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Revealing Shifts and Diversity in Understandings of Self Access Language Learning

John L. Adamson
University of Niigata Prefecture, johnadamson253@hotmail.com

Howard G. Brown
University of Niigata Prefecture, brown@unii.ac.jp

Naoki Fujimoto-Adamson
University of Niigata Prefecture, naoadamson@hotmail.com

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This study has traced the growth of a new facility intended to promote independent language study in a Japanese university. The study traces this Self Access Learning Center (SALC) from its inception through the first two years of its development. It has revealed how key qualitative insights from an archive of semi-structured interviews, conversational narratives and questionnaires with students, teachers, center staff and university management are marked by their shifting and diverse nature. Findings related to language policy for the center show how initial 'English only' regulations have been opposed and amended by stakeholders. Findings focusing on the center stakeholders' metaphors of self access language learning have changed or been supplemented and show great diversity. Importantly, SALC's positioning in the wider university has experienced problems with diverse evaluation expectations and, despite considerable financial backing, remains marginalized. Finally, SALC's integration with university curricula has seen mixed results; the center is connected closely to the English curriculum as taught by non-Japanese, but not to curricula taught by Japanese teachers of English or content subjects. This indicates that integration of university-wide curricula with autonomous modes of learning remains a hurdle. This study may inform other centers seeking to gather data on the diverse voices impacting upon their development.

self-access, policy, metaphors, positioning, evaluation, integration

Introduction

This study investigates the growth of a self-access learning centre (SALC) in a Japanese university. It outlines key themes that have emerged from findings collected over a two-year period from 2009 to early 2011. The longitudinal, qualitative methodology used to archive stakeholder voices related to the SALC uncovers shifting and diverse views about self-access language learning in its particular local context; these views can be grouped into themes. While the findings may not represent new insights into self-access, this approach of insider ethnography offers a unique voice that not only showcases the operations of a SALC, but also gives a window into the thinking process of those who have developed and run the centre.

This study begins by providing the context in which our SALC was established and now operates. It then reviews the literature of the main themes emerging from the data: language policy; metaphors of self-access and mentors; the institutional positioning of the centre in the university and its evaluation; and, finally, integration with university curricula. Following this, it outlines the triangulated methodology of an ongoing qualitative "archive" of semi-structured interviews, conversational narratives and questionnaires.

Key findings highlight the shifting and diverse nature of perceptions of, and realities in, self-access, and are discussed in relation to the literature. Finally, this article presents conclusions and discusses implications for the future direction of the centre. .

Context of the research

Established in April 2009, this new Japanese university was previously a two-year college with a long history of English studies. After its transformation into a university under regional-government supervision, the English-studies program was replaced by a program called "English for Academic Purposes" (EAP), as English had become the medium of instruction for many content courses in the university's fields of international studies and regional development, nutrition studies and an early childhood education course. EAP is now required for all first-year university students. To support this increased focus on both language learning and learning content through the medium of English, a SALC was established at the same time.

In the process of establishing this new centre, the first question was simply, "What is a SALC?" While there are many different models of self-access language learning, Gardner and Miller (1999) define a self-access centre as an integration of space, resources, staff, and systems for management and learning that combine to become a learning environment for independent study. Key concepts common in self-access use are learner self-direction and autonomy, language advising as opposed to teaching, and the long-term nature of independent language learning. For these purposes, centres often complement classroom-based learning and take the form of a room or a building that may or may not be staffed, and is stocked with language-learning and practice materials suitable for independent study.

To help establish, shape and steer our centre, it was decided to create a committee of 13 members consisting of English-language instructors and three SALC mentors. These mentors maintain its resources and advise students on language-learning, resources and university events, such as workshops on study skills and mini-lectures by content specialists.

SALC itself is a large room (having a capacity of approximately 40 students) with 10 internet-linked computers, reception area, tables, chairs, sofa and a carpet area. It is stocked with English-language graded reader collections, DVDs, grammar materials, games, paperbacks and materials related to university content curricula. A small collection of Chinese, Korean and Russian self-study materials is also available.

