



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Exploring the preservice training of assistant language teachers in Japan: Contents, gaps and recommendations

Robert G Arrogante* and Nadine R Rejano

Graduate Students, School of Graduate Studies, University of Nueva Caceres, Naga City, Philippines.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2025, 25(01), 2414-2423

Publication history: Received on 16 December 2024; revised on 27 January 2025; accepted on 30 January 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2025.25.1.0303>

Abstract

This study explored the preservice training programs of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan, analyzing their content, identifying gaps and overlooked essential topics, and proposing enhancements to equip ALTs for their roles better. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining survey data analyzed through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Findings revealed that training emphasized foundational topics such as Introduction to English Education and Team Teaching, highlighting the need for understanding Japan's education system and collaborative teaching roles. However, less attention was given to Error Correction and Feedback and Reading and Writing, indicating potential gaps. ALTs suggested additional training in Cultural Awareness, Lesson Planning, Classroom Management, and Professional Growth, emphasizing cultural competence, practical strategies, and career development. The study concluded that while effective in some areas, current training programs must address these gaps to align better with ALTs' needs. Recommendations include expanding modules on error correction, reading and writing pedagogy, cultural sensitivity, lesson planning, and classroom management. Professional development opportunities like certifications were also suggested to support long-term career growth. These improvements aim to enhance ALTs' effectiveness in Japanese classrooms and improve English education outcomes. Future research could explore the impact of such improvements on classroom effectiveness and student learning.

Keywords: Preservice training; Assistant Language Teachers; Japan; Teacher Development

1. Introduction

The preservice training of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan is a critical area of study, particularly as it relates to the broader context of English language education in the country. The role of ALTs, who primarily come from English-speaking countries, is to support Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) in delivering English language instruction through a team teaching model. This model is designed to leverage the native English proficiency of ALTs while addressing the limitations posed by their lack of formal teaching credentials in Japan. However, the effectiveness of this model is contingent upon the quality of preservice training that ALTs receive prior to their deployment in Japanese classrooms [5].

Recent studies have highlighted significant shortcomings in the preservice training programs for ALTs, particularly in preparing them for the unique challenges they face in the Japanese educational context. For instance, Binns (2022) noted that ALTs often find themselves in situations where they are not actively engaged in lesson planning or sharing responsibilities with their JTE counterparts, leading to a passive role in the classroom. This lack of engagement can undermine the potential benefits of the team-teaching approach and limit the effectiveness of English language instruction [4]. Furthermore, the absence of Japanese language proficiency requirements for ALTs can exacerbate communication barriers, hindering their ability to connect with students and collaborate effectively with JTEs [3].

* Corresponding author: Robert G Arrogante

The challenges faced by ALTs are compounded by the cultural and linguistic differences inherent in the Japanese educational system. Aswe (2023) elucidates that many ALTs encounter significant language barriers that impede their ability to navigate the classroom environment and engage with students meaningfully [3]. This phenomenon underscores the necessity for preservice training programs to incorporate strategies that not only enhance language proficiency but also foster cultural competence and adaptability among ALTs. Such training could include immersive experiences that allow ALTs to familiarize themselves with Japanese culture and educational practices, thereby equipping them with the skills needed to thrive in their roles.

Moreover, the professional identities of ALTs and their perceptions of their roles within the Japanese educational framework are crucial factors that influence their effectiveness as language teachers. Hiratsuka (2023) discusses how the professional identities of JTEs are shaped in relation to their foreign counterparts, suggesting that a more integrated approach to preservice training could help bridge the gap between ALTs and JTEs. By fostering a collaborative environment where both parties can learn from each other, preservice training programs can enhance the overall quality of English language instruction in Japan [12].

In addition to addressing the immediate challenges faced by ALTs, preservice training must also focus on long-term professional development. Chinda (2023) emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development (PD) for language teachers, arguing that regular in-service training can complement preservice education by keeping teachers informed of the latest advancements in language pedagogy and assessment [6]. This continuous learning approach is essential for ALTs, who must adapt to evolving educational standards and student needs in Japan.

The interplay between preservice training, cultural competence, and professional identity formation is a complex yet vital aspect of preparing ALTs for their roles in Japan. Yücel (2019) suggests that raising awareness of intercultural approaches within teacher training can significantly impact the effectiveness of language instruction [31]. By fostering an understanding of diverse cultural perspectives, preservice training can prepare ALTs to navigate the intricacies of the Japanese educational landscape more effectively.

