

Playing Japanese:

Fostering semantic language play in a Japanese as a foreign language classroom

Benjamin Robert Burton

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Japanese Linguistics

University of Washington

2020

Committee:

Amy Snyder Ohta

Ana Fernández Dobao

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Asian Languages and Literature

©Copyright 2020

Benjamin Robert Burton

University of Washington

Abstract

Playing Japanese:

Fostering semantic language play in a Japanese as a foreign language classroom

Benjamin Robert Burton

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Amy Snyder Ohta

Department of Asian Languages and Literature

How much fun can we have learning another language? This study explores the implementation of semantic language play tasks in an intact Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) classroom. In the study, I detail how I designed and implemented tasks meant to foster play in a JFL class. I analyze qualitative data from transcripts of classroom learner interactions to show how study participants played, experimented, and pushed themselves in their L2 during interactive tasks designed for playful language use. I also explore how participants provided peer assistance during playful interactions. The study shows how playful language learning tasks can encourage creativity, participation, and expression within the language classroom. I conclude by arguing for more serious consideration of play as not only a driver of linguistic development but also an essential aspect of language learning.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Literature review.....	2
Language play.....	2
The affordances of semantic language play.....	6
Cognitive, socioaffective, and pragmatic benefits of language play.....	8
SCT, collaborative interaction, and SLA.....	13
Interaction as a driver of linguistic development.....	13
Language-related episodes (LREs).....	15
Playful language-related episodes (PLREs).....	15
Peer assistance.....	16
This study.....	18
Methodology.....	18
The study.....	18
Participants.....	19
Class structure.....	20
Data collection.....	21
The tasks.....	22
Formal language play tasks.....	22
Semantic language play tasks.....	23
Realistic semantic language play tasks.....	24
Fantastical semantic language play tasks: The focus of the present study.....	25
<i>Uranaiishi</i> – The fortune-teller.....	26
<i>Konbini kuji</i> – Prize drawing at the convenience store.....	27
Developing materials for the fantastical semantic language play tasks.....	28
Coding and the corpus.....	30
Analysis.....	32
Modeling play in the safe house.....	33
Playing with reality in the <i>Uranaiishi</i> task.....	36
Playing with reality in the <i>Konbini Kuji</i> task.....	50
Expressing surprise at the task materials.....	58
LREs and peer support.....	66
Peer assistance.....	73
Discussion.....	78

Pedagogical considerations	80
Questions for future research	83
Conclusion	85
References.....	86
Appendix 1: <i>Uranaishi</i> question card prompts	89
Appendix 2: <i>Konbini Kuji</i> prize cards.....	90

Introduction

There are countless reasons why learners choose to formally study a language. Some may be intrinsically motivated by a personal interest in a specific language or culture whereas others may simply be fulfilling an institutional language requirement—not to mention those who find learning a language fun and rewarding in and of itself. Classroom language instructors must grapple with these differing motivations as they design and implement lesson plans to facilitate their students' linguistic development. Furthermore, they must devise ways to make their lessons memorable, stimulating, and motivating to a diverse group of learners. Having experienced a variety of language learning contexts myself (classroom, self-study, study abroad, work, etc.), and having taught first- and second-year Japanese language courses at American universities for several years, I have come to believe that *enjoyment* and *fun* are two key ingredients for successful language teaching and learning. Incorporating *play* into lesson plans is one way in which instructors can merge diverse motivations in the classroom. Providing opportunities for creative expression, humor, and play can complement the more “serious” aspects of language learning. But how, and to what degree? And, more generally, just how much fun can we have with classroom language learning? These questions drove me to look deeper into the relationship between language play (LP) and second language acquisition (SLA).

Ohta's (2001) work on second language acquisition processes in a Japanese language classroom was my introduction to the concept of language play. In the study, Ohta described how learners played with Japanese vowel pronunciation. Ohta argued that this play engaged the learner “in a process through which [their] attention was focused and channeled, enhancing [their] awareness and control” over their language production (p.

112). Ohta's description of language play as a learning resource inspired me to explore the subject of language play and second language acquisition. I wanted to know more about how we play with language, what benefits it may have for language learning, and how we can use LP in classroom instruction.

This thesis is a qualitative exploratory study into how semantic language play with ludic elements can be fostered within a language classroom to facilitate the linguistic development of beginning foreign- or second-language learners. In this thesis, I analyze interactional data from playful tasks I designed and implemented in a first-year intensive Japanese language course that I co-taught. Below, I describe the theoretical background that informs my understanding of language play, with a focus on semantic language play, and second language acquisition. My data consists of transcriptions of audio recordings of participant interactions during two LP role-play tasks I designed for the study. In the analysis, I examine instances of play, learner reactions to the pedagogical materials, and learner provisions of peer support. Finally, I discuss my findings and the potential pedagogical implications for including tasks that foster semantic LP in the language classroom before suggesting directions for further research on classroom language play.

Literature review

Language play

The literature on language play (henceforth LP) has explored the functions, forms, and affordances LP provides for cognitive development and language acquisition. In this section, I explore how LP was addressed in Vygotsky's work and later expanded upon in SLA research. Then I summarize research on the affordances of LP for SLA. In general terms, the literature on LP has argued for serious consideration of playful language use;

how it not only is a fundamental aspect of human behavior but can also be a valuable resource for learning and development, as LP may incorporate incongruity, ambiguity, and the unexpected into social interaction while encouraging creative expression on behalf of the interlocutors.

In his research on the origin and development of human higher mental functions, Vygotsky found that pretend play promotes cognitive development in children. Role-playing adult activities makes “the adult culture accessible” (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2012, p.514) for a child. Thus, “in play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself” (Vygotsky, 1967, p. 102 as cited in Bodrova & Leong, 2015, p. 371). Lantolf (2000) sums up Vygotsky’s perspective on play as follows:

Play is an especially important activity in Vygotsky’s theory of development, because it is in play that children create, usually in collaboration with other children, a zone of proximal development ... in which they perform beyond their current abilities (see Vygotsky 1978 and 1997). So when children play house, mommy and daddy, or some particular profession, such as a doctor, a sports figure, etc., they engage in activities that are not just about having fun, but allow children to project into the future. Thus, play is an important activity for child development (p.13).

While being a source of fun and enjoyment, pretend role-play gives children an opportunity to practice and experiment with adult roles in a low-stakes environment. In later research, Lantolf explored how adults also “play” with language, albeit in a different way: through private speech. Lantolf (1997) argued that L2 private speech functions as “mental rehearsal of unmastered L2 forms” (Broner and Tarone, 2001, p. 366) that can mediate L2 acquisition. Adult L2 private speech and children’s pretend play thus perform similar developmental functions as they provide opportunities for individuals to, borrowing Lantolf’s words above, “project into the future.”

In *Language Play, Language Learning* (2000), Cook argues that LP performs essential functions for individuals, societies, and the human species (p. 5). Cook also explores how LP drives linguistic development from a young age. Cook suggests that children's rhythmic and rhyming language play facilitates development by extending the linguistic capabilities of the child who may not yet understand the links between sound and meaning. Such play also encourages interaction between the child and adult. The formal aspects of this type of LP (patterning, rhythm, parallels) help the child replicate and produce speech. The interactive play between child and caretaker creates an opportunity for the child's cognitive development because it encourages speech and interaction before they can understand the semantic meaning of the words being uttered. Cook argues that this tendency to engage in LP persists into adulthood. However, the object of play may transform or become more complex:

For such recitations, we may presume, the familiarity engendered by constant repetition, rhyme, and the steady simple beat serves as mnemonics, allowing children to produce language way above their current capacity, apparently with a great deal of pleasure. In much the same way, adults performing drama or reciting poetry enjoy producing language richer than that which they can invent themselves, and language learners gain satisfaction from the reading or recitation of ready-made texts, which allow them the sensation of being more fluent speakers of language than they actually are (p. 16).

Cook proposes three major categories of LP: formal, semantic, and pragmatic (2000, p. 123) (see Table 1). Formal LP is manifested in patternings (rhythmic, phonological, or grammatical), exact wording, and repetition. Semantic LP is realized in linguistic ambiguities, incorporating "vital or important subject-matter (birth, death, sexual relations, health, etc.)" (p. 123), alternate realities, and inversions of language with reality. Pragmatic LP includes social functions of solidarity and exclusion, enjoyment, and even "not direct usefulness" (p. 123).

