

The ICNALE Spoken Dialogue: A New Dataset for the Study of Asian Learners' Performance in L2 English Interviews*

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Ishikawa, Shin'ichiro. (2019). The ICNALE Spoken Dialogue: A new dataset for the study of Asian learners' performance in L2 English interviews. *English Teaching*, 74(4), 153-177.

This paper first surveys three kinds of learner interview corpora (LINDSEI, NICT-JLE Corpus, and Trinity Lancaster Corpus), paying particular attention to their interview structures. Then, it explains the principles and features of the ICNALE Spoken Dialogue (ICNALE SD), which includes 425 videos and approximately 1.6-million-word transcripts of the L2 English interviews with 405 learners from ten regions in Asia and twenty native speakers. The ICNALE SD is one of the largest learner interview corpora and practically the sole dataset for the analysis of dialogue speeches by various Asian learners. As a case study based on the ICNALE SD, the author sought to find out how fluently learners in different regions speak in the interviews, which words they characteristically use, and which relationship is observed among them.

Key words: learner corpus, Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA), dialogue, fluency, vocabulary use

1. INTRODUCTION

The author recently released a new dataset of Asian learners' utterances collected during L2 English interviews. This is known as the ICNALE Spoken Dialogue (hereinafter, ICNALE SD), which is the newest addition to the ICNALE (International Corpus Network

* The ICNALE SD project is supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant (17H02360). This paper is based on a featured lecture by the author at the 2019 Joint International Conference: KATE, GETA, KAMALL, KASEE, KEES, MEESO, and PKETA (July 4-6, 2019 at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, Korea). I sincerely appreciate the kind invitation by the Korean Association of Teachers of English (KATE).

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of Asian Learners of English) on which the author has worked since 2007 (<http://language.sakura.ne.jp/icnale/>).

The ICNALE SD includes (i) approximately 270-hour videos of oral interviews conducted with 405 college students in ten regions in Asia and twenty English native speakers, (ii) approximately 1.6-million-word transcripts of the interviews (approximately 800,000 words for the interviewees' turn), and (iii) detailed background information of the participants. All the data of the ICNALE SD are available online and offline. The ICNALE SD owes a lot to two existing L2 English learners' interview corpora: the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI) (Gilquin, De Cock, & Granger, 2010) and the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, Japanese Learners of English Corpus (NICT-JLE Corpus) (Izumi, Uchimoto, & Isahara, 2004). The ICNALE SD (425 participants/ 1.6 million words) is sufficiently comparable to the LINDSEI (554 participants/ 1.08 million words) and the NICT-JLE Corpus (1,281 participants/ 1.2 million words) in terms of size. Thus, the ICNALE SD has become one of the largest learner interview corpora available to the public, and it is practically the sole dataset for analysis of spoken dialogues by Asian learners with varying L1 backgrounds and L2 proficiencies.

This paper illustrates how the ICNALE SD has been developed by comparing it with the LINDSEI and the NICT-JLE Corpus. It also briefly shows how much and in which way learners from ten regions in Asia make utterances in L2 English spoken dialogues.

2. EXISTING INTERVIEW CORPORA

2.1. LINDSEI

The LINDSEI was compiled at Louvain Catholic University in Belgium, which is also known for having developed a ground-breaking learners' essay corpus—the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) (Granger, Dagneaux, Meunier, & Paquot, 2009). As such, the main goal of the LINDSEI project is to “gain a better understanding of the acquisition of spoken skills by EFL (English as a foreign language) learners, notably by comparing it to the acquisition of written skills by similar-type learners” (Gilquin, De Cock, & Granger, 2010, p. 4).

The LINDSEI includes the data of 554 college students at an advanced level from eleven different L1 backgrounds (Bulgarian, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Spanish, and Swedish). The number of participants in one L1 group is around fifty.

The LINDSEI data is collected from approximately fifteen-minute-long oral interviews.

The interview structure is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
LINDSEI Interview Structure

Task	Content
Set Topic	An interviewee is given a topic (“an experience teaching you an important lesson,” “a country impressing you,” or “a good/bad film or play”), then after a few minutes preparation, s/he talks about it for 3-5 minutes.
Free Discussion	The interviewee answers questions related to the set topic and other topics (university life, hobbies, traveling abroad, etc.) given by an interviewer.
Picture Description	The interviewee makes up a story based on the four pictures given by the interviewer.

The LINDSEI team points out that the data collected in the set topic task and the picture description task may not be entirely spontaneous, which is why they call their dataset a “database,” not a “corpus,” but that collected in the free discussion task can be sufficiently spontaneous (Gilquin, De Cock, & Granger, 2010, p. 5).

2.2. NICT-JLE Corpus

NICT-JLE Corpus is a collection of learner utterances in the Standard Speaking Test (SST), which is an approximately fifteen-minute-long oral proficiency interview (OPI) test developed for Japanese learners of English. Participants’ oral proficiency is classified into nine levels. The interview structure is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
NICT-JLE Corpus Interview Structure

Task	Content
Warm-up	An interviewee answers easy ice-breaker questions about familiar topics given by an interviewer.
Picture Description	The interviewee describes a single picture that the interviewer has chosen from seven pictures.
Role-play	The interviewee does a role-play with the interviewer based on an instruction card that the interviewer has chosen from fourteen cards, which vary in terms of the situation and the difficulty level.
Story-telling	The interviewee describes serial pictures on a card that the interviewer has chosen from nine cards. Four or six pictures are on each card.
Wind-down	The interviewee answers easy questions about familiar topics given by the interviewer.

It is known that many of the Japanese learners are not fluent in L2 English, and they often have a problem developing their story. Considering this, the SST’s interview structure, which gives a greater number of shorter tasks to the interviewees, seems to be

more suitable for Japanese learners than the LINDSEI interview format is.

In the SST, participants' oral proficiency is evaluated through the interviews, which enables an interviewer to choose a prompt that is suitable for each participant. For example, in "a train station" role-play, a novice learner is required to buy a ticket by saying where s/he wants to go, an intermediate learner is required to buy a ticket for a train arriving at the destination at the earliest time, and an advanced learner is required to claim for a refund by saying that s/he could not get onto the designated train. The SST's idea of preparing different tasks for learners at different L2 proficiency levels is reasonable when trying to elicit a certain amount of utterance even from novice learners, but it may make a comparison of the outputs by different learners somewhat more problematic.

