



LINKING SITUATED LEARNING IN EDUTOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF JAPANESE UNDERGRADUATES

Noor Hanim Rahmat¹ⁱ,

Nur Anisah Tan Abdullah²,

Kozue Kashiwazaki³

^{1,2}Akademi Pengajian Bahasa,

Universiti Teknologi MARA,

Shah Alam, Malaysia

³Department of Regional Development Studies,

Faculty of Global and Regional Studies,

Toyo University,

Tokyo, Japan

Abstract:

Global learning is concerned with exploring interconnections between people and places around the world. Through adopting a global learning approach, learners were given the opportunity to critically examine their own values and attitudes. They also learn to appreciate the similarities between people everywhere. The students value diversity; yet, at the same time understand the global context of their local lives. In order to support global learning, some universities introduce summer programmes in the form of edutourism to learners around the world. The main objective of this study is to explore the influence of edutourism on learners from visiting countries. Specifically, this study investigates how learners are influenced by the authenticity of the language activities. Next, this study also looks into how context influences students' perception of the language activities. Finally, this study is done to explore the students' perception on their cultural experience. This pilot study employs a qualitative approach. The research randomly analysed the open-ended responses of 5 male and 5 female Japanese students who took part in a 5-week summer programme in a public university in Malaysia. Findings of this study bear interesting implications in the planning of future edutorism programmes for overseas students both to the host and receiving countries.

Keywords: global learning, edutourism, summer programmes, authenticity, culture

ⁱ Correspondence: email patanim@gmail.com, patanim28@gmail.com

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Higher institutions are now flooded with learners who belong to generation z and also millennials. According to Rahmat, Syed Abdul Rahman, Hassan (2018), these learners prefer real and authentic content when it comes to learning experience. As such, institutions of higher learning believe that the learning environment needs to be catered to the needs of these learners. Global learning is concerned with allowing learners to explore interconnections between people and places around the world. According to Bourn (2014) and Heick (2019), global learning is an approach to learning that necessitates both reflection and thinking on the part of the teachers. Global learning requires the learners to observe the similarities and differences that exist around the world and then relate these experiences to their own lives.

There are several characteristics of global learning. Learning at this level is focused on learner-centred classrooms. Learners in global learning environment demand authenticity when it comes learning experiences. These learners may expect new technologies; yet, at the same time crave for collaborative activities. Through adopting a global learning approach, learners were given the opportunity to critically examine their own values and attitudes. They also learn to appreciate the similarities between people everywhere. They value diversity; yet, at the same time understand the global context of their local lives.

In order to support global learning, some universities introduce summer programmes in the form of edutourism to learners around the world. The Educational-based tourism (Edutorism) was introduced in 2014 is slowly gaining popularity in Malaysia (Bernama, 2019). These programmes; last form one week to one month or more, allow learners opportunities to learn languages as well as, enjoy tourist benefits in countries of their choice. These learners have tourist characteristics and hope to enjoy the experiences that the host country can offer. According to Jason, Lam, Sia, Chen, and Goh (2011), one of the basic needs of tourist would be accommodation, transportation as well as safety.

2. Statement of Problem

Edutourism is set to help the host countries in many ways; and at the same time provides education the visitors concerned. The former education minister of Malaysia, Dr. Maszlee Malik (Bernama, 2019), reported that Malaysia has planned for ambitious goals in its move to raise Malaysia institutions in the regional and global ranking. Dr. Mazlee also said that Malaysia has been reputed as an important source market for both established and emerging study destinations of visiting institutions globally. The influx of edutourism in local universities has given many advantages to the host institutions. What has the learners gained from the visiting countries gained from edutourism? This study addresses this issue.

2.1 Objective and Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to explore the influence of edutourism on learners from visiting countries. Specifically, this study investigates how learners are influenced by the authenticity of the language activities. Next, this study also looks into how context influences students' perception of the language activities. Finally, this study is done to find out the students' perception on their cultural experience. The research questions that will be answered at the end of this paper are;

- 1) In what ways are the language activities authentic?
- 2) How does context influence language activities?
- 3) How do the students perceive their cultural experience?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This section discusses edutourism and situated learning. Past studies on edutourism are also presented to look into what other researchers explored when it comes to edutourism. The theoretical framework of the study presents the theories that support this study.

