A Duoethnography of the Elucidation of Teacher Agency of Digital Tools for Teaching English as a Foreign Language During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Japanese Universities

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ABSTRACT

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, a lack of decisive leadership from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) resulted in each Japanese university implementing ad-hoc emergency measures for teaching. Although the majority of universities started teaching online three years later (in 2022), university teachers are expected to teach in a variety of contexts — online, face-to-face, or a hybrid of the two. To date, there is scant literature reporting on the ongoing tension between teachers who want to exert agency over the use of instructional and communication tools (ICT) under such circumstances and university policy on the sanctioned use of digital tools during this ongoing crisis. Adopting a duoethnographic approach, this study aims to elucidate teacher agency of digital tools for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Japanese higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan. In duoethnography, new knowledge is discoverable from the individual lived experience, and the study findings offer societal implications to enhance the meaning of the phenomenon or inform educational leadership with further insights regarding teaching English as a foreign language in Japanese tertiary education. The findings of this study show that the insights provided by the duoethnographic method not only provide a cathartic salve by which teachers can constructively overcome negative teaching circumstances on an individual level but also warrants further research to explore teachers' similar experiences in other teaching contexts on a global scale.

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INTRODUCTION

When the World Health Organization officially declared the COVID-19 virus a global pandemic on March 11th, 2020, many schools around the world imposed lockdowns of face-to-face teaching as a public health emergency measure. Although the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) recommended school closures for K-12 as a response to the state of emergency at the outset, no recommendations were offered to the tertiary sector at all. At the time of writing, the pandemic continues to play havoc with all facets and levels of teaching, including Japanese higher education. The last official response from the MEXT website, dated August 6th, 2020, not only recognizes that the disruption to education will likely be long-term, but it also relinquished all decision-making on school closures recommending all stakeholders to cooperate with the demands of the local authorities.

The lack of educational leadership and the inability of governments to provide clear guidelines throughout this pandemic is not limited to Japanese tertiary schools. Many research studies have called on their respective local governments to take responsibility for the situation by providing clear, detailed pedagogical guidance to schools under their aegis to provide training and support for frontline teachers (Castaneda-Trujillo & Jaime-Osorio., 2021; Ping et al., 2021; Ulla & Perales, 2021).

Agency

In this paper, we draw from studies related to emergency remote teaching (ERT) and teacher agency, with a specific focus on English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching at the tertiary level, against a backdrop of ongoing disruption caused by the evolving complications of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, this is partly about definition, such as what we mean by agency. Moreover, on the other hand, this is about factors that promote or hinder the achievement of teacher agency by agents of change (i.e., ERT teachers) in day-to-day, concrete settings. In conceptualizing agency, we have been guided by the work of Biesta et al. (2015), who write: "[The] concept of agency highlights that actors always act *by means of* their environment rather than simply *in* their environment [so that] achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations [italics authors']" (p. 626). In other words, agency, as Priestly et al. (2015) define it, "is not something that people have; it is something that people do" (p. 3). We also draw on Emirbayer and Mische (1998), who remind us of the ever-changing properties of agency in that it is informed by the past yet constrained by the present, which requires the agent to be reflexive, dialogical, and selective.

By extension, as a temporal construct, the manifestation of teacher agency, we argue, is further subject to cultural and material influences. As such, these influences suggest a high degree of teacher agency in pursuing alternative courses of action and difficult decision-making during extenuating circumstances, such as the phenomenon of remote teaching as a last-minute response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the importance teacher agentic use of digital tools plays in tertiary education in foreign language learning, the current study investigates how teachers cope with teaching during this ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Saturation of the literature review was achieved when the full range of research findings was obtained, and further studies either repeated the same findings or offered no new insights. The following literature review offers an extensive range of findings pertinent to address the research question of this study.

