Lamb, 2008; Hoidn & Kärkkäinen, 2014), the development of autonomous language learners has been the subject of many studies (e.g., Raya & Lamb, 2008; Benson, 2011; Everhard & Murphy, 2015) since Holec (1981) first defined the term as learners taking charge of their learning. However, many authors have warned against simply equating an autonomous learner with an independent one, pointing out that the development of a capacity for autonomy does not happen in isolation but through interactions involving peers and teachers (Little, 2000; Raya & Lamb, 2008; Raya, Lamb and Vieira., 2007). To become autonomous, therefore, learners need to develop the psychological and emotional capacity to control their own learning collaboratively as well as independently (Kohonen, 1992; O'Leary, 2014; Oxford,

1990, 2016). From a social constructivist perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), the multidimensional nature of the concept (Benson, 2011) combined with the need to access both individual and social constructions of learner autonomy presents significant ontological and epistemological challenges. Learner autonomy and its development have been explored using a range of paradigms and theoretical frameworks ranging from positivist quantitative approaches, such as Fazey and Fazey (2001)'s study of the autonomy of first-year undergraduates, to narrative qualitative ones (e.g., Karlsson & Kjisik, 2009).

Within my own PhD research relating to the development of autonomy, the need to take into account all the voices on equal terms, without privileging my own or those of theorists from the literature, was of particular concern when selecting my methodology. This demanded an approach which would not frame the participants' responses within a "meta-narrative" from the literature or my own beliefs whilst still allowing all voices to interact. Language also needed to be problematised as words could hold different meanings and or connotations for an individual or a group of individuals (see Derrida, 1976). A postmodernist stance (see for instance Lyotard, 1984) appeared to offer the most suitable research orientation. Although postmodern theory has been associated with practical applications for promoting learner autonomy (e.g., Curtis, 2004), I have not found any studies to date that have researched the development of learner autonomy using a postmodern orientation, at least not explicitly, so this new approach may be of interest for fellow researchers within the field of learner development/autonomy.

In this paper, I aim to discuss the benefits and practical implications of using a postmodernist approach to explore the development of learner autonomy, in undergraduate specialist and non-specialist students, studying advanced level French modules[1] in an institution-wide language programme in combination with International Business or other subject areas, within a large UK higher education institution. After considering the background to the study and providing a detailed examination of the learner autonomy construct, I will discuss the choice of methodology in view of the challenges presented by prioritising voices within a multifaceted and multidimensional theoretical framework. Although a full discussion relating to methodological choices, issues and challenges is beyond the scope of this paper, I will show how the methodology was applied in practice, using a few illustrative extracts from the study's data analysis. I will conclude with some recommendations and consideration of the limitations of such an approach, together with some reflection on the process and outcome of the case study research.

Background to the Study

The research was based on a case study of undergraduate specialist and non-specialist students studying French at the advanced stages of the University Language Scheme (ULS) -Stage 5 (CEFR[2] B2/C1) and Stage 6 a or b (CEFR C1) (Council of Europe, 2000).

The ULS, as an institution-wide language programme, offers electives to students of other disciplines (non-specialists) and core modules to students majoring or minoring in Languages (specialists), alongside other specialisms such as International Business, Tourism or TESOL, in six stages of language proficiency mapped on the CEFR, from ab-initio (A1) to degree standards (C1). Although the ULS comprises seven languages, only Spanish, French, German and Italian can be studied at the two most advanced levels due to more limited demand in other languages at these levels overall.

The ULS has a vocational orientation with three key aims at the advanced levels:

- the development of language skills to enable students to function in both a social and business environment;

- the acquisition of basic knowledge of the country/countries where the target language is spoken, together with the development of students' awareness of its/their society/ties, traditions, customs and business culture(s);
- the fostering and development of autonomous language learners.

Although the language study on the ULS could be described as common core rather than discipline specific, Stages 5 and 6 module designs allow students specialising in other disciplines to focus part of their language study on their subject specialism through the production of a subject-specific portfolio, report and presentation. In the case of students majoring or doing a minor in Languages at ULS 6, the portfolio involves the development of more specialist language skills such as negotiation, translation and interpreting. To encourage planning and reflection, each portfolio includes a planning record and self-evaluation (normally in L2 although some were written in L1). ULS 5 and 6a students were also encouraged to keep a research diary in their L1 or 2. A summary of the assessment programme for both the specialist and non-specialist routes can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. ***Assessment Programme***

ULS 5 & 6-Assessment Programme			
Semester	**ULS 5**	**ULS 6**	
		Route a (non-specialists)	**Route b** (Languages specialists)
1	*Oral* with tutor: defending their opinion (25%)	*Mini-portfolio: negotiation/ translation* (50%)	*e.Portfolio: negotiation/ translation/ interpreting* (10, 50 or 70%)
	Translation into English (25%)		
2	*Written portfolio and report* on topic of own specialism (25%)	*Written portfolio and report* on specialist area (25%)	Time-constrained *translation* (15, 20 or 25%)
	Presentations on above topic (25%)	*Presentations* on above topic (25%)	*Interpreting* with tutor (15, 25 or 25%)

Learner Autonomy as a Construct

Individual level

As a starting point for this study (O'Leary, 2010), I decided to use Benson's (2001) model of autonomy for control at the individual level (p. 86) and William and Burden's (1997) social constructivist model for learning and teaching (p. 43) for the social dimension of the process. On the basis of an extensive literature review relating to learner autonomy, Benson (ibid) identifies control over cognitive processes as probably "the most fundamental level." (p. 87). His model includes three key areas for control over cognitive processes:

- *attention:* active engagement with linguistic input, involving conscious apprehension and awareness of specific aspects of the language;
- *metacognitive knowledge* at task level encompassing any evidence of: decision to carry out

the task, decisions about content, progression, place and time of learning, the selection and use of cognitive strategies, and the criteria selected for evaluation;

- *reflection:* any form of reflection on the language, the learning process, learners' role within that process (pp. 86–87).

Social Level

William and Burden's (1997) social model of the teaching and learning process complemented Benson's (2001) individual model through taking into account the learning environment and the learning partnerships between teachers and learners. I adapted William and Burden's model slightly by adding a learner-to-learner dimension as shown below (see Figure 1).

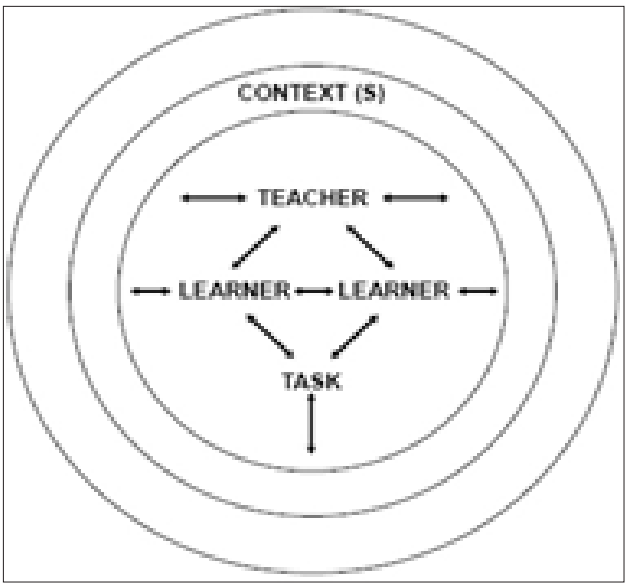

Figure 1. A social constructivist model of the teaching-learning process, adapted from Williams and Burden (1997, p. 43) by O'Leary (2014, p. 22)

The Significance of Metacognition

Whilst attention and reflection were clearly important, my initial review of the literature suggested that the development of metacognitive knowledge (Wenden, 1995, 1998) was perhaps the most significant factor for the growth of autonomous learners. This led me to choose a working title of "The Development of Metacognition within a Social Context" as a working title for my thesis.

Postmodernism as a Theoretical Framework: What can it offer to learner autonomy research?

Other studies

Previous studies on learner autonomy have used a very wide range of paradigms. For instance, Cotterall (1995) and Lai (2001) used psychometric approaches including and/or developing rating scales for understanding the development of autonomy. More recently, mixed methods using a (neo) realist and pragmatist[3] theoretical framework have been a methodology of choice (see Cooker, 2015; Tassinari, 2015). Practitioner action research involving a strong reflective/reflexive element within the process has been favoured by researchers such

as Champagne, Clayton, Dimmitt, Laszewski, Savage, Shaw, Stroupe, Thein, & Walter (2001) and Karlsson (2008). Complexity Theory, which seeks to reflect the complexity of the learning process in relation to autonomy, has also gained ground as a theoretical paradigm (see for instance Dörnyei, MacIntyre & Henry, 2015), whilst narrative and highly inductive qualitative stories can be used to privilege the learner's voice (see Benson & Cooker, 2013). However, I was looking for an approach that would enable me to access all the voices, including the teacher's perspective without privileging any. I was also conscious of the potential influence of dominant theories within the literature. In addition, I wished to reflect the social and interactive dimension of the research and its closeness to practice, within a social constructivist paradigm. I also wanted to find a research approach which acknowledged the relativity of language whilst still providing some answers to my questions relating to the case study.

Postmodernism as a Research Orientation

Whilst modernism can be seen as the culture of modernity underpinned by a belief in the power of science to deliver unified and legitimate knowledge (Sarup, 1993), postmodernism, on the other hand, tends to reject "metanarratives" which convey a unified and monolithic view of the world (Lyotard, 1984). Derrida (1976) rejects these narratives and their claims to unmediated knowledge. He asserts that we can only know reality through our own concepts or constructs within the theoretical frameworks we develop to make sense of our experience and research data. The postmodern approach therefore assumes a pluralist perspective and multiple "truths" contingent to specific settings. Haber (1994) stresses that postmodernism is both "*committed to*" and "*constitutive of difference*" (p.13). Although there is not one unified Postmodern Theory, postmodern theorists would all agree on "the arbitrary and conventional nature of everything social—language, culture, practice, subjectivity, and society itself" (Best & Kellner, 1991, p. 20). Despite its inherent relativism (Hargreaves, 1994) and much criticism of its excessive relativity (Hill, McLaren, Cole, & Rikowski, 1999), a postmodern stance can offer new insights into complex and dynamic phenomena in a situated context such as researching educational practice (Brown & Jones, 2001; Stronach & McLure, 1997). Moderate postmodernism is a variant of postmodernism which accepts cumulative knowledge (Roseneau, 1992), including non-postmodernist as well as postmodernist works, thus enabling rigour (i.e., in-depth theoretical consideration) without rigidity (e.g., imposition of a metanarrative). Roseneau's study, which considered works emanating from various philosophical/theoretical traditions, came under the category of "moderate postmodernism." Fox (2000), for example, distinguishes between three key principles guiding postmodern research, particularly in relation to practitioner research/action research namely: "Knowledge is local and contingent; the research is constitutive of difference" meaning that the research question should neither "close down or limit the ways in which the subjects will be understood or conceive of themselves." In other words, participants' responses should not be framed at the outset; and "the theory should be related to practice" suggesting that research questions and "their theoretical consequences will be of direct practical relevance to practice" (p. 20).

There are four main reasons why I decided to adopt a postmodernist stance to explore the main themes of my study:

- a desire to reflect a "pluralist perspective", i.e., not privileging individual or groups of individuals' constructions of the world, including my own based on experience and/or existing literature;
- a recognition that the learners' constructions, or their version of the "truth", was contingent on the specific setting of the research;
- the move away from macro theories as a theoretical framework to a "micro logical/the-

oretical" level, more in line with the study participants' personal theories and closer to practice;

- the dynamic nature of the research, and the possibility of change at a micro level working within the constraints imposed by the wider society, rather than framing the research within a critical theory of resistance or conflict, in a quest for an ideal practice (Brown & Jones, 2001) or an absolute solution to the development of autonomy.

This was not to negate the inherent political and ideological nature of the concept of autonomy (Pennycook 1997). It is clear that the psychological dimension of autonomy does not operate in a vacuum, independently of the cultural and social values of the broader society, as Pennycook (Ibid) rightly points out. Brown and Jones (2001) speak of "critical pedagogy in a postmodern world" because we need to recognise that these values, and the need for as well as type of change, will be different between individuals and communities depending on their background, education and experiences.

Postmodernism and a Social Constructivist Perspective

A social constructivist approach to knowledge and its acquisition fits in with the postmodernist orientation outlined above, in that it implies a local/personal construction of the broader social context and the relativity of language structures and meanings associated with these constructions. Both my philosophical and theoretical positions in undertaking this study were strongly influenced by constructivist theories of learning. Benson (2001, p. 35) citing Candy (1991) broadly describes constructivism as "a cluster of approaches which hold that knowledge cannot be taught but must be constructed by the learner" (p. 252). Constructivism, described in these terms, forms the basis for the concept of autonomy outlined earlier. Benson (2001) citing Paris and Byrnes (1989, p. 170) links constructivism with psychological theories of learning which assume that "knowledge is produced through socially conditioned processes of interpretation" (p. 36). A constructivist view of learning, therefore, stresses the importance of the learner's full participation in the learning process for learning to be effective (Benson, 2001, p. 36).

Focus of the Study

Research Questions

The key questions posed in the case study relating to the development of autonomous language learners were:

1. What do undergraduate language students believe about learning and their role within the process?
2. How do these beliefs relate to current conceptualisations of learner autonomy in existing literature?
3. What implications might this have on the conceptualisation of learner autonomy, and associated operationalisation of the construct within the language curriculum and beyond?
4. Is it possible to influence students' constructions of learning, particularly in relation to tutor dependence?
5. What is the impact of students' beliefs/constructions of learning on their learning, in relation to the development of autonomy in practice, within the languages curriculum?

Learner Voices and Practice

As I began the study, I was particularly focused on the need to ensure that all voices were heard, including the learners and my own as a learner researcher-practitioner, as well as with the application to practice as an outcome of the research.

Implication of a Postmodernist Orientation

Methodology

The philosophical and theoretical perspective of the research, as outlined earlier meant accessing multiple realities through participants' constructions of these realities, including my own as a learner researcher-practitioner. Guba and Lincoln (1989) see the outcome of constructivist enquiries as "another construction to be taken into account in the move towards consensus" (p. 45) where the investigator/ evaluator acts as "a subjective partner with stakeholders in the literal creation of data" (p. 45). However, my commitment to voices and multiple realities meant not seeking consensus but rather adopting a dialogic approach to my enquiry to risk my own prejudices (such as the importance of metacognition) "in conversation with others" (Smith & Hodkinson, 2009, p. 37). My intention was to facilitate/ take part in the co-construction of meaning within the community of learners (Wenger, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1997) whilst attempting to reflect the various realities, including any differences, which individual participants brought to the research.

In addition to more general methodological considerations, using a postmodern research orientation has a number of practical implications for the research design, the way data is collected and analysed. The first consideration was the best way to approach the literature review to avoid framing the participants' responses around particular theories. I was also aware of my own focus on the development of metacognition as the cornerstone to learner development in relation to autonomy. I decided to divide the research into two phases. *Phase 1* would access the learners' voices prior to any literature being considered apart from the main definition for learner autonomy, answering *question 1* and starting the following literature review from a student perspective. The *literature review* and its implications would respond to *questions 2, 3 and 4*. The *second phase* would concentrate on the practical implications in answer to *question 5*.

Dealing with Language

In line with my own concern at the start of the research, one of the key implications of using a postmodernist research design was giving due consideration to language and the plurality of meaning implied in this theoretical orientation. This meant taking a poststructuralist rather than a structuralist perspective, i.e., moving away from Saussure's (1910-11) structuralist theory of language, where the link between the signifier or word/system of representation and signified or the physical object/idea it represents is constant and stable, to poststructuralist notions of plurality of meanings and shifting meanings. For Derrida, as cited in Sarup (1993), signifiers and signified are continually separating to reattach themselves in "new combinations" (p. 33). In other words, whilst the signifier and signified are still closely linked, the signifier has supremacy over the signified. In practical terms, we cannot assume that there is one privileged interpretation of a written or an oral discourse. Words may have different meanings for different participants. This has implications for the way the data are collected and analysed, i.e., meanings have to be checked with participants during data collection and participants need to have some involvement in the analysis. This was particularly relevant to Phase 1 which reflected the students' perspectives as opposed to Phase 2 which

solely considered the practitioner-researcher perspective and language interpretation, based on pre-determined criteria from Phase 1.

Literature review

The literature review was framed by the learners' responses in Phase 1 rather than framing the responses within key theories in the field, at the outset. It focused particularly on the link between the learners' beliefs and existing literature by exploring primarily the areas highlighted by the focus group participants, including the role of the teacher in the learning process.

My Role as a Researcher-Practitioner

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) suggest that the qualitative/phenomenological researcher adopts the posture of "indwelling", which they define as living between and within the research meaning: "being at one with the person under investigation, walking a mile in the other person's shoes, or understanding the person's point of view from an empathic rather than a sympathetic position" (p. 25). It is, however, clear that my position as one of the voices in the research constitutes more than indwelling. My own reflection and reflexivity here form an integral part of the research process. I became one of the learners as a learner-researcher practitioner within the study, giving my "voice" no more authority than that of the learners. My research diary extracts as a learner-researcher practitioner were analysed in Phase 2 using similar criteria to the ones used in the self-evaluation reports and diaries (see Phase 2 data collection, example of data/analysis and outcomes).

Scope and Limitations of the Research

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) speak of the "trustworthiness" (p. 145) of the research, in relation to its validity. A detailed description of the research process and its expected outcomes can act as a basis for assessing its credibility (Nunan, 1992; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Transparency is an essential feature of qualitative research, particularly a clear audit trail incorporating relevant materials to help readers "walk through the work from beginning to end" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 145). Face validity is another way of considering whether the results of an investigation are valid. Face validity depends on whether the results seem valid, i.e., whether they resonate with the audience's experiences or whether they have a predictive quality (Krueger, 1994, p. 32). Given its postmodern orientation, how this study's findings resonate with the readers' experience and perception of "reality" played an important role in "validating" its results as well as its process of enquiry. From a postmodernist perspective, Smith and Hodkinson (2009) stress that external evidence cannot force or coerce individuals' agreement to "see the social and educational world in the same way" (p. 38). The reader must be taken through the research journey and convinced by the author's arguments.

