

Personality and participation in a Japan-Taiwan online intercultural exchange

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This article examines personality and participation in an online intercultural exchange (OIE) between 57 university students in Japan (n = 28) and Taiwan (n = 29). The two-month OIE used Facebook (FB) as the medium of communication. During the online exchange, participants communicated linguistically using English as their common language and para-linguistically through photos, videos, and emoticons. The revised version of the 60-item HEXACO personality inventory was used to assess personality traits and to compare those traits with participation as measured by a FB participation rubric created for this study. From the data two themes emerged: 1) overall participation rates were high; 2) participation positively correlated with the personality item Modesty and negatively with the items Sincerity and Organization. These results suggest that a degree of modest-insincerity may be natural for student engagement in online social interaction and that the asynchronous nature of the exchange suits students who favor less structured communication activities. One of the implications of this research is that, with the required coaching and support, students can develop the necessary skills to successfully partake in OIEs.

Keywords: Online Intercultural Exchange, EFL, HEXACO, Participation, Personality traits

Introduction

Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE) is a growing area of research among educators interested in supporting the development of language, intercultural communicative competence, and special subject knowledge. **147**

It capitalizes on current technology to support telecollaborative projects between groups of learners who might otherwise never come into contact. A recent article in the CALICO Journal describes the variety of methods and contexts in which researchers are exploring OIEs. O'Dowd (2016) describes OIEs which can be lingua franca exchanges or bi-lingual. He describes exchanges between groups with diverse cultural backgrounds and based on diverse subject areas such as jazz music, feminism, the diaspora, gender roles, and human rights. He even describes a project-based exchange where participants programed robots in a virtual environment.

As the focus shifts away from explicit language study, toward incidental study and fluency development through the participation in projects, discussions, and cultural exchanges (Byram, 2014), other factors become a concern for educators. Educators may wonder if their students have the necessary subject matter knowledge, technical savvy, or social skills to participate in an OIE (O'Dowd & Ritter, 2006). Educators may wonder what technology is appropriate, or how students will present themselves online (Rui & Stefanone, 2013). Educators may be concerned with the logistics of such an exchange, especially considering participants from different time zones, on different school calendars, or from significantly different cultural backgrounds (Guth, 2016).

This preliminary study investigates the issue of personality and its correlation with participation in an OIE. In doing so, we outline an instructional approach that uses Facebook (FB) groups as the platform to connect small groups of students in an intercultural exchange on a variety of popular, cultural topics. A total of 57 students from Japan and Taiwan participated in the eight-week exchange during the spring of 2015. The personality profile of participants was measured using the HEXACO personality inventory which measures: Honesty-Humility (H), Emotionality (E), eXtraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), and Openness to Experience (O). Participation was measured using a FB participation metric designed specifically for this study.

Literature review

Personality and FB

When it comes to social interaction, studies of FB usage and personality traits have resulted in mixed conclusions regarding specific traits and FB use (Bachrach, Kosinski, Graepel, Kohli & Stillwell, 2012; Hughes, Rowe, Batey & Lee, 2012). Though it is generally held that extraversion, openness and neuroticism positively correlate with FB engagement, other research has suggested that extraversion and conscientiousness positively correlate with motivation and satisfaction in a general sense within online learning environments (Shih, Chen, Chen & Wey, 2013). A study conducted by Quercia, Lambiotte, Stillwell, Kosinski and Crowcroft (2012) concludes that online popularity is similar to offline popularity, while Ryan and Xenos (2011) found that extraverts were more likely to use FB. These studies suggest that FB is a means of social extension rather than an alternative form of communication for those who are introverted and that offline and online personalities are directly, rather than inversely, related.

Personality and EFL

Personality traits have long been of interest in studies of language learning (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999). They are known to affect learners' strategies (Chen & Hung, 2012; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995), foreign language anxiety (FLA; Gargalianou, 2015; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002), willingness to communicate (WTC; MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément & Noels, 1998; Yashima, 2002) and are therefore believed to have an influence on language learning outcomes and achievement. Some research suggests that introverted students generally achieve higher scores on written assessments, while extraverts possess the advantage in oral situations (Dewaele, 2012; Moody, 1988). However, other studies have discovered contrary results. For example, Kiany (1998) uncovered mixed results relating to personality traits and language learning achievement. Specifically, the findings of this study failed to show correlations between extraversion and language skills of the participant non-English-major graduate students.

