The Journal of
Literature in Language Teaching

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Introduction

Welcome to issue 13.1 of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching*.

As the world heats up literally and figuratively, this summer is perhaps the perfect time to take refuge in the pages of a good book, and to mull the powers of literature. Black marks on a white page that magically transform through the imagination into experiences of other worlds, insights into people around the world, or questions we hadn't even considered asking, are what brought us all together in this community. As educators, it's also what drives us to use literature as a teaching tool, broadening our circles, and sharing our passion for stories.

The new issue of *The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching* drops into your sweltering summer (at least for those of us in Japan) with those optimistic thoughts behind it.

In the wake of wider awareness of perspectives and representation, **Tara McIlroy** tackles the thorny issue of decolonising the literary canon in the context of a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) course. In a detailed and thought-provoking paper, she advocates for student involvement in the selection texts for the classroom and looks at way of moving forward in a Japanese context where decolonisation of the canon is slow moving.

Meanwhile **Atsushi Iida** returns to the fascinating topic of students writing haiku in English, this time exploring student perceptions of composing a Japanese form in their second language. In this data-driven study, he concludes that while students get a lot out of the experience, and haiku writing is a valuable activity in the English classroom, it can also produce a certain amount of ambivalence in the students.

Our Literature in Practice article comes from **Andrew Nesseler**, who looks at using the picture books of Japanese American author Allen Say. Say's work delves into the myriad experiences of cultural exchange and therefore could be of value to students studying abroad, moving abroad more permanently, or simply curious about the meeting of different outlooks and expectations. In particular, as we will also see in the next paper, the nature of the picture books makes them ideal for younger and newer learners.

Mary Hillis and **Luke Draper** update us on LiLTs representation at November 2023's JALT conference in Tsukuba. "Growth Mindset in Education" was the overarching theme but as ever LiLT members covered a wide array of topics. The panel theme was "collaboration with literature," and discussion ranged across picture books, poetry, and short stories. In addition, Bethany Lacy, Chelanna White, Yiu-nam Leung, Mark Brierly, Camilo Villanueva, and Atsushi Iida all delivered presentations of particular interest to our readers.

Finally, **Richard Donovan** unpacks his textbook Translating Modern Japanese Literature with a view to classroom usage for both translation and language teachers. Through the close analysis of four Japanese literary texts, the textbook guides postgraduate students through the minefield of literary translation, and his article explores both the theory behind the book, and pedagogical methods that can be utilised by instructors.

The peer-reviewed *Journal of Literature in Language Teaching* accepts submissions from around the world. Submissions are accepted at any time on a rolling basis. Submission details are given on the final page of this journal and can also be found on the LiLT SIG website www.liltsig.org.

Submissions can be sent to liltjournaleditor@gmail.com. You can also contact the LiLTSIG at liltsig@gmail.com. The Literature in Language Teaching Special Interest Group (LiLTSIG) is part of the Japan Association of Language Teaching. LiLTSIG was formed in 2011 to encourage and promote the use of literature in the language classroom.

LiLTSIG produces a newsletter and a peer-reviewed journal, as well as organising various literature-themed events.

Although based in Japan, the group, and the journal welcome contributions and cooperation from around the world.

Decolonising a Literature CLIL Course in Japan: CEFR integration and course design recommendations

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Abstract

In this paper, the planning of an undergraduate content and language integrated learning (CLIL) course is discussed through the lens of decolonisation. Although it has not yet been widely adopted in Japanese English classrooms, decolonisation of English language and literature curricula, particularly regarding the selection of literary texts, has grown in popularity around the world. This preliminary report makes the case that allowing students to participate in the process of selecting appropriate texts encourages critical thinking and in-depth learning. Looking beyond the canon can also reveal students' interest in learning about history, culture, and intercultural understanding with the aim of nurturing skills to evaluate literary texts in the global context. Using principles from the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR), and reflecting on applications of the decolonising lens, this paper offers insights into the process and suggests strategies for decolonising English language and literature education within the Japanese context.

Key words: decolonising, curriculum design, pedagogy, EFL, postcolonial literature

In this age of globalisation and multiculturalism, it is increasingly important to review literary texts used in language classes. This motivation stems from the need for new and creative ways to use literature in the teaching of second (L2) and additional (L+) languages. It is natural that educators would incorporate international perspectives into the range of texts available for classroom use. In Japan, however, the adjustments to decolonise literature curricula (what we teach) and pedagogy (how we teach it) have not yet been implemented. One of the most important aspects of preparing a literature and language course is selecting the texts for students. Using literature for language learning can be done in many different ways (see Paran, 2008 for a review of approaches). Teachers planning courses want to know what kinds of texts they should select, and how these texts can be used to engage learners. Which aspects of reading will really resonate with students? Which characters will they relate to? Which themes will they want to discuss? Which aspects of the texts may bring the most cultural enrichment? These questions, as well as many others, help guide curriculum planning and decision-making (Applebee, 2008). Finding relatable stories that foster empathy and connection for thought-provoking conversations are just two of the many variables that affect curriculum design.

Global concerns about the future of languages and culture appear to be growing and cannot be ignored. David Graddol's *The Future of English*? (1997) raised a number of issues relevant to language learning contexts,

such as the role of English, its status as a global language, and considerations of how English may evolve in changing times. Graddol's predictions have proved to be only part of the story since the impact of globalisation has gone beyond these earlier considerations. Educators should ensure that changes to planning and text selection are done with careful review of language and content-related course aims.

An additional way to do this is by using language-based descriptors in activity planning. The Council of Europe released the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEFR) in 2001, meant as a thorough assessment of language competency levels. However, when it first appeared, its application to literature courses was limited. The document briefly mentioned that literature fosters "imaginative and artistic uses of language, which are important both educationally and in their own right" (Council of Europe, 2001: 56). It wasn't until the Council of Europe's Companion Volumes (CV), appearing in 2018 and 2020, that the addition of descriptors with explicit literary connections received formal recognition. These three new scales have been added since 2018, specifically for literature, in order to make clear the function of literature in language learning. These are: 1) reading as a leisure activity 2) expressing a personal response to creative texts, and 3) analysis and criticism of creative texts (Council of Europe, 2020: 24). For more detail about how this might be achieved at different levels of language proficiency, Appendix A provides a list of descriptors at the relevant levels. Any language course that uses literature must carefully consider the texts that are chosen for reading, analysis, and individual response. The second and third of these aims are most obviously related to the current topic (see emphasis in the quote below):

> **Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature):** This represents an approach more common at an upper secondary and university level. It concerns more formal, intellectual reactions. Aspects analysed include the significance of events in a novel, treatment of the same themes in different works and other links between them, the extent to which a work follows conventions, and *more global evaluation of the work as a whole* (Council of Europe, 2018: 117)

The essential elements of this skill are not simply to look at the texts in isolation, but to be able to evaluate them.

Evaluation, as a higher-order thinking skill involves making judgements, through the use of criteria or values, considering aspects such as reliability, perspective and awareness of impact and importance. Combining the CEFR and literature has been receiving more attention recently with emerging frameworks such as that of the model of literary competences (Alter & Ratheiser, 2019). The concepts of empathetic competence, aesthetic competence, cultural and discursive competence, and interpretative competence can be used to evaluate literature and CEFR aims. Reviewing texts and commenting on them using a decolonising lens is one potential way in which students can interrogate texts for the information they present, as well as looking for missing details using wider knowledge of global contexts.

To clarify the focus and structure of this paper, it is important to highlight that the central aim is to examine the integration of decolonial perspectives into a specific content and language integrated learning (CLIL) course in the Japanese university context. While the background information on decolonisation efforts in higher education provides important context, the main part of the paper will be dedicated to a case study of how these ideas have been put into practice in the development and implementation of a CLIL literature course. Through a detailed analysis of the course content, student responses, and reflections on the process, this paper seeks to offer insights and practical strategies for incorporating decolonial approaches into language and literature education in Japan and beyond. Building on the growing body of scholarship on decolonising higher education, this paper aims to contribute to the discussion by offering a detailed examination of how decolonial perspectives can be integrated into the design and implementation of a CLIL course in the Japanese university context. By focusing on a specific case study, the paper seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical discussions of decolonisation and the practical challenges and opportunities of putting these ideas into practice in the classroom. With these aims in mind, the next section discusses what decolonisation may look like in English studies and literature courses in the tertiary context in Japan.

What does it mean to start *decolonising* the English curriculum?

Decolonisation involves investigating and identifying colonial systems, structures, and relationships while working to challenge them. Related to what Giroux and Penna (1979) referred to as the *hidden curriculum,*

colonial attitudes and perspectives may be embedded in institutional cultures, which the University of Liverpool has described as barriers to success (Chavez and Cheetham, 2021). Around the world, there have been attempts to look at the content taught at universities with a decolonial lens. Specific to curriculum development are the kinds of courses, texts, and methods employed, depending on the context and geographical area.

Focusing on language learning, in a 2019 edited collection edited by Donaldo Macedo, Michel DeGraff writes simply that the decolonising refers to "coloniality in the teaching of foreign languages" (Degraff, p.xii). The urgency is found in countries where language learning was used for the project of coloniality itself. The collection covers a variety of key research areas including the displacement of indigenous languages, critical pedagogy and ways towards multilingualism. Those interested in global perspectives will find the book a detailed introduction.

In recent years, educators have also become more aware of the need to make diverse reading lists in literature courses. For various historical and cultural reasons, representing diverse literary voices and considering the situation of the authors of literature (gender, race, social background, etc.) may have become more commonly accepted recently. Initiatives to decolonise have become associated with curriculum design and delivery, research agendas and staffing. There has been a welcome and general shift away from the so-called "male, pale, and stale" overwhelming whiteness of the choices in literature courses. As Munslow Ong (2021) points out, many of the initiatives have been led from global regions beyond Europe and have often been initiated by students themselves. Universities around the world have taken steps to decolonise their curricula in recent years. One example is the University of Cape Town in South Africa, which led the way after the 2015 student-led movement #RhodesMustFall. The campaign, initially aimed at removing a statue of colonist Cecil Rhodes on campus, sparked a broader conversation about the university's role in addressing its colonial past. As part of its decolonising mission, the university now includes more diverse voices from African and postcolonial literature to address the imbalance of Western literature. Similarly, the English department at the University of Toronto in Canada has focused on creating postcolonial and Indigenous literature courses. In the US, many universities have intensified their efforts to

integrate marginalised faculty and support diverse students, particularly in response to the #BlackLivesMatter movement of 2020. The University of Oxford has also initiated change by targeting iconography, curriculum, and representation.

Studies, such as one conducted by the London School of Economics (El Kadi, 2019), have found that analysing reading lists can provide valuable insights into perspectives and biases. Scholars have addressed the specific steps needed to decolonise English studies through edited collections (Beyer, 2022), news articles (Shay, 2016), and special issues of journals. In postcolonial contexts, the discussion centres on power dynamics, with local writers and indigenous languages being considered for inclusion in curricula. Bernard (2023) examines the need to decolonise literature from various angles, considering history, translation, context, and the value of reading colonial and anti-colonial texts together. In "Decolonizing Methodologies," Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) critiques the colonial foundations of Western research methodologies and advocates for indigenous research paradigms. Smith argues that traditional Western research has often been an instrument of colonialism, exploiting indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems. She calls for decolonising research methodologies that transform the power relations in the research process. Some suggestions have been made by Kubota (2021) from the perspective of decolonising scholarly knowledge. Kubota argues that epistemological racism, which privileges white Euro-American knowledge and marginalizes knowledge produced by scholars from the Global South and scholars of colour, is deeply entrenched in academic practices and institutions.

In Asian contexts, decolonisation has already become a normalised and familiar approach. For example, a drive to teach ethics through literature is an ongoing concern in literature classrooms, as explained in detail by Choo (2021). Choo is writing in Singapore about literature education in high schools, but it can be argued that her ethical approach can also be applied effectively in language courses which use literature as the content. In order to keep up with global trends and provide students with valuable opportunities to critically analyse their own relationships with books and reading, this article argues that decolonising language and literature curricula in Japan should receive more attention.

One earlier discussion of decolonial approaches in the sphere of linguistics came from Pennycook (1998),

writing about the English language education in China. Although China is not a country usually considered to have been fully colonised by European powers, Pennycook's analysis of textbooks and language course materials showed that colonial perspectives were all-pervading. Essentially, even countries not considered colonised are still influenced by colonial discourses. In a related call to educators, McRae (1991) discussed the idea of literature with a small 'l', which means looking beyond canonical texts and including literature broadly defined as including all kinds of storytelling genres, non-traditional and diverse literature, and including learner literature. Recently, Kester et al. (2019) offered valuable insights into decolonising higher education in the Korean context, drawing on a comprehensive review of literature and practical workshops with educators. The decolonial toolkit that emerged provides concrete strategies for addressing coloniality and injustice, ranging from curricular interventions to pedagogical approaches.

In Japan, the discussion enters another layer of depth when considering the influence of Japanese as colonial languages in parts of Asia in the first half of the 20th Century. Within the field of applied linguistics and language teaching, the issues surrounding colonialism have begun to be addressed in policy statements and course planning. For example, Eoin Jordan and colleagues at the University of St Andrews have created a set of resources for teachers as a set of audio recordings and accompanying reading lists (Jordan, 2023). The key questions for decolonisation are:

1. What is meant by the term "decolonisation"?
2. Why would a language teaching practitioner want to decolonise their class, and how should they go about doing this?
3. What impacts might this type of action have?

Identity, ideology, and decolonisation are brought together in this toolkit meant as a starting point for discussions on how to make departmental changes happen in any language teaching context (available from https://ctltp.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/). This discussion does not fully explore the range of language

and culture-related issues in Japan itself, however. Indigenous populations (Ryukyu and Ainu cultures and others) are those which have been marginalised within Japan through a process of cultural assimilation.

In 2018, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London created a teaching and learning resource kit for their departments. With a connection to "broader institutional questions about the principles and practices of good teaching" it seeks to create curricula in "a spirit of critical dialogue within education" (SOAS, 2018: 1). The focus is on both curriculum choices and academic freedom (the development of courses, selection of courses, and ways of managing diversity), as well as the ways of teaching and learning (broadly referred to as pedagogy). Table 1 illustrates the range of actions that departments should think about, which include discussions amongst colleagues, extensive reading on the subject (points 2-3), and student involvement in decision-making and action-planning (points 5, 6, and 10). These broad recommendations can be used to review courses with a colonial lens.

All of these universities take a strategic and thorough approach to raising their awareness of problematic text selections while simultaneously addressing the systemic changes necessary to bring about long-lasting improvements in the educational experiences of their students.

