

## Foreword

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In previous years, the Yokohama JALT MyShare sessions had a tech focus in June and a general focus in December. This year we removed that distinction, and decided that we would aim at publishing twice a year, while the ideas are still hot and fresh in the authors' minds. This semester's Special Issue consists of three papers in which presenters from our June event share their ideas with those of you who could not attend our hybrid event (and provide more detail to those of you who did!). As ever, they are pertinent and practical, and especially relevant to language teachers in Japanese high schools and universities.

This Special Issue kicks off with Theodore Bratton's "Cliffhanger Script Performance", an activity sequence that is sure to be a hit with your students as it combines the use of movies, dramas and student performance, backed up with theory on authentic materials and motivation. He gives a step by step approach with key advice about aspects that he found through experience to be challenging. Also concerned with linguistic performance, but focussed on pronunciation, is Morgen Livingston's application of artificial intelligence based transcription software. His methods help students to analyze and improve their own pronunciation, and he highlights the importance of the teacher's role alongside the benefits of technological automation. Finally, for this issue, Tomoe Sato guides us through a set of tools not only to gamify the explanation sections of language classes, but also to maintain attention and motivation through the class. She further reflects on the stages that students may pass through from first experiences of gamified lessons, to later engagement. I hope that readers will find many ideas to take into their classes.

I would like to thank the authors of this Special Issue for their contributions throughout the process, from the MyShare event in June when they presented their ideas, through the proposals, development, and review stages of the issue. Many thanks also to the other contributors to the My Share events. I encourage readers to join these events live so as not to miss out on a wealth of other great ideas. Finally, special thanks to the Yokohama JALT team who work year round to provide the region and beyond with a flow of varied and stimulating events.

To participate in Yokohama JALT events, or learn about the Chapter, visit <http://yojalt.org>.

Sincerely,  
Alexander L. Selman  
Editor, *Yokohama JALT My Share June 2023 Special Issue*

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## Cliffhanger Script Performances

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### ABSTRACT

The *Cliffhanger Script Performance* is a multifaceted, highly customizable activity that requires students to view clips from TV shows and movies and create their own original endings for each scene. By combining elements of traditional listening practice, prediction/story completion tasks, and drama, this activity not only provides students with exposure to authentic language, but also motivates them to pursue opportunities to engage with the target language both inside and outside the classroom. In this article, I explain and provide pedagogical justification for each part of the Cliffhanger Script Performance while discussing customization options for teachers wishing to use this activity in their classrooms. Due to the difficulty involved in choosing and creating materials for this kind of activity, I also give advice based on my own experience.

### INTRODUCTION

Despite the importance of motivation in second and foreign language classrooms (Dörnyei, 2001), it can be difficult for instructors to encourage students to actively engage in classwork and even more so to pursue opportunities to use the target language outside of class. However, a lack of exposure remains a significant hurdle for many learners, particularly foreign language students whose only opportunity to use the language is during their weekly 90-minute (or less!) classes. Therefore, it is crucial for language teachers to not only make in-class tasks enjoyable and intrinsically motivating (Willis & Willis, 2007), but to motivate students to take the initiative to use the language outside of class as well. One way to do so is by connecting language learning to something that students already enjoy in their everyday lives, such as TV shows and movies. In this article, I explain an activity that I have dubbed the *Cliffhanger Script Performance*, which requires students to view clips from such authentic materials and create their own original endings for each scene. This activity can be used in a wide range of teaching environments to allow students to practice their language skills while also motivating them to continue learning the target language in their free time.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Authentic Materials

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In an attempt to simplify language use for language learners, textbook audio materials often contain stilted and contrived instances of the target language (Gilmore, 2004, 2007). Despite the shortcomings of such materials, many instructors rely on these recordings as the primary source of linguistic input in their classes due to time constraints or other reasons. Although selecting level-appropriate audio and video clips from alternate sources can be difficult for instructors (Lingzhu & Yuanyuan, 2010), there is a wealth of research supporting the use of authentic materials in second and foreign language classrooms.

As opposed to the unrealistic dialogues and monologues that often appear in textbooks, authentic materials can expose students to the way the language is used in the real world. By viewing such materials in the classroom, teachers can help students to not only understand the idiosyncrasies of the spoken register (Lingzhu & Yuanyuan, 2010), but also the culture and social context in which the language is being used (Li, 2013; Sherman, 2003).

Exposure to authentic materials has also been shown to improve students' listening abilities. This is true of students at various stages of language learning. Alijani et al. (2014) found that upper-intermediate students exposed to authentic materials surpassed their peers on a listening comprehension test. Although it could be assumed that authentic materials are most appropriate for intermediate or advanced learners, Sabet and Mahsefat's (2012) study suggests that even elementary-level students can benefit greatly from more realistic input.

Perhaps more surprising is the impact that authentic materials can have on students' other language skills. For instance, Weyers (1999) discovered that students who viewed authentic materials showed gains not only in terms of their listening skills, but also their communicative competence. In this case, communicative competence was determined by how many words were used, students' confidence in generating output, and the breadth of discourse.

Although some researchers bemoan the lack of convincing empirical evidence to support the widespread belief that authentic materials can raise student motivation (Gilmore, 2007), it is still a crucial point to consider given the importance of motivation in the language classroom. As Dörnyei (2001) has observed, motivation serves as the foundation for language learning. Without sufficient motivation, even the most cutting-edge approaches will fail to make a significant impact on learners' skills. Indeed, some studies have attempted to establish this link between authentic materials and motivation. For example, Zhafarghandi et al. (2014) found that pre-intermediate level students and their instructors preferred authentic materials and had more positive attitudes toward using them.