In the Japanese setting, Busch (1982) collected data on Japanese college students and adult students via a standardized English proficiency test and through oral interviews. This study revealed that extraversion was negatively correlated with pronunciation and that introversion was correlated with higher scores on the grammar and reading sections of the standardized test. However, more extraverted college males performed holistically better in the oral interviews. Also in Japan, Ockey (2011) investigated the relationship between two facets of the extraversion domain – assertiveness and self-consciousness – and their connection to the oral ability of freshman EFL university students ($n = 360$). This study revealed that assertiveness was a significant predictor of second language oral ability, specifically communication skills and fluency, with vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation to a lesser degree.

A study by Liyanage and Bartlett (2013) revealed that even though introversion/extraversion and neuroticism contribute to strategies employed by language learners, the associations depend upon the context. As a result, they concluded that extraverts may not necessarily possess the upper hand when it comes to acquiring a foreign language. Consequently, to date there is still little definitive agreement as to which personality traits affect foreign language learning and proficiency, and how they might be connected. It is likely that the discrepancies in previous results stem from the different personality inventories used, the type of assessments employed to measure language achievement, divergent research designs, measurement error arising from self-report questionnaires, limited sample sizes, and the use of general personality constructs that may include sub-constructs not related to language learning (Kao & Craigie, 2014; Ockey, 2011).

FB and EFL

As the global number of users actively engaged on Facebook in a single day reached over one billion recently (Lee, 2015), it is not surprising that this technology has captured the attention of educators. The literature identifies a number of key reasons for the appeal of combining SNSs into educational contexts, including: the rapidly increasing everyday use of social media; the self-directed nature of engagement with social media; the authentic nature of the communication; and the ability to connect people across the globe making distance and time zones less relevant. These attributes seem to ease the interaction between

language users and enhance the possibility of collaborative behavior and social construction of language, cultural, and social artifacts (Lantz-Andersson et al., 2013).

FB has been the medium of communication for learners in numerous published studies in Japan and Taiwan in recent years. Researchers have found FB to have multiple benefits due to its popularity and ease of use (Dizon, 2015). Some of these advantages include providing opportunities for friendship and support from classmates (Lin, Kang, Liu & Lin, 2016), improving motivation (Hamada, 2012; Shih, 2013; Wu & Kawamura, 2014), supporting peer-based learning (Wang, 2014; Gamble, 2014), improving cultural knowledge (Bray & Iswanti, 2014; Wu & Marek, 2013; Wu, Marek & Chen, 2015), achieving higher test scores (Shih, 2011), and providing opportunities for feedback (Hamada, 2012).

International OIEs between EFL students are still a relatively new application of SNS technology, with studies such as Bray and Iswanti (2013), and Ke and Cahyani (2014) appearing as pioneering examples. Bray and Iswanti (2013) studied an intercultural exchange between 47 Japanese freshman students and 28 Indonesian sophomores who participated in various online activities. Participants found the exchange beneficial, commented that it helped improve their English, and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn about another culture. Ke and Cahyani (2014) describe an exchange between 58 Taiwanese and 48 Indonesian students who connected via email, FB, and MSN and participated in six activities over the course of two semesters. Many Taiwanese students realized that native speaker-based norms may not be so important for intercultural communication and described how they became less concerned about grammar after using English as their lingua franca in written communication, with the result that they gained greater confidence and developed more positive perceptions regarding their ability to use English for international communication.

Despite the positive feedback, a number of pitfalls have been identified such as students having difficulty connecting through FB and finding time outside of class to do so (Bray & Iswanti, 2014; Dizon, 2015). In another study Yu (2014), found that low participation in the FB segment of a writing course required the instructor to employ a variety of strategies, including: offering grade based incentives for contributing, implementing classroom and online scaffolding procedures, scheduling teacher-student conferences to motivate students to join in the online discussion, and connecting the FB discussion with classroom based discussion. Moreover, in a computer-mediated communication study that examined student participation via the online virtual world *Second Life*, Wang (2014) contends that a number of strategies may be employed to manage student participation in an online context. She specifically mentions that task guidance through teacher intervention and directed imperatives were useful to foster participation by some inactive students.