2.3. The Trinity Lancaster Corpus

We also like to mention the Trinity Lancaster Corpus (TLC), which is one of the most recently released learner interview corpora (Gablasova, Brezina, & McEnery, 2019). It includes transcripts of approximately 4.2-million-word utterances recorded in the Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE) administered by Trinity College London. The number of participants is 2,053, including 369 participants from Spain, 352 participants from Italy, 313 participants from Mexico, 295 participants from China, 205 participants from India, 176 participants from Argentina, and 103 participants from Sri Lanka. Participants from these seven countries account for 88% of all the participants. The participants' proficiency is classified into three levels: B1 (Threshold), B2 (Intermediate), and C1/2 (Advanced), based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The interview structure varies greatly according to the level of the participants. The interview for advanced learners is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
TLC Interview Structure

Task	Content
Presentation	An interviewee makes a presentation on a topic that s/he has chosen and prepared beforehand.
Discussion	The interviewee answers questions about the content of his/her presentation.
Interactive	The interviewee has a conversation with an interviewer about the topic that the interviewer has chosen (e.g., "I haven't heard from a friend of mine... and I'm beginning to get a bit worried").
Conversation	The interviewee has a conversation with the interviewer about general topics (e.g., "society and living standards," "personal vs. ideal")

Learners at the B2 level skip the presentation task, and learners at the B1 level skip both the presentation task and the interactive task, meaning that only the discussion task and the conversation task are done by all the participants. As each task is said to be around five-to-six-minutes long (Cervantes & Gablasova, 2018, p. 33), the total interview time is assumed to be roughly 10-12 minutes for intermediate learners, and 20-24 minutes for advanced learners.

3. DESIGN OF THE ICNALE SD

3.1. Basic Principles

As a part of the ICNALE, the ICNALE SD shares the basic principles with the other ICNALE components: Written Essay Module (2,800 participants/ 1.3 million words) (Ishikawa, 2011, 2013), Edited Essay Module (320 participants/ 150,000 words) (Ishikawa, 2018a, 2018b), and Spoken Monologue Module (1,100 participants/ 0.5 million words) (Ishikawa, 2014).

First, the ICNALE SD focuses on Asian learners living in EFL regions (China: CHN, Indonesia: IDN, Korea: KOR, Japan: JPN, Thailand: THA, and Taiwan: TWN) and in ESL (English as a second language) regions (Hong Kong: HKG, Malaysia: MYS, Pakistan: PAK, and the Philippines: PHL). The previous ICNALE modules include the data of Singaporean learners, which is replaced by the data of Malay learners in the ICNALE SD. This is because we could not collect learners at different proficiency levels in Singapore. The corpus also includes the L1 output data of English native speakers (ENS) coming from the USA, the UK, and other regions, who have the experience of teaching English to non-native learners. Thus, the ICNALE SD, which is primarily a dataset for the study of the L2 oral outputs by Asian learners, can also be used for the comparative study of different types of English speakers in an inner circle, an outer circle, and an expanding circle (Kachru, 1985).

Second, the ICNALE SD pays much attention to the policy of collecting comparable data. One of the most common analytical techniques in learner corpus studies is a contrastive interlanguage analysis (CIA) (Granger, 1996), which means a comparison of learners and native speakers or of learners having different L1 backgrounds. For example, one can discuss the difference between Japanese learners of English and English native speakers and also investigate the difference between Japanese learners of English and Korean learners of English. What matters here is data comparability. If there are two sets of data that different speaker groups produced in different conditions (e.g., different topics, different tasks, and different task durations), it would be extremely difficult to interpret the difference observed between those datasets. The difference may derive from the difference

in the speaker groups, but it also may come from the difference in the conditions for L2 outputs (Ishikawa, 2013; Ädel, 2015). As Caines and Buttery (2018) suggest, “situational variables such as document length, task and topic” may have a decisive effect on learner outputs. Unless controlling these parameters appropriately, we could not draw any strong conclusion about “proficiency–level profiling, learner progress and so on” (p. 5). This risk increases in interview corpora, in which who an interviewer is and how an interview is administered can be additional variables.

Therefore, we took four kinds of preventive measures in the ICNALE SD. First, we decided to give the same tasks to all the participants, regardless of their L2 proficiencies. Second, we prepared the detailed interview protocol book for interviewers, which lists all the sentences and expressions that they should say in each task, though partial revisions are accepted, especially in the role-play tasks. Third, we gave a training session to all the interviewers, who were selected among local college English teachers having the same L1 as the learners. They were required to videotape their first interview and send the video to the project team, who scrutinized whether the interview was conducted according to the plan, and gave them detailed feedback. After this training session, an interviewer was allowed to resume the remaining interviews. Finally, we developed two sets of interview tasks linked to the prompts adopted in the previous ICNALE modules (“it is important for college students to have a part-time job” and “smoking should be completely banned at all the restaurants in the country”). All these measures to collect comparable data are expected to contribute to the “sophistication” of traditional CIA studies (Ishikawa, 2013).

Third, the ICNALE SD collects detailed learner background data, including basic personal attributes (sex, age, college major, etc.), L2 proficiency, L2 learning experiences (experiences of using four skills in and outside classes, being taught by native-speaker teachers, and learning essay writing and/or public speeches), and L2 learning attitude (motivation types, preference of using English, etc.) as in the other ICNALE modules. As McEnery et al. (2019) summarize, “(t)here are currently few well-structured data sets that permit the study of variables relevant to SLA, such as proficiency level, sociolinguistic variables (e.g., age, educational attainment, social class), contextual features (including different registers and modes of communication), and L1 background.” Most of the variables mentioned here have been surveyed in the ICNALE SD. Concerning the survey of learner proficiency, all the non-native participants are required to report their scores in standard proficiency tests such as TOEFL and TOEIC. The participants are also required to take a common vocabulary size test covering the top 5,000 words (Nation & Beglar, 2007), where they choose an appropriate definition of the target word, before participating in the project. See Figure 1 for an example.