Review of the Context: English literature programmes in Japan

To undertake an examination of the choices for potential literature students in Japan, an initial step involves an analysis of how literature is portrayed on university websites, and what kinds of texts are used in literature classes in Japan. Based on the latest data from the Times Higher Education (THE) ranking, an analysis of prominent English literature and language departments in Japan provides a comprehensive overview (THE, 2023). The primary aim is to examine the initial attitude towards issues and concepts related to the study of English literature as a subject. Table 2 contains excerpts from three high-ranking literature departments in Japanese universities introducing the study of English literature.

Table 1: Suggested curricula and pedagogy adaptations to decolonise the disciplines (SOAS, 2018: 10)

	Suggested adaptations from the Decolonising SOAS Working Group
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)	1. Re-organise material in the syllabus to bring different issues to prominence, in particular through bringing various kinds of critical perspectives to the earlier sessions 2. Consult a wider range of journals or textbooks for source materials, particularly journals located in the global South which may help capture different debates or perspectives 3. Talk to colleagues in the discipline who specialise in different research areas to get recommendations 4. Read articles about pedagogy in your field which speak to questions of diversity, coloniality, inclusion and critical thinking 5. Talk to students about what kinds of content they would like to see addressed 6. Keep open some spaces in the course to teach around topics identified by students in that year 7. Teach 'controversies' around key issues in the field or think about how to engage topics dialogically 8. Teach through the juxtaposition of material from different areas 9. Contextualise the subject in its historical moment, making explicit the kinds of research programmes, assumptions and aspirations that generated it 10. Facilitate students' engagement with language learning within programme design 11. Diversify the kinds of source material that come into the classroom; intelligent writing or comment on particular issues might well be available online in non-academic form **12.** Confront issues that may arise around potentially distressing topics

Table 2: English literature and linguistics and course descriptions (Times Higher Education (THE), 2023)

Country Ranking	University Name	Department Name	Description of Course
1	Tohoku University	Faculty of Arts and Letters, English Literature	English literature is not limited to England; taken in a broad sense, it also includes works from Australia, South Africa, Canada, and even the United States.
2	Tokyo University	The Department of English Language and Literature	English Literature is, to begin with, so broad that its limits are difficult to define. In general, our staff's research interests cover the traditional core of the discipline in British and American literature, and classes typically focus on close reading of texts.
3	Osaka University	English and American Literature and English Linguistics	Students majoring in Anglo-American literature will receive a general overview of the world of English-language literature with a central focus on Britain and America, as well as the characteristics of different genres and their formation and development from a range of cultural perspectives.

In the descriptions in Table 2, there is a sense that something about literature is being hinted at, i.e., "English literature is not limited to England" and "so broad that its limits are difficult to define" and a course gives a "general overview of the world of English-language literature", without historical reasons given. It is possible that there are ongoing efforts that have not been documented or summarised on the department websites. However, at a superficial level, there is limited indication of any focus on decolonising the literature curriculum at these universities Issues of identity and a raised awareness of multiculturalism, limited though they may be, are beginning to appear:

> "Nowadays, we see many writers with complicated cultural backgrounds, like Ishiguro Kazuo, enjoy success in the English literary world—proof that the adjective refers to the original language of the work, rather than to a specific country." (Tohoku University, Department of Global Humanities: English Literature, n.d.).

The complicated background of Ishiguro is of course his Japanese national identity (by birth) and his current citizenship (British) by naturalisation. His Nobel prize in Japan was warmly received, while his books are in the international section of the bookshop using his name in *katakana*. Ishiguro's work is used in the English General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) English literature examination as a British author of colour (along with Meera Syal). While these areas of literature and nationhood are certain curiosities that Japanese students may find broadly linked to social changes in Japan (issues of immigration, emigration, naming, dual nationality, and so on), they are not directly concerned with the same direction of any decolonisation project. Another way to learn more about the current situation in Japan is to take a close look at the reading lists and texts used in language and literature classes. This may not fully reflect how some teachers are already decolonising or are making attempts to do so but is meant as a snapshot to give a general impression. The situation with textbooks for English literature courses available for teachers of literature in Japan provides additional context. Offerings from a major Japanese publisher for their 2024 include the following:

1. British and American Short Shorts (Graham Green, James Joyce, etc.),
2. Contemporary British and American Short Stories (Kinsley Amis, John Updike, etc.)
3. Modern British and American Short Stories (James Thurber, Aldous Huxley, etc.)
4. Charming Stories by Modern Authors (Ernest Hemingway, Somerset Maugham, etc)
5. Gems of Modern Short Stories (John Steinbeck, Katherine Mansfield)

The closest in the catalogue to a non-European collection was a set of short stories by Katherine Mansfield, including *The Garden Party* (set in New Zealand, but written while the author was in Europe) and *Kwaidan* by Lafcadio Hearn (written by a European in Japan). From this it may be inferred that many English literature courses in Japan at the current time are taught in departments not yet discussing decolonisation, using texts which focus on traditionally canonical (if adapted or shortened) literature. A fuller investigation of courses and texts used in Japan could show greater diversity and the work already done by researchers and instructors in this field, so this beginning discussion is not meant as a fine-detail investigation. The next section looks at how decolonisation may be realised by using examples from one undergraduate CLIL course currently being developed.

Examining the decolonial lens: Course planning perspectives

As with other components of the course design, the instructor's situation should be taken into account. Although not all CLIL teachers have experience in the field, the course instructor should ideally be knowledgeable about the most recent methods for teaching language through literature. In this case, my background of teaching literature and language was with subject knowledge from an undergraduate degree in English and Scottish literature, PGCE in English (language and literature, with drama and media studies), master's degree in applied linguistics and PhD in applied linguistics with thesis on uses of literature for language learning. Though my four-year undergraduate course touched on subjects that are commonplace today only briefly. That is, my subject knowledge began at the undergraduate level when I was aware of coloniality and the post-colonial lens reading novels in class such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and learning about Edward Said's *Orientalism*. However, that introduction was taken from a single course and was not essential to comprehending English as a subject in general. In the

current English program at the University of Aberdeen, an undergraduate course called "Rethinking Reading" is offered in the first year. It explains in detail "the history of English studies and its relationship to colonialism, and how this impacts on conceptions of literature" (University of Aberdeen, 2023). A continuing component of this project is learning about the decolonisation process and carrying out decolonising work as a kind of continuing subject-based learning. Data for this paper came from practitioner research investigating literature and language learning using the CEFR and CLIL.

Context and course information

The course reflections were gathered at a medium-sized liberal arts university in Tokyo, Japan. The new language curriculum for undergraduate language courses across the university includes both content and CLIL classes, with English as a medium of instruction (EMI) classes at a higher level of challenge. Prospective students were required to self-select courses according to their English proficiency level. It is scheduled to be included in a new curriculum that will be introduced in 2024 to commemorate the university's 150th anniversary of its founding. The entry English language level was B2, with a target of CEFR C1. In 2021, 2022 and 2023 during initial piloting of the literature course, enrolments of students ranged from the B2+ level up to C2. This course met 14 times for 100 minutes throughout one spring or fall semester (see Appendix C for a weekly plan). All students in the course agreed to contribute data in the form of lesson reflections. The four Cs of CLIL (Content, Culture, Curriculum, and Content) were used to create a syllabus with objectives related to language and content. According to Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010), the four C's approach is designed to be an integrated and interconnected web of learning objectives, with each component having a strong connection to and embeddedness in culture. Key CLIL concepts in the course planning included activating students' existing knowledge; scaffolding of input; focus on vocabulary; and a use of authentic texts. A small number of international students and undergraduates from any department at the university were permitted to enrol in the elective course.

Students enrolled in this course thus far come from a variety of university departments, such as literature, business, mathematics, and natural science. Students from the literature department tend to come to the CLIL seminars course to develop their English skills but may also be curious about how English literature is taught in English by instructors outside of the literature department. International students are limited to five with the limit on enrolment set at a maximum of 30. One effect of this is that a small number of international students including those from Anglophone countries take the course along with domestic students. What this has meant in practice for course activities and grading is that the language-related aims of the course are interpreted broadly. In multilingual settings, students themselves can be a linguistic resource which can bring in multiple perspectives (Preece, 2019). As Japanese classrooms also become more multicultural, plurilingualism can become a built-in resource. Some students in the class were multilingual and multicultural, with several of the Japanese students having lived abroad for part of their schooling. The course included some domestic students who had not left Japan before. Several of the comments in the following section were from these students. All comments were written before class or after class, giving everyone time to consider their responses and the opportunity to write after reviewing the course materials closely. Those who have completed the course to date report satisfaction with the course contents and the small class size, allowing them to interact with each other and receive feedback from peers on their presentations and in class discussions.

Teachers in the language centre have access to a shared folder containing course resources, which includes a list of potential content areas. As demonstrated in Appendix B and C, the course materials are adaptable and can be added in accordance with the interests and backgrounds of the students as well as the instructor's expertise and area of specialisation. For this course, there is not currently a commercially available textbook; instead, it is advised that the material be taken from a range of sources. As can be seen from Appendix B, decolonising the curriculum is only one of the possible suggestions given to teachers as suggested topics. The intention is that a three- or four-week Unit could be created within the 14-week plan, in which the issues and background to decolonising the curriculum could be the main focus, with a culminating project on a text, course or topic of interest to students.

During the initial two teaching cycles of the course, a contemporary literature text from the Oxford Very Short Introduction series (Eaglestone, 2013) was effectively utilised. However, given limits on time and a sense that localised content would need to be added meant that this course book is recommended as a

reference text only. The general recommendation for those assigned to this course is to start with the objectives of the course and the relevant language descriptors from the CEFR, then plan the course using tasks, projects, or other appropriately varied contents.

Responses to *A Year of Reading the World* by Ann Morgan

In the course described above, a unit entitled *The Future of Reading and Global Literature* centred around discussing Ann Morgan's reading project *A Year of Reading the World*. The reading project website (available at https://ayearofreadingtheworld.com/) describes the experiences of read books from different countries around the world. Morgan carefully documented the books she read along with her critiques, prompting reflection on her own reading prejudices, and then investigating a more expansive discourse on reading lists in both formal and informal settings, including educational institutions and book clubs. The project is introduced through Morgan's TED talk (Morgan, 2015), and additional information is available in news articles, her blog (Morgan, 2023), and a book. While the project's motivations provide valuable introductory material for discussion, the project itself opens potential conversations surrounding decoloniality.

Preparation for the discussion was conducted as follows. The Ann Morgan TED talk was allocated as homework, and the review activities discussing high school course texts was a post-discussion reflective activity. To encourage student engagement with the topic, first students were asked to select countries they were familiar with and analyse the corresponding book lists. Second, they were encouraged to explore reviews of countries they were less acquainted with and speculate about the reasons behind their inclusion on the lists. This approach aimed to promote a critical examination of the representation and selection of literature from diverse global contexts within the framework of *The Future of Reading and Global Literature* unit.

For Japan, the list of books seems to be a combination of predictable canonical texts and authors such as Yukio Mishima, and lesser-known or new authors such as Mieko Kawakami (https://ayearofreadingtheworld.com/thelist/). Kawakami's *Breasts and Eggs* has a short review, perhaps in response to its commercial success overseas and media coverage of the book (https://ayearofreadingtheworld.com/2020/09/25/book-of-the-month-mieko-kawakami/).

Students were intrigued by the Japanese list, what seemed to be missing from it, and how the list may have been collated by international readers. They had many suggestions for what to add and reasons for their inclusion. The discussions about the reading list also touched on the issue of translation, since some of those listed seemed to be available in various languages along with Japanese, while others have only been translated into English. Some of the students in the class are literature majors, so they had opinions about the courses and texts chosen by their professors. Students were also keen to discuss books from their high school literature courses, recommending more of the canonical readings than appear on Morgan's list.

The classroom discussion also encompassed an examination of multiculturalism in Japan, which included a reference to the recent distinction of the Akutagawa Prize given to bilingual Japanese-Chinese novelist Li Kotomi, who became the first Taiwanese-born writer to achieve this award (Kotomi, 2021). As for the topic of decolonising the curriculum, students grasped the concepts immediately and suggested ways to discuss the topic in their reflective papers after the lesson. In their reflective comments, learners responded to the questions before and after classroom discussions.

The following selected comments were submitted in a Google Form and answers were converted into a PDF to be shared on the class learning management system (LMS). The purpose of sharing the comments is to emphasise the value of learner's perspectives and to emphasise the value of different opinions. Students agreed to submit comments for research and course development purposes. They are referred to by pseudonym with their writing unedited.

The comments and opinions emerging from this lesson were surprising in some ways since the topic of diversifying literature (and other subjects) may have been new, given that they were from different academic backgrounds and some of them admitted it was the first time to discuss these types of topics in English. The CEFR concept of mediation, which includes critique and offering personal responses, can be nurtured through discussions involving such topics. As follow-up activity students were given the opportunity to present on a topic of their choice at the end of the semester. Themes from the unit appeared to be used in those presentations.

Student responses: Topic 1

Explain in your own words why you think literature from some countries is more familiar to us than others.

Ann Morgan's project of reading a book from every nation is really significant because it shows the potential of literature to broaden and widen our understanding of different cultures. Reading novels from various nations allows us to move outside of our own cultural bubble and get fresh ideas and viewpoints when unfortunately, we are often not aware of all possible perspectives and opinions, as people tend to read literature from nations with cultures similar to their own, which can limit their viewpoint and create a limited understanding of the world. A lot of people in Europe, for example, are familiar with European literature or Western literature but are less familiar with Asian literature.
(Hana, Mathematics Department)

Some countries are more familiar to us than other countries because they are historically similar to each other. The project is worthwhile because it is good to see the world by the different point of view as Ann Morgan herself says. It is good to know the similarity with other countries, like reading other Asian books for me. Similarity and differences both will give me an opportunity to rethink my identity and the world.
(Leon, Intercultural Communication Department)

I consider that the reason for this inequality in distribution of books from each country is mainly capitalism. Which book shall be translated and published is decided based on its potential profit and to make a lot of money from the publishing industry, it cannot be helped but to pick a book based on its popularity. This selecting process unconsciously leaves out the books from countries with low populations and unpopular languages. Consequently, books from non-English speaking countries such as Asian countries, African countries, and Caribbean countries have less chance to be translated and to be read by people from other countries.
(Miri, Education Department)

Student responses: Topic 2

Imagine you could make changes to the reading lists for high school students. What changes would you make and why?