Personality, FB and EFL

As far as the authors of this article are aware, one of the only studies to investigate the relationships between personality, FB use and foreign language learning is that conducted by Kao and Craigie (2014) who recruited 164 university students in Taiwan and collected data on their FB usage, personality traits and achievement on a standardized English proficiency test. They detected that English usage on FB (EUF) was positively associated with extraversion and conscientiousness but negatively with neuroticism. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis determined that the variables EUF, extraversion and neuroticism were

used FB more, scored higher in extraversion and lower in neuroticism, were more likely to perform better in EFL achievement.

Purpose of this study

To date there are relatively few published studies analyzing the connections between personality traits, FB and EFL. Much of the existing literature is confined to focusing on OIE descriptions and relatively simple measures of motivation and satisfaction from partaking in them. Moreover, numerous studies prefer to analyze data from one side of the exchange rather than focusing on the more complex comparisons between participants engaging in these cross-border OIEs. In most of these studies, the influence of personality is ignored entirely. This study aims to extend the current research by investigating the role of personality traits on participation in an OIE.

Research questions

A growing body of literature shows personality characteristics play a fundamental role in language education. However, while numerous studies report on associations between FB use and personality traits, or FB and language learning, there are few, if any, that do so within the context of OIEs. To fill this gap, this study attempts to draw a personality trait profile of the participants from each country and to answer the following research questions:

1. Which, if any, personality traits associated with participation in this OIE?
2. Are there country-specific personality trait contrasts that explain participation?

Methods

Participants and procedures

During the planning stages the researchers identified a number of classes to engage in this project. The two classes chosen for this OIE were selected due to the similarity of the courses taught, with each involving a cultural component, and the interest and willingness displayed by the students to join the exchange. Participants in this study comprised of 28 (female = 12) students from Japan and 29 (female = 17) from Taiwan. The students from Japan were freshmen studying International Politics, Economics, and Communication. Students in this program have average TOEFL scores of 500, which is equivalent to a B1 CEFR score. They attended class for 3 hours per week, for a total of 45 hours over the course of the semester. The Taiwanese students were in a mixed class, with students ranging from freshmen to seniors and from a variety of departments, including Accounting, Business Administration, History, Law, and Sociology. Their average TOEIC score was 714 (SD = 84), putting them in the level of B2-C1 on the CEFR. The class met for 2 hours per week, a total of 32 hours over the semester.

The FB exchange in Japan was conducted both on the FB platform and during regular class time through the use of a number of classroom activities, including reflection, presentations and time to read and respond to posts from their foreign counterparts. In Taiwan, due to the class schedule, time was not available during regular class hours for activities such as reflection, presentations and time to read and respond to posts from their

counterparts, and aside from some limited instructions and guidance disseminated during class time, the exchange was primarily conducted on the FB platform. In Japan, apart from the requirement to partake in FB-exchange-related class activities, students could choose how much they wished to participate. Although students in Taiwan were encouraged to participate in the project, there was no obligation to do so throughout the two-month exchange. Neither class provided formal credit towards class grades for participation in the project.

Implementation

In the present study, university students in Japan and Taiwan participated in an OIE in small groups using FB. In line with the work of Mascolo (2009) teachers acted as guiding participants in the construction of socio-cultural knowledge, providing weekly posts which acted as prompts. Participants were put into groups consisting of roughly 4 Taiwanese students and 4 Japanese students per group. Each group was given their own private “Facebook Group” as a platform for communication. No one but the group members and their teachers could view or participate in the group communication using FB. An overview of the project is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of FB exchange implementation

	Taiwan: 8 groups (n = 29)	Japan: 8 groups (n = 28)
Pre-exchange	HEXACO (n = 27)	HEXACO (n = 27)
	Students join Facebook group	Students join Facebook group
Week	Weekly topics	Weekly topics
1	Introductions & video sharing	Introductions & video sharing
2	Food	Food
3	Music	Music
4	Movies/Anime	Movies/Anime
5	Sightseeing spots	Sightseeing spots
6	Celebrities	Celebrities
7	Free topic	Free topic
8	Goodbyes & video sharing	Goodbyes & video sharing

Measurements

HEXACO Personality Inventory. The original 108-item HEXACO Personality Inventory was developed to evaluate six personality characteristics based on the findings of lexical studies (Ashton & Lee, 2001). Following a series of revisions, the researchers published the 60-item HEXACO-PI-R, representing an iteration suitable for those with a shorter time allocation (Lee & Ashton, 2004; Ashton & Lee, 2009).