Most funding comes from the university and the central Japanese government. Furniture and other infrastructure items are funded by the regional government. English resources (graded readers and audio CDs) are integrated with the EAP syllabi of all six expatriate teachers of English; however, of the remaining Japanese teachers of English or English-language content, only one has integrated SALC use into his syllabus. Sixteen hours per week of EAP are compulsory for first-year students. Second-year students have only approximately seven hours of English classes a week, so considerably fewer use the centre, with the exception of students taking Chinese, Korean and Russian courses, which start in the second year. Workshops by mentors on common weak points in English and mini-lectures by content teachers on their language-learning experiences have been popular and well-attended.

Literature review

Four main themes were determined by the researchers as key to understanding and steering the centre: language policy, metaphors of self-access and mentoring, institutional positioning and evaluation of the centre by different stakeholders and integration with English and content curricula. These themes broadly reflect Benson's (1997) three views on autonomy: operative space, content and professional role. In our context, the operative space focuses on what should happen in the centre, meaning its language policy and its various forms of evaluation, and multiple metaphors of how to use centre and its resources; the content view is manifested in data on integration with English and content curricula; finally, insights into the professional role draw upon data from themes of institutional positioning, and metaphors of mentors and mentoring.

Language policy

The language policy of a self-access centre needs to be seen in light of its stakeholders' views concerning second-language acquisition (SLA Language-policy determination can impose strict monolingual rules; for example, Gardner and Miller (1999) suggest that a clear, strict "English only" policy may help learners overcome their language anxiety and hesitation to use English, yet also acknowledge that some flexibility in policy may be called for. Alternatively, the stance can be taken that accepts that languages naturally intermingle (Jacobson & Faltis 1990). Creese and Blackledge (2010, p105) outline the benefits of such intermingling, which they call "translanguaging", and compare that loose policy against the strict "two solitudes" approach (Cummins 2005) of separation of languages in learning contexts. In this sense, code-switching between languages can be seen as a linguistic resource for learners that develops "local, pragmatic coping tactics" (Lin 2005, p 46). Considering the various speech communities in society in which students may find themselves, Canagarajah (2006) advocates mirroring this kind of translanguaging in educational contexts:

> *Rather than simply joining a speech community, then, we should teach
> students to shuttle between communities.... Not only must we possess a
> repertoire of codes from the English language, we must also learn to use
> it in combination with other world languages.* (p26)

Furthermore, this flexibility provides "safe" language-practice opportunities (Martin 2005, p80) for students with limited competence in the target language. Also, a translanguaging policy, if applied, may mitigate the feelings of "dilemma" and "guilt" (Setati, Adler, Reed & Bapoo 2002, p147) common among code-switching students. Admittedly, though, it needs to be counter-balanced by arguments from the students themselves, who may have strict, monolingual views on language acquisition.

Metaphors of self-access and mentoring

The concept of metaphors from Lakoff and Johnson (1980) has been used in this study's questionnaires and interviews to investigate the various stakeholders' images of self-access and mentoring. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p3) stress the importance of these images in understanding beliefs and behaviors, pointing to the "govern[ing]" nature of metaphors on everyday behaviour and our "conceptual system". In educational contexts, they are commonly used to explore the beliefs of teachers, students and other stakeholders, and have been applied to education as a curriculum model, a badge of professional identity, a tool for self-reflection, a guide for professional thinking and an agent for change (Saban 2006). As Low (2008, p215) says "Metaphor analysis can play an important role in establishing educational problems and indicating fruitful directions for change".