## **Film**

As one potential source of authentic materials is film, the benefits of using this medium have been discussed in the literature (Herrero & Vanderschelden, 2019). A study by Sulaiman et al. (2017) revealed that students showed significant gains in listening comprehension when viewing video media compared to only audio. The authors hypothesized that video is beneficial in that it allows students to grasp the main idea of the scene even if they cannot understand every word. The use of film in the classroom has also been shown to have a significant effect on students' speaking competence (Hoinbala, 2022).

These promising results have led educators to recommend the use of film in classrooms as a means of exposing students to real-world discourse (Li, 2013; Sulaiman et al., 2017; Tognozzi, 2010). This form of communicative input is especially important for foreign language

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learners who lack consistent contact with speakers of the target language (VanPatten, 2015). Not only that, but as with other forms of authentic input, film allows students to develop cultural awareness as well (Sherman, 2003; Tognozzi, 2010).

## **Drama**

Another more interactive way to motivate students while improving their linguistic skills is through the use of drama. There are many different ways to implement drama in the classroom, from improvised role play to scripted plays, but what they have in common is their ability to allow students to communicate in a contextualized way (Angelianawati, 2019). More specifically, drama can improve learners' speaking, nonverbal communication, and textual understanding (Al-Mahrooqi & Tabakow, 2013).

Not only is drama useful in facilitating the development of a variety of language skills, but it has also been shown to have an impact on student motivation. This is true even in educational contexts in East Asia where students are accustomed to teacher-centered learning (Matsuzaki-Carreira, 2005; Reed & Seong, 2013) and in the Middle East where there are concerns about Western cultural intrusions (Al-Mahrooqi & Tabakow, 2013). Drama activities are motivating because they promote a student-centered learning environment in which learners are given the opportunity to collaborate with their peers (Angelianawati, 2019). Drama also fosters enthusiasm toward language learning by allowing students to express themselves in creative ways (Angelianawati, 2019). This enthusiasm can lead to an increase in motivation and enhanced sociocultural awareness, especially if authentic materials are used (Matsuzaki-Carreira, 2005).

By combining the aforementioned pedagogical practices into the Cliffhanger Script Performance, I hope to provide students with the opportunity to enhance their language skills in an engaging and motivating way.

## **PROCEDURE**

In this section, I outline the basic procedure that I follow when implementing the Cliffhanger Script Performance in my classes. Typically I use one 90-minute class session for the listening exercises, another for the scene completion activity, and one more for the performances. However, the time allotted for each part can change depending on the level of the students and the teacher's requirements. Because the Cliffhanger Script Performance is a highly customizable activity, the following steps serve as suggestions for educators to adapt for their unique groups of students and teaching environments.

### **Listening**

The Cliffhanger Script Performance starts with a listening activity using a scene from a TV show or movie. The defining characteristic of the activity is the cliffhanger, meaning that the clip is cut or paused at a critical moment in the scene. The fact that students are unaware of what happens next serves as the basis for the scene completion portion of the task that follows.

Before viewing the clip, however, students are given conversation questions to discuss with their classmates. This pre-listening activity is an effective way of activating schemata and

pre-teaching any necessary words or phrases. As can be seen in Table 1, the questions are designed to direct students to the key content of the scene, thereby allowing them to consider the topic while previewing unknown vocabulary. For example, by introducing the questions related to the clip about music, the teacher can explain or elicit the meaning of words that are often unfamiliar to students, such as “composer” or “read music”.

**TABLE 1**  
**Pre-listening Question Examples**

Theme	Music	History	Technology
Clip	<i>August Rush</i> (Sheridan et al., 2007)	<i>Futurama</i> (Avanzino & Morton, 2010)	<i>The Big Bang Theory</i> (Rich, 2014)
Questions	Do you know how to read music? If so, how did you learn?  How do you think composers like Mozart and Beethoven got their ideas?	What do you think of time travel?  If you could change one historical event, what would it be and why?	What’s important to you when purchasing a new electronic device?  Have you ever had difficulty choosing between two electronic products? If so, how did you make your final decision?

The next part of the listening section is an optional vocabulary preview activity. Although Berne (1995) found that students benefited more from previewing listening questions than vocabulary, some instructors might find it necessary to pre-teach more difficult or idiomatic language to give students a better understanding of the clip. There are many ways to preview the vocabulary, from matching to cloze tasks, so teachers can use the ones that best suit their students’ needs.

After the pre-listening activities, the instructor should introduce the characters in the scene and give any necessary background information. In the first viewing, the students are asked to demonstrate their basic understanding of the scene by answering comprehension questions. The form of these questions depends on the level of the students. As shown in Table 2, simple multiple choice or true/false questions are appropriate for lower-level learners, while intermediate or advanced students might welcome the additional challenge of answering more open-ended questions. As mentioned earlier, previewing the comprehension questions before watching the clip can help boost students’ performance (Berne, 1995).

Once the teacher has reviewed the answers with the class, it is time for the second viewing. At this point, the instructor distributes a copy of the script containing some missing words and phrases to each student. The students are then required to fill in the blanks as they rewatch the scene. The purpose of this cloze task is to have students focus more closely on the language being used by the speakers. As can be seen in Table 3, the words and phrases the teacher chooses to omit depend on the proficiency level of the students. While single-word blanks make the task more accessible for lower-level learners, listening for longer, multi-word blanks can help more advanced users grow accustomed to the suprasegmental features of the

language. If necessary, the clip can be slowed down to .75 times the normal speed, as this will make it easier for students to catch what is said without overly distorting the speakers' voices.

