Can’t I Speak Japanese? The Use of Students’ L1 as a Cognitive Tool for Collaborative Writing Tasks in a Japanese EFL Context

Brian Steven Berning
Hamline University, bberning01@hamline.edu

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CAN’T I SPEAK JAPANESE? THE USE OF STUDENTS’ L1 AS A COGNITIVE TOOL FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING TASKS IN A JAPANESE EFL CONTEXT

by

Brian Berning

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

May, 2016

Primary Advisor: Suzanne McCurdy
Secondary Advisor: Hywel Evans
Peer Reviewer: Chris Magor
DEDICATION

To the student who asked why and inspired an answer.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

On the first day of freshman English conversation class at a public university in Japan, a student asks - in a slightly different way every year - the question I dread, “Do we have to speak English?” What makes this question even more stinging is the fact these students are declared English literature majors with the option of entering English teacher training in the third year of study. Many of the students claim to want to study abroad, teach English professionally, or work with foreign people. With these claims of wanting to learn English and use it professionally, the question of why some students show a lack of desire to speak in an English program needed to be addressed.

The idea that some students who had entered a university to study English would need pressure to speak English made me think about the reasons why students would ask the question, “Do we need to speak English?” As a teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this is an important issue. When I communicated my dilemma to my colleagues, the issue of students being willing or unable to use English in class seemed to be a common occurrence. This is rationalized in McMillan and Rivers (2011, p. 256) where some English teachers described students as “lazy.” While this might go too far, it does show a gap in the understanding of why students might feel reluctant to use English in class. Eventually, some of my colleagues would share their ideas on classroom
management and how to best get students to use English only. I considered that the idea of English only policy could be a contributing factor for my students’ anxiety and with that realization I began to question whether the English only policy was pedagogically sound in this context. At this point I decided to look for answers to the question if my students could or even should be using English only.

**English Only**

Although some teachers and institutions treat the English only policy as a monolithic concept or a steadfast rule, when put in practice it is often applied in a more flexible manner. If taken literally, English only means to immerse students in the language of instruction, maximizing the time students spend communicating through the language in class (Hawkins, 2015; Jeon, 2008). Compared to bilingual education where code switching and a respect for the place of each language is maintained, English only emphasizes the need to fully immerse oneself in the language as if one were living in the target country; this is known as the strong version of English only and is also referred to as the virtual position (Cook, 2001; Hawkins, 2015; Jeon, 2008; Macaro, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2013). This position has often been employed in English as a second language (ESL) environments where, in many cases, students do not share a common L1 (Auerbach, 1993). When a virtual position is applied to an EFL setting where students share a common L1, a common educational background, and a common culture, it can be a constant struggle to keep students from using their L1. Levine (2003) goes as far as claiming that it is futile to deny the use of the students’ L1 in a foreign language class. Phillipson (1997) calls this monolingual teaching strategy a form of “linguistic imperialism” that ignores the local context and sees the students’ L1 as something to be
avoided at all costs. When applied to the EFL classes my colleagues and I teach, which occur in Japan, where the students are native Japanese speakers with little exposure to communicative English, and who are surrounded by a community of Japanese speakers, the virtual approach becomes highly problematic and - more importantly - unauthentic.

Taking into consideration how English only is interpreted by many colleagues, institutions, and the Japanese Ministry of Education Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), it could be said that a weaker version of English only is adopted in the Japanese context. This involves the teacher primarily using English throughout the lesson and creating an environment where English is the common language of discourse without fully excluding the students’ L1 (Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Jeon, 2008; MEXT, 2004). This weak version is described as either a maximal or an optimal position.

The maximal position refers to the belief that the students’ L1 can be used in the classroom but only as a stop-gap measure for something that has no pedagogical value and which is only used when absolutely necessary (Turnbull, 2001). This could be disciplinarian in nature, gaining control of the class, or administrative in nature. The maximal position, in which L1 usage is seen as negative, is how English only is interpreted by some institutions and many of my colleagues (McMillan and Rivers, 2011). Edstrom (2007) mentions that when implementing the maximal position, the use of the L1, even for positive pedagogical concerns, can lead to a feeling of guilt or laziness on the part of the teacher. This is a position repeated in Duff and Polio (1990) who lay out nine methods for maximizing the use of the L2 with only three methods that allow for the use of the L1 for brief periods (or only when necessary). Rather than promote the
judicious use of the L1, the maximal approach goes to great lengths to promote L2 use with only reluctant concessions to the students’ L1.

In contrast, the optimal position sees the L1 as a positive tool that does not interfere with learning that holds pedagogical value, which can be an aid to learners (Cook, 2001; Hawkins, 2015; Macaro, 2001; Maher 2015). The optimal position does not call for the primacy of the L1 in the L2 classroom, rather it calls for the judicious use of the L1 when it is needed to aid in understanding. The optimal position allows teachers and students to access the L1 without relying on punitive measures or detrimental avoidance. Allowing students to access their L1 is seen as a way to allow students to use cognitive abilities that might not yet be accessible when using the L2 (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986). If students are allowed to use this cognitive tool when negotiating meaning in group collaborative tasks it could lead to better learning outcomes in the target L2 (Swain & Lapkin, 2013). By focusing on the positive applications of the students’ L1 teachers can more easily leave the maximal position (Auerbach, 1993). In addition, allowing the judicious use of the students’ L1 reduces the perception of what Phillipson (1997, P 238) calls “linguistic imperialism,” which could possibly antagonize students who might not see value in acquiring the L2.

**Sociocultural Theory**

Allowing the use of student language and the idea that it could improve learning outcomes is in line with sociocultural theory. The general theory is that human learning takes place in and is greatly enhanced through social interactions. The idea of using cultural artifacts to mediate learning, which was pioneered by Vygotsky in the early 20th century, is applicable to this day. It is hoped the use of the L1 will allow students to
socially interact, learning cooperatively and negotiating ideas better than if they were to use the L2 alone (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986). In addition to the benefit to language learning, allowing the use of the L1 also affirms that the students’ language has worth and that it is not something that should be a taboo in the EFL context.

**Students’ English Educational Background**

Although the students in this study are first year university students, they are not new to the English language. English education has taken on great importance in Japan, so much so that in 2002 MEXT introduced English education to elementary schools (Butler, 2004; Hawkins, 2015; MEXT, 2014; Tahira, 2012). This expanded the already established English education system, which started from Junior High School, in the seventh year of mandatory education. By 2009, MEXT raised the requirements by stating high schools should, in principle, use English as the medium of English education (Hawkins, 2015). This means that students entering university-level English courses have had six years of mandatory English classes. In addition to mandatory English classes, English conversation schools, also known as *Eikaiwa* schools, study abroad programs, and *Juku* (cram schools) offer opportunities for learning English (Takanashi, 2004). These educational opportunities establish a basis for MEXT’s claim that English only classrooms are viable.

**Japanese EFL Students**

When a student asks a question such as, “Do we have to speak English?” it leads to the idea that students cannot use English or at a minimum are unwilling to speak. With six years of mandatory English education, the idea that some students think they are
unable to use English is a negative conclusion that may work to the detriment of everyone involved, both teaching professionals and students. In fact, students do have some ability to use English: the levels vary greatly with some students having little difficulty, while others struggle to complete basic tasks. What leads students to believe they are not up to the task of using English in a university environment? In the seventh year of their EFL education, has something changed to bring upon this condition, or does this occur because the use of English in the EFL context does not fit with the students’ conception of the cultural context regarding when and how to use English (Takanashi, 2004).

One answer seems simple: students are now at university, which means everything is different and harder in comparison to their previous educational experiences. This is not entirely true. Although the classes might be more difficult, the biggest difference for many is who is teaching. Most public high school English classes are taught by Japanese teachers of English (JTE) with limited assistance from native English speakers (Butler, 2004; Hawkins, 2015). The opposite is true at university, where many of the English conversation classes are taught by native or near native speakers, whose ability to use the students’ L1 varies (Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001; Harbord, 1982; Kang, 2012; McMillan & Rivers, 2011). Students who could previously use and interact with their L1 (Japanese) have this highly developed skill taken away from them in the English only classroom. The students’ L1, which Vygotsky (1986) describes as a cognitive tool, helps to mediate interactions between the L2 and L1, and when teachers insist on English only or are unable to assist students in their L1, some students might not
have the language ability to fully comprehend the course work (Butler, 2004; Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986).

**EFL Context**

Compounding the lack of L1 in the classroom is the fact that these classes are in a non-English speaking country at a rural university. In this environment, many students will almost never encounter situations where they will need or even have the chance to use spoken English. According to Chen, Warden, and Chang (2005) in addition to the lack of opportunities to use English, a majority of students have no intention of leaving Japan for an English speaking environment. Simply creating an interest in English outside of academic life can be a challenge. English language media are at a disadvantage as well. While available, they have to compete with a thriving Japanese entertainment industry, as well as Japanese language versions of English media. The time spent learning in the classroom does not come close to what is needed to fulfill the ideal of immersion and comprehensible input to provide the rationale for English only methodology (Butzkamm, 2011; Krashen, 1982; Macaro, 2001).