Because I'm from Hiroshima, let me talk about Hiroshima's reading lists for high school students. Because of the atomic-bomb, Hiroshima has peace studies from elementary school, or even from kindergarten. When I grew up there, I had a lot of chances to read about World War 2 from the perspective of Japan, however, there were few chances to know about other perspectives or peace problems like conflicts in Africa, or refugees. To learn more about other countries, I think it is better to have other countries' stories, like I mentioned above. Students need more opportunities to know and understand about other countries' problems.
(Maya, Mathematics Department)

I agree with the idea of Ann Morgan that you can tell a lot about a person looking at what's on their bookshelves. I think books they read represent their characters. I think it is an interesting point that Ann noticed a contradiction of her character that she thought and her reading. Reading this part, I noticed that my reading is also quite unbalanced. It was quite surprising that in the list of books all over the world, in some countries' sections, I have read some of these and I know the titles of almost all of them, but in some countries' sections, I can't even read the titles of books. Therefore, I thought my reading was very biased.
(Yui, Department of Business)

When I went to school, literature was limited to famous classic novels from my own country and later in high school with growing understanding for English also a few British or North American ones, but these kinds of books were rather supposed to help us practice English than getting too deeply involved with the story itself. Therefore, if I could change the reading list in high schools, I think it's better to include more literature from other parts of the world which are not as dominant as their own country's literature. Even though it's impossible to cover all countries during school time, it would be a great start to widen and also deepen the understanding of other cultures than our own and could support interest in these as well.
(Kai, French Literature Department)

Hana, Leon, and Miri's comments reveal a growing awareness of the factors that shape their own reading experiences and the imbalances that exist in the representation of different cultures and perspectives in literature. By reflecting on their own backgrounds and the historical and cultural contexts that have influenced their reading choices, these students are beginning to develop a more critical understanding of the ways in which power and privilege operate in the realm of literature and education.

Maya, Yui, and Kai's reflections on their local experiences in Japan also highlight the importance of considering the specific cultural and educational contexts in which decolonial approaches are being implemented. Their comments suggest a desire for greater diversity and inclusivity in their own educational experiences, as well as a recognition of the limitations of the current curriculum in terms of representing marginalised voices and perspectives. Notably, Kai's reflection on the lack of exposure to literature from other parts of the world during their high school education speaks to the broader issues of cultural hegemony and the dominance of Western literary traditions in many educational contexts. By acknowledging these limitations and expressing a desire for change, Kai demonstrates the potential for students to become active agents in the process of decolonising the curriculum.

Overall, the themes that emerge from these student comments suggest a growing awareness of the need for greater intercultural understanding and a more inclusive approach to literature education. By engaging with decolonial perspectives and reflecting on their own experiences and backgrounds, these students are developing the critical skills and cultural competencies needed to navigate an increasingly globalised and diverse world. While the process of decolonising the curriculum is complex and ongoing, these student reflections demonstrate the transformative potential of engaging with these issues in the classroom. By creating spaces for critical dialogue, reflection, and action, educators can empower students to become active participants in the process of creating a more just and equitable society. Themes from the comments overall seemed to suggest a general agreement that considerations of adapting reading lists (in class and outside) could help to ring about greater intercultural understanding.

As described in the earlier section, the 2018 SOAS list of ideas for any decolonial project lists "bringing different issues to prominence" and "asking students about what kinds of content they would like to see addressed". Looking for key controversies in topics in the field can mean looking at how literature is taught and presented in schools as well as examining literature in society (book clubs, social reading etc.). Diversifying the texts brought into the classroom, as well as opening up discussion about what else can be included are ways in which a decolonial lens can become central to classroom activities. As for the aim of looking beyond a text itself and global considerations, discussions related to the global reading project could be extended to include a number of other activities (time permitting). Project-based approaches, critique and reviewing or creative responses to the project could be added to a course of study to further explore the topic.

Discussion

This paper aimed to explore the integration of decolonial perspectives into the design and implementation of a CLIL course in the context of a Japanese university. By focusing on a specific case study, the paper aimed to contribute to the growing discussion on decolonising the curriculum in English language education, which has been less prevalent in Japan compared to Europe. While the paper did not look closely at decolonisation work being done in Japanese language education, it provided a detailed examination of the factors affecting course design and the practical application of decolonial approaches in a particular English course at one private liberal arts university. Although the broad field of decolonising studies cannot be fully detailed in this short paper, the insights offered from this specific perspective may serve as a starting point for others considering similar steps in their own contexts.

When it comes to course planning, many contexts still underutilise CEFR concepts like mediation and plurilingualism. The CEFR descriptors for language learning allow for a range of teaching approaches because literature can be discussed, translated, adapted, and remixed. Sociocultural approaches and the CEFR concept of mediation may also be well-suited to the literature descriptors of the CEFR. According to the CEFR, mediating a text entails both analysing and critiquing literary texts in addition to providing one's own personal reactions to them. Bloom's taxonomy of higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and other approaches such as multiliteracies are suggested as ways to develop learning activities which match the key objectives of the course. In the next section, one of the

lessons and discussion texts is introduced with some suggestions for further adaptations.

Zidani (2020) offers a critical perspective on decolonising the curriculum, arguing that it requires not just diversifying content but also fundamentally rethinking pedagogical practices and power relations in the classroom. The author emphasises the importance of embracing difference, challenging dominant Western frameworks, and creating space for marginalised voices. Zidani proposes a "pedagogy of discomfort" that encourages both students and teachers to confront difficult truths, engage in critical self-reflection, and imagine alternative possibilities for knowledge production and social transformation. This involves building relationships of trust, valuing students' lived experiences, and working towards a more holistic vision of education.

When considering the implications of decolonising the curriculum in the Japanese context, it is essential to acknowledge potential challenges and resistance that may arise. From an institutional perspective, there may be barriers related to existing academic traditions, departmental structures, and faculty expertise. Decolonising the curriculum requires a significant shift in perspective and a willingness to challenge established norms, which may be met with resistance from some faculty members or administrators who are accustomed to traditional approaches to language and literature education. Despite these challenges, it is crucial to recognise that decolonising the curriculum is a necessary and worthwhile endeavour. By engaging in ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and reflection, educators can work to overcome these barriers and create more inclusive and equitable learning environments. This may involve building alliances with colleagues across disciplines, seeking out professional development opportunities, and advocating for institutional support and resources.

Choosing texts for literature classes is a critical thinking exercise that expands on mediation strategies. Students must look beyond the texts themselves to take into account the historical and global contexts in which they were written. *Plurilingualism*, another element of the CEFR, values language knowledge at all levels across languages. Plurilingualism (Council of Europe, 2018/2020), which emphasises the benefits of learning languages concurrently, is relevant to the current debate on decolonising the English language and literature curricula since it incorporates the use of multiple languages (both in translation and for proficiency development). Teachers who study translated literary texts and engage with literature inside and outside of the classroom might think about implementing a plurilingualism approach in their course design. In this context, it refers to the decolonisation of the English literature and language curriculum as well as pedagogical approaches to these changes.

According to the UK's University of Bristol's *Ten Tips to Start Your Curriculum Decolonisation Journey* (2022), fact-finding is a key step in evaluating the current situation. The approach recommends looking for examples of practice specific for the discipline, including finding researchers who are already approaching the topic. By incorporating texts from various cultural backgrounds and expanding the canon, the University of Bristol's English Department has significantly altered its curriculum and teaching pedagogy. Compared to 2004, when I finished my PGCE English studies and became a trainee secondary teacher, the current situation is a very different scenario. The potential inclusion of courses at the University of Bristol that examine the literary consequences of colonialism could be attributed to a wider societal acknowledgment of the enduring impact of slavery. This observation can be attributed to a recent period of self-reflection over the economic advantages that Bristol acquired from its period of involvement with colonial practices. Recently, I learned more about the context of this and how universities can decolonise from an online course. The University of Bristol created a Futurelearn MOOC, *Decolonising Education: From Theory to Practice* in which different departments discuss their current stages of decolonising (Futurelearn, 2023). The course looked at literary studies as well as the sciences, history, the arts, and humanities. The four-week course is an introduction to the topics, with discussions from participants revealing various perspectives and opinions. Those interested in the topic could access this free resource to learn more.

A decolonial lens brings potential benefits for learners as they critically analyse their own understanding of culture and literature, while also offering opportunities for faculty to address contemporary issues. Careful planning is required when applying content-based changes to specific disciplines. Once the decolonisation process begins, it is inevitable to examine the degree to which academics and students will accept its efforts. According to Ranasinha (2019), students may be opposed to diversity if it is seen as a superficial gesture. Including texts from marginalised communities in supplemental courses does not equate

to actively substituting classic texts with works from the global south or balancing traditionally marginalised works with traditionally canonical pieces. It will also be necessary to think of ways to effectively incorporate non-Western and marginalised voices into the curriculum.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A
Expressing a Personal Response to Creative Texts (Including Literature)

CEFR Level	
C1	Can describe in detail his/her personal interpretation of a work. Can outline interpretation of a character in a work and/or their psychological/emotional state. This could include the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions. Can give his/her personal interpretation of the development of a plot, the characters and the themes in a story, novel, film or play.
B2	Can give a clear presentation of his/her reactions to a work, developing his/her ideas and supporting them with examples and arguments. Can describe his/her emotional response to a work and elaborate on the way in which it has evoked this response. Can express in some detail his/her reactions to the form of expression, style and content of a work, explaining what he/she appreciated and why.
B1	Can explain why certain parts or aspects of a work especially interested him/her. Can explain in some detail which character he/she most identified with and why. Can relate events in a story, film or play to similar events he/she has experienced or heard about. Can relate the emotions experienced by a character in a work to emotions he/she has experienced. Can describe the emotions he/she experienced at a certain point in a story Can briefly explain the feelings and opinions that a work provoked in him/her. Can describe the personality of a character.
A2	Can express his/her reactions to a work. Can describe a character's feelings and explain the reasons for them. Can say in simple language which aspects of a work especially interested him/her. Can say whether he/she liked a work or not and explain why in simple language. Can select simple passages he/she particularly likes from work of literature to use as quotes.
A1	Can use simple words and phrases to say how a work made him/her feel.

Based on the CEFR-CV (Council of Europe, 2018 p. 116)

Appendix B
Description of CLIL Seminars: Literature

Course outline

This course is designed for students to study literature in English while developing their language skills. Students will be encouraged to develop an informed and perceptive understanding of literature in today's society using multiple perspectives and critical thinking. Course content will support the use of language strategies to read and respond to literary texts using concepts from critical theory and the broad field of English studies. Individually and in groups, students will discuss and react to various literary texts. Students will select texts related to their own interests and will work on a creative and interactive presentation at the end of the course. Throughout this course students will learn to

1. describe and analyse features of literature and contemporary literary trends (C)
2. show understanding of language and literary features such as narrative structure and theme (C)
3. apply knowledge of contemporary literature in society in reflective writing and presentations (C)
4. understand a clearly structured lecture, and take notes on major points (L)
5. understand and use target specialist vocabulary required in 1) academic lectures and 2) literary topics (L)
6. respond appropriately using questions and responses in discussions and presentations (L)

*L = Language goal, C= Content goal

Grading

Pair/group work and preparation for weekly discussions (30%)

Vocabulary/reading notebook and lecture notes (20%)

Project presentations and reflection papers (20%)

Final presentation (30%)

List of possible topics

- Children's literature
- Young adult literature
- Trends in literature and reading in society
- Critical reading (reader response, feminist reading, post-colonial, post-structuralism)
- Various ways of learning literature around the world
- Global literature
- Gender issues and literature
- Social issues through literature
- Ethical reading and ethical questions in literature
- SDGs in literature
- Decolonising the curriculum
- The future of literature teaching around the world
- Adapting the school literature curriculum for 21st century skills
- Digital learning using literature
- Paper books vs. digital reading
- School-based literature learning vs. 'in the wild' reading
- Evolving habits of reading in society
- Translanguaging in literature
- Language learning using literature
- Effects of banning books
- Influences of Bookstagram and BookTok
- Creative remixing of literature
- Creative adaptations of literature

Appendix C
CLIL Seminars: Literature

Weekly Contents

Lesson 1: Introduction, reading survey and reflective writing: Personal literature learning experiences

Lesson 2: Discussion circles: Methods and expectations

    Critical reading and critical thinking skills: Considering audience and purpose

Lesson 3: Unit 1: Multiple perspectives of contemporary fiction

    Note-taking skills: Annotation

    Critical reading/critical thinking skills: Argument and evidence I

Lesson 4: Unit 1: Multiple perspectives of contemporary fiction

    Note-taking skills: Selecting evidence and data

    Critical reading/critical thinking skills: Argument and evidence II

Lesson 5: Unit 2: Genre and contemporary fiction

    Note-taking skills: Summarising content using narrative structure

    Critical reading & critical thinking skills: Language and tone I

Lesson 6: Unit 2: Genre and contemporary fiction

    Presentation skills: Using visual storytelling

    Critical reading & critical thinking skills: Language and tone II

Lesson 7: 1st project: Individual presentation and reflection paper

Lesson 8: Unit 3: The globalised novel and the future of reading

    Note-taking skills: Organising ideas

    Critical reading & critical thinking skills: Judgement and comparison I

Lesson 9: Unit 3: The globalised novel and the future of reading

Presentation skills: Creating and responding to questions

    Critical reading & critical thinking skills: Judgement and comparison II

Lesson 10: Unit 3: The globalised novel and the future of reading

Note-taking skills: Rebuilding main points from lecture notes

    Presentation skills: Focusing on fluency and spontaneity

Lesson 11: 2nd project: Group presentation and reflection paper

Lesson 12: Preparing for the final project

    Notetaking, presentation, critical reading & thinking: Applying all skills

Lessons 13 & 14: Final project: Group presentations and reflective paper

Japanese EFL Students' Perceptions of Composing Haiku in English

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Abstract

The current study examines the perceptions of Japanese EFL writers regarding the task of composing English-language haiku. Drawing on a mixed-methods research approach, 405 survey responses were statistically analyzed and self-reflective essays written by seven focal students were coded based on the positive and negative learning experiences. The results of this study revealed that the overall perceptions of 405 Japanese EFL students concerning the task of writing haiku were positive. The study also found that, even among the seven students who responded negatively to the survey, they still considered haiku composition to be valuable. However, it became apparent that these students experienced feelings of uncertainty, confusion, or resistance when they encountered difficulty in recognizing the significance of the task itself or when attempting to express emotions within the constraints of the haiku structure in a target language.

Key words: second language poetry writing; haiku; perceptions and attitudes; EFL learners

There is a growing body of literature addressing the value of poetry writing in second language (L2) writing classrooms (Chamcharatsri & Iida, 2022; Hanauer, 2010, 2012; Iida, forthcoming; Iida & Chamcharatsri, 2022; Liao, 2018; Nicholes, 2022). Poetry writing in a target language is an effective literacy practice because the distinctive quality of poetry as a linguistic form lies in its ability to directly shape sound pattern, form, and meaning, thereby creating a wide range of effects on the listener and reader (Peskin & Hanauer, 2023). Through poetry writing, L2 learners can find the opportunity to discover their own voices, negotiate meaning, and express themselves in the target language (Iida & Chamcharatsri, 2022). This approach transforms traditional views of L2 learning in the classroom by allowing L2 learners to flexibly express themselves and explore a new language through a creative format. Poetry writing thus offers a new avenue to experiment freely with the target language, expanding beyond rote memorization of linguistic and structural knowledge.