**TABLE 2**  
**Comprehension Question Examples**

Level	Beginner	Intermediate	Upper-Intermediate
Clip	<i>August Rush</i> (Sheridan et al., 2007)	<i>Futurama</i> (Avanzino & Morton, 2010)	<i>The Big Bang Theory</i> (Rich, 2014)
Questions	<p>How much does August like music?</p> <p>a) A lot. b) A little. c) Not at all.</p> <p>How does Hope feel about August?</p> <p>a) She thinks he's smart. b) She doesn't like him. c) She thinks he's strange.</p> <p>What does August NOT know how to do at the beginning of the clip?</p> <p>a) Read music. b) Play music. c) Read or play music.</p>	<p>What is the result of the second big bang?</p> <p>What are Fry, Bender, and the Professor trying to do?</p> <p>Why does the Professor stop the time machine?</p>	<p>Which video game console does Sheldon want at the beginning of the clip?</p> <p>Why does Sheldon doubt his decision?</p> <p>What advice does Amy give Sheldon to help him make a decision?</p>

**TABLE 3**  
**Cloze Task Sample Sentences (with Answers)**

Level	Beginner	Intermediate	Upper-Intermediate
Clip	<i>August Rush</i> (Sheridan et al., 2007)	<i>Futurama</i> (Avanzino & Morton, 2010)	<i>The Big Bang Theory</i> (Rich, 2014)
Sentences	Do you know your <u>[notes]</u> ?	Hey, uh, what was the <u>[purpose of life]</u> anyway?	I've heard that if you flip a coin, it will tell you how you actually feel because you'll either be <u>[disappointed or excited by the outcome]</u> .

Following the second viewing, if the instructor wants to use this activity primarily for listening practice, students can be asked to discuss what happens next in the scene in pairs or groups. This prediction task builds on the listening activity by giving learners the opportunity to express their opinions in the target language. However, if the instructor wishes to capitalize on the benefits of drama, the prediction task can be expanded upon further through the scene completion and performance described in the next section.

## **Scene Completion & Performance**

After completing the listening activities, students are divided into pairs or groups. The number of students in each group depends on the number of speakers in the scene. The scene completion activity requires learners to work together to complete the script by preparing their own original endings to the clip. If the students have never done this activity before, the instructor might find it beneficial to provide a brief example. That said, giving students as much autonomy as possible has been shown to lead to an increase in motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). I urge instructors to allow students to experiment with the language to express their creativity. Students might want to make their scenes comical, heartwarming, or just downright bizarre—it matters not, as long as they are using the target language.

The fact that this part of the activity is done in groups encourages metalinguistic discussion among students about how to use the target language to express their ideas in a natural way. This kind of metalinguistic discussion can be especially beneficial for learners who are not confident enough in their linguistic abilities to engage in spontaneous conversation solely in the target language. It also allows more proficient students to help their peers in a nonthreatening, face-saving setting.

Although I advocate giving students as much autonomy as possible, a word or time limit can prevent students from producing an overly brief or underdeveloped ending to the scene. This activity is intrinsically motivating enough to encourage most students to put forth an honest effort, but some groups of learners might find more explicit guidelines useful.

After students have finished preparing their cliffhanger script endings, they should start to practice for the performance. Students can be asked to either practice from the beginning of the scene or just their original endings. If time allows, I suggest having students practice from the beginning, as it gives them the opportunity to emulate the speech patterns of the characters in the clip. In an earlier talk from which I developed this article, I referred to the activity as the Cliffhanger Script Presentation (Bratton, 2023), though the term performance is indeed more fitting because the students are not only encouraged to practice the lines but to act out the scene so that it more closely resembles a real conversation. Students may also be asked to memorize the lines, which can help them internalize the language and make the subsequent performances more captivating.

While the prospect of speaking another language in front of an audience has the tendency to make students nervous, there are advantages to having students perform their scenes for the class. As discussed in Angelianawati (2019), having students perform their rehearsed dramas can promote higher enthusiasm, creativity, and motivation. In addition, performances give learners the opportunity to practice their public speaking skills in a less intimidating way than formal speeches.

Of course, how to assess the performances can be left to the instructor's discretion. Some teachers might choose to score students on the content of their original endings, their speaking

skills (pronunciation, voice inflection, etc.), and/or their performance skills. However, given the fact that this activity is intrinsically motivating enough to inspire active engagement from most students, other instructors might prefer to just give students credit for their participation and focus on the process over the impending grade.

### **Checklist for Material Selection**

One of the biggest challenges for instructors wishing to implement the Cliffhanger Script Performance into their pedagogies is material selection and development (Angelianawati, 2019; Lingzhu & Yuanyuan, 2010; Tognozzi, 2010). While it is by no means exhaustive, I have compiled a list of points to consider when choosing TV or movie scenes for this activity.

Effective materials should:

- contain a good point at which to cut the scene and create some suspense or wonderment about what happens next.
- be sufficiently comprehensible for students to understand the gist of the scene.
- include only two or three speakers who speak for approximately the same amount of time.
- be related to students' interests and/or the topics students have learned about in class.

On the other hand, effective materials should avoid:

- scenarios that require background knowledge to understand or enjoy.
- excessive profanity or sensitive topics.
- flashbacks, flashforwards, or cuts in the scene.
- lulls in the conversation.
- too many cultural references.

Although selecting appropriate materials for this activity might seem daunting at first, once instructors have scenes prepared for a variety of topics and proficiency levels, they can continue to use them again and again. When possible, I recommend that teachers pull clips from TV series or movies that they have personally seen, as blindly searching for scenes related to a particular theme on the internet can be time-consuming and often unfruitful.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Cliffhanger Script Performance combines the benefits of authentic materials, prediction tasks, and drama to allow students to practice their language skills in an enjoyable and motivating way. After being exposed to clips from popular TV shows and movies, learners will hopefully develop an interest in exploring other ways of engaging in the target language outside of the classroom. Due to its highly customizable nature, the Cliffhanger Script Performance can be used with any age group or proficiency level. I urge educators to experiment with the ideas presented in this article to discover how to best adapt the activity to their unique groups of students and teaching situations.