The HEXACO model of personality trait structure has been successfully used to establish associations with numerous qualities, including creativity (Lin, Hsu, Chen & Chang, 2013), educational attainment and motivation (Dinger, Dickhäuser, Hilbig, Müller, Steinmayr & Wirthwein, 2015; Bakker, Vergel & Kuntze, 2015), and leadership (Ogunfowora & Bourdage,

correspond to the factor domains of the Big Five model, with the honesty-humility factor displaying itself as an independent personality trait (Wakabayashi, 2014).

The Japanese and traditional Chinese versions of the HEXACO-PI-R questionnaire were used to gauge personality traits. This instrument was used due to its inclusion of the Honesty-Humility trait, the availability of both Japanese and traditional Chinese versions, and the fact that it has been successfully employed in Japanese (Wakabayashi, 2014) and Taiwanese samples (Lin et al., 2013). The questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms and completed at the beginning of the project. Chronbach's alpha for the domains were: Honesty-Humility = 0.61, Emotionality = 0.57, Extraversion = 0.63, Agreeableness = 0.69, Conscientiousness = 0.45 and Openness to Experience = 0.54.

FB participation rating scale (FBPRS). Different approaches have been taken to assessing participants' FB usage with some researchers preferring self-report measures and others choosing measurements based directly upon FB engagement, frequency and content. For example, Kao and Cragie (2014) created the 12-item self-report English Usage on Facebook Inventory for Language Learning (EUFILL) to measure an individual's active engagement on FB, while others such as Mahdi and El-Naim (2012) and Lin, Kang, Liu and Lin (2016) have endeavored to count and/or categorize FB posts and content. The metric employed in this study is an extension of those using directly observable FB content, including frequency of posts, comments and likes. The rating scale, displayed in Table 2, scores students on a scale from 0 to 10 according to their individual participation. Higher scores point to higher rates of participation.

Table 2. FBPRS

Participation rating	No. of participants
10 = posted on all, commented and entered dialog on most, liked	11
9 = posted on most, comment on some, liked	7
8 = posted on some, commented and entered dialog on most, liked	7
7 = posted on some, comment on some, liked	10
6 = posted on one, commented and entered dialog on most, liked	4
5 = posted on one, comment on some, liked	6
4 = commented and liked many	1
3 = commented and/or liked some	1
2 = liked some	2
1 = looked at some	7
0 = no participation	1

Results

Participation

During the eight weeks, the FB project registered a total of 290 posts (including 94 photos and 77 videos), and 1,196 likes (875 likes for posts and 321 for comments/replies). In addition, a word count revealed the exchange of 15,014 words by participants. Approximately 15% of this content can be attributed to teacher modeling and participation.

Food and movies were the most popular topics attracting the highest rates of student participation. Overall, average participation measured by the FBPRS was substantial ($M = 6.51, SD = 3.06$). Participation by students in Japan ($M = 8.29, SD = 1.92$) was higher than that of the students in Taiwan ($M = 4.79, SD = 2.99$). T-tests for country differences between the two groups revealed a significant result (mean difference = 3.49, $SE = 0.669, t = 5.22, df = 55, p < 0.001$). Figure 1 provides excerpts from a selection of FB posts (see Appendix A for further FB posts).



Figure 1. Examples of FB posts

HEXACO personality trait correlations with FB participation

Spearman's rho correlations show that participation was correlated with the facets *Sincerity* ($r_s(54) = -0.36, p < 0.01$), *Modesty* ($r_s(54) = 0.30, p < 0.05$) and *Organization* ($r_s(54) = -0.35, p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Spearman's rho correlations between FB participation and HEXACO ($n = 54$)

Domain	r_s	Facet	r_s
Honesty-Humility	.15	Sincerity	-.36**
		Fairness	.17
		Greed avoidance	.16
		Modesty	.30*
Emotionality	-.04	Fearfulness	-.05
		Anxiety	-.02
		Dependence	.02
		Sentimentality	.00
Extraversion	-.09	Expressiveness	-.08
		Social boldness	.01
		Sociability	-.09
		Liveliness	-.13
Agreeableness	-.21	Forgiveness	-.13
		Gentleness	-.12
		Flexibility	-.09
		Patience	-.26
Conscientiousness	.05	Organization	-.35**
		Diligence	.19
		Perfectionism	.04
		Prudence	.12
Openness to experience	.00	Aesthetic appreciation	.06
		Inquisitiveness	.13
		Creativity	-.17
		Unconventionality	.18