An important aspect of researching L2 poetry writing is to examine the perceptions and emotional reactions of L2 learners. This focus on affective dimensions in L2 learning is supported by a theoretical perspective that emotions are inextricable from language acquisition (Dewale, 2010; Prior, 2016). Based on this view, previous studies have explored L2 learners' experiences through poetry writing in the target language. For example, Hanauer and Liao's (2016) interview-based study explored the experiences of creative and academic writing among 19 ESL students attending an American state university. This qualitative study revealed that the students had both positive and negative experiences in the classroom. Positively, they recognized creative writing to be useful for increased emotional engagement, gaining a sense of expressing their own voice and memories, and promoting their self-

understanding. On the other hand, their negative experiences stemmed from a sense of difficulty in communicating personal voices and an unfamiliarity with the creative genre.

Another study conducted by Iida (2012) examined 20 university students' perceptions of writing haiku in the Japanese EFL classroom. The overall analysis of their self-reported data revealed 19 different issues that fell under four themes related to English-language haiku writing: difficulty, value, emotion, and attitude. Although challenges (e.g., syllable adjustment, incorporating seasonal references, self-expression, or word choice) appeared, the students generally felt intrigued by the composing process, had a greater sense of achievement, and positively viewed the task of composing haiku. Most recently, Iida (forthcoming) further investigated the perceptions and attitudes toward composing haiku among a group of 60 EFL students who demonstrated exceptional performance in the book of haiku project. The project required the students to design and create an original, handmade booklet of poetry, including a cover page, table of contents, an introduction, ten poems, and a description of each poem. The analysis of 60 self-reflective essays identified eight major themes: affect, awareness, change, difficulty, discovery, L1 and L2 differences, skills, and writing. The study revealed that, while haiku composition contributed to students' skills development and their increased awareness of audience, emotional expression, and the English language, they struggled with linguistic differences between L1 and L2 as well as applying the fundamental principle of traditional Japanese haiku to English-language poetry.

In this way, previous studies explored L2 learners' experiences with creative writing, though often on a small scale, focusing primarily on advanced or high-achieving groups of students. While these qualitative studies identified certain affective dimensions, the broader impact of poetry writing on L2 learning remains relatively unexamined. Of particular interest in L2 creative writing research is the investigation of the overall perceptions of L2 learners who engage in a semester-long poetry writing project as well as the attitudes of low-achieving students regarding L2 poetry writing. The current study, therefore, aims to examine the emotional experiences of Japanese EFL students concerning L2 poetry writing and uncover the potential factors that facilitate or impede their achievement of creating poetry in a target language. Specifically, this study addresses the following two research questions:

1. What is the general tendency of Japanese EFL university students' perceptions regarding the practice of composing haiku in English?
2. What challenges and difficulties did Japanese EFL university students encounter during the process of composing haiku?

Methodology

The current study employed mixed-method research. It involved statistical analysis of questionnaires and coding of reflective essays written by Japanese EFL students.

Research Site and Participants

Participants were 405 first-year university students who registered for a required, first-year college English course during the academic years of 2014–2017 at a four-year public university in Japan. Of these students, 147 were education majors, 47 were nursing majors, and 211 were science and technology majors. All participants were born and raised in Japan and had studied English for six years under the Japanese educational system. Despite having no prior experience of writing poetry in English, they had read and appreciated Japanese haiku in elementary school as part of the school curriculum. Haiku was, therefore, a culturally familiar genre to them.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in a total of 18 sections of the first-year college English course over the four years. Drawing on *evocative voice pedagogy* proposed by Iida (forthcoming), I taught a 15-week course by incorporating the task of composing haiku into regular lessons under a coordinated English curriculum. As presented in Table 1, I designed a semester-long, book of haiku project, which could be accomplished in the limited time available (see Table 1).

Table 1

Overview of the book of haiku project (Iida, forthcoming).

Week	Stage	Content of Each Lesson
1		Introduction of the project
2	Genre familiarity	Understanding the concept of haiku
3		Reading haiku
4	Haiku composition	Exploring significant memories
5		Haiku writing
6		Peer-review (1)
7		Peer-review (2)
8	Multimodal haiku design	Mapping significant memories
9		Book introduction
10		Background information of each haiku
11		Book design
12		Discussing evaluation criteria
13	Poetry reading presentation	Presentation (1)
14		Presentation (2)
15		Course review

Evocative voice pedagogy consisted of three stages: genre familiarity, haiku composition, and multimodal haiku design. The first stage of the project involved poetry reading exercises to understand and familiarize the genre of haiku. Participants first read traditional Japanese haiku to review structural rules and then read English haiku to analyze and understand how voice is constructed. The second stage consisted of a series of writing exercises to create haiku. After exploring and writing freely about ten significant memories, each participant wrote a poem for each memory. They then participated in a peer review session and made revisions based on feedback from classmates. During this peer-review session, participants read a peer's poem, thought of a theme, wrote down their own interpretation, and discussed how the poem could be revised to express their intended meaning more properly. The third stage involved designing a book of haiku. Participants were assigned to create their own original booklets of haiku, consisting of a cover page, a table of contents, an introduction, and ten poems. In addition to writing practice through evocative voice pedagogy, poetry reading presentation was integrated into this course. This was not only for sharing their books of haiku with classmates but also for providing participants with the opportunity to develop their presentation skills in English. On the final day of the lessons in Week 15, they were assigned to reflect on the book of haiku project through a survey and self-reflection essay. Each participant answered the survey consisting of nine question items with a five-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: somewhat agree, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree). In addition, they wrote any thoughts and concerns about the project in approximately 1,200 characters in Japanese. The purpose of using their first language in this reflective practice was to help participants to engage in deeper introspection and analysis of their learning process. The use of Japanese here was intended to remove any potential language barrier that could inhibit their reflective practice.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of two stages: calculating the survey results and analyzing the self-reflection essays. The first stage of analysis was to analyze the participants' overall perceptions through their survey responses. Each question item in the survey was analyzed with basic statistical measures including mean, mode, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum. The second stage involved examining the experience of composing haiku

among low-achieving students. For this purpose, seven focal participants scoring below an average of 2.5 points on the perception survey were selected for further in-depth analysis. Initially, all written responses in the seven essays were translated into English by myself. Subsequently, based on Hanauer and Liao's (2016) methodological guideline, the translated responses were coded depending on their emotional orientation: positive or negative. The experiences under each category were further sub-categorized to gain a deeper understanding of the issues associated with these emotions. This resulted in two main coding categories concerning the task of composing haiku: positive learning experiences (14 responses) and negative learning experiences (14 responses). The frequency of each code under the main categories was then determined by calculating the number of participants who referenced a certain code in their essays.

Results
This section presents the overall analysis of Japanese EFL university students' perceptions concerning the task of composing haiku in English. It first shows the results of quantitative analysis of the survey. It then identifies several issues that emerged in the coding process of the self-reflection essays produced by seven focal participants.

Japanese EFL Writers' Overall Perceptions of Composing Haiku
Table 2 summarizes the results of the statistical analysis of nine question items concerning the task of composing haiku in English.

Table 2
Japanese EFL students' perceptions of composing haiku (N=405)

Question Items	Mean	SD	Mode	Max	Min
1. The book of haiku project is meaningful in my English learning.	3.97	0.80	4	5	1
2. The book of haiku project is fun and interesting.	4.06	0.86	4	5	1
3. I feel a sense of achievement throughout the book of haiku project.	4.28	0.83	5	5	1
4. Haiku writing is meaningful in my English learning.	3.83	0.83	4	5	2
5. Through haiku writing, I can learn to express my emotions or feelings in English.	3.62	0.82	4	5	1
6. Haiku writing enables me to write my thoughts succinctly in English.	3.61	0.81	4	5	1
7. Haiku writing helps me develop my writing skills.	3.62	0.85	4	5	1
8. Haiku writing helps my vocabulary learning.	3.92	0.85	4	5	1
9. I would recommend this learning approach to other Japanese students.	3.63	0.92	4	5	1

As can be seen in Table 2, the mean value of all question items was above 3.5. This indicates that participants in general had positive perceptions and responses to the book of haiku project. The participants in the study felt a strong sense of accomplishment through the project (Question 3: Mean 4.28). They also found the project fun and interesting (Question 2: Mean 4.06). Furthermore, they recognized that not only the book project but also haiku composition itself was meaningful for their English language learning. This was reflected in the mean values of 3.97 and 3.83 on Questions 1 and 4, respectively. Moreover, the participants reported that composing haiku in English helped them learn new vocabulary (Question 8: Mean 3.92). In this way, this group of Japanese EFL writers found the activity of composing haiku in English to be meaningful, valuable, and motivating.

Issues and Challenges of Composing Haiku in English
This section discusses the positive and negative learning experiences of seven participants who scored below an average of 2.5 points in the survey. Table 3 displays the issues that emerged under the main theme of positive learning experiences related to composing haiku in English. The table includes the name, definition, and example written responses of each code. The names shown in the example responses are pseudonyms.

Table 3
Positive learning experiences

Issues	Definition	Example
Fun	A learner's enjoyment and interest in engaging in the task of composing haiku	Through taking this class, I learned for the first time about the English haiku project. I wondered how to express 5-7-5 in English, whether I should adjust words to 5-7-5, or simply translate a haiku I had in mind in Japanese. However, when I started to write haiku, it was completely different. I learned to create haiku using syllables and felt interested in this project. (Mio Tanaka)
Perception change	A learner's change in perception concerning L2 learning	In this haiku writing class, my insecurity regarding English composition has lessened somewhat. (Mio Tanaka)
Audience awareness	A learner's perception of improving audience awareness	I have come to think about how to effectively communicate with others when writing haiku. (Ryo Kitayama)
Confidence	A learner's perception of developing confidence in L2 learning	I felt that my English language skills improved through learning haiku and creating English sentences. In the past, I lacked confidence in constructing English sentences and often doubted if my English writing was good enough. However, in this English learning experience, I gained confidence in my own English writing as I created sentences, composed haiku, and even completed a book. When I presented it, I became more confident in using English compared to before. (Yuto Hashimoto)
Motivation	A learner's development of motivation in learning English	In high school, English was mostly formal and focused on reading and listening, so I didn't feel motivated to study much. However, writing haiku in English this time is different from my English learning in high school. The project has clear purposes and it is easier to get accustomed to, and it is not too difficult. I believe there is a big difference in motivation for learning English compared to my high school days. (Yuto Hashimoto)
New forms of expression	A learner's perception of acquiring new forms of expression in English	When writing haiku, I try to avoid being too direct. When attempting to express one thing, I find myself experimenting with various phrases. This enables me to rapidly learn many ways of expression. (Mika Saijo)
Vocabulary	A learner's perception of the contribution of composing haiku on expanding L2 lexical knowledge	When making English sentences by myself, I encountered unfamiliar words and searched for them, which allowed me to acquire new vocabulary knowledge. English haiku involves using a 5-7-5 structure with syllables, so I was able to learn about the syllables of words. As I continued, I naturally became aware of syllables (I still make mistakes or don't understand sometimes, though). (Nanase Yokozeki)
Discovery	A learner's new finding through composing haiku in English	In Japanese, hiragana gives a gentle impression, but I noticed that haiku in English can have a more formal tone. When I want to create a relaxed atmosphere in my haiku, I prefer to use Japanese. On the other hand, when I want to create a haiku with a firm and contrasting atmosphere, using English would be a good choice. Even if the content I work on is the same, I believe that visual elements of language also have an impact, and different languages can give completely different impressions. I am now studying Italian as a foreign language, and once I become proficient in Italian, I would like to try writing haiku in Italian. I think it will likely create something with a distinct impression, different from English or Japanese. (Mika Saijo)

As shown in Table 3, there were eight sub-themes identified under the category of positive learning experiences: *fun, perception change, audience awareness, confidence, motivation, new forms of expression, vocabulary,* and *discovery.* Participants reported positive emotional reactions and perceived benefits from writing haiku as a form of L2 learning. It is noteworthy that even Japanese EFL students who responded negatively to the survey found composing haiku to be an effective and meaningful task for L2 learning.

Table 4 presents the issues found in the main theme of negative learning experiences with regards to haiku writing in English.

Table 4
Negative learning experiences

Issues	Definition	Example
Skepticism	A learner's doubt, questioning, or uncertainty about the practice of composing haiku in English	We had a group discussion about the content of haiku after looking at the teacher's examples, but each group had completely different ideas, and our group's opinions were different from what the teacher intended to convey. I think that even if we try to summarize it concisely using English and make it haiku-like, it would be meaningless if everyone interpreted it differently. It is precisely because of the Japanese language that we can infer the hidden meanings and scenes with minimal characters, but I feel that there are limitations when expressing them in English words. (Hiroki Kondo)
Confusion	A learner's confusion, frustration, or challenge encountered during the process of writing haiku	There is a big difference between writing haiku in Japanese and writing haiku in English, and it initially bewildered me. Expressing within the structure of 5-7-5 syllables is already challenging, but in English haiku, it requires creating 5-7-5 in syllables instead of characters. In Japanese, each character is generally one syllable (small characters are counted as one), so 5-7-5 corresponds to 5-7-5 sounds/characters. However, in English, it confused me that it is not about the number of characters but about the number of syllables to achieve 5-7-5. (Mio Tanaka)
Resistance	A learner's dislike, or disinterest in the activity of writing haiku in English	This is just my personal opinion, but I don't think writing haiku in English is particularly desirable. (Hiroki Kondo)
Emotional expression	A learner's perceived difficulty in emotional expressions in English	When writing haiku in English, I believe that I couldn't express emotions richly. I assume that it's because I'm unfamiliar with what symbols represent in English for various objects and things. (Ryo Kitayama)
Vocabulary	A learner's perceived difficulty in lexical choices in the process of composing haiku	In haiku, syllables play an important role, so I had to think about how to use words effectively to express my intended meaning. I found it challenging to choose the right vocabulary. (Yuto Hashimoto)
Task	A learner's perceived difficulty in the task of composing haiku in English	For those of us whose English skills are still not very good, just writing sentences in English is difficult. So, writing haiku must be very challenging. First, because I did not pay attention to the number of letters in English words at all, I had to search every time I used a single word. Also, while ideas came to me in Japanese, the translated words did not always express exactly what I wanted to say. It was very difficult to find the right words. (Mika Saijo)

As can be seen in Table 4, six sub-themes fell under the main category of negative learning experiences: *skepticism, confusion, resistance, emotional expression, vocabulary,* and *task*. Participants realized that their negative impressions and the various challenges they faced during the process of composing haiku led to overall negative learning experiences. It was apparent that seven Japanese EFL students encountered difficulty in expressing themselves in a target language while adhering to the haiku structure.