Looking specifically at metaphor in the context of self-access, Gardner and Miller (1999) drew up a typology of models of self-access expressed through a series of retail metaphors – a boutique, a catalogue shop or a convenience store. Each metaphor is embedded with notions of how a centre will be set up and run, how students will interact with staff and materials and what kind of learning support will be provided. As metaphors are strongly pervasive, research into their emerging and changing nature is necessary as the SALC grows. Indeed, Adamson et al. (2009), in studies into this same SALC, report that stakeholders' beliefs about self-access shifted over a relatively short period of time.

The role of mentors (alternatively termed as advisors or counsellors) in self-access has also been subject to various in-depth investigations (Reinders, Hacker & Lewis 2004; Darasawang 2011; Dam 2001; Reinders 2006, 2008; Ciekanski 2007). Important among these studies is how their function is perceived. Darasawang (2011) argues that mentors can be seen as either surrogate tutors or counsellors of autonomy in how they advise students. Further, in differentiating advising from teaching, Mozzon-McPherson (2001) sees advisors as playing a "bridging" role from the classroom to the more autonomous operative space of a self-access centre. In this process, advisors tend to focus more on the strategies needed by individual students towards self-direction, as opposed to the classroom teacher's focus on the whole class. Kelly (1996) also notes that teaching employs "macro" skills, which may include a transmission of knowledge, evaluation of performance or modeling, whereas advisors use "micro" skills, which are discursively more akin to counseling in that they may empathise with learners or question them about their feelings and motivations concerning learning.

Mentors' role as language models for Japanese students is also an area of investigation. Murphey (1996) proposes that institutions should scaffold learning environments to encourage students to aspire to more attainable "near-peer role models" than Anglophone speakers of English. However, on an institutional level, despite their potential pivotal role as brokers of knowledge between students, teachers and management in a "pedagogical dialogue" (Little 1995, p178), mentors may

be viewed as peripheral in the larger university "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991), as they lack faculty teaching status.

An understanding of metaphors of self-access and its mentors must also consider attitudes in local educational settings towards autonomy. Since this study is situated in Japan, it follows that Asian perspectives on autonomy need to be embraced. Kubota (2002) and Holliday (2003, p115) warn of a "native-speakerist" version of autonomy in which a "superior" western form of autonomy is imposed on non-Western students. The premise here is that forms of autonomy already exist among Asian learners, and stereotypes of passivity and teacher-dependence are misleading (Littlewood 2000). In practice, the "autonomous interdependence" (Benson et al. 2003, p23) commonly adopted by Asian students, which relies on peer support, can lead to various benefits. In specific reference to Japanese students, Nakata (2006) indicates that they may develop high levels of reactive and proactive autonomy when working in groups, but are unlikely to exercise individual proactive autonomy.

Institutional positioning and evaluation

Understanding the institutional positioning of a self-access centre within a university requires awareness of issues internal and external to the centre. Firstly, university self-access centres are frequently managed by language specialists, as their core activities are directly related to language-learning. These specialists often join the centre's steering committees, and consequently represent a form of "middle leadership" (Busher & Harris 1999) in the institution. Such committees are naturally governed by higher managerial forces in the university, and in the case of regional or national universities, by public officials who work outside the university. Awareness of this complex web of authority, or "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1988), is essential for the self-access committee to operate effectively. Although teachers are frequently empowered in such committee roles (Harris 2003), there are institutional restraints to their roles as middle leaders, especially when such committees are new. In this respect, the analogy of a "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) is useful in conceptualising where the committee stands in the larger organisation. In this analogy, the self-access committee can be positioned at one negative extreme, at the periphery of the university community. In this view, it lacks legitimate participatory rights in the community and is regarded as unimportant to the institution; however, this negative and simplistic analogy fails to consider the "overlapping communities of practice" (James 2007, p130) within a self-access committee itself, as members may belong to other committees within the institution. The diversity of membership, "each with its own sense of joint enterprise, mutuality and shared repertoire" (James 2007, p130), points to diverse allegiances that also shape the centre's committee's positioning.