3.2 Edutourism

Edu-tourism is a form of tourism where the participants gained more than just general interest. Figure 1 below presents the learning and travel continuum. A traveller's intentions to travel can be seen from two ends of a continuum (Figure 1). Some travel because they have a general interest to visit new places. They may or may not learn while they travel. On the other hand, other travellers may plan their travels well because they have more than just one purpose for the travel. They may have a genuine interest to learn a skill while still enjoying the benefits of travelling.

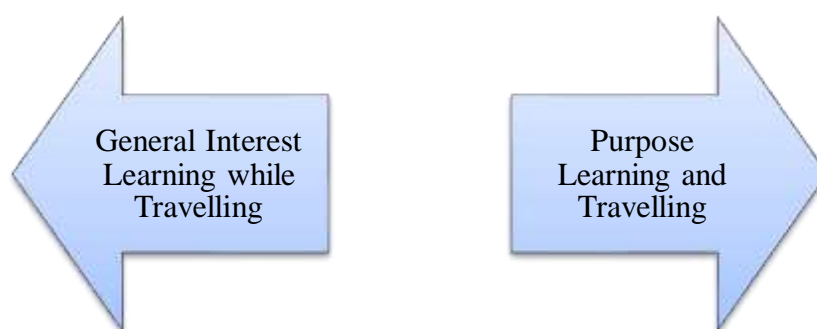


Figure 1: Learning and Travel Continuum
(adapted from Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper, 2003)

Travelling in itself is a learning process by the traveller. Van Winkle & Lagay (2012) report that tourists gain learning experience during leisure tourism. Learning can occur through unplanned and planned opportunities. In addition to travelling, edutourist gained more than just enjoyment of travels. Kamdi, Jamal, & Anuar (2018)

states that Malaysian edutourism packages have been a popular way for institutions to plan for their students' fun and learning travel sessions.

3.3 Situated Learning

The benefits that students get from edutourism mirror the advantages gained from situated learning. According to Lave and Wagner (1990), situated learning theory states that learning needs to be unintentional and situated within authentic activity, context and culture. Lave and Wagner (1990) refer to this process of situated learning as "*legitimate peripheral participation*". One way of looking at this that learners were seen as actively participating in activities. These activities were seemingly not directly related to the academic programme they were registered to in the university. Nevertheless, they gain the benefits of situated learning. One example is when students from overseas are registered in edutourism programmes in host universities. These students participated in the programme to learn a foreign language. However, what they gained from the programme far exceeds the language that they had planned to learn. This is because, for learning to take place, the knowledge needs to be presented in authentic situations (Clace, 1995; Stein 1998). Social interaction takes place in the context that is conducive to the learners. As the learners become immersed in activities, they may also become engaged with the culture of the host country.

Stein (1998) suggests several guidelines that learners can follow to develop situated learning experience. Firstly, learning is grounded in the undertaking of everyday situations. Secondly, knowledge is acquired situationally, and learners transfer that learning to similar situations. Thirdly, learning is the result of a social process that includes ways of thinking, perceiving, problem solving, and interacting.

3.4 Past Studies

Learning occurs in both planned and unplanned opportunities. The study of Van Winkle & Lagay (2012) explored the learning experience during leisure tourism from the tourist's perspective. The Husserlian phenomenology presented here involved in-depth interviews with 10 recent tourists and revealed the following 6 qualities of the tourism learning experience: contrast, freedom and flexibility, fun and engagement, authentication, reflection and exploration. Findings of this study reveal the relationship between learning, leisure and tourism concepts.

More edutourism packages should focus on inculcating values to the learners. Kamdi, Jamal, & Anuar (2018) report a preliminary study on how edutourists' perceived values in Malaysian through edutourism packages. A purposive sampling was used to choose 32 respondents in the state of Kuala Lumpur and Perak, and they were presented with a questionnaire to assess their perceived values on the edutourism packages and programs. The results revealed the dimensions and attributes perceived as important to them as students. These findings gave insights for better development and organization of edutourism packages and programs in Malaysia.