Table 1. Types of language play (Cook, 2000)

Categories	Forms
Formal	Patterns, wording, repetition
Semantic	Ambiguity, fictions, risqué or taboo topics, inversions with reality
Pragmatic	Solidarity, exclusion, enjoyment

Using language to create and refer to fictional or alternate realities is categorized as semantic LP. Semantic LP can perform a number of functions that aid development. It can teach people about the real world vicariously through fiction. It can also aid first language acquisition, as “fiction ... allows its inventor greater freedom to manipulate ... linguistic units and structures in ways which draw attention to their formal characteristics” (p. 42). Semantic LP can also provide a social education for readers, as they can learn about interpersonal relationships and conflicts through fictional settings and characters. Furthermore, Cook suggests that fictions drive human creativity, “enabling such activities as science, art, and religion” (p. 41). Above all, Cook finds that the creation of alternate realities through the patterning of linguistic items can contribute to greater mental flexibility and adaptability to unfamiliar circumstances, which allows humans to experiment with possible eventualities.

Cook suggests that LP is a fundamentally human behavior that performs essential functions at all stages of our lives in various dimensions. Dismissing play as frivolous ignores the fact that LP is not only found in more “serious” human enterprises, like religion and politics, but that it can also be leveraged to promote cognitive development and language acquisition (Cook, 2000). Seen from this perspective, it makes sense that LP is a part of L2 development and can complement classroom language learning. In the following

section, I explore how semantic LP in particular can provide affordances for language study.

The affordances of semantic language play

Semantic language play creates the possibility for learners to incorporate fictions into their language use; it frees them “situational constraints,” allowing them to create and engage with imaginary scenarios in the L2 (Bell and Pomerantz, 2015, p.102). Through play learners can imagine themselves in different roles and experiment with appropriate (or inappropriate) language use. Semantic LP sanctions a broader “array of speech events, thus affording opportunities to engage with a wider array of language forms” (p. 105) than what may be found when language use is tightly controlled. In other words, semantic LP gives users agency to craft their utterances in unique and creative ways.

As mentioned in the previous section, Vygotsky argued that children’s pretend play drives cognitive development. However, it is important to recognize that pretend play is also a means for having *fun*. Can adult language learners also benefit through pretend play and having fun? Role-plays are a common activity used in language classes to facilitate learning. However, role-play activities are not always *playful* in the ludic sense, like the pretend play of children. Some textbooks and curricula operate under the assumption that role-playing culturally authentic or realistic scenarios will prepare learners for performing in similar situations in real life (Jordan & Noda, 1987). While this may be true, these types of role-plays can be mundane, repetitive, and outright boring for classroom learners. Furthermore, they are often generic and devoid of the emotionally charged and dynamic

nature of human interaction. It begs one to question what is actually meant by ‘realistic’ in these ‘serious’ role-plays.

The language classroom is a particular type of institutional setting that differs from most real-life interactional settings. Even the most ‘authentic’ classroom role plays are idealizations of real-life events. In a language classroom, ‘reality’ and the ‘real’ are reductions of complex social phenomena, much like how Vygotsky (1987) describes the word as a “concealed generalization” of an entire group or class of objects (p. 47). As Cook (2000) argues, “[r]eality and artifice are complementary, and each strengthens our understanding of the other. Why language teaching alone should be singled out as an area where everything should be real, and where the ‘real’ is somehow better than artifice, is unclear” (p. 172). This is not to discount the importance of role-playing ‘realistic’ scenarios in the L2; after all, children do this in their ludic pretend play. As mentioned above, LP as rehearsal can help learners prepare for some future, anticipated event. But if we only focus on ‘realistic’ role-play, then learners are missing out on the benefits of *fun* role-play, where creativity and the unexpected come into play and learners are allowed to take the reins of their language learning. Furthermore, *fun* LP may provide unique benefits for language learners.

Cook (2000) posits that ludic language play trains the mind to be flexible and adapt to unexpected events (p. 58). Furthermore, being able to play in an L2 is a marker of advanced proficiency. Cook argues that LP is both a means and an end to language learning: “Knowing a language, and being able to function in communities which use that language, entails being able to understand and produce play with it, making this ability a

necessary part of advanced proficiency” (p. 150). However, advanced proficiency is not a prerequisite for play:

Play—albeit with varying degrees of complexity—can take place at **all levels of proficiency**. Indeed, it could be argued that it is particularly evident in the discourse of children and the elementary stages of language learning, where repetition, pattern manipulation, and a degree of separation from the demands of work are most in evidence (p. 204, emphasis added).

It makes sense that LP can be found in the speech of language learners at any level of proficiency. As humans play with language at all stages of their life, language learners also play in their developing languages. Furthermore, the nature and object of this play goes through transformations as their L2 ability develops. If it is true that learners can play at all levels of proficiency, and that LP is an essential part of language use, then language educators must ask how play is addressed in their curricula if at all. Understanding how play can benefit SLA is an essential first step to addressing and systematically implementing LP into the language class.

Cognitive, socioaffective, and pragmatic benefits of language play

In this section, I survey research that has explored how LP can positively impact SLA (see Table 2). Ludic language play can make linguistic items more memorable and thus more salient, which promotes internalization. Ahn (2015) writes that “[p]lay with linguistic forms and units of meaning both correspond to one’s alertness and focused attention on the language as a medium or object of play” (p.5). Furthermore, the “affectively charged” atmosphere of a playful frame can make the object of play more memorable (p. 5). Bell (2012) writes that “[a] large body of memory research supports the notion that bizarre materials are remembered more readily than common ones” (p. 239).

Reddington (2015) finds that humor can make language more memorable as it “may result in deeper processing of lexical items” (p. 24). Bell’s (2012) study found that playful incidental attention to form resulted in stronger recall of linguistic items (p. 259).

Table 2. Language play benefits for SLA

Benefits of LP for SLA
Memorability (Ahn, 2015; Bell, 2012; Reddington, 2015)
Increased motivation and interest in class (Bell & Pomerantz, 2015)
Relaxed atmosphere (Bell & Pomerantz, 2019)
“Safe house” effect (Bell & Pomerantz, 2011)
Introduces ambiguity and incongruity (Cook, 2000)
Encourages experimentation (Bushnell, 2009; Shively, 2013)
Displays advanced proficiency (Cook, 2000)
Encourages learners to look beyond surface meanings (Fernandez & Fontecha, 2008; Kim & Lantolf, 2018; Tocalli-Beller and Swain, 2007).

Incorporating humor into teaching and learning has been correlated with positive effects on the classroom learning environment. Bell and Pomerantz (2015) write that “the most robust argument for using humor in education is affective” (p. 101). Humor can create a greater sense of immediacy (or emotional availability) between the instructor and students, reduce anxiety, and increase a sense of enjoyment and interest in class. This may also contribute to a relaxed atmosphere that acts as a “counterweight to the potential face-threat of being asked to perform in a language in which their proficiency is still developing” (Bell and Pomerantz, 2019, p. 66). In other words, a playful atmosphere can help reduce learner anxiety, which may encourage active participation in language learning tasks. Ahn’s (2015) study of playful language use by adolescent Korean EFL learners showed how a collaborative and playful environment encouraged classroom participation in the TL.

The frame of play may generate a space where learners can resist, subvert, or challenge classroom relationships or tasks without fear of serious consequences. Pomerantz and Bell (2011) argue that humor in a foreign language class can function as a “safe house” where learners may resist “monotonous, culturally insensitive, or even face-threatening classroom practices” (p. 148). Framing utterances as “just a joke” can protect speakers from negative social consequences to a degree. Play in the “safe house” can also encourage experimentation through revoicing, or “trying on different voices” (Shively, 2013, p. 943) in the L2. “LP gives learners an opportunity to experiment with other voices without concern for adverse social consequences.” (Bushnell, 2009, p. 51).

A number of studies have also explored the relationship between language play and developing L2 pragmatic competence. Learning how to recognize and understand L2 humor, irony, and other forms of LP gives learners greater agency within the L2 (Kim & Lantolf, 2018). But even advanced learners report having trouble understanding and responding to, for example, sarcastic utterances by L1 English interlocutors (Kim & Lantolf, 2018). This may be because sarcasm, like other forms of humor and verbal irony, often relies on incongruity between what is said and what is actually meant (Wagner and Urios, 2011). Bell and Attardo (2010) write, “[h]umor usually relies on nonconventionality in some way; the juxtaposition of unexpected elements in unexpected ways, a unique turn of phrase, and conventions that are turned on their heads” (p. 425). Linguistic pragmatics refer to how “language use reflects the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions shared by members of the given speech community” (Taguchi and Roever, 2017, p. 3). Thus, knowledge of the playful conventions within a speech community is important for

recognizing and understanding forms of conversational implicature, like humor and sarcasm.

