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Using online forums to promote Japanese university student motivation to use English outside the classroom

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate whether online forums, used as a tool for virtual exchange of communication between English learners in different institutions, areas and countries, are beneficial in increasing Japanese University students' motivation to use English outside the classroom. Online forums or message boards have long been used as a means for people around the world to discuss various topics and interact with each other about subjects they share an interest in. These forums can create lively and varied discussions as users comment on and post questions about other users' posts. A forum called the International Virtual Exchange (IVE) Project allows students learning English in universities around the world to take part in an 8-week online English exchange program, discussing four topics by making posts connected to the topics. The topics are related to sharing information and learning about culture and cultural differences. This paper explores whether this activity increases motivation to communicate in the target language outside of the classroom, either instrumentally through the students striving to complete the immediate practical goals of making their posts and interacting with their peers or integratively through providing opportunities for personal growth and cultural enrichment by learning about different cultures through the medium of English (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) or by nurturing an identity connected to the second language.

本研究では地域・国の英語学習者間の仮想的なコミュニケーション交流のツールとして利用されているオンラインフォーラムが日本の大学生の教室外での英語使用に対するモチベーションを高めるために有益かを調査しました。オンライン・フォーラムや掲示板は、世界中の人々が様々なトピックについて議論し、互いに興味を持つテーマについて交流する手段として、長い間利用されてきました。このようなフォーラムでは、ユーザーが他のユーザーの投稿にコメントしたり、質問を投稿したりすることで、活発で多彩な

議論が展開されます。IVE (International Virtual Exchange) プロジェクトと呼ばれるフォーラムでは、世界中の大学で英語を学ぶ学生が8週間のオンライン英語交流プログラムに参加し、4つのトピックに関連した投稿を行いながらディスカッションを行うことができるようになっています。テーマは、情報の共有や文化、文化の違いを学ぶことに関連するものです。本稿では、この活動が教室外でのターゲット言語のコミュニケーションに対するモチベーションを高めるかどうかを調査している。目先の実用的な目標をクリアしようと努力する学生の道具的な動機付けでしょうか。それとも、英語を媒介として異文化を学び、自己成長や文化的な豊かさを得る機会を提供することで、統合的な動機付け(Gardner & Lambert, 1972)を行うのでしょうか。それとも、第二言語と結びついたアイデンティティを育ませるのでしょうか。

Keywords: Virtual exchange (VE), computer mediated communication (CMC), motivation, learner identity

Introduction

Learning a language is a long and arduous endeavor that takes place over numerous years (Klein, 1991). N. Ellis (2002) stated that frequency is a determining factor of language acquisition because the rules of language are structured by the learner through analysis of input over a long period of time. It is widely accepted that second language learners require plentiful opportunities to produce varied output. Swain's (1985) output hypothesis explained the three functions of output are: to notice gaps in knowledge, test tacit hypothesis of previously learnt language and finally metalinguistic reflection, which allows us to internalize linguistic knowledge. Stereotypical foreign language learners in classrooms are exposed to the second language for only a few hours per week (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 38). If you consider the number of hours of exposure to input or opportunities to test output first language learners receive in a natural setting, the few hours per week in the classroom seem rather insufficient. Therefore, it is incumbent that language learners must strive to put in the hours of work necessary to learn a language, seeking out opportunities to use it wherever possible, both inside and outside of the classroom and use these opportunities effectively.