The preservice training of Assistant Language Teachers in Japan is a multifaceted issue that requires careful consideration of various factors, including language proficiency, cultural competence, and ongoing professional development. Despite its critical importance, the actual content of preservice training provided to ALTs has not as yet been widely researched. The current study attempted to fill this void by ascertaining the content of preservice training topics as self-reported from the ALTs themselves. By emphasizing the training areas that ALTs find most relevant or lacking, this study hoped to provide insight into how these programs might more adequately tailor the needs of ALTs and better equip them for the Japanese educational context.

1.1. Research Objectives

In an endeavor to uncover important areas in the preservice training of ALTs, this study aimed to:

- Identify the contents of the ALTs preservice training provided to assistant language teachers in Japan.
- Probe into other content areas, which ALTs deemed to be significant.
- Propose research-based inputs for the further enhancement of the preservice training of assistant language teachers in Japan.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

This study was grounded in Desimone's Core Conceptual Framework for Professional Development (2009), which identifies five critical features of effective professional development: content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. Among these, the content focus component is central to this research, as it emphasizes the importance of subject matter content and its alignment with the knowledge and skills required for educators to succeed in their roles [10].

The content focus element underscores that professional development should prioritize the specific knowledge and competencies necessary for effective teaching. In the context of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan, this involves addressing linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical competencies that enable them to support English language education effectively. Preservice training serves as a critical foundation, providing ALTs with the tools and knowledge needed to meet the unique challenges of teaching in Japanese classrooms.

The study adopted the lens of the content focus principle to investigate not only what is currently taught but also what ALTs themselves identify as critical for their professional preparedness. By aligning the training content with both the

objectives of language education in Japan and the practical insights of ALTs, this research aims to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of preservice training programs.

2. Review of related literature

The inadequacy of preservice training for assistant language teachers (ALTs) in Japan has been a subject of increasing scrutiny in recent years. This literature review synthesizes recent studies and articles highlighting the challenges and gaps in the training programs that prepare ALTs for their roles in Japanese educational settings. The review will explore various aspects of preservice training, including pedagogical approaches, teacher efficacy, and the integration of inclusive education practices.

One significant issue identified in the literature is the disconnect between the skills that preservice teachers acquire during their training and the competencies required in actual classroom settings. Mukhtiar et al. (2022) emphasize the necessity for language training programs to encompass all four language competencies- listening, speaking, reading, and writing [20]. They argue that a lack of comprehensive training in these areas leads to inadequacies in teachers' performance in real-world teaching scenarios. This sentiment is echoed by Steele et al. (2016), who note that the failure to adopt Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in English education in Japan is partly due to insufficiently qualified teachers [24]. The authors suggest that improving teacher training is essential for enhancing the overall effectiveness of English education in Japan.

Moreover, the literature indicates that preservice training often fails to address the specific challenges that ALTs face in Japanese classrooms. Yada and Alnahdi (2021) highlight the need for further investigation into how preservice training can enhance teachers' self-efficacy in inclusive education practices [27]. They found that while some training programs have shown positive outcomes, there remains a significant gap in preparing teachers to manage diverse classrooms effectively. This gap is particularly concerning given the increasing emphasis on inclusive education in Japan, as noted by Nagase et al. (2020), who discuss the emotional distress experienced by teachers due to inadequate training in inclusive practices [21].

The concept of teacher efficacy is critical in understanding the inadequacies of preservice training. Yada et al. (2018) conducted a comparative study that revealed how teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education are influenced by their training experiences [29]. Their findings suggest that preservice training programs need to be more robust in developing teachers' confidence and skills in implementing inclusive practices. This is further supported by the work of Yada and Savolainen (2019), who found that teachers' perceptions of support-both internal and external-significantly affect their attitudes toward inclusion [21]. This indicates that preservice training must not only focus on pedagogical skills but also on fostering a supportive environment for new teachers. In addition to pedagogical skills, the literature also points to the importance of intercultural training in preparing ALTs for their roles. Yücel (2019) argues that raising preservice teachers' awareness of different approaches to interculturality is essential for their future practice. This training can help teachers navigate the complexities of teaching in a multicultural environment, which is increasingly relevant in Japan's diverse classrooms. The integration of intercultural training into preservice programs can enhance teachers' ability to connect with students from various backgrounds, thereby improving educational outcomes [31]. Another critical aspect of preservice training inadequacy is the lack of a cohesive framework linking preservice and in-service training. Isozaki (2018) notes that the disconnect between these two stages of professional development has led to a fragmented approach to teacher education in Japan. This fragmentation can hinder the continuous professional growth of teachers, making it challenging for them to adapt to the evolving demands of the educational landscape [14]. The need for a more integrated approach to teacher training is echoed by Yonezawa et al. (2023), who emphasize the role of mentorship and peer support in enhancing teachers' professional development [30].