Using a Postmodernist and Social Constructivist Perspective in Practice

Data collection methods and analysis for Phases 1 and 2

As stated earlier, the research was subdivided into two phases:

- *Phase 1* which was concerned with accessing learners' "voices" through focus groups with the student learners and through a reflective diary by the learner practitioner-researcher as well as by other learner practitioner-researchers'/ researchers' "voices'" from the literature, leading to a revised construct;

- *Phase 2* which used the revised construct as the theoretical framework for the analysis of 28 self-evaluation reports and five detailed research diaries, drawn from the same learners as the Phase 1 focus groups' participants, including the learner practitioner-researcher, for evidence of "autonomy in practice", in order to assess the construct's usefulness as well as the autonomy of all the learners involved. The outcome of Phase 2 would determine further intervention through curriculum and assessment design at the advanced stages on the ULS.

Phase 1 Data Collection Process, Examples of Data/analysis and Outcomes

Focus Group Process

Phase 1 used focus group described by Krueger (1994, p. 19) as group interactions aimed at gauging feelings, ways of thinking and perceptions which may differ between participants. Rather than seeking any consensus, the aim was to respect difference as well as to note similarities.

During Phase 1 of the study, four focus groups of between two (Group 2) and five participants (Group 3) met between one and three times over one academic year for a duration of one to one and a half hours). In total, six focus group meetings were carried out: Group 1 met three times, Group 2 once, Group 3 met once and Group 4 once. Each group consisted of student volunteers studying French at Stage 6 (Groups 1 & 3) and French at Stage 5 (Groups 2 & 4). Participants in each group were all experienced language learners studying at the same stage and in the same class with me as their teacher, with the exception of Group 4 (3 students).

The focus groups were carried out in line with standard ethical procedures, including confidentiality and the opportunity to withdraw at any point. An interview guide was drawn up before each focus group with a summary of the outcomes of previous group meetings and other focus groups as applicable, and presented at the beginning of each meeting (Krueger, 1994; Banister, Burman, Parker & Taylor, 1994; Arksey & Knight, 1999). In order to access their constructions or beliefs about the learning process both generally and with regards to languages, participants were asked to: identify the characteristics of a *good teacher/language teacher* and *a good learner/language learner*; describe *successful* and *unsuccessful learning experiences* both generally and for languages; reflect on their own acquisition of *language proficiency* and outline their *plan for future language learning* after graduating. These questions were kept sufficiently broad to cover their learning/language learning experience in higher education, rather than focusing on the last two years when I taught most of them. This was intended to mitigate the inequalities in the power relationship, between the learners and myself.I used summaries drawn up with the participants to devise the next interview guide for the following group meetings. Some minor modifications were made to the structure of interview guides as the study progressed. In particular, learner and teacher were swapped around to try and elicit more data on the good learner in Groups 2, 3 and 4.

Recording and Analysing the Data

In relation to the analysis of the data, Krueger (1994, pp. 143-144) identifies five possible options: (a) a transcript-based analysis; (b) a taped-based analysis using an abridged transcript based on careful listening of the tape; (c) a note-based analysis; (d) a debriefing session and summary comments at the conclusion of the focus group; and (e) memory-based analysis where an oral account is presented. The approach I adopted is a mixture of the second and third options, with some further adaptation: part of the analysis and the "debriefing" ele-

ments of the third option taking place with the participants as co-constructors/co-researchers in relation to the preliminary findings, as recorded on the flip charts; and I used the tape to produce partial transcripts. This enabled a partial analysis and clarification of meanings with the participants. Pseudonyms were used for each participant to maintain confidentiality.

The interviews were conducted in English (the students' L1) using a "brainstorming" approach in so far as each participant's contributions were recorded, as much as possible in the participants' own words, for instance *Approachability* (Scott[4], Group 1, meeting 1), *Self-motivated* (Lesley, Group 3), *Curious person* (Dallera, Group 4) and *Participation* (Gregory, Group 2). I recapped the students' responses so far on a number of occasions throughout the interview using the statements written on the flip charts to partly analyse the data with the participants. The following extracts from Group 1, meeting 1 show how the data was collected interactively (in conversation) with the themes identified in the presence of the participants:

[Researcher *writing headings:* "What makes a good teacher/ what makes a good learner" *on different pages of the flip chart.]*

Researcher: Let's start with the Teacher, sort of brainstorming. What makes a good teacher?

ANNA-MARIE: Someone who cares about students.

Researcher: In what way?

ANNA-MARIE: cares about the students, about the learning not about their pay packets at the end of the day.

Researcher: right, so somebody who cares about students' progress.

ANNA-MARIE: Yes, yes.

[Researcher writes "student progress" on the flip chart]

[….]

SCOTT: Somebody who understands students what they do and what they want.

[Researcher writes on the flip chart

Somebody who understands students/ what they do/ what they want (SCOTT)]

Researcher: That's interesting, what sorts of things would you say students want?

SCOTT: Every student is an individual, [they] want different things. So it's understanding, I don't know, the different students in your class and their objectives. You know which students are good. You know what they want.

Researcher: Do you mean being aware of the needs of the students?

SCOTT: Know which students are good, who wants to get on.

ANNA-MARIE: What's their objectives.

JANINE: Within that, you know when students need more help as well.

Researcher: so? [Researcher starts writing on the chart

Understand different students and their objectives (SCOTT, ANNA-MARIE)]

Krueger (1994) identifies two essential techniques to moderate group discussions namely: "the 5 second pause and the probe" (p. 115), in order to elicit additional information. From a poststructuralist standpoint, probing was used to seek clarification of the various concepts mentioned by the participants, for instance, "self-motivated" (Group 3):

Researcher: What do you mean by self-motivated?
LESLEY: To be a good learner, you have not just to go to your lessons but you've got to be motivated at home to do the work and learn yourself.

Students were then asked to rank the themes in order of importance with variation in ranking between participants noted on the flip chart such as the extract below from Group 3, meeting 1 concerning the good language learner:

- *Good Language Learner (additional characteristics)* [as written on flip chart]
- *Time out of lesson-learning vocabulary and grammar*
- *Interested in the subject 1 (SIAN/ JOCELYN)/ ½ FRANCES (also valid outside of languages)*
- *Very attentive—pronunciation 1 (DAVID)*
- *Immersion in the target language 1(LESLEY).*

The ranking gave an idea of the group's position but also had the potential to highlight differences of opinion in relation to importance of, and/or support for different statements, after they were recorded, thus ensuring disagreements as well as agreements were noted on the chart, in line with the approach's commitment to difference.

Using the Phase 1 Findings

The key findings were used to frame the literature review with a view to developing a conceptual framework for the development of autonomy on the advanced levels of the ULS, which is more aligned with our students' beliefs and experience, and thus. more "in tune" with their "voices". (See Appendix A for extract from flip chart summaries)

The Focus and Outcome of the Literature Review

Based on the main themes identified in Phase 1, the review of existing literature focused, more particularly, on theories and case study research relating to *affect*, including motivation, and cognition/metacognition both from *individual* and *collaborative perspectives*, together with the *role of the teacher* within the learning process.

Although the students' construction of learning (and teaching) were very much what I expected from my own discussions with students, the Phase 1 approach helped reveal the importance of affect in the learning process from these students' perspective. At these levels of study, the affective dimension is seldom considered, particularly in relation to learner development and/or training. This aspect and other finding implications, including learner motivation and the role of collaboration, led to a revised definition and model which emphasized the importance of affect as a category in its own right (as opposed to being implied within the others), as shown in Figure 2.

A Revised Conceptualisation and Theoretical Model

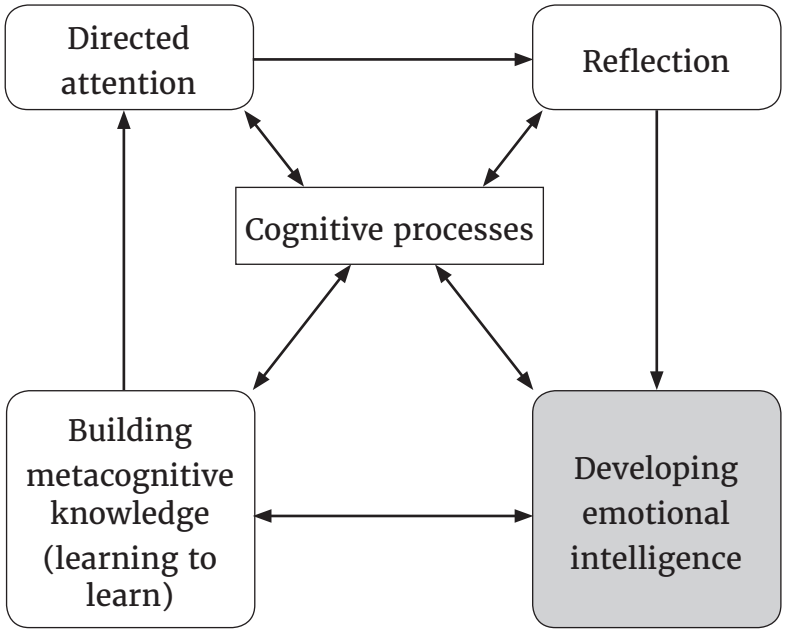

Figure 2. A model for the development of autonomy: individual level. The psychology of autonomous learning, adapted from Benson (2001, p. 86) (O'Leary, 2014, p. 21).

Phase 2 Data Collection, Example of Data/analysis and Outcomes

Based on the revised model of control over cognitive processes and from my own perspective as learner practitioner-researcher, I analysed 28 self-evaluation reports (students produce only one per portfolio-based assessment) and five learner diaries from the student learners (diaries were not compulsory and only five students completed theirs) as well as entries from my own research diaries, as a learner practitioner-researcher, for evidence of control over cognitive processes, using Benson's initial three broad categories, namely attention, metacognitive knowledge and reflection, plus one focusing on emotional intelligence/ affect. The evidence contributed to demonstrating control over cognitive processes as proxy for evidence of autonomy.

Self-Evaluation Reports

The findings suggested that, in practice, the student learners displayed *some degree of autonomy*. A few extracts below illustrate the data analysis:

Attention Although perhaps most difficult to identify, seven out of the 28 self-evaluation reports indicated a focus on particular linguistic aspects such as specific items of vocabulary:

> *I also learnt a lot of new vocabulary as the medical and legal French was quite complicated* (SE9)

or specific linguistic skills such as grammar:

> *Thanks to this report, I think I have made a lot of progress, particularly as far as my vocabulary and grammar are concerned* (SE20).

Task Knowledge (Metacognitive knowledge at task level) was quite complex since the task's aims included more than just linguistic development. In the typical example below, the student was approaching the task in a way that is contrary to the advice given, i.e., to find a theme/

topic then plan the content of the report and then search for available sources. Only seven out of all the 28 self-evaluations examined referred to the chosen/theme topic at the beginning.

> *In doing the portfolio, I found a new way of working: research then write. When I write something for my law course, I write, and then I find examples or quotations to support what I think.* (SE 12)

This constituted an indication of some degree of autonomy in the way content is selected based on their prior experience.

Reflection: All the self-evaluation reports contained some form of reflection which is to be expected since their stated purpose is reflection on the learning experience. Not all students covered all the aspects. In fact, the learners seemed to have focused on negative aspects as well as positive ones. Thirteen out of the 28 self-evaluation reports started with difficulties experienced with sources such as:

> *It was difficult to find sites which simply covered law* (SE11).

Fifteen out of the 28 reports highlighted linguistic progress as part of their reflection. Six focused on the acquisition of specialist language, particularly vocabulary:

> *I have learnt more vocabulary relating to my subject and I have developed my skills.* (SE10)

A small number (around 4 of the 28 self-evaluation reports) mentioned an improvement in skills such as reading and writing or more specific ones such as summarising:

> *I have learnt how to do summaries, and now I can write a summary when I want.* (SE17)

Some described progress in very general terms or simply stated that vocabulary and/or grammar had improved. Only two self-evaluation reports identified some weaknesses and suggested how they might remedy them:

> *Generally, I am pleased with my progress but sometimes my grammar isn't perfect because I have forgotten certain aspects and I need to revise these.* (SE27)

Emotional intelligence (affect) was less evident and limited to motivation/engagement:

> *This project has given me a sense of achievement; also I have put a lot of time and effort into the project.* (SE9)

The *role/influence of the tutor* was not as prominent as might have been expected from Phase 1 findings. Despite the central role given to the teacher in Phase 1, only two students referred to the influence of the tutor on their progress:

> [..].*the meetings with my tutor ensured that I made regular progress* (SE14)

and

> *The comments, corrections, advice and recommendations of my tutor guided me.* (SE5)

Learner Diaries

The five learner diaries ranged from weekly detailed accounts to a one-sentence entry against a list of dates. In terms of process, four of the five started with the search for sources and the problem associated with this:

> *During the Christmas holidays, I have researched several interesting subjects on the internet relating to law.* (LD19)

Four of the five referred to a tutor. A typical entry simply mentioned an appointment with the tutor. Only one diary gives a detailed account of discussions and their outcome:

> *I arranged an appointment with Mrs. O* [..] *to check the progress of my research. We examined the sources I had found on work legislation and my ideas on how to plan the report.* (LD 19)

The tutor was generally mentioned several times, up to five in one learner diary, LD3. This was in sharp contrast with the self-evaluation reports which were supposed to be based on diary entries. The teacher was not even mentioned once in SE3 relating to the above mentioned diary. The explanation could lie with what they understood a self-evaluation task to be. The available diaries included more information on the role of other agents such as the teacher and much less on reflection about the task and their own progress.

Learner-Researcher Practitioner Diary

My own diaries were analysed using the same categories as for the students'. In all, 27 entries between 10 and 20 pages long were examined. The extracts gave a flavour of the context of the research as I "lived" it / perceived it.

Attention was as difficult to identify as in the case of the student learners. This was perhaps even more the case because my focus was not language as such. However, the following extract from a diary entry suggested a focus on terminology although this is inextricably linked with concepts and therefore overlaps with reflection.

> *What is self-directed learning as we understand it? Is that the outcome of "proactive autonomy" whilst directed learning would be the outcome of "reactive autonomy" or is it something different altogether?* (DOL 1)

Task Knowledge (Metacognitive knowledge at task level) was an aspect which had quite extensive coverage both in relation to literature review and the field work. The following extract which was typical of many entries throughout the three years encompass evidence of the decision to carry out the task, select its content and use of cognitive strategies:

> *[I] decided to spend the afternoon finishing "interviewing for social scientists". The analysis and profile must be written* (DOL 4)

Reflection as in the case of the student learners and as might be expected from the nature of a diary is wide-ranging. The diary entries included reflection on concepts and theories, research process, student achievements relating to the study and dealing with dependent students

> *My last focus group ran just before Easter with a number of stage 4[5] students (3 actually since 2 didn't turn up). The mix of the group was very different from the previous ones- [..] they were all reasonably cosmopolitan—an "independent" group who were confident of their language ability. They also must have learnt an awful lot of the language whilst abroad and yet were still prepared to assert the centrality of the teacher in the learning process.* (DOL 10)

*Emotional intelligence (Affect)*or As was the case for the student learners, , there was little explicit evidence of "control over affect". However, there were a few examples of dialogue relating to curriculum development (partially influenced by the study) which could fit within the social dimension of affect, i.e., "empathising" and "cooperating with others", as illustrated by the extracts below:

> *We discussed the development of the new ULS 6 module for the linguists. The meeting was tense. FD and GM who had taught translation and interpreting on BAIBL [the old degree programme]*

> *were not keen on portfolios because they were worried about marking workload. […]I discussed the success of 6A, including my own research, and mooted the possibility of including a collaborative task to encourage peer support. This seems to appeal to most, except for Italian who had small numbers anyway […]. We discussed criteria. I did not really wish to include performance but was outnumbered. I did argue about it being "low stakes" and we settled for 20%* (DOL 12)

The role of the teacher (read here supervisor) was mentioned explicitly in a small number of entries (5 out of 27) but tails back as my thesis progressed. The entries referred to two aspects of the supervisor's role: help/feedback and as a "motivator" to undertake the various activities relating to the thesis.

Whilst Phase 2 concluded that there was some clear indication of the students demonstrating their autonomy in relation to other aspects, explicit *evidence* of *control* over the *affective dimension* was limited. Apart from one or two of the learner-researcher practitioner's diary entries, there was *no evidence* relating, for instance, to *cooperation* or other *relational aspects* such as empathy with other learners, despite the prominence given to those aspects by the focus groups' participants who were the authors of the majority of the self-evaluation reports. These findings suggested the need for *collaborative activities* and for paying *more attention* to the *affective dimension* of the *learning process*, through raising learners' awareness at an individual as well as a collective level. They subsequently informed changes to the curriculum. Creating more opportunities for collaboration with peers and encouraging students to engage with, as well as articulate, the emotional dimension of the learning experience was something which the language team, consisting of all the module leaders of the advanced ULS stages, myself included, considered and developed through revising the curriculum delivery and assessment of the ULS 5, 6A and 6B modules, as a result of discussions arising from the outcomes of the study. In relation to the affective dimension, in particular, we now encourage feedback to peers and self-evaluation relating to these issues after discussing these aspects in class.

Conclusion

In summary, the approach to Phase 1 of the research enabled the identification of emotional intelligence or meta-affect as an important element in the development of autonomy in its own right, leading to a different starting point and initial focus of the main literature review, together with its addition to Benson's (2001) model. Although affect/meta-affect, including motivation and strategies associated with self-assessment and collaboration, has been the subject of a number of studies/publications linked to autonomy within an educational context (e.g., Aoki, 1999; MacIntyre, 2002; Oxford, 1990, 2016; Ushioda, 1996, 2003, 2006, 2011), influential models for its development such as Benson's (2001) or (2011) have tended to subsume these aspects within broader categories (e.g., as part of metacognition). Generally, the affective dimension of the learning process is likely to be underplayed (if acknowledged at all) within broader Higher Education pedagogies (Mortiboys, 2005) so highlighting its existence is of particular relevance for learner development or programmes that foster the development of autonomy. Phase 2 showed how the new construct/model could be used to assess the development of autonomy in practice, despite some difficulty with the "attention" criteria. Although all the self-evaluation reports demonstrated that students had developed a degree of autonomy, including some independence from the teacher, evidence of the development of meta-affect was absent.

As demonstrated by the overview of the methodology and the above brief account of its outcomes, I found the postmodern orientation to be an empowering approach in the use of theories and frameworks, which avoided closing down or limiting the ways in which participants

can be understood or "conceive of themselves." It facilitated a dynamic research design and the adaptation as well as use of existing theories. It also gave me the opportunity to articulate my own voice openly through the analysis of my diary entries and reflection sections, rather than covertly.