Recent research has shown that adult English foreign language learners' motivation to use English outside of the classroom increases when they are given access to online tools (Aydin, 2007; Columbo & Columbo, 2007; Son, 2007, as cited in Terrell, 2013). One online tool that can help improve saliency in recognizing target language forms is computer mediated communication (CMC) (Smith, 2004). CMC can also increase opportunities to receive feedback and produce more modified output than conventional classroom communication with a teacher (Mackey et al., 2003). A Virtual Exchange (VE) describes a program where CMC is implemented to promote interaction between learners around the world (O'Dowd, 2018, as cited in Canals, 2020). Realtime text, oral or video-based CMC can be referred to as synchronous computer mediated communication (SCMC). Darhower (2008) found that a telecollaborative chat (SCMC) exchange between 80 Spanish and English learners resulted in improvements in their L2 writing and knowledge of the L2 culture. In addition, the learners said that they intended to continue

to communicate with native speakers (NS) using the L2 in the future. Jung et al. (2019) used video SCMC interactions between English learners in Korea, Japan and Taiwan to nurture intercultural and linguistic awareness. There was a positive response from learners who reported that the VE had fostered their L2 learning, intercultural communicative competence and willingness to communicate and had also instilled in them a need to use English.

However, more research into exactly how these virtual exchanges motivate students is needed. What types of CMC work best? Is the motivation instrumental in terms of striving to complete a short term goal or more intrinsic in terms of a purpose of long-term betterment?

This study is an attempt to address these lacunae in the research. It focuses on the use of a text based online forum for Virtual Exchange (VE) between non-native speakers learning English. It attempts to discover if it is effective as a means of motivating out-of-class English practice and if so how. This study was specifically designed to answer the following questions:

RQ1. Can virtual exchanges using text-based communication in online forums such as the International Virtual Exchange Project motivate students to use English outside of the classroom?

RQ2. If so, is the motivation instrumental because of a short-term goal such as completing a homework task and passing the course or is it intrinsic, meaning they are motivated by the idea of being able to communicate in the L2 with people from other countries and learn about their culture? Or is the motivation related to the building of their L2 identity, learner autonomy or other factors?

Literature review

Acquisition of a language requires a focused use of the language over time both inside and outside of the classroom (Hyland, 2004; Nunan & Richards, 2015). The learner seeking the chance to learn out-of-the classroom is one of four factors that Nunan & Richards (2015) attribute to language learning success, along with motivation, goal setting and reflection on progression. Ellis (2008, p. 855) also stated that, in order for language learners to be successful they must not only actively attempt to recognize forms but also search for occasions to use the L2 for communication. Promotion of out-of-class learning is a way to give students more autonomy about what they learn and how related to the topic of study, as well as a chance to reflect more deeply on their goals, methods of study and successes and failures. Benson (2013) describes how learners can actively and autonomously interact with material, social or technological resources available to them to direct their own learning process, which in turn will support their learning and give them the opportunity to reflect on their learning process. This study will examine whether any autonomy the students have in how they communicate, what they communicate about and how much during the VE is a connected factor to the learners' motivation to practice English outside of class.

Research has shown that communicating with first language (L1)-different

interlocutors allows for greater negotiation of meaning through interaction and chances for production (Bueno-Alastuey, 2013). Interaction is a dynamic mechanism for improving L2 competence (Mackey & Goo, 2007) because it creates more substantial opportunities to notice the target forms (Mackey, 2006) and gaps between these forms and the learners' own interlanguage before producing output (Gass & Mackey, 2006).

Learners using the L2 outside the classroom are using language authentically as a lingua franca and adapting it in experimental ways to achieve a communicative goal (Dewey & Jenkins, 2010). This investigation will explore whether the learners found the ability to communicate with peers around the world and learn about their culture intrinsically motivated them to use the L2 outside of class or whether the short-term instrumental goal of completing the task or a short interaction was their motivation.

There are also differences in learners' production based on whether they are speaking to a native speaker (NS) or non-native speaker (NNS). This study is based upon a VE between NNSs. Research has shown that communication with other NNSs results in greater modified output than exchanges with NS (Sato, 2006) and also increased time on task and L2 output produced (Bueno-Alastuey, 2013).

Block (2007) refers to the importance of building an identity related to the second language whilst it is being learned and states that this identity is shaped strongly by crucial encounters of using the language outside of the classroom. In the classroom, among their peers, students may already have a strong identity related to their use of their first language or wish to present one. Interaction in an EFL classroom of learners who share an L1 can be problematic as there is a reluctance to communicate in the target language amongst peers and a likelihood to regress to adoption of their L1 when a breakdown in communication occurs (Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006).