Furthermore, the literature highlights the importance of practical experience in preservice training. Hiratsuka (2023) discusses the professional identities of Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) in relation to their foreign ALTs, suggesting that collaborative experiences can significantly influence teachers' perceptions and practices [12]. This underscores the necessity for preservice programs to include opportunities for practical engagement, enabling future teachers to develop their identities and pedagogical approaches in real classroom settings.

The role of lesson study as a professional development tool is also noteworthy in the context of preservice training. Kanellopoulou and Δάρρα (2019) argue that lesson study can mobilize preservice teachers and improve their performance. This collaborative approach allows teachers to reflect on their practices and learn from one another, fostering a culture of continuous improvement [15]. Incorporating lesson study into preservice training could address some of the inadequacies currently observed in teacher preparation programs.

The literature reveals several critical inadequacies in the preservice training of assistant language teachers in Japan. These include a lack of comprehensive training in essential language competencies, insufficient focus on inclusive education practices, and the need for greater integration between preservice and in-service training. Additionally, the importance of intercultural training, practical experience, and collaborative professional development through lesson study cannot be overstated. Addressing these gaps is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of ALTs and improving educational outcomes in Japan's increasingly diverse classrooms.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

The research design for this study followed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data to explore the preservice training of assistant language teachers (ALTs) in Japan. The quantitative data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire with close-ended questions, and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means. The qualitative data were gathered via open-ended survey questions, which were analyzed thematically to identify key themes and areas for improvement in the training programs. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the training contents and the identification of significant areas that need further development [8].

3.2. Respondents

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants, focusing on assistant language teachers (ALTs) in Japan who have undergone preservice training. Participants were chosen based on the following criteria: they must have received preservice training conducted in Japan, be currently employed or have experience as ALTs, and have worked for at least one year but no more than three years. This ensures that participants are relatively new to the role, allowing them to provide insights into how the training prepared them for their duties while minimizing recall bias. To further address recall bias, the timeframe for preservice training was limited to the last three years, ensuring accurate recollection of details. Additionally, the data collection instrument was designed with memory aids to help participants recall specific aspects of their training. This approach ensures that respondents can provide meaningful insights into the preservice training they received and suggest areas for improvement.

Table 1 Respondents

Type of Employment	Frequency	Percentage
JET Programme	4	21.1
Private Dispatch	14	73.7
Direct Hired	1	5.3

As shown in Table 1, the respondents of the study were composed of assistant language teachers who are currently working in Japan. Specifically, 4 or 21.1% are JET programme participants and 14 or 73.7% are working in a private dispatch company. While there is one who is directly hired by a board of education. A total of 19 ALTs served as respondents in this study.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process took two weeks for the timely collection of reliable information regarding Japan's preservice training for assistant language teachers (ALTs). A survey questionnaire was constructed and pilot-tested with a small group of ALTs in regard to checking its clarity, accuracy, and purpose fulfillment with the study. The questionnaire was designed to ask the respondents about the preservice training topics they had undergone before working as ALTs in Japan. It was composed of ten categories. These categories were broken down into specific topics composed of two to four items. The categories were English Education in Japan, Team Teaching, Teaching and Learning, Error Correction and Feedback, Speech and Pronunciation, Visual Aids, Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing, and Games. These categories and sub-items in the survey questionnaire were pooled from the British Manual for Assistant Language Teachers. Also, to elicit the topics that the respondents deemed necessary in the preservice training for ALTs, an option for other topics was included in the survey questionnaire.

Recruitment of respondents was conducted through professional ALT networks, social networks, and through emailing lists with invitations describing an overview of the study and a link to an online survey form. The survey was conducted online via Google Forms for convenience and included prompts for recalling memories about preservice training in a manner for recalling information about their preservice experiences accurately. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, voluntary consent, and confidentiality of responses, were followed in a stringent manner. Responses were checked for completeness and compliance with selection requirements following two weeks of collecting data, and relevant data for analysis were organized. This organized and efficient process helped in collecting high-quality information for the accomplishment of the purpose of the study.