Some studies have explored how L2 humor can be taught through explicit instruction in pragmatics. Fernandez and Fontecha (2008) implemented explicit instruction of Grice's cooperative principle to teach EFL learners how humor was created in the TV show *Friends*. Kim and Lantolf (2018) showed how concept-based instruction improved learners' ability to understand L2 English sarcasm. One participant reported that they "shifted from literal translations of expressions to figuring out the possible intended meanings and functional goals of utterances" (p. 224). Tocalli-Beller and Swain (2007) incorporated riddles and puns into an ESL classroom to see how learners pool their knowledge while solving L2 puns and whether this instruction had a lasting effect. The results demonstrated "considerable learning took place" as a result of the intervention (p. 156). All learners showed improvement on the post-tests when asked to recall the double-meanings of words that were punned on. The scores for the delayed post-tests were also uniformly higher than the pre-tests.

So why should language learners spend time learning and practicing L2 humor, verbal irony, and language play? In many cultural contexts, nonserious talk is ubiquitous in daily conversation (Kim and Lantolf, 2018; Tocalli-Beller and Swain, 2007). Speakers use sarcasm, irony, and humor across formal and informal contexts. "The ubiquity of language play in talk indicates that playing with language is indeed part of what 'would normally be held to be part of a native speaker's competence in a particular language' (Lyons 1996: 24)" (Tocalli-Beller and Swain, 2007, p. 147). The extent to which one is able to recognize, understand, and appreciate (should one desire) L2 irony, as well as comprehend the

intended meaning behind such an utterance, can have a significant influence on their life in the TL community. Several studies have explored how L2 users deal with these forms of talk in their daily lives.

Davies (2015) reports on an L2 English user who believed they were passed up for a promotion at work due to misunderstanding a joke by his supervisor. Moody (2014) documented how an L2 Japanese user's playful language and codeswitching promoted his successful integration into the workplace. Shively (2013) described how a learner successfully adjusted their L2 humor in response to negative reactions from TL community member interlocutors. Bell and Attardo (2010) report how some L2 English users were offended or felt uncomfortable due to misunderstanding the humorous or sarcastic intent behind utterances made by L1 English users.

With regard to humor, Fernandez and Fontecha (2008) argue that humor "originates, among other things, in plays on words, second meanings, and cultural factors, all of which may go unnoticed to the learner if interpreted literally. Thus, in order to avoid confusing—and even uncomfortable—situations, teaching this pragmatic aspect of language becomes indispensable" (p. 33). Learning to recognize humor requires one to go beyond literal translation of L2 utterances; one must learn to discover the communicative intent of their interlocutor, a marker of pragmatic competence.

Bell and Attardo's (2010) qualitative study of advanced L2 English users' difficulties with English humor supports Fernandez and Fontecha's argument. One significant finding was that these learners' failures to understand or appreciate humor were not qualitatively different from those of L1 users. "Most of us can recall a time when we responded seriously, failing to recognize a speaker's humorous intent, or when we

recognized the attempt, but were unable to identify the incongruity in a humorous utterance” (p.441). In fact, they argue that most humor failures are pragmatic in nature. They suggest that L2 humor can be taught through an awareness raising approach, starting with teaching students about various cues that signal humor as well as contexts in which humor may occur. Expanding on this idea, perhaps giving learners an opportunity to be humorous in the language classroom will help create a foundation upon which they can develop this important aspect of pragmatic competence.

SCT, collaborative interaction, and SLA

As the previous section has shown, play provides a number of benefits for SLA. In the following section, I explore how social interaction can also drive linguistic development. I focus particularly on sociocultural approaches to linguistic development and the relationship between interaction and SLA.

Interaction as a driver of linguistic development

Sociocultural theory (SCT) posits that human higher mental functions originate in “the external world of social interaction between individuals” (Swain, et al., 2011, p. 37). Furthermore, language is the primary means by which we carry out higher mental functions. In contrast to cognitive approaches that view human linguistic and cognitive development as the linear progression of biological processes, SCT approaches view language development as “essentially a social process” (Foster & Ohta, 2005, p. 403), built upon biological foundations but significantly influenced by the individual’s interaction with the mediational artifacts in their environment. “In this view, knowledge is not owned solely

by the learner, but is also a property of social settings and the interface between person and social context” (p. 403).

With the support of an instructor, peer, or other mediational artifacts, learners can accomplish things they may not have been able to do on their own. Vygotsky called this “space” between what the learner can do on their own and what is possible with assistance the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It is within this zone that development occurs, as learners are accomplishing something that is slightly beyond their individual ability. The ZPD is also future-oriented, as what learners are able to accomplish with assistance predicts what they may be able to accomplish as an individual in the future. A learner can do more collaboratively, but not infinitely more (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 209). Lantolf (2000) describes the ZPD as “the collaborative construction of opportunities ... for individuals to develop their mental abilities” (p. 17). Within the ZPD, “internalization occurs as the learner becomes less dependent on assistance, and more able to individually control language as a tool of thought” (Ohta, 2001, p. 73). Moreover, Ohta (2001) found that an “unequivocal expert” is not needed for learning to occur within the ZPD (p. 74). As learners collaborate, they pool their resources (e.g., differing dynamic expertise or burdens on their working memory) in order to accomplish something they could not do on their own. Swain et al. (2011) note that productive learning in the ZPD requires co-authorship or co-construction among interlocutors (p. 24). Thus, learning within the ZPD is not characterized as a unidirectional transmission of knowledge from expert to novice, but the co-construction of knowledge through a negotiation between interlocutors.

Language-related episodes (LREs)

Language related episodes (LREs) are one way to observe the collaborative learning process in action. Swain and Lapkin (1998) define an LRE as “any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others” (p. 326). LREs include an explicit metalinguistic reflection of the linguistic item being addressed. In other words, learners “talk out” the language problem as they work towards a solution. Swain and Lapkin further divide LREs into two categories: lexis-based, in which learners address vocabulary items; and form-based, in which learners address spelling, morphology, syntax, or L2 discourse (p. 326). These episodes are opportunities for learning because learners focus their attention and engage with the language as they work together to solve language problems and reach mutual understanding. Peer interaction can thus encourage development as it gives learners an opportunity to deeply engage with language by collaboratively addressing linguistic impasses.

Playful language-related episodes (PLREs)

LREs have also been examined in LP literature. Bell (2012) implemented a study of language play that investigated “spontaneous, incidental focus on form” in an EFL classroom (p. 242). In the study, Bell compared learner recall of items that were the focus of serious or playful LREs, as past research suggested that “LREs involving language play and humor should contribute to the memorability of the items of focus to a greater extent than serious LREs” (p. 245). Bell categorized LREs involving language play and humor as playful LREs (PLREs). PLREs can thus be described as instances in which learners

explicitly address a linguistic problem in a playful manner. Two examples of PLREs in Bell's data show how playful interactions unfolded among learners after they encountered and explicitly addressed a semantic or lexical problem in the L2.

Bell suggests that playful cues can help the researcher distinguish between a playful and serious LRE. Playful cues can include register shifts, marked vocabulary choices, exaggerated intonation, as well as laughter and smiling (Bell, 2012, p. 250). However, Bell notes that "cues to play cannot be presented as absolutes, but must instead be examined in the context to see what meaning they take on for the interlocutors themselves" (p. 255). In other words, these playful cues are a guide to help the observer determine the playful or serious stance of the interlocutors within the context.

None of the classroom tasks in that study were designed to intentionally elicit LP, but the instructor was tolerant of play and often joined in rounds of LP with the students. In the data, Bell found a "positive and statistically significant trend toward stronger recall of those items that have been the focus of playful attention, with the strongest effects demonstrated for recall of word meanings" (p. 259). In other words, spontaneous, playful attention resulted in stronger recall of linguistic items. In light of these findings, one wonders if tasks that were designed to intentionally elicit playful attention would also generate similar results.

Peer assistance

Peer interactive tasks afford learners a chance to provide or receive support from their learning partners. Ohta's (2001) corpus evidenced that classroom language learners "both utilize and provide developmentally appropriate assistance to their peers" and co-

construct knowledge (p. 124). As discussed earlier, LREs provide opportunities for collaborative support among interlocutors. However, there are many other ways in which learners can support each other's language production in the classroom.