FIGURE 1**A Sample Question from the Vocabulary Size Test**

- | |
|--|
| Please be <u>candid</u> .
1. be careful
2. show sympathy
3. show fairness to both sides
4. say what you really think
5. "I don't know this word." |
|--|

Based on the scores in the proficiency tests or in the vocabulary size test, all the participants are classified into the four CEFR-linked proficiency bands (A2, B1 lower, B1 upper, and B2 or higher).

3.2. Interview Structure

Although the NICT-JLE Corpus and the Trinity Lancaster Corpus collect the data from the existing interview tests, we developed interview tasks from scratch. The interview protocol adopted in the ICNALE SD has three unique features.

First, the duration of an interview is longer. This is because we expected that it would be difficult to elicit a sufficient amount of oral output from Asian learners in just ten or fifteen minutes, especially at a novice level. Therefore, we structured the interview so that it would last for around 40 minutes.

Second, a persuasion role-play is included. A role-play is generally assumed to provide a clue for “inferences about the candidates’ proficiency to use language pragmatically appropriate for the situation posed in the scenario presented by the interviewer.” (Ross, 2017, p. 77). However, when giving an easy task, it is difficult to investigate the participants’ pragmatic and communicative skills. If a participant were told to simply buy an item from a shop clerk in a role-play, the exchange between an interviewee and an interviewer would be highly patterned. Therefore, we decided to give the participants role-plays with a certain level of difficulty and cognitive load. Thus, we developed role-play tasks in which the participants were required to persuade someone stubborn and tenacious to do something that s/he does not like to do. In these tasks, they need to disagree with a formidable opponent. Gablasova and Brezina (2018) say that “more effort is required in realizing ‘dispreferred’ speech acts [like disagreement]” because they include “a potential threat to [the face of] one of the interlocutor” (p. 70). Under such a communicative and cognitive pressure, the participants naturally speak up and take the initiative in the negotiation.

Third, an L1 reflection task is included. We tell the participants to reflect their performance in their mother tongue at the very end of the interview. Incorporating an L1 task into an L2 oral interview, which is unique to the ICNALE SD, has several merits. First,

we can end the interview without leaving participants who do not perform well with a negative feeling, which is pedagogically essential. Second, we can directly ask a participant why s/he has (or has not) made various linguistic choices during the interview, which helps us to understand how s/he has perceived each task and how s/he has intended to deal with it. Finally, we can collect the data about the participants' L1 fluency, which we can use as a baseline when discussing their L2 fluency. Comparison of two kinds of fluencies seems to be a promising area of study, which would enable us to model the relationship between L1 fluency, L2 fluency, and the overall willingness to communicate (WTC) (MacIntyre, 1994). Currently, transcripts of L1 reflections are offered only for Japanese learners.

The structure of the interview in the ICNALE SD is as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
The ICNALE SD Interview Structure

Task	Content
<i>Introduction (Icebreaking)</i>	
Introduction	An interviewee answers easy questions about his/her English learning.
<i>Part-time Job Task Set</i>	
Picture Description	The interviewee describes six serial pictures about a boy having a part-time job at a computer shop to earn money to go swimming with his friends.
PD-related QA	The interviewee answers questions about the contents of the pictures (swimming and computers) and gives an opinion on the college students' use of smartphones.
Role-play	The interviewee plays the role of a college student wishing to continue his/her part-time job. The interviewee is told to persuade his/her supervisor, who firmly believes that students should not have part-time jobs, to allow him/her to continue working.
RP-related QA	The interviewee answers questions related to the topic of the role-play (part-time jobs) and gives an opinion on the college students' part-time jobs.
<i>Non-smoking Task Set</i>	
Picture Description	The interviewee describes six serial pictures about a mother with her son, who tells a nearby smoker to stop smoking in the park.
PD-related QA	The interviewee answers questions about the contents of the pictures (a park and the depicted woman) and gives an opinion about the cleanness of public parks.
Role-play	The interviewee plays the role of a customer who had a meal with his/her friend at a restaurant that allows smoking. The interviewee is told to persuade a restaurant owner to refund his/her money because his/her friend could not enjoy the meal due to too much smoking.
RP-related QA	The interviewee answers questions related to the topic of the role-play (restaurants) and gives an opinion on the ban on smoking at restaurants.
<i>Reflection</i>	
L2 Reflection	The interviewee answers questions about the whole interview.
L1 Reflection	The interviewee answers questions about different tasks in the interview in his/her L1.

The interviews in the ICNALE SD are considerably longer than those in the previous learner interview corpora. The average duration of the 425 interviews is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Duration of ICNALE SD Interviews

Task	L2 Interview*	L1 Reflection	Total
Duration (mm:ss)	32:09	5:31	37:40

Note: L2 interview includes L2 reflection.

3.3. Participants

The learner participants in the ICNALE SD are all the college students (including some graduate students) studying in ten regions in Asia, and the English-native-speaker participants are the English teachers currently working at a language school based in Japan. Although we intended to recruit 20 or 30 participants evenly from each region, we eventually collected more data in several regions. The number of participants in each speaker group and the quantity (i.e., the number of tokens) of their utterances are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6
Participants and Their Oral Outputs

		Number of Participants					Quantity of the Utterance		
		A2	B1L	B1U	B2+	Total	Time	Token 1	Token 2
EFL	CHN	2	13	17	18	50	33H	202,058	103,673
	IDN	6	6	16	2	30	19H	134,832	61,175
	JPN	31	29	28	12	100	67H	350,697	151,646
	KOR	0	3	7	10	20	13H	80,912	33,491
	THA	7	12	19	2	40	28H	149,126	74,615
	TWN	11	7	16	16	50	33H	185,995	83,466
ESL	HKG	0	10	9	11	30	20H	132,082	83,846
	MYS	2	4	14	0	20	14H	81,122	42,031
	PAK	5	6	13	1	25	13H	95,957	49,951
	PHL	1	1	34	4	40	18H	112,789	59,798
ENS	ENS	---	---	---	---	20	9H	79,449	46,258
Ttl	--	65	91	173	76	425	270H	1,605,019	789,950

Note: “B1L” and “B1U” represent B1 lower level and B1 upper level, respectively. “Time” represents the total duration of the interview videos. “Token 1” is the number of words said by the interviewers and the interviewees, while “Token 2” is the number of words said only by the interviewees. These numbers do NOT include the utterances in L1 reflections.

