

A QR code is positioned on the left side of the slide, set against a background of a blue sky with white and yellow-tinted clouds. The QR code itself is white with a black silhouette of a dinosaur in the center.

FOSTERING LEARNER AUTONOMY

EVALUATING A STUDENT-LED RESEARCH
PROJECT IN A JAPANESE UNIVERSITY
LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Kwansei Gakuin University Language Center Annual Research Forum
Monday January 20th, 2025, 13:35-14:00

Tom Stringer

TODAY'S AIM...

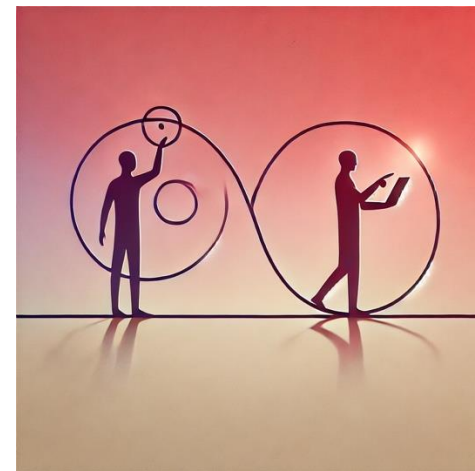
Assess whether **autonomy** was well operationalized in a classroom activity through reflective accounts of classroom research by two learners: **Mina** and **Nao**



AUTONOMY?

More than simply being a socially mediated psychological and technical capacity of learners to reflect, plan, monitor and act upon their own learning, **autonomy** is also an evolving, epiphenomenal quality of complex systems which is best understood by those involved in them

(Stringer, 2024)



AUTONOMY: RESEARCH



Practitioner Research Family Tree

Adapted from Hanks (2022, p. 7)



AUTONOMY: PRACTICE

Four key features of **autonomy** classrooms: **use** of the target language, **co-construction** of knowledge by learners, learner **management** of learning, and learner **evaluation** of learning

(Little et al., 2017)



CONTEXT: PRACTICE

コンテンツ・コース

Language and Communication 副題例

- AI & English
- The Language of Business
- Slang, a Creative Use of English?

Culture and Society 副題例

- Media Literacy and Current Issues
- Australian Culture
- Language of Film and TV

その他の副題は
kwic をチェック!



13

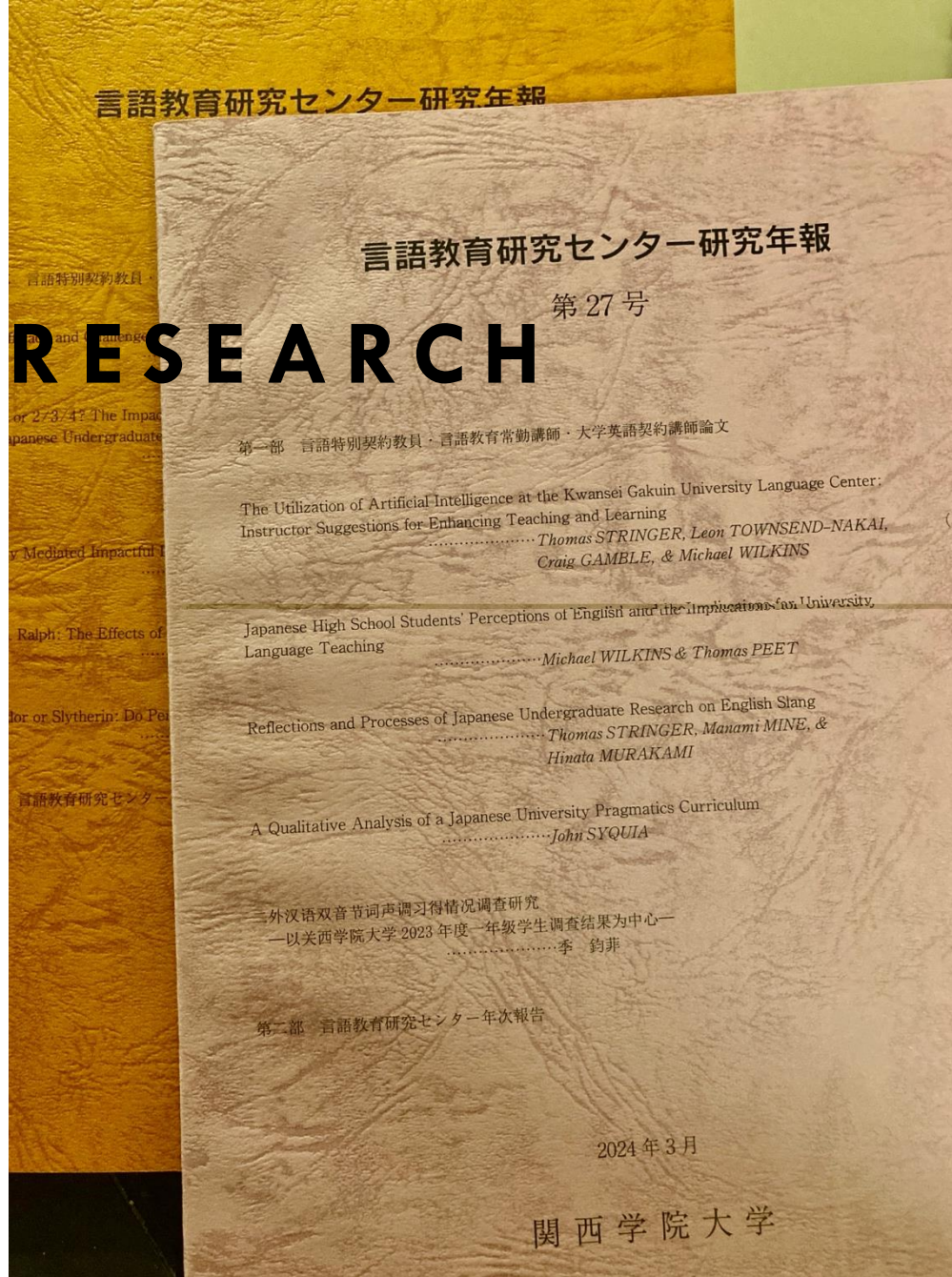
(Kwansei Gakuin University, 2024, p. 13)



