

<実践報告>

マルチリテラシーの多様な文脈と方法を操る
—言語学習者にとってのポスター発表の—単元—

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Navigating the *Multis* of Multiliteracies:
A Poster Presentation Unit for Language Learners

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研究の目的	A poster presentation unit was designed to provide language learners with multi-context and multi-mode communication opportunities in order to harness the ICT momentum from remote learning and strengthen in learners an awareness of the demands of literacy in the digital age.
キーワード	Multiliteracies Language education Poster presentations
実践の目的	Explore the benefits of poster presentations for developing multiliteracies awareness and skills
実践者名	Same as the author
対象者	Shinshu University Faculty of Education 2nd-year students enrolled in Practical English IV (150)
実践期間	December 2021 – January 2022
実践研究の方法と経過	In-person classes were conducted using eALPS and Google Apps, and remote classes were conducted on Zoom. Learners used these tools and others to complete their poster presentations. They submitted a final self-evaluation using Google Forms.
実践から得られた知見・提言	This unit provided students with many opportunities to struggle with multi-contexts and multi-modes. Observations showed some learner awareness of the need for different strategies in different situations for successful communication. Learners rated the project an average of 4.3 (out of 5) in terms of interest and usefulness. However, the quality of the poster presentations varied, as did performance in the question and answer sessions. More in-class support activities should be developed.

1. Introduction

The challenges of language education in the digital age are not new. We are already several decades into this information age, and students are digital natives who communicate in diverse ways beyond the reach of the traditional literacy education they often still experience in the classroom. However, the recent use of online and blended learning throughout the pandemic has provided language teachers with a unique opportunity to confront this reality. The necessary integration of technology into language classes, whether they are conducted remotely or face-to-face, has clearly been a step forward. Grammatically correct English papers and sleeker presentations, however, do not themselves demonstrate that language learning in university classrooms has been sufficiently updated. It is not just the tools of language teaching that need to be examined but also the larger goals of language education and the classroom activities that may help students reach them.

To recognize the changing world, a group of scholars who called themselves the New London Group (1996) coined the word *multiliteracies*, and the term has been developed into a pedagogical approach over the past 25 years. The *multis* of multiliteracies are characteristics of the digital age, namely multi-contexts and multi-modes of communication. In terms of multi-contexts, Cope and Kalantzis (2015), members of the New London Group, emphasized that communication “increasingly requires that learners become able to negotiate differences in patterns of meaning from one context to another” (p. 3). They identified “culture, gender, life experience, subject matter, social or subject domain, and the like” (p. 3) as significant factors that must be given due attention. As the world has become smaller, communication contexts have multiplied. The second multi, multi-modes of communication, refers to the changes and challenges to literacy brought about by the technology itself. Cope and Kalantzis (2015) specifically mentioned “synesthesia, or learning that emerges from mode switching, moving backwards and forwards between representations in text, image, sound, gesture, object, and space” (p. 3).

A multiliteracies pedagogical approach in the language classroom requires that communication-focused activities be designed in ways that will challenge learners to confront and navigate multi-contexts and multi-modes of communication. The specific design articulated by Cope and Kalantzis (2015) combines the strengths of both didactic (instructive) and authentic (experiential) pedagogies and highlights the importance of movement among knowledge processes. They have named these processes *experiencing* (situated practice), *conceptualizing* (overt instruction), *analyzing* (critical framing), and *applying* (transformed practice). Experiencing immerses learners in life experiences and builds on what they know, conceptualizing asks them to classify and define what they know, analyzing provides learners with opportunities to explain and evaluate their knowledge, and

applying leads them to move knowledge to new contexts in appropriate and creative ways. Designing classroom activities that utilize and combine these processes can help learners develop the literacy skills that they need for success in today's world.

The classroom poster presentation unit outlined below is an example of a language activity moved to a digital platform. However, more importantly, it is an activity that aimed to help students recognize how language must change as they move what they know among contexts and modes of communication.

2. Poster Presentation Unit

Overview

A poster presentation unit was designed for second-year university Education Faculty students enrolled in a year-long general education course. Learners could choose to work independently or with a partner. It was used in the form described below in the fall semester of 2021 in a course called Practical English IV. The entire unit can be conducted remotely, in-person, or in a hybrid form, as it was done here. When possible, a hybrid approach can naturally add opportunities for learners to experience multi-contexts and multi-modes.