A corpus user needs to note two things. First, the distribution of proficiency levels is not even across different speaker groups. For example, the ratio of the participants at the B1

level varies between 46% (TWN) and 90% (MYS). When the whole dataset of Taiwanese learners is compared to that of Malay learners, the meaning of observed differences is not necessarily clear (See 3.1). It would be safer to compare different speaker groups at the same proficiency band. A user also needs to understand that there may be a gap between the proficiency measured in the receptive tests and the actual performance in the oral interviews. Second, there exist two kinds of Chinese learner data. CHN_001 to CHN_025 are the participants currently studying in Japan, and the “L1” reflection was conducted in Japanese, while CHN_026 to CHN_050 are the participants studying in mainland China, and the L1 reflection was conducted in Mandarin.

3.4. Collected Data

Here, we introduce a sample of the collected learner speeches in different task types. The quotations below were taken from “a part-time job” task speech of JPN_016, a twenty-year-old female participant whose English proficiency was classified into the B1 upper level. Figure 2 shows the participant in the interview.

FIGURE 2
Japanese Participant



First, in the introduction task, an interviewer asked several questions about the participant's experience of learning English. [T] and [S] stand for a teacher (interviewer) and a student (interviewee), respectively.

(1) [T] ...maybe as you know, there are four basic language skills; I mean reading, listening, writing, and speaking. In your opinion, which is the most important thing?

[S] Um. Umm. Listening.

[T] Listening, why do you think so?

[S] Um. I --- I think the listening is the basic skills to understand the foreign language. And if I travel --- travel in a foreign country, it is difficult to um-eh it is difficult to uh travel in a foreign country without listening skill I think.

Some of the EFL learners tend to answer the questions in short and simple sentences. In this case, the participant answered the question with just one word, “listening.” However, this does not necessarily suggest a lack of proficiency because, when the interviewer asked “why,” the learner soon developed her sentence in a proper way.

Next, in the picture description task, the participant was given a prompt card, as seen in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3
Picture Prompt Card (A part-time job)



Then, the interviewer told the participant to describe the pictures. The description needed to begin with “a few weeks ago.” The interviewer checked whether the participant could control the past tense consistently.

(2) [S] A few weeks ago, a man --- a man would um a man was planning to swim in the sea and --- but he didn't have much money and he didn't match enough money to go to the sea. So, he not --- he find --- he founded a job, a part-time job, and he --- he um he noticed --- no --- noticed a staff wanted --- wanted and he take --- he took a part-time job. And he um he got a money to go to the sea, so --- so he --- he --- and so he was able to go to the sea and he did it.

This participant controlled the tense considerably well. When she happened to say,

“find,” she soon realized that she had made a mistake and tried to correct it. However, she was presumably too conscious about the past tense and said, “*founded,” which seemed to be an overcorrection.

Next, the interviewer gave several questions related to the content of the picture.

(3) [T] ...And then, perhaps you have some experiences of swimming in the sea, not in the pool. Please introduce your experience to me.

[S] Um. When --- when I was in XXX (place), I --- I went to XXX uh I went to the sea.

[T] Um-hmm.

[S] And I --- and then, I --- I was a child.

[T] Um-hmm.

[S] So, I can --- I um I --- I can swim a little. And my father and I swim eh swam uh --- swam uh around and near --- near and I --- I um XXX (place) --- in uh in XXX sea is --- sea --- sea was --- sea was beau --- beautiful --- more beautiful than that in XXX.

[T] Oh, really?

[S] So --- so, I --- I enjoyed it so much.

In comparison to the picture description, the participant seemed to have greater difficulty in dealing with this free discussion, where she was required to think and speak at the same time. Thus, she made several tense errors (my father and I *swim/ sea is*), but she soon made self-correction. The participant kept her monitor even in a more interactive and cognitively challenging task.

The next was a role-play task. The participant was given a role card, where the instruction was given in two languages, that is, English and the participant's mother tongue (in this case, Japanese). The participant was required to persuade a strict college supervisor firmly believing that students should never have a part-time job to allow her to continue working.

(4) [S]Umm. [...]. Um. I would like to continue a part-time job um there uh for two reasons.

[T] Um-hmm.

[S] And one reason is that a part-time job is --- is the --- is the only way to earn money um by myself.

[T] Um-hmm.

[S] And at the univer um when I uh when we are uni uh you --- when we are the university students, and we have to uh we need more --- we need much money. And

we --- but we --- our only way to earn money is a part-time job. So, I would like to a part-time and I would like to continue a part-time job. Two re --- and second, um, a part-time job is easy. Uh. It is important to --- to continue part-time job um uh in order to develop, so develop various skills in society. A part-time job is essential. Um. At school, we talked about --- talk about uh talk to young people or young people --- many young people. But um part-time job --- at the part-time job, um, we --- we can talk to very --- various aged people. And --- and we --- we can --- we can um we can um we can experience a very much in a part-time job.

[T] Okay, I see. All right, I understand. However, actually if you need the money, maybe you can borrow the money from the government. You can get a scholarship.

[S] Oh!

[...]

[T] So actually, you are really a good student. So as your teacher, I want you to stop working immediately and then to spend more time for study.

[S] Umm. Um. And --- and --- and spending more --- spend --- spending --- spending a lot of time studying is nice --- is not necessarily important and. [Overwrapping]

[T] Excuse me, why --- why you say so? You have entered university to study, not to play, not to work.

[S] Yes, uh, but --- but --- and uh and we um if I --- I can --- I can study effectively, um, the time is decrease and the time --- the time to study is increase --- uh decrease so um.

[T] Um-hmm. I --- I understand. It is good for you to study effectively. However, if you have no jobs, maybe you can study more and more in a more effective way. A longer time in a more effective way. So, that's why I think that maybe you should stop working.

[S] Umm. Umm. Um. A part-time job is uh a part-time job prevents studying, but um experience um I --- I had --- I have in a part-time job and if um and uh if uh uh it can be used in a study, so. [Overlapping]

[...]