To ensure rigor in locating research related to the research question of this study, searches were expanded to include teachers at tertiary institutions beyond the geographical context of this study, and full-time, as well as part-time, EFL teachers were considered. However, consideration was exclusively limited to foreign language teachers of higher education institutions (i.e., K-12 excluded). Moreover, only peer-reviewed, empirical research designs (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods) were reviewed.

The Zhang (2020) study, a discovery-oriented qualitative case study of seven Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) teachers, was conducted at a Danish University. This study sought to explain the level of teacher expertise for teaching online, and to investigate teacher pedagogical competency to replace a traditional teaching mode with a digital one. The research found that teacher beliefs about digital tools influenced their chosen tasks. Moreover, the degree to which they achieved digital competence was contingent on the time the institution afforded them to modify their existing techno-pedagogical competence and degree of tool agency.

In 2022, Vergara-Rodriguez et al. conducted an online quantitative study of 908 Hispanic university professors who came from 21 different countries in central and south America and Spain. The purpose of the study was to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the teachers' self-perception of self-confidence to use digital learning during the period of emergency remote learning. The participants were categorized as digital natives if born before 1980 and non-natives after that year. The research found a negative correlation between the stress caused by the pandemic and the teachers' digital adaptation skills, especially among digital natives. The authors recommended a qualitative study to explore the underlying causes that contributed to the participant's self-perception of digital teaching stress caused by the pandemic.

In a qualitative case study conducted at a university in Beijing, Gao and Cui (2022) interviewed four CFL university teachers who varied in age, gender, education level, and teaching experience. The purpose of the study was to explore the degree to which teacher pedagogical beliefs influenced the agentive use of digital technology for teaching purposes during the shift to ERT during the pandemic. The study found that analyzing pedagogical beliefs was insufficient for understanding teachers' preferences for the agentive use of tools. This was partly due to the lack of available tool choices and tech support, which, in turn, influenced agency. Gao and Cui called for more prompt institutional efforts to support teachers with sufficient learning resources and tech training for present and future offline teaching and learning.

The Thumvichit (2021) study, a mixed-methods research conducted online, used snowball sampling to recruit 162 tertiary-level teachers of English. The participants varied in age, nationality, and years of teaching experience. The majority of respondents were Thai and worked full-time. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of the abrupt transition to online teaching on teaching agentic use of digital tools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that lack of institutional and technical support restricted teacher performance and forced them to endure enormous stress as they struggled to overcome impediments due to lack of

training. The authors called on higher institutions and governments to take responsibility for providing more concrete and detailed pedagogical guidance in preparing teachers both now and in the future.

In 2021, Arumugam et al. used a qualitative study to conduct in-depth telephone interviews with 20 English as a second language (ESL) teachers at private tertiary institutions in Malaysia. The average years of teaching experience ranged between 10 to 12 years. The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges the ESL teachers encountered as a result of the shift to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the major findings reported by the participants was a profound sense of isolation, frustration with inefficient, time-consuming digital tools, and an overall lack of motivation to teach online due to a work-life imbalance. The study called for overhauling managerial and staff resources across Malaysian institutions, such as creating better guidelines for online teaching and upgrading and providing various e-learning tools. Moreover, university management has to make greater efforts to transform online education based on sound regulations and not based on ad hoc efforts.

Ulla and Perales' (2021) study employed a qualitative phenomenological method to recruit six Thai university English teachers via purposive-convenience sampling to investigate the impact of emergency remote teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors found that due to a complete absence of formal guidelines for online teaching and a lack of university leadership from either the department head or media support center, the teachers had no choice but to employ teacher agency to develop informal networks of the community as a "safe space" to cope with the techno-pedagogical difficulties. Apart from calling on universities to develop better guidelines and leadership for online learning, this research also called for a different research methodology to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of individual teachers in such conditions.