The student voices changed my perception that metacognition was the most important element in the development of autonomy. The shift of emphasis in my own understanding of autonomy and focus of research is best reflected by the new broader title of *Developing autonomous language learners within the HE curriculum: A postmodern and social constructivist perspective* finally adopted for the study. This has also impacted the way I approach learner development, in my own practice, particularly in relation to the affective dimension which now forms an integral part of class discussions as well as oral and written peer and tutor feedback, with some initial evidence of success (see O'Leary, 2014).

The relativity of the philosophical/ theoretical approach to this study does limit its scope as a free-standing piece of research. In relation to practice, future student cohorts within the same Programme may hold differing views, both as a collective and individually, so the outcome could change depending on the cohort. However, the research has enabled me to challenge main stream theories and opened the door to alternative perspectives. As such, it has given insights and a focus that may not have been possible with a different approach. As part of an ongoing enquiry into learner autonomy and the practices that may help foster it, it offers a broader definition and a new construct with practical implications and applications, within the wider body of existing and future literature, to be used, revisited and reconstructed as necessary.

Review Process

This paper was peer-reviewed by the following contributor to Issue 2, Ryo Moriya. It was also blind peer-reviewed by members of the Learner Development Journal Review Network.

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Appendix A

Example of Flip Chart Summary

Focus group 1—Stage 5—meeting 1

Present: Scott, Janine and Anna-Marie

What makes a good teacher?

- Somebody who cares about students progress/ students' experience
- Approachability
- Good listener
- Somebody who understands students/ what they do/ What they want
  - understands different students and their objectives
  - being aware of the needs of students
  - needs to be able to reach the students to inspire them
- Break down barriers between students and teachers- encourages (social worker sort of role)

- Teacher should have an interest in the subject-/passion & enthusiasm which is transmitted to students
- Help should be readily available- they should make time. Job= teaching students therefore should be a priority
- Recognition & rewards to good students
  - prizes/ certificates
  - a word of praise/ book tokens
  - motivation-competition between students
- Main role of the teacher is to get the students to learn
- Ask the students what would motivate them/ setting achievable goals
- Teaching style on the level with their students
- Patience- empathy with students' difficulties
- Know how to handle different students- more experienced teachers appear more confident
- Classroom management/ discipline
- Organisation

What makes a good learner?

- Hard-work
  - make sure you do your homework +reading round or doing something extra
  - ask for help and advice
  - look what you are supposed to have learnt from homework
- Willingness to work
- Learner aware of objectives given by teacher/ to make themselves acquainted with the subject
- Work on their own + go back to teacher with questions- tutors= main experts/ source of advice
- Main objectives= to pass the subject/ to know enough about the subject to pass (major)
- Understanding the subject for further studies (minor)
- the ability to prioritise what they need to learn
- Making friends (minor)
- Enjoying the subject
- Doing extra work to find out more
- Relating to real life
- Looking at background/ concrete examples from

Good teacher (follow-up from last focus group)

- Subject knowledge- 1= (link to enthusiasm for their subject/ teaching)
- Empathy (understanding student needs/ objectives) 4=
- Approachability 4= (link with empathy)
- Experience 3= (link classroom management/ knowledge of teaching methodologies/ how to teach)
- Good preparation 2= (link with organisation)

- Classroom management 3= (link experience/ knowledge of teaching methodologies/ how to teach)
- Organisation 2=(link with good preparation)
- Enthusiasm for their subject/ teaching 1= (link with subject knowledge)
- Knowledge of teaching methodologies/ how to teach 3= (link classroom management/experience)

Good learner—More general points applying to both School and HE

- Willing to do (hard)- work- willingness to learn/ motivation/ organisation/ target setting 1
- Ability to prioritise what they need to learn HE 3= (equal to recognition motivator/ pressure)
- Willing to do extra work/ to find out more -using theory + applying own experience 4=
- Interest in the subject studied 2 (interest= experience)
- School different from HE—HE requires self-motivation/ learning to be independent. Independence taught gradually.

Think of activities when you really learnt something-What/ how/ where/why

Example 1- Working for a seminar. Had to do research and then present it at University. Worked because there was structure and discussion. You did your research, shared ideas and took time.

Example 2- Revision for an exam. Involved group work and discussion in bedroom in France. Successful because worked together as a team / shared

Example 3- Research. Had to visit various places/ sites around the region-to be completed_

Example 4- Revision. Group work- shared your understanding of the concepts /brain storming in library and bedroom. Sharing ideas and concepts/ different points of view / interaction.

Focus group 1, meeting 2 (continued)

Think of activities when you didn't learn What, how, where and why

Example 1-Law lesson in France. Couldn't understand. Paid no attention/ switched off/ confused. At university in France. Couldn't engage in the learning.

Example 2- Group work. Somebody tries to lead/ there is competition/ unequal effort. At School. In HE, it is better. You do your own work but have no overview. Boredom/ lack of interaction.

Focus Group 3- Stage 5- Meeting 1 (only one meeting with this group)
Present: David, Sian, Lesley, Jocelyn and Frances.

Good Learner

- Self-motivated 1
  - want to learn
  - able to be motivated & learn yourself
- Good listener 3= (equal to attendance/ participation)
  - open-minded- understands & accept others' opinions
- Take time to understand 2= (equal to well-organised)
- Well-organised- organisation/ time management 2= (equal to take time to understand)
- Attendance 3= (equal to take time to understand/ participation)
- Participation 3= (equal to attendance/ good listener)

Good Language Learner ***(additional characteristics)***

- Time out of lesson- learning vocab and grammar.
- Interested in the subject 1 (Sian/ Jocelyn)/ 1/ 2 (France**s)** [also valid outside of languages]
- Very attentive- pronunciation 1 (David)
- Immersion in the target language 1 (Lesley)
  - Language- listening to radio/ reading etc..
- Need to sustain effort- learning process gradual

Good Teacher

- Able to come down to the level of the learner 2= (equal to patience)
- No favouritism- no preference for more able people
- Patience 2= (equal to able to come down to the level of the learner/ Relate to students/ Confident)
- Good in-depth knowledge of the subject 1=
- varies the lesson 3=
- involves the student in the lesson- encourage participation 3
  - by not talking too much
  - ask students' opinion
  - group work- classroom discussion
  - move around the class to individual students
  - uses visual aids rather than talking
- Relate to students 2= (equal to able to come down to the level of the learner/ patience/ Confident)
  - not too serious
  - approachability
  - personality
- Confident 2= (equal to able to come down to the level of the learner/ patience)

End notes

1. Modules refer to the constitutive elements of a course or programme of study. Undergraduates students typically study 6 x 20 credit modules a year or a total of 18 (360 credits) for a three-year undergraduate degree.
2. Common European Framework for Languages
3. This is my description of the author's research framework rather than their own.
4. Different Christian names were used to preserve confidentiality.
5. These are referred to as Stage 5 students in the study.

RESEARCH PAPER

Qualitative Research Methods in Second Language Learning:Review and Evaluation

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The first time you attempt a qualitative research project it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the methods you use until the research project itself is complete. My intention in writing this paper is to provide reflections and insights into my thinking about the choice of research methods for my Masters dissertation, as well thoughts for future projects using these same methods. A combination of qualitative methods was used for my research project, including think aloud protocol, interviews, and stimulated recall. By reflecting critically on the implementation of these methods, I was able to identify various areas that could be improved on in future projects. Using qualitative research methods and adjusting them specifically for the project to be carried out, researchers can gather more useful data, but the resulting increase in the amount of data that needs to be analyzed can cause a project to consume more time that was originally envisaged. It is hoped that by reading this paper novice researchers may gain some insight in how to approach their own research using qualitative methods.

初めて質的研究のプロジェクトを行う場合、研究自体が完了するまでは、そのプロジェクトの手法の有効性を評価することは困難である。本稿の目的は、筆者の修士論文の研究手法の選択について省察と洞察を与え、また、同じ手法を用いる今後のプロジェクトに示唆を与えるものである。本研究プロジェクトでは、定性的方法の組み合わせ（考え話す記録法、インタビュー法、刺激想起法）を使用した。これらの方法を批判的に省察することによって、今後のプロジェクトで改善可能な部分を明らかにすることができた。定性的な研究手法を用い、それを特定のプロジェクトに合わせて調整することで、研究者はより有用なデータを収集することができるが、プロジェクトの時間を浪費させるのはデータの量である。本稿は初めてリサーチを行う研究者に、質的手法を用いた自身の研究のアプローチに関する洞察を与えるであろう。

Keywords

reflective, qualitative, effectiveness, research methods

キーワード

省察的、定性的、有効性、調査方法

Attempting a research project for the first time can be quite daunting. I know that was certainly true for me. Where do you start, and how do you find the information you need? This paper provides firsthand account of the methods and techniques chosen for a first-time qualitative research project. The structure of this paper follows the chronological order in which the project was completed: pre-project decisions, project design and implementation, and post-project reflection. This last section examines the effectiveness of the methods and techniques in obtaining the necessary data in relation to the research questions and notes how these could have been better applied with hindsight.

My first step in the project was to refer to existing reference books on qualitative research methods. There are many general or genre-specific "how to books" on qualitative research methods in social work (Padgett, 2017), psychology (Willig, 2013), or applied linguistics (Dörnyei, 2007). I do not attempt to add to this collection of "how to books", but instead provide a reflection of my own learning about these methods as I applied them in my own research. My reflection on the project used was undertaken 6 months after the research had been completed giving me time to process how well the research had been carried out. As a first-time student-researcher, I discovered that the literature I read focused on description and what the qualitative method could achieve, as well as the pros and cons of use, rather than practical implementation. My aim, therefore, is to describe the methods that I chose and

explain how they were implemented in a qualitative research project. The reflection on their implementation allowed for greater learning and considerations for future projects. I knew that my research project was not flawless, and my desire to know where I could have improved led me to write this paper. The shortfalls discussed when using these methods are not necessarily due to the method itself but, rather, my interpretation and application of them.

Pre-Project Decisions

The project I reflect on in this paper was my dissertation for the Birmingham Masters of Arts Course in TEFL/ TESL in 2017. Masters students are expected to write a 15,000-word research paper under the guidance of a supervisor. The research project was to be completed within six months of initial contact with the supervisor. I started my masters after working for 15 years in English education in Japan, including six months at the tertiary level before undertaking my dissertation. As an avid user of technology, in all of my classes I encourage students to use whatever tools are available to them to enhance their learning. The choice of topic for my dissertation arose from watching how the low proficiency students at a small private Japanese university used their smart phones when creating scripts for conversations, rather than rely on their own ability. The less proficient students appeared to rely on their phones more than their textbooks. Unfortunately, when checking the English that my students wrote, I found simple mistakes that even lower proficiency students should not make. In addition, there were more complex errors that often rendered the conversation incomprehensible. As I was unsure how the mistakes were made and use of smart phones is ever increasing, I felt this was an area of personal interest that I could do research into. How can advancing technology not improve how we do things, or in fact make them worse?

I firstly reviewed what software the students were using for writing their dialogues and compared their favorite translation apps with Google Translate. This enabled the students to see firsthand how different software produces different results. Students decided that Google Translate was the most accurate app and they consequently used it to help them with translation. This alone did not solve all the translation problems, and a new concern that students may use their phones in other ways to find the information they were looking for via YouTube or online searches helped me further focus my research area on how students used smart phones for producing written language.

At this point, I sent my dissertation proposal to Birmingham University and subsequently a supervisor was assigned to work with me. Our first contact focused on why students used their smart phones for creating conversations. I had not thought much of the wording of the research question or with what methods I would attempt to answer it. I did know that I wanted to answer the *why* question: Why did students choose to use their smart phones for a particular question, and in what ways other than translation were they using their phones for? We agreed that the best way to gain access to the thoughts of the participants was to use a qualitative approach. My supervisor suggested I look further into Second Language Acquisition research methods and provided suggestions of books (Dörnyei, 2007; Ellis & Barkhiuzen, 2005) to aid me in the design of my project. Indeed, my supervisor was an important influence on me throughout the project, so it is worth saying a little more about this relationship.

Supervisor—Supervisee Relationship

Throughout the design of the research project I was in contact with my supervisor. Not only did my supervisor advise me on the general steps and processes of research and writing, he also suggested ideas that were not outlined in the "how to books" I had read. Working through the project, my supervisor suggested various research method books that would help

me to understand the methods available. In turn, I attempted to learn more about each method and how to implement it. As the method of data collection is important in qualitative research, being able to discuss with someone who has used various methods in their own projects was as valuable as reading academic papers and books. We communicated by Skype and email. My supervisor consistently provided suggestions rather than directives, ensuring that I looked for information on how to progress on my own.

Project Design and Implementation

To answer my original *why* question, it was necessary for me to create more specific and detailed questions designed to help me describe what students do, when and how they do it:

1. *To what extent do low-level Japanese tertiary English language learning students rely on their smart phones in written language production?*
2. *When do they turn to their smartphones in language production?*
3. *What are they relying on their smartphones for?*
4. *How do they use their smartphones to produce answers in their L2, English?*
5. *How often do they use their smartphones?*

I will continue by first explaining the context of the research. Then I will discuss the qualitative research methods that I decided to use, before focusing on particular issues that arose in their implementation.

The Research Context

As a part-time teacher at the university where I decided to conduct my research and with commitments elsewhere on other days of the week, I only had access to students for research on the day I taught there. The second-year students in the English communication class that I chose for this research were either business management or sports management majors. According to the university, 75% of students of their students had scored less than 380 on TOEIC, so they had low proficiency in English. The classes were compulsory, and my personal observation of students suggested a lack of motivation, especially among the sports management students. I assumed motivation would be greater if they were able to express their own ideas rather than only following vocabulary and grammar provided in the textbook. In order to find the words that best represented what they were trying to say, I encouraged the use of smart phones as dictionaries and for translation. It appeared that not only were students using simple word-to-word translation, but they were also translating complete sentences. The project design was threefold: choosing participating students, designing the task for participants to complete, and deciding which methods and techniques would allow me to collect the necessary data to answer my research questions.

Getting my students to become participants raised difficult issues, including the use and presentation of participants' personal information. Different ethical considerations are noted by Dörnyei (2007): shared information (Who has access to what?); collection methods (removing participants from their normal activities); anonymity (participants should not be named); handling the data (video data can remain after the project ends); and ownership of data (Who owns the data and controls the editing and releasing?) Barbour (2014) suggests that ethical issues should not only be a concern at the beginning of the project, but considered throughout the project. Another way of describing the need for ethics in research is a participant's exposure to harm. Traianou (2014) notes that harm can include anything from the

obvious physical harm, to harm by damaging reputations or projects participants are involved in. Some countries have laws in place to protect participants in research projects and to avoid exploitation, and require informed consent by participants, but Dörnyei (2007) notes that even when consent is not required by law, ethical principles cannot be ignored. Participants need to be aware that they are going to be involved in a study and should provide consent for this, as well as allowing the information produced to be used in a research project intended for a dissertation or for publication.

Selection of Participants

One of the most difficult decisions for my project was deciding how many students were necessary in order for me to obtain enough data, and how I would get them to participate in the project. This was important as it would impact the logistics, analysis, trends, and time constraints of the project. The more participants in the project, the more difficult it would be to find a time for all participants to complete the task. Additionally, the larger the number of participants, the larger the amount of data produced, and hence the more analysis required. Alternatively, would keeping numbers small give me enough information to discover trends in the data? Different to quantitative research where a large sample is needed to yield meaningful statistics, qualitative research needs to convey the individual experience by description and clarification (Dörnyei, 2007). There is no concrete answer as to how many participants are needed for a project. Dörnyei (2007) suggests six to 10 for an interview study, and if using computer-aided analysis, up to 30.

As this was my first time doing research involving participants, I made a blanket request to all of my students asking for five volunteers. There was no response. Unsure how to move forward, I contacted my supervisor; his suggestion was to approach possible willing students personally. Additionally, knowing that I could not increase grades for the helpers as ethical standards needed to be maintained, I was at a loss for how to reward those who gave up their time. Another suggestion from my supervisor was to give the participants a small treat at the end of the project. The selection process I used in choosing the five students was *purposive sampling,* which Padgett (2017) describes as "a deliberate process of selecting respondents based on their ability to provide the needed information" (p. 67). Each participant was chosen according to three criteria: firstly, their English score in my class in the first semester, secondly, the students' likelihood of saying yes, and thirdly, based on the possibility of their cooperation in doing what was required throughout all the tasks. I also ensured that there was a three-to-two ratio of males to females as a representation of the gender balance in the class, and to see if any trends could be observed for different genders. I decided to select students with different proficiency levels in order to find out if there were differences in smart phone use between ability levels, a decision based on my hypothesis that a higher level of English would positively correlate to less reliance on using the smart phone.

When I approached my chosen students, their two main concerns were: *What are you doing the project for?* and, *How much of my time do I need to give up?* I answered these questions clearly, and in a straightforward manner.

To ease any ethical issues that could arise I contacted the university department for any internal guidelines. A colleague suggested that if no names were used then there were no ethical considerations, but my instincts told me to go to the administration. As they had never had a similar request, samples of consent forms and an explanation of the students' roles in the project needed to be submitted. The students signed a consent form, ensuring they were aware the data would only be used for this research by me, and that at no time would their names be included in the paper. I also provided students with updates on the analysis of the

data to acknowledge their contribution. The five students whom I approached directly agreed to take part in the research project and gave up a half to full lunch period for completing the task and subsequent data collection.

The Task

The task designed for the students comprised three writing exercises. The first part was simple translation of Japanese words to English; the second part was an English question-and-answer style exercise; and the third part required students to write the plot of a movie. It was hoped that these three exercises would present tasks of increasing difficulty and would mean that students would use their phones in different ways to aid their completion of the exercises. As the level of some students was quite low, the task activities were explained in written Japanese.

Qualitative Methods Considered and Issues to Consider

Here I cover the qualitative methods I considered for studying the research questions: pre-task questionnaire, think aloud protocol, stimulated recall and interviews. I also consider, related issues that arose: triangulation and videoing. Most of these came from suggestions made by my supervisor, which I then further researched on my own. The importance of data validity is discussed by Dörnyei (2007), to ensure that criticism of the data collection is kept at a minimum, as no single method allows for this, I used a combination of different data collection methods. My research focused on the *why* of participants' behavior or reasoning, so I decided to use introspective methods, in the hope of obtaining data that would provide responses from unobservable thought processes. My first plan was to go with open-ended questions in a paper-based questionnaire.