A persuasion role-play is generally a challenging task for learners (even for English native-speakers), but the participant kept trying to persuade a supervisor anyway by introducing various reasons. In this task, we see how a learner can utilize any linguistic and non-linguistic resources available to complete a communicative mission.

Then, the interviewer asked the participant what part-time job she was doing or had done before and how she felt about college students having a part-time job, which can be a kind of winding-down after a tough role-play task.

(5) [T] So finally, some people say that it is important for college students to have a part-time job. Do you agree with this opinion or you disagree with it?

[S] Um. I --- I disagree to this idea.

[T] Um. Why?

[S] Um. A part-time job is um a part-time job have [has?] to be uh have to um-um to uh we should uh we should part um we should um start a part-time job in um in condition that we can work.

[T] Uh-huh.

[S] And --- and I --- I think a part-time job is not uh should not be imposed by other people. So um now our --- our um so we should decide --- we --- we should decide to start a part-time job or not to start a part --- a part-time job by myself.

Then, the participant was given another set of “non-smoking” tasks. When all the tasks were finished, the interviewer gave some questions to make the participant reflect on the whole interview.

(6) [T] ... many people say that... so... they feel very nervous when speaking in English. Did you have the same feeling today?

[S] Um. Um. Uh. Yes.

[T] Um. Yes? So, what should you do or what do you think we should do uh to decrease our nervousness uh when in --- when speaking in English?

[S] Um. We should be used to speak in English in public or um ordinary situation.

Here, an interviewer informed the participant about the end of the L2 interview and then, using the participant's L1, asked additional questions about each task included in the interview. The quotations below are translated into English by the author.

(7) [T] How was your performance in the role-play? The supervisor was really strict, as you remember. (Laugh)

[S] No-o-o! It was miserable. It was was not good at all. (Laugh)

[T] I know. That supervisor didn't pay any attention to the student's claim. (Laugh). Are there anything you can or you like to say in Japanese to persuade that supervisor?

[S] So, well...

[T] Maybe this is not a matter of language.

[S] Well... (Laugh) If I do a part-time job, it makes my brain work better and it is good for my study... or something...

[T] Wow! It would be good if you could have said it in the English interview.

By observing such an L1 exchange, a researcher can estimate the participant's L1 fluency or his/her general speaking style, which should be considered as a baseline when discussing a learner's L2 fluency. In addition, the researcher can see how the participant perceives each task in the interview.

The interview in the ICNALE SD takes much longer than the interviews in the other learner interview corpora. However, the idea of combining multiple tasks leads to eliciting as much and varied output as possible from a variety of Asian learners.

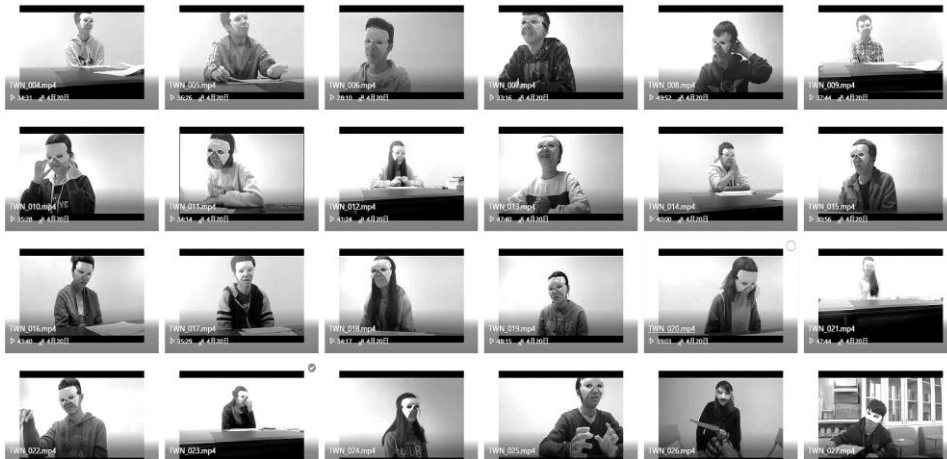
3.5. Application

The ICNALE SD can be utilized for various research purposes. Users can investigate the complexity (e.g., word level, lexical variety, sentence length, syntactic embedding, use of gerunds, subjunctive modes), accuracy (e.g., ratio of error-free sentences), and fluency (e.g., number of tokens, turn-taking, or disfluency markers such as pauses and fillers) of learner utterances in dialogues. In addition, the influence of learners' backgrounds (L1, L2 proficiency, sex, learning experiences, motivation, etc.) and tasks (free conversation, picture description, persuasion role-play) on the quantity and quality of learner utterances could be an interesting topic for discussion.

Another promising area of study is a pragmatic analysis of learners' oral outputs. As summarized in Timmis (2015), previous L1 speech studies have revealed many interesting facts about native speakers' use of the first and the second person pronouns, high frequent basic verbs, discourse markers (e.g., "well," "just," and "right"), response tokens (e.g., "absolutely," "certainly," and "definitely"), evaluative and emotive words (e.g., "good," "lovely," and "bad"), fillers, vague expressions, and collocations (e.g., "you know," "a bit," and "come on") (pp. 84-91). Furthermore, O'Keefe, McCarthy, and Carter (2007) point out four key topics in pragmatic studies: discourse marking (e.g., "you know"), face and politeness (e.g., "I was going to say," "Do you think," and "Do you want me to"), hedging (e.g., "sort of" and "a bit"), vagueness and approximation (e.g., "and things like that") (pp. 71-75). By analyzing the ICNALE SD, a researcher could investigate how Asian learners use a great variety of pragmatic devices in L2 discourses.