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## Using Automatic Speech Recognition to Improve Pronunciation and Promote Self-Directed Learning in English Language Learners

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### ABSTRACT

Whether we are ready or not, artificial intelligence (AI) has arrived in our classrooms and, as educators, a part of our daily lives. Thus, we must think critically about how to best utilize these technologies to help our students. It is common, however, for educators to feel overwhelmed with the possibilities when thinking about how to use AI and new technologies associated with them in their classes (Lameras & Arnab, 2021). In this paper, I will examine one area of this new and rapidly expanding landscape: how automatic speech recognition (ASR) technologies, a branch of AI, may improve English language learners' (ELLs') pronunciation and promote self-directed learning. After introducing ASR technologies and giving a brief literature review on relevant studies, I will detail two in-class activities which scaffold ELLs' written work to spoken output using an ASR software to highlight pronunciation issues. Finally, I will conclude by addressing some current limitations of these technologies and propose areas for future research.

### INTRODUCTION

Careful adaptation of artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom has incredible potential for decreasing the burden on teachers while enabling English language learners (ELLs) to autonomously develop their speaking and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as digital literacy, problem solving, and critical thinking. One recent improvement in AI is the ability to automatically recognize natural speech and transcribe it into text in real time. While there are many of these technologies available, this paper will specifically examine Otter.ai (<https://otter.ai>), because it handles a variety of regional accents, allows users to listen back to their recordings while reading a transcription, and permits editing (Otter.ai, 2022). These features have two benefits for the activities presented in this paper. First, because it can recognize many regional accents, Otter.ai allows the activities to be replicated for ELLs all over the world. Second, since both activities focus on recognizing, then correcting, errors in speech, it is important that the automatic speech recognition (ASR) technology has the ability to produce a script that can be edited.

AI in the classroom also enables the development of the skill of learner autonomy. In Japan, the government has tasked teachers with increasing autonomy in students (MEXT, 2017). Though, regardless of where in the world they are, this is a skill all students should develop. In

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terms of speaking, typically it falls on the teacher to catch and correct students' errors. With ASR technologies however, this responsibility shifts away from the teacher, giving students more autonomy. By preparing a script, recording themselves reading it using an ASR program, then reviewing the generated transcript against what they originally wrote, students can independently recognize their errors, then work towards correcting them. Introducing ASRs into the ELL classroom gives students not only a tool to work on their pronunciation, but to do so independently from the teacher, thus providing a path for self-directing their learning.

Finally, it should be noted that, because they are not educational tools developed specifically to help teach English pronunciation, ASR technologies should be used as guides for the ELL teacher to direct students' attention towards recognizing their own errors. Likewise, students may not naturally be prepared to autonomously fix their errors once they have recognized them when using an ASR; it again falls to the teacher to vet suitable resources for students to self-direct their learning, then guide them towards using these correctly. The suggested activities in this paper thus highlight this shift in teacher-student responsibility.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Though it requires teacher guidance to develop, self-directed learning has many benefits for students. In the 1970s, Malcolm Knowles, the forefather of self-directed learning, defined it as the autonomous ability to identify personal needs, find resources which meet these needs, and implement, then evaluate, strategies for improving them (Smith, 2002). Later researchers added that self-directed learners who use strategies to self-manage their goals and time, self-monitor their progress, and maintain high levels of motivation to start and continue tasks were more likely to have high metacognitive capabilities and become lifelong learners (Garrison, 1997). For ELLs, Alghamdi (2016) found that students with self-directed learning tendencies, such as self-management, self-monitoring, and high self-efficacy, were more likely to be successful language learners than those who did not show these traits. It is rare this happens independently, however. Knowles maintained that teachers should guide their students from patterns of passive reliance on the teacher towards being self-directed, and that, when developed, this tendency allowed them to acquire more knowledge, retain it for longer, and better apply it to problems with less teacher guidance (Smith, 2002).

It is common for beginning English language learners to use written work to help them prepare for their spoken output, and that teacher scaffolding, adding support to the writing phase of this process, also benefits students in enhancing their learning. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), beginner to intermediate language learners will be able to give public announcements and presentations with some pronunciation issues, "provided they can prepare beforehand" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 63). CEFR goes on to state that any oral communication outside of everyday information or their interests will require preparation and rehearsal time, often processed first through written work (Council of Europe, 2020). Like with helping students develop autonomous learning skills, students gain more when teachers help them in this process of written to spoken output. It was found that teacher scaffolding of ELLs' written to spoken material improved their memory and helped them internalize the L2 better (Guerrero, 2005). Another study concluded that ELL students were less frustrated when preparing presentations when the teacher provided scaffolding in the form of suggesting digital resources, asking questions, and giving personalized feedback (Nguyen, 2022).

Finally, progress has already been made towards developing these language and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills using AI and ASR technologies in the ELL classroom. In a bibliometric analysis of 516 studies on AI in language education since 2000, Huang et al. (2023) found that automatic error detection, natural language and vocabulary learning, and assessment of pronunciation in speech training were some of the most common themes explored. In examining the impact multimedia resources had on non-native speakers, Mahdi (2022) found that including recording devices in the preparation stages of presentations improved both students' speaking ability and overall presentation skills. Looking at ASR technologies, Evers and Chen (2021) concluded that combining speech recognition with peer correction improved students' pronunciation in both reading and live conversation activities.