The poster presentation unit took about half of a 14-week semester and consisted of the following main parts: planning, data collection and analysis, poster creation and poster presentation recording, question and answer session, and self-evaluation. It included many opportunities to move information from one context to another using multi- modes of communication, including written and oral texts, graphs, gestures, images, and designs. Thinking skills, presentation skills, and technical skills, which can be useful outside the language classroom as well, all received attention.

This unit was designed for use in an EFL setting so it assumed but did not require use of L1 with peers for planning and also with written or human resources for some data collection (as explained below). In addition, learners were instructed to prepare their posters, poster presentations, questions, and answers with their classmates in mind as target interlocutors. Students were repeatedly reminded that their communication partners were not native speakers. These points are in line with Global Englishes research “that promotes a more flexible view of language, that emancipates non-native speakers from native-speaker norms, that repositions the target interlocutor and where learner agency is central and language creativity is nurtured” (Rose, McKinley & Galloway, 2021, 1.2). The self-evaluations were completed in either English or Japanese.

Planning

This poster presentation unit began with a prompt explaining the purpose, process, and products of the task. Learners were told that they would build on their own knowledge or experience within the field of education and/or investigate a new education topic of interest in order to share information and insights with their classmates through a poster presentation. They were told to focus on specific issues within their own major (e.g., Social Studies Education, Science Education, Music Education) or on more general education issues, and they were encouraged to identify appropriate topics by thinking about the specific education courses they had taken. In this way, the starting point of the unit was each learner. This is an adaptation of the funds of knowledge approach articulated by Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez in 1992.

Learners were then asked to brainstorm and construct possible research questions. Writing a research question was something they had done in class the previous semester, but many still wrote simple yes/no-type questions (that could be answered using a questionnaire with just one question) or questions which were very vague. For example, learners often did not specify whether their investigation was focused on elementary, secondary, or tertiary education; others tried to explore a teaching method without specifying the subject matter. A shared Google Sheet (Table 1) allowed each learner (or each pair) to see the ideas of others while they constructed tentative research questions of their own. They received immediate comments from me and/or others and were able to revise their questions in the Sheet. This activity was conducted in the classroom, so I was able to talk directly to students as well.

Table 1 Google Sheet Used in Brainstorming and Planning

Name	Topic Ideas	Research Question	Comments
CD	Write one or two topic ideas. You should choose a topic related to education. It should be a topic that can be discussed → people have different opinions about it.	A simple yes/no question is not a good RQ. Use question words like "what" or "how" or ...	
	Teaching cursive-style writing in American elementary schools	How does cursive affect the academic life of university students?	

In the planning process, learners moved information from other content courses into the context of our English course. They also moved between English as the language of instruction and their L1, and from other L1 classes and L1 discussions with their peers into

English. In addition, they may have become conscious of how discussion with peers outside their major differed from inside conversations and, through my comments, how their questions were understood by someone who did not share the L1. Although all learners remained inside the English classroom, they were able to experience real context movement that highlighted the importance of understanding a target audience. They also moved from in-person interactions that included sound, gesture and possibly images to digital text.

According to the pedagogical approach of Cope and Kalantzis (2015), what learners “do to know” (p. 17) is a key focus. They affirmed that “Learning is a consequence of a series of knowledge actions, using multimodal media to externalize our thinking” (p. 32). This planning phase of the unit included all knowledge processes: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing, and applying. Learners were engaged in discussions (L1) about their experiences outside the English classroom, they received instruction about writing research questions, they had opportunities to analyze how their questions might be understood or misunderstood by others, and they applied what they learned from comments in order to rewrite them.

Data Collection and Analysis

After learners decided on their research question, they began to brainstorm about data collection. They were required to use at least three forms of data collection: library research, survey questionnaires, and an interview. An expanded Google Sheet provided spaces for them to write their ideas and receive comments about their data collection plans, as they had done when writing their research questions.

The first type of data collection was library research. Learners were expected to find background information about their topic. For example, since my example topic was teaching cursive writing in elementary schools in the United States, I would have needed to find information about the history of teaching cursive and the reasons for it being a point of discussion in the field of education. In most cases, students were able to rely on texts used in other courses, including official documents from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

Learners were also asked to collect data using a Google Form. They had experimented with writing a questionnaire earlier in the semester, so they already had an idea about how to write open and closed questions that could give them useful data related to their research question. They were given options of collecting information about the experiences or opinions of their classmates in our English course (with the Forms written in English) and/or collecting data from members of their major.