Waiting is one form of peer assistance that provides several benefits for language learners. Waiting gives the other partner time to complete an utterance, "even when struggling" (Ohta, 2001, p. 89). It also promotes self-correction and self-monitoring on behalf of the speaker, as they are given a chance to "produce their own utterances and work out many of their own problems" (p. 90). Co-construction is another means by which learners provide assistance. "In co-construction, the listener chimes in with the next syllable, word, or phrase when the speaker is having difficulty" (p. 91). Helpful partners may also provide recasts, a form of corrective feedback given in response to an erroneous utterance. Recasts "repeat the semantic content of the utterance but contrast with the [speaker's] utterance in linguistic form" (p. 142). Helpful peers may also provide explanations or ask the teacher for assistance when they notice something is wrong (p. 97). Thus, during interaction peers can collaboratively generate solutions for erroneous language use in the classroom. Furthermore, Ohta suggests that exposure to erroneous language can be beneficial because peers can "catch their own and each others' errors during the interactive process" (p. 124). While some may be concerned that exposure to erroneous language use can promote linguistic fossilization, Ohta's study found that learners did not repeat the errors of their interlocutors over 92% of the time. Ohta argues that "the social interaction that occurs during L2 interactive language learning tasks constitutes learning" (p. 124-125). Ohta found that learners engaged in assisted learning behaviors more often during peer learning settings than during teacher-fronted settings. Thus, peer interaction can

be a valuable language learning opportunity when learners collaborate to solve impasses in their L2.

This study

The present study explores the implementation of language play tasks in an intact Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) classroom. Unlike previous research which examines naturally occurring language play, this is an interventionist study, that works to deliberately promote language play in an intact classroom by implementing tasks that have ludic components. This study also contributes to the research literature in its focus on semantic language play and learner interaction. My research questions are as follows:

1. What happens when playful tasks, designed with an eye to promoting semantic language play, are incorporated into foreign language instruction?
2. Do peers engage in productive learning behaviors during playful tasks? What kinds of behaviors?

Methodology

The study

The data comes from a larger study in which I designed and implemented six tasks that were intended to promote language play. Data were collected in an intensive first-year Japanese language course at an American university during the Summer of 2019. Over a four-week period, I implemented playful tasks in-class and collected audio data from student participants. During the 6th week of the 10-week intensive program, I announced my study to the Japanese class. I informed students that I was doing a Japanese applied

linguistics M.A. thesis in which I would audio record classroom interactions during specific tasks for my data. The tasks were either adapted from past in-class activities or designed in accordance with the existing curriculum. I did not explicitly state that I designed these tasks to promote language play. Students were notified in advance of data collection sessions and the sessions were also listed on the course schedule. At the end of the summer quarter, I had participants complete a qualitative survey that asked about their attitudes regarding in-class learning, language play, and the language play tasks designed for data collection.

Participants

The study was conducted in a class of 29 students. 12 students agreed to participate in the study (see Table 3). This study analyzes data from 9 of the participants, who are indicated in bold in Table 3. The 3 non-bold participants were unable to produce or comprehend enough L2 speech at the time to accomplish the guidelines of the playful tasks. Therefore, their interactions were not included in the analysis for this study. Participant ages ranged from 19 to 29 years old. Academic years ranged from sophomore to graduate student. Ten participants identified as male and two as female. All participants identified English as their L1, with one reporting that they had some experience speaking Japanese at home while growing up. Two participants reported taking some Japanese courses during middle or high school. Nine participants reported that this class was their first time studying Japanese.

Table 3. Participants

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Previous Japanese Instruction</i>	<i>Native language</i>	<i>Gender identity</i>	<i>Age</i>
Art	None	English	Male	19
Gene	None	English	Male	19
Mark	Four years in middle and high school.	English	Male	21
Mel	None. Reports speaking some Japanese at home growing up.	English, some Japanese	Female	21
Ken	Two years in high school.	English	Male	22
Sean	None	English	Male	22
Seb	None	English	Male	22
Al	None	English	Female	24
Chris	None	English	Male	24
Kai	None	English	Male	24
Jim	None	English	Male	29
Karl	None	English	Male	29

Class structure

The course was organized into two classroom formats: lecture and sections, as shown in Table 4:

Table 4. The class

Class Format	Students	Lesson content	Clock time
Lecture	29	Lectures in English, interactive L2 practice, quizzes, tests.	2 hours 10 minutes
Sections (A, B, C)	9-10 per section	Primarily L2, interactive heavily focused on practicing content addressed in whole class session.	2 hours 10 minutes

During lectures, all students registered for the course shared the same classroom. Lecture content included explanations in English about Japanese grammar, interactive L2 practice, exams, and announcements. After lectures, students were divided into three smaller sections (A, B, and C), each with a different instructor. Sections were conducted primarily in the TL and focused on interaction and practice of content covered in the lectures. Both class formats were scheduled for two hours and ten minutes, with a ten to twenty minute break in-between, Monday through Friday. I was one of the three teaching assistants who taught the smaller sections. The head instructor led the lectures. However, I was given reign of the lectures when LP tasks were implemented for data collection.

Data collection

I collected data during both classroom formats. During lectures, all students (including non-study participants) participated in the playful tasks designed for this study in the same classroom. Study participants were paired with each other during lecture sessions. On days when data was collected during sections, all study participants, regardless of their original section, were gathered together in a special section. Non-participants also did the playful tasks in their respective sections, as the tasks were incorporated into the overall curriculum.

Initially, I requested that participants use their own smartphones to record themselves during the activities. However, after having difficulties gathering the audio recordings from the students in a timely manner after the first data collection session, I provided Olympus digital audio recording devices and collected them at the conclusion of each activity for the remainder of the study.

The tasks

In total, I designed and implemented six playful tasks. Each task was designed in accordance with the curriculum and meant to focus on specific structural patterns. While this study focuses on data from two semantic play tasks, *Uranaiishi* (the fortune teller) and *Konbini Kuji* (convenience-store prize drawing), this section also describes the other LP tasks from the larger project so that the reader may have a better understanding of the context of these tasks. Two tasks were designed to elicit formal language play (see Table 5). Four tasks were designed to elicit semantic language play (see Table 6). Task design varied in terms of instructional goals, structural patterns being focused on, materials used, and classroom setup.

Formal language play tasks

There were two formal LP tasks: *dajare* ('puns') and *haiku/senryu* ('poems'). In the *dajare* ('pun') tasks, learners had to decipher Japanese puns that used vocabulary and structures that had been introduced in the class (see Table 5). Learners were also encouraged to write their own *dajare*. In the *haiku/senryu* task, learners were introduced to the formal and cultural conventions of these two forms of Japanese poetry. Then, they were tasked with writing their own *haiku* or *senryu* as vocabulary and grammar review.

Table 5. Formal language play tasks

Task Name	Description	Learning target	Pre-work	Post-work	Materials
<i>Haiku</i> and <i>Senryu</i> writing	Students write <i>haiku</i> or <i>senryu</i> .	Learning poetry forms and practicing writing.	Introduced poetry forms. Read and translated examples.	Students write their completed poems on the whiteboard.	None.
<i>Dajare</i>	Students identify the punning words in <i>dajare</i> then write their own.	Practice recognizing puns in Japanese.	Mini-lecture with examples prior to pair seatwork.	Students write their work on the board, for class to read and discuss.	Handouts with Japanese puns printed on them.

Semantic language play tasks

The four semantic LP tasks varied on a continuum from realistic to fantastical, with two tasks being realistic and two having more fantastical elements (see Table 6). The two realistic tasks, “First Date” and “Excuses, Excuses”, could be considered “business-as-usual” for a language class, as I did not incorporate any bizarre topics or outlandish scenarios into the materials. The topics themselves and the open-ended nature of the tasks were meant to encourage play among participants. This idea came from Pomerantz and Bell’s (2011) study in which they suggest that topic plays a role “in occasioning humorous interaction” (p. 151). The two fantastical tasks, *Uranaishi* and *Konbini Kuji* introduced a variety of playful and fantastical elements into the task design itself.

Table 6. Semantic language play tasks

Task Name	Description	Learning target	Pre-work	Post-work	Materials
<i>Ura-naishi</i>	Role-play being a fortune teller or customer.	Making guesses, talking about the future.	Introduced Japanese fortune-tellers, modeled activity with whole class.	None.	Question cards, box.
<i>Konbini kuji</i>	Students draw prize cards and discuss what they received.	Talking about wants, likes, dislikes, and negotiating exchanges.	Introduced students to convenience store prize drawings in Japan. Modeled activity with whole class.	Role play performances.	Prize cards, box.
Excuses, excuses	Role play excuses or explanations for bad behavior.	Eliciting or providing clarification, explanations.	Oriented students to activity. Modeled how to do the task.	Role play performances.	Station posters indicating situation and roles.
First date	Students discuss what they should or should not do on a first date.	Talking about things one must do, things one cannot do, and making recommendations.	Began by asking students about do's and don't's during a date.	Students report what they talked about.	None.