Teachers in an all Japanese environment are left feeling that they must maximize the use of English during precious classroom time. Recognizing this issue, Edstrom (2007) calls for the use of English to be maximized in class. Calman and Daniel (1998) go so far as to make recommendations regarding language use percentages in each class, suggesting that use of the L1 and L2 should account for 5% and 95%, respectively, of the language used in class. Yet with only twenty-eight ninety-minute classes in a school year, the time that students can be immersed in English is limited. The time amounts to forty-five hours per year, for a total of ninety hours of instruction over two years in mandatory
English conversation classes. This falls short of what would be considered an appropriate amount of time for comprehensible immersive input (Macaro, 2001). As well as the total class time, the time that a teacher can assess and offer input to the students is limited given class sizes that range from 20 to 30 students. On top of all this, if the teacher must take valuable time to enforce English only rules, students might be missing out on valuable input.

**Guiding Question**

These insights led me to a general idea. Could students be better served if they could use their L1 in certain situations, which would not detract from the English language target of a lesson? With this idea in mind, I am researching the effects of L1 use as a cognitive tool for collaborative writing tasks. By doing this, I hope to discover whether students who are allowed to use their L1 when collaborating on a task achieve different L2 results than students who must rely on English only to collaborate. Will students who cannot fully use their L1 cognitive abilities be stifled during collaboration, or will students who are allowed to fully use their cognitive abilities perform differently from students who are only allowed to use their L2? This may provide a better answer to the question: by allowing the use of L2 with L1 support, can I help my students and colleagues’ students to better learn and produce L2 output when they are engaged in collaborative tasks?

**Summary**

In this chapter, I have introduced the challenges of implementing student language and English in the classroom, and brought attention to the significance of this
problem. Chapter Two will look at the ongoing debate on L1 use in the classroom.
Chapter Three will lay out the study in detail. Chapter Four will present and analyze the
data gathered from the research. Chapter Five examines how the data relates to the
literature, how it could better shape the way teachers approach student language in the
classroom, where the study was limited in its ability to greater generalize the findings, a
plan for dissemination of the findings, and possible directions for future study.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Hawkins (2015) suggests that the rejection of L1 is not always rational. While MEXT, which dictates educational guidelines, does not call for outright English only in the classroom – unlike South Korean and Taiwanese educational organizations which mandate it – it does encourage its use in principle (Butler, 2004; Tahira, 2012). This recommendation to use English only is just that, a recommendation, not a requirement. Thus, the grammatical knowledge that is necessary to pass competitive high school and university entrance exams is still primarily taught in the L1 by JTEs, and English conversation classes are partially taught in English with assistant language teachers (ALTs) providing English only support (Butler, 2004; Hawkins, 2105; MEXT, 2014; Stephens, 2006; Tahira, 2012; Takanashi, 2004). If English only is to be accepted, in principle, by teachers and learners it should be adapted to the social cultural setting of Japan, where the L1 and L2 can both aid in language acquisition and do not have to be considered mutually exclusive.

Classroom Language from the Teacher’s Perspective

When McMillan and Rivers (2011) asked Japanese university English lecturers whether their preferred classroom language was L2 with L1 support or English only, their
answers were mixed. This question was posed at a university with an English only policy, yet the teachers were divided on the use of L1 in the classroom (McMillian & Rivers, 2011). In fact, EFL pedagogy in Japan is divided on how or if the students’ L1 should be used in the classroom (Butzkamm, 2011; Cook, 2001; Edstrom, 2007; Hawkins, 2015; Jeon, 2008; Kang, 2012, Weschler, 1997). The proponents of Krashen’s input hypotheses of comprehensible input in an immersive setting have tended historically to encourage faith in an idealized situation, where the L2 should be all that is required for second language acquisition. This has perhaps influenced how MEXT feels about the use of English only in principle as the best way to educate students (Butzkamm, 2011; Tahira, 2012).

L1 Use by Teachers

With the push to use English only, the use of L1 by the teacher should not be overlooked as a useful tool. Teacher L1 use falls into three broad categories suggested by Harbord (1992): teacher-student communication, teacher-student rapport building, and supporting learning. These categories were further refined by Edstrom (2006), Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) as task management giving instructions, task clarifications checking for understanding, grammar instruction, describing cultural difference and rapport building through conversing casually with students. A study by Carson and Kashihara (2012) found a need for L1 support in beginner-level classes as well as a link between L1 use in collaborative work and the promotion of L2 output. It would appear that taking away the use of the L1 to create an English only environment only serves to remove a tool that can be of use, especially with low-level students (Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001 Harbord, 1992; Lee & Macaro, 2013; McMillan & Rivers, 2011).
Native English Speaking Teachers

This push for English only might be based on factors other than just pedagogical concerns. A greater reason behind this English only policy in English education might stem from the teachers themselves. Japan, unlike its neighbors South Korea and Taiwan, has a large population of native speaker teachers in elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools (Butler, 2004; Robertson, 2015; Tahira, 2012; Takanashi, 2004). These ALTs typically come from the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program, which was founded in 1987, or they are directly hired by local boards of education, or are dispatched by private dispatch companies (Butler, 2004; Hawkins, 2015; Tahira 2012). Harbord (1992) points out that many of these teachers, while native speakers of English, have varying levels of Japanese ability, and that many have few or no teaching qualifications. Butzkamm (2011) goes as far as to say that many do not have the ability to use the students’ L1 in the classroom. This could mean that the native speaker is a true beginner in the students’ L1, lacks social language skills, or does not have the appropriate pedagogical language needed in the classroom. By necessity, classes led by these teachers would probably have to be English only or near to it. This carries over into the universities as well, where teachers with educational qualifications and experience are sought after but in most cases Japanese ability is not a stated requirement (McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

Non-Native English Teachers

In the compulsory and secondary educational system, ALTs function as assistants to the native Japanese teachers. With MEXT’s language reforms, there are increasing calls for dedicated JTEs (Butler, 2004; MEXT, 2014; Robertson, 2015; Tahira, 2012).
Most schools do not have dedicated JTEs; instead elementary schools rely on English lessons from their homeroom teachers (Tahira, 2012). These teachers receive up to 30 hours of training, which many feel is inadequate (Butler, 2004; Tahira, 2012). This is echoed in South Korea where teachers who were asked to use English only have reported that they feel unprepared for the task (Butler, 2004; Jeon, 2008). Students are expected to learn in English by using English, but receive instruction from teachers who have reported that they do not feeling qualified for the task (Butler, 2004; Jeon, 2008; Kang, 2012). Many of these teachers fall back on their L1 to teach grammar-translation exercises, or lecture style lessons that allow for planning on what language to use but which results in the less spontaneous production of contextual English from the lecturer (Butler, 2004; Hawkins, 2015; Jeon, 2008; Stephens, 2006; Tahira, 2012). By the time students reach high school the demands of standardized university testing favor the teaching of grammar primarily in the L1 (Hawkins, 2015; Tahira, 2012; Takanashi, 2004). In 2006, to encourage a greater variety of language usage in classes, the National Center for University Entrance Examination (NCUEE) added listening to its National Center Test, which is a step towards recognizing the value of oral communication, but which still does not address the students’ ability to communicate in oral English (Tahira, 2012).

**Does English Only Instruction Really Mean English Only?**

The idea that, in principle, instruction should be in English only is gaining ground in Japan. Because of this, teachers need to balance these new pedagogical demands with their L2 ability and their students’ ability (Butler, 2004; Hawkins, 2015). This does not mean teachers have to follow a virtual English only policy, which for many would be
untenable (Butler, 2004; Robertson, 2015). A number of studies have found that, even in schools with an English only policy, it is not the case that classes only use the L2 (Butler, 2004; Kang, 2012; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Sercombe, Raschka, & Chi-Ling, 2009). The L2 ability of the students and the attitude of the teachers towards L1 use are factors in the amount and the type of L1 used in the classroom (Inbar-Lourie, 2010; Sercombe et al., 2009). Yet, even with an English only policy, Sercombe et al., (2009) came to the conclusion that English only is “virtually impossible” in the EFL setting, where students or students and teacher share the same language. If this is true then teachers should use the L1 as a pedagogically sound tool, rather than resist this virtual impossibility.

**Communicative Language Teaching and L1**

Along with the call for English to be used as the primary language in the English classroom, MEXT seeks to use the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach (Abe, 2013; MEXT, 2014; Tahira, 2012). The CLT approach can be characterized as follows: classroom activities with a communicative intention, the use of authentic materials or tasks, and the need to negotiate meaning in the L2 (Lochland, 2013). This approach, which seeks to displace the teacher-centric grammar intense courses that are seen in some high schools, is not without its challenges (Bax, 2003; Lochland, 2013; McMillan & Rivers, 2011, Takanashi, 2004). Nunan (1991) proposed that CLT emphasizes learning through communication in the target language, yet fails to mention a role for the use of the L1. Cook (2001) mentions that the L1 has been regarded as a necessary evil to be minimized, not a tool that can be used advantageously in CLT classrooms. Yet Lochland (2013) makes an important point that in order for CLT to work, students need to have sufficient linguistic resources to allow them to complete a
communicative task. If students do not have a sufficiently developed L2 ability, their L1 may help to fill this gap. This has created an unfortunate situation where in many communicative approach classrooms taught by native English speaking teachers at the university level the students’ L1 has been left out, ignored, or used only in non-pedagogical situations (Lochland, 2013; McMillian & Rivers, 2011). The root causes for this could include institutional policy, a teacher’s lack of L1 skill, or a lack of understanding of the students’ educational needs (McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Weschler, 1997). In short the judicious use of the student language can be an important tool in CLT, and teachers and institutions should focus on how to optimally use the L1 (Atkinson, 1987; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Butzkamm, 2011; Cook, 2001; de La Colina & Mayo, 2009; Ferguson, 2009; Harbord, 1992; Hawkins, 2015; Sampson, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 2013). This need for the L1 therefore precludes the English only approach, and favors a position in which teachers and students are allowed to, when needed, judiciously access the student L1 in the form of code switching (Hawkins, 2015; Sampson, 2012).