The use of text based communicative activities can encourage learners who are reluctant to speak in class to produce output and this can increase their confidence to produce oral output in future tasks (Beauvois, 1995, as cited in Thomas, 2017, p. 201). Low ability learners through communication in text chat or by uploading images or videos related to a discussion can feel a sense of involvement and community within the class, learners can also create another identity in the L2 or online world, which could be more outgoing or confident (Lamy, 2006; Thomas, 2017, p. 202). Hyland (2004) after studying the use of English outside of class by university students in Hong Kong, found that the students felt more in control when communicating in the out of class setting and found it less threatening to their identities (both individually and as part of a group). This study will investigate whether the VE helps to cultivate an L2 identity in the learners and whether this increases motivation to practice the L2 out-of-class.

Computer mediated communication (CMC) has been shown in research to have many positive benefits as a setting for interaction to take place (e.g. Canals, 2020; Smith, 2004; Ziegler, 2016). Chun (1998) suggests CMC can often create a

reduced stress environment in comparison to face to face (FTF) interaction leading to more willingness to communicate.

CMC used in VEs can be both synchronous or asynchronous and take place between different types of interlocutors for example NS and NNS or NNS and NNS. One VE which is growing in popularity among teachers of EFL at university level is the International Virtual Exchange (IVE). IVE will be the subject of the research in this paper.

Method

Setting

IVE is an online exchange where students interact mostly asynchronously because with students being in different time zones around the world this avoids scheduling difficulties. However, if students are using the forum at the same time they can communicate synchronously. It is run using a website: iveproject.org which connects them to the Moodle platform (a popular learning management system), where they are put into message board style forums to discuss particular questions or topics. Exchanges are conducted over 8 weeks using English as a lingua franca among the members of the forum, who are from an array of different countries. Students can post and reply using text, audio or visual (picture or video) content created by themselves. IVE is run using funding from a Japanese government grant and assistance from Hosei University, so it is free for any educational institution's students to join.

The IVE goals for students are as follows:

- 1** To improve your intercultural competency.
- 2** To experience authentic communication with students from other cultures.
- 3** To find out about your own and others' cultures and lifestyles.
- 4** To improve your communication skills. In this project, this means learning to communicate in another language with people who do not know much about your culture.
- 5** To improve your digital literacy skills.

(IVE Project, 2022)

Participants

This study took place in the first semester of the 2021 school year at a large, prestigious, private university in eastern Japan. The institute is a co-educational facility consisting of 10 undergraduate colleges which include 27 departments. It is included in the Japanese government's Top Global University project allowing it to receive funding with the goal of promoting globalization and internationalizing Japanese higher education.

The research participants for this study were the 59 students of six first year Discussion classes. They were all 18–19 years old and Japanese. The Discussion course is designed to equip students with communication skills and increase their level of fluency while taking part in discussions in English based on a variety of

topics, such as Becoming Independent, The Globalization of Japanese Culture and Public Behavior. The course is very student centred with a communicative and collaborative focus. The course meets once a week for 90 minutes over the 14-week semester. Participants included thirty level 3 students (TOEIC level 285–500), twenty level 2 students (TOEIC level 500–700) and ten level 4 students (TOEIC level under 285). The place of implementation was the online Discussion classes attended by these students at the university and taught by the researcher and author of this paper. Classes are separated not only based on their English level but also by the faculty the students are members of. Two classes were the Faculty of Community Welfare, one was Tourism, one class was Literature, one was Law and one was Economics.