Table 5 summarizes emergent issues and the frequency count of the number of participants.

Table 5
Summary table of emergent issues related to positive and negative experiences (n=7)

Issues under positive experiences	Occurrence	Issues under negative experiences	Occurrence
Fun	2	Skepticism	3
Perception change	1	Confusion	3
Audience awareness	1	Resistance	2
Confidence	1	Emotional expression	3
Motivation	1	Vocabulary	1
New forms of expression	1	Task	2
Vocabulary	5		
Discovery	2		
Total number of experiences	**14**		**14**

As shown in Table 5, one of the common issues among the focal participants was vocabulary. This indicates that composing haiku in English helped them learn new lexical items in the target language. The issue of vocabulary, however, was also listed in the negative learning experiences. For instance, one participant struggled with finding suitable words to express his intended meaning. Furthermore, Table 5 highlights several other common issues that the participants encountered in the learning process. Notably, they felt uncertain, confused, and resistant when composing haiku in English. In addition, they perceived difficulty in expressing emotion in English as well as with the task itself.

Discussion and Implications

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of Japanese EFL students concerning the task of writing haiku in English, with a specific focus on identifying common issues and challenges encountered in the process of L2 poetry writing. It is acknowledged that the number of participants were limited, and it is important to note that the data for the current study relied solely on their self-reported documents. Despite these limitations, this study provides two significant findings that contribute to the existing literature in TESOL and applied linguistics.

First of all, this study reveals that Japanese EFL university students had positive perceptions and experiences through composing haiku in English. The results of the survey demonstrated scores over 3.5 points across all nine question items. Particularly noteworthy was the finding that these students regarded the semester-long book of haiku project as meaningful and valuable. They also perceived the task of composing haiku as an effective method for acquiring L2 vocabulary. In addition, this group of Japanese EFL students reported that haiku writing enabled them to express their emotions in English, improve their ability to convey ideas succinctly, and enhance their overall L2 writing skills. This finding aligns with the results of a recent study conducted by Iida (forthcoming), which demonstrated that L2 writers learn to become more aware of word choice and emotional expression by writing haiku in English.

The second major finding of this study is the identification of several types of difficulties and challenges that Japanese EFL students encountered in the process of composing haiku. It became apparent that the negative learning experiences were not only a result of their negative reactions towards the task itself but also stemmed from the inherent nature of composing haiku. As illustrated in Table 4, the focal students felt uncertain, confused, and resistant when they lacked a clear understanding of the significance of poetry writing or were unfamiliar with the genre and specific task of writing haiku. Additionally, this study revealed that Japanese EFL students had trouble expressing emotions effectively in English while adhering to the 5-7-5 syllable structure. This is consistent with the major findings in previous research on L2 poetry writing: Regardless of their L2 proficiency level, L2 writers face difficulty when

they have to express their emotions in the target language (Chamcharatsri, 2013; Hanauer & Liao, 2016; Iida, 2012, forthcoming; Liao, 2018).

Based on these research findings, this study provides practical suggestions for teaching English-language haiku writing in the Japanese EFL classroom. In order to enhance students' understanding of the nature of haiku writing, Japanese EFL teachers can integrate outdoor writing activities by taking them outside the classroom and assigning them to write poems inspired by their surroundings. By immersing themselves in the natural world and actively observing the world around them, students can naturally incorporate sensory details and seasonal references into their writing. This experimental approach can help to establish a deeper connection between the internal and external world of individuals (Hanauer, 2010). As for the issue of 5-7-5 syllable structure, an alternative approach to English-language haiku writing is to use the total number of words, instead of syllables. A recent study conducted by Iida (forthcoming) found that the collection of over 8,000 English-language haiku poems written by EFL students consisted of an average of 13 words in the 4-5-4 word structure. Applying this empirical evidence to the teaching of poetry writing may be particularly beneficial for novice L2 writers or EFL learners who struggle with couniting syllables in English words. By focusing on word counts, teachers may be able to lessen students' cognitive burden in the L2 writing process and reduce their potential negative emotions. Taken together, incorporating outdoor writing activities and word-based guidance provides a more accessible and manageable framework for L2 writers to create poetry in the target language.

Lastly, this study provides an important methodological implication. As discussed, students who responded negatively to the survey still perceived haiku writing as a valuable and effective activity in their reflective essays. This finding is a powerful reminder of the immense value of data triangulation. Relying solely on a single data source can limit research findings. By combining various data sources, we can enhance the reliability and accuracy of our findings, which enables us to properly assess the impact of literacy practice on L2 learning and gain deeper insights into our students' experiences in the classroom.

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Literature in Practice

The Picture Books of Allen Say: Instructing ELLs in Language Learning and Cultural Exchange

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Abstract

Many of the picture books by Japanese American writer and illustrator Allen Say depict the lives of individuals who find themselves acclimatizing to a new culture. From either moving from Japan to America or America to Japan, Say portrays characters who struggle with but succeed in appreciating both cultures. The picture books of Say, then, may be useful for English language learners (ELLs) who are interested in cultural exchange. Unique to ELLs, however, is the use of Say's work as approachable content, as it uses illustrations and relatively concise prose most likely aimed at young L1 English speakers. As such, Say's picture books are worthy texts for improving both the English proficiency and cultural awareness of ELLs.

Key words: Allen Say, picture books, English language learners, cultural exchange

Allen Say is a Japanese American author and illustrator of award-winning children's picture books, which includes the Caldecott Medal recipient *Grandfather's Journey* and the Oregon Spirit Book Award recipient *Erika-San* (Gregorio, 2022). Born in Japan, Say immigrated to the United States as a teenager, with his work consequently dealing with "themes showing his love of both countries" (Temple et al., 1998, p. 97). Whether about a Japanese man immigrating to America in the Meiji era or an American woman immigrating to Japan in the modern day, Say's books have explored themes of multiculturalism and, specifically, the cultural differences individuals experience when moving between the two countries.

In this article, I want to explore the potential for Say's picture books to be used in an educational setting with English language learners (ELLs). The introduction of picture books into English education seems especially pertinent in countries such as Japan, where English education has become compulsory for increasingly younger students (Kochiyama, 2016). Additionally, in alignment with standards of a MEXT survey (Commission on the Development of Foreign Language

Policy, 2011, p. 3), foreign language activities are in Japanese elementary schools with the goal of "[cultivating] cogitation, judgment, expressiveness and other abilities" as globalization continues.

Yet, while Say's work has value as a resource for English education in Japan, I believe what makes it such a valuable resource for Japanese ELLs is what makes it a worthwhile resource for ELLs in other countries. Specifically, Say's picture books have value in settings that touch upon intercultural and language instruction. In turn, I will explore the importance of Say's work for ELLs in learning about cultural exchange and, later, as a tool for building upon their English proficiency. Lastly, I will give three example activities to illustrate the utility Say's work can have in a class for ELLs.

Cultural Exchange in *Grandfather's Journey* and *Erika-San*

Grandfather's Journey and *Erika-San* show cultural exchanges between Japan and America as characters from either the former or the latter adjust to their different surroundings. From the Japanese perspective, Say gives readers a look into his grandfather's

experiences when moving to America as a young man. His grandfather, while coming to appreciate America and even starting a family there, eventually returns to Japan to be reunited with the landscape that he missed from his childhood.

Once again, his family settles with him in Japan, and Say's grandfather finds himself missing America, much like he missed the landscape of Japan, and wishing to visit it one more time in his lifetime. Unfortunately, he does not get this opportunity, but Say himself later repeats his grandfather's journey by immigrating to America. In closing *Grandfather's Journey*, Say (1993, p. 31) articulates his appreciation for each culture—feelings that his grandfather likely shared in his life as well—by saying, "The funny thing is, the moment I am in one country, I am homesick for the other." Additionally, we see Say (1993, p. 12) commenting on the diversity his grandfather witnessed in America when "He met many people along the way. He shook hands with black men and white men, with yellow men and red men." That said, it does not comment further on this categorization of ethnicities.

Next, in *Erika-San*, Say tells the story of Erika, a young American woman who grows up wishing to live in Japan. As a child, Erika's grandmother read to her various Japanese picture books and folktales. Also, during her time in America, Erika had some Japanese friends who taught her Japanese, which she also studied through American middle and high school. After graduating university, Erika moved to Tokyo to teach, but found the city too crowded. When she moved to a remote island in Japan, she found herself happier, especially when given the opportunity to lead a tea ceremony with one of her Japanese co-workers, whom she later marries.

The Approachability of Say's Work for ELLs
Both *Grandfather's Journey* and *Erika-San* utilize illustrations, relatively concise text, and similarly straightforward narratives, making them worthwhile material to be read by ELLs of appropriate levels. Specifically, these picture books may be aimed at ELLs at the CEFR levels A1/A2/A2+, with such levels being described, respectively, as being able to "respond to simple statements . . . on very familiar topics," engage in brief social exchanges, and, lastly, "give short, basic descriptions of events and activities" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 173). Alternatively, we may categorize Say's work as being suitable for productive beginner ELLs.

In *Teaching Beginner ELLs Using Picture Books: Tellability*, Ana Lado (2012, p. 42) describes the category of picture books for these ELLs as those that "[contain] no more than 500 words total, with up to 100 new words to be taught." Additionally, this category is aimed at ELLs who "can add and combine ideas from book-based activities into longer sentences and discourse," but these ELLs still "need extra time to respond when they transfer visual information to verbal and oral to written" (Lado, 2012, p. 42). That said, the level of English proficiency noted here is not necessarily about the age of the learner. Rather, it refers to the skill level itself, as even adult ELLs, such those from refugee backgrounds, may be beginner ELLs (Playsted, 2019).

When looking at *Grandfather's Journey*, we can see passages that potentially introduce new words for beginner ELLs. For example, when describing his grandfather's travel to America, Say (1993, p. 5) writes, "He wore European clothes for the first time and began his journey on a steamship. The Pacific Ocean astonished him." Japanese ELLs at the productive beginner level would most likely need to be taught "steamship," "Pacific Ocean," and "astonished," but Say's accompanying illustration helps ELLs make the connection to the new vocabulary by showing the steamship, the surrounding ocean, and the character's facial expression.

Given that ELLs are assumed to be at around the productive beginner level for the above example, instructors (and students) may show concern with the amount of new vocabulary introduced in such a small passage. In other words, one may worry that ELLs will experience, as described by the affective filter hypothesis, anxiety and loss of self-confidence—thereby limiting the ability for ELLs to acquire the targeted language (Krashen, 1982). However, if we look further at *Grandfather's Journey*, we can see passages that should encourage ELLs of the appropriate level. Namely, in the opening of the book, which happens to be the passage preceding the introduction of "steamboat," "Pacific Ocean," and "astonishment," Say (1993, p. 4) writes, "My grandfather was a young man when he left his home in Japan and went to see the world." This passage would seemingly allow ELLs of the necessary level to have meaningful input while proceeding to the next page, which offers an appropriate increase in difficulty.

This process of vocabulary building begins to resemble the acquisition of language stressed in the input hypothesis, which, while focusing more on grammar in the following, Krashen (1981, p. 126)

describes as when "Children progress by understanding language that is a little beyond them. That is, if a child is at stage i, that child can progress to stage $i + 1$ along the 'natural sequence' . . . The child understands language containing structure that is a bit beyond him or her with the aid of context." As previously mentioned, the illustrations of Say could function as this contextual aid for ELLs.

However, instructors should be mindful that more challenging texts may increase the foreign language reading anxiety of ELLs, with less difficult texts potentially decreasing this anxiety while still improving their reading comprehension (Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017). Similarly, Yang et al. (2021, p. 95) argue that the comprehension of ELLs may benefit from reading at the stage $i - 1$, but also note that reading at the stage $i + 1$ "could enhance overall reading motivation and promote self-efficacy" for ELLs. Lastly, on the relation between the motivation of ELLs and challenging material, Hitoshi Mikami (2023, p. 42) states that an L2 learner's perception of success "in high-pressure and test situations tend to be more motivated about, comfortable with, and confident about L2 reading," which may further support the potential for $i + 1$ material to bolster the motivation of ELLs.

Class Activities to Utilize Say's Work

With the cultural and linguistic benefits Say's work understood, instructors might ask how they can introduce the material to a class of ELLs. What follows will be three activities for ELLs, briefly described, as applied to *Grandfather's Journey* or *Erika-San*. The three activities used here have been taken from Linda Hoyt's (2009) *Revisit, Reflect, Retell: Time-Tested Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension*. Specifically, there are the activities "partner read and think," "the character and me," and "student-created dictionaries."

Partner Read and Think

In this activity, students work together in pairs to recognize and define difficult or novel vocabulary words—allowing students to "engage at several levels of comprehension and [encourage] language use as partners navigate a selection" (Hoyt, 2009, p. 16). Instructors can first model the lesson by reading aloud some passages, stopping at difficult words, and attempting to infer the possible meaning of those words. For those interested in using recorded readings of Say's work by native English speakers, one can find read alouds readily and freely available on YouTube. After

modeling the activity alone, students are asked to get involved with the instructors' reading aloud to spot difficult words and discuss their potential meaning as a class. This sort of guided reading can be especially beneficial for ELLs, as these read alouds aim to "generate discussions to support comprehension and vocabulary" (Malo-Juvera, 2011, p. 175). Finally, students work in pairs to read aloud passages, spot their own challenging words, and attempt to define them together.

The Character and Me

Given the short length of the texts, students can have the opportunity to practice spotting and briefly articulating themes in English. Students may begin to spot similar themes throughout, for example, *Grandfather's Journey* and *Erika-San*. In each story, both protagonists find themselves in unfamiliar cultures and come to miss their respective homes while growing to appreciate a new culture.

For this activity, specifically, students observe the traits of fictional characters and relate it to themselves. This can be accomplished through the steps of *1*) students describing themselves, *2*) students describing the character, and, finally, *3*) comparing and contrasting themselves to the main character. As Hoyt (2009, p. 42) notes, "A Venn diagram works well for this activity." Instructors should consider making worksheets with a Venn diagram in place, or students may draw it themselves. Importantly for ELLs, it allows them to practice connecting ideas in English.