**L1 Misuse**

There are a few caveats to add. While allowing that the positive use of L1 is important, it should be noted that overdependence can become an issue. This is especially important if EFL students lack proper motivation to use and acquire the L2 (Atkinson, 1987; Cook, 2001; Harbord, 1992; Kang, 2012). Students take university English classes for various reasons. These include a genuine interest in the language, future aspirations that involve the use of English or, for many students (including non-English majors) because it is a requirement for graduation (Stephens, 2006). Atkinson (1987) gives
several examples of the misuse of the L1 in the classroom including students’ failure to understand the importance of using English only during communicative activities, failing to realize pragmatic differences when translating and students slipping into the L1 when addressing the teacher, even if they are familiar with procedural English for classroom use.

Knowing that the L1 can be abused and the situations in which it might become problematic allows teachers to be better prepared to mitigate these issues. By being better prepared, by taking time to familiarize students with basic procedural L2 for the classroom, and by clarifying the reasoning why students need to use L2 in certain situations, we can work towards reducing L1 misuse. Yet, even if it can be misused, the L1 remains a valid cognitive tool that has a place in the EFL classroom (Auerbach, 1993). Even though the L1 can be considered to have a negative impact on second language acquisition in certain situations, when judiciously applied by the teacher and student it can be a valuable cognitive collaborative tool and thus should not be withheld from the language learner.

**L1 as a Cognitive Tool**

By the time Japanese university students reach their first class they have had at least 12 years of formal Japanese education. This means their ability to think, and reason in Japanese has been developed to a great degree. The ability to use this highly developed skill to think in their L1 should not be wasted.
Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory is based on Vygotsky’s idea of the mediated mind (1986). This refers to the idea that humans use tools, including symbols, concepts, art, and in this case language, to interact with the world. These tools are not innate but are passed down from generation to generation and are modified over the years to suit the needs of each generation. Language is an example of a tool that is passed down through social interactions and which changes from generation to generation. Examples of sociocultural learning include a teacher imparting knowledge to a student, children learning from parents, or a student accessing an online dictionary. Common interactions within one’s society, in one’s culture, are a part of the cognitive development of a person and language. Anton and DiCamilla (1998) noted that higher cognitive development originates in social interactions between individuals with dissimilar knowledge. If one is to include cultural artifacts such as literature, music, and mathematics these cultural artifacts can support learners over generations. Thus, the classroom is a place for students to work together to help build their language knowledge, since sociocultural theory is based on the idea that social interactions involving individuals or cultural artifacts can impart cognitive development (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; de La Colina & Mayo, 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003, Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986).

Semiotic Mediation

Vygotsky is able to justify sociocultural theory with the idea that the language we speak is the language of the mind (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986). Semiotic mediation refers to language as a tool of the mind, it coordinates our actions and the actions of others; it is a tool that mediates our intentions with the world at large (Anton and
DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks and Donato, 1994; Cook, 2001; Hawkins, 2015; Lantolf, 2000). Brooks and Donato (1994) specifically call speaking a cognitive activity that is inherently linked with thinking. A person’s language is thought of as a cognitive tool that is not only used to mediate our interactions with the outside world but which is also used to think. When an EFL university student is limited to the use of the L2 they will naturally be limited in what they can think and the complexity of the ideas that they can express in comparison to their more developed L1 (Atkinson, 1987; Harbord, 1992). When teachers allow L1 use, students can work more effectively in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) at a higher cognitive level by using their L1 to express their ideas and may negotiate meaning more fully than if they were only able to communicate in the L2 (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Cook, 2001; de la Colina & Mayo, 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). It must be noted that taking away the ability to think in the L1 is not only impossible, but impractical in an EFL context (Macaro, 2001). Cook (2001) noted that unlike the ideal English only classroom where the L2 is the only option, the L1 and the L2 are invariably mixed in the mind of the learners.

**Zone of Proximal Development**

In a classroom, when students work together or with teachers in what is referred to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), they are able to share their knowledge and internalize what is learned from abler persons (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998, Lantolf, 2000). This ZPD is not a physical place but can be understood as involving a cooperative activity where two of more people of varying levels of knowledge interact and share ideas (Swain & Lapkin, 2013). In a ZPD, participants help each other to construct a common perception of a task, thus establishing a scaffold that allows participants to learn
and accomplish more than they would be able to by themselves (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998). Contact with others in the ZPD who have greater, yet assessable knowledge, drives cognitive development (Swain & Lapkin, 2013; Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986). Working in groups allows students to share and learn from each other assuming that their communication is not stifled by the lack of L2 ability in an English only classroom. When all group members can share their knowledge, they can support each other and negotiate meanings that are far more advanced than they would have been able to achieve alone.

**Cognitive Tools**

Brooks and Donato (1994) advanced several ways students use their L1 in the ZPD based on the premise that student language is a powerful tool that can be put to positive pedagogical use in collaborative tasks. Metatalk, also known as private speech, is the language of our thoughts expressed aloud. When working collaboratively, metatalk allows the members of our cooperative groups to understand our thought process (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; de la Colina & Mayo, 2009). Private speech, if fully developed, in an individual becomes what Vygotsky calls inner speech (Lantolf, 2000). When students work in groups, private speech in both the L1 and L2 may provide the context for one’s perception of whether what they are doing is correct or incorrect. Private speech may reflect brainstorming or thinking aloud about a task, it is the speech that is used to start and sustain the work at hand, and should not be exclusively monolingual in EFL classrooms (Brooks & Donato, 1994).

Scaffolding, a further tool that includes the idea of orientation talk and goal formation, is when students negotiate how a task should be carried out, and how they
should focus on a problem (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Hawkins, 2015; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Anton and DiCamilla (1998) describe scaffolding as using the L1 to regulate what cannot be done in the L2, so that the L2 can be used for what is accessible to the student’s level. It is the language of action, of how things will get done. Scaffolding creates a support system whereby students can build upon each other’s knowledge. This has also been referred to as collaborative problem solving (Lantolf, 2000 p 48). The L1 of the student is a necessary cognitive tool – the inner speech that should not be neglected. Brooks and Donato (1994) opined that language learning is a cognitive activity and that taking away the students’ most powerful cognitive tool weakens this activity.

**The Current State of L1 and L2 Use in EFL Classrooms**

The use of the L1 in the classroom has not been overlooked in the current literature. While official bodies call for English instruction, the general momentum of EFL pedagogy would appear to be moving towards integrating the L1 judiciously into the L2 classroom. The focus of current research covers several important areas, including student language use in EFL classrooms.

**Teacher Talk**

Studies by several authors have provided well-considered rationales for how and why teachers should use the L1 in the foreign language classroom (Atkinson, 1987; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Cook, 2001; Duff & Polio; 1990; Ferguson, 2009; Harbord, 1992). A common theme is to monitor the use of teacher language (Duff & Polio, 1990; Edstrom, 2007; Inbar-Lourie, 2010; Turnbull, 2001). Polio and Duff (1990) found that L2
use in the classroom ranged from 10-90\%, depending on the teacher. They went on to give suggestions on how to maximize the use of the L2, and to minimize the use of the L1, to the point of relying on gestures (Duff & Polio, 1990 p.163). The American Council on The teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (AAPPL, 2016) went as far as recommending 90\% L2 use in the foreign language classroom. These examples only focus on maximizing the use of the L2 and do not express a positive role for the L1 in the classroom. However, this does not exclude the pedagogical validity of the L1 as a learning tool. Turnbull (2001) suggests that the term “maximize L2” is not clear enough and that studies need to be performed in order to understand the optimal amount of L1 and L2 use in the classroom. Macaro (2001) assessed this idea with a study on student teachers and the amount and type of language that they used in class. He found that teachers used the L1 for a small part of the time, mainly for procedural instructions and classroom control, but that when they did use L1 it did not increase the production of the L1 from their students. In addition, no link was found between the L2 achievement level of the class and the amount that the teacher used their L1. Edstrom (2007) carried out action research on her own class to investigate her use of the L2 and L1 during a lesson. She found that the amount of L1 that she used in comparison to L2 fluctuated greatly depending on the task and context of the lesson, with a peak of 30\% and a trough of 6\% (Edstrom, 2007). She came to the conclusion that, depending on the class and the lesson, setting a universal percentage of how much L2 should be used may ignore the local context and pedagogical uses of the L1. Duff and Polio (1990) first suggested the ideal situation is an L2 only policy in which students and teachers must exclusively use the L2. However, the authors go on to point out that allowing students to use their L1 when
necessary would reduce anxiety, misunderstandings, and encourage participation, especially among low-level students. In the end Duff and Polio (1990) pointed out that department guidelines have an important effect on how teachers use the L1/L2 in the classroom. These studies have emphasized how teachers should approach language usage. However, few studies have been carried out to inform teachers on how they should approach student language use as a cognitive tool in collaborative efforts in the EFL environment.