In light of the variable positioning of a self-access centre, it's important to consider how it is evaluated, and by whom. Most studies in the literature outline how a centre's evaluation of its own operation and resources can be based on user feedback (Koyalan 2009; Morrison 2008; Reinders & Lewis 2006; Victori 2007; Gardner 2007; Thompson & Atkinson 2010). However, importantly, non-users that provide funding, such as the university, regional administrators or central government, also evaluate the centre. Adding that dimension of evaluation can provide a more holistic evaluation that embraces all stakeholders.

Integration of curriculum and self-access use

The final theme predominant throughout the archives over 2009-2011 frequently returned to the centre's integration with the university curricula. In the interaction between the self-access centre

and classroom-based language curricula, Gardner and Miller (1999) create a continuum of integration, from no direct link to full integration. Crabbe (1993) outlines the differences between classroom learning – the "public domain" – and non-classroom learning areas – the "private domain". Cotterall and Reinders (2001) advocate that the ideal bridge between lesson and private study can take the form of a self-access centre. However, in using a centre, the culture shock of too much choice and unfamiliarity with self-direction may arise (Aldred & Williams 2000). To bridge this gap between the classroom and the self-access centre, Key and Newton (1997) and Miller and Rodgerson-Revell (1993) advocate "pathways" in which individual needs and wants are accounted for before the individual begins using the centre. This "mapping" (Key & Newton 1997) requires active student participation, and to ensure this is effective, Pemberton (2007, p23) warns that teachers or mentors need to "support, but not direct, our students' learning".

The degree of integration with curricula and guidance by teachers can be either strong or weak, according to Thompson and Atkinson (2010), who also advise against extreme forms of integration with "overly specific SALC activities [that reinforce] learners' poor experiences with learning experiences" (p 54). Integration is seen as requiring reward, or credit, linked to course evaluation (Victori 2007), or the allocation at least of some lesson time in the centre to reinforce awareness of its uses (Fisher et al. 2007).

Less researched is the integration with non-language curricula in a university (Gardner 2007) and the difficulties of persuading content specialists who use English as a medium of instruction of the benefits of autonomous learning. Self-access usage appears to be predominantly a language-focused venture, and a possible cause for "disjuncture" (Mehisto 2008) among content specialists struggling with the concept of promoting student autonomy. Promotion of autonomy and less teacher-dependence may be incompatible with some teachers' views of teaching and learning (Miller & Rodgerson-Revell 1993), especially if exposure to autonomous learning modes was absent in their own learning experiences (Lortie 1975; Denscombe 1982). In the context of this study, this unfamiliarity is compounded by Japanese teachers' reticence to adopt new pedagogical approaches even when instructed to do so by senior management (Sato & Kleinasser 2004; Takagi 2002). This potential impasse clearly may form the largest hurdle for the integration of autonomy, as expressed through work in a SALC, in an English curriculum taught by mixed Western and Asian faculty.

In consideration of these difficulties, studies on the problems of crossing disciplinary boundaries between language and content specialists (Heintz & Origgi 2008) need to address the potential collaboration concerning self-access use. As a consequence, the "mapping" issues of providing language students with better access to self-access (Key & Newton 1997) should be extended to teachers across university curricula.

Methodology

The methodology employed to create the archive comprises a triangulation of one-to-one interviews, group "conversational narratives" (CNs) (Ochs & Capps 2001, p3) with SALC stakeholders (committee members and management) and student questionnaires (Appendix 1). Data was collected from key stakeholders: those who use, run, fund and evaluate the SALC.

Committee members kept journals to record their views about the SALC and to help recall information in interviews or CNs. Unstructured CNs were employed for group discussions, and a semi-structured interview approach for one-on-one interviews. The archive of CNs, interviews and

questionnaires over the 2009-2011 period draws upon views from a range of participants, similar to Kjisik (2006) and Morrison (2008). The archive of data is epistemologically ethnographic, as it emphasises the SALC's situation within a university community over time. Blommaert and Jie (2010, p10) term this process the "product" of ethnographic research, as the archive "documents the researcher's own journey through knowledge".