Chen (2022) used a qualitative case-study approach to investigate how two university language teachers in China combined teacher agency and digital technology use for teaching purposes during the shift to remote teaching as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recruited using convenience sampling, the participants were solicited for the study due to their particular proficiency with using digital media for language instruction. Although the teachers obtained some measure of success in remote teaching, the authors found that the case-study design of the research method was insufficient for the data interpretation of the emotional aspects of the teachers' experience. The authors called for future research that employed a different qualitative design that evaluated reflective data of teaching practices under similar conditions (i.e., extenuating teaching circumstances imposed as a countermeasure to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Gong et al. (2021) performed a qualitative case study with three full-time university language teachers (one of whom was a program coordinator) in Macau to investigate teacher agency with instructional communication technology during the sudden shift to online teaching as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Convenience sampling was used to elicit volunteers for the study. The authors found that digital and non-digital tool resources sanctioned by the university severely hampered both agentic choice and professional discretion in techno-pedagogical performance. Moreover, mastering the instructional functions of digital platforms was a major source of frustration and a barrier to teaching online. The authors called for educational institutions to develop a flexible techno-pedagogical infrastructure that allows teachers to exercise more freedom with digital media innovations. Moreover, they recommended that future studies take a more ethnographic approach to understand how teaching contexts

influence teacher agentic use of digital media for language instruction during the ongoing restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, Castaneda-Trujillo and Jaime-Osorio conducted a case study of English teachers to explore their techno-pedagogical strategies and digital resources as they dealt with ERT caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eleven full-time Colombian university teachers (four doctorates, seven master's) with years of experience (from four to 30 years) participated. The study found that teacher reflections played a key role in helping them recognize how their "feelings of frustration, sadness, and helplessness" were a major source of demotivation. Even though these teachers were familiar with using digital tools for teaching, negative feelings prevented them from genuinely feeling connected with their students online. The authors called for universities to adopt a holistic system whereby media centers, techno-pedagogical leaders, and instructors collaborate as a united community to choose digital media and set guidelines for teaching effectively both now and in the future.

Ping et al. (2021) recruited 21 English language instructors at a Malaysian public university to conduct a qualitative study examining the effects of emergency remote learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on part-time instructors. Additionally, the study aimed to identify specific training needs. The study found that, due to their sessional status, this group of instructors was overlooked in receiving adequate techno-pedagogical training with the available instructional and communication tool resources compared to their full-time counterparts. A noteworthy finding was the agentic strategy to substitute or complement the use of non-sanctioned learning management systems (LMSs) instead of the compulsory in-house LMS, either as a response to inadequate training or a preference for a familiar tool. The authors. called for Malaysian universities to adopt a more egalitarian, equitable, and responsible approach to developing a training program sensitive to the needs of all instructors, including part-time instructors, to ensure students are receiving the best education possible regardless of the delivery format.

To summarize, the above literature review has provided evidence of several repeating patterns happening globally and a couple of cases unique to the institutions in question but worth exploring. For example, Zhang (2020) argued that teachers' beliefs in their ability to use ICT to cope with ERT could have played a more significant role if teachers were afforded more time to prepare in advance. Gao and Cui (2022), on the other hand, challenged that notion, arguing that the efficacy of teacher beliefs was contingent on ICT resources/infrastructure resources. The issue of adequate digital resources is echoed across several studies (Arumugam et al., 2021; Gong et al., 2022; Ping et al., 2021). As well as the call for a greater variety of digital tools (Argumugam et al., 2021) and flexibility in choice (Gong et al., 2022; Ping et al., 2021).

The studies in this review also draw attention to the need to consider a research design that could delve deeper into the negative emotional states expressed by the participants (Chen, 2022; Gong et al., 2022; Ping et al., 2021; Ulla & Perales, 2021). For example, Gong et al. (2022) recommended that future research pursue an ethnographic research design to explore the impact of negative feelings on teacher agentic use of ICT. In contrast, Castaneda-Trujillo and Jaime-Osorio (2021) found that teacher reflections were instrumental in transforming "feelings of frustration" into constructive techno-pedagogical decisions. It should be noted that all the studies reviewed here recommended that future research into the question of agentic teacher use of ICT during the ongoing COVID-19 disruption of EFL teaching in tertiary education be qualitative.