Related to image association and language learning, Hoyt (2009, p. 42) suggests that "students find it especially appealing if you have photocopies or digital pictures of the reader and the character and make them available to paste onto the page." With this additional material provided by instructors, such as printed out pictures of the characters, students can enhance the visual connection between the characters and their noted traits. Here it is important to recognize such picture books as "complex multimodal texts" where "Meaning is created when modes interplay with each other" (Sherif, 2022, p. 85), with Say's illustrations and text providing such interplay. That is, beyond "language and talk," learning may also take place when students engage with "symbolic representations such as pictures, diagrams or drawings" (Filliettaz et al., 2013, p. 156). The disparity is further expressed by Gunther Kress (2000, p. 339), as he raises the distinction between images and writing with the former being "spatial and

Student-Created Dictionaries

Similar to the "partner read and think," students focus on English vocabulary in this activity. The difference between this activity and "partner read and think," however, is that students choose and systematize words as opposed to analyzing words directly from the text. The criterion here is that students must select words related to a chosen topic that comes from the text. For example, if the topic is "travel," students can write down any previously taught words that fit this category, thereby creating a "travel dictionary." This could include previously learned words such as "car" and the newly learned word "steamboat" from the text. Whether written by students or created as a worksheet, the topic (for example, "travel") will be placed at the top of the sheet, while two columns run alongside each other. One column would be for the relevant words and the other for the definition. Students would be tasked to write the definition of each word, with either assistance from a partner or bilingual dictionary. By the end of this activity, students should have an alphabetically arranged list of these words with their definitions beside them.

While this activity shows promise, I would add an accommodation to it for beginner ELLs. Specifically, I think it would be appropriate for students to write the definition in their L1, as "Dictionary construction requires . . . use of academic vocabulary" (Hoyt, 2009, p. 179) and, so, some words may prove too difficult to define in the L2. Yet, regardless of the definition itself is written in the L1 or L2, this activity will "provide powerful content review while helping students understand the structure of a dictionary" (Hoyt, 2009, p. 179).

Conclusion

While only a small representation of Allen Say's overall body of work, both *Grandfather's Journey* and *Erika-San* provide ELLs the means to engage with questions of exchanges between Japan and America as well as intercultural exchange broadly. Additionally, the work of Say may be appropriately challenging for ELLs by building a connection between English passages and pictures as well as not being too intimidating to ELLs due to its use of images and language aimed at young native English speakers. Of course, the benefits of Say's work for ELLs would be better understood after observing their use in a classroom. However, this paper has aimed to show ways in which Say's work could be used in such setting.

For ideas on how to apply Say's work in a class, a few sample activities were given that may encourage ELLs to build on their English proficiency while simultaneously engaging in themes of cultural exchange. For the latter, ELLs can observe this through Say's characters as they deal with the interaction between American culture and Japanese culture. From this, the work of Say has value for ELLs in intercultural instruction as well as language learning. Instructors should, then, consider introducing it to those students with the appropriate level of English proficiency or an interest in cultural exchanges, especially between America and Japan.

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Conference Report

Growth Mindset in Education: JALT2023 Conference Report

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The 49th annual JALT Conference was held in Tsukuba, Japan from November 24-27, 2023, providing an opportunity for educators to reflect on their past experiences and gain new information for the future. This year's conference theme, *Growth Mindset in Language Education* took inspiration from Carol Dweck's (e.g. Dweck, 2006) intelligence theory which defines a fixed mindset of belonging to learners that believe their abilities are inherently limited and that educational mediation is futile. Conversely, growth mindsets are characterized by learners who believe in their capacity for development. Though these mindsets are individualistic and learner-centric, presenters at the conference shared classroom observations of diverging mindsets and approaches for educators to encourage confidence in growth. For example, talks on AI and ChatGPT were well-attended by those looking for solutions to restrain use or positively integrate it into the educational process. Its perpetuation of a fixed mindset or potential toward growth is still in debate.

The breadth of presentations connected to literature in language teaching responded to the conference theme in many ways, though the emergent theme of multimodal learning was prevalent. Multimodal literacy encompasses 'multiple modalities' in both learning styles and the resources used to develop them. Multimodal approaches are being integrated into classrooms to "expand students' range of communicative options through existing or new genres and help them to speak to new audiences" (Hyland, 2022, p. 73). These pedagogies were showcased with the LiLT SIG's featured speaker, Shannon Sauro, who detailed the use of digital spaces for language learners to explore their interests and create fanfiction for online communities, and the introduction of picture books into EYL classrooms that encourages young learners to engage in the visual creativity process while developing a range of communicative competencies.

Literature in Language Teaching SIG Forum

The theme of the 2023 LiLT SIG forum, *Collaboration with Literature* drew attention to collaborative and experiential activities in the language classroom. Conducted in-person at the conference site, four presenters summarized their projects in 15-minute talks, which were followed by an interactive question and answer session with the audience. The first two presentations centered on the use of picturebooks, with Martin Sedaghat discussing post-reading projects for young learners and Alison Hasegawa sharing insights from her research on picturebooks. During the second half of the forum, the presenters focused on activities and key takeaways from students' discussions in the university classroom. Mary Hillis explored the use of Instapoetry (Instagram poetry) to engage learners, and Luke Draper's students analyzed a Japanese short story in English translation through the lens of gender. The variety of text types and student populations covered in the forum presentations exemplifies the diverse potential of literature for language learning. The forum was co-chaired by Bethany Lacy and Jennifer Igawa, who both presented as part of the 2022 SIG forum..

Martin Sedaghat: Post-Reading Projects for Picturebooks

The types of activities that educators use in the classroom is a vital deciding factor when creating literature-based classes. These activities must foster engagement in the medium and optimize learning opportunities. Sedaghat spoke from the perspective of a young learner teacher who uses picturebooks as the main text and discussed effective post-reading activities. Sedaghat defines the benefits of post-reading activities as means of checking comprehension, gaining a deeper and personalized understanding of the narrative and developing creativity and social skills. Sedaghat provided examples of post-reading activities that facilitate this development. The first was 'retelling a story,' which Sedaghat illustrated through the picturebook *The Hare and the Tortoise*. His learners deconstruct the story into small scenes, draw the scenes and collaboratively reconstruct the story. This develops logical thinking, recall and synthesizing skills as well as social mediation. Using scenes from *This Is How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from Around the World* by Matt Lamothe as a model of illustrating the daily routines of children around the world, Sedaghat's learners create their own picturebooks, drawing pictures of their school and home-life as well as their likes and dislikes. *Ketchup on your Cornflakes* by Nick Sharratt also models humorous and imaginative ways of creating food-themed picture books with unusual ingredients. Another activity is 'making predictions', in which Sedaghat stops learners from reading the final page of a story and asks learners to imagine the scene with drawings. Activities that encourage learners to reimagine abstract or decontextualized elements of picture books through their own creations also develop textual understanding and personalization skills while building knowledge of other topics (STEM, social sciences, globalization, etc.). Creating their own texts based on model picture books allows young learners to examine the texts' central themes while exploring their own interpretations and visualizations of them, developing agency and creativity simultaneously.

Alison Hasegawa: The Power of Picturebooks

While there are various definitions of picturebooks, one key feature is the interplay of textual and visual elements. Hasegawa advocated an interactive approach to the utilization of picturebooks, citing Bland who was the LiLT Featured Speaker in 2019: "During booktalk the picturebook reveals its story and the students create

an understanding of its secrets gradually, layer by layer (2023, page 76). Indeed, Hasegawa's recent research project conducted from 2020 to 2023 with students aged 6-11 years old, demonstrated this process of gradually building understanding. The study involved the use of the picture book *The Suitcase* by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros, which focuses on the general theme of diversity and inclusion, particularly in welcoming others. In this book, a stranger arrives with a suitcase and the other characters speculate about what is inside. Critical and creative thinking activities were incorporated throughout pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading activities. One post-reading activity involved students watching a video about a Ukrainian student attending a Japanese elementary school, which prompted students to discuss how they would react if a new student from another country started to attend their school. In another post-reading activity, the children created artwork with new dialogue for the characters. Data collection included audio recordings, student artwork, and questionnaire results. Excerpts from student discussions and examples of their art were shared, highlighting the educational potential of the picturebook to explore concepts such as making friends, learning from mistakes, and embracing diversity. More book recommendations can be found online through the hashtag #weneeddiversebooks.

Mary Hillis: Engaging Language Learners through Instapoetry

Hillis's presentation centered on the use of Instapoetry to engage learners in the language classroom. The word "Instapoetry" is a fusion of Instagram and poetry, and it is characterized by its interactive nature, allowing users to like, comment, share, and remix content. Rupi Kaur, who is one of the most famous Instapoets, not only publishes poems online but also has three published poetry collections. She often writes about the themes of migration, womanhood, and relationships. The presenter shared four poems by Kaur, illustrating how they could be integrated with nonfiction articles covering a range of topics: body image, social media, advertising, beauty canons, and mental health. Students participated in collaborative activities, reading and discussing the poems in small groups before writing comments for selected poems. Their discussions initially revolved around reading comprehension before shifting to an exploration of their emotional reactions. It was observed that the use of Instapoetry can contribute to social-emotional learning (SEL): the emotional learning competency of self-awareness was addressed as students

identified and articulated emotions, while relationship skills were fostered through collaborative group discussions. Instapoetry may appeal to Generation Z learners through the integration of language learning, digital literacy, group work, and emotional exploration.

Luke Draper: The Lonesome Bodybuilder: Exploring Gender through Literature in the EFL Classroom

Draper's talk explored the use of short Japanese prose in translation to prompt ESL learners in a Japanese university to analyze their fiction and thus their culture and society and to articulate their interpretations in English. Draper first justified the use of Japanese literature as a valuable tool for language study by drawing on text-world theory, an area that studies the way meaning is constructed through the mental formation of 'text-worlds' during the reading process (Gavins & Lahey, 2018). These mental images are formed through the relationship of the story's words and the readers' narrative schemata: their stored memories, life experiences and real-world knowledge. When a reader's schema aligns closely to the context of the story, this may engage the reader and expedite the reading process of more challenging texts. Draper's talk focused on the classroom introduction of the short story "The Lonesome Bodybuilder", written by Yukiko Motoya and translated by Asa Yoneda. The narrative is told in the first person by a Japanese housewife who takes up bodybuilding as a hobby. A key objective when designing the course was to ensure that 'authentic' reading experiences are provided over 'manufactured' ones. Giovanelli and Mason (2015) describe authentic readings as borne out of independent response and interpretation, while manufactured reading is created through an imposition of meaning from instructor onto the learner. Thus, the course stimulates the learner to explain their own responses and interpretations in their L2. Draper detailed written and spoken assessment within the course that prompted interpretation and gave examples of verbal responses that corresponded to the overall theme of concepts of femaleness and femininity in Japanese society, yet also demonstrated individual perspectives of the actions and characterizations within the narrative. Draper concluded that allowing learners to draw their own authentic responses to the literature alongside lexicogrammatical instruction facilitates determination to voice their interpretations which leads to authority over their cultural property.

Featured Speaker

The featured speaker was by Shannon Sauro, expert in online fan practices and language learning, and member of the FanTALES project (Fanfiction for the Teaching and Application of Languages through E-Stories). She joined virtually from the United States; at the conference site, attendees gathered in person to watch her presentation, and online, virtual participants joined the session on Zoom via the conference participant portal.

Getting Started with Fanfiction in the Classroom

In her workshop, Sauro introduced the concept of a "fan" by drawing on Duffet's definition: "A fan is a person with a relatively deep positive emotional conviction about someone or something famous ..." (Duffet, 2013, p. 18), and she emphasized that fans exist across various domains such as music, sports, manga, movies, dramas, and books. She highlighted diverse fan practices, which include not only reading and writing fanfiction, but also consuming media, moderating online communities, building websites, and creating fan translations. Some students engage in these activities outside of class in the digital wilds, defined as "digital spaces, communities, and networks [where language learning occurs] that are independent of formal instructional contexts" (Sauro & Zourou, 2019, p. 1). Involvement in these fan communities can contribute to students' language development.

During the interactive portion of the workshop, participants took part in a fanfiction challenge, collaboratively writing a story based on a set of prompts within a 20-minute time period. Prompts were given in four areas: source text, lines of dialogue, settings, and objects, with a minimum of four choices in each category. For example, for the source text, the fairy tales *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, the *Little Mermaid*, and *Frozen* were listed. Choices of an empty library, late at night, Howl's castle, or a mountain village were given for setting; and a purple pen, mobile phone charger, translation software, half-eaten onigiri, a bottle of water, or the Catbus for objects. Sauro encouraged participants to bring in aspects of their own fandoms as well—one group creatively worked in references to JALT and JACET in their story! After completing the Challenge Lit activity, groups shared their stories and debriefed experiences, mentioning that writing together fostered creativity, collaboration, and comradery. Sauro added that another benefit of working in small groups is that

learners can overcome hesitancy they might have toward creative writing.

In addition to Challenge Lit, there are other genres of fanfiction. Two examples are Fix-it Fic (fixing plot holes or changing story events) or Fusion Fic (writing stories which combine two fandoms). Fans also write prequels or sequels, write stories from alternate points of view, or change identity characteristics of the characters (e.g., gender, sexuality). Therefore, fanfiction affords language teachers and students a rich array of options for exploring stories. Sauro's workshop provided practical insights, engaging activities, and valuable resources to introduce teachers to the use of fanfiction in the language classroom.

For more information, the FanTALES website (https://www.fantales.eu/) has additional resources, including lesson plans and a teaching handbook, providing guidance for educators interested in incorporating fanfiction into the curriculum. In addition, Sauro was interviewed in advance of the conference by Robert Taferner for the JALT YouTube channel, and the video "JALT2023 Featured Speaker Interview of Shannon Sauro" can be accessed at https://youtu.be/IHpqZboJwBA?si=sHnzvOW86gL V42CB

Fanfiction from the Digital Wilds to the Language Classroom

After the workshop, Sauro continued the theme of fanfiction by identifying 'the digital wilds' as a space for learners to explore their specific area of fandom. Sauro defines online fandom as "the local and international networks of fans that develop around a particular program, text or other media product" (Sauro, 2014, p. 239) and 'digital wilds' as online communities that are independent of the classroom. By participating in these communities, learners read the fanfiction of other enthusiasts and create their own, thus engaging in the target language in a creative and personally fulfilling way. Sauro draws on case studies from Black (2006) and Lepännen et al (2009) that describes the experiences of ESL learners developing linguistic competence through their participation in online fan spaces, and another study (Korobkova & Black, 2014) that details the growth in language learner's written skills through active engagement in a One Direction fanfiction community. In each of the works drawn upon, it was clear that the learners' language skills developed alongside their sense of identity and belonging to the group. Sauro then discussed the implications of introducing fanfiction to

the language classroom through her own research, in particular a six-year long project that explored in-class collaborative fanfiction writing at a Swedish university and the positive impact the theme had on learner engagement and language proficiency. Findings of interest are reflections from a learner who recognized the expansion of his vocabulary away from common, everyday lexis and another who identified the need to adapt his written language to match the fiction's period, thus demonstrating developed pragmatic ability. Away from a higher education setting, Sauro detailed a project in a Belgian upper secondary school based on the action-adventure video game *Assassins Creed*, in which students demonstrated keen attention to their language use to suit the genre to master the challenge of being creative with a limited vocabulary. The talk concluded with final observations that with the introduction of fanfiction in the classroom, learners gain cultural authority by drawing on their personal fandoms and manipulating their other language to best represent their fictionalizations. These practices shift to online communities, or digital wilds, where language learners continue to socialize and create fanfiction in their L2.