**Student Talk**

There has been a great deal of study on how students use their L1 as a tool (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; de la Colina & Mayo, 2009; Sampson, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). The primary focus of the past work has been the function that the L1 serves when students collaborate.

In an ESL classroom, Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) used a graphic prompt for a written task, which measured both the functions of the students’ L1 and their attitudes towards the language that was used in the task. The findings of the study showed that students were reluctant to use their L1 to collaborate in class but used it as inner speech, composing their answers in L1 then verbalizing their thoughts in the L2. Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) concluded that when students could collaborate freely, and were not bound to the use of their L2 alone, they could take control of a task verbally by orientating themselves to the language and the task. This would then create an authentic learning experience where students would take ownership of a task.
A study by Brooks and Donato (1994) used Spanish learners and analyzed how they used L1 and L2 in a cloze activity. The authors found that the L1 aided in learning by working as a “critical psychological tool” (Brooks & Donato, 1994 p 337). By using the L1 students were able to scaffold the task, creating a shared perspective of the task. Adult Spanish learners were also the subject of Anton and DiCamilla’s (1998) study of a collaborative writing task. This study took place in a language laboratory where the subjects were recorded and the functions of speech used in their L1 were then analyzed (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998). The students reported that the L1 enabled them to discuss the task in greater depth and to gain a greater understanding of the task, than they would be able to achieve with the L2 alone.

Spanish EFL students were used in similar studies measuring the functions of student L1 speech (de La Colina & Mayo, 2009; Sampson, 2012). Sampson’s (2012) differed from the others in that it did not use a collaborative task and instead measured the functions of student speech as they took part in a teacher-led class. This led Sampson (2012, p. 302) to the suggestion that banning the L1 would be detrimental to the amount of learning in the classroom and that thought needed to be put into whether L1 use should be encouraged and the point at which the use of L2 learning strategies should be promoted. Auerbach (1993) confirms this with the idea that the use of the L1 allows for higher cognitive processes, which allows for a more complete understanding of the task at hand.

The studies of Anton and DiCamilla (1998), Brooks and Donato (1994), de la Colina and Mayo (2009), Storch and Wigglesworth (2003), which investigated collaborative student interactions, had similar conclusions. The results of all of the
studies suggested that the L1 provided support for creating a cognitive framework or scaffolding for the activity. Anton and DiCamilla (1998, p. 271) call the student’s L1 a “critical psychological tool” which allows students to create effective dialogue, which was needed to complete the language task. Brooks and Donato (1994) noted that the L1 was used to control the collaborative task, and that students used the L1 to control not only the task and language but also how they orientated themselves to the task. De la Colina and Mayo (2009, p. 343) found that the L1 “established fruitful interactions,” by creating a working environment in which members could agree on a shared goal. Storch and Wigglesworth (2003, p. 768) also found the L1 beneficial and added that only when learners understand a task can they successfully initiate a task. Although these studies show the positive functions the L1 takes on as a cognitive tool, little has been done to show its effects on the outcomes of collaborative tasks in comparison to classrooms following strict English only policies.

Is Student Language Effective?

Swain and Lapkin (2013) highlight the need for studies on outcomes when students use their L1 for collaboration. I therefore seek to address this gap by measuring the L2 output of Japanese university students working collaboratively on an L2 written task. With the previous body of research showing the positive implications of L1 use in collaborative situations, a look into how it affects L2 outcomes is warranted. Ferguson (2009) and Probyn (2009) add to the importance of this study by pointing to the demand from students, not just institutions, for English only, and that the same students who demanded English only did not always benefit from English only because of their lack of English proficiency. The completion of this study will create a better understanding of
The research to date has led to a better understanding of how students use their L1 in collaborative tasks; however, the literature has not yet addressed outcomes. As demonstrated in several studies, the functions of the student L1 has been the center of research (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks and Donato, 1994; de la Colina & Mayo, 2009; Sampson, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). These studies have led to a better understanding of why and how students use their L1 when working collaboratively. Butzkamm (2011) goes further by providing careful guidelines regarding how the student L1 should be used in the classroom. Kang (2012) takes a different track by showing that adopting an English only approach and avoiding the use of the L1 can hinder learning. Ferguson (2009) acknowledges the current research and calls for investigation into the effects of L1 use on outcomes, other than the functions of its use. It is this call for demonstrating the positive, neutral or negative effect on L2 outcomes that needs to be addressed. The use of L1 in the classroom has long been seen as a negative, and this needs to be confirmed or dismissed. The present study aims to fill this gap in knowledge by answering the question, how does the use of L1 as a cognitive tool, in comparison to L2 only, affect the output of students working collaboratively to produce L2 written output? To answer this question, the next chapter will describe the study, laying out the setting, as well as the methods, and the instruments that were needed to compete the study.
CHAPTER THREE
Methodology

This study is designed to learn more about how the use of students’ L1 affects the outcome of a collaborative task. When students work collaboratively on tasks, the language they use (L1, L2, or a combination of the two) might have an effect on the outcome of their written L2 output. In this study, I hope to discover if the L1, when used as a cognitive tool in collaboration, affects the L2 output in comparison to when the L2 is used alone. I propose to seek this information by answering this question.

1. How does the use of L1 as a cognitive tool affect the written L2 output of students working collaboratively in comparison to the exclusive use of L2 during collaboration?

To carry out this study I used two instruments to measure whether the language used during collaboration had an effect on the students’ final written L2 output. These two measurements consisted of audio recordings of the students collaborating and the final written production of a story sequence task, also known as a jigsaw task. Once taken, the data was used in a qualitative manner to evaluate whether classroom usage patterns of the L2 with the L1 or English only had a positive, neutral or negative effect on students’ final L2 written output.
Research Design

The research design for this study follows a qualitative approach to interpret the data from the instruments in a useful and descriptive manner. As described by Mackey and Gass (2005) qualitative research takes place in natural environments with few participants, such as a university classroom. This leads to the use of the case study format. Nunan (1992) describes a case study as the study of particular groups as well as the dynamics in a classroom. By using a case study of two Japanese university English academic writing classes I will be able to better observe how language is used when Japanese EFL students work collaboratively.

The cases of this study include two first year English academic writing classes at a Japanese university. The use of the qualitative method will help to answer my research question, which is driven by the need to better understand how to regulate the use of L1 and the target L2 in the classroom. While the present study does not completely follow all of the ideals of qualitative studies, which often involve observations over an extended period of time, the rich and descriptive nature and my direct interactions with the study subjects best suits the use of qualitative methods that are employed in case studies (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

I acted as the observer as well as the instructor administering the task for the study. All data were analyzed using qualitative methods. A statistical analysis, including the mean, standard deviation, and a two-tailed paired T-test for significant difference was performed to better understand the data. It should be noted that care should be taken in generalizing the findings as the small study population of 36 students might have affected the statistical significance of the results. The findings from this study will be used to
better understand how Japanese EFL teachers could regulate classroom language and how we could better manage the students’ collaborative language. It will also make me better informed when discussing this topic with colleagues and school staff.

Participants

The study participants included 55 Japanese university students in their first year of study. The students were from 18 to 20 years of age; although the students shared a common ethnicity, they came from diverse locations within Japan, stretching from Okinawa in the south to Hokkaido in the north, with all four of Japan’s four main islands represented. Thus, while the study population was not ethnically diverse, it was geographically diverse, which allows the students to experience a wide range of local cultures and Japanese regional language varieties.

Japanese was the common L1 of the students, with English being a familiar second language. All of the students had completed compulsory and secondary school and passed the university entrance requirements. As a part of their junior high school and high school classes all students had taken a minimum of six years of mandatory English classes.

Once entering the university, all students are given the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), which is used to place students in either standard class sections or the A class, which is made up of the highest scoring students. The students in the present study came from the standard classes. These classes are organized based on the family name of the student using gojuon, which is a similar concept to alphabetical order. Within these standard sections the students’ levels of English proficiency vary. Other than the mandatory English classes in junior and senior high
school, some of the students had experience studying abroad or had participated in home stays – primarily in Australia and Canada – during high school.

Students were informed about the study and were asked to provide consent before the study commenced. Participation in the study was not mandatory. The students were given the choice of participating in the class; there were no repercussions for non-participation. All students received consent forms in English (Appendix A) as well as a Japanese translation (Appendix B), which included the option of not participating in the study. Two separate classes were used for this study totaling 55 students in all. One class was designated to use L2 only while the second class was designated to use L2 with L1 support. Out of a total of 55 students, only two students declined to participate. Seven students who were absent and one student who was late on the day of the class were excluded from the study. Thus, the final study population included a total of 45 students.

**Research Location**

This study took place at a four-year public university located in a rural Japanese mountain town. The university serves students in both undergraduate and graduate courses, with an emphasis on education and cultural studies. The setting for this study was a modern climate-controlled classroom with desks that could be reconfigured for group activities. This classroom was the assigned room for two sections of a university English academic writing class, which will be the focus of the study. Since this is the normal meeting place for these classes, the effect of a new or different location on the students should not be an issue.
**Data Collection Instruments and Procedure**

**Audio Recordings**

The primary question of this study is, how does the language the students use during collaboration affect the final written L2 output of the task? Answering this question requires the understanding of what languages (L2 with L1 support or L2 only) were used during the initial fifteen-minute collaboration period and the percentage of the collaboration period that was spent using each language. In Edstrom’s (2007) study on teacher language she used a lapel microphone attached to a recorder to collect data. In the present study, it was not feasible to give each student a microphone. Instead, a single digital recording device was used to make an audio recording for each group (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; de la Colina & Mayo, 2009; Macaro, 2001; Sampson, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003).