Interviews were semi-structured, and so open to participants' topic extensions and deviations (Drever 1995). All interviews and CNs were audio recorded. At the end of the first and second academic years, all first-year university students were invited to complete a questionnaire anonymously (Appendix 1) in either Japanese or English. As the new university only had first- and second-year students at that time (a total of approximately 500), third- and fourth-year students did not yet exist. Sixty-three percent of students (156 students) returned questionnaires in the last two weeks of the first academic year (February, 2010), and slightly more, 69% (172 students), returned questionnaires in February 2011. Devised in consultation between mentors and SALC committee members, the questionnaire had 10 questions on six themes: views of SALC facilities and resources; views of mentors; reasons for using the SALC and personal use; teacher engagement with the SALC; metaphors for the SALC; and suggestions for improvement. The Japanese questionnaires were analysed by two Japanese mentors, and the English by a native speaker of English. Data was reduced and analysed according to individual class, field, and level of class across the fields to provide multiple perspectives.

An ongoing qualitative analysis of the four themes of language policy, metaphors of self-access and mentoring, the institutional positioning and evaluation, and finally the integration of the centre with both English and content curricula was conducted. Periodically, the researchers examined the archive by highlighting key areas of discourse relevant to the themes and tracing them through the multiple data sources. Table 1 illustrates when and how often the themes were raised. After noting their occurrences, a content analysis was made by summarising the highlighted contents and particularly noting the shifts and diversity of views expressed over time.

Table 1: Ethnographic archive according to data themes/sources and frequency

	Auto ethnographic journals	Interviews and CNs	Questionnaires
Language policy	May & June 2009	May & June 2010	February 2010 & 2011
Metaphors of self-access and mentoring	April & July 2009	November 2009 May & June 2010	February 2010 & 2011
Institutional positioning and evaluation	October 2009 April 2010	April, May & June 2010	February 2010 & 2011
Integration with English and content curricula		June 2010	February 2010 & 2011

As the table shows, the themes were mentioned fairly consistently over the 2009-2011 period, and often recurred in clusters; for example over April, May and June 2010, the centre's institutional positioning and evaluation were frequently discussed. As all themes were integrated into the student questionnaires, they were naturally all raised in February 2010 and 2011, when the questionnaires were completed.

Archived findings and discussion

The content arising from these main themes from the archived findings is summarised here. It emphasises the underlying shifts and diversity of opinions over time. Participant pseudonyms and positions are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Participants and positions

Peter	Committee head (UK, English teacher)
Paul	Committee member (Canada, English teacher)
Lee	Committee member (Singapore, English teacher)
Sayaka	Committee member (Japanese mentor)
Keiko	Committee member (Japanese mentor)
Simon	Committee member (American mentor)
Rika	Committee member (Japanese mentor)
Mr. Tanaka	SALC manager (Japanese regional government/university staff)

Language policy

Archive findings show that the initial "English only" policy, as proposed by teacher committee members when the centre first opened, has been superseded by the realisation that some use of the students' first language (Japanese) is beneficial when talking *about* language. This suggests that code-switching is now recognised as a valid competence among mentors and committee members. However, the issue remains of how students regard use of Japanese, as some questionnaire findings illustrate objections to a loose language policy. "Parallel monolingualism" (Heller 1999), or the "two solitudes" (Cummins 2005) approach to language acquisition, would appear to be more embedded in student beliefs about language learning than among committee members. One mentor (Rika) wished to make English "cool" among student peer groups, and another mentor (Simon) had a policy of reminding students of the "cost/benefit" of using as much English as possible. Both represent a perhaps more persuasive than prescriptive approach of achieving more English use in the centre. Although, in principle, code-switching is seen by committee members as a valid "third competence", feelings of resistance to the use of Japanese, "guilt" (Setati et al. 2002, p147) and lack of awareness or acceptance of translanguaging as a bona fide skill remain possible obstacles to the multilingual space as envisaged by the elder mentor, Keiko.