Notes. * p -value < .05, ** p -value < .01

HEXACO personality traits with respect to country

Of the 28 students from Japan, 27 (96%) completed the HEXACO-PI-R questionnaire; of the 29 from Taiwan, 27 (90%) completed it. The spider diagram in Figure 2 represents the domain scores for the HEXACO for the students from Japan and Taiwan. Results (please see full table in Appendix B for means and standard deviations of HEXACO domains and facets) reveal statistically significant differences on the HEXACO ratings between students in Japan and Taiwan for the personality trait domain *Extraversion* ($t(52) = -2.44, p = <0.05$), with *Honesty-Humility* marginally significant ($t(52) = 1.99, p < 0.05$). Personality facets showing significant differences emerged for *Greed Avoidance* ($t(52) = 2.23, p < 0.05$), *Modesty* ($t(52) = 4.41, p < 0.001$), *Expressiveness* ($t(52) = -3.03, p < 0.01$), *Organization* ($t(52) = -3.01, p < 0.01$) and *Creativity* ($t(52) = -2.95, p < 0.01$).

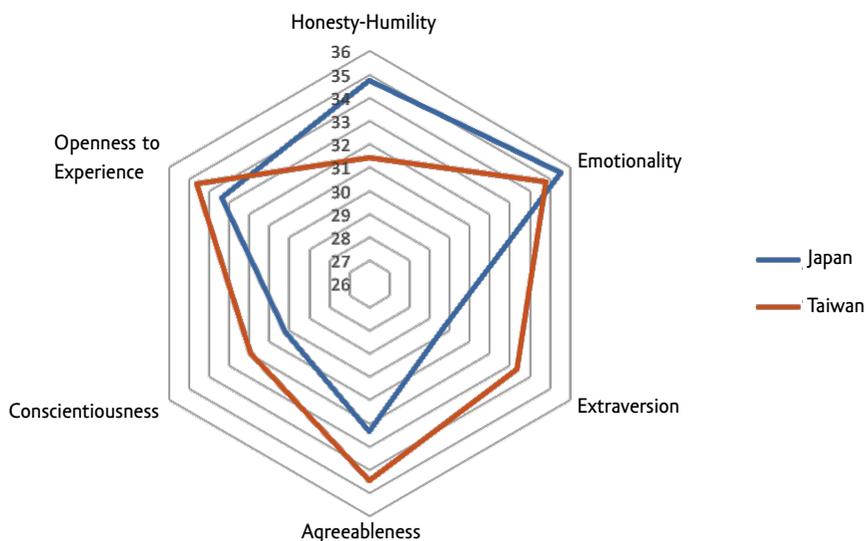


Figure 2. Japan and Taiwan HEXACO domains

Discussion

Personality profile of the learners in this study

HEXACO-PI-R results revealed that the domain *Emotionality* received the highest score overall and for each country individually. *Openness to Experience* and *Agreeableness* rated second and third overall, while *Conscientiousness* scored lowest for the students from Japan and *Honesty-Humility* for the students from Taiwan. Results of t-tests between the Japan-Taiwan groups uncovered a significant negative difference for the domain *Extraversion* and a marginally significant positive difference for *Honesty-Humility*. Differences were also detected for the facets *Greed Avoidance*, *Modesty*, *Social Self-Esteem*, *Organization* and *Creativity*. Corresponding to these findings, a tentative general profile for the two groups of students emerges as Japanese students being relatively humble, honest and generous, yet less organized and more introverted; while Taiwanese students appeared as being comparatively outgoing, expressive and creative.

Modest, insincere, and disorganized

With regards to research question one, this study did not find significant associations between any of the domains and participation. However, a number of significant correlations were achieved at the facet level. A possible explanation for this could be that, as pointed out by Ockey (2011), some sub-constructs of domains may not be related to language learning qualities. In this study, two facets from the *Honesty-Humility* domain showed significant correlations with FB participation. *Modesty* showed a positive correlation and *Sincerity* a negative correlation. This result may seem surprising as modest students would

usually not be likely to present themselves via SNSs. However, the students from Japan scored significantly higher on *Modesty*, and one could surmise that this type of digital exchange offers these students a chance to extend themselves beyond what they may ordinarily do in face-to-face situations. The negative association with *Sincerity*, which was rated equally by both groups of students, reveals that a certain amount of superficiality may be required to engage in polite conversation with strangers and to offer certain kinds of personal information in a public forum such as FB. Nevertheless, another way of viewing this outcome is that it could be revealing that modesty and insincerity are not separate unrelated factors, but rather two factors working together in tandem, albeit in opposing directions, to guide participation in ice breaking scenarios. After all, this exchange was essentially a long series of ice-breaking activities. *Organization* was negatively correlated with participation; therefore, we may theorize that the asynchronous nature of this OIE likely favored students who prefer less structured communication. This corroborates with results reported by Ryan & Xenos (2011) who discovered that FB use was negatively associated with the conscientiousness domain as diligent students were less likely to engage in FB activities.