3.4. Data Measures

This study employed a mixed-method design to analyze the preservice training of assistant language teachers (ALTs) in Japan. Quantitative data were collected using a survey questionnaire with close-ended items and analyzed through descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, to determine the common topics and patterns in the training programs. To complement this, qualitative data were gathered through open-ended survey questions, which allowed participants to share additional training areas they deemed significant or lacking in their preservice orientation. The qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes and unique insights. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provided a comprehensive understanding of the preservice training, enabling the study to propose practical, evidence-based recommendations for its enhancement.

4. Findings

Table 2 presents an overview of the preservice training topics for Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan, categorized into ten areas: Introduction to English Education, Team Teaching, Teaching and Learning, Error Correction and Feedback, Speech and Pronunciation, Visual Aids, Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing, Games, and Cultural Content. Each category is further divided into subtopics, highlighting specific focus areas within the training. The table also provides quantitative data for each category, including the mean score, frequency, and percentage, which collectively reflect the emphasis placed on each topic during the preservice training sessions.

Table 2 Preservice Training Topics

Category	Subtopics	Mean Score	Frequency	Percentage
Introduction to English Education	Foreign Language Courses of Study, Textbooks in Use	13.0	26	68.4
Team Teaching	Different Teacher Roles, Roles of an Assistant, Working with JTEs and HRTs	12.67	38	66.7
Teaching and Learning	Teaching Approaches, Building Rapport, Classroom Management	10.67	32	56.1
Error Correction and Feedback	Types of Learner Errors, Correcting Errors, Giving Feedback	9.33	28	49.1
Speech and Pronunciation	Speaking Activities, Promoting Communication, Practicing Communication	12.33	37	64.9
Visual Aids	ALT as a Visual Aid, Using Blackboard, Flashcards	11.67	35	61.4
Listening and Speaking	Preparing for Listening, Adapting Listening, Songs/Videos	12.33	37	64.9
Reading and Writing	Discussion Methods, Reading Techniques, Oral Practice	9.67	29	50.9
Games	Classroom Games, EFL Games Examples, Managing Games	12.33	37	64.9
Cultural Content	Materials for Cultural Lessons, Teaching Cultural Topics	10.33	31	54.4

The findings revealed that the most emphasized topics in preservice training programs for ALTs are Introduction to English Education (mean score: 13.0, 68.4%) and Team Teaching (mean score: 12.67, 66.7%), highlighting the importance of understanding Japan's English education framework and collaborative teaching roles. Other significant areas include Speech and Pronunciation, Listening and Speaking, and Games (all with mean scores of 12.33, 64.9%), indicating concern with effective approaches for creating communication and participations in a classroom environment. While topics such as Teaching and Learning (mean: 10.67, 56.1%) and Cultural Content (mean: 10.33, 54.4%) fall in between, topics such as Error Correction and Feedback (mean: 9.33, 49.1%) and Reading and Writing (mean: 9.67, 50.9%) receive less value and represent gaps in training that could be filled in to permit ALTs to become even more effective in an instructional role.

Table 3 Suggested Additional Topics for Preservice Training

Theme	Examples	Frequency
Cultural Awareness	Difference between Japanese and Western education systems, Culturally appropriate teaching strategies	4
Lesson Planning	How to plan lessons collaboratively with JTEs and HRTs	3
Classroom Management	Managing noisy or silent classes, handling diverse learners	3
Professional Growth	Certification options, career development strategies	2

Table 3 shows the themes, examples, and frequency count of topics that were identified by the respondents that they wished to have been included in their preservice training. The findings showed that Cultural Awareness was the most frequently proposed additional training theme, with indications such as awareness of the Japanese and Western educational system, and use of instruction approaches with a cultural orientation (frequency: 4). Lesson Planning and Classroom Management were mentioned, with indications such as planning lessons with JTEs and HRTs and strategies for working in diverse or problem classrooms (frequency: 3 each). Besides, topics regarding Professional Growth, such as certification and career development planning, were less frequently proposed but focused on training that supported ALTs' long-term career development (frequency: 2). All of these findings stressed extending training contents in terms of including practical, cultural, and career dimensions of teaching in Japan.