Ferreira, D., & Peloghitis, J. (2023). A duoethnography of the elucidation of teacher agency of digital tools for teaching English as a foreign language during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japanese universities. *Accents Asia. 16(2),*1-14.

RETROSPECTIVE DUOETHNOGRAPHY

Given the preceding literature review, the authors of this study adopted a duoethnographic approach to investigate emergency remote teaching in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) where the participants' universities continued to experience COVID-19 countermeasures in 2022. Duoethnography is a joint autoethnography whereby participants undertake a retrospective examination of themselves vis-a-vis the research phenomenon. This innovative methodology can best be understood as a combination of autobiography and ethnography. Unlike autoethnography, where one sole researcher is the center of the investigation (Eldridge, 2012), duoethnography involves analyzing how two individuals provide similar or different meanings to the phenomenon in common (Ferreira & Throne, 2022; Norris & Sawyer, 2016).

There is a dearth of duoethnographic studies in education research, and methodological examples of writing procedures within the genre are also scarce. Therefore, an explanation of data artifacts and analysis is warranted. This duoethnographic study was produced as a construction of two separate personal narratives using visual and orthographic artifacts as data. The artifacts include two artistic sketches by one of the participants and digital smartphone images used by the other participant—the orthographic data comprised practitioner journals, reflective commentaries on sketches, and a poem. MAXQDA 2O was used to code all the artifacts. The first round of coding was the literature review. This first set of codes was used for analyzing the participants' artifacts, and additional codes unique to the experiences of this study were added. We were conservative in determining what constituted an overarching theme derived from patterns, given the rather small representation of participants. Instead, we decided to present the findings and analysis of our study's data as a comparison to the patterns and themes derived from previous research while at the same time representing the new knowledge unique to the experiences of each participant in this study.

Research Question

The research focus was two teachers' implementation of teacher agency in response to the challenges imposed by COVID-19 on digital affordances for teaching purposes. What is the experience of elucidating teacher agency of digital tools for teaching English as a foreign language in Japanese higher education during the covid-19 pandemic?

DATA REPRESENTATION

Data representation within auto- and duoethnography can vary in literary form (journals, poems, etc.) and other artistic expressions (collages, sketches, paintings, etc.). In this duoethnography, the authors use a variety of self-generated ethnographic vignettes as artifacts to elucidate retrospective insights into their agentive experiences vis-a-vis the research question.

John

John's progression of agency development was illustrated by sketches, poems, and reflective writing. These artifacts were analyzed to elucidate the evidence of agentive attributes throughout the spring semester of 2022 at John's university. His agency emerged early in the semester when he drew his first sketch (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
John's first sketch is entitled "Facing Chaos"
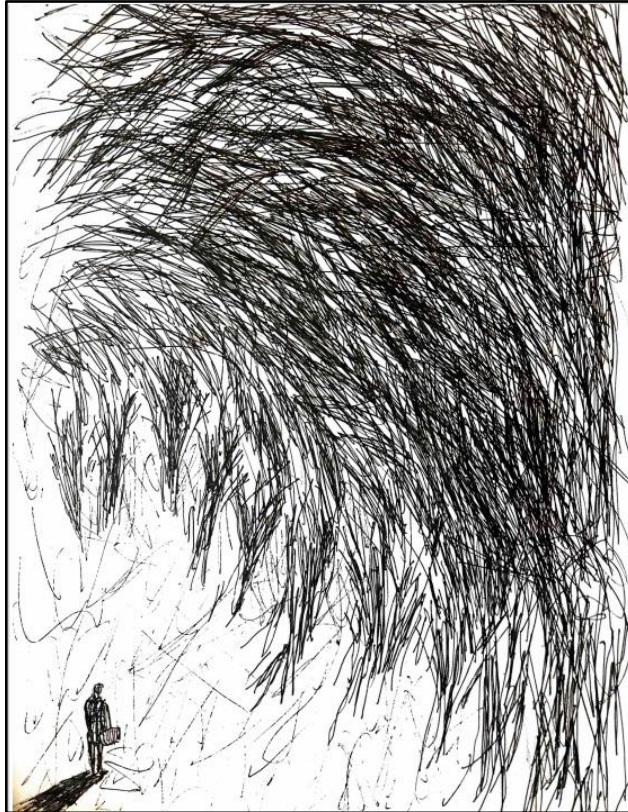
His orthographic reflection of his first sketch (see figure 2) described his self-awareness as an educator coming to terms with various conflicting emotions while trying to grapple with digital tools choices and lack of clear administrative policy.