Instrumentation

This study took a mixed methods approach consisting of a mixed closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire asked students about their experiences of using the IVE Project as part of the course as well as about prior experiences using online forums. The questionnaire was given as a Google Form and asked a set of questions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data regarding their experience of using online forums, their motivation for studying English and their feelings prior to using the IVE Project, during and after. The researcher wanted to ascertain how much experience they had of using online forums prior to participating in the IVE project as part of this class. Questions were also asked to determine if their reason for studying English had changed as a result of the experiences they had communicating with foreign students using English. These questions were open-ended in order to give the students as much freedom as possible to explain their reasons for study and they were allowed to state more than one reason. No options were given and students were free to write their own answers in the space provided. Other questions were asked to gauge how they felt about the experience of using English to communicate with and learn about people in other countries or areas. Again, these questions were open-ended and students could write anything in the space. This was done in order to gather as much data as possible about what the students liked and disliked about the experience. Finally, questions were devised to discover how useful they felt the VE was as a tool for improving their English and to measure any change in their level of motivation, as a result of the experience.

The procedure ran as follows. At the beginning of the semester the students were enrolled in the IVE Project, taught how to use it and told to make at least one post every week as part of their homework. They were told they could make more than one post and by making many posts and replying to other posts and interacting with other students their English was likely to improve. In the final class of the course, students were given the optional and anonymous questionnaire to complete. The research purpose was explained to them, and they were asked for consent.

Results

Prior to the IVE Project, few students had past-experience of using an online forum in their first language, which was Japanese for 100% of the participants in this study, even fewer students had used an online forum in English (see Table 1).

Table 1

Student online forum experiences prior to IVE Project participation

	With L1	Without L1	With L2	Without L2
N ^o of students	12	47	6	53
%	20%	80%	10%	90%

Table 1 shows that prior to the IVE Project 47 students (80%) had never used a forum in Japanese. 12 students (20%) had used a forum in Japanese. Table 1 also shows that prior to the IVE project 53 (90%) had never used an English language online forum before but 6 students (10%) did have some experience of using English on an online forum.

Table 2 shows significant changes in students' reasons for studying English after using the IVE Project.

Since the students gave open-ended, qualitative answers relating to their reasons for studying English, the researcher grouped answers together under representative categories in order to clearly display them in table 2. Students could give more than one reason, hence the answers number more than the total number of students. Looking at table 2, it is clear to see that the most popular reason for studying English pre-IVE Project was *to graduate university*. This answer was chosen by 14 students. This was closely followed in popularity by *to communicate/make friends with foreigners*, which was chosen by 13 students. The third most popular answer, chosen by 9 students, was *to pass an exam*. The fourth most popular, chosen by 8 students, was *to get a job*. Joint fifth, both chosen by six students were *to study abroad* and *to travel*.

After participating, 28 students said their reason to study English was *to communicate/make friends with foreigners*. The next most popular reason was *to study abroad* with 10 students, an increase of 4 students from prior to participation in the IVE project. Graduating university and getting a job are still in the top four most popular reasons with 8 and 6 students respectively stating these reasons, but these numbers have dropped from 14 and 8 students who gave these answers as their main reasons for studying English before taking part in the IVE project.

When the students were told that they would be participating in the IVE Project, many students felt it would be difficult and many others felt stressed or worried, however, this anxiety seemed to dissipate for many after they actually began using the VE (table 3).

Table 2

Student reasons for studying English pre- and post-IVE Project participation

Reason	Students pre	Students post	% pre	% post
To graduate university	14	8	24	14
To communicate/make friends with foreigners	13	28	22	47
To pass an exam	9	2	15	3
To get a job	8	6	14	10
For travel	6	3	10	5
To study abroad	6	10	10	17
For fun	4	2	7	3
To work abroad	4	5	7	8
Useful for the future	3	0	5	0
For homework	1	0	2	0
To improve communication skills	1	2	2	3
To live abroad	1	1	2	2
To read foreign news	1	1	2	2
To understand other cultures	0	1	0	8
To use IVE	0	5	0	2

Table 3

Students feelings about the IVE Project pre-participation and during (post-) participation

Feeling	Students pre	Students post	% pre	% post
Worried/stressed.	8	5	14	9
Thought it would be/was boring.	5	10	8	17
Thought it would be/was difficult.	36	25	61	42
Excited. Thought it would be/was fun.	10	19	17	32

Table 3 shows that the majority of students (61%) felt that using the IVE Project was going to be difficult before they started using it. 17% felt positive about using it, saying they were excited and expected it to be fun. 14% were worried or stressed about the thought of participating in the project and 8% thought that it would be boring. Table 3 also shows how the students felt while taking part in

the IVE project and using the online forum to make posts or read posts made by others. The results found that 42% found the VE difficult during the experience but 32% thought it was fun. 9% were worried or stressed while using the forum and 17% thought that it was boring.