Next, some institutions focus on allowing their students learn a new language through edutourism. The study by Boekstein (2017) was done on 250 English language

learners at 16 English language schools throughout South Africa. The main objective of the study was to gather information on the activity preferences of students. It was found that cultural activities feature prominently in students' activity preferences. In the increasingly competitive world of English language teaching and learning, the tourism attractiveness of the destination is feature more prominently in the decision making of those who want to learn English, but need to decide where. South Africa has created a competitive advantage by packaging its English language learning tourism offerings into something uniquely African, with a focus on location-based cultural activities. The experience offered by South Africa distinguished itself from other destinations offering similar academic products.

Edu-tourism packages do more than just introduce fun and learning to the learners; the host countries become introduced to the returning institutions to create a snowball effect of gaining more future programmes. Bello and Yusof (2019) developed a model capable of explaining the contemporary edutourism destination selection process in the Malaysian context. The model explains the edutourists' decision at each stage of the choice process. A modified synthesis model was adapted and used to develop the contemporary edutourism destination choice model (CEDCM). The research sampled 500 postgraduate and undergraduate international edutourists in 13 Malaysians' public and private universities using a survey questionnaire. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) supported by Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) was used to validate the CEDCM model. The research revealed that the three hypotheses in the study were significant. Thus, it provides significant implications for the government of Malaysia, the ministry of tourism, and higher education including the managers of Malaysia's education institutions in order to leap-frog the Malaysia's tourism sector.

3.5 Theoretical Framework

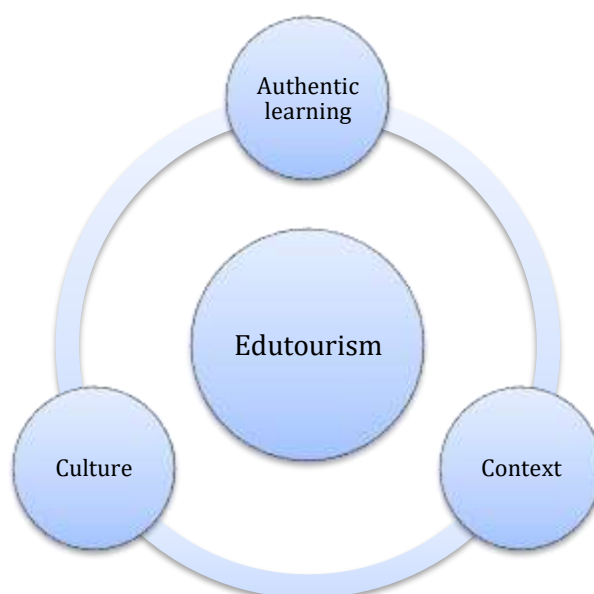


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework of the Study
(adapted from Lave and Wagner, 1990)

Figure 2 presents the theoretical framework of the study. This study presents several benefits gained from edutorism on the part of the learners. Learners are exposed to authentic learning by their instructors. They are given the opportunity to learn a foreign language in the context of the host country. Finally, throughout the participation of the learner, they may become immersed in the culture of the host country.

4. Authentic Learning

Authentic learning allows learners to explore through their personal experience and real-life experiences. According to Rahmat (2018), authentic learning activities allow learners to learn through interaction and solve real-world problems. In order to allow authentic learning, instructors plan classroom activities that encourage learners to explore their own learning experiences. In addition to that, learners get to enjoy themselves through the personal experiences they gain by participating in planned activities. What is interesting is that language learning is done in the host country and learners get to also learn the culture of the host.

4.1 Context

Edutorism programmes allow learners to learn in a conducive context that focuses on a suitable environment for planned activities to take place. According to Rahmat (2011), for maximum to take place, the instructor has to consider aspects such as the classroom teacher's role, teaching method, learner's role, learning materials, how materials are used. Learners need to see the environment for learning as non-threatening in order to maximise learning. Activities like field trips allow learners to enjoy learning as well as get to know the host country better. The learning is considered fun because learners learn about and from their peers.