CONTEXT: RESEARCH

紀要 Kiyō [ARR]

Reflective writing



CONTEXT: METHODS



September '23~ Plan to integrate previous research accounts into course materials

April '24~ Slang research project

July '24~ Collaboration with student co-authors



CONTEXT: METHODS

Class 5 Homework- R5 Australian English

Tom Stringer • 9 May 2024 (Edited 9 May 2024)

Due 15 May 2024, 23:59

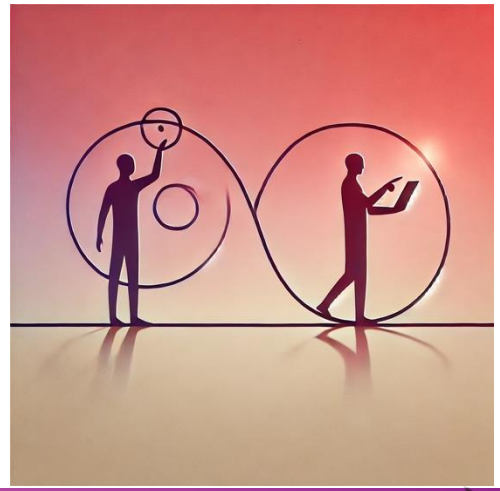
AUSSIE SLANG

~30 mins: Review lecture notes to prepare for "Written Response". If you are finding these WRs difficult, please re-read and try some of the preparation advice, or compare your WR responses to the model answer. I'm always happy to answer questions too. Remember, each of these is part of your grade (4%)

~60 mins: Read this week's reading (R5). Then complete the Reading Review Sheet (Word doc). Submit the completed RRS before our next class by attaching it to this assignment on Google Classroom and submitting it. Be prepared to discuss and debate the article

~30 minutes: Slang research project: We will soon start thinking about our own slang research projects. Review the attached student accounts of research, by Manami (Mine) and Hinata (Murakami). We'll talk about them next class.

	R5 Australian English.pdf PDF		RRS(L&C).docx Word
	Stringer, Mine, and Murakami... PDF		



CONTEXT: METHODS

Mina

Research Proposal: Mid-Term (Class 7)
MS Language & Communication: Slang, a Creative Use of English?

1. **Proposed Title:**
Differences in Slang Creation Between Spoken Languages and ASL

2. **Why do I want to study this topic?**
There are multiple ways of slang creation in spoken languages. We saw a lot of examples in the course: the way of adding the suffix -o aryo for 'afternoon' in Aussie, the way of abbreviation of initial words asap for 'as soon as possible', and the way of rhyming see you later alligator in teenage slang. However, what kinds of ways work when it comes to sign languages? Because some examples of spoken languages that we learned in the classes rely heavily on phonetic variations, wordplay, and cultural references, I thought this theme would be interesting because we have not learned any example of slang in sign languages and deaf people don't hear any sounds so those phonetic ways don't work for them. In addition, we've learned interesting situations where slang develops well; they are developed in the right conditions. Similar to military slang, teenage slang, and slang of prisoners, the slang is used by specific groups and they connect strongly. So I would like to research slang in sign languages especially American English (ASL).