The most popular topic IVE topic among the students was *the Cultures Around Us* with 46% followed by *Student Life in Our Cultures* with 27% (table 4).

Table 4

Most and least enjoyed topics

Topic	Students most enjoyed	Students least enjoyed	% most enjoyed	% least enjoyed
Who We Are	9	5	15	9
Student Life in Our Cultures	16	10	27	17
The Cultures Around Us	27	12	46	20
Gifts	7	32	12	54

Looking at table 4, *Who We Are* was chosen by 15% of the students and *Gifts* by 12%. The least popular topic was clearly *Gifts* as stated by 54% of the students. *The Cultures Around Us* was disliked by 20% of the students. *Student Life in Our Cultures* was the least enjoyable for 17% of the participants. *Who We Are* had the fewest number of students finding it their least favourite topic: 9%.

When making posts on the IVE Project most of the students were most concerned with comprehensibility (Table 5).

Table 5

The main thoughts of students when making a post on the IVE Project

Main thought	N° of students	%
Completing the post, so I could do something else	9	15
Writing a good post, so I could get a good grade	10	17
Writing a post that could be easily understood	28	48
Writing a post that would be interesting	12	20

Table 5 conveys that the most common thought when posting was a focus on making a post that could be clearly understood (48%), followed by a focus on making an interesting post (20%). 17% said they were thinking about writing a good post in order to get a good grade and 15% were thinking about just trying to complete the post so they could do something else.

The majority of the students found it interesting to read posts made by the other users of the forum (table 6).

Table 6

What students thought about reading posts by users from other countries/ parts of Japan?

Answer	N° of students	%
Not interesting at all	1	2
Somewhat interesting	7	12
Interesting	42	71
Extremely interesting	9	15

Table 6 displays that when reading posts made by others a large majority of 71% found them interesting and 15% found them extremely interesting. 12% said they found reading posts somewhat interesting and 2% not interesting at all.

The majority of students perceived the IVE Project as a useful tool for improving their English (68%) (table 7).

Table 7

How useful the students found IVE Project for improving their English?

Perceived usefulness	N° of students	%
Not useful at all	1	2
Somewhat useful	11	18
Useful	40	68
Extremely useful	7	12

Table 7 shows that 12% said it was extremely useful, 18% said it was somewhat useful and only 2% (1 student) said that it was not useful at all for improving their English.

The motivation level of students increased substantially between the pre-test and post-test (table 8).

Table 8

Level of motivation to study English before and after taking part in the IVE Project

Level of motivation	Students pre	Students post	% pre	% post
I had no interest at all in studying English	1	1	2	2
I didn't want to but I thought I need to so I will try	14	6	24	24
I wanted to study English a little	29	34	49	49
I was determined to learn English	15	18	25	25

Table 8 shows that before taking part in the IVE project, 15 students were determined to learn English, 29 wanted to study English a little, 14 didn't want to but thought they needed to try and 1 had no interest at all in studying English. After participating in the IVE project the determination to study English had increased substantially. 18 students said they are determined to study English, 34 said they want to study English a little, 6 said they don't want to but think they need to and 1 said he/she has no interest at all in studying English.