Pre-task Questionnaire

In order to create participant background data, I administered a pre-task questionnaire in Japanese, students were able to answer in Japanese ensuring they could answer in detail and without hesitation, rather than translating. The questions focused on current English ability and participants' attitude to English learning and use. In order to capture the thoughts of why participants chose when and how to use their phone, I also used a post-task questionnaire asking the participants when they used their smartphones and for what purpose. The participants were required to answer the questions as soon as they had completed the task. I did not request the post-task questionnaire be completed as each individual activity was finished due to a concern for participants overthinking and losing their train of thought. The post-task questionnaire provided me with a first look at the participants' thought processes. Most of the answers were short and did not contain many details. For example, this was one answer provided by one participant when asked about their smartphone use: "I am not good at combining sentences." Some of the answers were difficult to understand even when written in the participants' first language such as "to make (write) it good." (うまく作るため). The answers from the post-task questionnaire were the basis for the semi-structured interviews, which I come to later in this paper.

Think Aloud Protocol

After consultation with my supervisor about the questionnaire, I looked further into his suggestion to use the *Think Aloud Protocol* (TAP) in order to generate data on the participants'

thought processes. This method encourages participants to verbalize their thoughts as they complete a task, providing a closer look into what they are thinking. Various suggestions have been made about how to successfully employ this method (e.g., Dörnyei, 2007; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Fonteyn, Kuipers, & Grobe, 1993) including the following practical points:

- participants need to be trained as vocalizing thoughts is not a natural practice;
- small sample sizes are needed due to the time required;
- individual sessions in quiet settings are necessary to reduce distractions;
- it is necessary to remind participants to verbalize thinking if pausing occurs to ensure all thoughts are vocalized;
- the data need to be transcribed at the completion of the session.

Additionally, the following points should be taken into consideration:

- the method needs to have no impact on the performance of the event (Dörnyei, 2007; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).
- the method is more suited for writing tasks than oral tasks (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005)
- participants cannot pick and choose the information they verbalize, but must record all thoughts with accuracy for this method to be effective (Borg, 2006).

As this method seemed to me to be the most instant technique for recording thinking processes, I looked further into its application. I read papers that explained the method (e.g., Boren & Ramey, 2000; Charters, 2003), as well as papers that had used the method for data collection (e.g., Raimes, 1985; Wang & Wen, 2002). Through further research on Think Aloud Protocol (e.g., Dörnyei, 2007; Fonteyn, et al., 1993), I understood that training participants in how to speak their thoughts was integral to obtaining the necessary data. Before using this method with the participants, I tested its effectiveness in the early stages of my dissertation with a classroom conversation task. I instructed all of my students on how to vocalize their thoughts during conversations with each other. They were given an example of how it was to be carried out and prompted frequently throughout the task to express their thoughts. Although the students understood what was being asked of them, however, most of them failed to vocalize their thoughts. The students appeared more concerned with the task itself and having a conversation. As the students' English level is low, it was very difficult to apply out this method in English, and most students spoke in Japanese. Where I observed students using Japanese, it caused confusion with the task. I had not thought about the impact language could have on the process.

While debating whether to use this method in my dissertation, I noted that any vocalized Japanese would have to be translated. Students speaking in broken English did not verbalize all their thinking processes, and the quality of their English would make it difficult to understand what their thought processes were. I felt the effectiveness of the task would be affected if students were distracted by talking in Japanese. Most importantly, I could not be sure all thought processes were being verbalized, and I did not want to miss any important information. My observation was that when students focused on doing the Think Aloud as they were instructed, this appeared to impede the effectiveness of the lesson task. Another concern was that the natural flow of completing a task could be impeded by overthinking. Janssen, van Waes, and van den Bergh's (1996) study into the effects of the TAP in an L1 writing activity concluded that the reactivity of using the TAP varied according to the task, and that empirical checks should be used before applying the method. Even though I piloted this method with an oral task rather than a written task that I intended to use in the research project, my insecu-

rities and the training required for students outside of class time steered me away from using this method.

Stimulated Recall

As the TAP did not seem to be feasible for my research project, I needed to find another way to gain the necessary data that could be corroborated with the after-task questionnaire and expanded. My supervisor suggested I use *stimulated recall*. In this method, participants describe their thoughts retrospectively on an already completed task. The method can be used at intervals during a task through prompts such as *What were you thinking?* or using video playback of participants performing a task (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Dörnyei's (2007) recommendations to improve the output of stimulated recall include:

1. keeping the time between the task and recall within two days;
2. enabling participants to listen to and watch the task, as this provides more stimulation than written notes;
3. asking for thoughts, not explanations;
4. encouraging the participants to volunteer information rather than saying it for them, and
5. using participants' native language.

The first of these recommendations stems from the fact that our recall moves from short-term memory to long-term memory as time passes, and accuracy is compromised (Borg, 2006). Additionally, if the environment in which the recall is conducted is different to that of the "real-time" task, this may affect the information provided. However, stimulated recall provides an opportunity to express thoughts that would be difficult to obtain at the time of the task.

For successful implementation of stimulated recall, my participants needed to be videoed while they worked on the written task. Videoing has the advantage of providing not only audio, but also visual data such as facial expressions (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). However, it may be obtrusive and off-putting for participants, and may be ineffective if not set up correctly. Additionally, the transcribing and interpretation of non-verbal data can be difficult (Dörnyei, 2007). Three cameras were used in an attempt to view participants from different angles. As there was no need to collect spoken utterances, I did not have any concerns about microphone clarity and placement for recording what the participants said. The cameras were adjusted as the participants sat in their designated seats to capture their movements. While viewing the last participant working on their task through the camera lens, I found that the camera had been aimed at a higher sight line than anticipated. The student had hunched over their paper rather than sitting straight and valuable data had been lost. I adjusted the camera accordingly, but only clearly captured the last few minutes of them working on the task.

Once the task was completed, I needed to review footage of the five participants from the three cameras. I examined various aspects: discrepancies in the post-task questionnaire and the video evidence, instances of students in thought when answering questions, erasing and re-writing information, and using their smartphone. These observations were used to create questions for a post-task interview, as well as to design prompts for stimulated recall. Although participants had continual thought processes as they worked on the task, I was able to focus my prompts to the visual evidence of them in thought, leaning back on their chairs, looking around or at the ceiling in contemplation. Occurrences of participants in thought were recorded and time bookmarks were used for reference. Dörnyei (2007) notes that during stimulated recall interviewers should not ask leading questions, but rather should prompt the

interviewee to relive the moment by using questions such as *What were you thinking here?* As a week had passed since the task, most of the prompts for participants were *Do you remember?* Dörnyei (2007) also notes that interviews should be carried out in the participants' first language, and they were. The time needed to sort through the video was substantial. It took a full weekend to complete analysis of the five participants.

Once the analysis was completed, I was able to carry out stimulated recall with the participants. A week passed between administering the task and conducting the stimulated recall, well after the 48-hour recommended period. This was due to my teaching schedule at other institutions, and the logistics of getting to the university where the research took place. Additionally, students had other classes when I was available to talk, and lunch breaks were the only feasible solution. I knew that conducting all five participant sessions would not be possible in one lunch period, so I conducted some sessions during class time and the following week, 14 days after completing the task. Participants were shown video footage of the research task while having access to the task and follow-up questionnaire for recall. Whilst some answers provided usable data, participants often replied "I don't remember." One example was showing a participant video of them erasing content during the task whilst looking at their smartphone. It seemed odd that an eraser would be needed if copying from the phone. The prompt was *Do you remember?* Answer *Eraser?* Prompt *Why?* Answer *I made a mistake.* Prompt *Copying from the phone?* Answer *Probably I made a mistake when writing and I used the eraser.* Where participants could remember their reasonings and thought processes, valuable data could be collected. In addition to writing participants' answers, the stimulated recall was also video-recorded so as not to miss any information. The stimulated recall was administered in conjunction with a semi-structured interview so that more specific questions and issues could be raised.

Semi-structured Interview

An interview is an instrument for one party, an interviewer, to extract information from another party, the interviewee (Edley & Litosseliti, 2010). Interviews can be conducted in different ways, such as single or multiple sessions (Dörnyei, 2007), but usually consist of questions that require an oral response. In addition, interviews may be semi-structured or unstructured, individual or group based, and the delivery method may vary from face to face, to telephone, video phone, email, or chat rooms (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Interviews are not a foolproof method of finding out participants' thought processes for various reasons, including the time elapse between the task performed and the interview, as well as the inability to go back and ask questions that were missed in the first session.

In the semi-structured interviews, I asked participants both open and closed questions. The questions comprised fixed questions to all participants, as well as personally targeted questions. The specific questions for each participant were developed from queries about the answers in their post-task questionnaire, and discrepancies between the questionnaire and the video evidence. I was hoping the data gathered from the interviews would be the most detailed and useful in answering the research questions as I could see what I wanted to find out. An example of discrepancy between the video and questionnaire was a participant using their smartphone when they had not noted this on their post-task questionnaire. Going through each post-task questionnaire with each student allowed for clarification of their answers. One participant who failed to write reasons for use of their smartphone was able to provide the missing information. Another participant who had written "For how to summarize the synopsis" in answer to the question "Why do you use your smart phone to write the movie plot?" was able to explain their answer and this revealed that his intended meaning was different to

the one I had assumed. The participant had actually looked up an English version of the plot and was prepared to copy it word for word, rather than looking for a movie synopsis writing structure, as I had assumed. Interestingly, the students were quite willing to talk freely about their use of smartphones without any prompts.

Once the interviews were completed I transcribed each one and translated the relevant information from Japanese to English. This took a considerable amount of time as each participant conversed for at least 10 minutes, and some parts were difficult to hear. In order to include all utterances, multiple playbacks were necessary for certain sections, as was a native Japanese ear for the most difficult parts. The results were then written up and discussed in the dissertation. I analyzed the data by looking for common keywords. Students appeared to use their phones for similar reasons, and individual answers were expanded with the stimulated recall and interview. Findings from this analysis showed, first that regardless of level, when given the opportunity to use a smart phone for written English production, participants would readily do so. Second, the most frequently occurring use of smart phones was for translation purposes, including complete sentence translation for extended writing tasks rather than only unknown words. Additionally, the results revealed that some smartphone translations were simply incomprehensible, and some participants made errors when copying of information from their phones.

Triangulation

In order to ensure that my data were triangulated, I used a combination of questionnaire, stimulated recall, and semi-structured interview. Triangulation is a way of providing multiple perspectives on a phenomenon by using a variety of data sources (Denzin, 1978). In their paper on mixed method data collection, Moran-Ellis et al. (2006) suggest *integrating mixed methods*, where data generated by different methods are brought together, and provide an overarching view. Their approach incorporates the implementation of the triangulation methods, for example was the triangulation carried out concurrently or at separate times. They also note that using different methods "enriches the theoretical and epistemological approach" (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006, p. 20). Both views of triangulation suggest that by providing different vantage points of the same data we can create a more accurate picture of what is going on.

The use of video with participants for stimulated recall, exposed information that I did not know I was looking for. And using different methods and techniques enabled me to explore further into participant thought processes, and allowed for clarification of responses on the post-task questionnaire.

Post-Project Reflection

The following is a review of the various research tools used in my research project. As every project is different, the concerns raised here may not be applicable to other projects, but hopefully may help other novice researchers. In thinking over the different issues that occurred throughout the project, I became aware that one of my underlying concerns was time—and to have as much time as possible. Another reoccurring theme was translation of participants' thoughts and responses from Japanese to English. As a fairly competent non-native Japanese speaker, I was able to understand most of my participants' spoken Japanese; however, as I am not a professional translator, translation did not come easily, and extra care was needed for checking the accuracy of the translations I made. Overall, I believe my study did answer the research questions it posed. However, as the research was assessed as part of my MA, one of the assessor's comments was that some of the conclusions were

obvious. However, as there was little prior research in this area, I wanted to focus on covering the bases before identifying other areas of concern for further research.

Reflection on the Qualitative Research Project

Supervisor—Supervisee Relationship

The relationship with my advisor worked well as we both gave each other time. I didn't contact my supervisor every time I had a question, and he allowed me to work at my own pace in line with deadlines. The advice given worked better when researched further and piloted before the actual project. I also felt comfortable asking my supervisor for help when needed, the replies were always in a timely manner, and the information was not too detailed, but pointing me in the direction of where to find more explanation to promote self-learning. This scaffolding gave me more confidence to work on the project as I did not feel alone. If I were to do it over, I would have perhaps stayed in contact more regularly to gain feedback in smaller chunks. This would have allowed me to edit my research more frequently.

Selection of Participants

My initial disappointment at students not volunteering to be part of the project steered me to the use of *purposive sampling*. This allowed me to focus on students who seemed more willing to give information and participate earnestly. I still have concerns that purposive sampling did not provide a true representation of the class base, and it was researcher biased. Were students who were willing to participate in the study more motivated to work out a problem on their own before using their smartphone than students who did not seem motivated to participate? Had I chosen a balanced representation of those in the class? Although *purposive sampling* may not be a random selection of the population, it can address the issue of producing quality data by selecting participants who are communicative, available, and willing to participate (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Keeping the number of participants to five allowed me to find trends in the data produced, while keeping the amount of raw data at a workable amount. Each stage of the research project produced raw data that needed to be translated and transcribed before analysing. As qualitative research is not confined to giving participants a test and running responses through a statistical software program, it can be very time consuming (Dörnyei, 2007).

The decision on how to reward the participants for their time was also difficult. Whilst little of the literature I had read gave suggestions on how to thank participants, the advice from my supervisor to gift some sweets seemed appropriate and was well received. Additionally, keeping the participants informed of how and where the data were being used, as well as the conclusions reached in the project, maintained participant motivation and appeared to give the participants a sense of accomplishment.

The consent of not only the participants, but also the institution where the research was carried out, was needed to maintain ethical standards. It surprised me that although other professors at the university carried out research using students as participants, the institution did not have any official procedures in place. While I was informed that student consent would be sufficient, my pressing for institutional consent ensured that procedures are now in place for others to follow.

I would be very likely to choose my participants for another research project using the same procedure without changing anything. Choosing students who appear to be willing and capable ensured that I was able to gather enough data for analysis.

Post-Task Questionnaire

It needs to be noted that the post-task questionnaire was the only method applied within a short time frame of the task being administered. It allowed for short-term memory recall by requesting information through open and closed questions. This method was the basis for the follow-up interviews and allowed me to develop questions to probe deeper in the interviews. The responses given in the questionnaire were simple and appeared mainly in note form.

When thinking about the effectiveness of the questionnaire, I have the sense now that it would have been beneficial for participants to be aware of what questions were to be asked about how they completed the task. Alternatively, participants could have been working with the questionnaire as they completed each section in the task to reduce the time between task and question.

I would certainly use this method again as an instrument for obtaining data on thought processes. As it appeared that the questions were not stimulating enough for participants to give detailed answers, I would however need to change the way the questions were formulated. A simple *Why?* did not encourage long responses. As it is difficult to know exactly what each participant is going to write, it might be difficult to preempt all questions, although a pilot may identify some issues.

Think Aloud Protocol

Whilst the literature noted the think aloud protocol (TAP) was more suited for written tasks, I piloted this with a conversation task to see if students were able to voice their thoughts. This revealed that the task was confusing for students, which led me to decide not to use it for this research project. Had I piloted it with a written task, the results might have been different and more suited to the research project.

It was clear from the piloting that student training needs to be undertaken for it to become a natural process. This needs to be carried out over a period of lessons and a variety of situations for greater effectiveness, rather than a one-off as used in this project.

The pilot also made me aware that transcribing and interpreting the data would take time. Another more difficult aspect involved transcribing the students' utterances into usable data if the students were not speaking coherently. This would require interviewing students about their thought processes within a short time frame to confirm what they had been thinking at the time they were doing the activity.

Should I attempt a written research project with students again, I would like to retry this method as a way of glimpsing into students' thoughts. I would also do further research into training students to use this method, such as the training methods described by Fonteyn, et al., (1993), and van Someren, et al., (1994). In addition, I would ensure that the all the recording devices were well tested and positioned before starting any tasks. I do believe that this method alone would not suffice in gaining necessary data and would need to be supplemented with another method such as a questionnaire, stimulated recall, or interview.

Stimulated Recall

As all the participants completed the task at the same time, it was impossible to do the recall session with all participants at the same time. Rather than administering the research task to all participants simultaneously, having each participant complete the task individually followed by stimulated recall may have proved more fruitful. My research into this method before implementation had not prepared me for the repetitive *I don't remember* response to questions.

Another complication of the session was its combination with the semi-structured interview. With students needing to attend other classes, the time frame available to work through both instruments resulted in my rushing of the video recall. Rather than giving participants the time to recall what they were doing, I felt after a short period of silence a necessity to move on.

I would be very interested in using this method again, providing it was carried out much closer to the completion of the task. As prompts for participants are not specific, there is little need to prepare, and if carried out one student at a time, I could use my researcher observations in the moment as prompts without reviewing the video. This would let me keep the task and recall within a tighter time frame.

Interviews

The interviews allowed for depth to be added to the post-task questionnaire. The questions took time to prepare, as various methods had been used to collect data up until this point. The interviews were videoed for ease of transcription later, which let me focus on the conversation rather than note taking. The interviews were also combined with stimulated recall. As the participants found it difficult to express their ideas in English, it was necessary to conduct the interviews in Japanese, my second language. There were points in all five interviews where misunderstandings occurred either due to language barriers or misunderstanding of concepts. These were rectified on the spot by either myself or the participant. Some interviews were longer than others, as some participants presented more information than others. The longer interviews provided more depth and generated new questions to be answered. I was disappointed that I was unable to conduct the interviews much closer to the task being administered. There was a definite lack of information from participants when I asked them for their explanations of certain answers or activities in the task. Obviously, time was required to carry out the individual interviews, but the consequent transcribing and translation of the interviews also took a much longer amount of time than expected. The interviews enabled me to confirm data that had been presented in other forms already, and clarify ambiguities. Notably, my interpretation of a response to a question by a participant had a significantly different meaning than intended, and allowed me to amend my analysis of the data. I believe this was the most successful method of finding out why participants had done the task in a particular way. I would have preferred more time to conduct the interviews without encroaching on participants' study time or personal lives, as I believe this would have generated deeper information.

Due to the effectiveness of this method in this research project I would definitely use interviews in future research. As with the stimulated recall and questionnaire I would aim to administer the interview much sooner than in this project and at a more convenient time for the participants.