Metaphors of self-access and mentoring

After the first years of operation, there remains a diversity of metaphors of self-access among committee members, students, management and external stakeholders. This range of perceptions has also shifted; for example, Peter's concept of the SALC as an extensive reading and listening centre has been supplemented, yet not replaced, by others' metaphors of the SALC as a social space. Paul also reported shifts in his perceptions – from a community space to one where more

focused self-study opportunities should exist. Important in this diversity are the metaphors of those bodies (university management, regional government and central government) that have the decision-making authority to evaluate and affect the SALC's performance (Low 2008). Those metaphors have not shifted so greatly, with the exception of the Japanese SALC manager, Mr. Tanaka, who now understands more of the educational purpose related to self-access use. Other external metaphors point to a more commercially viable image of self-access (a clean study hall, attractive "fish bowl" for promotional purposes), whereas metaphors from the committee members and students are more diverse (a library, community centre, private study space) and differ according to field of study and level of proficiency. The challenge for the committee is to balance this range of metaphors with the various expectations expressed in formal evaluation, as they all pervade and even "govern" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) the centre's direction.

Metaphors and perceptions related to mentors themselves show more subtle shifts. This is reflected in the way students' views of the mentors' centrality changed. Students who had consulted them extensively early in the academic year did so less as time progressed and they began to see mentors as less central in their pathway towards autonomy. Issues arose with how mentors were viewed in the organisation at large, problems being reported in the first year when professors and office staff demanded that mentors perform surplus office duties and translation work. That issue has since been resolved, but is an indication of a lack of awareness of mentor roles in the institution, although these roles are more clearly understood among English teachers and students. Mentors felt some grievance when university management decided to block their wish to engage in research into the SALC, a situation which has now been partially resolved through compromise. Rika felt empowered as a mentor in the committee, yet marginalised in the larger institution, a comment which reveals two conflicting "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991), in which some members experience a natural overlap (James 2007) in their affiliation to other university committees. Simon and Keiko both referred to the pivotal role they play in a "pedagogical dialogue" (Little 1995, p178) between students, teachers and other stakeholders in the university. This intermediary role has not yet been recognised among the wider university community, yet is regarded as important within the SALC committee.

Finally, Darasawang's (2011) study into the type of advice (acting as surrogate teachers or promoters of student independence) is to some extent mirrored in feedback from mentors about how they interact with students. Simon, a young mentor with no teaching experience, clearly positioned himself not wishing to be seen as a "guru", i.e., the source of all knowledge, like a traditional teacher. Findings indicating other mentors' style of giving advice are less conclusive, and need further investigation as to whether their own background (work experience) and image of what it means to be a mentor have an influence.

Institutional positioning and evaluation

Although the SALC management committee is the largest in the university, its make-up of exclusively English teachers is seen as being unrepresentative of the larger community of teachers who, though welcome, have not expressed interest in the SALC. In addition, the SALC having adopted a relatively flat community of practice and democratic style may, in Simon's view, be seen as "unconventional" by other university bodies, a point that could further marginalise the relatively new committee. In contrast to the committee's democratic ideals, some students felt unrepresented in SALC affairs and expressed a desire to have student seats on the committee. This addition would constitute a healthy widening of representation in committee discussions and create a productive overlap in membership affiliations (James 2007, p130).

Evaluation, too, comes in diverse guises: student self-evaluation; student evaluation of the SALC; the committee's evaluation of its own operation; institutional evaluation; and finally evaluation by non-institutional stakeholders (regional and national government). These various forms of evaluation – including this qualitative, ethnographic study for internal, educational purposes, in contrast to what Lee calls the more "shadowy", quantitative measures by university, regional and central governments – appear to reflect the "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1988) among committee members and within and outside the university. Findings from the SALC manager, Mr. Tanaka, clearly show how the university's evaluation criteria of financial accountability for resources and the superficial requirement that the centre always be seen to be busy differ greatly to the committee's educational considerations. Committee members report awareness of this diversity as essential in satisfying all stakeholders. Findings from Keiko and Peter concerning struggles with the various forms of budgets illustrate the potential mismatch of values that teachers as middle managers face when dealing with non-SALC bodies both internal and external to the centre.