Coding this audio data followed the technique used by Inbar-Lourie (2010), in which the percentage of the L1 and L2 is noted. To do this each instance of speech recorded during the fifteen-minute collaborative task was coded as a packet, and tagged as L1, L2, or silence. A packet for this study equals a 9 second period of time equaling 1% of the total fifteen minute (900 seconds) collaboration period. Since the aim of the present study is to find the effects of L2 with L1 support in comparison to L2 alone, it is necessary to determine the actual percentage of time that each language, English or Japanese, was used in each group to validate the findings. If an L2 only group actually uses the L1, or a group tasked with using the L2 with L1 support only uses the L2, this information will help to determine whether the students used the language required for the validity of this study. Another possibility is that both the L2 with L1 support and L2...
only groups might use the same percentage of language. The ability to observe this will be important in interpreting and describing the outcomes of the tasks. It is also possible that there might be a complete lack of collaboration, which would be expressed by silence. A difference between the classes in the amount of silence could be significant. These possible outcomes are the key reasons for analyzing this data in a qualitative manner.

**Story Sequence Task**

This task was based on the idea of Fotos and Ellis (1991) that sees the main aim of language teaching as creating opportunities where students can exchange meaning not just acquiring the L2.

Fotos and Ellis (1991) believe the main aim of language teaching is to create opportunities where students can exchange meaning, not just learn grammar and language forms. Following this assertion, a story sequence task was developed for the current study which served as the main instrument to measure the outcomes of the students’ collaboration (Appendix C). The students had to create a story related to the events in a sequence of drawings as seen in Appendix C (Mackey & Gass, 2005). This task incorporates three of four general points described by Long (1989), which include two-way negotiation, planning of a task, and convergence on a common solution. Like de la Colina and Mayo’s (2009) study on the functions of L1 use, the students must work collaboratively to plan and then create a cogent story. The students were instructed to use key vocabulary words to reduce subjectivity when assessing these stories. The vocabulary also allowed for a level of convergence to the task as it set common themes for use in the story creation. The final written output required each group member to write one out of
three total parts of the story with each part fitting into the story as a whole. What this sequence story does is to create a task where students are required to work together to negotiate how to relate the events in the drawings to the final story, while integrating the required vocabulary (Brooks & Donato, 1994).

**Study Procedures**

This study was carried out in one day in two separate ninety-minute English academic writing classes. Two separate classes with 21 and 24 students were designated to use either L2 with L1 support or L2 only. The first class was restricted to English only, while the second class was allowed use of L1 as well as L2 during the initial fifteen-minute collaboration period of the task. These classes were further divided into seven and eight sub-groups of three members each. The level of the two classes was randomized by the school, but within the classes themselves special care was taken to create equal or near equal levels to allow comparisons between the L2 with L1 support or L2 only groups. To do this, the TOEIC scores of the students obtained at the beginning of the school year were used to create matched pairs with near equal TOEIC levels between L2 with L1 support or L2 only classes. Out of the 15 groups one group with a higher than average TOEIC score of 560 was excluded from the L2 only class, making a TOEIC average of 479 for the class using L2 with L1 support and 481 for the English only class (a TOEIC score of 480 is roughly a B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) or 480 in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)).
On the task day students were given oral instructions in English, as is standard procedure for the class, as to how to complete the task. Students were asked to look at a sequence of three drawings (Appendix C) and work collaboratively to create a descriptive story of what is taking place in the story sequence. For each of the three drawings one student must take responsibility and write a paragraph corresponding to their selected drawing. The first fifteen minutes of the task is for collaboration between the students to decide on what part of the sequence they will be responsible for writing. They then negotiate a logical story that flows from paragraph to paragraph. After the initial fifteen-minute collaboration time, the students are given an additional fifteen minutes to write their sequence paragraph.

Each class will have the same sequence story to increase the reliability of the class comparisons. The sequence story also includes a vocabulary bank of ten items. Out of these ten words each group member must choose three to integrate into their sequence paragraph — thus, nine separate words are included the whole story. The vocabulary words are to assist in the assessment process as well as give guidance and structure to the task. The groups were also provided with three pieces of standard A4 writing paper with a code number assigned to each group to insure anonymity. Before starting the task each group started their audio recording device, which they had been familiarized with in previous lessons. The task was limited to thirty minutes the first fifteen minutes for collaboration and the second fifteen minutes for writing to ensure an equal level between the two classes. Once the time limit was reached the teacher collected the recordings along with the completed work making sure to match the audio codes to the paper codes. The assessment of the stories was based on a modified version of a rubric designed by
Jacobs (1981) (Appendix D). Two raters assessed the papers and their scores were averaged. By following a tightly controlled rubric the rater’s bias should be reduced and their interrater reliability increased.

Data Analysis

1. The percentage of L1, L2, and silence in the audio recordings from each of the classes (L2 with L1 support, and L2 only) were noted. This follows the methods that de la Colina and Mayo (2009), and Marco (2001) used to compare the language used in two classes. Knowing the percentage of each language that was used, allows the type of language that is used to be analyzed to help determine whether it is a deciding factor in the outcomes of the tasks. It is important to determine these percentages to detect anomalies. For example, the L2 only group might use more L1 than the L2 with L1 support group or the L2 with L1 support group might use the L2 or L1 exclusively — and thereby affect the findings of the study. A lack of communication must also be noted, as the inability to communicate would be a significant barrier to collaboration.

2. The sequence task required a rubric to increase the objectivity of the assessments (Appendix D). Since the assessment of writing is partially subjective, a second rater was used to increase the reliability. To further increase reliability the assessors were familiarized with the rubric, and the expected outcomes for the task. Fatigue was not an issue with this sample size of 15 three-paragraph papers. In addition, Cronbach’s alpha was used to test the level of agreement in the scores of the assessors (Bailey, 1998)
3. The mean task scores in the two classes were used to determine whether there were any significant differences in the L2 written output of the two classes. For this purpose, a two-tailed t-test was performed. P values of \( \leq 0.05 \) were considered to indicate statistical significance.

**Ethics**

The main principle of this study is to provide a better learning experience and outcomes for current and future students. The tasks in this study fit within the curriculum of the class and did not take away from the students’ instruction time. Students were not asked to do anything that was out of line for a standard class. To this end this study employed the following safeguards to protect the informants’ rights.

1. The purpose of the study and reasoning behind it was related to the participants.
2. The students were given the right to withdraw from the study without any repercussions.
3. Informed consent was obtained with a written document in the students’ L1 as well as English.
4. The study received consent from the Hamline Human Subjects Committee (HSC) on 11/24/2015.
5. The head of the English Department at the study site was informed about the study, and permission was granted.
6. The student’s names and location were not used in the study.
7. Audio recordings of the students were only used to determine the percent of L1/L2 used during the task. These recordings are held in a safe, controlled location and will be destroyed within five years of the study’s completion.

8. All of the students’ writings were coded and not associated with a name.

9. The papers were assessed blindly with only a number linking it to the class and the TOEIC average of that group, which was only known by the lead researcher.

Summary

In this chapter I described the way I used a qualitative case study to discover the effects of L2 with L1 support and L2 only on a collaborative writing task. By using a collaborative sequence story task, I hoped to see whether the language students are allowed to use has an effect on the work that they produce. The present chapter also covers how voice recordings were used to verify the students’ language use, and the rubric in which multiple raters were used to increase the reliability of the assessment. The layout of the methods of the data analysis as well and the measures that were taken to protect the subjects’ anonymity are stated. The next chapter will present the results of this study as well as the interpretation of the results.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This study was designed to create a situation in which the effect of two different language settings (L2 with L1 support or L2) could be measured to better understand how the language use policy of a classroom affects the students’ L2 written output. Data were collected using a qualitative approach, including a three paragraph sequence story and audio recordings of the students’ collaborative session prior to the writing of their L2 sequence story. The collaborative session and writing of the final output took place on one day during normal class hours in two separate university academic writing classes. The L2 written output consisted of a sequence story made up of three paragraphs, each of which detailed one-time period in a sequence (Appendix C). Each member of a three-person group was personally responsible for one of the three paragraphs, which detailed one sequence of the story, but all members were responsible for creating a thematically consistent story connecting all three paragraphs. These two data sets (the audio recordings and the L2 written output) aided in answering the guiding question of this study: How does the use of L1 as a cognitive tool affect the written L2 output of students working collaboratively compared to the exclusive use of L2 during collaboration? This chapter will lay out the findings of this study with reference to the guiding question.
Audio Recording Data

The oral output data of the students’ interactions was fundamental for determining whether the two language settings had an observable effect on the L2 output in their collaborative endeavor. This made monitoring the language used during the initial fifteen-minute collaboration period of the task important for ensuring the validity of this study. If the students in the L2 only class were found to have used the L1, it could reduce the validity of the study. Monitoring how the students used language in the L2 with L1 support class is also important — for example, a group could have been found to have avoided using the L1 for support or to have avoided using the L2 and relied on the L1 alone. A lack of oral information is also an important issue; audio data can assist in discovering if collaboration actually took place. This could be interpreted by the amount of silence, extended pauses, or gaps in the conversation where no oral exchanges took place.