The questions about what students liked and disliked about participating in the IVE project were open ended, so a variety of answers were given. The researcher has tried to group answers which were common and significant to the research. When the students were asked what they enjoyed the most about using the IVE Project, 18 answers referred in some way to learning about/ sharing culture or communicating with foreign people. Answers included, "I was able to communicate with people from various countries" and "I enjoyed learning the different cultures". When they were asked what they did not like about participating in the IVE project 7 answers were related to technology, for example one student said, "The system was difficult". In addition, 7 answers were related to how many students were from the same country or from Japan. Here are two of the answers, "There were many Japanese people" and "Most people are Japanese so I wanted to communicate with people from other countries more".

Discussion

Despite an initial wariness of the project, most students adapted to and became appreciative of the advantages of participation in the VE. Students had little experience of using forums prior to the IVE Project. Table 1 shows 43 had never used a forum in Japanese and 53 had never used a forum in English, so that would explain their concern that it would be difficult and their stress or anxiety about using a VE (table 3). 7 students mentioned difficulty using the forum or the technology

as something they did not like about the VE. However, table 3 shows that most adapted to using the new technology quickly. Past research into the readiness of Japanese students to incorporate CALL into their curricula seems to show that they are far more proficient at using technology, such as their smartphones for gaming, entertainment or socializing than for any educational purposes (Lockley & Promnitz-Hayashi, 2012, as cited in Mehran et al., 2017). However, through learner training, awareness of the merits of tools such as VE and attitudes towards CALL can be positively influenced and this can lead to successful learning outcomes (Hubbard, 2005, in Mehran et al., 2017). This can be seen in the shift from negative preconceptions about using the VE to the change to more positive feelings while actually using the technology in table 3. Moreover, table 7 clearly shows that the majority of the students appreciated the technology as being useful for their English learning.

There seems to be focus placed on both form and meaning when making posts (table 9). Meskill and Anthony (2005) suggest that the extra time afforded to learners by text-based CMC allows for more time for processing and responding appropriately. Perhaps this is a factor in why the students found the exchange both interesting (table 6) and beneficial for improving their English (table 7).

Looking at table 2 the results show that for many, their motivation had changed from instrumental to more integrative (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). It seems to indicate that taking part in the IVE project created or nurtured a desire to meet and communicate with foreigners and experience their culture and to take their language learning outside of the classroom. The popularity of topics related to culture (table 4) seems to show that students greatly enjoy sharing their culture and learning about the culture of others using the forum.

The use of the IVE project outside of class seemed to increase intrinsic motivation in students, which according to Gardener (2010) is one of the attributes of an effective language learner. Table 8 seems to indicate that the IVE Project was able to increase the motivation of students to study English outside of the classroom. When looked at alongside the increase in intrinsic reasons for study (table 2) and the popularity of culture centric topics (table 4), it could be perceived that the use of English as a means to learn about other cultures and share one's own culture could have been a factor in the increase in motivation. Dörnyei & Csizér (2002) state that integrativeness as a temperament is a cognitive and emotive "*identification*", which Garden & Lambert (1972) say stems from being around native speakers of the L2 and their culture.

Block (2007) suggested that learners can create a different identity associated with the L2. Isabelli-García (2006, as cited in Block, 2007) claimed students studying abroad who integrated with the local community to practice the L2 developed a less ethnocentric and more ethnorelative and intercultural identity. Further in relation to identity, could the creation of an online persona in the VE have reduced feelings of anxiety associated with face to face communication among peers and fed a desire to conform and fit in with their online peers (Bullingham & Vasoncelos, 2013). Although further research would be required to answer these

questions other research purports the use of CMC for lowering learner anxiety and increasing confidence: Freiermuth and Jarrell (2006) found that CMC generates greater WTC because it provides a suspension of the social rules of face-to-face communication and they found some learners found this environment for communication preferential.

In relation to the complaint from seven students that the IVE Project had too many participants from Japan or from the same country, this is probably a result of the fact that this VE was first set up in Japan. The creator is trying to grow the project and promote it in a variety of countries and the number of participating countries increase every year. However, it is still most popular in Japan and it seems students can unfortunately be placed in a group that has several participants also based in Japan. Their complaint about this seems to support their integrative motivation to use the language to communicate with foreigners and learn about their culture along with the fact 18 students gave these answers as the thing they liked most about the VE.