To conclude, the literature briefly reviewed in this section show two common themes: teacher intervention improves ELLs' ability to develop new skills, and technology is increasingly being used to provide a form of scaffolding. In terms of autonomous learning, teacher guidance helps students learn more and remember it longer (Smith, 2002) and increases the chances students will remain autonomous lifelong learners even after leaving the classroom (Garrison, 1997). Looking specifically at the tendency for students to use written rehearsal material for spoken output (Council of Europe, 2020), teacher scaffolding of ELLs' written work improved their memory and ability to internalize the language (Guerrero, 2005) and decreased the stress involved with speaking in front of others (Nguyen, 2022). The technologies chosen to help provide this guidance also play a crucial role. When preparing presentations, recording devices improved students' presentation ability and pronunciation (Mahdi, 2022) and speech recognition technology has been shown to improve pronunciation as well (Evers & Chen, 2021). The following activities build on these findings in an attempt to foster autonomous learning in students while addressing their spoken English output.

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

In this section I will describe two activities for using ASR technology (in this case Otter.ai) in the ELL classroom: one in a group presentation setting, and one as a solo vocabulary building activity. Given the evidence that developing self-directed learning requires careful teacher guidance (Smith, 2002), and that this guidance should be given from written work to spoken English (Guerrero, 2005), each activity scaffolds from something written to something spoken. Likewise, as mentioned in the Introduction, just because students may recognize an error using an ASR technology does not mean they can immediately self-correct it, so each also includes notes on how I try to guide students during their independent work. However, the goals of both activities are the same: for students to independently recognize and try to correct any pronunciation issues by using an ASR. The steps taken to achieve these goals are the same as well.

Step 1: Students prepare, in writing, something they want to say.

Step 2: They read it aloud while the ASR is recording.

Step 3: While listening back to the recording, they check the ASR transcript against what they wrote in Step 1.

Step 4: They look for any discrepancies between the two and try to determine why.

Step 5: Using teacher and outside resources, they fix any issues in their spoken English.

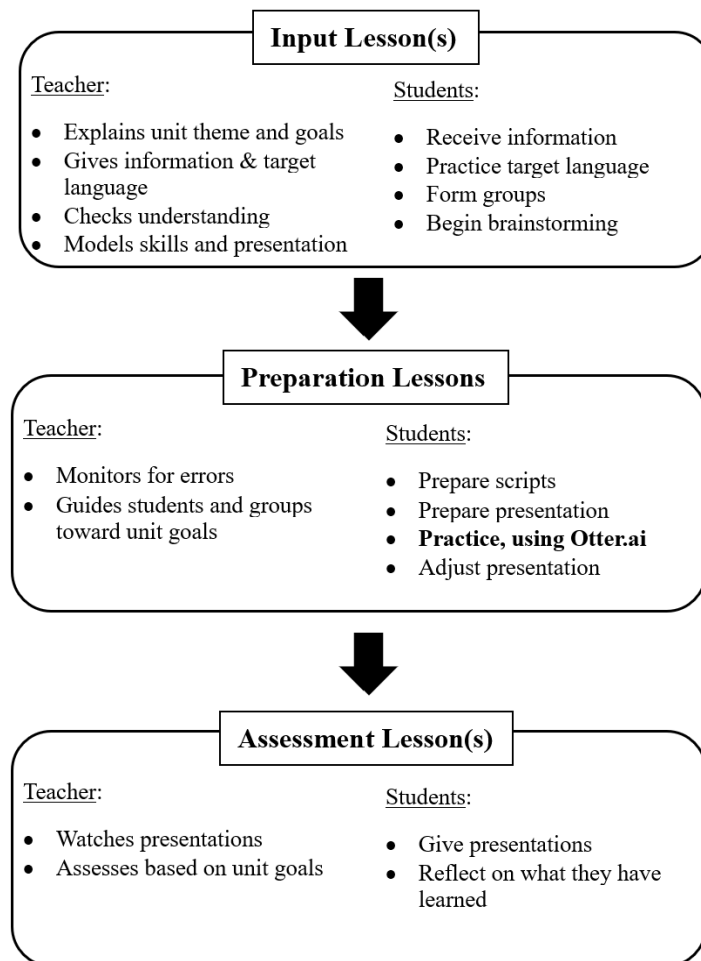
Step 6: Repeat Steps 2 to 5 until their ASR transcript matches what they wrote in Step 1.

Lastly, please note that in order to protect students' identity and avoid issues with private policy, Figures 3 and 5 are not screenshots of the Otter.ai interface, but instead are my own recreations of real student errors.

## Activity 1: A Group Presentation

In this activity, students use Otter.ai to check their pronunciation during the preparation lessons of a unit in which they give group presentations. The theme of this unit can be anything, though it should be deep enough or outside of the students' general knowledge to the point where they must conduct research when preparing their presentations. My example theme is "How can technology help the world?" In this unit, students select a current world problem, detail it, then suggest a real or imagined technology which will address this problem.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Lesson Flow**



For 50-minute lessons, the flow of this unit should include at least one input lesson, at least two preparation lessons, and at least one assessment lesson. Figure 1 shows this overall lesson flow, as well as suggested student and teacher roles in each part.

During the preparation lessons, students will do the following: brainstorm, research, prepare a script with what they plan to say during their presentation, and practice. They record themselves using Otter.ai and check to see if there are any discrepancies between what they wrote on their script and what Otter.ai transcribed. During this stage, I guide them towards first recognizing their pronunciation issues, then locating appropriate resources to fix these errors, such as online dictionaries and pronunciation examples. Doing so helps them develop a sense of self-directed learning. Figure 2 shows an example of the worksheet I use. Because this is a group presentation, it also includes space for them to see their group's overall time of the presentation, as well as a place for them to rate their level of confidence each time they practice. Finally, Figure 3 shows a recreation of real student errors picked up by the Otter.ai ASR, followed by the correct version recorded after fixing these errors.