FIGURE 2
John's reflection on his sketch "Facing Chaos"

When I look at this image, certain elements of helplessness, turbulence, and chaos come to mind. The small image on the bottom left is how I … feel. The teacher is small and helpless and faces a thorny wall that may soon swallow them. I have felt this way, … Many of us feel helpless as schools try to rush… back to the classroom despite the apparent risks that face-to-face classes have. This feeling of vulnerability… turbulence and [the] chaotic nature of the thorny wall represent the COVID policies and the use of digital applications to maneuver through such uncertainty. Sadly though, it seems that programs are reacting more than leading, which is why, what could have been just lines moving in different directions, have joined and latched onto each other. These individual lines have morphed into a massive formidable wall.

The ad-hoc demands of hybrid teaching further complicated John's agentic struggles with using technology and his sense of reality and role identity (see Figure 3). As depicted in Figure 4, John faced feelings of loneliness and isolation as he struggled to juggle between online and face-to-face teaching.

FIGURE 3
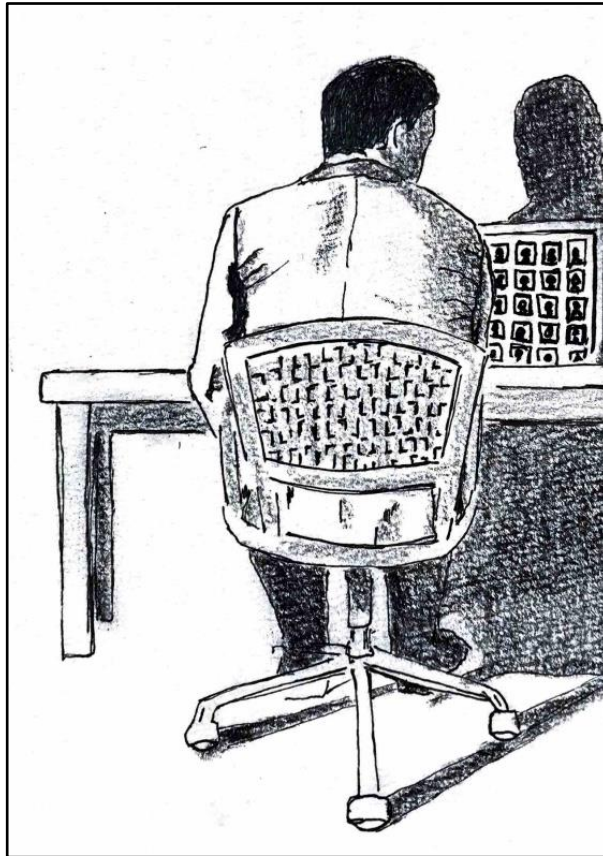**John's second sketch entitled "Between Two Worlds"**

FIGURE 4
John's reflection on his sketch "Between Two Worlds"