Fantastical
↑
↓
Realistic

Realistic semantic language play tasks

“First Date” was a discussion task in which participants talked about what they should or should not do before, during, and after a first date. For this task, I wanted to see if merely the topic of dating could elicit playful interaction. “Excuses, Excuses” was another realistic semantic LP task. In “Excuses, Excuses” I provided four settings accompanied with roles and situations in which one participant had to explain their bad behavior to an authority figure. The students were supposed to come up with excuses for why they

committed specific infractions and the authority figures were supposed to admonish or give advice in response. For this activity, I had students get out of their seats and go to stations where a poster with information on the role-play scenario was posted. For this task, I wanted to see if talking about bad behavior and admonishment would encourage play.

Fantastical semantic language play tasks: The focus of the present study

For this study, I will analyze interactions that happened during two fantastical tasks: *Uranaiishi* and *Konbini Kuji*. I selected these tasks for detailed analysis because learners were more playful during these tasks compared to the other tasks I implemented in the larger study. As I explain below, these tasks incorporated intentionally bizarre materials and specific Japanese cultural settings. Furthermore, these tasks actually surprised learners as they were working on them. Analyzing how learners utilized bizarre materials during semantic play activities may provide insight into how ludic semantic play can be incorporated into a language classroom curriculum.

Compared to the other semantic LP tasks, the *Uranaiishi* and *Konbini Kuji* tasks were more fantastical in terms of setting and materials. Furthermore, for both of these tasks, I placed a box at the front of the room that was either filled with question prompt cards (*Uranaiishi*) or prize cards (*Konbini Kuji*). Many of the question prompts or prizes were designed to be humorous or unexpected. Below, I explain these tasks in more detail and then share my thought process that guided task development.

Uranaishi – The fortune-teller

The *Uranaishi* (fortune-teller) task is a role-playing task designed to elicit semantic language play. I also designed it as an application exercise for practice in speculation (～と 思 っ た, *to omou*), using ‘after’ expressions (～後, *go*), and using expressions about ‘becoming something’ (になる, *ni naru*). However, there was no explicit instruction for learners to use these forms. This task was designed to create a context for using these structural patterns. However, I reminded students of these forms and used them when I modeled the activity during pre-work.

For the task, I prepared question prompt cards that the students could ask the fortune teller. The questions worked to incorporate vocabulary and grammar that had been introduced in the course thus far. I included possible follow-up questions to ‘yes’ answers on some of the cards as well. I printed these questions on thick card stock with colored text. The question cards are shown in Appendix 1.

The setup involved one student acting as a fortune-teller and the other as a customer. Students were instructed to randomly draw one or two question cards from the box in the front of the classroom and ask the fortune-teller these questions about themselves in 5, 10, or 20 years from now. Fortune-tellers were instructed to provide their predictions in response. I also encouraged them to surprise their customers. They were also allowed to “charge” as much as they wanted for the session.

For pre-work, I prepared students to use the relevant forms by asking them questions about the future in the TL. I used this to segue into a brief presentation about Japanese fortune-tellers, as their job is to see the future. I introduced the word for fortune-teller (*uranaishi*) and showed some pictures of Japanese fortune-tellers. Next I modeled the

activity with the class. I acted as the customer and asked the entire class to take on the fortune-teller role. I pulled a question card from the box and asked the class a question. Then I elicited volunteers to provide a response. After hearing the response, I followed up by modeling potential ways to continue the dialogue. I spent about six and a half minutes doing pre-work in this manner. Afterwards, I instructed the students to do the task in pairs. All of the question cards were in a single box at the front of the room, so students had to leave their seats to grab questions to ask the fortune-teller. I periodically reminded students to switch roles and draw new questions at will. As most classroom tasks were implemented through verbal or textual explanations, I wanted to make this activity feel different by having students leave their seats to get new questions. I had students do the task for approximately 10 minutes.

Konbini kuji – Prize drawing at the convenience store

This task was designed to elicit semantic language play while serving as practice of desideratives (〜たい, *tai*), talking about likes and dislikes, and making negotiations. In this activity, the students pretended they were customers who won a prize drawing at a convenience store in Japan. I prepared a variety of prize cards that were printed with illustrations or images in color on card stock (see Appendix 2). The prizes ranged from the extraordinary (absurd amounts of money, fancy cars, etc.) to the average (a moderate amount of cash, a television, etc.) to the strange, if not undesirable (12 cans of tuna, an old cell phone, a herd of horses, etc.).

Students were instructed to grab a prize from the box and then ask their partners what they got. They were then supposed to ask each other what they want to do with the

prizes. I also gave them the option to ask to trade prizes if they did not like what they received. The variety of prizes was meant to make the interactions humorous and also elicit creative responses from students. I incorporated unrealistic prizes to provide students opportunities to practice using the L2 in unexpected circumstances.

For pre-work, I gave a brief presentation about convenience store prize drawings in Japan, showing pictures of what it may look like in real life. Then I modeled the activity. I spent about four minutes doing this. I gave the participants about 10 minutes to do the tasks in dyads with one triad. After 10 minutes, I implemented the task once more as a class for approximately seven minutes.

Developing materials for the fantastical semantic language play tasks

Both of these tasks were elaborated and more playful version of tasks that had been used in the course in the past. The original versions were simple text-based role plays without prompt cards drawn from a box. I also incorporated cultural references into the *Uraishaishi* and *Konbini Kuji* tasks. I thought that I could generate student interest in these tasks by incorporating some aspect of Japanese culture. This is why I showed students what *uranaishi* (fortune-tellers) look like in Japan and situated the task within a Japanese-style fortune-teller setting. I applied the same process to the *Konbini Kuji* task, which was placed within a Japanese convenience store setting.

I designed the question prompts in the *Uraishaishi* task with the students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar in mind. I made an effort to use as much of the vocabulary and structural patterns they had been studying up to that point. Mixed in with more general questions about the future (e.g., topics about future careers, finances, and relationships)

were more specific and unusual question prompts. These included: “Will I travel around the world by boat?” “Will I ride a bike from Seattle to New York?” “Will I be on the news/cover of a magazine?” “Will I make money by playing guitar in the park?” and others. Some of these more unusual question prompts may help serve as reading comprehension practice, especially when they make students wonder “Does it really say that?” By doing this, students can test their comprehension on the spot and gain valuable experience coping with the unusual or unexpected in the TL.

My choice of materials for the *Konbini Kuji* task was influenced by my years of experience in Japan. Like the *Uranaishi* task, I thought that this task would feel more relevant for my students by situating this role play in a Japanese setting. It also creates potential for them to learn about an aspect of daily life in contemporary Japan. Japanese *konbini* (convenience stores) are ubiquitous across urban and suburban areas of Japan and are a part of daily life for most people. Furthermore, the appearance and experience of a Japanese *konbini* is different from convenience stores I have visited in the states. The *konbini* was the perfect setting for a prize drawing activity, because Japanese *konbini* actually do this. While making the activity, I recalled my own experience of *konbini kuji* when I lived in Japan, particularly the confusion I first felt when I was prompted by a cashier to draw a prize after making a purchase. In essence, this task gives students an opportunity to playfully practice a situation that they may find themselves in should they travel to Japan someday.

I incorporated different levels of cultural references within the *Konbini Kuji* prize cards. Some Japan-related prizes included *nattō* (fermented soybeans), Pocky, Japanese canned tuna, old Toyota print advertisements, and trips to popular vacation destinations like

Okinawa and Hokkaido. I also included images of Japanese currency and Japanese Amazon gift cards. Other cultural references that were not necessarily Japanese in origin include a Windows 95 install disc (I should note that the image of this disc is actually a Japanese version of Windows 95, with Japanese script printed directly onto the disc itself) and other items. In order to introduce incongruity—and hopefully humor as a result—other items were intentionally absurd. Some of the more absurd prizes include a mean-spirited upperclassman, a giant teddy bear, a very old cell phone, and a herd of fourteen horses. Of course there were also ‘normal’ prizes like a new computer, movie tickets, fancy cars, and others (see Appendix 2 for images of all the prize cards).