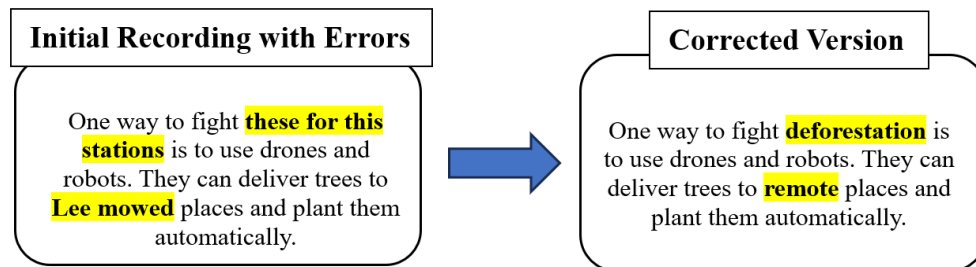
**FIGURE 2**  
**Example Presentation Preparation Worksheet**

What Otter.ai Said	What I said

What Otter.ai Said	What I said

**FIGURE 3**  
**Presentation Recreation of a Student Errors and Corrections**



## Activity 2: Vocabulary Building

In this activity, students use Otter.ai to check their pronunciation of new words used in sentences they create. This can be adapted to fit vocabulary from builder books, textbooks, or anything the teacher selects. Regardless of where the vocabulary is sourced from, the teacher should be prepared with their own knowledge of possible pronunciation issues and sample sentences to guide students who need extra guidance. For my example, the vocabulary is from a unit on travel, with words to describe places. The goal of this activity is for students to immediately begin saying and using new words they are learning.

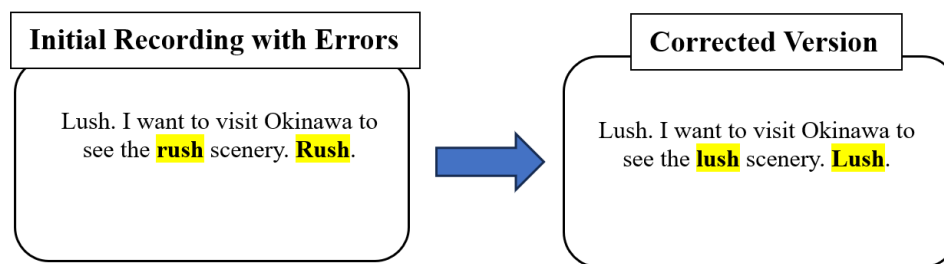
Typically, this activity can last anywhere from 20-30 minutes, and should be done as a formative assessment after students have learned the translation of the words. In this activity, students: review the vocabulary, write the word and an example sentence using the word on their worksheet (Figure 4), use the ASR to record themselves saying the word and the sentence, check the transcription for any discrepancies, and use the teacher and other resources to correct these issues. Figure 4 shows the worksheet students use with a sample entry showing how to fill it in, and Figure 5 shows another recreation of a real student error and the corrected version.

**FIGURE 4**  
Example Vocabulary Builder Worksheet

Name ( ) Class ( ) Number ( )  
Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

English	Japanese	In a Sentence / Question
foggy	霧深い	London is often <b>foggy</b> .

**FIGURE 5**  
Vocabulary Builder Recreation of a Student Error and Correction





## CONCLUSION

These suggested activities show how ASR technology and AI can be harnessed to improve not only ELLs' pronunciation but help them build valuable self-directed learning and technology literacy skills at the same time. From my personal observations, I have seen students become more independent in checking the meaning of words and using each other and online resources to check pronunciation after working with these technologies. I have also seen increased engagement in classes when they are given the opportunity to use real online resources to improve their learning.

However, like all new technologies, there are current limitations and downsides which should also be considered. From my experiences using these activities, I have seen two possible issues other educators may encounter. First is that ASRs often do not include proper punctuation in their transcripts. For example, transcripts may not include commas where needed, or even produce run-on sentences when transcribing students' speech. It is important to let students know these issues ahead of time, so they do not regress in their written English while using ASRs to improve their pronunciation. Another issue is that by seeing repeated errors, students' motivation to speak may decrease. To avoid this, I carefully monitor students' progress when they are working with ASRs, and intervene to guide and encourage them when needed. Finally, the common feature of autocorrecting in these technologies should also be addressed. It is possible that students may be missing their pronunciation errors because the software is adapting to their speech and auto correcting their mistakes. Like with maintaining student motivation, careful teacher monitoring and listening back to recordings with students can help address this issue.

Even with these potential issues, I strongly believe that AI and ASRs will have an overall positive impact on ELLs' learning in the future. Further research and data collection should be done to examine to what extent AI improves students' speaking ability, their tendency to self-direct their learning, and their motivation to learn a language.

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## **Stimulating Students' Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation and Sustaining their Attention Through an Online Quiz Tool**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Even the most motivated students can have their minds wander during class, and keeping their concentration can be challenging. Gamification, the various techniques of using games in class for educational purposes, is currently receiving increased attention in the literature of foreign language learning. Over the past two years, I have explored techniques using online educational tools, Quizizz and Quizizz Lesson, to aid in the balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the students, leading to an increased engagement in learning throughout the classes and with EFL students of various proficiency levels. In this paper, I will illustrate the process of how I developed my use of Quizizz in relation to students' motivation. I hope to provide valuable information for educators who are interested in using games for EFL learning, and that the practical examples provided in this paper will help them to advance the use of gamification in class.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Even for highly motivated students, minds can drift during class, and keeping students focused on the class material is a challenge that all educators must regularly face. Motivation is one of the key factors encouraging students to be more attentive during the class resulting in better learning outcomes (Weber, 2003). Over the past two years, I have been introducing gamification techniques into courses to find out the possible benefits and drawbacks for students and teachers alike in the EFL class. Gamification is concerned with game playing elements being used in non-game environments, and its techniques include earning points, advancing in leaderboards, and competing against other classmates (Alomari et al., 2019; Koppitsch & Meyer, 2021). In this paper, I will give an overview of the research on gamification and its connection with extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, then go on to discuss how I incorporated an online quiz tool to motivate my students and sustain their attention in my classes, followed by lesson examples.