Integration with English and content curricula

Findings reveal that most students and committee members believe the English curriculum to be closely integrated with use of SALC resources; however, some concerned was expressed by both students and committee members that there was too much of a "push" to visit it and that it was becoming a "homework" centre. This was illustrated in comments by students who suggested that the Extensive Reading and Listening credit-related points system was over-complicated, as they needed to calculate points earned per page of reading and per minute of listening, termed by Toogood (2006) as making students "jump through hoops". In one sense, the SALC did act as a bridge to the English curriculum (Cotterall & Reinders 2001), but the "pathways" (Key & Newton 1997; Miller & Rodgerson-Revell 1993) were too teacher-directed and could be simplified and customised to individual students' needs. This resonates with Pemberton's (1997, p42) warning of over-direction towards autonomy, rather than "support". Paul was particularly concerned at this imbalance between "push" and "pull" and Rika mentioned the lack of learning chances between first- and second-year students, the latter of whom had few reasons to visit the centre, as the number of compulsory English lessons had been reduced for the second year. Paul later accounted for this situation by reflecting on the lack of "pull" for those second-year students when they were in the first year, saying "Students who'd only ever been pushed into [the] SALC had no reason to go there when the push was gone".

One clear message emerging from the findings was that not enough integration had been made with other languages and content curricula, and that simple "mapping" (Key & Newton 1997) needed to be created for teachers not yet familiar with how to exploit the SALC. Simon warned of the difficulties inherent in trying to persuade conservative Japanese professors to adopt autonomous modes of learning into their syllabi, a point that resonates with common problems of cross-disciplinary collaboration (Heintz & Origgi 2008) and a sense of "disjuncture" (Mehisto 2008) between embedded norms of disciplinary practice and new ways of teaching and learning.

Conclusions and implications

The ethnographic approach in this study of compiling an archive of interviews, conversational narratives and questionnaires from the students and SALC committee members and management has provided insights into the emerging nature of a self-access centre as situated in this new Japanese university. Findings representing stakeholder views are always situated within a context – one which, as is common in a new university, is still shifting as the institution grows.

Specific findings from the archive have focused, first, on language policy, which has softened from a strict "English only" regulation to acceptance of the benefits of "translanguaging" (Creese & Blackledge 2010) among committee members. Some students, however, have not yet recognised these benefits, and show preference for a more purist view of language acquisition in which the students' use of Japanese is discouraged.

The theme of metaphors for the SALC has pervaded many discussions over the first two years of operation, which confirms Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) importance of metaphors on human thought and behaviour. There remains a diversity of metaphors among committee members and students, ranging from the SALC as a library and quiet study hall to a social community space. In previous studies into this same centre (Adamson et al. 2009), this diversity was reported as initially surprising, but has more recently been accepted as natural and healthy, as long as stakeholders retain the right to express those metaphors and see some action taken to accommodate them. Perceptions of SALC mentors, too, show a variety of perspectives (mentor as surrogate tutor, or mentor as nurturer of student self-direction), even among mentors themselves. In this respect, the mentors' previous experiences of self-access and teaching (Lortie 1975; Darasawang 2011) shape those beliefs. Within the committee itself and among students, it is becoming apparent that mentors play a pivotal role in bridging communication about teaching and learning in a "pedagogical dialogue" (Little 1995, p178). However, mentor positioning in the larger institution is still reported as being marginal, and feelings of empowerment exist only in SALC committee meetings, not in other interactions with university staff, from which they report much misinterpretation of their role.