3. **What one research question will I investigate?**
What are the differences in slang creation between spoken languages and ASL (American Sign Language)?

4. **Background Review:**
- What do I already know about this topic?
- ASL has slang expressions and they lie in visual and gestural elements different from spoken languages.
- For sign languages in English, they use facial expression a lot and the structure of English is different from spoken English so these factors might influence the differences in slang creation.
- I already did primarily research about ASL and found some examples.
"Think Self" in ASL means "it's up to you." *general expression; "You Decide" or "Your Choice"
"Train Go Sorry" in ASL means "What's that?" "Can you say that again?" *general expression; "What?" pointing to something or "Repeat"

5. **How do I intend to answer my research question?**
- What kind of data will I collect? How will I collect it? Will I need to talk to people? If so, how will I handle their information?
- I will mainly collect data from YouTube videos that explain slang in ASL and its usage.
e.g.) ASL Slang | 70+ Signs & Phrases | Pahl Ringt FSH!
- I will watch the movie "Coda" which Tom recommended to me. "CODA" abbreviated the Child Of Deaf Adult. And the story about the family in Massachusetts so I may see ASL in the movie.
- I also try to refer to some academic papers or articles about slang in ASL.

6. **What potential problems or difficulties might happen?**
- How will I overcome them?
- I think I might face difficulties in categorizing the kinds of slang creation.
- But this just needs time so I can deal with it.

7. **Timetable of Research**
- Produce a week by week plan for the next seven weeks Class 8-14

Class 8: Watch the YouTube videos and list up slang of ASL as much as possible week1
Class 9: Watch the YouTube videos and list up slang of ASL as much as possible week2
Class 10: Search some academic papers or articles about the slang of ASL
Class 11: Start to organize what are main differences in slang creation between ASL and spoken English
Class 12: Finish to write research paper (or script) for final presentation
Class 13: Prepare for final presentation; complete with slides and start to remember the script
Class 14: Final Presentation

Nao

Research Proposal: Mid-Term (Class 7)
MS Language & Communication: Slang, a Creative Use of English?

1. **Proposed Title:**
Product names used to refer to general terms (ex. バンドエドド、老急便)

2. **Why do I want to study this topic?**
Some famous products become known to everyone, and those product names often replace general standard language terms. I sometimes hear these examples in daily life conversations. Some people do not even know the terms they are using are originally specific product names, and I believe this linguistic phenomenon is a common thing.

3. **What one research question will I investigate?**
How is one particular product name used as a general term based on the content?

4. **Background Review:**
- What do I already know about this topic?
In the previous reading, there was a part mentioning about people's names or product names creating a slang term, so I think there are many examples of proper nouns turning into slang. I have already heard some examples from my friends.

5. **How do I intend to answer my research question?**
- What kind of data will I collect? How will I collect it? Will I need to talk to people? If so, how will I handle their information?
Using corpora. Research about a specific product name and look at examples, focusing on how the term is used in different contexts. I might look at previous research and look at how they gathered data and made the structure of research.

6. **What potential problems or difficulties might happen?**
- How will I overcome them?
Considering if the usage of the term is standard/colloquial/slang may be difficult, but I think I can judge it by looking at what genre or source it is used in (newspaper - standard language, blog - likely to have more slang and uses casual language).

7. **Timetable of Research**
- Produce a week by week plan for the next seven weeks Class 8-14

Class 8: List up what kinds of product names have been used as general terms.
Class 9: Narrow down the examples to one or several terms. Start researching corpora.
Class 10: Research corpora. Gather examples and classify them by genre.
Class 11: Make tables, charts and gather data in a visual format.
Class 12: Make a clear outline and start preparing presentation slides.
Class 13: Make presentation slides.
Class 14: Practice doing the presentation.



CONTEXT

Hello Nao and Mina,

It was nice to hear about your interest in writing up your reflective accounts of your classroom research yesterday. I'm happy to have you both on board!

I am intending for us to submit the paper to the Annual Research Report (ARR) of the Language Center here at KGU. The ARR mostly reports research that relates to teaching which takes place at the LC, so I think it's a good place for this piece of work.