"Between Two Worlds" was completed after about a month of teaching, reflecting how I sometimes feel in a face-to-face classroom. The image depicts a man sitting with his back to the viewer, which suggests a certain degree of loneliness, a feeling of isolation. The teacher's shadow looms over him - it is almost as if the shadow is another person or an extension of the teacher. The shadow suggests that the teacher is between two worlds - one in reality surrounded by the students in the classroom while the other one is situated in the digital world... [I] must navigate between these two worlds fluidly with students since students request to take classes online due to isolation protocols after being in contact with infected people. Frequently the [I] must make adjustments in their classes to accommodate these students by offering hybrid classes on Zoom classes with assignments and classwork being [disseminated] mainly on digital platforms

John's agentic strategic use of orthography in the form of a poem (see figure 5) and subsequent reflection (figure 6) helped him to understand his feelings of frustration, disappointment, and isolation as he struggled with inadequate tools to nurture growth in language learning in his classes.

Figure 5.
John's poem entitled "I am a Farmer"

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I AM A FARMER

I am a farmer                          I am
Without a crop
Without a field
To tend
I rarely see                           nature's magic


I once saw this magic                  I once saw
buds blossoming
buds maturing
In nearby fields
Offering colorful meadows of           Innocent enthusiasms


Now, I sit alone in my field           I sit alone
I stare vacantly
I stare wearily
at rich pastures full of promise
but my spirit is            silently waiting


Awaiting a time for the farmers   awaiting a time
For them to return
For them to plow and seed
Until then        I do not hear any soil break
I witness no such wonders              I witness no such wonders
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FIGURE 6
John's reflection on his poem "I am a Farmer"

The poem…signals that teachers assume different roles in the classroom, and one of these is that of a caregiver… Despite this role, the first stanza illustrates an idea of abandonment where the teacher feels that he has neither his own students nor the tools to help them grow. The last line "I rarely see nature's magic" is juxtaposed with the next line "I once saw this magic" which suggests that the author has witnessed his students' achievements or progress in the past, but now such matters are no longer visible…The farmer notes that the fields are ready to be tended but that no one is there to farm the land. This references the isolation [I] feel in the classroom…after the COVID-19 lockdowns…[T]here is a foreboding atmosphere which is met with fearful apprehension as the farmer stares vacantly and wearily at the empty fields. It is likely that the soil will not be broken in the near future.
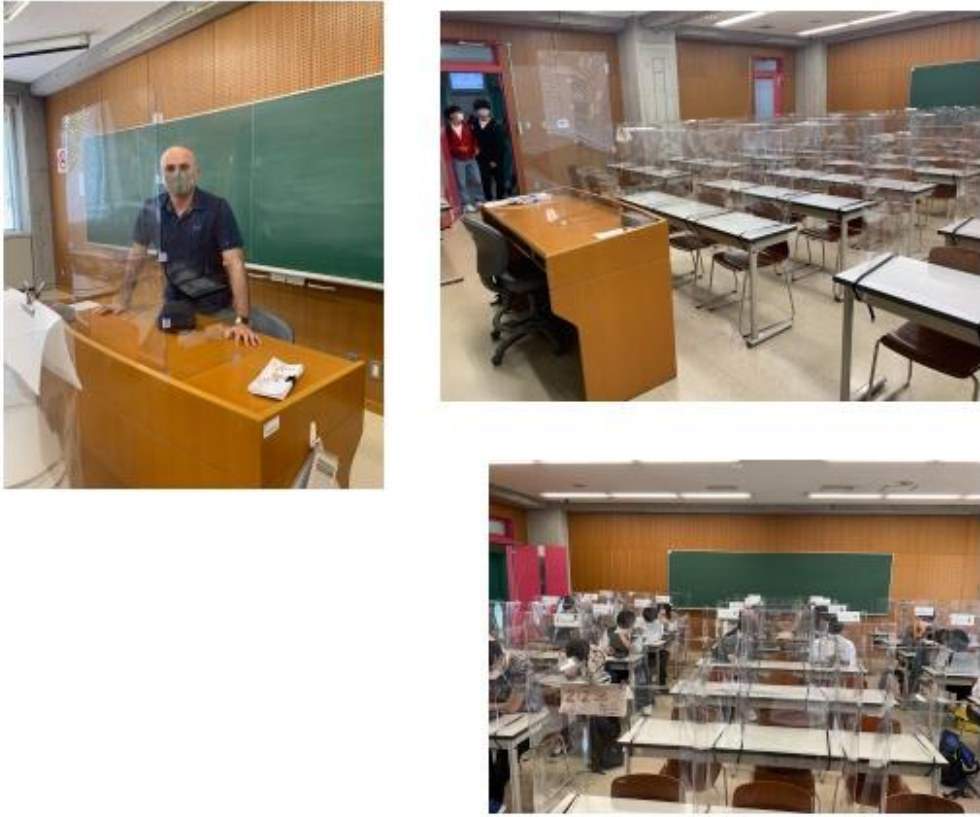
John's strategic use of sketches, poems, and journal entries helped to make sense of his agentic role in the messiness of the situation.