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

When students are not interested in what they are learning in class, everything tends to go south; boredom, lower motivation, less attention, less energy, and lower mastery level are all a result of low levels of motivation and engagement in class (Bolkan & Griffin, 2018). One way to trigger students' motivation is by the introduction of games. The research shows that through the

use of gaming mechanisms such as competition, problem solving, and cooperative work, gamification in the classroom can positively supplement traditional educational materials and make them more engaging for the students (Erümit & Yilmaz, 2022). Therefore, it is recommended for instructors to provide resources to create exciting learning environments to stimulate students' interest (Koppitsch & Meyer, 2021). Once students are engaged in the class material, it boosts their involvement and motivation which leads to higher academic outcomes (Bolkan & Griffin, 2018).

However, instructors quickly face the need of adjusting how we use games in class after the initial phase. One of the drawbacks of gamification is when the initial excitement fades down, extrinsic motivation, which holds students' interest, rapidly declines (Funa et al., 2021; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Furthermore, some research suggests that competition can be related more to extrinsic motivation than intrinsic, resulting in lower learning outcomes because students are too focused on winning the games and not paying much attention to the content of the quizzes (Funa et al., 2021; Lam et al., 2004).

In order to avoid the pitfall of extrinsic motivation withdrawal, instructors need to incorporate a variety of game features within lessons to sustain students' interest. Some suggest that positive learning is the result of intrinsic motivation which can be triggered by lessons that gives students a sense of fulfillment to their academic goals and future needs (Funa et al., 2021; Lam et al., 2004; Weber, 2003). Furthermore, collaborative work requires active participation which encourages students to share their ideas and promotes critical thinking (Erümit & Yilmaz, 2022; Zou et al., 2021), and a feeling of being a part of a team extends security and confidence, which lead to increased intrinsic motivation (Funa et al., 2021).

One example which makes student collaboration possible is using open-ended questions. This question style demands extensive knowledge of the subject and higher comprehension skills to solve the problems; therefore, it challenges intrinsically motivated students to work harder (Çakiroğlu et al., 2022). Other benefits of using open-ended type questions are to implement immediate feedback and identify students' understanding levels. Giving opportunities to revise their errors with appropriate feedback likely contributes to higher learning outcomes (Riyanto & Aryulina, 2020). Attali (2020) insists that feedback should not be limited to correction of the errors, but rather providing comments including reasoning and explanations. Furthermore, Cognitive Evaluation Theory also argues that intrinsic motivation is generally enhanced by positive verbal and written feedback (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Open-ended questions stimulate cognitive learning but can be difficult and could demotivate some extrinsically motivated students and may cause them to avoid challenge and withdraw from making effort (Lam et al., 2004). Therefore, it is important for instructors to provide learning materials that keep an appropriate balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in class (Erümit & Yilmaz, 2022).

## **ONLINE QUIZ TOOL**

### **Quizizz and motivation**

Quizizz (<https://quizizz.com/?lng=en>) is an online educational tool which provides different types of questions, and it allows students to answer questions as if they are participating in game shows. Using a multiple-choice question type as an example, an instructor creates questions then shares the game join code to students via the overhead projector (OHP) screen.

The students use their computer or phone to visit the website and enter the join code. They can enter any name they wish, which allows them to be anonymous if they want. When the instructor begins the game, the students see the questions and answer choices on their screen while the OHP screen shows the question and a countdown timer. The game also includes a game show like sound effects which create a more exciting atmosphere. When the time is up, the students see the correct answer on their screen as well as their ranking among the class. At the same time, the answer result of the question and leaderboards are shown on the OHP screen. Quizizz Lesson is a part of Quizizz and allows instructors to create lesson slides similar to the Microsoft PowerPoint and Quizizz game questions as one set.

I have been using Quizizz in different types of English classes in Japanese universities and have found that students often show enthusiasm and interest toward the materials they are quizzed on. In the beginning of the semester, I introduce online learning tools such as Quizizz and Quizlet (<https://quizlet.com/>) in class and provide many opportunities to use them. As most of my students, past and current, have rarely experienced playing games as an educational tool in the classroom, their initial reactions are usually uneasy and nervous because they are not well acquainted with their classmates yet or not accustomed to playing games in class. Generally, within a few weeks, students are captivated by the online tools and become competitive to get in a higher place on leaderboards and be one of the top three winners. However, I quickly faced the need of adjusting how I would continue using games in class after the initial phase. From there, I wondered if sustaining students' motivation would be achievable with Quizizz.

In addition to popular multiple-choice type questions, Quizizz offers open-ended type questions. As instructors can set a preferred time limit from 5 seconds to 15 minutes for each question, we can create different sorts of open-ended questions. Quizizz open-ended type question has a feature that allows participants to change or modify their submitted answers within the time limit. This allows instructors to give quick feedback to help students fix their errors. Following suggestions from the previous research, I often provide praise and give positive reinforcement with the goal of heightening students' motivation and have noticed that when students see the activities as being more beneficial and acquire a better and deeper understanding of the materials from immediate feedback, their intrinsic motivation kicks in, and they begin appreciating the challenging tasks and the challenging class environment.