4.2 Culture

One of the reasons why many love travelling is that they get to experience the culture of the host country in an authentic way. Bourn (2014) and Heick (2019) agreed that one of the first things that tourists mention from their travels would be exposure to a new culture. Adventurous tourists report of how the food, clothing and way of life of the people in the host country differ or are similar from theirs.

5. Methodology

This pilot study uses the qualitative design. Random sampling is done on 5 male and 5 female students about their edutorism experience in Malaysia. The study Van Winkle & Lagay (2012) also examined 10 samples from edutorism participants. The samples were given open ended questions that relates to what they feel about their edutorism experience. The open-ended questions are divided into 4 sections.

Section A is about the respondents' personal details, section B looks at their perception authentic learning, section C is about the respondents' experience of learning

in the Malaysian context. Finally, section D is about the participants' perception about learning culture in Malaysia. The study by Jason, Lam, Sia, Chen. & Goh (2011) suggested having open-ended questions to have a more personalized information on environmental and situational influences on the research. Personalised input would provide more specific and clearer output of the tourist behavior of the respondents.

6. Findings

6.1 Demographic Profile

Gender differences do play some roles when it comes to perception on surrounding learning environment. According to Nakata and Momsen, (2010) men and women emphasize on different aspects when they perceive their surroundings. For instance, women value traditional cultures more than men do. 5 male and 5 female students were randomly chosen for this pilot study. Their responses to the open-ended questions were analysed based on three main themes; authentic activity, context and also culture. Responses from the open-ended questions were tabulated and presented to answer the three research questions presented.

6.2 Authentic Activity

Authentic learning becomes more meaningful as learners enjoyed what they went through. Participants enjoyed using the target language-English as well as learn more about the customs of the environment they were in.

6.2.1 Activities They Enjoy

Both male and female students enjoyed the communication they had with their teachers. The findings did reveal that male students enjoy different types of communication in the class. For example, in table 1, the male students' idea of enjoyment was when they could communicate with the teachers, Female students enjoyed the bond with the teachers as well as their peers. They enjoyed sharing of stories.

Table 1: Responses for "Enjoy"

Question	Male	Female
Enjoy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with teachers. • Got to know new English grammar that I never knew. • Mr ADI introduced his favorite music to me. • I like all the three teachers. • Practicing writing and speaking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking. I can speak a lot and convey my information. • Writing, trying to say answer in exercise. • Talking with students and teacher in circle. they told about interesting stories. • To listen other people speech in speaking class. • Writing, it makes me know the fun of writing.

6.2.2 Use of English

Table 2 shows the responses for the “use of English” among the respondents. According to Rahmat (2018), authentic learning takes place in a non-threatening environment. Respondents were asked how whether the activities encouraged them to use English. The male respondents felt that the authentic way of using English encouraged them to use the target language with the teacher. The female students felt the non-threatening environment of learning English further helped them to focus on learning another skill-writing in English.

Table 2: Responses for “Use of English”

Question	Male	Female
Use of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. • Yes. • I agree. • I should study hard in English, so every day I use it. • Dr Chay taught me how to write properly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Help me a lot. • I could learn how to develop my idea in writing. • Writing skill is well better. • In writing class, I can get ability to develop essay. • Thanks to class. I use English positively.

6.2.3 Malaysian customs and lifestyle in the classroom

Interestingly, the male respondents (Table 3), did not quiet enjoy the activities of getting to know Malaysian customs and lifestyle. The female respondents enjoyed the social bonding they gained from the activities such as playing traditional games and wearing traditional clothes.

Table 3: Responses for “Malaysian Customs”

Question	Male	Female
Malaysian Customs in the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Malaysian songs, food & Fashion. • No, I prefer to have lectures. • I agree. • Yes, because teachers give me Malaysian things through learning class. • Nil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes. Because teachers told us about Malaysian. • Playing traditional games, wearing traditional clothes. • Buddy session, dancing, clothing. • Every class give up many kinds of snack, so we can try lots of Malaysian snack. • Yes. Me ADI recommend “Yuna”.