Videoing

As noted previously, videoing allowed me to see things that were not visible at the time of the research task implementation. I could see when the participants moved or appeared to be thinking and this prompted specific questions for the interview and stimulated recall. The footage of five participants from three cameras took longer than expected to review. As the time constraints of analyzing video and carrying out the interviews with five participants made it impossible to complete the stimulated recall within 48 hours, I would likely attempt this again by carrying out the task individually, one on one with a single participant, so that I could review the video and interview each participant in a timely manner. This would allow

participants to recall information more easily, but increase the overall time needed for participants to complete the task one by one. As a trade-off for the extra time needed, I would expect that the depth of the information recalled would create more useful data. I would also complete a trial video recording of tasks in action to ensure that the video angle captured the participants' behaviour fully and clearly.

Triangulation

As noted above, by not relying on one method, I was able to strengthen the data used in the project. Written information was checked in the interviews for any misunderstandings and video provided evidence of physical movement which could be checked with the written responses. As the research task was a written task completed in silence, the use of video to corroborate participants' written responses gave an added dimension to the research. I was unaware how useful this data would be until I watched the video with the task responses and after I had the task questionnaire in hand. I was surprised at the number of discrepancies between participants' post-task responses and what had taken place. The most obvious was student's failure to note smartphone use in their post-task questionnaire when the video clearly showed they had. When doing further research, I intend to carry out video tasks, as well as follow-up interviews and questionnaires to create a complete picture.

Overall Observations

Regardless of the any techniques mentioned earlier, the most critical reflection I take with me is the notion of time. Bell & Waters (2014) observe that "the extent of your data collection will be influenced by the amount of time you have" (p. 120) and I would fully concur with this. The importance of time has been a common thread through the evaluation of each method and technique. The importance of a short time frame for short-term memory recall was made evident in the interviews. Additionally, the unforeseen time needed for translating and transcribing made the project longer than expected. This too is the most important advice for someone new to qualitative research: be aware that everything takes longer than you expect.

Being able to combine different qualitative methods allowed for data to be crosschecked and triangulated. If only one method had been chosen, the data would have only been taken at face value. Finding the ideal way for the methods to complement each other is also important, as each method allows for slightly different information. The video evidence revealed inconsistencies between what the participants actually did and what they remembered when answering the questionnaire.

Researching the methods and their applications can not only save a lot of time, but it can also help you to find more effective ways of obtaining your required data. Take suggestions from friends and colleagues, and research them to see what fits your project best. Piloting the research techniques and methods that you intend to use will allow you to see inconsistencies and will permit you to make corrections, developing the way you research as you learn from experience.

Conclusion

In this paper I have presented a description of and reflection on the implementation of qualitative research methods. As the research project was carried out as part of a Masters degree under supervision, it may differ slightly to that of "stand alone" research for a journal publication. For future research I would discuss the process with colleagues in order to gain advice and insights about my project, mirroring the work of a supervisor. The opportunity to revisit

this research project and work through the techniques has been beneficial for me and allowed me to reflect on the decisions I made at the time as a novice researcher. The process of working with an editing group for writing this paper for a journal has also been a new experience that has enabled me to grow as a researcher. The time and effort required for making multiple reviews over several drafts was something I was not aware of. I have also been able to assess the effectiveness of each method and technique, enabling me to see not only flaws in the method itself, but also my lack of knowledge in each method, as well as the challenges. Reflecting on each tool has allowed me to clarify how I can use these methods more effectively in future research projects, including how students use smartphones when overseas and the impact that would have on language learning. I learnt that the restraints with time and logistics were big factors in the selection of my methods, as well as their effectiveness. Not being able to gain access to students in a timely manner after carrying out the research task meant that vital participant thought processes were lost. In future research I intend to be more conscious of this issue. Although confident that I had done enough research to use the methods effectively, errors in implementation and loss of critical data show a need to do more background reading of recommendations and work by other researchers. This will allow me to collect data that would yield more substantial findings.

Reading the theory of how a particular method works and should be implemented does not necessarily correspond to implementation and effectiveness in any research project. The suggested way of execution is not always the way it turns out. As each research project is different, what works well for one researcher may not work so well for another. Reading available literature on the methods, while extremely valuable, will not necessarily lead to success in your chosen research.

This research project allowed me to see a little further into the thoughts of learners, that simple word translations were not the only way to use smart phones, and that students' confidence in technology outweighed confidence in themselves. I saw the participants working hard in their free time to help my project and completed the tasks to the best of their abilities although not being given any credit. Additionally, I learnt that, even with an advanced tool such as a translation app, learners still need to be taught how to use it effectively, and how to recognize mistakes in the English that they produce. It appeared that the learners were content to rely on such technology regardless of its effectiveness.

By the end of my research project and confirmed in my writing of this paper, I came to understand the importance of time in a qualitative research project, and that there is never enough.

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Review Process

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RESEARCH PAPER

Storytelling for Learning and Healing: Parallel Narrative Inquiries in Language Counselling

Leena Karlsson & Fergal Bradley, University of Helsinki Language Centre

In the Autonomous Language Learning Modules (ALMS) programme at the University of Helsinki Language Centre, language counselling is the primary pedagogical medium in a self-directed degree-required English course. Storytelling and sharing stories is central to the practice of counseling: students tell stories in counselling to make sense of their language learning pasts and presents and take charge of their futures. Correspondingly, much research in ALMS has been narrative inquiry (Karlsson, 2013, 2015; Bradley & Karlsson, 2017) with counsellors engaging with their own stories and those of their students and peers in order to develop their professional practice. In this article, two ALMS counsellors—Leena Karlsson and Fergal Bradley—present parallel practitioner inquiries which explore the narrative nature of counselling and the learning that occurs on ALMS courses. The inquiries both explore ideas of learning and healing and the role storytelling plays in these processes. Fergal's inquiry takes inspiration from the practice and research of narrative-based medicine, and he uses this as a starting point for examining the different narratives of learning that students recount in counselling. Leena's inquiry focuses on the narrative of one particular student, wounded by language anxiety, and how telling his story in counselling and through reflective writing has helped him begin the process of healing. Both inquiries emphasise the power of narrative knowing in the practice and research of language counselling and language learning.

ヘルシンキ大学のランゲージセンターの自律学習モジュール（ALMS）プログラムではカウンセリングが主たる教授法である。ここでは学習者がカウンセラーと自身の過去や現在の言語学習経験を通して、将来の言語学習者(language learner)としての自分について語る。従って、必然的にALMSで行われる研究の大半はナラティブ手法が中心となっている（Karlsson, 2013 & 2015; Bradley & Karlsson, 2017）。自身のプロフェッショナル ディベロップメントに繋げていくため、カウンセラーは自分のナラティブ、また、同僚や学習者のストーリーに取り組んでいる。本稿では二人のカウンセラー（Leena Karlsson とFergal Bradley）がそれぞれのナラティブから通してみられるALMSプログラムにおいての学習とカウンセリングの実態を考察する。特に「学習」と「ヒーリング(healing)」の二つのテーマを中心に、本研究での「語り」(narrative)が果たす役割りを探究する。Fergalは医療学の観点からヒントを得て、narrative based medicine(NBM)に着目し、学習者のナラティブを分析する。一方で、Leenaは第二言語不安を訴える一人の学習者に焦点をあて、カウンセリングで行われた語りや省察を通じて彼が立ち直っていく過程を追う。いずれもnarrative knowingが実践、及び、カウンセリングや言語学習の研究においていかに意義のあるものであるかを物語っている。

Keywords

autoethnography, autonomy, language counselling, narrative, writing as inquiry

キーワード

オートエスノグラフィー、オートノミー、語学カウンセリング、ナラティブ、

Our Context and Commitments

Much research in education has highlighted the importance of educators sharing stories of practice as a means of fostering professional growth and wellbeing (e.g., Barfield & Delgado, 2013; Conle, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002). These stories—stories of who we are as professionals, "our stories to live by" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999)— "sustain, shift, and freeze" (Estefan, Caine & Clandinin, 2016, para 5) our practice over time. For practitioner-researchers, attending to lived, felt, remembered, and told experiences through stories is both an ontological and epistemological commitment. Estefan, Caine, and Clandinin (2016) argue for *experience* as a valuable source of knowledge and understanding for practice. Central to the study, and indeed the creation, of experiential and embodied knowledge is one's context of practice and one's commitment to it. Through this inquiry, a narrative study in language counselling, we—Leena Karlsson and Fergal Bradley—seek to add to our professional growth and wellbeing in our work context, the Autonomous Language Learning Mo-

dules (ALMS) programme at the University of Helsinki. And by doing this, we aim to improve the quality of life and learning for our students.

We work as language counsellors (*advisers* is a more frequently used and analogous term, see Mynard & Carson, 2012) in the ALMS programme, a type of English course that fulfils the foreign-language study requirements for undergraduates at our university. Language counselling is the primary means to support learner development and autonomy; the counsellor's role is to inspire and encourage lifewide experiential learning, to safeguard emotional learning, and to help create spaces for reflection. Detailed accounts of the programme can be found elsewhere (e.g., Karlsson, Kjisik, & Nordlund, 1997, 2007) but in a nutshell, the key features of the ALMS programme can be seen in Figure 1.

- Two initial learner awareness sessions (4 hours plus 2 hours) in groups of 20, led by one of the ALMS team of teachers and counsellors.
- Learning histories discussed and written as free-form texts or using Kaleidoscope (www.helsinki.fi/kksc/alms).
- Personally meaningful goals and learning programmes.
- Learning logs and diaries, with a focus on reflection on learning.
- Skills Support Groups on a wide range of academic, professional, and lifewide skills; teacher-facilitated to a greater or lesser extent.
- Counselling: 3 individual 15–20-minute meetings per module:
  - 1st counselling focus on concept of autonomy, reflection, learning history, and study plan
  - 2nd counselling focus on work/learning progress and reflection
  - 3rd counselling focus on learning outcomes, learner identity, portfolio discussion, and visualizing the future

Figure 1. Key Features of a 14-week ALMS programme

Practitioner research, arising out of a shared inquiry-orientation in the programme, is central to our work. We believe in its cyclic nature: "as one work ends, another work begins" (Choi, 2016, p. 41). Our dual role as counsellors and researchers demands a continuous critical and ethical re-appraisal of our work, our words, and actions. Counselling skills as actions, as "the words we use, the body language we radiate, the talk and silences we create" (Karlsson & Kjisik, 2015, p. 7) are crucial in supporting learner development and autonomy; they are also skills that we need to keep developing to make (better) sense of our own counselling. We feel that cultivating a curiosity about experience, the diverse unique experiences of our students, is important and best done through narrative inquiry. We have previously written educational stories emerging out of our practice both collaboratively (Bradley, Karlsson & et al., 2015; Bradley & Karlsson, 2017) and individually (Karlsson, 2013, 2015, 2017).

Setting the Scene

Storytelling, a phenomenon and a method (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), is an established research praxis and a recognized form of communication on the ALMS landscape (Karlsson, 2008, 2013, 2015). In this project, we wanted to extend a previous inquiry, a narrative autoethnographic project (Bradley & Karlsson, 2017), and continue exploring language counselling dialogues and reflective writing practices (free writing, diary/journal writing, and collab-

orative scholarly writing from experience) in our own unique context using novel narrative inquiry approaches. This inquiry involves telling, sharing, co-constructing, and re-constructing experiential and empowering stories with our learners and each other. We want to further deepen our understanding of writing as a method of data collection, creation, and analysis and collaborative writing as narrative inquiry in itself (Li, Conle, & Elbaz Luwisch, 2009). Through engaging with literature, we learned from narrative inquiry approaches and research techniques and, in our two parallel inquiries, we explored how we could improve the pedagogical dialogue of counselling using our deepened narrative understandings and skills.

In the previous project (Bradley & Karlsson, 2017), we aimed at bridging the gap between experience and reflection in our writing, and we were interested in experimenting further with autoethnography. We feel that it can generate "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) and more creative accounts than data gained through using only interview-based qualitative methods. In another research account (written concurrently with Bradley & Karlsson, 2017), Leena attempted to give a glimpse of the strong emotions and reactions affecting her counseling at the time, and how they "shifted" her practice (Karlsson, 2017). Listening to the recorded research discussion with her student Kaisa, Leena felt that it had not been dialogic enough because, in her counsellor-researcher role, she had dominated the discussion. Consequently, she considered adapting Horsdal's narrative interviewing technique (Horsdal, 2012) for her context in a future inquiry. In her interviews, Horsdal listens attentively, without interrupting, to the person telling her life story but she also writes attentively, that is, records the teller's words verbatim pen on paper. This means that the writer needs to be fully present in the moment of telling, which felt like a potential solution to the "counsellor-researcher talking too much" that was evident in the recorded interview.

When planning this inquiry, however, the writing and recording process suggested by Horsdal felt too distanced from our pedagogical idea of *sharing stories* and *storytelling* in the counselling dialogue (Karlsson, 2008, 2013, 2015) and the principles of exploratory research (see for example Allwright, 2003), that is, research as non-invasive and fully integrated into our counselling pedagogy. At that point, our reading was taking us to narrative-based medicine (Fergal) and therapeutic writing (Leena), and to the ideas of growth and healing as part of our pedagogies for autonomy. For both of us, the process of ongoing narrative inquiry was pointing towards a re-consideration of our pedagogies, and on reflecting more on the meaning and realization of story*telling* as part of the counselling dialogue (Karlsson, 2013, 2015). In particular, we wanted to make the idea of *telling* more explicit and meaningful to our students.

What follows are accounts of two parallel inquiries, Fergal's and Leena's, which both explore ideas from narrative research to enrich their counselling and their understanding of it. The text then closes with a coda, which draws together ideas from both texts, reflecting on the writing and research process and back to counselling.

Fergal: Towards a Narrative-based Counselling

Finding Inspiration in Narrative-based Medicine

The writer, researcher, and oncologist, Siddhartha Mukherjee (2015), argues for new metaphors within the field of medicine. He talks of changing the metaphor from one of "have disease, take pill, kill something"—a metaphor of lock and key—to one of growth. He is talking here about a new type of medicine—using the body's own cells rather than antibiotics. However, he is also talking about a different way of thinking about and practicing medicine, as metaphors structure "how we perceive, how we think, and what we do" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 4). In language learning, the field of learner autonomy has long espoused a view of language learning based not on deficiency within an imperfect learner, but on person-centred

growth, which is "grounded in language use, engages learner's identities and agency, and exploits their existing repertoires while extending them" (Little, 2017). This view of language learning underpins the ALMS programme, where I work as a language counsellor. In realizing this view of language learning, much of the research and practice within the programme has been narrative, focusing on the experiences of learners and counsellors and viewing growth and transformation as central to learning (see, for example, Karlsson & Kjisik, 2009; Kjisik, Karlsson, & von Boehm, 2012; Karlsson, 2013).

In ALMS, stories are everywhere. We ask students to write their language learning histories at the beginning of the course to make their English story explicit. We use this narrative to co-construct a plan of study with the student. As the course develops, we ask students to extend and develop that story through writing, in their logs/diaries, and through discussion, in counselling. As counsellors, we tell stories to guide students and to share our experiences and learn from each other. We also tell stories to ourselves, to make sense of our practices and deal with the emotions that teaching and counselling confronts us with. This concern with stories is reflected in previous research in ALMS, as mentioned above, and it inspires this project on how narrative research approaches can be used in ALMS counselling, both as a method of inquiry and a pedagogical approach.

Early in this project, my reading took me to narrative-based medicine (NBM). Here, I was struck by how many of the concerns resonated with my own work as a language counsellor. Firstly, there was explicit concern for the whole person. There was also a parallel between the relationship of healthcare professionals and patients with that of ALMS counsellor and student, particularly in the interaction between both parties, who both bring knowledge to encounters and co-create it during them. In addition, NBM embraces the benefits that stories can bring to our ways of knowing and being. Most importantly, perhaps, it emphasises the importance of telling and sharing stories in order to heal and to learn. Consider, for example, the similarity between Frank (1995, p. 1) on ill people:

> *They learn [to deal with illness] by hearing themselves tell stories, absorbing others' reactions, and experiencing their stories being shared.*

And Aoki (2010, p. 1) on teachers:

> *It is by living, telling, retelling and reliving secret stories that teachers make meaning of their classroom experience and reflect on it.*

In NBM, the idea is not to replace traditional evidence-based medicine with one based solely on stories, but that stories and storytelling can complement and develop traditional approaches to curing illness. In the same way, narrative research suggests tools for and approaches to counselling and the study of counselling, adding to rather than replacing existing pedagogical and linguistic knowledge, understanding and practice. NBM includes several strands: narratives of patients, narratives of physicians, narratives of patient-physician interactions and grand medical narratives (Kalitskus & Mathiessen, 2009). In this inquiry into narrative in counselling, I refer to student stories, my own counsellor story, and the story of the interaction between the two. In doing so, I contribute to the existing body of ALMS research, as well as literature on learner autonomy and language advising/counselling.

By referring to NBM, I do not wish to pathologise ALMS students. It is true that some come to ALMS wounded by previous experiences of language learning and language use (Karlsson 2015, 2016 and see Leena's text below), but the parallel I want to make is that of NBM's use of narrative in the healing process with the role of narratives in ALMS as part of the learning process. Leena and I decided on a project which would make narrative explicit in our counselling sessions. To me, this has developed into what I could call narrative-based counselling,

which is, to paraphrase Kalitzkus and Mathiessen (2009) on NBM, a specific pedagogical tool, a special form of student-counsellor communication, a qualitative research tool, and a particular attitude towards students, teaching, and learning.

Researching and Practicing a Narrative-based Counselling

My venture into narrative-based counselling began with an email to students. In this message, written by both Leena and me, we asked students to think about their ALMS courses as stories for the third and final counselling session.

> *In this meeting, I invite you to tell the story of your ALMS course. For example, how did you complete your ALMS hours? How did you reflect on your work? What did you learn? And what successes/failures/feelings did you experience during the course? Finally, how will the story of your English continue after the ALMS course?* (Extract from our email to the students before the final counselling session)

I used these questions and prompts to scaffold the final counselling sessions: asking, allowing and helping the students to tell the stories of their ALMS courses. Through the students' stories, I was able to fulfil some basic counsellor duties, such as checking that the plan of study had been completed. I was also able to enact a pedagogy for autonomy, with the storytelling transferring agency and ownership to the students and serving as a medium for reflection. By connecting these ALMS stories to the language learning histories that students wrote at the beginning of the course, students were placing their course into the context of their other language learning and language use experiences. And the final questions extended the discussion of learning beyond the ALMS course, evoking ideas of life-long, life-wide and life-deep learning (Karlsson & Kjisik, 2011).