Presentations of Interest

Using Picturebooks in University CLIL Environments by LiLT Forum Chair Bethany Lacy
Bethany Lacy served as the chair of the 2023 LiLT SIG Forum, and her poster presentation showcased practical suggestions for integrating picture books into university content and language integrated learning (CLIL) classes, with examples for units on literature, economics, health, sociology, and zoology. Providing accessible yet authentic materials on commonly studied topics, picture books also develop students' visual literacy, which can be achieved by encouraging them to analyze the pictures before reading the accompanying text. Suggested picture books included *In Search of the Little Prince: The Story of Antoine de Saint Exupery*, written and illustrated by Bimba Ladmann. As part of a literature module, this book could be used to explore factors that influence an author's writing. *Lights On! Glow-in-the-Dark Deep Ocean Creatures*, written by Donna B. McKinney and illustrated by Daniella Ferretti, features bioluminescent creatures and can be used as part of a zoology unit in order to introduce information about animals and give students practice discussing and describing them. For each of the recommended books, vocabulary lists, pre-reading tasks, post-reading research topics, and

connection questions were included to foster further engagement and exploration of the topics. Lacy was recognized as a JALT2023 Conference Poster Presentation Winner, and the poster is currently available at the JALT website (https://jalt.org/system/files/JALT2023_Poster_Lacy.pdf)

Exploring Queer Literacies through an Online Book Club by Chelanna White

White described distinguishing characteristics of the queer book club as "diversifying understanding of classic literature; experiencing perspectives from different, intersecting identities; challenging assumptions about our own and others' experiences; and potentially engendering advocacy and activism". Participant responses to the researcher's questions showed that the book club facilitated their understanding through active discussion, negotiation of meaning, and exploration of the text. Furthermore, all respondents affirmed the book club's contribution to their personal growth. "Educators have the capacity to disorient the social space of their classrooms, making visible queer objects and encouraging students to engage with them in particular ways in order to redress exclusionary and repressive discourses" (Potter 2022, p. 101). Promoted as a social issues English book club, the weekly sessions were held during lunchtime through the university's self-access learning center. One book the group read was *FernGully* by Diana Young. It is about deforestation and was aligned with participants' request for an environmentally themed reading selection; in addition, the story can be enjoyed in both book and animated film formats. The presentation concluded with recommendations for educators interested in starting similar book clubs at their own educational institutions.

Enhancing EFL Learners' Language Proficiency with Literature by Yiu-nam Leung

Yiu-nam Leung's presentation, sponsored by ETA-ROC, showcased the use of the epistolary novel *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker in an EFL context. The presenter highlighted the short length of letters in the book which make the reading experience manageable for language learners. Various active learning techniques, for instance note taking, group discussions, and presentations related to the novel,

were explored. Students were encouraged to discuss overarching themes related to race, sexuality, and injustice; in addition, students analyzed the significance of the title,

plot development, and the use of colors and other symbols throughout the book. By inviting guest speakers, showing the movie, and conducting internet research, the students' understanding and appreciation of the novel was deepened further. While the presenter acknowledged the difficulties of using literature in the classroom, its effectiveness to cultivate language development and foster an engaging learning environment was emphasized.

Writing a Series of Graded Readers in a University Classroom by Mark Brierly

Mark Brierly discussed the integration of creative writing into a compulsory university English course. He emphasized the benefits of creative writing, pointing out that the fundamental writing process of planning, writing, revising, and proofreading applies to both creative and academic writing. Other advantages of creative writing include stimulating the imagination, increasing student writing output, and producing enjoyable reading materials. The collaborative process for developing the series was discussed. After brainstorming ideas, the list is narrowed down, and then as a class, students vote to decide the overall theme of the series. Then students contribute stories to the series. Brierly shared examples of successful series titles, such as "Japan Travel 2021", "Avocado Man 2022", and "What if there is no … 2023", each providing learners with many choices within a structured framework. The importance of not only including essential story elements (orientation, conflict, resolution), but also crafting effective titles, taglines, characters, and settings were underscored. The presentation offered insight into an innovative approach to teaching writing skills while fostering creativity and learner autonomy in the language classroom.

Teaching EFL Students How to Analyze Short Stories by Camilo Villanueva

Villanueva looks to Foucault's (2015, p.48) conceptualization of literature, "a language, a text made of words, but words that are so appropriately and carefully chosen and arranged that something ineffable passes through them" to illustrate both the challenges and values that literature in the language classroom may offer. His research focuses on the various ways his third and fourth year university students analyze fiction in his elective creative writing class toward a more holistic literary understanding over traditional grammar-translation methods of teaching with literature.

Examples of short fiction Villanueva uses in his classes are "The Egg" by Andy Weir, "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant and "The Chicken" by Clarice Lispector and each story had a specific learning goal in analysing elements of fiction, such as depiction of dialogue, thought and action and characterization. Evaluative feedback of his classes reveal that students mostly feel that positive in regard to the value of literary analysis, that it has helped them develop their literary analysis skills and has helped them in the writing of their own fiction. Villanueva's presenting of both his teaching methods and research findings suggests that literary analysis techniques and their application through creative writing is an underutilized area of study for English learners in Japan which may offer an engaging practice of language production.

Haiku Reading as Meaningful Literacy Practice by Atsushi Iida PhD

The relationship between the stylistic choices of poetry and reader interpretation is an area of research that may inform educators on reading comprehension based on the text's linguistic features. The field advocates for empirical data that analyzes textual form and applies this to a rationale of interpretation. Thus, findings in this area are valuable for all teachers who use literature in considering the impact of style on reader response. Iida's research focuses on haiku, the form of poetry that follows a 5-7-5 syllable line structure and applies imagery in reference to seasons. Iida recognises haiku as a popular style that is taught around the world as a form with strict boundaries that facilitates the development of voice in both its practitioners and readers. His research focuses on the reading process and reader interpretation of English-language haiku by Japanese learners. More information on his research can be found at his website https://atsushi-iida.com/

Reflections on the Conference (Hillis)

During the pandemic period, language teaching associations around the world shifted to online professional development activities, and although there were some drawbacks, benefits of the modality also emerged. Kormpas and Coombe (2023) write that advantages included "… diversity of audiences, inclusion of underrepresented populations of both teachers and students, and the occasion to expand the professional development repertoire of the association" (p. 66). In May 2023, the United Nations declared an end to the COVID-19 global health emergency (UN, 2023)

and Japan's official border restrictions also came to an end ("Japan," 2023). Similar to the JALT 2022 conference, a virtual element remained in the JALT 2023 Conference: presenters and attendees could choose to attend in person or online, which meant that the conference was open to more domestic and international participation. As previously mentioned, this year's LiLT SIG Featured Speaker Shannon Sauro presented live online from the United States, and a selection of concurrent presentations were also available in online or hybrid formats.

Many of the presentations of interest in this conference report dealt with pedagogical interventions conducted within teaching and learning environments during the pandemic period. Moreover, the results of research conducted on emergency remote teaching and subsequent face-to-face classes with measures designed to prevent the spread of infection (e.g., mask wearing, social distancing) were presented. These could further be seen in presentation titles throughout the program, such as "Teacher and Student Perceptions of Online Language Learning" by Ferg Hann and "Navigating Psychological Impacts of Masks in the Classroom" a poster by Lauren Landsberry and Ann Flanagan.

The year of 2023 was also marked by the growth of generative artificial intelligence (AI), with Collins Dictionary choosing "AI" as its word of the year (Guy, 2023). The use of ChatGPT and Midjourney, for example, has become a hot topic in many fields, including education and publishing. In addition to LiLT member Cameron Smith's presentation "Creativity and Artificial Intelligence: Supporting Students", technology was the subject of focus in the CALL SIG Forum "AI and ChatGPT in Education: Prospects and Threats", and in Louise Ohashi and Antonie Alm's presentation "ChatGPT: An Initial Response From Language Teachers in Japan". Language education in Japan continues to change and develop along with societal and technological influences.

Reflections on the Conference (Draper)

For another year, literature as a tool for language education was well-represented at the JALT2023 conference. A range of textual mediums and innovative pedagogies were displayed and an overall sense of positivity and gratefulness to be sharing ideas and experiences together after years of mostly online participation was manifest. The diversity of texts and academic backgrounds was also striking. Featured speaker Shannon Sauro spoke about fan fiction and

digital spaces from the perspective of her Swedish university students, an area of rich opportunity for English learners in Japan who embrace the full reach of global and domestic media cultures. Young learners were widely represented, and it was heartening to watch such diverse talks on the effective use of picture books in EYL that stimulates not only language acquisition but higher-order thinking such as analysis, problem-solving and creativity. Areas of ELT research that may be somewhat neglected in Japan are beginning to emerge, such as creative writing (Mark Brierly; Camilo Villanueva) and stylistic analysis of poetry (Atsushi Iida).

Innovation in the face of adversity seemed an ancillary theme of this year's conference. As Hillis discussed in her reflection, many of the talks arose from experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent prevalence of AI use has posed a challenge to many educators. With constant advances in the technology, there seems to be few solutions for halting student usage. I am reminded of the sci-fi magazine *Clarkesworld* that paused short fiction submissions due to a sudden surge of similarly plotted, AI-generated stories. It may be easy to condemn these authors, though it was revealed that many authors submit from poorer countries where payment for publication may greatly assist in living costs. Similarly, while some learners may abuse ChatGPT due to its existence, others may utilize it for legitimate reasons, such as disengagement with the assignment and overall lack of motivation. Each talk presented innovative approaches to language education through multiple modes of literature that may dissuade learners from seeking shortcuts and engaging with the learning process towards a positive growth mindset.

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Textbooks

Formulating a Postgraduate Textbook on Translating Modern Japanese Literature

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Abstract

My book *Translating Modern Japanese Literature* (Donovan, 2019) remains the first postgraduate textbook focused on Translation Studies (TS) issues related to this specific field of literature. It consists of four short literary works from the Taishō era (1912–1926), my English translations, and detailed commentary on major TS and literary issues arising. In this paper I summarise the content of the work, highlighting my pedagogical methodologies, which focus on a process-based approach to translation that is informed by literary and TS theories. I also briefly introduce the upcoming sequel to the book, which will take a slightly different approach in terms of featured literary works and methodology.

Key words: modern Japanese literature, Japanese–English translation, Translation Studies, literary theory

In 2018 I decided to write a textbook that would simultaneously address my pedagogical, scholarly and publishing objectives. My overall approach was to choose four short works by major Japanese authors that had not yet been published in English versions, translate them, and then write a commentary on the literary and Translation Studies (TS) issues arising from the translation process.

I used the online literary repository Aozora Bunkō (aozora.gr.jp) to access four out-of-copyright literary works never before published in English: an essay about Kyoto by Natsume Sōseki entitled "Kyō ni tsukeru yūbe" and short stories by Miyazawa Kenji ("Tani"), Yokomitsu Riichi ("Akai kimono") and Tokuda Shūhei ("Aojiroi tsuki").

From the outset, although my book was to be a TS textbook, I was determined to give equal weight to aesthetic and analytical considerations: I wanted it to focus on literature as much as Translation Studies. Thus I divided the works by theme, with "Tani" and "Akai kimono" embodying the theme of childhood, and "Kyō ni tsukeru yūbe" and "Aojiroi tsuki" exemplifying place. Then in each chapter devoted to an individual work, I focused on two specific literary and TS issues.

The discussion of these issues was an opportunity to introduce some of the literary and TS theory that underpins academic discourse, but this was always used to serve my text-grounded analyses, both of the source text (ST) or original Japanese text and the target text (TT), my English translation. I realised of course that analysing one's own translations is an inherently subjective exercise, but believe that by being as systematic as possible with my analysis I uncovered patterns in my translation strategies that could serve in the modelling of approaches for upcoming translators as well as in providing examples of the application of theory to translation process.

A further element promoting objectivity and TS insight appeared in the chapter on Sōseki's piece through a comparison with another translation. Associate Professor Sarah Frederick of Boston University kindly let me quote excerpts from her unpublished version (2015), allowing me to make direct comparisons with my own.

Having briefly overviewed the background to this coursebook, I shall now outline the parts of the book and how I believe each contributes to my pedagogical and scholarly objectives. My hope is that this description will be of interest to those instructors using either

Japanese literature, translated texts, or both in their classes. Overall I tried in this book to offer a structured yet flexible approach to the material, following the same general methodology in each chapter but leaving it up to the individual instructor as to how deeply to pursue the minutiae of a given topic with students.

The Introduction to *Translating Modern Japanese Literature*

I began by explaining how this book fulfils the need for an extensive examination of stylistic issues in Japanese-to-English literary translation and provides an introduction to the linguistic and cultural characteristics of modern (i.e., pre-contemporary) Japanese literature. There is inherent utility in reconciling the roles of translator and academic, which often seem to be at odds. As TS expert Susan Bassnett (2002) notes regarding Translation Studies, "[t]o divorce the theory from the practice, to set the scholar against the practitioner as has happened in other disciplines, would be tragic indeed" (p. 16).

In the Introduction I acknowledged the significance to the field of such preceding works as Yōko Hasegawa's (2012) *The Routledge Course in Japanese Translation*, which at the time was the only coursebook specifically dealing with Japanese–English translation issues. (Since then, Judy Wakabayashi's (2021) *Japanese–English Translation* (Routledge) has been published.) Next I outlined the selection criteria for the book, with which those using literature in the classroom will be intimately familiar: namely "level of difficulty, length, subject matter, author, and the prevalence of literary devices" (Donovan, 2019, p. x; subsequent references to this work are mostly indicated by a page number alone).

Addressing the vexed topic of style, I used David Crystal's (1987) definition—"the (conscious or unconscious) selection of a set of linguistic features from all the possibilities in a language" (p. 66)—to allow for the insight that part of what a literary translator does when responding to the style of the ST author is as much unconsciously as consciously enacted, and that therefore by examining how one has translated one may become aware of one's stylistic tendencies and what effects they have on the TT. It is important to have such a discussion with students of literary translation early on, as it influences the entire translation process.