Autonomy was a recurring theme in discussions about integration of the SALC with university curricula. Although the SALC had been linked closely with foreign English-language teachers' syllabi, there had been little integration with English classes taught by Japanese, other languages or content curricula. This appears to confirm the literature on Japanese teachers' unwillingness to accept new modes of teaching and learning (Sato & Kleinasser 2004; Takagi 2002), despite research suggesting that adapted forms of autonomous learning, especially ones that encourage "interdependence" among Asian students (Benson et al. 2003; Littlewood 1999), may prove to be fruitful. This issue remains problematic, and it is argued in this study that guidance into self-access use needs to be expanded to teachers as well as learners (Miller & Rodgerson-Revell 1993). Integration of the English curriculum itself, although reported as being close, is also reported as requiring a rebalancing from the teacher-directed "push" to more student-directed "pull" activities; yet, as can be observed in the absence in the centre of second-year students who require fewer English classes, integration is strongest mostly when credit is given for using SALC resources.

Perhaps the final theme of significance is that of evaluation, which was linked to an understanding of "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1988) in the university. As the SALC struggles to ascertain its place in the institutional hierarchy and embarks upon its own qualitative forms of self-evaluation with the compilation of an ongoing archive, other powerful stakeholders within and outside the university use more commercial, quantitative forms of evaluation; the SALC committee should include these in its overall evaluation scheme. This implies that the ethnographic archive should also trace the shifts and diversity seen in more quantitative measures of the centre's progress; for example, data on student resource use and visitation patterns.

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Appendix 1: Student questionnaire

1. What do you think of the SALC?
- The room (space, enough seats ...)
- The posters (interesting? informative?)

2. What do you think of the resources in the SALC?
- Books/CDs/DVDs
- PCs, DVD players
- Games
- Grammar materials, testing materials
- Magazines

3. What do you think of the activities/events?
- With teachers (including the lecture series)
- Workshops
- Festivals/celebrations
- Movie nights

4. Did you ask the mentors for advice? (Yes/No)
If yes, what did you often ask?
If no, why not?

5. How was the advice from mentors?
- About how to use the SALC
- About language and language learning

6. Why did you go to the SALC? (Mark as many as you wish)
- My teacher told me (   )
- SALC is a good place to study (   )
- SALC is comfortable (   )
- SALC is a good social place (   )
- Other reasons:

7. How about your use?
- How easy or difficult is it to use the SALC?
- How often do you visit the SALC per week?
  1. Once a week (   )
  2. A few times a week (   )
  3. A few times a month (   )
  4. A few times a semester (   )
  5. Never (   )
- How long do you spend each visit?
  1. Less than 10 minutes   (   )
  2. 11 – 30 minutes (   )
  3. 31 – 60 minutes (   )

4. More than 60 minutes (   )
- What do you usually use the SALC for?
  1. Lecture activity (   )
  2. ER/EL (   )
  3. Games (   )
  4. Grammar (   )
  5. Testing preparation (   )
  6. Events (   )
  7. Talk with friends (   )
  8. To pick up materials to study at home (   )
  9. Group projects (   )
  10. Watch DVDs (   )
- Do you study by yourself or with friends?

8. How about your teachers?
- Do they encourage you to use the SALC? (Yes/No)
- Do they encourage you to study independently? (Yes/No)
- Is the SALC integrated with classes?
    No (   ) A little (   ) Enough (   ) Too much (   )

9. How do you see the SALC? As a…. (Mark as many as you wish)
- Self-study center   (   )
- Homework center   (   )
- Place to meet friends (   )
- Library (   )
- Another CALL (   )
- Advice center (   )
- Another (   )

10.   Suggestions for improvement:
- More materials? Which?
- More technology? Which?
- More events/activities? Which?
- Other suggestions?

11.   **What question(s) did we forget to ask you? If you know of a question we should have asked, please tell us how you'd answer it.**