My method of reflecting on the counselling sessions was one of free writing. After each group of counselling sessions, usually three or four at a time, I sat down to write about the students' narratives, particularly how they positioned the ALMS course in relation to their learning and their lives. Thus, the free writing became a reflective diary for my counselling, mirroring what the learners are asked to do during their course. I have previously used free writing as a research method (Bradley & Karlsson, 2017). In doing so, I use Richardson's idea of "writing as a method of inquiry" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005): using writing to collect and create data—the free-writing diary—as well as to analyse data—the stories my students told me. I was recording my experience of the students' stories and, at the same time, making sense of and theorising them.

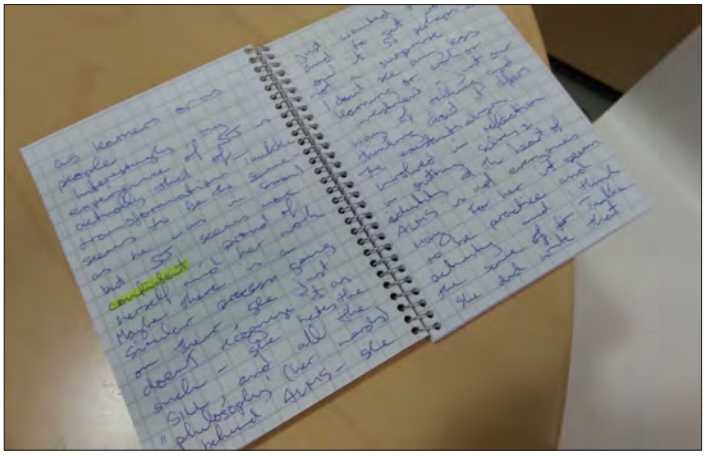

Figure 2. Fergal's free-writing diary

One theory I brought to this project was the idea of transformation from language learner to language user. The growth into being a language user is a narrative familiar to ALMS counsellors, in that we have often heard it in counselling and observed it taking place during ALMS courses. It is also a narrative we value: we discuss language learning and language use in ALMS opening sessions and it has been discussed in previous ALMS research, such as Karlsson and Kjisik's article on life-wide and life-deep learning (2011). This idea is also referred to in the wider literature on learner autonomy (see for example Benson, 1994 and there are echoes in the quote from David Little cited above).

I understand this transformation primarily as an identity shift, based on an individual's subjective criteria for what constitutes the change. Thus, in this project, I listened to the students' narratives, wrote about them and re-read my writing with the idea of transformation from language learner to user in mind. I was interested to see if and how it manifested itself in the students' stories of their ALMS course and if there were other contrasting or complimentary narratives, which would emerge from my free-writing diary.

Four Types of Narrative

While I was listening to and free writing about the students' stories of their ALMS courses, I did indeed encounter the narrative of transformation or growth from being a language learner to being a language user. However, I also picked out three other narratives in the stories. Identifying these four narratives is my attempt to understand the student stories told to me and co-constructed with me in counselling. In recounting them, both immediately in the free-writing diary and here in this text, I want to remain faithful to what the students told me. However, I recognise too that they are, perhaps primarily, my narratives of how I experienced the student stories. The quotations I use to illustrate these narratives are not direct quotations from students, but rather they are quotations from the students written down in my free writing.

The narrative of transformation or growth from learner to user was present in the stories several students told to me. It was characterised by a change in the students' language practices, particularly changes involving agency, engagement and participation. Students consciously decided to use English in communicative situations and reported feelings of confidence in their ability to succeed in doing so.

- *Now, I actually say something in English, instead of just saying "yeah, yeah".*
- *I joined a Facebook group, posted replies and <u>even</u> started discussions* (Student's emphasis)

(Comments from two students who became users, rather than learners, during their ALMS course)

The second type of narrative was one of looking to the future. Several students talked of becoming a user of English but, unlike the previous students, they talked of it in a less immediate sense; it was something that was *going to* happen. This sense or knowledge shaped the work they did on the course, which for many of these students focused on academic reading and vocabulary. For some students, the future orientation was specific, while for others it was more general. While writing about the first narrative, I was struck by the agency, engagement, and participation of the students. In this second narrative, the emphasis was placed more on necessity or obligation, recognising the importance of and the need to be able to use English. I did not note the same sense of investment or identity shift with these students and, although the work they had done seemed valuable to both them and me, they did not talk about it in the same way; they told a different story.

- *We will have to read and write more at the MA level.*
- *I will have to use English at work*

(Comments from two students who looked a future where they used English more)

In the third narrative type, I also did not note a feeling of identity shift from learner to user. These students appeared to remain learners and they emphasised learning, continuing to learn, and indeed learning better. Here I was struck particularly by the students' self-awareness of learning, what to study and how to learn. In their stories, however, English was still something to learn or to study, rather than a language to use throughout their lives.

- *I'm on my way.*
- *I know now what I need to do.*
- *I'll continue with more specialised English.*

(Comments from three students who continued to see themselves as leaners by the end of the course)

Finally, the fourth narrative was one of revisiting learning. These students tended to be ones who already identified as users of the language at the beginning of the course. For them, the story was of learning more deeply, learning aspects of the language they had not considered before and relearning aspects of the language they had in new ways. They all pointed to the importance of reflection and *noticing* to develop learning further. Here there was, in my reading, a reinhabiting or reinvigoration of the idea of being a learner, without losing any sense of them being users of the language.

- *I really noticed what I was doing when I was speaking English.*
- *You have to use English all the time anyway, but reflection made me think about what I could learn.*
- *You can use English without really learning, but you can also really learn by using English.*

(Comments from three students who (re)embraced the idea of being learners during the course)

Making Sense of the Narratives

I do not want to suggest that these are the only possible ALMS narratives; they are simply what I found counselling one group of students. I went looking for narratives of growth and transformation from learner into user of English, and along with these I found three other, related but sometimes contrasting types of story.

What I see from this inquiry is a more nuanced picture of the transformation from language learner to language user. This narrative does seem valid in that it is a story some students tell about their ALMS courses and an experience some have on the course. Thus, it can serve as a tool for understanding my work as a language counsellor and for understanding how to support students in their learning. However, I also see that it was, for me, becoming something of a *sacred* story (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), that is, something I was beginning to take for granted as the principal goal or most valuable outcome of an ALMS course. My free writing in this project reminded me that students view the valuable work they do in ALMS in many different ways and tell different types of story to make sense of their learning experiences. For example, the second type showed me that transformation into being a user of the language

is dependent on many factors in a person's life and is not something a course or a counsellor can necessarily effect. Indeed, it is for the individual, the learner, to realise a change like this, and for a counsellor or teacher to listen and support. The third and fourth narratives show there is room for growth within the identity of a learner and that it is not simply a stage to pass through. They also showed students (re)embracing language learner identities and becoming autonomous agents taking charge of their learning (Dam, Eriksson, Little, Miliander & Trebi, 1990, p. 102). The role of learner could also coexist with that of a user of English.

This project has also encouraged me to rethink my own vocabulary, especially in relation to words such as *transformation*, *change*, and *growth*. While the first and the fourth narratives matched my initial idea of transformation as something dramatic and dynamic, the learners whose stories fit the second or third narrative had less obviously transformative ALMS courses. To me, many of these students had made dramatic changes in the way they learned or used English or in their attitudes towards the language. However, their stories emphasised the continuity with what they had done before and how their English learning and use would continue. These differences in perspective are a warning to me not to push any one idea of transformation on the students. Instead, allowing students to tell their own stories and listening to them seems to better support their autonomy in evaluating and making sense of their own learning experiences.

Making the storytelling explicit in the final counselling session has been a useful tool in learning about my students. It has also been a practical pedagogical tool, positioning the students as agents and narrators of their own language course. However, writing about medicine, Frank (1998, p. 199) warns against seeing the telling of and listening to stories as "another professional technique", arguing that the benefits are lost when it becomes formulaic and routine. Therefore, my narrative-based counselling must be more than a pedagogical and research tool; it should also be a way of being in counselling, most of all, of listening—actively, critically and empathetically—to the students as people as they tell the story of their ALMS course and its role in their lives.

Leena: Writing in the Dark

In the following story, nested within our umbrella story, I want to show how, again, "it's all in the writing" (Bochner, 2012) in narrative autoethnography, my chosen inquiry approach. A big part of this work has meant "writing in the dark" (van Manen, 2002, p. 2), and the resulting text remains a writing "exercise", only an approximation of the unpredictable and unexpected reality, always open to another interpretation.

My previous published texts (e.g. Karlsson, 2008, 2013, 2015) can be seen as small ethnographies of the ALMS landscape. They are accounts of being out there, to be read from the position of being firmly rooted in the here and now of each current writing. More recently (Karlsson, 2017), I have been drawn to *auto*ethnography because it combines autobiography and ethnography: research becomes a braiding of personal memories, experiences and feelings on the one hand, and being in the field, as part of the landscape, always alert and sensitive to contextual influences on the other. I understand these *writing exercises* (van Manen, 2002) as nested tellings, as nested ecologies of practice and research, a "sequence of tales" (Pinkola Estes, 1992, p. 1, quoted in Speedy, 2004, p. 25). In the ALMS programme, I have been answering questions with stories for nearly two decades; stories have evoked other stories and my answers have thus become several stories long. I would like to name this methodology a "storytelling" (Carteret, 2008; Karlsson, 2013, 2015).

In this inquiry, one of a series of stories from ALMS counselling (Karlsson, 2015, 2017; Bradley & Karlsson, 2017), I ponder on a way forward at this moment in time: I ask myself

what a facilitator of therapeutically oriented writing in my context can learn from her reading and writing in order to fully appreciate students' unique telling, and what kind of understandings can support her work with students. In my inquiry I listen to and write about the inaudible, silent stories or voiceless telling of university students with English language (classroom) anxiety. The student voice in my account is Juhana[i], who was a student in my special peer-group in ALMS in spring 2017. His words, mostly unedited, come from two texts in his ALMS portfolio, his learning history and a final reflective essay, which were both discussed in our counselling meetings. Juhana's story is told and written from the experience of someone whose identity as a university student, with a need to study in and through English, is "wounded". I am also committed to our, mine and Fergal's, common goal to make storytelling in the context of counselling more explicit to our students. There is always a danger of inadvertently controlling students' experiences in the counselling discussion; a danger of keeping them away from the "best" answers, that is, the stories that belong to them. We share a concern for potentially stopping students from telling their story or starting a questioning game (van Manen, 2002). This concern has been one of the tensions leading into this joint project and its focus on respecting students' unique ways of telling.

In my account, I am attempting to write about Juhana's experience with curiosity and respect, always remaining aware of the openness of my interpretation and my limits as a writer. His words punctuate my practitioner-researcher's ponderings; my account is partly a response story, my reaction to his telling infiltrated with insights from my reading, but also a parallel story emerging from the shared experiential context of ALMS programme counselling where storytelling permeates communication, written and spoken. Writing has been the medium of thinking, reflection, knowing and, this time particularly, experimentally, of "playful but serious authoring" (Hamilton, 2014, p. 46); it has also been therapeutic. But writers always start as readers: I understand the writer, myself, to be a curious reader who willingly enters into textual dialogues with other writers both in and through her reading, writing and discussions. She is also an active reader of her own texts and of herself; ideally, writing begins from "genuine self-reading" (van Manen, 2002). So my practitioner-researcher story starts from reading.

Reading as "Rewriting"

Early in this inquiry, I read van Manen's wonderful book (2002), which is about reading as much as it is about writing; his ideas echo in my inquiry and in my thinking about storytelling as a method and a practice. In his interpretation, reading means *rewriting* the text being read, and interpretive reflective texts invite the reader to "write what the author forgot, overlooked, could not see or hear or remember" (van Manen, 2002, p. 8).

I read with van Manen's words in mind: qualitative inquiry needs to ask what is required of writing and language; it needs to query what the possibilities and limits of writing are (van Manen, 2002). I mainly explored literature on narrative inquiry in education (e.g., Estefan, Caine, & Clandinin, 2016; Hunt, 2013; van Manen, 2002) as well as texts on *reflective* personal (such as exploratory, expressive and/or therapeutic writing) and texts on *reflective* academic writing (for example, creative, different, or playful). Two particularly inspiring texts were those by Fiona Hamilton (2014) and Siri Hustvedt (2016) whose words addressed me and invited me "to dwell in [this] interpretative reflective space" (van Manen, 2002, p. 8) they had managed to create in their texts.

Siri Hustvedt's essay is a personal account of working as a facilitator of therapeutic writing for psychiatric inpatients in a New York clinic. Fiona Hamilton's article is a beautifully writ-

1. i Juhana gave me permission to use his story and words in this paper. He read the draft and approved of my restorying.

ten academic text growing out of her own experiences as a writer and facilitator. Hamilton reflects on what collaborative therapeutic writing is and can be. Both writers make it easy for the reader to read *with* the stories told and to vicariously experience the lived and remembered, because there is a strong quality of telling, of writing, *from* experience in their texts. They call attention on individual experience as a source of knowledge for practice (Estefan, Caine, & Clandinin, 2016) and let their narrative understandings speak in the texts. I feel that they both reach out to finding and using sensitive interpretative tools of life lived and felt, in and through their very writing. For both, writing is a method of thinking, of discovering what they think, and a method of knowing (Hamilton, 2014; Hustvedt, 2016). It is in Laurel Richardson's revolutionary idea of "writing as a method of inquiry" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) that my path crosses Hustvedt's and Hamilton's and, as a reader, I get to meet them. Likewise, when I read Juhana's learning history, in which he uses his own experience as a source of knowing and learning from it, his text immediately drew me into his story. His telling *from* experience had me "dwell in the interpretive reflective space" that he, like Hustvedt and Hamilton, had created. His story begins when he meets "a ghost from the past" at the beginning of his ALMS course:

> Juhana: *... when I got through the entrance exams... A whole universe of my life moved forward. A few years earlier I had found a subject called sociology. My life, all tattered, unclear and strange, now pieces came together. The world had received an explanation. The only but was one ghost from my past: my own view of my English learning capabilities was completely lost. I used the time to study where I was good and try to forget whole of the English language which was very painful, regrettable and frustrating. One of the worst development was the social aspect. I had begun to feel ashamed and to avoid every situation which English language might be involved one way or another.*

Juhana told his story in a massive portfolio—still unfinished in the final counselling—a scrapbook-like narrative, a hand-written portfolio of all his ALMS programme work. It depicted both his intellectual and emotional learning during the term; it reported on integrating his academic reading of texts in sociology and his lifewide cultural interests with his learning English; it was full of pictures and visual representations of his extensive academic reading and diary entries pondering on his English self and skills, his history, present and future; it was a true narrative portfolio (Karlsson, 2016, 2017) and a writing ecology, an idea and a metaphor I have used in earlier inquiries (Karlsson, 2016, 2017). In a writing ecology, a practitioner-researcher's or a student's, all the psychological, emotional, socio-cultural, even such mundane contextual influences as sleeping, the weather or one's health have their place (cf. Casanave, 2012).

Hamilton and Hustvedt share an interest in and a passion for "writing cures" (Bolton, Howlett, Lago & Wright, 2004); I too am drawn to explore the power of expressive, exploratory writing that might have effects on individuals' inner lives and their wellbeing. Both see facilitating of therapeutic writing as helping to bring out *authoring* experiences in writers that are experimental and playful, yet serious. For many who have never considered themselves to be "writers," and who have written only in contexts where the focus is on the written product, therapeutic expressive writing, the freedom and inattention to grammar and style, can open up new worlds. Hamilton and Hustvedt talk about texts as partial, unedited, incomplete, and in flux, and writing texts as ways of engaging in a dialogue with oneself as other. They both write about writing as a *process* and therapeutic writing as a particular way of "staying with the process" (Hamilton, 2014, p. 39), that is, being in unhurried contact with both the personal and the social narratives and being able to see the interplay of the two: looking inwards (exploring the self) and outwards (being alert to the surrounding environment), and appreciating the fact that possibilities for alternative views on the self, one's learning and

being, and relations with others exist. Juhana looks inwards and outwards and plays with the language, in the language, English, his nightmare from the past:

> Juhana: *Where am I? Who am I? What are my possibilities, abilities, skills? What is my place in universe…there are too many questions when your only real task should be to think about learning a language. All this questions have been with me and my ALMS… I have no answers yet…I feel very strongly to be like in a wheelchair with my English…I'm a lost boy in postmodern society. My language history was unpleasant in many ways. ALMS started to direct me in a different way. I reconsider my past, I rearrange my memories, rewrite my stories again and again. That's all magic…*

In the counselling, I understood how therapeutic writing was helping Juhana to "generate, capture and embrace" (Speedy, 2004, p. 27) the many different stories that he, a multi-storied human being, had the need and ability to tell and re-tell. Telling became a process of co-researching alternative stories, telling and re-telling (Speedy, 2004). Juhana's telling in English, however, only happened through writing; speaking in English in the counselling was too emotionally challenging. We spoke Finnish but the starting point was always in Juhana's texts in English:

> Juhana*: Speaking a foreign language and communication in that is still absolutely impossible for me. But maybe this* [written] *reflection brings some little confidence. For if I've learnt anything about hermeneutics it is that, at the end there is always a new beginning.*

All the way through the inquiry, I felt more attentive than ever before to the chaos that so often follows troubling experiences, the knotted entanglements of life that can freeze our hearts, minds and bodies. Celia Hunt (2013) has used creative life writing for personal and professional development in higher education. She suggests that a dialogue, a building of a creative bridge, between reflective and experiential work through writing can lead to *transformative learning*. Transformative learning is an emotional and intellectual exercise, not only conscious reason but also a bodily-felt and emotional experience (Hunt, 2013, p. 15) and should not be thought about too narrowly. The relationship between teacher and student is the key part of the student's emotional learning and necessitates that the two "travel similar roads and speak from [our] own experiences" (Boyd & Myers, 1988 quoted in Hunt, 2013, p. 156). In this inquiry, like in the one before (Karlsson, 2017), my curiosity, the wondering, was about the emotional learning of my students. Juhana writes about his emotional "practices of self" (de Carteret, 2008), bodily-felt and imaginal, his ways of thinking and feeling which therapeutic writing was influencing:

> Juhana: *… people have their public image, persona, identity … But there is always other way to look at it. That is a kind of alley behind the market. That is where they are lurking, all those fears, anxiety, bad feelings, thoughts that you are stupid or unable to express your identity… Your imagination could be different than reality. But if you dare step into, look at your background, other side of you, reflection and shade, maybe you can manage all that stuff, organize to a category. I believe that is possible, to take fears with you and be with the past, but it takes time.*

Juhana had managed to find a reflective space and a rhythm (Hamilton, 2016) of therapeutic, explorative and expressive writing and thus found a place for the imaginal. Celia Hunt (2013) quotes Dirkx (2012, p.127) on a holistic approach to transformation in learning:

The imaginal is not intended to take the place of more analytic, reflective, and rational processes that have been associated with transformative learning. Rather, it is intended to provide a more holistic and integrated way of framing the meaning-making that occurs in contemporary contexts for adult learning (Dirkx, 2012, p. 127).