Timetable

- In terms of scheduling, I think **we need to turn in a first draft around the end of September 2024**. After that the paper will go through a few rounds of review from LC teachers before the end of Fall semester (mid January 2025).
- During the latter half of this year, we will have to make revisions based on each reviewers' comments - so we'll need to be in contact by email about that. **Are these email addresses the best way to contact you?**
- Usually the hard copies are published around the end of term. As an author, you'll get some personal copies of these - so you'll need to provide me an up-to-date postal address closer to the time. The electronic version is uploaded later in the year.

Your reflective accounts of research

- In order that I can write my part, I need to see what you have written. I was wondering how long you would need to write your reflective accounts of research. Is one month enough time? Today is July 12th, so **that would be August 12th**. How does that sound? I think it's good to not leave things too long, so the experience is fresh in your minds. However, if you need a little longer just let me know ASAP.
- Please **return your work to me as a Word document by attaching it in a reply to this email**.
- I've attached a PDF copy of my previous paper which I co-authored with students as a guide for you. Please have a reread of Manami and Hinata's reflective accounts of research again, so that you can get an idea of what they wrote:

STUDENT: NAME- RESEARCH REFLECTION (Roughly 1000 words)

Reflection (share your personal experience of our class; points that interested you, things you learned, difficult parts, new behaviours, etc)

Introduction (describe the details of what you wanted to research and why, for example - drawing links to the course material)

Methods (talk about the practical steps you took to conduct your research, explaining why you did it in this way)

Results (explain what you learned from your research -highlighting any surprising results, limitations, future directions)

Reflection (share positive and negative aspects of your persons; experience of doing the research. Offer recommendations for future student researchers)

Please acknowledge this message to let me know you understand, and if you have any questions/ comments/ requests.

Looking forward to working with you!

All the best,

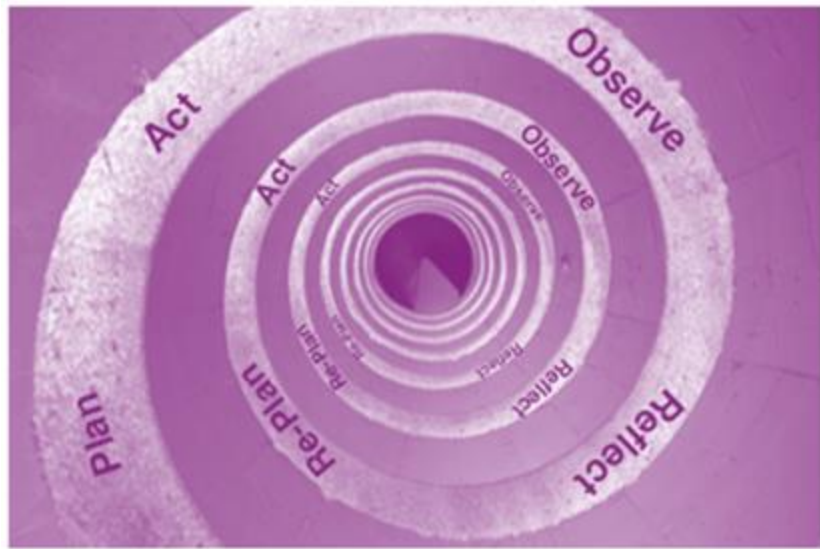
Tom



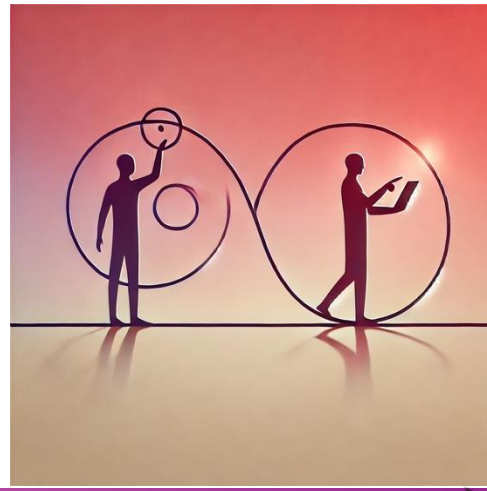
CONTEXT: METHODS



Action Research Spiral



Adapted from Kemmis et al. (2014, p.19)



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

Personal Experience

Mina: interest in slang creation and usage, curious translating to ASL

Nao: interest in how brand names become used as general terms, reflect regional linguistic tendencies, and commercial leveraging.