To encode the conversations for these three variables (L2, L1, and silence/gaps) the recordings were analyzed in packets of time. The recordings obtained in this study were 15 minutes (900 seconds) in length — this was then broken down into 100 nine-second packets of time. Each recording was then monitored, with the language (L2, L1, or silence/gap) used in the 9-second packet representing 1% of the collaboration period. Cases in which a student code-switched did not count towards the L1 or L2 percentage. The code switching observed in these recordings amounted to single-word utterances, either when talking about the L2 vocabulary words required for the writing, exclamations, interjections, or filled pauses in the L1.
Audio Recording Findings

A total of fifteen audio recordings were made on the day of the collaborative task. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of two separate classes divided according to the language setting (L2 with L1 support or L2 only). Three of the original fifteen audio recordings were excluded from the study. One recording was unusable due to poor audio quality. The second recording was excluded because an additional member joined near the end of the collaboration period, thereby invalidating their final written work. Finally, an outlier group was excluded because their average TOEIC score was higher than that of the other groups.

Table 1. The collaborative audio data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech type</th>
<th>L2 with L1 Support</th>
<th>L2 Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>84.8 (16.4)</td>
<td>1.2 (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>0.2 (0.4)</td>
<td>74.5 (10.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication gap</td>
<td>15 (16)</td>
<td>24.3 (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1The values are expressed as the mean percentage (standard deviation).
2The types of speech used in the nine-second audio packets.
3There was no communication in the nine-second audio packet.

The final findings represent the results of twelve groups with a total of 36 members who were divided equally between the two classes into matched sets of six groups per class. Table 1 shows the percentage of time spent using the L1, L2, or in which a communication gap (silence) during the initial fifteen-minute collaboration period. The L1 was used an average of 84.8% of the time in the L2 with L1 support class, but only 1.2% of the time in the L2 only class. Although the L2 only class was to be exclusively L2, several of the groups did use the L1. The usage amounted to 1.2% of the time, which equates to 10.8 seconds of the 15-minute collaborative period. There was an
inverse pattern of L2 usage in the two class settings; L2 usage accounted for 0.2% and 74.5% of the language used in the L2 with L1 support class and L2 only class, respectively. While the L2 with L1 support class was allowed to use the L1, the students used the L1 a majority of the time and only used the L2 0.2% of the time. It must be noted that code switching was observed in every L2 with L1 support group when the members read the vocabulary words; this is not reflected in the percentages listed here. Gaps in conversation accounted for an average of 15% of the time in the L2 with L1 support groups and 24.3% of the time in the L2 only groups; however, a paired t-test revealed that this difference was not statistically significant (P=0.3917, assuming P ≤ 0.05).

**L2 Written Output**

The goal of this study was to observe whether the language used in collaboration was correlated with the quality of final L2 written output at the end of the collaborative task. If the ideas of Vygotsky and supporters of his ideas are to be validated, L1 support should show a favorable impact on the final L2 written output of the collaborative groups who were allowed L1 support (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Butzkamm, 2011; Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986).

**Assessment**

To create more generalizable data, and reduce its variation, matched groups were created based on the students’ TOEIC scores. Unfortunately, several variables were not accounted for, including: the time of day between the two classes (the students might have been more or less rested), the gender and age composition of the groups, relationships between group members (familiarity might have affect the members’
willingness to communicate), and the timing of the task (the task took place on the last class day before winter break, which might have affected attendance or motivation). Although each of these factors could have created variability in the final output, they were discounted for this limited study.

The main assessment tool for this study was a sequence story (Appendix C). The students collaborated in groups of three and then wrote one paragraph each to create a consistent three paragraph story. It must be noted that collaboration was only allowed in the initial fifteen-minute planning time and not during the final fifteen-minute writing period. The three-paragraph story was then assessed as a whole by two separate individuals: the author of this study, and an associate professor at the university using an assessment rubric sheet (Appendix D). All of the papers from the two classes were anonymized and randomly coded. They were then placed in a randomized order for grading in order to reduce the chance of bias related to the two class types. The rubric, which was based on a design by Jacobs (1981) was used to increase the inter-rater reliability and focus the assessment on the points in which a collaborative effort would have had the greatest effect. It is important to reiterate the three paragraphs by three authors were assessed as a whole. This means that one writer’s grammatical errors should have little effect on the scoring of the whole story; on the other hand, one author deviating from the group story frame could have a major impact on the score of the story as a whole. The reasoning behind this was to give greater weight to areas such as content (story frame), which reflect prior planning and collaboration on the part of the group members rather than the personal grammatical knowledge that was used during the writing period in which collaboration was not allowed.
With the assessment complete, the average class scores of both assessors were compared — the maximum possible score was 100. The L2 only class produced eight papers, while the L2 with L1 support class produced seven. To make generalization easier, one outlier group from the L2 only class, which had a TOEIC score that was higher than the average, was removed (Bailey, 1998). Two more groups were removed (one from each class) based on audio and attendance issues. Before removing the three groups, the L2 only class had an average TOEIC score of 491; in contrast, the L2 with L1 support class had an average TOEIC score of 479. After removing the three groups, the L2 only class had an average TOEIC score of 492. The average TOEIC score of the L2 with L1 support class remained unchanged at 479 (Table 2). Thus, there was a 13-point difference in the TOEIC scores of the two classes (the standard deviations differed by 1.47).

### L2 Written Output Findings

While the assessments of each of the assessors differed (*Figures 1 and 2*), they showed a similar pattern of grading. On the class level, the inter-rater reliability of

---

**Table 2. The mean TOEIC scores of the class/group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>L2 with L1 Support</th>
<th>L2 Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>479.16 (64.86)</td>
<td>492.16 (63.39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The values are expressed as the mean (SD).
assessors A and B showed low consistency, with a coefficient alpha of 0.472554 (Bailey, 1998). Assessors A and B gave average scores of 64 (SD: 15.98) and 83.83 (SD: 8.75), respectively for the papers from the L2 with L1 support class, and 54.83 (SD: 5.74) and 65 (SD: 13.6) for the L2 only classes.

The standard deviations of the assessors showed consistency when comparing the differences across classes; for the L2 with L1 support and L2 classes, the SDs differed by 7.23 and 7.9, respectively. When comparing the two classes, the L2 only class had
consistently lower scores than the L2 with L1 support class. When the assessors scores for each class were averaged (Table 3), the average score of the L2 with L1 support class (74 points) was thirteen-points or more than one grade higher than that of the L2 only class (61 points).

Table 3. *The mean scores for the collaborative sequence story*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Papers</th>
<th>L2 with L1 Support</th>
<th>L2 Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>74 (12.1)</td>
<td>61 (8.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.0037</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paired two-tailed hypothesis *t*-test was used to investigate the significance of the outcomes of the collaborative task (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The groups and the classes in this study were matched as closely as possible using their TOEIC scores to form matched pairs (Table 2). Furthermore, the tasks were performed on the same day and were taught by the same instructor. With these commonalities a paired *t*-test would be the best way to determine whether there was a significant difference between the two classes. A two-tailed hypothesis was used since the premise of this study is that the language used during collaboration should have an effect on the L2 output, without knowing which group would perform better. Each of the classes produced six papers (a
total of twelve). The scores of the two assessors where then combined and averaged before performing the t-test (Table 3).

To investigate the statistical significance of differences using a paired t-test a null hypothesis must first be set. A null hypothesis indicates that no significant difference between the classes exists and that any difference is due to error (Mackey & Gass, 2005). For this study the null hypothesis, which I hope to disprove is as follows: assuming that both classes are equal, is it possible that the difference between the means of the two classes could have in fact been observed by chance? For this test the threshold of significance was set at P ≤ 0.05. The P value for the 13.08-point difference between the means was 0.0037. This result suggests that there was a very low probability that these findings represented an error or a random event. Since the P value fell under the P ≤ 0.05 threshold, there was a statistically significant difference between the outcomes of the activities in the two classes.

**Interpretation of the Findings**

The statistical significance of the difference in the L2 writing outcomes of the two classes answers the guiding question of this study: *How does the use of L1 as a cognitive tool affect the written L2 output of students working collaboratively compared to the exclusive use of L2 during collaboration?* Although a P value of 0.0037 indicates that the result was statistically significant, care should be taken in generalizing the results to the Japanese EFL population due to the sample size (12 papers and 36 students) and using only two assessors who showed inconsistent inter-rater reliability. However, these findings point to the possibility that the Vygotskian idea regarding the use of socially-
mediated L1 cognitive tools could be useful in the Japanese EFL context (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986).