Hamilton writes about the "reflective spaces" and "reflective rhythms" of therapeutic writing; these can offer opportunities for "exploring personal meanings and sense of self and situation" (Hamilton, 2014, p. 36), which is exactly what anxious learners of English, in my experience, have managed to do when gently persuaded to try out different forms of private reflective writing, writing that is not rule-regulated and not necessarily meant for the teacher's eyes (Karlsson, 2017). This happened with Juhana:

> Juhana: *I am not ready. I am completely unfinished. My ALMS program continue, it is not stop at all. This text* [portfolio] *is unfinished. It has started and ended already many times. I can't stop it anymore. Perpetual motion has been invented! My ALMS continues all the time, maybe the rest of my life.*

As Juhana's counsellor, I travelled through what turned out to be a transformative learning experience for him. Juhana's words, I hope, address the readers and help them to think *with* his story, a true example of writing *from* experience, an example of a "writing cure" happening in English for an anxious learner of the language. His are words that give the reader an idea how reflective, expressive and exploratory, therapeutic writing can become a process of self-discovery.

Writing (different?) Academic Texts

> "Even in academic writing we can have an existential engagement with our project, the feeling of mystery that has to be unraveled. Sometimes it is a matter of life and death" (Lie, 2014, p. 123).

I have been interested in (reflective) creative academic writing for a number of years and now turned to van Manen when experiencing the challenge and difficulty of my writing effort, vividly described by van Manen as "writing in the dark" (van Manen, 2002, p. 2): a qualitative researcher, a practitioner, is trying to write but "words just do not come", and "the text of writing seems so trite". This feeling comes from the fact that a research text, written to be published, is always a retrospective, second, third or even fourth take on an experience or episode in one's practice and thus, very concretely, re-told and re-storied. To situate myself at the moment of writing this current text, to position myself as deeply and exactly as I could, I read and re-read myself in two now published, audience-oriented texts (Karlsson, 2017; Bradley & Karlsson, 2017) I (co)authored before this one. When trying to thus enter the textual worlds I had created in them, I started the process of becoming the *author* for this new text.

There is "a reliance on process, changingness rather than on static knowledge" (Rogers, 1969, p.152) in my work with educational storytelling. I am fully aware how previous stories always matter for a practitioner, how when one inquiry finishes, another one has already started. Re-reading is a way of seeing what has happened and what these past writing processes have been contributing to my practice. In my text in Bradley and Karlsson (2017), I refer to Wright and Bolton (2012) who describe a three-phase reflective writing process for practitioners: the exploratory and expressive first writing, re+cording, (re=again and cord=heart) as in "getting closer to the heart"), re-reading to the Self (which becomes a way of *listening* to oneself and can only happen after the writing), and finally a deep emotional reading of one's Self and a potential sharing with a confidential other. I have felt the power of this three-phase process even more when authoring this story and feel very strongly that a practitioner-researcher, a writer, should always aim at genuine self-reading (van Manen, 2002), at being the first reader of her own text, reading and re-reading her Self in it (Wright & Bolton, 2012, p. 26).

The idea of a writing ecology (Karlsson, 2015, 2016, 2017) has been with me for a few years now. For one thing, it helps to build an organic whole out of different bits of data out there in the counselling and research documents, personal and research diaries, and previous (published) texts. Importantly, it helps letting this diverse storied data grow into an organic whole with theory, the dialogues I have had with literature. The idea of an ecology matches the way of writing in autoethnographic work: the process is unpredictable, writing cannot be separated from research, data collection (and creation) overlaps analysis and interpretation, different strands are connected through the reflective writing in the diaries and the ecology becomes a way of being "existentially engaged" with the project.

In my inquiry, through engaging with literature, re-reading myself and writing my way feelingly through the inquiry, I have deepened my narrative understanding and skills for research and practice and of facilitating therapeutic writing practices; for example, how to listen appraisingly and attentively; how to be, and help students to be, more aware of experience and the telling arising out of it; how to be curious and wonder; how to inspire (therapeutic) writing in my students and keep engaging in writing exercises myself have deepened. Traversing between the texts in the writing ecology has been a way of "sustaining" my (personal and) professional story to live by:

> *What is the gain in reflective writing exercises in and for research, what is it good for? It's learning, not outcomes but a feeling, a sensation whilst practising, of being more prepared, of listening better, of being more focussed, of making sense of life lived, of coping. It's about wellbeing, searching for and finding* ***well*** *words for coping!* [An entry in my research diary in July 2017]

Closing (and Beginning Anew)

What if ethical academic writing should be *re+cording* all the way through, writing from the heart? What if academic writing should be a process full of spaces for reflection, for reckoning, and what if silent stories emerging in research should be allowed to keep a bit of their mystery? What if it is *re-cording* that is necessary if we practitioners want to be pedagogically tactful and thoughtful and even retrospectively respectful of the unique in our students (van Manen, 1997)? What if *re+cording* is the only way for a practitioner to write, and what if all her published texts should only be considered writing exercises for the readers to re-write?

Writing and telling, the talking and writing, in this inquiry has been important; more important, however, has been listening to theirs, the students'. If the readers wonder why I present only one ALMS programme student's writing as a mirror to my own ponderings on the writing and counselling, my answer comes in Siri Hustvedt's words (2016, p. 111): "…we must be careful not to treat **one** person's story as evidence of nothing" (Hustvedt, 2016, p. 111, my bolding). The last words in this restorying will be Juhana's:

> Juhana: *Birds which cannot perhaps fly all, but in my counsellor's mind, it makes no difference. There are perhaps birds which have never started to fly but they can jump and bounce very well too. And maybe someday some of them can fly, some still hopping, but that is enough.*

Coda

Figure 3. Leena and Fergal meeting to discuss the project

Comprising two parallel inquiries into narrative research in language counselling, this article has grown out of several sources. We both work as counsellors together in the ALMS programme and have a shared interest in developing our counselling through practitioner research (Bradley & Karlsson et al., 2015; Bradley & Karlsson, 2017). Most immediately, however, this article came into being through regular meetings we held during the spring of 2017 (see Figure 3). We began, as mentioned above, from Leena's idea to use a research technique outlined by Horsdal (2012) to develop and inquire into our counselling practice. This idea evolved during our discussions, which touched on our professional and personal reading, as well as our counselling practice and indeed our life experiences over these few months.

While we began the project together, writing individual texts for our parallel inquiries over the summer of 2017 took us away from one another, and our inquiries took new turns, following our reading and the data we collected in our individual counselling encounters. Thus, the inquiries are both independent and integrally linked. We show our individual counsellor/researcher voices yet, at the same time, present a *crystallisation* (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 963) of the stories and the telling that makes up the messy ecology of ALMS: the voices of counsellors and students, shared trajectories and individual journeys.

Alongside our shared interest in narrative and storytelling, two key concerns emerge from both our inquiries: learning and healing. Our approaches and understandings, however, clearly differ. Fergal's inquiry takes ideas from narrative-based medicine, using them to inspire his counselling practice and as a lens through which to view it. The relationship between learning and healing is an analogy. In Leena's inquiry, this relationship is much closer, more palpable and visceral. This is embodied in Juhana's learning journey, which in part involves healing wounds from previous language learning and use experiences. While narrative-based medicine inspired Fergal's inquiry and practice, Leena's use of therapeutic writing in her special peer group in ALMS is of direct relevance to such wounded learners.

Leena describes Juhana's ALMS course as a process of self-discovery, and this idea links with Fergal's students' narratives of their ALMS course. While few of his students seemed

wounded in any comparable way, all of them were engaged in some form of self-discovery, identifying themselves in relation to English and its role in their lives. The self-discovery is also important for counsellors. And we, like our students, learn and even heal, actually or metaphorically, through *writing* and *telling* our stories.

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Review Process

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Endnotes

1. Modules refer to the constitutive elements of a course or programme of study. Undergraduates students typically study 6 x 20 credit modules a year or a total of 18 (360 credits) for a three-year undergraduate degree.
2. Common European Framework for Languages

COMMENTARY

TEN Qualitative Research Dilemmas and What to Do About Them

Gary Barkhuizen, University of Auckland, New Zealand

In this article I present TEN research dilemmas[1] that I have experienced in my life as a qualitative and narrative researcher. I have always been a qualitative researcher, not only because I am interested in exploring in depth the experiences of people's lives and the meaning they make of those experiences, but also because I have a personal affinity with the aims and methods associated with qualitative research, many of which have been discussed and illustrated in the articles in this issue.

Very simply, a dilemma is a situation when a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives. In research, dilemmas never go away—they emerge every time I am engaged in a new project. I see them also in the research of my colleagues and the graduate students I supervise. And I see them in the many articles I review for research journals; sometimes they are presented as dilemmas and the researcher explains how they were resolved during the research process, or at least an explanation is given as to why they were not, but sometimes they are swept under the carpet and not addressed at all.

The dilemmas I address in this article are those encountered during the planning stages of the study and also once the research activity gets underway, right up to the time of reporting and disseminating the research findings. I am listing only ten dilemmas here, those that have been most salient in my research life. There are many others, of course, and any particular researcher could compile their own list of ten based on their personal research experience.

It is perhaps worth noting that even before the planning of a research project begins there are two important questions that a researcher would need to consider. These questions may themselves present dilemmas for some researchers, but I have not included them in my TEN since in most cases they no longer apply to my work. First, is a qualitative research approach the most appropriate for answering the research question? To answer this, you would need to have a good idea about the aims and scope of the study, what its purpose is, and what is achievable with the time and resources available. Second, is a qualitative research approach the most suitable for you as a researcher? In other words, is it compatible with your research skills and your interests in the way research is or should be done; does it fit with how you see yourself and how you feel as a researcher? I find this second question to be hugely important. From my experience and observations there is nothing worse than being stuck in a project where you feel out of place and thus uninterested and unmotivated.

In what follows, for each of the ten dilemmas, I first describe what the dilemma is. I then provide examples from my own research to exemplify the dilemma, and finally, I suggest ways in which the dilemma can be resolved in the process of conducting qualitative and narrative research.

#1. Choosing a Topic: Passion or Need?

The first dilemma is one we all face as researchers, no matter what our research methodology. It has to do with choosing a research topic. I am currently in the process of editing a book called *Qualitative research topics in language teacher educator* (Barkhuizen, forthcoming, 2019) that includes nearly 40 chapters written by experienced researchers who suggest ways in which qualitative researchers could go about selecting their topics. Almost without exception they say that following one's interest and passion is paramount—doing so will keep the researcher interested and focused and will ensure that research activity is sustained and the project is completed. I would add that enjoying the research process makes for good quality research and a successful study. But sometimes focusing only on what interests you might be ignoring or neglecting other topics that really need to be researched. For example, if a new curriculum is being considered for a region or a new assessment regime or language policy is being implemented in a school or community, there is an obvious need for these processes to be investigated. Often researchers, then, are torn between wanting to work on topics in areas that inspire and motivate them and feeling obligated to fill some research"gap"or need in their community, or more broadly within the discipline.

I was lucky enough during my doctoral research (Barkhuizen, 1988) to be truly excited about my research topic—an ethnographic investigation of the first six weeks of the life (and career) of a high school ESL teacher in New York City. I observed numerous lessons in her classroom during that period and interviewed her after each lesson. I focused particularly on the classroom interaction in which she was involved. The aim was to discover interactional patterns in her practice that might be associated with being a first-year English teacher. I will refer more to this study below, but the point I am making here is that I was quite passionate about the topic; consulting a wide range of literature (with enthusiasm), analyzing the data with anticipation, and even enjoying the dissertation writing process.

Later in my career I was living in South Africa during the time apartheid was being dismantled. Many institutions were becoming racially integrated, and therefore multilingual, including schools, universities, and the workplace in many sectors. This situation was therefore ripe for linguistic investigation, and there was an urgent need to understand what was happening in these institutions to inform policy decisions as well as communicative practices within them. One of my studies during that time (Barkhuizen, 1998a) investigated the perceptions of high school ESL students of the classroom activities they engaged in. There was a quantitative dimension to the study (a survey) but it also included focus group discussions with students, interviews with teachers, and classroom observations. I also taught in the school for three weeks while one of the regular teachers was on leave. Now, I enjoyed doing the study, was inspired by a new topic area (learner perceptions), and was interested in the findings, and so on, but this time (as opposed to my doctoral research) I was invested in working on a topic that had significance to the institutional changes taking place in South Africa at the time. My commitment to making a contribution to the understanding of changes in post-apartheid schools overrode my"passion" for working on topics that were primarily of personal interest.

One, ideal, way to resolve the *passion* versus *need* dilemma is to find a topic that achieves *both*; i.e., it is a topic you are passionate about and also fulfils some community or institutional need. This is easier said than done, of course. For novice researchers, or those undertaking graduate research, my advice would be to follow their passions, because at this stage of a research career it is important to be and remain engaged and committed and motivated. Over time research expertise will develop, and then once they become more established, they could tackle topics that have wider societal or disciplinary significance.

#2. Research Collaboration: Alone or Together?

Doing research in collaboration with another researcher or as part of a team is not an option for graduate students—for that, they are on their own! They do have an adviser or supervisor, and through that relationship start to learn about research collaboration, negotiation, and decision-making (see Kaneko, this issue). However, post-doctorate, opportunities for collaboration may arise, depending on the context in which the researcher works. There are plenty of advantages to working in a team or with a partner, such as sharing the reading required for the literature review, making research design decisions together, collecting and analyzing the data, and, best of all, the writing up of the findings. Another advantage is when collaborators have complementary skills, such as one being particularly informed theoretically and the other being an expert in the type of methods employed. Generally, partners enable more informed decision making on all aspects of the project. Partners can provide emotional support to each other when they are feeling less motivated, or encouragement when they are running behind schedule. However, there are also disadvantages. A co-researcher, for example, may not carry his or her weight, leaving one researcher to do the bulk of the work. There may also be disagreements about the research itself—sometime this can be a good thing because it stimulates productive discussion and re-focuses the direction of the project, but at other times the disagreements could be destructive and compromise the project. A common complaint made by collaborators is when one researcher lags behind the time schedule for the completion of assigned work. Finally, some researchers may simply have a personal preference for working alone.

I was involved in a study with a team of researchers who investigated the language and identity experiences of Hong Kong study abroad students sojourning in a number of mainly"English-speaking" countries (Benson, et al., 2013). This was a most rewarding experience. Team members got on well (across three countries) and shared the division of labour according to decisions made together. It was a large project with many participants and multiple data analysis and writing phases. It certainly required a team, including a research assistant, and the project was a great collaborative success. When the project was wrapped up, I continued working with one of the participants on an individual basis (see Barkhuizen, 2017a), interviewing him face-to-face and online since his return to Hong Kong post-sojourn. This was feasible since the scope of the research activity had been very much scaled down.

As you can see, a number of factors come into play when deciding whether or not to collaborate with a co-researcher. Some of these are contextual (e.g., independent study required by a graduate program), some are personal (e.g., a preference for working alone), and others relate very much to the nature of the study (e.g., its scope and the resources available—time, funding, research assistance). If collaboration is an option for a researcher, the benefits and disadvantages would need to be weighed up carefully to ensure the best outcome for both the researcher(s) and the study.

#3. Qualitative Versus Narrative Research: Story or Not?

I regularly read studies reported in published journal articles that claim to incorporate narrative aspects into the research design and processes or even claim to be full-blown narrative studies. However, to me they often appear to be straightforward qualitative studies. The question then becomes, what makes research narrative? How can it be distinguished from qualitative research? This dilemma is one I have encountered many times, either in my own research (especially in my early days as a narrative inquirer) or that of my doctoral students. Unfortunately, the question is not easy to answer, mainly because there are many definitions of what narrative is, and crucially, what story is. To me, narrative research has as its central

focus *story*: stories gathered, analyzed and interpreted, and constructed (or retold) by researchers (see Karlsson & Bradley, this issue). Without story we have qualitative research. In the introduction to my book on narrative research in applied linguistics (Barkhuizen, 2013) I present a framework of narrative analysis that covers the many possibilities for conceptualizing and actually doing narrative research. The framework consists of eight more-or-less continua, which represent narrative research characteristics that are more or less evident in a particular study.

I became aware of the power of story when I was interviewing participants for a study I was conducting in New Zealand in the early 2000s. I was exploring language and identity in the lives of Afrikaans-speaking (a South African language) immigrants who had settled in New Zealand. I was particularly interested in their efforts to maintain Afrikaans and to learn English and how this related to any identity changes. I conducted 28 interviews across the country. Both during the interview process and when I was transcribing them, I became aware of stories in the data, and I also realized how intimately I was involved in the co-construction of those stories. The stories the participants told captured very well their personal experiences and, more importantly, the meaning they made of those experiences. For example, it was common for the adult participants to tell me stories about the language practices of their children, including how they were using and learning more English both inside and outside the home. These stories and my analysis of them (see Barkhuizen, 2006) clearly made the study narrative.

When planning a narrative (or qualitative) study it is worth consulting the narrative analysis framework I described above (or relevant narrative literature) in order to locate the proposed study within it and thereby have a clearer idea about whether or not the study is in fact a narrative one. In reporting a study which claims to be narrative (or has some narrative aspects) I also recommend providing the audience with an explanation as to how and why it is narrative (as opposed to qualitative).

#4. Number of Participants: One, Few or Many?