5. Discussion

The findings from the preservice training programs for Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan revealed a significant emphasis on foundational topics such as Introduction to English Education and Team Teaching, which received high mean scores. This underscores the necessity for ALTs to grasp the framework of English education in Japan and the collaborative dynamics inherent in team teaching settings. Such insights align with the broader discourse on the importance of teacher training in enhancing English education quality in Japan, as highlighted by Steele et al. (2016) and Cripps (2023), who argued that effective teacher training is crucial for bridging the gap between educational policies and actual classroom practices [24, 9].

Moreover, the focus on Speech and Pronunciation, Listening and Speaking, and Games, indicated a concerted effort to foster effective communication and engagement in the classroom. This is particularly relevant in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, where interactive and participatory methods are essential for language acquisition. The emphasis on these areas suggests a recognition of the need to develop communicative competence among students, which is supported by findings from Hoshina et al. (2022) that highlighted the inadequacies of traditional didactic approaches in fostering verbal fluency [13].

Conversely, the lower mean scores for topics such as Error Correction and Feedback and Reading and Writing indicate potential gaps in the training curriculum. These areas are critical for comprehensive language education, as effective error correction and feedback mechanisms are vital for learner development [11]. The findings suggest that enhancing training in these domains could significantly improve the instructional capabilities of ALTs, aligning with the calls for more robust teacher training frameworks that address these deficiencies [9].

Furthermore, the findings reflected a broader trend in English education in Japan, where there is a growing recognition of the need for innovative teaching strategies that engage students more effectively. For instance, the integration of

digital storytelling and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has been shown to enhance motivation and language skills among learners [25, 16]. This aligns with the current educational landscape, which increasingly values interactive and technology-enhanced learning environments.

The findings that emerged from the analysis of recommended additional training topics for Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan pinpointed several principal areas that need to be addressed, namely those of Cultural Awareness, Lesson Planning, and Classroom Management. Cultural Awareness was the most frequently recommended topic, pointing towards the need for ALTs to be sensitive to both Japanese and Western educational systems and adopt pedagogically suitable practices that are sensitive to the culture. This view is in line with the growing recognition of the importance of cultural competence in school environments because it enables educators to create more inclusive and productive learning environments [2, 26]. The emphasis on cultural awareness is particularly pertinent in Japan, where the use of indigenous cultural contexts for pedagogical practice can enhance the motivation and academic performance of learners [26].

In addition to Cultural Awareness, the findings indicated that Lesson Planning and Classroom Management were also causes of concern with each being named three times. The focus being put on planning lessons with the Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) and Homeroom Teachers (HRTs) reflects the cooperative nature of teaching in Japan where cooperation is the cornerstone of teaching effectiveness [17]. Sound lesson plan development is also crucial in ensuring the attainment of learning outcomes and the creation of lessons to meet the diverse needs of learners [17, 23]. The inclusion of mechanisms for dealing with diverse or challenging classroom environments also signifies the need for ALTs to develop competencies that enable them to handle the dynamics of classroom complexities effectively [19].

The idea of Professional Growth, while less commonly discussed, prioritizes the acquisition of continuous career development among Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs). This includes certification and career development training that is essential in constructing a long-term teaching career [22, 7]. The findings revealed that while command of immediate instructional practice is most important, attention to professional growth is also equally important for retaining quality teachers in the long run. Empirical research demonstrates that ongoing professional development is critical in enhancing the effectiveness of teachers and their job satisfaction, which in turn leads to improved student performance [18, 1].

6. Conclusion

This study examined the preservice training programs for Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan with the objective of outlining the contents of the programs, evaluating other areas of training needs, and proposing improvements for enhancing their effectiveness. The findings of the research offer strengths and weaknesses, providing important input for the improvement of ALT training.

The focus on key subjects like Introduction to English Education and Team Teaching, implies the significance of giving a proper insight into Japan's English education system and team teaching activities to ALTs. The focus on Speech and Pronunciation, Listening and Speaking, and Games also implies awareness of communicative and interactive methods of developing student involvement and language learning.

On the other hand, Error Correction and Feedback and Reading and Writing indicate serious gaps in the training program. These are essential elements of holistic language instruction, as good error correction and feedback systems are central to student growth. Bridging these gaps through the addition of concentrated training on these elements can increase the instructional potential of ALTs.