Personality and participation by country

With respect to research question two, no conclusive evidence was found that country-specific personality traits lead to differences in participation. Generally, higher scores in extraversion have been related with higher levels of FB usage (e.g., Ross et al., 2009). However, in the case of this study, the less extraverted Japanese students participated significantly more in the exchange. Other studies have also supported the notion that extraverts may not possess the advantage in communication, especially in non-verbal contexts (e.g., Kiany, 1998; Moody, 1988). Moreover, past research has indicated that more creative and open students (as were represented by the Taiwanese students) may not find inspiration in expressing themselves via FB as this SNS has already become mainstream and lacks novelty (Bachrach et al., 2012).

Another explanation for the seeming discrepancy between the introversion-extraversion factor and participation observed at the country level comparison may stem from the complexities of conducting such an exchange. For example, challenges arise in connecting classes with regard to time, ability and course content. This is a possible reason why much of the published research on various forms of OIEs report data from only one side of the exchange or engage in relatively modest descriptions of the exchange content and simple measures of student satisfaction or motivation rather than attempting to discern possible sources of similarity or variation. Moreover, direct comparison of these results with preceding FB usage studies is not feasible as prior research reports primarily on general FB usage as opposed to participation in a specifically designed exchange as presented in this study. As the extraversion domain did not significantly correlate with participation among the total test subjects in this study, the argument can be made that factors other than the participants extraversion level affected these student's participation in this OIE.

Teacher presence in the OIE

Motivating students to participate in online EFL learning environments is not a unique challenge (Yu, 2014; Wang, 2014). Some students may require intervention strategies to

eliminate the ambiguity arising from certain tasks. They may also require the establishment of a more formal social context to understand the relationships they are expected to create in social interactions. In such cases, detailed instructions in how to proceed, followed by in-class activities which the students are required to participate in, may be an important factor in certain contexts. In situations such as the FB exchange described in this study, where the students had not met before and had a period of only eight weeks to familiarize themselves with each other, these types of interventions are likely best conducted during class sessions, and with a heavy amount of instructor involvement. As mentioned by Lin, Kang, Liu and Lin (2016), in East Asian contexts, “teachers might assume a dominant role in class interactions on SNSs for learning purposes through *design and organization, facilitating discourse, and direct instruction*” (p. 105). Therefore, it is likely that instructor support coupled with in-class activities, discussion and reflection potentially serve as the necessary impetus for students who would normally remain inactive as they struggle to negotiate the succession of events and engage in the exchange. That is to say that teacher involvement may help to even out any discrepancies with regard to the personality profiles of participants which might be more likely or less likely to participate in an OIE.

Implications

A number of implications relevant to teachers considering conducting online exchanges arise:

1. Potential exists for online exchanges to connect EFL students around the globe through OIE, aiding instructors and students to overcome the distance, time and financial constraints which limit the scope for physical interaction between learners.
2. Engaging students in the exchange through use of attractive topics, and including them in the topic selection process, is worthy of further consideration.
3. Supporting OIEs with in-class instructor-directed instruction, activities and scaffolding can be motivating. Certain students may require extra attention, especially those who feel shy or anxious interacting with strangers.
4. Assignments requiring interaction could provide impetus to participate as not all parties will have a natural social disposition to contribute of their own accord.