In an editorial of the journal *Language Teaching Research* (Barkhuizen, 2014, p.5) I commented about this dilemma as follows. I am often asked by novice researchers how many participants they should include in their study. What is the ideal number? "Well, it depends," I always answer. What does it depend on? Top of the list is probably the purpose of the study. If, for example, a study aims to describe the language learning history of a particular learner, giving full, rich contextual details of learning over time, then obviously just that one learner would be the focus of the study (see Hooper, this issue). There are cases, however, where it is not always easy to decide what the actual number of participants should be. In ethnographic studies, for example, what difference does it make if five or eight or 12 participants are interviewed? Should three schools be investigated or just two? In a large-scale questionnaire-based study, how much difference would it make if 190 instead of 250 respondents completed the questionnaire? Sometimes answers to questions such as these depend more on practical matters, such as accessibility to participants (Does the researcher have permission to enter a school site? Does the desired site even exist?), their availability (Do participants have time to take part in the study? Do they wish to?), and who they are (teachers, learners, policy-makers).

Three studies of mine illustrate how I managed the number-of-participants dilemma. The first is my doctoral study briefly described above, which focused on the first-year classroom experiences of only one teacher. A single participant was appropriate in this case since my aim was to gain an in-depth, intensive understanding of the teacher's interactional patterns that exemplify beginning language teaching. Having more than one participant during that

same period (the first six weeks of the semester) would have diluted that goal. My data collection with Afrikaans-speaking immigrants in New Zealand ended after I had interviewed 28. At that stage I was finding that, although the personal stories were different, many of the pertinent themes were beginning to be repeated and no new themes were emerging. In other words, "saturation" was reached. A third study is one I am currently involved in. I am exploring the teacher identities of a cohort of seven experienced teachers enrolled in a doctoral program at a university in Colombia, South America. Why seven? Because quite simply that is how many students are enrolled.

My editorial commentary referred to above offers some advice with regard to this dilemma (p. 7). There is a range of factors that need to be considered when deciding on the number of participants to include in a research project. Some of these are outside the control of the researcher; e.g., the specific requirements of the research design and methods, the availability of the participants, constraints of time and human resources, and organizational structures within research sites, such as class size and timetabling. Other factors that contribute to decision-making about the number of participants are under the control of researchers. These include, determining the purposes and goals of the study, planning for and monitoring access to participants and research sites, and gauging feasibility in terms of scale of the project, time constraints, and one's own research knowledge and skills. Consulting published research literature in the same field and having discussions with collaborators and more experienced colleagues are always useful strategies when making these decisions.

#5. Engagement in Construction of the Data: More or Less?

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to narrative inquirers being "in the midst" during the processes of collecting their data (what they call "field texts"). What they mean is that the researcher is fully engaged in the lived experiences (the lived stories) of the participants—they are part of the narrative action. In qualitative research we see this type of engagement in, for example, (a) participant observation, where the researcher doesn't just observe from a distance so as not to "influence" the natural action being observed, but actually becomes involved in the performance of that action, and (b) in interviews, where the researcher is not merely someone who asks questions and records the answers, but an active participant in the co-construction of the discourse. The dilemma is, how involved or engaged or participatory or in the midst should we be—in observations, interviews, video-recordings, Facebook posts? Often the argument against (or fear of) significant engagement is that objectivity would be compromised. Qualitative and narrative researchers can't and don't try to achieve objectivity—it is not what they are supposed to do.

When I observed the first-year teacher during my doctoral research I sat at the back of the classroom with an audio-recorder placed on the desk next to me and intentionally remained out of the action as much as possible. As a non-participant observer I did not want to "disturb" the ongoing action in the classroom. If I could do the study again, I would do things quite differently—I would immerse myself far more in the classroom activity because this, I believe, would enable me to gain a more thorough insider's view of "what is going on" (a classic ethnographer's question). In almost all of my recent research I conduct narrative interviews (see Barkhuizen, 2016), as opposed to semi-structured interviews more typical of qualitative research. Narrative interviews invite participants to "tell me about" their experiences; that is, to invite meaningful stories rather than answers to sociological questions (Chase, 2003), and then to participate as a co-constructor of those stories when the narrative begins.

The dilemma exists, nonetheless, and decisions have to be made constantly about how much researcher engagement in the construction of data is advisable and desirable. My pref-

erence in qualitative research is for judicial engagement, and by this I mean at each point of the data gathering process (e.g., planning to collect data, actually collecting data) the researcher should weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of more and less engagement (see O'Leary, this issue), and at all times relate any decisions made to the particular research questions and the aims and purposes of the study more broadly.

#6. Member Checking: To Check or Not to Check?

Member checking means going back to the original research participants to get their opinions on various aspects of the study. For instance, they could check the accuracy of the data (e.g., interview transcripts), volunteer additional relevant information, confirm the researcher's interpretations, or challenge those interpretations (which could mean re-thinking and increasing the trustworthiness of the original interpretations). Another advantage is that checking is ethically appropriate—returning data and interpretations to participants informs them of progress with their contribution and allows them to retain some form of ownership of the project. The dilemma arises, however, when there is limited or no time to do member checking, and its benefits are then lost. As they would be if participants choose not to member check. Furthermore, member checking can be a "risky business". What if the participant totally disagrees with your interpretations, or denies having said something, or demands that you delete some data, or withdraws altogether from the study because of what they see? Despite these real possibilities, which could derail your project to some extent, ethical guidelines have to be complied with, and the participants' wishes granted. Finally, some qualitative researchers are sceptical of member checking arguing that it assumes a verifiable truth; that experience can be reduced to a set of facts, which are proved to be or not to be the case in the process of member checking.

I have been involved in two projects in which I approached member checking in quite different ways. One is my doctoral study of the in-classroom interactions of the first-year high school ESL teacher in New York. I spent six full weeks with her—observing her teaching and interviewing her after each lesson. I also interviewed her before the data collection began to obtain information about her personal background and teacher education. I then had a final interview with her after the data collection period, a couple of weeks after my last observation. Between the pre- and post-interview I did not inform her about what I was finding in the data; my (tentative) interpretations or the themes and categories my data analysis was generating. My reason being that I did not want to "influence" her teaching based on my findings.

Many years later I used a very different approach in a longitudinal narrative inquiry of the identity changes of an English teacher in New Zealand. I conducted narrative interviews with her (and analyzed her student teacher journal) while she was a pre-service teacher at university to explore how she imagined herself (her identity) as a teacher in the future. Then eight years later I interviewed her again to see how things had turned out. During the latter interview I told her exactly what I was looking for and how I had interpreted her earlier interviews. And when it came to writing up the findings, I sent her my analysis, section by section, for her to comment on. I then included her actual comments in the article that was published (Barkhuizen, 2016). This was a very rewarding experience for me as a researcher, and I believe the close collaboration and information sharing with the participant enriched the quality of the study.

I feel qualitative researchers should strive to include member checking at every opportunity available, taking into account the pros and cons briefly described above. Chief among the pros is the confidence generated in the credibility of the study, for both researcher and consumers

of the research report. The biggest constraint is probably lack of time. I also think, nonetheless, it is a good idea to have a frank conversation with research participants to explain to them what member checking means and to discern their willingness and commitment to doing the checking in a thorough and timely manner.

#7. Implications: High or Low Impact?

Implications connect a study to a broader context, claiming relevance for theory, research methodology, the topic area being investigated, or practice. They show that the study has made some difference – it has contributed to the field in some way. In designing a study and preparing to write the report of the findings, researchers draw on this same field. In a way, then, implications represent a "giving back" to the field—extending it and making it richer. Without implications, readers might find themselves asking questions such as: What next? So what? Who cares? So despite the study itself being a good one, well designed and with interesting findings, it may lack impact. The dilemma for researchers then is how to present the study and its findings in such a way that it *does* have impact. The strength of the impact—the difference the study makes—will vary depending on, for example, the scope of the study (small-scale vs. large-scale) and where it is published (regional vs. international). Small-scale, exploratory or descriptive studies will typically have low-impact implications and will rarely be published in international journals. My point here is, nevertheless, that all research should have clearly stated implications so that readers of the report (or audience at a conference presentation) will know how the study affects them and their work.

I will never forget a seminar I presented (my first) as a young lecturer at the university where I was working at the time. The seminar was based on a small-scale sociolinguistic study I carried out as part of my pre-doctoral graduate studies (Barkhuizen, 1982), which aimed to discover any differences in the way men and women purchased a movie ticket at the local movie house. My focus was on politeness and I wanted to see if different levels of politeness were reflected in the linguistic forms used in this simple transaction—buying a movie ticket. During question time at the end of the seminar presentation one of the participants asked me what the implications of the study were. I had absolutely no idea! I hadn't even considered that there might be. That experience certainly taught me a lesson. Since then I have always diligently considered potential implications, even during the planning phase of the study. It is not something I simply tag onto the end of an article after the findings section.

To have implications or not is hardly a dilemma, therefore; a study should *always* have clearly stated implications (especially qualitative research, which typically avoids making generalizations). Their statement should be given very careful thought. When planning the study, for example, it is useful to talk to other researchers who have investigated a similar topic and to ask them their opinions about the need for further study in this area. Is there potential impact? At the planning stage implications would only be tentative, of course. But once analysis begins and especially during the writing of the report, any implications should be clearly related to the actual findings of the study (see, for example, Moriya, this issue). Needless to say, they can't simply be made up as something you think readers might like to hear!

#8. Presenting the Findings: Description or More?

Gao (2016) reflects on criticism he received from reviewers of an early qualitative research article he submitted for publication to a journal: "I just presented the findings by listing major themes with data extracts and made limited efforts to theorize the themes identified from the analysis. … In their detailed reports, the reviewers largely challenged me for being too descriptive and simplistic in the presentation of the findings" (p. 227). This is often one

of the main criticisms directed at qualitative research generally. The dilemma is reflected in the following question: How do you go beyond mere description in the presentation of qualitative findings? It is all too easy to present extracts of data and let them speak for themselves, or to offer our interpretations of what we think is going on in that data. But, as Gao points out, readers of the report may be tempted to ask "so what?" This does not relate only to the implications of the study (see dilemma #7 above), but also to how your findings relate and contribute to theory and other research in the field. Why are the findings significant? What do they add to our understanding of the topic of the research? How do they relate to what others have said about it? How does the study advance theory development in the field? In narrative research, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) distinguish between *field* texts, the data collected, and *research* texts, the research reports we write about that data. Research texts move beyond mere data presentation and make connections to the discipline by referring to theory and other research within a particular topic area.

Personally, I have no problem with research that might be described as "descriptive". I believe there is a place for it in language teaching and learning research. Much teacher research and action research would fit into this category, and often provides rich detail of learners' and teachers' lives, which we can learn from. But, it is unlikely that such research reports will be published in major international journals. As some would argue, it is too localized, too parochial. My research in the late 1990s focused on learner perceptions of the classroom activities they engaged in and how their perceptions compared to the aims and objectives of their teachers (Barkhuizen, 1998a, 1998b, 2001). Looking back at those research reports, I now find them quite descriptive, minimally couched in conceptualizations of learner perceptions and individual differences (e.g., attitudes) and more related to practice-oriented discourses about teaching methods (e.g., communicative language teaching). I do believe they served a useful purpose, nevertheless—they changed the focus from what teachers do to what learners think about what teachers do. I still find this area of research relevant and interesting.

Moving beyond description, for those researchers who want to tackle this dilemma, would require familiarity with relevant *theoretical* literature to frame the design of the study and the interpretation of the data, and *other research* that has been done and published on the topic under investigation so that the current project can be related to it and possibly advance knowledge in that area. Then in writing up and discussing the findings, interpretations of the data should be closely linked to that literature. And then clear implications for those in the same and related research area and in other contexts should be stated. A final comment—this dilemma may not even be one for those researchers who are quite happy to make a contribution by producing descriptive reports relevant to their own work or to those working in the same (or similar) local context.

#9. Reporting Conventions: Follow or Not?

The organization of a qualitative research report refers to the sequence and arrangement of the parts that make it up, including: the sections and sub-sections (with suitable headings); excerpts of illustrative data; tables and figures; visual data such as drawings, photographs and screenshots; and any accompanying material, such as appendices and internet links. The organization of these various parts follows conventions that are typically quite strictly adhered to, evident in guidelines for dissertations and journal articles, for example. Some narrative researchers (e.g., Ely, 2007) have urged researchers to present their reports in ways more consistent with narrative epistemology and methodology; these include, giving the report a temporal dimension, making more explicit the voice of the researcher, experimenting with genres like poetry and drama, and utilizing developments in electronic and multimod-

al media. Despite these excellent suggestions, researchers constantly face a dilemma when trying to overcome the traditions and conventions of qualitative research reporting, many of which are upheld by gatekeepers such as dissertation examiners, journal editors, and research funders.

I have always been somewhat conservative in my approach to research report writing, perhaps influenced by the powerful conventions encountered in my training and early communications with editors. A few years ago, however, I submitted a research report with a colleague (Barkhuizen & Hacker, 2008) based on an interesting study in which we adhered to a fixed time schedule to explore conceptualizations and the practice of narrative inquiry by actually doing a narrative inquiry; so, a narrative inquiry on narrative inquiry. The research questions emerged from our research work about half way through the study rather than being stated up front. As such, in the report of the study we included the questions as part of the *findings* section. This did not go down well—reviewer after reviewer wanted them placed earlier in the article, typically after the literature review. We resisted this, which unfortunately resulted in the paper being rejected—time and time again. We finally got it published—when we moved the questions to its "appropriate" place, according to convention. A second article, focusing on the identities of English tutors who work one-on-one with learners (Barkhuizen, 2017b), also received criticism from reviewers when I decided to include some interview data in the *introduction* (rather than the findings section) to illustrate some of the themes I would be addressing in the rest of the article. In response I argued my rationale to the editors, who were fortunately happy to accept the article without a change.

Deviating from conventions by changing the organizational arrangements of a qualitative or narrative research report or using alternative forms such as poetry, stories and drama allows for the communication of meanings and emphases in ways more suitable to conveying the lived experiences of people, and may be more engaging and accessible for a wider audience. Although this may be so, reporting in these ways no doubt presents some challenges. For instance, not all audiences will appreciate deviations from anticipated, traditional forms (often those associated with positivistic, quantitative research), such as examiners of research dissertations or reviewers of manuscripts submitted to research journals. Some may perceive these alternative forms as confusing, or trivial and lighthearted, and thus not serious "scientific" work. One solution to this dilemma is to consider constructing multiple reports, with various forms constructed to suit different audiences. "Taking risks" (Casanave, 2010) with alternative reporting procedures should probably be left to more experienced researchers, who might have the necessary authority to argue their case more convincingly with editors, or to graduate researchers who have sympathetic supervisors!

#10. Disseminating Research Findings: Going Big or Small?

When it is time to think about disseminating the research findings, the question, and potential dilemma, becomes: Where do I publish the report? Nowadays, with the many journals available in the field of language teaching and learning and because of advances in technology and the speed with which papers can be submitted, this is not an easy question to answer. There are many factors that can be considered, such as: the stage of the researcher's career; the most appropriate audience for the article; the scope of the study reported in the article; and the urgency with which the research needs to be published. However, one dilemma I have often faced has to do with the "size" and status of the journal. Should we aim big or should we aim small? By "big" I mean international journals with large readerships that therefore require articles to be relevant to a wider range of scholars. These journals typically have high impact factors, accept fewer submissions, have stricter quality standards, and take longer to

get accepted articles out into the public domain (either online in advance access or in a particular issue). By "small" I mean regional or local journals and those published by (national) professional associations. These journals are usually quicker to accept submissions, the scope of the reported study can be more limited, and the content more relevant to a local audience. The turnaround from submission to publication is also usually much quicker. This dilemma might be particularly applicable to post-doctoral students looking to publish their first articles; typically articles based on their doctoral research. (A related dilemma for doctoral students is whether to publish while still a student or to wait until the doctorate has been completed; but I won't be going into that here.)

In my own research I have regularly tried to go both big and small when it comes to disseminating the research findings of any particular project. Publishing in international journals means my work is distributed to a larger audience, but more importantly, it engages with and contributes to important discussions and debates at a global level. At a regional level the research has immediate contextual relevance for readers, and may have an impact, for example, on policy decisions, curriculum development and classroom practice that relate very specifically to the topic on the published work. The research I did on the perceptions of English learners in multilingual schools in South Africa, for example, made sense, and was potentially useful, for South African researchers and practitioners because it had direct relevance to their contexts (see also Gallagher, this issue). On the international stage it contributed to theorizing about the role of the learner in teacher learning and classroom practice (Barkhuizen, 1998, has been cited over 300 times and continues to be cited today).

I often advise doctoral students and novice researchers who are just beginning their publishing careers to aim small, focusing on regional and national journals, professional association newsletters and magazines (mostly they don't listen to me!). My reason for suggesting this strategy is that their work will then get into the public domain more quickly (which is useful if they need to apply for an academic job). It will also more likely be seen and read. How many articles make it into an international journal and then sit there hardly seen with minimal downloads? Being read in a regional journal means the researcher's work will become known and his or her research networks can therefore start to be established (e.g., when meeting colleagues who now know your work at a regional conference), which consequently might result in research collaborations, invitations to present talks and seminars at other institutions or conferences of affiliated professional associations, and so on. *At the same time* as publishing regionally/nationally, I advise early career researchers to attempt to publish in one international journal. The advantage of this dual approach is that if the international publication does not eventuate then at least the successful publications at regional level will keep the outputs rolling along. I have seen unfortunate cases where post-doctoral students put all their eggs in one basket and submit one article to a major international journal. When this is not accepted (many months later), they start looking for another place to publish the same article, and if that is rejected (many more months later), they give up, and at the end of it all have no publications. I have also seen cases, however, where targeting only a major journal has been successful, and post-doctoral researchers get their very first article published in the top journal in their field. Note, I have only commented on journal articles in this section—there exist many other channels for dissemination, of course, including regional and international conferences, book chapters, and various online forums.

Conclusion

The articles in this issue are all excellent examples of qualitative research in language learning and teaching. Reflecting on them, and the numerous research projects of my own I have

referred to in this somewhat self-indulgent overview of qualitative research dilemmas, I am reminded of this definition of qualitative research by Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 8):

> Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning.

To me, this description of qualitative research emphasizes its dynamic nature, where things change and challenge us to be vigilant of the social and material spaces we explore, of the multiple meanings attached to our participants' lives, and of the ethical work we do as researchers. Because of this, qualitative researchers constantly struggle with ambiguities, at all stages of any research project. Some of these ambiguities are captured in the TEN dilemmas I have described in this article. I hope that by highlighting these and giving readers the opportunity to reflect on them in relation to their own work, they will be better equipped to do something about them.

Notes

1. This article is based on a presentation given at *Developing as a TESOL Researcher: International Doctoral Summer School*, 17–20 July, 2018, University of Malta, Malta.

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