The other suggested topics by ALTs, that is, Cultural Awareness, indicates the necessity of having training modules to attain cultural competency. The incorporation of cultural awareness modules will be better able to equip ALTs with the challenges of both the Japanese and Western education systems, leading to more efficient classroom processes. Accordingly, the training needed in Lesson Planning and Classroom Management reflects the collaborative nature of education in Japan, where coordination with Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) and Homeroom Teachers (HRTs) is most important for effective pedagogy.

Lastly, the focus on Professional Growth, though less commonly debated, acknowledges the need for ongoing career advancement for ALTs. The implementation of certification courses and professional development seminars would assist in the long-term retention and promotion of quality teachers. The literature indicates that ongoing professional development improves the quality of teachers and job satisfaction, which in turn results in better student outcomes.

In summary, while the Japanese ALT preservice training programs show strengths in basic and communicative subjects, filling gaps in error correction, culture, lesson planning, and classroom management is critical. By adding these elements and a focus on professional development, training programs can more effectively prepare ALTs to handle the varied challenges of their position toward the overall success of English education in Japan.

Recommendations

In order to strengthen preservice training programs for Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan, it is advisable to eliminate the revealed deficiencies in the curriculum. Though fundamental topics such as Introduction to English Education and Team Teaching are adequately addressed, Error Correction and Feedback, as well as Reading and Writing, need to be given more attention to enhance ALTs' teaching skills. Adding increased instruction in Classroom Management, Cultural Awareness, and Lesson Planning will more effectively prepare ALTs for cultural sensitivities, cooperation with Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) and Homeroom Teachers (HRTs), and the management of diverse classroom populations. Offering ways for professional advancement, including career development and certification, will similarly enhance ALTs' long-term contributions to teaching English in Japan. With these recommendations included, preservice training courses may be enhanced to better prepare ALTs for their role, and eventually, the success of English education in Japan.

Future research could focus on comparing the training materials used across different ALT hiring schemes, such as the JET Programme, private dispatch agencies, and direct hiring by Boards of Education (BOEs). Longitudinal studies examining the impact of training materials on ALTs' classroom performance and their ability to address student needs would provide valuable insights. Additionally, studies involving a larger and more diverse sample of ALTs from various regions of Japan could enhance the generalizability of the findings and offer a broader understanding of the effectiveness of preservice training programs.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

The authors extend their gratitude to the assistant language teachers who participated in this study.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

References

- [1] Ali, A. (2021). Lesson planning and proactive classroom management strategies for teaching english at tertiary level in pakistan. *Elsya Journal of English Language Studies*, 3(1), 8-16. <https://doi.org/10.31849/elsya.v3i1.5737>
- [2] Asmiyunda, A. (2023). Developing learning tools with case-based learning and project-based learning for digital classroom management course. *Jurnal Eksakta Pendidikan (Jep)*, 7(1), 84-93. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jep/vol7-iss1/729>
- [3] Aswe, I. (2023). Language barrier: exploring the lived experiences of assistant language teachers in japan: a hermeneutic phenomenological study. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 5(3), 92-99. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v5i3.1339>
- [4] Binns, A. (2022). Impact of assistant language teachers on english education in shizuoka. *PCP*, 2021(1), 89. <https://doi.org/10.37546/jaltpcp2021-11>
- [5] Brown, C. (2024). Shortcomings in the jet programme as a vehicle for english pronunciation teaching by native speakers. *Anglophile Journal*, 4(2), 77. <https://doi.org/10.51278/anglophile.v4i2.1191>
- [6] Chinda, B. (2023). Teacher cognition of efl assessment: a case study of professional development on performance-based language assessment in japan. *rEFlections*, 30(3), 757-775. <https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v30i3.268136>