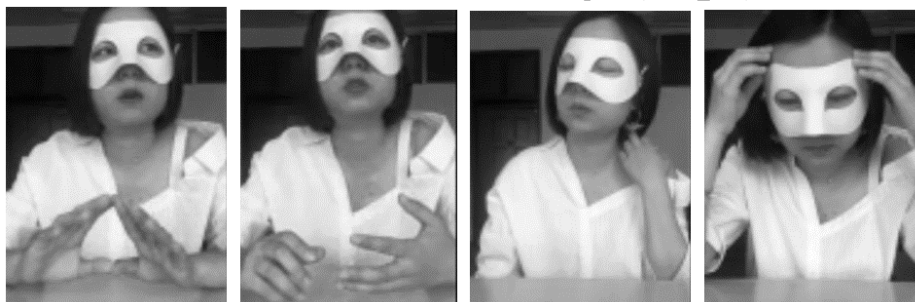
In comparison to the other existing learner corpora, the ICNALE SD is unique in that it gives full access to the video data. See Figure 4 for an example. By analyzing the videos, researchers can investigate each participant's pronunciation and intonation. They can also discuss how the participant uses his/her gaze (eye contact), hand, head, and body to facilitate L2 communication. These non-textual behaviors, especially those of learners, have been hardly studied to date.

FIGURE 4
Video Files Available Online



Adolphs and Carter (2013), who are known as developers of the Nottingham Multimodal Corpus (a collection of thirteen videos of English lectures and seminar conversations between a teacher and a graduate student at a UK college), regard head gestures and hand gestures as “headtalk” and “handtalk” (p. 158) and emphasize the importance of paying attention to “behavioral, gestural and linguistic features” (p. 145) in speeches. The video data included in the ICNALE SD (see Figure 5 for an example) should make it possible to conduct this kind of new multi-modal analysis of Asian learners’ performance in L2 dialogues.

FIGURE 5
Headtalk/Handtalk of a Chinese Participant (CHN_048)



4. A CASE STUDY: FLUENCY AND VOCABULARY USE OF ASIAN LEARNERS

4.1. Aim

How do Asian learners perform in L2 English interviews? What kind of difference can be observed between learners in different regions and English native speakers? We will discuss these points by analyzing the ICNALE SD. Our research questions are shown below:

RQ1: How fluently do Asian learners speak in L2 English interviews? (Fluency)

RQ2: Which words are overused or underused by Asian learners? (Keywords)

RQ3: What relationship is seen among different speaker groups in terms of their use of basic vocabulary? (Relationship among speaker groups)

4.2. Data

We used the ICNALE SD (v 1.0). In order to control the possible influence of L2 proficiency, we analyzed the data of only 173 learners at the B1 upper level as well as those of twenty English native speakers.

4.3. Method

In terms of RQ1, we calculated the mean word-per-minute (WPM) fluency for each speaker group. Let us take an example of a group of Chinese learners. First, we investigated the WPM of the participant CHN_001 (B1 upper). The duration of the L2 interview for this participant was 32:09 (1,929 seconds), during which s/he produced 1,718 tokens. In this case, the WPM fluency for CHN_001 was calculated as 53.4. After obtaining the WPM fluency of each of the seventeen Chinese learners at the B1 upper level, we calculated the mean WPM fluency for a group of Chinese learners (58.3).

Then, in terms of RQ2, we compared the frequencies of the words used by a target learner group and those used by a native speaker group and extracted the keywords significantly overused or underused by the target learner group. The judgment of “keyness” was based on the log-likelihood score. The higher the score is, the more saliently a word appears in the target dataset. We paid attention to the keywords whose log-likelihood scores were higher than 30.0. Non-lexical fillers (e.g., “uh,” and “mmm”), proper nouns (e.g., “Japan,” “English,” and “Chinese”), fragments of words (e.g., “s,” “d”), and the words related to particular tasks were excluded manually.

Finally, with regard to RQ3, we chose the top fifty words that native speakers used most

frequently in the interviews, which we used as a sample for the current analysis. Then, we examined how often these words were used by different speaker groups. Regarding the vocabulary (fifty words) and speaker groups (ten groups) as Item 1 and Item 2, we conducted a correspondence analysis to turn multivariate data into a few dimensions, and put each of the item category data on a scatter plot. By observing the plot, we discussed how nine learner groups and a native speaker group were clustered and what words characterized each cluster.

4.4. Results

4.4.1. RQ1: Fluency

First, we compared the mean WPM fluencies of EFL learners in six regions, ESL learners in four regions, and English native speakers. The difference between EFL learners and ESL learners (Welch: $t(155.91) = 6.96$; $p < .001$; $d = 1.07$) and the difference between ESL learners and native speakers ($t(27.23) = 3.61$; $p = .0012$; $d = 1.02$) were both significant. It can be said that ESL learners speak more than EFL learners do and native speakers speak more than ESL learners do. The difference between EFL and ESL learners may be explained by the fact that EFL learners have relatively limited opportunities to “use” English in and outside the classes. They can perform considerably well in the proficiency tests or the vocabulary size test, but they cannot perform well enough in real discourse situations. Then, we compared the mean WPM frequencies of different speaker groups. See Figure 6 and Figure 7 for the results.

FIGURE 6
Mean WPM Fluencies of EFL/ ESL Learners and English Native Speakers

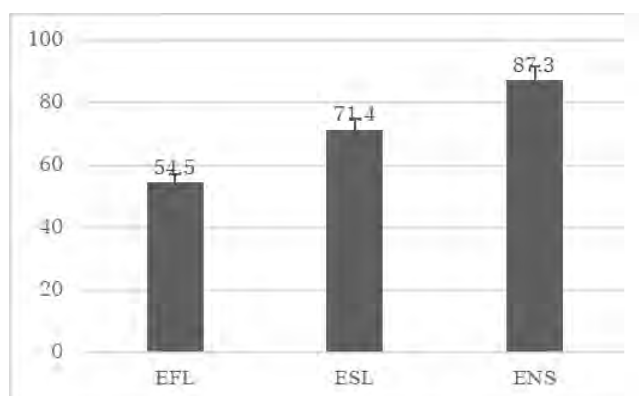
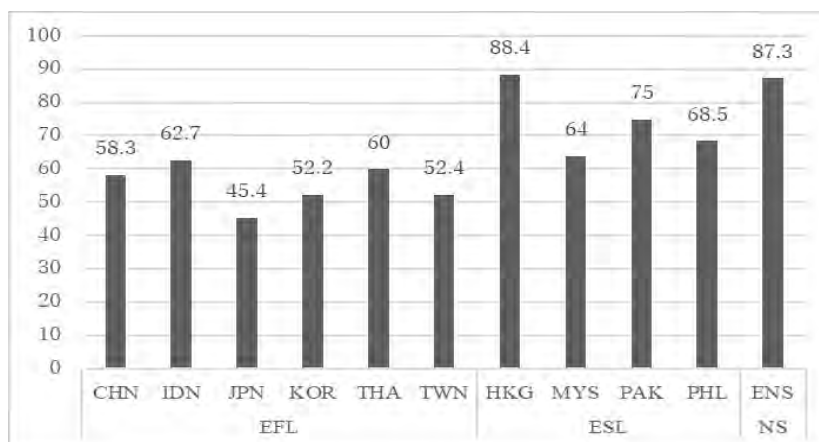