Coding and the corpus

The corpus of this study is comprised of transcriptions of student audio-recorded interactions. I transcribed my audio data using Otranscribe and Microsoft Word. Using MaxQDA, I coded the transcripts for instances of semantic or formal LP in learner discourse. Semantic LP includes role-plays, imaginary scenarios, teasing and joking, taboo or risqué topics (Bell, 2012, p. 244) or reference to fictional worlds (Cook, 2000). Formal LP can include puns, word play, repetition, and experimentation with patterns (Bell, 2012, p. 224; Cook, 2000). To identify LP, I looked for the following cues: register shifts, marked vocabulary choices, exaggerated intonation or prosody (Bell, 2012, p. 250), talk treated or produced “as playful by participants themselves” (Waring, 2012, p. 195), and learners commenting something as funny (Glenn 1989 as cited in Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005) (see Table 7). I also included instances of laughter and smile voice in the transcripts as potential cues for play.

Table 7. LP cues

LP cues
Register shifts, marked vocabulary, exaggerated intonation, prosody, playful talk, comments on something that is funny, laughter, smile voice (Bell 2012; Waring 2012; Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005).

To explore how learners engaged with linguistic problems during the tasks, I also coded the transcripts for LREs and instances of peer support or collaboration. Instances in which the students verbally addressed a difficulty they were having were identified as LREs. Instances of co-construction, recasts, asking for help, and waiting were also coded in the data (see Table 8).

Table 8. Peer learning behaviors

Behavior	Example
LRE	Talking about language, questioning language use, self-correction, other correction (Swain & Lapkin, 1998)
Peer assistance	Waiting, co-construction, recasts, explanations, asking for help (Ohta, 2000).

The corpus is comprised of transcripts from nine study participant interactions during the two fantastical semantic play tasks. These participants are indicated in bold in Table 3. Since this is an exploratory study that examines learner interaction during semantic play tasks, I limited my analysis to dyads or triads that were voluble, playful, and demonstrated a strong grasp of the materials through their performances. As mentioned earlier, data from three participants were not included in this study as they were consistently unable to produce or comprehend enough L2 speech to effectively participate in the playful tasks. Therefore, these examples are not representative of the entire class or course, but rather glimpses into learners that had sufficiently understood the material so that they could perform these tasks while playing with the language.

To get a sense of the volubility of the participants during these tasks, I quantified the amount of words and turns in the transcripts (see Table 9 and Table 10). For utterances in Japanese, I counted all free morphemes and particles as words. Students were given approximately ten minutes to interact during both tasks.

Table 9. Uraishi corpus data

Pair	Words	Turns
Gene & Chris	668	145
Seb & Ken	633	154
Mel & Kai	629	140
Al & Mark	592	138

Table 10. Konbini Kuji corpus data

Pair/Triad	Words	Turns
Gene, Chris, & Art	870	246
Seb & Ken	691	161
Al & Mark	623	160

Analysis

In this section, I first analyze how LP influenced the creation of a pedagogical “safe house” which encouraged classroom humor and participation in the L2. Then, I present how students played with reality in the two tasks, particularly how they created and elaborated on fictions within their interactions. I then analyze instances in which study participants reacted with surprise at the task materials. Finally, I explore instances of LREs and peer support.

Modeling play in the safe house

Play can influence the asymmetry of power between learners and instructors in the classroom. While some sense of authority may be helpful for keeping language classrooms organized and on-task, there may also be benefits to challenging the power differential between students and instructor. Like the aforementioned “safe house” effect, students may feel more inclined to speak up, participate, or take risks in the L2 if they do not anticipate any sanctions for their behavior. Furthermore, instructors who tolerate or even join in on play may be able to reach students who respond negatively to strict authority figures. By leveling out the playing field, so to speak, the relationship between instructor and student can become more collaborative. It may encourage students to take ownership of classroom learning processes by producing content, rather than passively accepting what is being handed down to them from the instructor.

There was a moment when I modeled the *Uranaiishi* task in which the power balance between me, the instructor, and the students was transformed through play. The excerpt below shows how when I modeled the *Uranaiishi* task, the students who volunteered to help model the activity provided playful, teasing answers to my inquiries which resulted in raucous laughter.

In excerpt 1, I take on the role of the customer while the class acts as a fortune teller. The bolded text in the excerpt indicates instances of LP during the interaction. In line 3, I ask the class who I will be married to in twenty years. Mel volunteers a response in line 4: “Nobody.” The class bursts into laughter for over 8 seconds. Mark and Al’s comments in lines 8 and 9 indicate that they found the exchange funny. In line 8, Mark comments “that was so perfect.” In line 9, Al says “that was beautiful.” In the moment, I could not have

been more pleased that Mel provided a playful teasing response that generated laughter among the class, even though it was at my fictional character's expense. It was as if they knew the activity was meant for play without me telling them to play.

In response, I dramatically enacted the rest of my utterances to ratify the playful mood. In line 11, I ask the class if they think I will have children in twenty years. In line 13, Al volunteers a response: "10 children." Al's response also results in another bout of laughter across the classroom. I feign surprise and dismay in line 14. In line 16, I follow up by asking if I will be rich, the implication being that having such a large family will not be so bad if I am financially well off. Al's response in line 18: "No." The students burst into laughter again. The laughter continues in the background as I act dejected in response. I finally ask how much I will be charged for the fortune-telling in line 19. A student responds: "30,000 yen (approx. \$280)." The class laughs again. Perhaps they found humor in the fact that I was charged so much, especially after being given such a negative prediction of my future. I feign disappointed surprise in my response before wrapping up the modeling and starting the activity.

Excerpt 1

- 1 T: a uranaishi san konnichiwa
ah hello fortune teller
- 2 All: konnichiwa
hello
- 3 T: sumimasen iroiro shitsumon ga arimasu kedo (.) ah watashi
nijuu nengo (.) dare to kekkon shiteiru to omoimasu ka?
*I have some questions (.) ah twenty years from now (.) who do
you think I will be married to?*
- 4 Mel: **dare mo**
no one
- 5 All: **((class bursts out in laughter for over 8 seconds))**
- 6 T: wakarimashita. ja: mou hitotsu kikimasu ne ((more laughter

- from the class))
I see. well then: I'll ask another question ((more laughter from the class))
- 7 T: e::to
let's see:
- 8 Mark: **that is so perfect**
- 9 Al: **that was beautiful**
- 10 T: uranaishi san (.) watashi nijuu nengo kodomo ga iru to
 omoimasuka?
fortune teller (.) do you think I will have children in twenty years?
- 11 Mark: hmm?
- 12 Al: **hmm. (.) juunin iru to omoimasu**
hmm. (.) I think you'll have ten children.
- 13 T: [j-juunin irun desu ka?
 [t-ten children?
- 14 ((more laughter from students))
- 15 T: ja ano o-okane mochi desu ka?
well uh will I be r-rich?
- 16 ((more laughter from students))
- 17 Al: **ie**
no
- 18 T: ah taihen desu ne. wakarimashita. arigatou gozaimashita. ano
 (.) oikura desu ka?
ah that sounds tough. I understand. thank you. uh (.) how much will that be?
- 19 S: **san man en desu ((more laughter from students))**
30,000 yen.
- 20 T: **s-san man en?! kashikomarimashita san man en desu hai.**
30,000 yen?! I understand. Here, 30,000 yen.

This teasing play, at my fictional character's expense, revealed to me that at least some of the students were comfortable with being funny while I was taking the helm as the classroom instructor. As a language instructor, I try to present myself as a cheerful and approachable individual. I also regularly incorporate humor into my teaching. I believe that

if I consistently presented myself as an authority figure who draws strict boundaries between teacher and student, the students in the class may not have been so inclined to play or laugh at my expense.

As the following excerpts will show, the participants in this study carried this playful mood into their own performances during the *Uranaishi* task, as evidenced by their play. When the activity went underway, students were vocal and loud throughout. By the conclusion of the activity, most participants were still role playing. The laughter and volume was so great that I had to raise my voice to notify the students that the activity had ended. While past research has shown that students will play with or without their teacher's permission (Ahn, 2015), the instructor can play a crucial role in how play manifests itself in the classroom. Instructors who are tolerant of play and see its value as a pedagogical tool may be able to draw out unforeseen potential for play as a driver of linguistic development through interaction.

Playing with reality in the Uranaishi task

In the *Uranaishi* task, the most commonly observed form of LP was semantic play in which participants co-constructed a fictional or alternate reality within their interactions. During such rounds of play, participants referred to topics ranging from the realistic (e.g., not having very much money) to the outlandish (e.g., marrying wealthy celebrities). There was also mention of the world at large in similarly realistic or outlandish terms.