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

Narrow Research Focus

Mina: Non-reliance of ASL slang on phonetic elements

Nao: One specific brand (McDonalds)



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

Methods



Mina: Inductive design: online resources (YouTube, dictionary, papers) > categorize

slang in database as no existing corpus

Nao: Deductive design: Set terms > corpus search > categorize



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

Findings

Mina: ASL vs SAE comparison not possible > idiomaticity and tone in ASL conveyed by speed, gesture frequency, facial expressions.

Nao: *makku* and *makudo* (informal) *makudonarudo* (formal) > familiarity leveraged in corporate marketing



AUTONOMY: PRACTICE

Four key features of **autonomy** classrooms: **use** of the target language, **co-construction** of knowledge by learners, learner **management** of learning, and learner **evaluation** of learning

(Little et al., 2017)



AUTONOMY EVALUATION:

Target language use

Mina: Uses English throughout (planning, resource search, analysis, write-up x2)

Nao: Uses Japanese (planning, resource search, analysis) and
English (write up x2)

Both improved at academic writing through the 'ARRticle' (my feeling)



AUTONOMY EVALUATION:

Co-construction of knowledge

Mina and **Nao**: Classroom collaboration (direct), engagement with disciplinary knowledge and skills (indirect)



AUTONOMY EVALUATION:

Planning and managing learning

Mina: shifts focus but anticipates categorization problems > creates own nascent ASL corpus

Nao: stuck to proposal timeline and focus, reflects on limitations



AUTONOMY EVALUATION:

Self-evaluation of learning

Mina and **Nao**: Success with 'ARRticle' reflective writing and multiple revision

Whole: Not all work suitable standard, needed **earlier support** or scaffolding for **inclusivity** (e.g. student-led whole class, rather than individual, project)



CONCLUSION

Autonomy was broadly well operationalized:

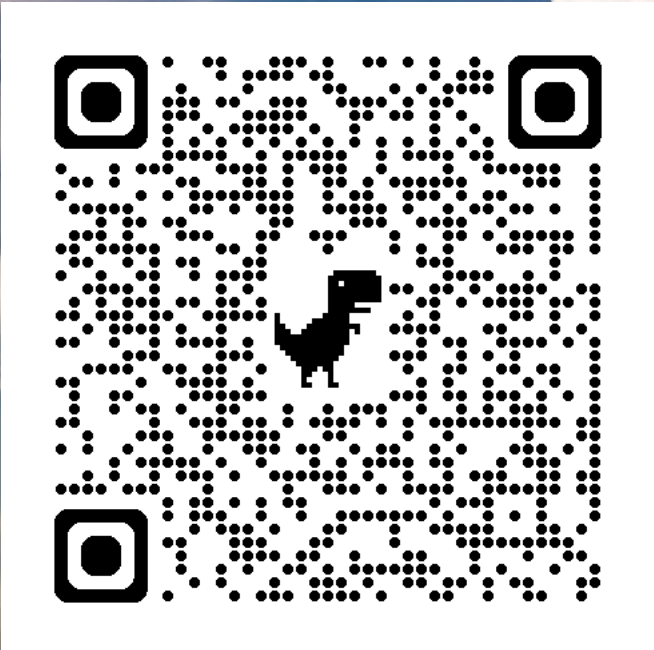
- Target language **use, co-construction** of knowledge, **management of** learning
(successful)
- **Self-evaluation** of learning (needed some more support)



REFERENCES

- Hanks, J. (2022). Integrating research into language teaching and learning: Learners and teachers as co-researchers exploring praxis. *Language Teaching*, 55(2), 217–232.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s026144482100032x>
- Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014). *The action research planner: Doing critical participatory action research*. Springer Singapore. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-4560-67-2>
- Kwansei Gakuin University. (2024). *Language Programs 2024*. Language Center.
https://www.kwansei.ac.jp/cms/kwansei_c_language/pdf/news/2024/LanguagePrograms2024.pdf
- Little, D., Dam, L. & Legenhausen, L. (2017). *Language Learner Autonomy: Theory, Practice and Research*. Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783098606>
- Stringer, T. (2024). A conceptual framework for Emergent Language Learner Autonomy – a complexity perspective for action research. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1–13.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2024.2371505>



A QR code is positioned on the left side of the slide, set against a background of a blue sky with white clouds. The QR code is black and white, with a small silhouette of a dinosaur in the center. The dinosaur is facing right and has a long neck and tail.

FOSTERING LEARNER AUTONOMY

EVALUATING A STUDENT-LED RESEARCH
PROJECT IN A JAPANESE UNIVERSITY
LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Kwansei Gakuin University Language Center Annual Research Forum
Monday January 20th, 2025, 13:35-14:00

Tom Stringer