FIGURE 7
Mean WPM Fluencies of the Different Speaker Groups



The WPM fluencies of the EFL learners were between 45.4 and 62.7, which were equivalent to 52.0-71.8% of the fluency of the ENS. Meanwhile, the fluencies of the ESL learners were between 64.0 and 88.4, which were equivalent to 73.3-101.3% of the fluency of the ENS. Among all the speaker groups, the relatively limited fluency of Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese learners drew our attention.

4.4.2. Keywords

Key overused and underused words are listed in Table 7. The words whose log-likelihood scores were higher than 100 are shown in bold italics. What matters here is that many overused and underused words are shared across different learner groups. Table 8 shows the words that were over/underused commonly in three or more regions.

Learner speeches are often self-centered (“I,” “(I) want...,” “(I) think...”), responsive (“yes,” “yeah”), and ambiguous (“maybe,” “some”). They also tend to put too much emphasis on the reason-result relationship (“because”) or someone’s capability and intention to do something (“can,” “cannot,” “will”).

- (8) Uh, *I think it is true because* while – you *can* use smartphone but you *can* – cannot use a computer... (THA_025_B1 lower)
- (9) *I have family issues and I also want* to improve my experience in that field *because I decided to choose the next, uh, in future that field.* (PAK_003_B1 lower)
- (10) And *some* people litter at the sandbox and *yeah maybe because* mostly *because of* the cat poops it makes it not clean. (IDN_010_B1 upper)

TABLE 7
The Words Overused/Underused by Nine Learner Groups

		Overused	Underused
EFL	CHN	<i>is, think</i> , can, maybe, when, some, yes, yeah, because, will, our, here	<i>well, would, of</i> , that, be, was, an, as, am, on, were, they, at, where, could, probably, had, are, a, out, around
	IDN	<i>yes, because, maybe</i> , yeah, the, also, can, my, is, cannot, when, ready, only	<i>was, well, would</i> , be, right, they, as, a, at, of, up, had, where, an
	JPN	<i>yes, is</i> , want, many, so, opinion, i, yeah, can, when	<i>that, be, well, would, just, really, you, as, on, it, they, of</i> , a, was, right, an, going, know, been, mean, where, guess, are, like, actually, having, were, up, out, am, probably, kind, had, them, then
	KOR	<i>yeah</i> , yes, I	be, would, as, a
	THA	<i>yes</i> , like, gonna, cannot, is, want, I, have, can, when, about, me, something	<i>well, would, was</i> , a, where, as, are, be, were, had, am, able, been, an, on, very, out, alright, really
	TWN	<i>think, yes, because</i> , is, can, some, cannot, will, want, maybe, or	<i>was, that</i> , as, of, a, would, be, well, an, am, sir, going, probably, up, where, been
ESL	HKG	also, think, is, some, maybe, because, can, for, others, affect, somehow	<i>was</i> , would, okay, a, well, out, been, could, right, see, where
	MYS	<i>because</i> , me, when, yes, can, for, my, will, is, so, then, need	<i>well</i> , was, just, had, a
	PAK	<i>sir</i> , you, yes, we, our, mostly, should, because, why, is,	<i>really, just</i> , well, the, right, like, was, I, a, had
	PHL	<i>because</i> , my, also, when, is, the, will, in	<i>yeah</i> , they, okay, well, know, so, was, like, right, would, mean, out, sort, oh

TABLE 8
The Words Overused or Underused Commonly by Three or More Learner Groups

Overused	Underused
is, yes, because, can, when, maybe, will, yeah, also, cannot, I, my, some, think, want	a, was, well, would, as, be, had, where, an, out, right, am, been, of, they, are, just, like, on, probably, really, that, up, were

Meanwhile, learners cannot sufficiently use indefinite articles (“a,” “an”), subjunctive modal verbs (“would”), past (participle) forms of verbs (“was,” “were,” “had,” “been”), adverbs adjusting the strength of one’s claim (“probably,” “really,” “just”), lexical fillers (“well,” “right”), third-person pronouns (“they”), and various types of prepositions and particles connecting the words (“as,” “on,” “up,” “of,” “out”). The quotations below were taken from the utterances of native speakers.

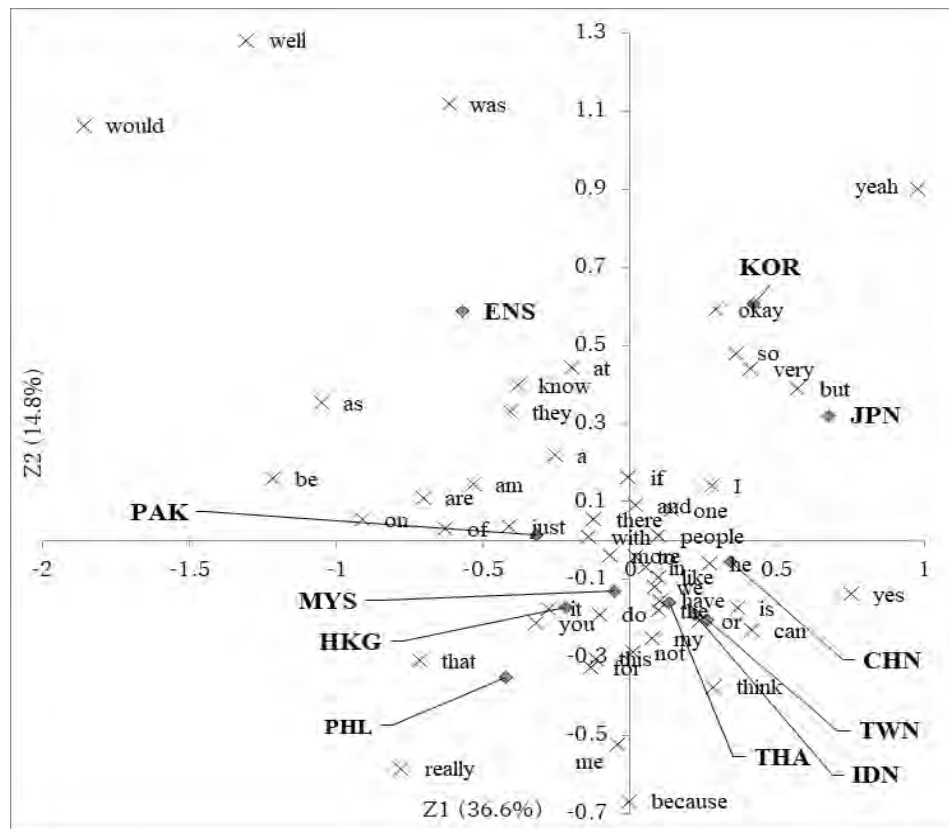
- (11) ... teaching *would* be *an* easy way to be able to sustain myself... (ENS_010)
 (12) Oh *really, well* I guess I have research to do then. (ENS_005)