6.3 Context

6.3.1 Destination

Based on the findings in Table 4, both male and female learners felt that their choice of choosing Malaysia as their edutourism was a good decision. This was because they felt that English is commonly used in Malaysia. However, in the process of learning the language, the female students found that both Malaysians and Japanese share a common way of communication-the use of body language.

Table 4: Responses for “Destination”

Question	Male	Female
Good place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people can speak English. • Better to study at an English-speaking country because the locals have the mother tongue influent. • English is common in Malaysia. • Because Malaysian people is straight and interesting. • English is spoken as a second language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysia’s 2nd official language is English. • Many people in town speak English • Many people can use English. I can do life in English. • Same with Japan, body language is. • It is easy to understand.

6.3.2 Fieldtrips

Throughout their 5 weeks stay in Malaysia, the students were brought out for fieldtrips. Interestingly, the male participants loved the field trips because they got to know more about the history of Malaysia. On the other hand, the female students noticed the kindness of the society around them. They also took the opportunity of the fieldtrip to bond with the students from the host university who accompanied them (buddies). Unfortunately, both male and female students did not welcome Malaysia’s heat during their excursion.

Table 5: Responses for “Field Trips”

Question	Male	Female
Love Field Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malacca. • Communicate with the native people (locals). • It’s exciting. • Going to Blue Mosque. • We can feel history of Malaysia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak with buddies. • Kindness of the people. • Food. I ate a lot of Malaysian food. • Malacca. • Malacca trip.
Hate Field Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too long (2 days). • Toilet and food. • It’s on holiday(weekend). • No. • Nothing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The weather. • Toilet. • Toilet and no bathtub. No time. • I was touched by the historical of Malaysia. • Museum.

6.3.3 Society

Table 6 shows the response for “society”. Both male and female respondents felt that being in the context of Malaysian environment enabled them to know more such as religion (different from theirs), how Malaysians spend their time, as well as how diverse the culture mix are in Malaysia.

Table 6: Responses for “Society”

Question	Male	Female
Learn about Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of religion and race. • Difference between different cultures and religions. • Islamic culture. • Malaysia has a lot of natural and culture. • Night market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know more about Islam. • There are many people who is friendly. • Culture difference to Japan. • Malaysian culture is made by lots of culture. • There are lots of sightseeing spots in Malaysia.

6.3.4 Peer Influence

One interesting thing about the participants in this edutourism was that they did not know one another before they joined the programme. These programmes helped them to make friend even from their home country (Table 7). They admitted they made friends not only from the host country (buddies), they also bonded with their peers from their home country.

Table 7: Responses for “Peer Influence”

Question	Male	Female
Learn from Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindness. • Loss of courage because we could get along well with each other. • Nothing special. • I made sense of the way friend lives. • Many friends are kind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building good relationships. • Kindness. • Difficult but enjoy for me. • Friend is important for me to help each other. • You can feel soy sauce taste. • They are very kind and energetic.

6.4 Culture

6.4.1 Food

Table 8 shows the responses for “food”. The students noticed similarities and differences about the food in their home country with that of the host country (table 8). Through the differences, the participants could see how similar the food in their home country with that of the host country.

Table 8: Responses for “Food”

Question	Male	Female
Similarities in Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice. • Nothing. • We eat rice. • Mee goreng. • Fried(fried) rice is similar to Japanese Cha Han (fried rice). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spicy. • Noodles are popular. • Rice tastes. • Major food is rice.
Differences in Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too spicy and too sweet. • Rice hardness, water temperature. • Tastes spicy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysian food is only chicken and beef. • Rice, spicy, fruits.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yakiniku (grill meat). • Too spicy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spicy kind, sweet tastes, less vegetable, cost. • The volume served is more and it's spicy. • Spicy or not.
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6.4.2 Clothes

Table 9 reports the similarities and differences of the clothing through the eyes of the participants. For both male and female participants, they noticed similarities as well as differences. They were exposed to a variety of styles as well as colours.