Daniel

Daniel's engagement with teacher agentic use of digital technology for teaching was evident in the following journal reflection (see figure 7). Teaching a speaking and listening class while transparent cuboid plastic partitions separated each, and he was behind his partition was a challenge for Daniel.

FIGURE 7
Daniel and students in a face-to-face classroom with plastic barriers

At Seikei U: I'm in a speaking and listening class that looks like this:

the room is divided to separate everyone from each other, yet this is a language class with a focus on speaking and listening… I'm working overtime to come up with ideas, digital ones, to make up for

what would otherwise be a much easier experience if we stayed on Zoom. My dilemma here is that not everyone has ear phones. For speaking, I am using Flipgrid (now called Flip). This university does not provide me with their emails, so I have to use QR codes to get them to join the class.

Daniel's mixed emotions about relying on his "techspertize" to overcome foreseeable obstacles in his teaching environment deteriorated when his request for assistance from the full

staff in charge failed to address his pleas for assistance at his part-time post at another university (see figure 9).

FIGURE 9
An extract from Daniel's journal detailing administrative negligence.

One part of me, though, feels rather intrigued by this whole situation because the set-up for teaching these courses, which are highly dependent on using and teaching with technology, an area that I am considered to be an "expert" in, is fraught with complications. In our teachers' meeting held on April 4th, only then was it made clear to me that teaching this course may also require hybrid teaching. In which case, I would need to use Zoom, in which case I don't have the right lap top for (I only have a Chromebook). When I said as much, I got zero assistance from the group, including my nemesis ███ ████ who used to go toe-to-toe with me in displaying tech proficiency in the department back when I was full-timer there. Not only did he not step up with a suggestion for help, his sole contribution to the whole meeting was to quote some departmental rule stating that studets should not get more than 30 minutes homework.

So to deal with this situation, I have to borrow a computer from the media center once in the morning, return it, and then borrow again in the afternoon, and then return it again. Each time requiring set up. And it's only a 70-minute class.

At another university, where Daniel works part-time, he encountered more ICT barriers that obligated him to troubleshoot working solutions. An unfair administrative policy barred him from using a computer, which he needed to teach the course, thus forcing Daniel to use his equipment and make alternative arrangements — all of which were time-consuming, stressful, and fraught with problems (see figure 8).

FIGURE 8
Daniel struggling for solutions in his part-time teaching position

It takes a considerable amount of time, at least 10 minutes to set up all my digital tools to teach a class that is focused on using digital tools (Academic Tools and Strategies). Similar to the Seikei experience, this was much easier when we did everything on Zoom. Now I don't even get access to a computer room though other teachers are. That's not fair.
Even my use of preferred (i.e., personal tools) are at odds with the existing infrastructure. Who uses AVI cables anymore?? Every other place I work (Sophia, Waseda, Se   ikei) uses HDMI.