(13) *Right. I preferred the roleplay format because it felt like a, kind of, battle, who could come out on top.* (ENS_020)

4.4.3. Relationship among speaker groups

From the correspondence analysis of a frequency table, we obtained the scatter plot shown in Figure 8, where we regarded variables clustered together as similar in quality.

FIGURE 8
Scatter Plot Based on the Correspondence Analysis



Both of the Z1 axis ($X^2(58) = 4380.6, p < .001$) and Z2 axis ($X^2(56) = 1759.1, p < .001$) are statistically significant. First, ten speaker groups are classified into the right half and the left half by the Z1 horizon axis, which explains 36.6% of the variance in the dataset. The right half includes all the EFL learners, while the left half includes ENS and all the ESL learners. Thus, the Z1 seems to be an axis classifying non-native-speaker-like vocabulary

use (right) and native-speaker-like vocabulary use (left). On this axis, Japanese learners are positioned at the right end, meaning that they are particularly remote from the native-speaker norm in terms of the use of the basic vocabulary, which may be explained by the fact that Japanese learners speak the least among all the EFL learners (See 4.4.1). An important finding here is that there exists a substantial boundary not between learners and native speakers but rather between EFL learners and others.

Next, speaker groups are also classified into the upper half and the lower half by the Z2 vertical axis, which explains 14.8% of the variance. In the right half, learners in Japan and Korea are positioned in the upper half, which could also be explained by their limited fluency, and learners in China, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Thailand are clustered in the lower half. Then, in the left half, ENS is positioned in the upper half, while most of the learners in ESL regions are positioned in the lower half. Thus, ten speaker groups are classified into four quadrants. By observing the words positioned in each, we can see which words characterize different speaker clusters, as seen in Table 9.

TABLE 9
The Keywords Characterizing Four Speaker Clusters

Quadrant	Clusters	Characteristic Words (examples)
1 (Z1+/Z2+)	EFL (JPN/KOR)	so, but, yeah, okay, very
2 (Z1- / Z2+)	ENS	well, would, was, as, know, they, be
3 (Z1- /Z2-)	ESL	that, really, you
4 (Z1+/ Z2-)	EFL (Others)	think, can, yes, is

The results above show that Japanese and Korean learners frequently use “so” and “but,” both of which, in combination with “because” mentioned above, often mark the transition in the development of a claim. Too many transitions often lead to limited coherence, which might characterize their speeches.

- (14) I think umm uh university students should use much --- should umm should use computer umm more often *because*, you know, umm uh this is umm a lot of --- uh almost all of the company umm uses --- produce umm computers and we have to use them --- use computers to work, *so* we can't umm work with my --- uh our smart phone, *so* we should use or you --- we should learn about using computers. (JPN_033_B1 lower).
- (15) *But* in that case, you need to like – then, you have to put like you know, smoking is like permitted signs on your restaurant. *But* you put prohibited signs on your restaurant. *So*, I think they are not right and *so*, we are right. *But* if you want to keep them smoking or having a time in your restaurant, then give me a full refund,

so I can walk away. (KOR_018_B2+).

By carefully analyzing the scatter plot, we can identify a core element of the so-called “native-like natural speeches,” which would be pedagogically valuable, especially for EFL learners with limited access to natural oral inputs.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper first surveyed three kinds of learner interview corpora (LINDSEI, NICT-JLE Corpus, and Trinity Lancaster Corpus), paying particular attention to their interview structures. Then, it explained the principles and the features of the ICNALE SD as the newest addition to the ICNALE. The ICNALE SD is a unique dataset in that it focuses on Asian learners, and it includes the transcripts, videos, and detailed background data of the learners. Then, as a case study using the ICNALE SD, we discussed three research questions on Asian learners’ fluency and vocabulary use. With regard to RQ1 (Fluency), the study revealed that the mean WPM fluencies of EFL learners, ESL learners, and native speakers are 54.5, 71.4, and 87.3, respectively. Our analysis also showed that the fluency of Japanese learners is only around 50% of that of native speakers. In terms of RQ2 (Keywords), we extracted keywords for each of the ten learner groups and discussed the commonly overused or underused words. We found that learner speeches are often self-centered, responsive, ambiguous, and they put too much emphasis on the reason-result relationship or someone’s capability and intention to do something. Finally, in terms of RQ3 (Relationship among speaker groups), we showed that speakers could be classified into four clusters: English native speakers, ESL learners, Japanese, and Korean learners, and the other EFL learners. An important finding is that a significant boundary exists not between learners and native speakers but between EFL learners and others.

The ICNALE SD can be utilized by various researchers in the fields of SLA, TESOL, World Englishes, and language policy. As a corpus developer, the author hopes that this unique dataset is used as widely as its sister modules and that it contributes to a better understanding of L2 use by Asian learners and to the development of new effective teaching materials optimized for them.

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Applicable levels: Tertiary

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Received on November 1, 2019

Reviewed on November 26, 2019

Accepted on December 7, 2019