

論文要旨

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論文題目（外国語の場合は、和訳を併記すること。）

Researching the Pedagogical Praxis of Three In-Service Japanese Teachers of English
in a Private Senior High School

私立高校における現職日本人英語教師三名の教育実践の研究

論文要旨（別様に記載すること。）

This study was ignited into action by the recent educational policy reforms known as English in principle (EIP) or teaching English through English (TETE). This paper argues the importance for continued professional teacher development (PTD) among in-service private school teachers in times of changing policy. The study involved helping three in-service Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) at a private high school in Kumamoto, Japan make conceptual changes in their teaching through PTD. The paper suggests, if access to sponsored PTD is limited, steps should be taken and administrations should be urged to provide teachers with opportunities to develop independent professional teacher development (IPTD) projects. One way to affect positive change in professional teaching is to engage participants in professional discourse. The concept of developing productive professional discourse leading to teacher identity change stems from the work of the sociologist Paul Gee (1990). Applying this to PTD, the work of Donald Freeman (1996) is used to show that having participants reflect and articulate their views on teaching can lead them from a static non-growth state to a professional growth state. Professional discourse was therefore interpreted as contributing to the professional development of the participants, as they

transitioned from passive technicians to reflective practitioners (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Schon, 1983; Schon, 1987) as demonstrated by their changing comments in interviews and behavior in the observation lessons. Furthermore, it is stressed that IPTD projects should be designed to meet the context specific needs of the teachers and facilitate positive change in the classroom through engagement by developing professional discourse and critical reflective practices among participants.

The reflective process of praxis framed the PTD process in this study. As the participants developed their teacher knowledge and critical reflective skills, they began connecting theory to the practical action. Underpinned by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), the author assumed a participatory role in the study by taking on the formal position of more knowledgeable other (MKO). One of the duties of this role was to guide the JTEs through stages of reflection and aid with the development of professional teacher knowledge. By providing the JTEs with opportunities to engage in instructional conversations, a professional discourse was developed which allowed for better articulations of ideas and led to re-conceptualizations of their teaching practices.

This qualitative study is investigative and interpretive. It utilized Template Analysis to guide the data collection and analysis. Falling under the umbrella of thematic analysis, Template Analysis has been picking up traction among qualitative researchers due, in part, to its epistemological flexibility and applicability across a wide-range of research areas. The outcomes of this study are presented as a Final Template which includes three major themes supported by subthemes, which were developed over the course of a three-year span. The study was also framed by the epistemological stance that the participants construct their lived reality through their perceptions of experiences which influence their thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Both the reality that they constructed and the context specific influences were considered to be important to interpret the data. Therefore, this study has epistemological ties to contextual constructivism.

Working within the guidelines of Template Analysis, theoretical focus was quickly brought to the study by applying one *a-priori* theme, designed using the researcher's insider knowledge of the contextual conditions of the school. This led to the emergence of multiple themes, three of which earned their way into the study's final presentation. Themes were correlated with three research questions designed to address the behavioral, theoretical, and developmental domains of the research. The study, therefore, describes the JTEs' day-to-day reality to readers using their own words in the aim of resonating with other teachers who may be facing similar challenges in their own teaching and professional development. Further implication of the study may also be applied by teachers and teacher researchers to frame future IPTD projects.

The main purpose of this study was to facilitate positive changes in the participating JTEs' teaching praxis. To do this, the constraints preventing the participants from implementing the EIP/TETE policy guidelines in their lessons were addressed and discussed in focused guided conversations. Research questions were designed to guide the study and address specific areas of teaching that related to teacher perceptions, their behaviors in the classroom, and how they can inform teacher development. Applying Template Analysis enabled generation of thematic categories first by applying the *a priori* theme then proceeding through the iterative substantive process from which the three major themes of the study emerged.

This study was not experimental in nature and therefore did not begin with a hypothesis or set out to measure data. The changes made in the participants' thoughts and behaviors were described to paint a picture of the participants' teaching realities and the transformative process of their PTD in which it was attempted to find ways to facilitate positive, lasting changes among the participants. By working closely over a two-year period, teacher knowledge was developed and critical reflective practices were improved. Praxis cycles were used to connect theories to practice through reflective actions. Interviews incorporated instructional conversations to bring focus to the discussions aiming them at the participants' thoughts, beliefs, and teaching experiences. This was done to connect theory, method, and action. By considering how institutional and cultural influences informed participant actions in the classroom, participants developed what Schon (1983) refers to as critical reflective skills in-action and on-action. The researcher's insider knowledge of the school, administration, teaching staff, and students was beneficial in facilitating in-depth and revealing dialogues. Being aware of such things as the reduced access to sponsored PTD and the day-to-day demands at the ground-level was not only beneficial, it was a stimulus for organizing this IPTD project and undertaking this qualitative study.