The third type of data collection was a simple interview with an “expert” on the topic they were investigating. I suggested interviewing professors on the university campus or active teachers. Some learners interviewed their *sempai* or relatives who were teachers; others, their own teachers from when they were elementary or junior high school students.

Much of the data collection took place in the L1 and outside the classroom. Although some language teachers may feel that time away from L2 is not appropriate, the process provided learners with the challenge of moving information from one context to another and making appropriate changes. These are useful skills in a digital age.

After collecting their data, learners had to analyze them. The library research, survey, and interview were all conducted with the research question in mind. Learners were reminded that the purpose of the research was to answer their question. As we had used a Google Form for conducting a survey in the first semester, learners were familiar with the Google-generated graphs and spreadsheets. They also knew not to rely exclusively on those presentation forms, as they might not be appropriate for the purpose or context of their research. They sometimes used other applications for producing visual aids. The interview data may have been in the form of notes from a verbal response or direct written responses to questions. Learners had to discern what information was relevant.

As in the planning stage, learners here moved ideas between contexts and modes. They interacted with novices and experts on the same topic, and they collected data from paper sources, digital sources, and human sources in various combinations. They likely used their L1 most of the time, which has benefits even in an L2 classroom. By working in their L1, education students were able to delve more deeply into meaningful content. In addition, doing research in L1 and presenting it in L2 was a somewhat more realistic task for these learners. For example, learners majoring in the sciences may expect to present research in English in the future and could do that as a part of this unit. Also, it is important to note that, although often positive, research done in English may involve translation into Japanese, increasingly likely done with the help of machine translation, before it later becomes English output. Other dangers of original sources in English include learners producing language output that neither they nor their interlocutors can understand well and also unintentionally plagiarizing.

This phase of the unit included many opportunities for learners to experience and analyze. They were actively involved outside the classroom in meaningful interactions and they had to work with their data to explain and evaluate them.

Poster Creation and Poster Presentation Recording

Once students had collected and analyzed their data, they were ready to create a poster. They were given an example of a digital poster (Figure 1) created from a single Google Slide but were free to create a poster using other software. The example poster included all the sections that they had to prepare: summary, background, results (survey questionnaire and interview), discussion, conclusion, and references. The discussion section was used to present interpretations and questions related to the data and their relationship to the research question.

Learners were instructed to write the summary last and were told it should be just a few sentences long. They were given an example that included an introductory sentence, a sentence about method, and one or two sentences about the results.

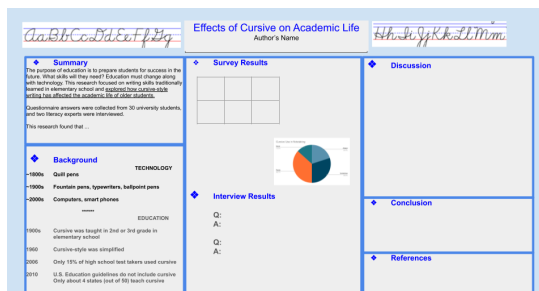


Figure 1 Google Slide Poster Example

Instructions for the rest of the poster were simple: be simple. It was to be a presentation tool. Learners were given examples of easy-to-read presentation forms like bullet lists, tables, graphs, time lines, images, etc. Space limitations forced the learners to work with their data and interpretations, to highlight key words or findings rather than type everything into a machine translator and copy and paste it into a document or an unlimited number of slides. Learners were involved in both translating and summarizing their materials. The summaries were summaries both of the pieces of their research and also of their project as a whole, based on their research question.

Once the poster had been created, learners prepared to record a presentation of their poster. They were given time guidelines (about 3-4 minutes), and instructed not to simply read their posters. The summary, for example, could be read by the listener, so it did not need to be read out loud by the presenter. Rather, the presenter was to lead the listeners through the research process from beginning to end, pointing to sections with the cursor as needed. Poster bullets were to be put into spoken sentences. Learners were expected to highlight important data from graphs but recommend the listeners take time to look at other information by themselves. The recordings were uploaded to eALPS.