**Audio Data**

The audio findings from this study helped not only to validate the basic premise of the study but also to bring up some connections to social cultural theory. The results from the audio data validated the near exclusive use of language in the L2 only class (only 1.2% of the time was spent using the L1). This corresponds to a similar pattern in the L2 with L1 support class using the L2 0.2% of the time. It seems that instead of using the L1 as support for the L2 it was the dominant language, with English only being used when reading L2 instructions or vocabulary. While the lack of L2 does not invalidate the data, it does show that the students tended to favor the L1 over the L2 in this context. Atkinson predicted this type of L1 misuse when students are not made aware of the significance of using the English during collaboration (1987). Instead of trying to use the L2 to communicate with judicious L1 support, the students misused and almost entirely ignored the L2. This was demonstrated by the 0.2% usage of the L2 when the L1 was allowed. The final result to examine is the lack of speech, gaps, or silences. These accounted for 15% of the time in the L2 with L1 support class and 24.3% of the time in the L2 only class. While not statistically significant (P = 0.3917) the greater amount of silence in the L2 only class could be linked to the idea of hampered cognitive function (Sampson, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Following the ideas of Vygotsky, by limiting the more developed L1, the students might have had a slightly more difficult time producing language in comparison to the L2 with L1 support group (Sampson,
These numbers do not confirm this idea statistically but they do call into question whether L2 only allows students to work to their highest level of cognitive ability.

**Written Output**

The written L2 output of the collaborative task displayed a significant difference between the L2 only and L2 with L1 support groups. The mean scores of the L2 with L1 support and L2 only groups were 74 and 61, respectively. This thirteen-point gap in the means was significant. This difference might have contributed to the higher cognitive language afforded by the use of the L1 while working in the ZDP of the collaborative groups. While the SD of the L2 with L1 support class (12.1) was higher than that of the L2 only class (8.8), the median score of the L2 with L1 support class (72.5) was higher than the top the score of the L2 only group (69). A two-tailed paired t-test revealed that the difference was statistically significant (P = 0.0037). This reveals a pattern of overall better work by the L2 with L1 support class in comparison to the L2 only class.

**Summary**

The data laid out in this chapter helped to answer the guiding question of this study. The supporting audio data validated the study by revealing that the language that was produced during collaboration was in line with the requirements of this study. The written output in the L2 was assessed by two individuals and despite the low consistency in their assessments, a general pattern of preference for the written work of the L2 with L1 support class emerged. In Chapter Five the significance of the findings will be explored, including the implications of these findings in light of the current literature, and the areas in which the current study was limited or could be expanded. This chapter will
also suggest opportunities for future research, and how these findings could be applied to the Japanese EFL teaching context.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

In the previous chapter, results from the data gathered were given to answer the guiding question of this study. The data presented were collected through a qualitative approach that used two instruments from two academic writing classes over two class periods. Students took part in a collaborative writing task that consisted of a fifteen-minute group oral collaboration period followed by a fifteen-minute sequence story production period. While the first fifteen minutes was collaborative and oral, the last fifteen minutes was individual and written. Audio recordings from the initial collaboration period and sequence stories combining the collective written output of the group were then collected and analyzed.

In this chapter, the findings of this study in relation to the current literature will be reviewed. Reflections on the implications of the study’s outcome for Japanese EFL educators will also be discussed. Furthermore, I will describe the limitations of the study and areas in which the present study could be improved. Suggestions for future research in the use of L1 for collaborative tasks will be covered, followed by a discussion for disseminating the findings of this study. The chapter will then conclude by discussing
how the ideas that were revealed in the present study improved the author as a teacher of
Japanese EFL students and how improving the general knowledge of how language used
in the classroom can have an effect on the students’ L2 output.

**Reflections on the Current Literature**

With the results presented in the precious chapter, a reflection on how they fit
with the current literature is in order. The outcome of this study found a link between the
use of the student language in collaboration and better L2 written output. Carson and
Kashihara (2012) alluded to this study’s finding when they suggested that a link exists
between the L1 in collaborative work and the L2 output. Brooks and Donato’s (1994)
study further explains this finding as an outcome of the L1 providing the cognitive
framework for the negotiation of an activity. Anton and DiCamilla (1998) back this idea
with the concept of ZPD facilitating the learners’ exchange and development of ideas.
When students are allowed to use their developed L1 as private speech and inner speech
they are capable of doing more than when limited to an exclusively monolingual domain
(Brooks & Donato, 1994). All of this supports the underlying idea of Vygotsky’s
mediated mind (1986). Human language is believed to be a tool that mediates our
intention with the world at large, and taking away our highly developed L1 and relying
on an incomplete L2 could diminish our ability to collaborate. This concept is supported
by this study with a significant finding that the removal of the students’ L1 when
collaborating on a group task compromised their ability to produce L2 written output.
Colina and Mayo (2009), Ferguson (2009), Harbord (1992), Hawkins (2015), Sampson
(2012), Storch and Wigglesworth (2003), and Swain and Lapkin (2013) have all called for the acceptance of the judicious use of the L1 in language classrooms as an important tool in CLT. The author of this study agrees and the findings seem to validate the L1’s place in EFL pedagogy. Unfortunately, while it seems to be an easy conclusion to say that the judicious use of the L1 should be allowed and that the banning of the L1 could be detrimental to learning, the means by which the L1 should be implemented is still in question (Sampson, 2012). In the literature review, Sampson (2012) agreed, in principle, that a place for the L1 exists in the EFL classroom, but asks an important question: what next? Allowing the L1 is one thing, when to allow the L1 and how the L1 should be used to promote L2 learning remains an open question. This leads to the question of how teachers can implement the L1 and the directions in which further research should proceed.

**Japanese EFL Implications**

This study points to the possible benefits of using L1 to improve written L2 output in collaborative efforts. Teachers of EFL in the Japanese context need to look at these results carefully and to not take this L1 position to the extreme. This study does not show whether the unrestricted use of the L1 would be beneficial in all classroom situations. However, it does show that there is a place for the students’ language. The present study demonstrated that when students of similar TEOIC levels, independent users in this case, used language to negotiate the meaning of a task, they were better able to create written output in the L2 that conformed with the goals of the task. In addition, the audio findings highlight a need for collaborative L2 support language, along with
instilling a better understanding that the L1 should be used as a bridge to communication not as the exclusive language of discourse. It is up to teachers to take this idea into consideration. The student language can be useful as students who better understand a task, even if it requires their L1, will gain a better understanding of that task and be able to communicate their ideas at a higher cognitive level than with the L2 alone. The benefits of allowing this controlled use of the L1 also extended to the teachers, as it allowed them to focus on the content of the task and not take time to police the language choice of their students during collaborative tasks. The final point on this matter is that teachers should not see the L1 as a pejorative to be censored at all costs, but as a cognitive tool that, when used judiciously, can have a positive influence on the students’ L2 written output.

**Limitations**

The present study is associated with some limitations which may have affected its statistical validity. The first limitation to note is the small sample size. With 36 students and twelve samples of work, it is difficult to generalize these findings to a wider student population. The assessment of the samples was also limited by the use of only two assessors with a low alpha coefficient; an increased number of assessors and the implementation of an intra-rating system by the assessors might have improved the validity of the present study (Bailey, 1998). It should be noted that the rubric for the assessment of the L2 written output is also a limiting factor, while it is weighted in favor of measuring the collaborative efforts of the groups, it also measures individual metrics,
grammar, mechanics usage, and vocabulary, which could detract from the collaborative aspects of measurement.

The formation of the groups was also a limiting factor. The group TOEIC levels were not consistent within a class, with some groups averaging over 100 points higher than others (Table 2). The groups themselves reflected the TOEIC averages of the three members, this could also be a limitation with one advanced member dominating the lower level members, or a situation in which members of equal level lack the expertise of a higher level student leading to the possibility of a less effective ZPD.

The TOEIC scores of students are most likely to be the single greatest limiting factor of the present study. While useful for generalizing students’ language ability, by the time this study took place the TOEIC scores obtained were over nine months old. In those nine months, the students have had a semester and a half of academic writing instruction and their skill levels might have changed — making these TOEIC scores less accurate in defining the students’ abilities. The final limiting factor of this study relates to the narrow range of the TOEIC scores of the groups. With a difference of 140 points between the highest and lowest mean TOEIC scores, the groups in this study all fell into the same general category determined by Educational Testing Service (ETS) of independent users (Tannenbaum, & Wylie, 2015). Students of significantly higher or lower TOEIC levels might exhibit outcomes that differed from those of the study groups. While this study was limited in scope by its small sample size, it does point to a pattern of significantly better L2 written output when the L1 is allowed. The fact that this study,
as limited as it was, still revealed statistically significant findings calls for a more refined look into this issue with follow-up studies.

**Future Research Opportunities**

The use of student language as a cognitive tool is a far-reaching topic with several areas in which further research would be advantageous to teachers and students in the EFL context. The present study’s narrow focus only touched upon collaboration on a written task on a single day of a school year. Further research should be undertaken to better generalize the findings of this study. Factors such as number of participants, the duration of the study, the language ability level of the participants, and the type of task should be investigated. Since the student language is pervasive in every subject, every class, and between every student, it should be observed and then maximized in a way that supports the students’ L2 learning. Examples of follow-up studies include increasing the number of participants by running the collaborative writing task in a more classes and performing it multiple times over a school year. Controlling for the group TOEIC level could also be beneficial in determining when it is best to allow L1 support and whether the allowance of L1 support should depend on the learner level or if it something that is useful to all levels of learners. The type of task must also be varied to also include oral output, to determine whether L1 collaboration can lead to better speeches, presentations, or classroom reporting situations in comparison to students who are required to use the L2.

In addition to investigating the final L2 output of collaborative tasks, the differences, if any, in the academic level of the conversations during collaboration should
be examined. Although the difference in the mean silence time between the L2 with L1 support class and L2 only class was not statistically significant (9.3%; 83.7 seconds), it amounted to almost one and a half minutes of extra silence (Table 1). Thus, studying what actually took place during the collaboration period, could shed light on why the students were silent, and if L1, L2, or a combination of both produced more or less detailed negations of the task topic.