Three full-time JTEs, who represented a cross-section of the full-time English teaching staff, were selected and agreed to participate. They were given an initial questionnaire that included questions designed to assess their knowledge of the EIP/TETE policy revisions, the amount of English used in class, and areas in their teaching that they would like to improve. The questionnaire, corresponds to the research questions aimed to assess: (1) teacher perceptions through the interview process; (2) teacher behaviors by observing the participants in the classroom; and (3) the developmental domain of the PTD process. The questionnaire was followed by interviews conducted one-on-one with each participant to confirm and develop their answers to the survey questions. This was also done to enrich the data through further explanation of the complexities of their situations. The questionnaire and interview comments further substantiated suspicions that there were implicit and

explicit constraints holding the participants to the traditional teaching method that was labelled the “status quo” teaching method in thematic abstraction. This teaching approach was interpreted as preventing participants from developing more active lessons. Therefore, attempts were made in this study to find ways to reduce the gap between what the participants were doing (teaching using the traditional methods) and what MEXT suggested they do (EIP/TETE policy).

Interviews continued throughout the study framed by praxis. Interviews were conducted during the planning and feedback phases of the praxis cycles. Each subsequent interview was further informed by previous data analysis and interpretations made regarding participants’ actions in the classroom. The major themes and their subthemes were abstracted from the data gathered in these interviews, observations, and a total of three questionnaires. Trustworthiness of interpretations was strengthened through collecting data from multiple sources, triangulation of the data collected, and regular member checking. This was important because of the researcher’s closeness to the participants increasing the potential for bias. Member checking was performed at every stage of analysis to insure the interpretations and abstractions were accurate depictions of the participants’ descriptions. The process of thematic coding began early in the study, as soon as transcription commenced. The list of codes in Template Analysis can be created early and then developed as analysis continues (King & Horrocks, 2010). The template of themes was then refined through cross analysis strengthened by substantive, iterative data until the final template included the three major themes discussed in this paper: (1) maintaining the status quo; (2) breaking down barriers; and (3) reconstructing teaching practices.

The paper first provides the context for reports on the situation at the school where the study was conducted as situated in the Japanese education system. Therefore, some historical and cultural background were provided to aid the readers in their contextual understanding. When this study began, the conditions implied that even though there have been great advancements in PTD and the efforts by MEXT to provide extensive learning opportunities to teachers through sponsored seminars and workshops, there may still be places where access to sponsored PTD programs are limited. Such reduced access to the necessary PTD affected teachers at this school negatively, preventing them from performing at their best and holding them to a static non-growth state, focused on maintaining out of date teaching methods as status quo. The skills developed by this approach were focused too strongly on language accuracy leaving inadequate time for developing language fluency (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). MEXT developed the EIP/TETE policy based on projections indicating students will most likely need proficient English communicative skills in the future. However, at this school the teaching remained focus on teaching to the test.

The study attempted to capitalize on the strengths of the participants and help them to better assess, correct, and compensate for their weaknesses. The IPTD project worked from the bottom-up, making use of instructional conversation and co-generative dialogues, to close the gap described above. As Sternberg and Grigorenko (2003) state, there is no one right way of teaching because there is no single way in which all students learn. The participants concern was always based firstly on their students' needs. The important thing in this IPTD project was developing flexibility among participants so that they could begin to apply the teaching theories and methods appropriately within their classrooms. This flexibility was developed through increased reflective action (Schon, 1987) and by building more diverse knowledge of teaching theories and methods. In doing so, the participants appeared to gain the confidence to try different things. Facilitating this kind of diversity required creating an environment where the participating JTEs could reflect on and in their teaching frequently over an extended period of time. It was in this respect that the researcher's insider status positively contributed to the process. Working in collaboration with colleagues ensured contextually accurate discussions on real concerns facing their daily teaching struggles.

Although the EIP/TET policy reform discussed in this paper was initially met with hesitancy, the study showed that this IPTD project was able to find compromises that nudged the participants into action. The policy change was the spark that drew our attention to the issues discussed in this paper, but it was the initiative of the participants, who set out to find ways to improve their teaching practices for their students, that really ignited the change among them. Therefore, this paper argues the importance of more support for teachers through continued PTD as a means to empower and guide teachers through the rigours process of reflective change. This paper showed that when given the chance, teachers are eager to build their teacher knowledge and refine their critical reflective skills.

The depictions of the process of participants' change has the potential for broader implications by resonating with other teachers facing similar challenges in their own professional development. To increase the potential for transferability, a teacher development model is provided in this paper which gives readers a clearly defined course of action to develop effective IPTD projects.

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