Daniel's strategy to use a journal helped him to voice his frustrations on the one hand and brainstorm viable digital teaching solutions on the other hand. Daniel's journal entries documented the evolving dimension of his agency, where setbacks caused problems (administrative and technical) and negative emotions were counterbalanced with professional knowledge and skills. Although this unprecedented emergency remote teaching situation prompted Daniel to exert more teacher agency in generating digital tool solutions, he overcame his negative emotions once he embraced his agentic role in the messiness of the situation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

To know more about the relationship between digital affordances and teacher agency during the pandemic, the present study tracked two teachers' reflections on their EFL instruction over the 2022 spring semester at several universities in Eastern Japan. The duoethnographical research study design foregrounded each teacher's unique perceptions, emotions, and experiences.

Moreover, their respective data artifacts made their thought processes and agentic decisions more observable. The dynamic relationship between ICT affordances and teacher agency during the pandemic can be interpreted by the reflective artifacts generated in this study as follows: When faced with unprecedented ad-hoc teaching arrangements that transitioned from emergency remote teaching to face-to-face/hybrid teaching, both teachers struggled to come to terms with a range of negative, stressful feelings such as frustration, abandonment, and despair (Castaneda-Trujillo & Jaime-Osorio, 2021; Chen, 2022; Gong et al., 2022; Ping et al., 2021). Negative teacher emotion is one of the main themes derived from the coding of the literature review. To make sense of these negative emotions, they each employed some form of reflective practice as agentic strategy to mitigate the negative impact and execute their duties professionally using ICT.

Through John's reflections on his use of sketches and poetry as an agentic strategy to understand what he was feeling about how he was using digital technology for teaching, he could elucidate why he was feeling displaced and "out of touch" with students. Perhaps this process of art and reflection is connected to what American philosopher Iris Murdoch once described as "unselfing". The process of artistic representation in itself is a kind of "unselfing" because "[A]nything which alters consciousness in the direction of…objectivity and realism is to…pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is" (Crawford, 2006). Put another way, John's artistic approach helped him to get outside his head, as it were, and focus on the underlying causes of the problem.

Similar to John, Daniel's use of reflective journaling was a combination of airing out frustrations in order to re-focus on the technopedagogical needs at hand. For Daniel, it was less a question of lack of training than it was dealing with a series of technical/physical barriers and the ICT limits instituted by the digital media centers in each of his teaching environments, a phenomenon noted in previous research (Arumugam at al., 2021; Gao & Tsui, 2022; Gong et al., 2021; Ping et al., 2021). Daniel chronicled in more detail how teachers have had to endure the more chaotic ad-hoc repercussions that were evident as a result of the negligence and lack of competence on the part of institutional digital media leadership (Arumugam et al., 2021; Castaneda-Trujillo & Jaime-Osorio, 2021; Ulla & Perales, 2021). His experience exemplified how trying these teaching circumstances have been even for the more digitally proficient

teaching staff (Vergara-Rodriguez, 2022). Nevertheless, Daniel's agentic use of detailed documentation helped him brainstorm and reflexively implement what appeared to be effective technopedagogical use of alternate ICT tools to execute his teaching mandate with some degree of efficacy.

The findings of this study contribute to L2 education by proposing autoethnography (as well as duoethnography) as a viable form of research inquiry to investigate teacher agency of digital tools in higher education during and after post COVID-19 pandemic. We call for future studies to support self-as-subject research design to understand how this method is appropriate for teacher agency when combined with reflexive data artifacts, especially those that include other artistic forms of expression. These insights may offer a better understanding and use of narrative explication of teacher agency under similar extraordinary teaching circumstances such as those imposed by the recent pandemic. Hopefully, knowledge gained from such studies could propose better coordination of efforts in developing sound institutional guidelines that not anticipate future pandemics but is also prepared to protect and support teachers on the front for future pandemics.

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