Limitations

This research is subject to a number of limitations. First, the relatively small sample size and group size make it difficult to conduct further analysis into group and participation interactions and group composition effects. Further, the participation measure is by no means flawless, though it does attempt to derive a variable which is a composite of both quality and quantity for gauging participation in the FB exchange. Several students, even though they only read, watched, viewed and perhaps liked some posts, still felt they participated and were positively engaged in the exchange. Additionally, the exchange was not undertaken in entirely the same manner in Japan and Taiwan. This likely had considerable impact on the outcomes of certain students who required additional scaffolding and stimulus to partake in this exchange. One final limitation relates to the students who participated in the exchange. Due to differences in the English language programs at the two universities it was not possible for the instructors to match the students in terms of

with a range of students from freshman to senior in Taiwan. As a result of these stated limitations, the results should be interpreted with caution and further study is required to address these issues.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most noteworthy result to emerge from this study was that no matter what personality traits are manifest by participating students, pedagogical affordances such as in-class activities, scaffolding, and reflection could steer the participants in the desired direction and toward participation in the exchange. Indeed, our findings corroborate with those of previous studies (Lin, Kang, Liu & Lin, 2016; Yu, 2014; Wang, 2014) and further highlight the benefits of in-class activities and specifically targeted teacher interventions for those students who struggle to bridge the gap between passive participation and active engagement. Language teachers considering the use of social networking technology to engage learners in OIEs should be aware that the networking side of the interaction is fundamentally social interaction among strangers online, and that social interaction online, similarly to offline, requires the very special skill of being able to engage in polite conversation with strangers.

The authors of this study believe that conducting an online exchange through the use of FB groups was an enriching experience for students and their teachers alike. Students from both ends of the participation range provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. It is hoped that other researchers will conduct further online exchanges and advance this line of research to gain a more in-depth understanding of the personality factors influencing student participation in OIEs.

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Appendix A

Excerpts of FB exchange posts from a selection of FB groups

May 13, 2015

Despite earthquakes, typhoons, water shortages, and generally being busy, most groups managed to have a good intercultural exchange! Today, Aoyama students presented on their Taiwanese counterparts and the cultural items they shared. Highlights included a music video from a local Taiwanese artist which was shared in group 6 by Ya Yang. Thank you for that, Ya Yang! I hope we can continue the great exchange and grow in our international friendships! Who knows what the future may bring? But Taiwan and Japan can surely benefit from each other and in developing mutual understanding. The seeds of friendship planted here can blossom into a beautiful tree! Keep up the good work!



Like Comment

and 2 others like this. Seen by 8

I like this artist,too!His name is Chang Chen-yue(also known as A-Yue).He is a Taiwanese aborigine,so there are a lot of elements of aboriginal

June 9

This week is the end of our interaction officially. That's why I gonna ask a question: what images of Japan does Taiwanese have. I wanna know my country's image, so please tell me frankly!

Like Comment

and 3 others like this. Seen by everyone

View 1 more comment

to me , japan is a traditional but also innovative country , many taiwanese love japan in many reason/way . I love the old structure in japan , that make me feel like home . and as my classmates , they love japanese pop culture , electricity , and food... See More
June 9 at 11:05pm · Unlike · 2

To me ,Japan is a high quality country.Have many delicious and delicate delicacy/rich culture.great natural science.That's the reason why many Taiwanese want to travel to Japan in vacation. The high economic and the system of law,technology also be a st... See More
June 9 at 11:19pm · Unlike · 3

Thank you for your responses. I'm very glad to hear your straightforward impressions. I could learn about my country objectively again, but I'm sorry there is historical issue and people who hate Japan.... See More
June 11 at 2:19pm · Unlike · 3

May 21

Mc hot dog and soft lipa are my favorite rapper in Taiwan because there songs are different from other rappers (they rarely diss other people) this song is my favorite one which talks about 'No breakfast is real hiphop'. It really interesting . Hope you enjoy it.



MC HotDog 熱狗 feat. 蛋堡 Soft Lipa 【不吃早餐才是一件很嘻哈的事】 Official Music Video HD
不吃早餐才是一件很嘻哈的事 Feat. 蛋堡SoftLipa 詞曲：饒中仁、杜振熙 編曲：黃冠豪、張震嶽...
YOUTUBE

Like Comment Share

You and 2 others like this. Seen by 8

the best rapper in Taiwan!
May 21 at 11:10am · Like

Hi!!! Thank you for introduce of your favorite song;) I was ignorant of rap,but thanks to your introduce ,I am interested in rap songs!!!!. See More
May 22 at 5:35am · Like

http://youtu.be/PjQbnPYwt1g

「睡蓮花」MV
2007年6月8日発売、「絶恋歌」より約1年3ヶ月となる8th Single「睡蓮花」...
YOUTUBE.COM

May 18 · Edited

Hi! What are you doing now?
I'm listening to music now.)
"SEKAI NO OWARI" is one of the most favorite artists for me. Do you know them? Their music has their musical world which other artists can't create. This summer, I'm going to go to their concert with my friend! I'm forward to that!!!! want you to search for them on internet and please listen to them!
By the way, what kind of music do you like or often listen to?