I ended the introduction with two suggested approaches to translating the texts. Students may undertake their own translation upon reading the introduction to each author and work that precedes the

ST before comparing it with my translation and then reading my commentary on the two literary/TS issues highlighted in the commentary. Alternatively, they may spend some time reading parts of my commentary or even my translation itself to familiarise themselves with the salient issues before embarking on their own translation, as this may facilitate the translating process and make their translation choices (and hence overall TT style) more purposive.

I noted in conclusion that the methodology of the commentary proceeds in the same way in each chapter: first I analysed germane elements of the ST and then corresponding TT elements. I would often try to provide alternative translation choices, sometimes explaining why I chose one particular option over another. In this way I hoped to sharpen students' analytical skills by encouraging them to provide a rationale for their own translatorial choices, with iterations of such a process hopefully leading to better decision-making.

Chapter 1: Miyazawa Kenji, "Tani"

Kenji (as he is conventionally known in literary circles, like Sōseki) was a writer famous for his innovative use of sound-symbolic language, also known as mimetics. Japanese is particularly rich in such expressions, though in Japanese they are usually adverbial, which tends to foreground them in a locution, while English mimetics are usually embedded in verbs and hence often less obvious. Given Kenji's association with mimetics, it was logical to focus on their manifestations in the ST and how they could be conveyed in the TT. In the commentary I began by identifying seven mimetic structures that Kenji employs in "Tani" as well as the four emphatic, marked forms that are particular to his writing (p. 25). Next I identified four major approaches I deploy in the TT: "(a) a mimetic, (b) a mimetic plus explanation, (c) an idiom, and (d) a non-mimetic paraphrase" (p. 25). This is followed by a comprehensive enumeration of the 13 variations of these four basic techniques that I identified in my translation. For each variation, "I first discuss the context of each ST mimetic …, where appropriate quoting definitions from the comprehensive *Dictionary of Iconic Expressions in Japanese* [H. Kakehi, I. Tamori, & L. Schourup, 1996]…. Next I consider how I rendered each mimetic in the TT…. I sometimes provide potential alternative translations" (pp. 25–26). I was at pains to note here—as elsewhere in the book—that "my translation choices in no way preclude other potentially

valid translations" (p. 26): while I want students to find utility in emulating my approaches, they should not view my choices as the 'best' or 'only' ones in a given situation, as I wish to encourage their translatorial autonomy through enhancing their ability to justify the decisions they make.

Some readers may find excessive the detail I went into in identifying so many potential translation approaches, but as I indicated above there is no need for the student or educator to pursue every one of them. I think it is better to err on the side of more examples than fewer when modelling translation decision-making. In that vein, at the end of the chapter I provided a list of all the ST mimetics I identified, which numbers 40 entries. Since not all of them are covered in the foregoing analysis, they offer another potential avenue of study, as one of the further topics for discussion mentions.

As the end of the section on mimetics summarised, "I have employed three main techniques to address the expressive qualities of Japanese mimetics: (1) similar mimetic verbs and nouns to replace the original adverbials; (2) idioms that paraphrase the emotional or physical impression of the ST mimetic; and (3) partial or total lexical repetitions that echo the formal (structural) element of the ST mimetic" (pp. 34–35). Such a summary represents a useful overall guiding principle for students to keep in mind when they encounter mimetic expressions in a ST and consider how to render them.

In introducing the second topic, voice, I quoted the editors of Kenji's collected works regarding how the story contains the contending voices of adults and children, its adult narrator looking back on his childhood and the mysterious eponymous valley. My conclusion regarding the relevant translation stylistics was that we "should thus be able to observe diction in the story, both lexical and structural, that reflects the childish and adult perspectives and discourse, and be aware of these choices when we come to translate, so as to mark much the same shifts and maintain a corresponding tone" (p. 35).

To underline this point I brought in some literary theory with Cobley's (2001) reference to Bakhtin's idea of the heteroglossic narrative wherein he suggested a struggle between the voices of narrator and characters for dominance, which is indeed relevant to this story, as at times it seems as if the adult narrator is possessed by his childhood self in reminiscing about his time in the wilds of Iwate Prefecture at the turn of the 20th century, surely a reflection of Kenji's own upbringing.

However, having introduced some narrative theory, I then immediately grounded the discussion again by characterising the features that I identified in the ST narrative and characters' discourse, distinguishing between perceived adult and childlike lexical and structural features and providing lists of their manifestations in the ST. This was followed by a corresponding analysis of TT techniques: adult narration markers in terms of lexical and structural elements, followed by child narration markers; and then adult and child characters' speech markers respectively. A particular feature of this section was the use of tables containing three columns of text consisting of the ST Japanese; a so-called 'direct' translation (my term for a ST-orientated translation that is as close to the ST as English grammar and lexis allows); and my TT. These tables allowed the reader to see at a glance how many transformations have taken place in my rendering of a literary translation of the original. They were followed by my analyses of the texts and explanation of my rationale for the choices I have made.

I summarised that "the vast majority of the 'literariness' that the TT has gained over the direct translation comes from syntactic changes; the lexis itself, while not childish, is standard register. There are definitely parts of the TT where high-register language … is being used along with literary structures. But at the same time there are numerous cases where I combine a sophisticated structure with childish lexis" (p. 43). Again, such summaries can provide useful stylistic cues for students; equally, they can help the instructor provide related guidance. I shall continue below to provide examples from the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Yokomitsu Riichi, "Akai kimono"
I noted in the chapter introduction that this 1925 story is strikingly modernist in its attempts at psychological realism, as well in how, while largely from the point of view of the well-meaning but ill-fated boy Kyū, it fleetingly portrays multiple character perspectives in a so-called 'perspectivist' fashion. Such literary contextualisation is a way of cueing the student to see commonalities and mutual influences among examples of world literature, something that can be helpful as a way into literary translation itself.

The first issue, parallelism, concerns the so-called 'deviant' use of language whereby marked structures establish thematic comparisons. The first example in the ST that I cited is a quoted folksong, its patterns of repetition in the form of assonance and rhythm, which

in the TT are rendered as the more formal poetic devices of rhyme and meter. Second there are prosodic repetitions, such as verbatim repetition of character utterances, and certain verbs that appear multiple times. There are also motifs such as insects and rain, and, most tellingly, as an avatar of indifferent fate, the re-appearance at the end of the story of the same lamplighter who began it, as if nothing in the world has changed despite the tragic events at the hot-spring inn where Kyū lived. I made the point that it is vital to retain as much of the repetition inherent in the ST as possible while being sensitive to the fact that English is less tolerant of verbatim repetition than Japanese is.

The second issue is figurative language, and on reflection it is evident that it was not treated with the same depth other issues were. This is partly due to my considering this section as a primer on figurative language before the in-depth treatment that occurs in Chapter 3. Instructor and students may thus find it perfunctory compared with the other sections; but on the other hand, its relative brevity may provide a moment of relief for those overwhelmed by the pedantic nature of the enumerations in Chapter 1.

After a brief introduction to metaphor as a general concept in both Japanese and English literature, I provided tables listing the examples of similes, metaphors and personification in the ST alongside how they are translated in the TT and noting any differences in approach. Drawing on Saussure's terms, my general comment on the differences between the languages was that "Japanese appears to prefer to make the connection between signifier and signified more explicit, which is why simile (with its linking particle *yō na (ni)* 'like, as') is used more. English's preference for metaphors has implications for literary translation: … sometimes a metaphor will replace a simile, and perhaps even a mimetic expression" (pp. 82–83). I furthermore suggested that the instances of personification in the ST manifest the deep empathy for all living things that contributes to Kyū's downfall. As with Chapter 1, the chapter concluded with a list of topics for further discussion, including a question about how to handle the different points of view that briefly appear in the story.

Chapter 3: Natsume Sōseki, "Kyō ni tsukeru yūbe"
As this is the most challenging piece in the book, I devoted some time to contextualising it in terms of Sōseki's literary philosophy, which was grounded in a deep understanding of literary theory and presumably tempered by his own accomplishments as a literary

translator. Here is how I characterised the complex nature of the piece:

> The present essay is in equal parts descriptive of a physical, historical place, Kyoto, and of the mind of the one observing it, namely Sōseki himself. The two modes meet in a number of remarkable sentences that are at once descriptions, extended metaphors, and explorations of mental phantasms: I refer to them collectively as 'hybrid literal–figurative passages'. As Sōseki and his hosts rush ever further north across the city, Sōseki and his thoughts rush onwards across the psychological terrain of memory and conjecture, a palimpsest of his summer visit many years before with his friend Shiki, of his current early-spring visit without him, and of all the cultural and literary associations of Kyoto he has accrued over a lifetime. (p. 92)

I paraphrased Professor Frederick's explanation of how Sōseki "uses physical objects both as representations of received notions of a place—the *zenzai* soup that he equates with Kyoto itself—and conduits into the abstract yet inextricably personal realm of his thoughts and feelings" (p. 93). As I noted in conclusion, the "peculiar challenge of the translator … is to do justice to these streams of consciousness that alternate … between the concrete and the imagined, cultural commonality and the excruciatingly personal" (p. 93).

It was a real challenge to decide how to present examples of such hybrid passages. In the end I decided to provide a sample of representative passages in order of appearance, "characterising their main feature(s) in the sub-heading, juxtaposing my and Professor Frederick's translations, and occasionally relating Frederick's comments on the translation and translating process" (p. 110). This was followed by overall conclusions about how we handled such hybrid devices.

Of the 12 passages I singled out for analysis, I spent quite a lot of time on the first, which consists of the opening two sentences of the ST and is fundamental to establishing Sōseki's stylistic *modus operandi* in this piece. First I provided a table that presents the ST and two TTs as three horizontal bands of text, allowing for relatively easy comparison. Next I listed the six figurative elements present in the ST and characterised them. I suggested that the passage not only sets the scene in concrete terms, it also establishes its tone through zoomorphism, personification and even perhaps pathetic fallacy ("the attribution of human-like emotions or intentions to an

inanimate object" (p. 113), in this case the hulking train that 'shakes Sōseki off' in Kyoto before continuing on its way. Then I compared the TTs both with the ST and with each other. I invoked Berman's (1985/2000) concept of 'ennoblement' in translation, wherein attempts to 'improve' upon the ST result in 'deformation' of the ST: "Both of us … have enhanced the 'literariness' by increasing sonic parallelism" (p. 115): we both add alliteration, while I also add consonance and Frederick assonance, where they are absent in the ST. The exercise of questioning exactly which expressions were figurative and which literal raised interesting points about the labile nature of language in general.

The second issue of the chapter, Culturally Specific Items or CSIs, introduced a perennial TS concern: how to render culturally bound elements when they have no direct equivalent in the target language. I combined this issue with my own classification of the TT strategies that can be employed to deal with CSIs. In my PhD thesis (Donovan, 2012) I boiled such strategies down to four key terms—retention, modification, addition and omission—characterising such strategies as either 'foreignising' (retaining aspects of the 'foreign' language/culture in the target text) or 'domesticating' (converting ST elements into more 'palatable' or familiar elements in the TT).

An explanation of the strategies was followed by a large table listing all the CSIs I located in the ST (which totalled 72 items), a direct translation, the TT translations and a characterisation of the translation strategies employed in each translation. An analysis of representative examples of these CSIs followed. I finished the section with a summative analysis of TT strategies, contrasting Frederick's and my approaches.

Indeed, in comparing and contrasting two translations in this chapter, I modelled the salutary activity of peer production comparison that I often use in my own courses.

Chapter 4: Tokuda Shūsei, "Aojiroi tsuki"

This story of a narrator bemused by intergenerational differences and the rapid modernisation in Kantō that perhaps embodied them makes it read as the most 'modern' piece in some ways, something reflected in its style: "the story's multiple thematic strands, temporal jumps, geographical references and tonal shifts are deliberately confusing" (p. 164). I suggested that the translator should thus work to retain such a sense of confusion—yet certain differences in Japanese and English literary conventions may

confuse excessively, highlighting the issue of textual cohesion. The second issue, double negatives, is another manifestation of the evasive and jumbled mental state of the narrator.

In introducing textual cohesion, I began with Halliday and Hasan's (1976) seminal research, which distinguished lexical and grammatical cohesive devices, where lexical cohesion is enabled through reiteration and collocation, while grammatical cohesion consists of the elements reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. I provided my own examples of lexical and grammatical cohesion in English and Japanese and then demonstrated how cohesive devices work across two paragraphs of the ST and the corresponding three paragraphs in the TT, showing differences in the two languages' approaches. For example, "I was surprised how closely the configuration of lexical elements fit the expectation of elegant variation in English writing [whereby verbatim repetition is often avoided]: there is not one significant verbatim repetition among the lexical cohesive elements" (p. 209).

I provided 14 additional comparisons of ST/TT paragraphs. In terms of structural cohesion, I demonstrated that, as Hinds (1987) suggested, a 'reader-responsibility' language like English has stronger expectations of temporal, spatial and logical consistency than Japanese does, necessitating reordering of information and the addition of linking utterances so as to make the narrative flow more acceptable to English readers.

The final issue, double negatives, particularly concerns the rhetorical device of litotes, or understatement in a negative form, such as *sō iu kyōmi wa nai koto wa nai* "it wasn't as if I had no interest in these things" (p. 228). I noted that in this story, "it appears Tokuda is using double negatives to add to the portrait of a man in a confused state: he finds it difficult to make a definitive statement about anything" (p. 227). I compared ST and TT features across nine example passages, ultimately concluding that I used eight different techniques to render the effects and meanings of the double-negative constructions in English, "suggesting that I am instinctively avoiding using the straight grammatically negative structures of the ST and instead making frequent use of semantic negative forms and expressions of limited degree to convey the mixed feelings in the ST" (p. 233).

I ended the book with brief Concluding Remarks, challenging student translators to use my model

translations and commentary to enlarge their repertory of techniques in translating Japanese literature.

I would like to conclude my remarks here with a comment on how my follow-up coursebook project differs from the original. The overall approach remains much the same: I have again chosen four short out-of-copyright works to translate and shall then discuss two literary and/or TS issues in relation to each. However, all the authors this time are female, ranging in age from mid-teens to adult, and some pieces were written in the mid-1940s, depicting the severe environment of Japan at the time. I also introduce a more inclusive method of analysis, beginning discussion of each ST with a report on the sociolinguistic and literary features of the text before narrowing the analysis down to two highlighted issues. The pedagogical purpose of this is to encourage students to view each text as something that can be analysed as a literary entity in its own right, with translation being one possible response to that entity.

I have also widened the range of text types presented, this time featuring a young teenager's diary, an older teenager's essays, and two short stories. Furthermore, three out of the four works are presented in their original archaic orthography, with a preceding primer on how to read them. My hope is that the slight changes in approach mean that the new book will complement the original, offering a fresh entry point into the translation of modern Japanese literature.

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