Conclusion

The answer to RQ1 is that a virtual exchange using text-based communication can motivate students to use English outside of the classroom. The answer to RQ2 is difficult to ascertain and seems to depend on the individual learner. However, the experience of being able to communicate with people from other countries using the L2 seems for many students to increase their integrative motivation to study the language and so VE should be utilized as a tool to increase practice of the L2 outside of the classroom. Language acquisition requires frequent encounters and opportunities for analysis of the rules of correct usage over a long period of time (Ellis, 2002), as well as opportunities to test the understanding of these rules with output (Swain, 1985). Learners require attentive practice of the language both inside and outside of the classroom in order for acquisition to take place (Hyland, 2004; Nunan & Richards, 2015). Therefore, if CMC can increase the motivation of learners to use English outside of the classroom its use should be explored as a means of bolstering language learning. More research should be conducted involving the benefits of different types of virtual exchanges both synchronous and asynchronous, text-based and live video chat based. Moreover, further research into the effects of communicating with other NNS on L2 identity could also have pedagogical implications and should therefore be encouraged.

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Appendix

Student questionnaire

I am conducting a research project into students' motivation to study English and the use of online forums to study English. I would appreciate if you could answer the questions honestly. None of your personal information will be shared and your answers will only be used for research purposes. The survey is completely optional and will in no way affect your grade.

- 1 Do you consent to your answers being used in this research project?
Yes. No.
- 2 Are you over 18?
Yes. No.
- 3 Before taking part in the IVE project, did you use any online forums in your first language (e.g. Japanese)?
Yes. No.
- 4 Before taking part in the IVE project did you use any online forums in English?
Yes. No.
- 5 Before taking part in the IVE Project, what was your reason for studying English?
- 6 Before taking part in the IVE Project how motivated were you to study English?
 - I had no interest at all in studying English.
 - I didn't want to study English but I thought I need to so I will try.
 - I wanted to study English a little.
 - I was determined to learn English.
- 7 How did you feel when you were told you were going to use an online forum as part of this English class?
 - I was worried/stressed.
 - I thought it would be boring.
 - I thought it would be difficult.
 - I was excited/ I thought it would be fun.
- 8 How did you feel when you were using the online forum?
 - I was worried/stressed.
 - I thought it was boring.
 - I thought it was difficult.
 - I thought it was fun.
- 9 Which topic did you enjoy the most from the IVE project?
 - Who we are
 - Student life in our cultures
 - The cultures around us
 - Gifts
- 10 Which topic did you enjoy the least from the IVE project?
 - Who we are
 - Student life in our cultures
 - The cultures around us
 - Gifts

- 11** When making a post on IVE project what were you thinking about the most?
- Completing the post so I could do something else.
 - Writing a good post so I could get a good grade.
 - Writing a post that would be easily understood by other students using the IVE project
 - Writing a post that students from other countries parts of Japan would find interesting.
- 12** How interesting did you find reading posts by students from other countries or parts of Japan?
- Not interesting at all.
 - Somewhat interesting
 - Interesting
 - Extremely interesting.
- 13** After taking part in the IVE Project, what is your reason for studying English?
- 14** After using the IVE project, forum how motivated are you to study English now?
- I have no interest at all in studying English.
 - I don't want to study English but I think I need to so I will try.
 - I want to study English a little.
 - I am determined to learn English.
- 15** How useful do you think using the IVE Project forum was for improving your English?
- Not useful at all.
 - Somewhat useful.
 - Useful.
 - Extremely useful.
- 16** What did you enjoy the most about using the IVE Project online forum?
- 17** What didn't you enjoy about using the IVE Project online forum?

Author's bio

Jack Pudelek has taught English in Japan for over 12 years. He has an MEd in TESOL and Applied Linguistics. His recent areas of interest for research include CALL, CLIL and learner goal setting.