A third area for further research is the students’ perceptions of L1 and L2 use for collaborative tasks. The students’ perceptions of how language should be used in the classroom might have affected this study. If the teachers increase the implementation of the L1, will students need to be informed as to why the L1 is being used in the L2 classroom or will they be accepting of its use? Some of these ideas are covered in Berning’s (2015) study of students’ perceptions of L1 use, in which students found that the L2 not only increased the difficulty of the task but also reduced their perceived ability to communicate with their peers. A better understanding of what students expect, want, and need in the classroom with regards language to use (L1/L2) needs to be taken into account.

These are only a select few areas to study the cognitive effects of using the L1 in the Japanese EFL context. Yet something as pervasive as student language must not be ignored. The student language should not be forgotten, rather, it should be used judiciously and the elucidation of how this might be accomplished should be a research priority.
Dissemination of Results

Performing a study in a vacuum is not a complete waste of time, since the author benefits from the knowledge that is gained. However, making this information available to a wider professional audience could lead to EFL classrooms in which students can better access their full cognitive potential and put it to good use in the production of the L2 target. To make this happen several steps should be taken to make these findings known to a wider cohort of teachers. The first step will be making this capstone available through Hamline University’s Bush Library Digital Commons. Unfortunately, this is a small step since this is not a common site for Japanese EFL professionals seeking ideas for classroom pedagogy. A second step, which has already been completed, is to publish ancillary data on this study covering students’ perceptions of L1 use during collaboration. This can be seen in Berning’s (2015) study on students’ perceptions of L1 use on a collaborative task. A third step is to complete a follow-up study addressing some of the limitations found in the present study, and then to attempt to publish the findings in an academic journal geared towards Japanese EFL professionals, such as JALT or a Japanese university publication. The fourth step is to present this capstone or a portion of it in a professional conference, this is by far the most challenging, yet it is the most likely means of garnering attention for this topic. All of these ideas can and should be possible to complete and could lead to a better understanding of student language and hopefully create a conversation where student language is on the table.
Summary

This capstone was a journey of discover into why my students’ asked the question, “Do I have to speak English?” Starting with a question that at first seemed ridiculous in a university English classroom, turned into an opportunity to better understand my students and how my teaching should evolve to support them. The idea that I could force English only on these students now seems to be folly. Through this study I have a better understanding that a place for the students’ L1 does exist in the EFL classroom, and that enforcing an English only policy can be a disservice to the students. This of course is not the end, while I have a better understanding that the L1 is useful, when and how to implement the L1 is still in question. Further study and collaboration with fellow EFL professionals could hopefully answer some of these questions. With the completion of this Capstone the first of many steps is completed but many more are to follow in the pursuit of supporting students’ EFL education.
REFERENCES


Doi:10.1080/01434639708666317


doi:10.1080/13670050802153137


Appendix A: English Informed Consent Letter

December 3, 2015

Dear Academic Writing Student,

I am currently doing research at Hamline University for competition of my graduate studies, and I would like to do research in your classroom. I want to see how using Japanese and English on a task affects your work. The study when completed will be put online where it will be available at Hamline Bush Library’s Digital Commons. Our school, Tsuru University, has given permission for this research. I also need your permission to participate.

During class, you will work in groups to create and write a story based on a sequence of pictures. While working in groups, I will record your conversation to measure what language you use. I also will need to use your story paragraphs to measure the quality of your work. We will do this for one lesson. I will report the amounts of language used, as well as the outcomes of the writings, but I will not use names of the students or institution, and all audio records will be protected for your privacy.

No one will know that you were a part of the research. If you do not want to be in the research, that is ok. You can still participate in the lesson. If you want to leave the research later, that is ok. If you feel anxiety by being recorded or reported on in any way you just need to tell me. This project should provide benefits to future students in the way student language is handled in class.

If you have questions, contact me Brian Berning at _____________________ by phone __________________ or before/after class. You can also contact my Hamline Advisor, Suzanne McCurdy ____________________.

If you want to participate in the research approved by the head of the English department ____________, please sign and date both letters. Return one to me by December 10th, 2015, and keep one for yourself.

I agree to participate in research on Language Usage in a group writing activity, as well as authorize the use of my writings as a part of this research.

Signature__________________________ Date___________________________

Participant copy
Appendix B: Japanese Informed Consent Letter

2015年12月3日

学術調査ご協力のお願い

現在、私は大学にて英語講師をしている傍らアメリカのヘムリン大学院に属しており、研究をしております。そこでこのクラスの皆様にも私の調査研究にご協力いただきたく今回お願いがございます。

今回の調査目的は日本語と英語の使用がどのようにプロジェクトタスクの結果に影響するかを調べたいと思っております。この調査結果はヘムリン大学ブッシュ図書館のデジタルコンテンツに掲載され、オンラインにて供覧が可能になります。都留文科大学よりこの調査を行う許可は頂いており、今回皆様一人一人の御許可を頂きたく存じます。

調査内容は授業でグループに分かれて、それぞれのグループでつながりのあるストーリーを作成して頂きます。このグループワーク中の会話を録音させていただき、調査します。また授業終了後に簡単な質問もさせていただきます。この調査は1授業で行います。私はどれだけの言語量が使用されたか、実際に書いていただいたストーリーを調査結果として掲載いたしますが、お名前や録音した音声等は個人情報保護の観点より記載は致しません。皆様がこの調査にかかわったことが特定出来ないように致します。もちろん、ご協力いただけなくても通常どおり授業には参加いただけます。参加ご協力の名前後に、この調査対象から外れたい場合も可能ですので、その際にはお声をおかけください。

ご質問等ありましたら、下記に連絡ください。

________________
TEL: ________________

もしくは

Suzanne McCurdy≪ヘムリン大学: 本調査アドバイザー≫

_______________________
TEL: ____________________

ご協力いただけます様でしたら、下記に署名と日付記入をして頂き、2015年12月10日迄に私に提出をお願いいたします。ご自身用にご協力いただけます様でしたら、下記に署名と日付記入をして頂き、2015年11月1日迄に私に提出をお願いいたします。ご自身用1部コピーを保管しておいて下さい。

私はこの調査 "Language Usage in a group writing activity" に参加することを同意いたします。

署名 ___________________________ 日付

...
Appendix C: Sequence Story Task

Group Sequence Story Task

1. Work with your group to create a story about these pictures
2. Each member will write a paragraph about one part of the story pictures 1, 2, or 3
3. Each paragraph must fit together to create one (continuous) story
4. You must use 3 of these key words in each paragraph to help create your story:

   Work, Study, Play, Friends, Life, Busy, Relax, Goal, Career, Fun

Clipart obtained under license from Shutterstock.com
### Appendix D: Assessment Guide for Sequence Story Task

#### Assessment Guide for Sequence Story Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content #1</strong></td>
<td>35-50</td>
<td><strong>EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD</strong>: thoroughly develops story • content fits within the story frame • paragraph follows and/or creates a bridge for next paragraph • <strong>GOOD TO AVERAGE</strong>: story shows some development • content mostly fits within the story frame • paragraph creates an adequate but not fully thought-out bridge for following and/or next paragraph • <strong>FAIR TO POOR</strong>: limited story development • content only superficially fits story frame • paragraph follows, or creates a lead into next story only in a minor way • <strong>UNACCEPTABLE</strong>: writing only describes picture shows no thought by writer • content of story does not fit story frame • does not follow or does not create room for following paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization #2</strong></td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td><strong>EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD</strong>: well-organized paragraph • topic sentence clearly sets topic and main idea • cohesive • conclusion supports topic • ideas clearly stated • <strong>GOOD TO AVERAGE</strong>: maintains paragraph form • topic sentence sets topic and main idea • main ideas stated but not always clearly • supporting sentences are somewhat cohesive • conclusion touches on topic • <strong>FAIR TO POOR</strong>: topic is unclear • supporting sentences do not always cover topic • conclusion does not relate to topic • <strong>UNACCEPTABLE</strong>: not cohesive • no clear topic • supporting sentences confused and disconnected • no conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-9</td>
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<td><strong>Vocabulary #3</strong></td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td><strong>EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD</strong>: uses key words fully • all words appropriate for academic paper • shows a great range in vocabulary does not over use words • <strong>GOOD TO AVERAGE</strong>: uses most of the key words • most words are appropriate for academic paper • shows some range in vocabulary usage • <strong>FAIR TO POOR</strong>: some key words used • uses some words inappropriate for academic paper • uses wrong form of word or spelling but meaning is discernable • <strong>UNACCEPTABLE</strong>: very basic vocabulary • use of non-English words • wrong word used • does not use key words</td>
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<td><strong>Grammar / Mechanics #4</strong></td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td><strong>EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD</strong>: no errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns • mastery of paragraphing, • no errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization • <strong>GOOD TO AVERAGE</strong>: few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns • paragraph is mostly formed • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization • <strong>FAIR TO POOR</strong>: errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns that distract from meaning • Paragraph is not entirely formed or formatted correctly • errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization that interfere with meaning • <strong>UNACCEPTABLE</strong>: numerous errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns that distract from meaning • Not in paragraph form • numerous errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization that interfere with meaning</td>
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<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
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