Recording the poster provided learners with an opportunity to listen to themselves and re-record if necessary. In addition, the recordings later provided the rest of the class ample opportunity to listen to some presentations multiple times. From the perspective of Global Englishes, these recordings provided useful listening opportunities. In their chapter “Global Englishes and Language Teaching Materials,” Rose and Galloway (2019) wrote that

the authenticity of a text that teachers should be focused on is related to whether or not it “is truly an authentic depiction of the English that learners are most likely to encounter outside the classroom” (p. 135). While learners are unlikely to speak to other Japanese learners in English outside the classroom, it is true that they are more likely to speak with other Asian English users, many of whom might be familiar with Japanese, than with monolingual native English speakers. Although didactic English language instruction must remain important in an English language classroom, it is also necessary to recognize and value the use of authentic multi-linguistic resources in global communication.

Creation of the poster moved information from its collected and analyzed forms to a presentation form. Learners had to think about how to communicate to a wider audience using a single slide. In addition, learners had to prepare a spoken component to accompany the slide. In this phase of the unit, learners were engaged primarily with applying their knowledge in a new context.

Question and Answer Session

The size of the class made it impossible for all students to present during class time. The required uploading of the recording meant that all learners, working individually or in a pair, completed a presentation. However, a live audience was necessary for oral interaction to take place. A question and answer activity was devised to ensure that all presentations were valued and discussed.

Learners were divided into teams of about five individuals or pair presenters, and team forums were created on eALPS. The poster presentation recordings were uploaded to the team forums, and learners were instructed to watch all the presentations. After watching, they posted a question about the content of each presentation. Answers were not posted, but learners looked at the questions before attending the question and answer session.

The question and answer sessions were conducted on Zoom because of the corona situation. With planning, they can be held in the classroom, but Zoom allowed for efficient movement from one team to the next, allowed faces to be shown clearly without masks, and eliminated noise from non-team members. In addition, since video communication apps are likely to be part of the future, it made sense to conduct this session virtually and provide learners with experience in this new context.

During the year-long course, learners had participated in structured discussions, so they were familiar with the process. Before the meeting, a group leader and a timekeeper were chosen. The procedure had also been decided. The leader asked the first person to share their screen to show the poster and remind the listeners of the research question and main

findings. Then they answered a few questions. Although I was present during the sessions and felt that my presence helped create a need-for-English environment, I only asked questions if there was extra time or if there was an unclear answer.

This activity moved the information into a semi-formal setting where there was a need for negotiation. Although students did prepare before the session, there were many occasions of communication breakdown or miscommunication. In addition, there was the added stress (or comfort) of speaking to a screen.

These question and answer sessions were primarily chances for learners to experience and apply. They were immersed in a real language activity, and they were challenged to transfer what they had discovered over the course of several weeks to an interaction of several minutes.

Self-evaluations

After finishing the unit, learners were asked to complete a Google Form questionnaire about the poster presentation process and the question and answer session, as well as about other tasks from the semester. The questions were in English, but they were told they could answer in English or Japanese. One hundred and fifty learners completed the questionnaire.

The question, “You collected data and made a poster. Was this project interesting and useful for you?” was answered using a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 being the highest rating. The average rating was 4.32. In the open question “Why?” following the rating, learners wrote a variety of answers. About 25% of the respondents answered that they found the project satisfying because they could explore their own interest. Twenty percent thought the process would be helpful in the future, for example when they wrote a graduation paper. About 10% specifically mentioned that they enjoyed the interviews. Many others mentioned that they liked thinking about their classmates’ topics. About 15% made a negative comment, sometimes together with a positive one. The most common one was that the unit was difficult and time consuming.

There was a similar 5-point Likert scale question about the question and answer session. The average rating was 3.9. Many commented that they deepened their understanding of their own research or that they appreciated the presentation of other groups. However, there were more negative comments for this interactive piece than for the preparation piece. While some learners commented that they liked Zoom, others reported that they did not. Some felt that they did well or felt that the experience of struggle was helpful, but others reported that they felt they did poorly or were unable to participate.

3. Conclusion

This poster presentation unit provided learners with multi-context and multi-mode communication opportunities in an English language course. Learners moved information from L1 to L2, from expert to novice audiences, and across in-person and digital modes of communication. The unit also incorporated important aspects of a Global Englishes perspective into the lessons. Observations in the classroom and of posted work indicated that many students became aware of the need to navigate the multis of multiliteracies and began to do so. Learners generally rated the unit positively in terms of interest and usefulness, but some found it difficult. More in-class activities at each stage of the poster presentation project should be developed to support learners with their research outside the classroom.

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