Some participants engaged in dramatic enactment of their role by adopting markedly different vocal registers and acting out strong emotions in a playful manner. Participants also teased and joked with each other in the L2. The complexity and length of playful interactions varied across dyads. Some dyads created elaborate fictional worlds

within their interactions that they periodically referred to throughout the task, whereas others engaged in briefer episodes of semantic play. In this section, I provide an analysis of how participants engaged in semantic play during the *Uranaiishi* task. The bolded text in the excerpts indicates instances of LP during learner interactions.

Seb and Ken engaged in extensive semantic LP throughout the *Uranaiishi* task. Furthermore, they played within their alternate realities by incorporating marked vocabulary, exaggerations, and inside jokes. In excerpt 2, they play with all these aspects of language while continuing to use the TL to elaborate on each other's responses.

In excerpt 2, Seb takes on the role of the fortune-teller and Ken asks about his future. They begin to incorporate semantic play in line 2 when Seb responds, “I think you’ll probably become a *yakuza*” in ten years. The word *yakuza* refers to the real-life organized crime syndicate based in Japan. This can be a playful cue, as talking about *yakuza* may be considered risqué within the classroom context. Seb continues to play in lines 8 and 10 when he claims that Ken will marry Keanu Reeves in 20 years. Keanu Reeves is a famous American actor who has starred in numerous films, many of which involve him either being a part of an organized crime syndicate or fighting against one (See the *John Wick* series for recent examples). Their laughter here reveals that they are having fun with these playful responses. In line 11, Ken playfully elaborates on Seb’s response by asking if Keanu Reeves will be a *yakuza* as well. Seb responds in the affirmative. The participants will repeatedly refer to Keanu Reeves and the *yakuza* at later points in the activity.

Excerpt 2

- 1 Ken: o::h. alright well. umm juunengo watashi wa donna seikatsu desu ka.
o::h. alright well. umm what kind of lifestyle will I lead in ten years?

- 2 Seb: juunen desu ne. mm. tabun **yakuza ni narimasu** to om-
ten years? mm. *I think you'll probably become a yakuza-*
- 3 Ken: [sou desu ka.
[Is that so?
- 4 Seb: ni naru to omoimasu. sou desu ne.
I think you'll become. yes.
- 5 Ken: doushite desu ka.
why?
- 6 Seb: heh doushite ((laughing)) saa ((still laughing))
heh why ((laughing)) *I dunno ((still laughing))*
- 7 Ken: [((laughing)) sou desu ka. arigatou. I
guess we'll do the next one. ja: ninjuunengo umm dare to kekkon
shiteimasu ka.
[((laughing)) I see. thanks.
*I guess we'll do the next one. so: twenty years from now who
will I be married to?*
- 8 Seb: mmm. sou desu ne ((laughing)). uh:. **Keanu Reeves** ((laughing))
mmm. *let's see ((laughing)). uh:. Keanu Reeves ((laughing))*
- 9 Ken: [((laughing))
- 10 Seb: to kekkon shiteiru to omoimasu.
I think you'll be married to Keanu Reeves.
- 11 Ken: sou desu ka. **Keanu Reeves mo yakuza desu ka.**
I see. Is Keanu Reeves also a yakuza?
- 12 Seb: ((exhales)) sou desu ne. yakuza ja nai kedo (.) hmm. tabun
Keanu Reeves mo yakuza ni naru to omoimasu.
*((exhales)) Well. He isn't a yakuza. (.) hmm however
I think Keanu Reeves will also become a yakuza.*
- 13 Ken: sou desu ka.
Is that so.
- 14 Seb: [zannen desu ne.
[how unfortunate.
- 15 Ken: hehehe
- 16 Seb: demo (.) sou desu. hehe
But (.) that's how it is. hehe
- 17 Ken: hehe. ja ikura desu ka. (.) ikura desu ka.
hehe. well how much? (.) how much?

Excerpt 3 happened later in the task. In this exchange, Ken and Seb return to the Keanu Reeves and *yakuza* jokes for more playful material as they interact using a different set of questions for the fortune teller.

In line 6, Seb incorporates semantic play by, again, claiming that Ken will be married to Keanu Reeves in ten years. Seb continues the semantic play by incorporating exaggeration in line 12, saying that Ken will have one hundred family members too. Ken dramatically enacts surprise in line 15 by saying “waa waa.” Ken then asks if his family will be rich in line 17. In line 18, Seb responds yes, “rich *yakuza*.”

Excerpt 3

- 1 Ken: arigatou. ja juunenmae- uh juunengo uh kazoku ga iru?
thanks. ok ten years ago- uh ten years from now will I have a family?
- 2 Seb: nani ga iru?
will you have what?
- 3 Ken: kazoku ga.
a family.
- 4 Seb: oh:: oh kazoku
oh:: oh family
- 5 Ken: [irimasuka err yeah imasuka.
[will I need ((wrong verb)) err yeah will I have?
- 6 Seb: ahh hai kazoku ga iru to omoimasu. uh **Keanu Reevesu to kekkon shiteiru** kedo err kara.
ahh yeah I think you will have a family. uh but- err because you're married to Keanu Reeves
- 7 Ken: sou desu ka.
is that so?
- 8 Seb: mm.
- 9 Ken: nannin kazoku desu ka.
how many people in my family?
- 10 Seb: nannin? uh: sou desu ne.
how many people? uh: let's see.
- 11 Ken: ga imasu

- NOM exist.*
- 12 Seb: [uhh tabun **hyakunin to omoimasu.**
[uhh probably 100 people I think.
- 13 Ken: *hyakunin desu ka.*
100 people?
- 14 Seb: [b**hyakunin da to omoimasu.**
[100 people I think.
- 15 Ken: *waa waa*
- 16 Seb: *[((giggling))*
- 17 Ken: *watashi tachi okane mochi desu ka.*
will we be rich?
- 18 Seb: *un. totemo okane mochi yakuza desu kara*
yup. because you are very rich yakuza.
- 19 Ken: *sou desu ka.*
is that so?
- 20 Seb: *((giggles))*
- 21 Ken: *arigatou gozaimasu. ikura desu ka.*
thank you. how much?
- 22 Seb: *uhh mmm sannen- er san en. hehe*
uhh mmm three years- er three yen. hehe
- 23 Ken: [hehe
- 24 Seb: **sannen.**
three years.
- 25 Ken: [s**sannen. three years hehe**
[three years. three years hehe
- 26 Seb: **three years. it's all I ask ((laughing)) three ye-**
- 27 Ken: [give me **three years of your life ((laughing))**

Excerpts 2 and 3 show how Seb and Ken co-create and sustain a fictional reality in which Ken becomes a rich *yakuza* who will be married to Keanu Reeves, who will also become a *yakuza*, and have one hundred family members.

Seb and Ken primarily interact in the TL while creating a farfetched scenario in which they both seemed to derive much pleasure as indicated by their mutual laughter and continual engagement. In excerpt 2, L1 is used for task management (lines 1 and 7). However, in excerpt 3,

- 5 Mark: [juunengo
[ten years from now
- 6 Al: hmm. sou desu ka. ah **juunengo sekai ga arimasen** to omoimasu.
ari-
hmm. I see. ah I don't think there will be a world in ten years.
ari-
- 7 Mark: zannen desu ne:
how unfortunate.
- 8 Al: [wait no. (.) **juunengo sekai ga nai to omoima-** wait.
[wait no. (.) ten years from now there won't be a world I thi-
wait.
- 9 Mark: [hehehehe
- 10 Al: wait. (.)
- 11 Mark: hehe sou desu ka
hehe is that so?
- 12 Al: mmm. **climate change kara:** hehe
mmm. because: of climate change hehe
- 13 Mark: [ahh hehehe ahh wakarimasu
[ahh hehehe ahh I understand.
- 14 Al: [hai. sou desu ne
[yes. that is so.

Some dyads engaged in extensive dramatic enactment during the task. They did this by drastically changing their voices and role-playing intense emotions (e.g., sadness, elation, etc.). In excerpt 5, Chris's dramatic enactment of the fortune teller included a marked shift in speech style (lines 2 and 4), reference to a crystal ball (lines 4 and 6), and acting out as though he is actually attempting to see the future (line 11).