Like Comment

You and 2 others like this. Seen by everyone

View 1 more comment

My favorite music group is "one direction"
It is formed four members. (five members before)
All their songs are awesome, so I listen to them almost every day!... See More
May 18 at 11:40pm · Unlike · 2

I will listen to music of SEKAI NO OWARI!!!! Also, I sometimes listen one direction's music such as "story of my life"!!
My favorite singer is Sam Smith. He is a British singer and I really love his song. I would listen these songs when I study or commute to my university. I especially recommend "stay with me" and "lay me down" to everyone.
May 19 at 9:14am · Unlike · 1

I love "story of my life" I think its promotion video is so nice. I know "stay with me" and sometimes listen to it, but I never listen to "lay me down".
I want to listen!!!!
May 19 at 9:23am · Unlike · 2

Appendix B

HEXACO results: Cronbach's alpha, Total and Japan-Taiwan differences

	Alpha (N = 54)	Total (N = 54)		Japan (N = 27)		Taiwan (N = 27)		Difference Japan-Taiwan	
	α	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	t-test
Honesty-Humility	0.61	33.07	6.33	34.74	7.00	31.41	5.18	3.33	1.99
Sincerity		9.46	2.08	9.07	2.45	9.85	1.59	-0.78	-1.39
Fairness		10.83	3.14	11.19	3.29	10.48	3.01	0.70	0.82
Greed Avoidance		6.15	1.77	6.67	1.90	5.63	1.50	1.04	2.23*
Modesty		6.63	2.29	7.81	2.06	5.44	1.89	2.37	4.41**
Emotionality	0.57	35.19	5.54	35.56	5.85	34.81	5.29	0.74	0.49
Fearfulness		10.56	2.05	10.70	2.27	10.41	1.85	0.30	0.53
Anxiety		7.06	1.95	7.41	1.93	6.70	1.94	0.70	1.34
Dependence		7.09	1.84	7.04	1.95	7.15	1.75	-0.11	-0.22
Sentimentality		10.48	2.52	10.41	2.47	10.56	2.62	-0.15	-0.21
Extraversion	0.63	31.56	5.72	29.74	6.52	33.37	4.16	-3.63	-2.44*
Expressiveness		9.37	2.80	8.30	2.77	10.44	2.42	-2.15	-3.03**
Social Boldness		8.65	1.93	8.56	2.17	8.74	1.70	-0.19	-0.35
Sociability		6.93	1.53	6.74	1.53	7.11	1.53	-0.37	-0.89
Liveliness		6.61	1.87	6.15	2.05	7.07	1.57	-0.93	-1.86
Agreeableness	0.69	33.39	5.78	32.33	6.46	34.44	4.90	-2.11	-1.35
Forgiveness		5.85	2.11	5.37	2.22	6.33	1.92	-0.96	-1.70
Gentleness		10.31	2.04	10.07	2.13	10.56	1.95	-0.48	-0.87
Flexibility		10.15	2.19	9.96	2.38	10.33	2.02	-0.37	-0.62
Patience		7.07	1.61	6.93	1.73	7.22	1.50	-0.30	-0.67
Conscientiousness	0.45	31.07	4.82	30.19	5.38	31.96	4.10	-1.78	-1.37
Organization		5.48	1.75	4.81	1.88	6.15	1.32	-1.33	-3.01**
Diligence		6.8	1.57	7.11	1.45	6.48	1.65	0.63	1.49
Perfectionism		9.72	1.93	9.59	2.22	9.85	1.61	-0.26	-0.49
Prudence		9.07	2.45	8.67	2.83	9.48	1.97	-0.82	-1.23
Openness to Experience	0.54	34	5.96	33.37	6.00	34.63	5.96	-1.26	-0.77
Aesthetic Appreciation		7.2	2.03	7.00	2.43	7.41	1.55	-0.41	-0.73
Inquisitiveness		7.26	1.90	7.70	1.98	6.81	1.73	0.89	1.76
Creativity		8.76	3.02	7.63	2.86	9.89	2.78	-2.26	-2.95**
Unconventionality		10.78	2.30	11.04	2.28	10.52	2.34	0.52	0.82

Notes. * p-value < .05, ** p-value < .01