Table 9: Responses for “Clothes”

Question	Male	Female
Similarities on Clothes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape, unique. • Almost similar. • We wear T-shirts. • Malaysian ware like cultural cloth. • Easy to ware. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern clothes. • They sometimes wear jeans. • Casual clothing similar. • Material for clothing during summer is thin. • Comfortable materials.
Differences on Clothes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, hijab and long sleeve • Touching comfort (material) • Women always ware long shirts • They don't limit the color of cloth, so fashionable • There are a lot of traditional clothes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional clothes. • Hijab, traditional clothes. • Ingredient clothing material. • Malaysian's designs are more colorful. • Simple and gorgeous.

6.4.3 Way of life

Table 10 presents findings for “way of life”. Here participants learnt many new things about Malaysia. They noticed not only how Malaysians live, how religion is a part of Malaysian, how Malaysian behave towards them. Most of all, they were exposed to how Malaysians value elders, how Malaysians greet others, etc.

Table 10: Responses for “Way of life”

Question	Male	Female
Differences in culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion. • Feeling for religion, work etiquette. • How to eat food and toilet. • Easy to cancel promise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysia has many different cultures. • Nil. • Food, religion, people kind • A lot of kind and considerate people (forgiving) in Malaysia. • Multi Ethic country or not.
Similarities in Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest for God. • Kindness. • We eat rice. • To say hello when we meet. • Regard family as importance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My culture has only one. • Malaysian people more friendly than Japanese. • Rice. • There is a spirit of hospitality. • They are less popular.

Activities Enjoy Most	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Chai’s class. She gave me advices on how to improve my English skills. • Shopping. The sale person will call me “Bro” I felt good. • Skytrex, I like exercise. • Dr Chay’s class. I am not good in speaking, but the class can study speaking easily. • Everything. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil. • Traditional games. It’s unique and enjoyable. • Dr Chai. Teaching is good and talking is fun for me. • Mr Choi’s class. Did lots of pronunciation exercises. Able to use lots of English. • Mr Choy’s class. I enjoyed talking in front of people.
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7. Conclusion

7.1 Summary and Discussion of Findings

Edutourism provides two -fold benefits to both the host as well as the visitors. Both the host and visitors learn new ways of dealing with people outside their “globe”. The visitors do not only learn a foreign language, they learn new ways of looking at things. Male and female participants have shown different reactions to different environment while they learnt. Participants are exposed to a way of life different than what they were used to. They learnt about how values are similar or different from theirs. This is also agreed by Kamdi, Jamal, & Anuar (2018) who found that edutourism let the participants learn values of others. Learners may or may not agree with the differences. Nevertheless, they learn to understand how different life can be outside their “world”. According to Van Winkle & Lagay. (2012) some learners observed the differences and similarities and reflect on their own way of doing thing. In the end, according to Belllo and Yusof (2019), edutourism can create a snowball effect of learners, learning as well as teaching.

7.2 Implications

Encouraging edutourism is also advocating the importance of situated learning in higher institutions. Learners come to host countries to learn a foreign language and they benefits of the host environment allow learners to gain experience learning in an authentic environment. They are also given real opportunities to use the target language. Finally,

7.3 Suggestion for Future Research

It is recommended that future research examine the pushing and pulling factors of participants to choose a particular country, and what pulls learners to one country and not another.

About the Author(s)

Noor Hanim Rahmat is an associate professor at the Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Alam, Malaysia. She has a PhD In Education, specializing in Teaching English as a second language. She has taught for the past 26 years. She teaches bachelor and masters courses, as well as supervises masters and PhD candidates.

Her area of specialisation are Teaching English as a Second Language, Academic Writing, Methodology of Teaching Writing, Educational Psychology and Language Proficiency.

Nur Anisah Tan Abdullah is a senior lecturer at the Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Alam, Malaysia. She has an honours degree in Japanese language & Literature, and a Master in Education She has taught for past 23 years. She teaches Japanese as a foreign language in the university. Her research interest is teaching and learning.

Kozue Kashiwazaki has a Phd in Engineering. She is an assistant professor at the Department of Regional Development Studies, Faculty of Global and Regional Studies, Toyo University, Japan. She has taught for the past eight years in Yokohama National University, the University of Tokyo and Toyo University. Since 2017, she has taken charge of the Learning English Abroad programs of Toyo University and took more than 180 bachelor students to Malaysia and Philippines.

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