## **Introducing Quizizz Lesson**

### ***Uninterrupted flow: Justification for moving on from Quizizz to Quizizz Lesson***

Maintaining students' attention is challenging, and we do not want to lose it once we catch it. A lot of research argues that vigilance decrement occurs after 15 minutes, while others argue the length of students' attention depends on class activities (Rosengrant et al., 2020; Warm et al., 2008). At the start of experimenting with multiple forms of gamification in my classes, I included a few different quizzes in one lesson; however, each quiz required students to join the game application at separate times, and specifically for Quizizz, the instructor-paced quiz mode did not offer QR code access, which made it inconvenient for the students to keep joining the games because they had to visit the website and enter the join code. Although using a computer was encouraged for some quizzes as open-ended questions involve typing, there were numerous times that the QR code saved valuable class time and kept the momentum of the activities. Moreover, there were occasions when a student had trouble accessing the game due to an

unstable internet connection or device malfunction, and the rest of the class had to wait for their classmate to gain access. These were the moments that students' focus and attention would slip away.

In order to bring their attention back to the class materials and reduce the amount of time spent 'off task,' it was not a difficult decision to try out Quizizz Lesson, which enables us to have a continuous flow throughout the lesson without interruption when moving between quizzes and slides. In the past semester, I utilized Quizizz Lesson mainly during writing class before moving onto actual writing activities.

### ***Quizizz Lesson Example 1: Paragraph Introduction***

One of the main reasons I introduced Quizizz Lesson here was to spice up the class atmosphere. Students tend to shun anything to do with writing in English, but introducing something new helps maintain their attention. There were 25 slides including multiple choice and open-ended questions. The lesson started with using the Quizizz Lesson, and it took about half of the class time (45 minutes) to complete this exercise.

1. Four slides explaining what a paragraph and topic sentence are
2. Three multiple choice questions about the paragraph and topic sentence
3. Two slides explaining what good topic sentence should be and showing some examples
4. Five multiple choice questions to answer the reason why each example is a bad topic sentence
5. Three slides with in-depth explanation of topic sentence
6. Four open-ended questions asking students what information they expect to read in a paragraph after reading each topic sentence
7. Three multiple choice questions about the paragraph and topic sentence (retention)
8. One slide to summarize

During the open-ended questions, students receive enough time to comprehend the question, type their answers, and modify the answers they submitted as this feature allows students to revise their answers upon request by the instructor. All student answers were reviewed as a class. After the Quizizz Lesson, students practiced brainstorming and writing topic sentences.

### ***Quizizz Lesson Example 2: Building sentences***

There were 25 slides including multiple choice and open-ended questions. This lesson also started with the Quizizz Lesson, and it took about 30 minutes to complete this exercise.

1. Two slides reviewing relative clause
2. Six open-ended questions – relative clause
3. One slide reviewing embedded questions
4. Four multiple choice questions – embedded question
5. Three open-ended questions – embedded question
6. Three slides reviewing reported speech
7. Five open-ended questions – reported speech

This Quizizz Lesson was used to introduce the techniques to construct longer and more sophisticated sentences. Students played the Quizizz Lesson as pair work and were encouraged to discuss their answers before submitting, especially during the open-ended questions. When all answers were submitted, we reviewed the answers together. Students continued working on a separate exercise; editing a poor-quality paragraph with a partner.

### **Additional strengths and some weaknesses**

Although there are numerous educational online games available for educators to choose from, a few factors that Quizizz or Quizizz Lesson offers charmed me more than others. The first one is related to a privacy issue. Students are not required to create an account to join the game or lesson, and they can join it anonymously if they wish. Another positive aspect is how much educators can do as free account users, unlike many online educational tools which limit the capacity of available features to free account users. A further convenient use of Quizizz Lesson is that its settings let instructors share the lesson slide screen with students, which is especially beneficial for distance learning settings.

From my perspective, no online tools are perfect, and Quizizz is no exception. Presumably it applies to any online tools, but poor internet access could delay or disrupt what we plan to do. Another pitfall appeared to be in lesson slides. They look like the Microsoft PowerPoint slides, but Quizizz Lesson slides are not equipped with many of the features that MS PowerPoint offers; for example, animation functions are not a part of Quizizz Lesson which led me to adding additional slides to make adjustments. Finally, the biggest drawback of Quizizz Lesson for me is its lack of an undo function. The duplicate button and the delete button are next to each other, and countless times I have mistakenly clicked the delete button and lost some slides permanently. In order to avoid frustration, I often create additional duplicate slides as safekeeping.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, summarizing the negative and positive points, we can see that as online learning resources naturally rely on devices that require the internet connection for participation, we face some glitches that a few students take longer or are unable to join the game. When this problem happens in the middle of class time, it is usually harder to bring students' attention back or sometimes they tend to forget something they have just learnt. Using Quizizz Lesson, students are already in the game from the beginning, and there is no interval (waiting time) between lecture and quizzes. Furthermore, unlimited numbers of lecture slides and quizzes can be arranged in any order. Another factor which delivers higher learning outcomes is providing immediate feedback. Open-ended questions give us great opportunities to provide immediate feedback to our students and find out individual understanding levels on the spot. The final favorable point to utilize Quizizz is to save our preparation time. Demands from institutions and trends which mandate us to continuously modify and upgrade lessons can be overwhelming sometimes. It is vital for us to take advantage of existing shared materials and fit them into our classrooms.

Finally, although there are divided opinions towards the use of gamification in classes, I take a supportive stance on gamification due to the positive results I have witnessed and because

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it brightens up the classroom atmosphere. Well-balanced lesson material to drive students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivations is one of the key factors to capture students' interests and improve learning outcomes. Despite the fact there are some negative aspects that educators need to consider when they introduce gamification in the classroom, Quizizz and Quizizz Lesson have presented me and students the opportunity to have fun in class and encouraged me to strive to further my research and teaching skills.

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