- [7] Coenders, F. and Verhoef, N. (2018). Lesson study: professional development (pd) for beginning and experienced teachers. *Professional Development in Education*, 45(2), 217-230. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2018.1430050>
- [8] Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- [9] Cripps, T. (2023). Constructing effective teacher-training workshops for japanese pre-service english teachers. *Proceedings of the World Conference on Research in Teaching and Education*, 2(1), 45-55. <https://doi.org/10.33422/worldte.v2i1.90>
- [10] Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(3), 181-199. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140>
- [11] Hartshorn, K., Hart, J., & McMurry, B. (2019). Comparing language skill priorities among tesol faculty and esl students bound for english-medium universities. *Tesol Journal*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.438>
- [12] Hiratsuka, T. (2023). Professional identities of local japanese teachers of english (jtes) v is-à-vis their foreign assistant language teachers (alts). *Journal of Language Identity & Education*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2023.2282692>
- [13] Hoshina, Y., Yada, K., Maki, H., Yoshino, T., Takaiso, H., & Akiyama, M. (2022). Medical english education in japan : developing a curriculum to motivate students by providing visualization opportunities using near-peer teaching. *The Journal of Medical Investigation*, 69(3.4), 332-334. <https://doi.org/10.2152/jmi.69.332>
- [14] Isozaki, T. (2018). Science teacher education in japan: past, present, and future. *Asia-Pacific Science Education*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41029-018-0027-2>
- [15] Kanellopoulou, E. and Δάρρα, M. (2019). The implementation of the lesson study in basic teacher education: a research review. *Higher Education Studies*, 9(3), 65. <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v9n3p65>
- [16] Kasami, N. (2018). Advantages and disadvantages of digital storytelling assignments in efl education in terms of learning motivation., 130-136. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2018.26.825>
- [17] Mahrus, M. and Dewi, A. (2023). Pre-service teachers: the inconsistency between the lesson planning and their performance. *Premise Journal of English Education*, 12(1), 16. <https://doi.org/10.24127/pj.v12i1.4818>
- [18] Mirna, W. and Nurjanah, S. (2022). Innovative, ideal, and fun classroom management to improve reading literacy of madrasah ibtidaiyah students. *International Journal of Humanities Education and Social Sciences (Ijhess)*, 1(5). <https://doi.org/10.55227/ijhess.v1i5.135>
- [19] Mohamedi, K., Kileo, E., & Siamoo, P. (2022). Teachers' perceived level of knowledge on preparation of lesson plans towards facilitating classroom instruction in secondary schools in rombo district, tanzania. *British Journal of Education*, 10(14), 15-29. <https://doi.org/10.37745/bje.2013/vol10n141529>
- [20] Mukhtiar, R., Lodhi, M., & Yasmeen, R. (2022). Pedagogical gaps between the acquired and desired proficiency of english teachers at secondary level. *Innovare Journal of Social Sciences*, 4-8. <https://doi.org/10.22159/ijss.2022.v10i2.44381>
- [21] Nagase, K., Tsunoda, K., & Fujita, K. (2020). The effect of teachers' attitudes and teacher efficacy for inclusive education on emotional distress in primary school teachers in japan. *Frontiers in Education*, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.570988>
- [22] Sanina, Y., Artyukhina, M., Dendeberya, N., Savadova, A., & Nasikan, I. (2019). The use of internet technologies in teaching bachelors-economists mathematics as a factor of students' professional growth. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 8(2), 3877-3880. <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijrte.b3078.078219>
- [23] Schipper, T., Goei, S., Vries, S., & Veen, K. (2018). Developing teachers' self-efficacy and adaptive teaching behaviour through lesson study. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 88, 109-120. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2018.01.011>
- [24] Steele, D., Rong, Z., & McCornacc, D. (2016). Policy change in teacher training: challenges to enhance english education in japan. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management*, 4(2), 12-26. <https://doi.org/10.22452/mojem.vol4no2.2>
- [25] Teeter, J. (2017). Improving motivation to learn english in japan with a self-study shadowing application. *Languages*, 2(4), 19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages2040019>

- [26] Vikaraman, S. (2024). Unlocking the potential: teacher's take on the power of starter activities in remedial intervention. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v14-i1/20319>
- [27] Yada, A. and Alnahdi, G. (2021). A comparative study on saudi and japanese in-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and self-efficacy in inclusive practices. *Educational Studies*, 50(4), 539-557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2021.1969646>
- [28] Yada, A. and Savolainen, H. (2019). Japanese and finnish teachers' perceptions and self-efficacy in inclusive education. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 19(S1), 60-72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12478>
- [29] Yada, A., Tolvanen, A., & Savolainen, H. (2018). Teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy on implementing inclusive education in japan and finland: a comparative study using multi-group structural equation modelling. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 75, 343-355. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.07.011>
- [30] Yonezawa, T., Watanabe, T., & Yamasaki, A. (2023). Middle leaders as teacher educators: the case of the kenkyushunin (chief teacher of school research) in japan. *Frontiers in Education*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2023.998550>
- [31] Yücel, N. (2019). Rethinking intercultural training in teacher training. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 19(3), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v19i3.793>