Excerpt 5

- 1 Gene: a:no nijuunengo uhh watashi wa ninki ga aru umm uh ninki ga
aru uh to omoimasu ka.
u:hh twenty years from now uhh will I be popular uhh do you
think I'll be popular?
- 2 Chris: ((laughs)) mmm. sou desu ne:. mmm. (.) **to omoimasu to**

omoimasu ((affected voice))

((laughs)) mmm. Let's see:. mmm. (.) **I think I think ((affected voice))**

- 3 Gene: hehehe
- 4 Chris: ((affected voice)) e:to mmm. **watashi no crystal ball**
((affected voice)) u:hh mmm. *my crystal ball*
- 5 Gene: hehe
- 6 Chris: **ga zenbu uh mina- mimasu.** hmm. ni no- hmm gonengo? ni ninengo.
can see everything. hmm. two no- hmm in five years? two- in two years.
- 7 Gene: uhh nijuunengo.
uhh in twenty years.
- 8 Chris: nijuunengo.
in twenty years.
- 9 Gene: nijuunengo.
in twenty years.
- 10 ((Instructor asks class to switch roles of they haven't already))
- 11 Chris: **hmmm. Gene san wa: ("fortune-teller" voice)**
hmmm. Gene will::
- 12 Gene: hehe
- 13 Chris: ninki ga (.) mm (.) ninki gaijin na hito to omoimasu.
popular (.) mm (.) be a popular foreigner I think.
- 14 Gene: ahhh
- 15 Chris: [da to omoimasu.
[I think.
- 16 Gene: ahh yokatta desu hehe
[ahh that's great hehe
- 17 Chris: mmm.
- 18 Gene: arigatou.
[thanks.
- 19 Chris: mmm
- 20 Gene: **uhh. um. ja: ok- okan**
uhh. um. well: mo- money
- 21 Chris: **[ja go man.**
[well 50,000 yen.
- 22 Gene: **okane hehehe**
money hehehe
- 23 Chris: ((laughs))

24 Gene: onegai shimasu hehe
please hehe

25 Chris: ((laughing))

Chris continues to dramatically adopt the fortune teller role throughout the activity.

In excerpt 6, lines 2 and 4, Chris provides more dramatic enactment by straining to “see” the future through his crystal ball. In line 1, Gene asks if he will be on the cover of a magazine someday. This comes from another question card that I designed with the intention to promote playful interactions. In line 4, Chris finally says yes. However, he clarifies that Gene will become a cover girl, to which Gene replies “how unfortunate” in a mirthful tone in line 7. Chris then starts to playfully flatter Gene by calling him beautiful (line 8), then handsome (line 10), before quickly shifting the tone and charging 50,000 yen (approx. \$465) in line 12, which results in them both breaking down into laughter. In fact, Chris pulled the same move earlier in the task. In excerpt 5, line 21, Chris interrupts Gene to charge him 50,000 yen for the fortune telling. Both participants find the sudden charging of exorbitant fees humorous, as indicated by their laughter. Nevertheless, they stay on task and attempt to complete it primarily in the TL.

Excerpt 6

- 1 Gene: hehehe ninki ga aru desu kara uh er uh ninki ga aru kara
 zasshi no kabaa ni uh deru uh to omoimasu ka?
*hehehe because I'm popular uh er uh because I'm popular do you
 think I'll appear on the cover of a magazine?*
- 2 Chris: **mmm. mmm. sou desu ne. hmm.**
mmm. mmm. Let's see. hmm.
- 3 Gene: hehe
- 4 Chris: what was it. (.) **miru: miru: (.) hmm. kaba girl ni**
what was it. (.) I see: I see: (.) hmm. you'll be a cover girl
- 5 Gene: heheh ohh
- 6 Chris: deru to omoimasu.
I think you'll appear [on a magazine cover].
- 7 Gene: [ohhh **zannen desu ne ((laughing))** ahh wakarimashita

- [ohhh how unfortunate ((laughing)) ahh I see*
- 8 Chris: **bijin desu ne.**
You're a beauty.
- 9 Gene: wakarimashita hehe
I understand hehe
- 10 Chris: **totemo kakko ii.**
You're so handsome.
- 11 Gene: **hehe ja-**
hehe well-
- 12 Chris: **[hai go man.**
[ok 50,000 yen.
- 13 ((both laugh))

Throughout the *Uranaishi* task, Gene and Chris incorporated playful dramatic enactment and unexpected responses that both participants seemed to find humorous. In excerpt 7, Gene adopts the fortune-teller role and gives his predictions about Chris's future. Chris's reactions as a customer are dramatic and humorous. He incorporates affective expressions for displaying disbelief and despair (lines 9, 13, and 15) interspersed with excitement (lines 5 and 7) and optimistic resignation (line 20). Perhaps due to the fact that they commonly paired up throughout the course, it is almost as if Gene expects to get funny reactions from Chris. He raises Chris's hopes that he will be a "little rich" in a year (lines 4 and 6) before dashing those hopes by saying he will not be rich in ten years due to a recession (lines 8 and 12). Gene's play on the future here is similar to Al and Mark's interaction in excerpt 4. In both excerpts, the participants pointed to a bleak future event that was interpreted as humorous within the context of the task. Here, Gene appropriated the English word "recession," for the utterance while still using mostly accurate Japanese structural patterns to communicate his message.

Excerpt 7

- 1 Chris: hmm. hmm. (.) hmm. okanemochi ni narimasu ka?
hmm. hmm. (.) hmm. will I be rich?

- 2 Gene: hmm. (.) cho- cho-
hmm. (.) a li- a li-
- 3 Chris: [ichi nen- ichi nengo
[one year- one year from now
- 4 Gene: **ichinengo. cho- uh chotto okane mochi-**
one year from now. a little- uh a little bit rich-
- 5 Chris: **ohhh!**
- 6 Gene: ni uh- ni narimasu
you'll uh- you'll become
- 7 Chris: **ohhh. nice desu ne**
ohhh. nice
- 8 Gene: **hehe demo juunengo uh okanemochi ja nai hehe**
hehe but ten years later uh you won't be rich hehe
- 9 Chris: **ehhhhh?! doushite?**
ehhhhh?! why?
- 10 Gene: hmm. uh
- 11 Chris: kikitai!
I want to hear!
- 12 Gene: uh **recession** desu kara. haha
uh because of a recession. haha
- 13 Chris: **ehh?!**
- 14 Gene: ((laughing))
- 15 Chris: **no:!** ((in a funny voice)) **hehe baka na. ohh. us- uso**
no:! ((in a funny voice)) *hehe unbelievable. ohh. no- no way*
- 16 Gene: uso hehe
no way hehe
- 17 Chris: uhh hmm. hehe uhh. ok. ((inaudible))((laughing)) tanoshii desu
18 ne
uhh hmm. hehe uhh. ok. ((inaudible)) ((laughing)) how fun.
- 19 Gene: **hehe zenbu err um zenbu terebi geemu o katta kara okanemochi
ja nai hehe**
***hehe all err um because you bought all the video games you are
not going to be rich***
- 20 Chris: **hmm sou desu ne. desu ne. tanoshimi ni.**
hmm that makes sense. Looking forward to it.
- 21 Gene: hehe
- 22 ((activity ends))

Like Chris and Gene in excerpts 5 and 6, Mel and Kai also played with how they charged their customers. In excerpt 8, Mel charges 50,000 yen (line 2). However, Kai offers a playful response saying “sorry, I’m not rich” (lines 3 and 5). Instead he offers 100-yen (approx. \$.93) whereupon Mel responds, “get out of here!” (line 8). While Kai does not outright laugh during the exchange, his smile voice coupled with Mel’s laughter and playful responses indicate that both were playing while working through the task.

Excerpt 8

- 1 Kai: arigatou gozaimasu.
thank you.
- 2 Mel: hai. uh ja: umm ah go man en kudasai.
yes. uh well umm ah 50,000 yen please.
- 3 Kai: **sumimasen**
excuse me.
- 4 Mel: ((laughing))
- 5 Kai: **okane mochi ja nai**
I’m not rich.
- 6 Mel: hai. ((laughs))
yes.
- 7 Kai: **uh ah eto: hyaku en desu.**
uh ah uhh: here’s 100 yen.
- 8 Mel: **are wa denasai.**
that is get out of here
- 9 Kai: **ah hai sumimasen.**
ah yes my apologies.
- 10 Mel: [((laughing))]

Like Chris in excerpt 6, Kai also demonstrates a flair for the dramatic by changing his voice when role-playing the fortune teller. In excerpt 9, line 1, Kai attempts to make a “spooky” atmosphere by saying “ohhh” in a manner reminiscent of classic horror film soundtracks. In line 3, Kai seems to surprise Mel when interrupting her with “Welcome!” in a voice that is drastically different from his typical classroom voice; it was louder in volume, higher in pitch, and

incorporated “creaky voice”, reminiscent of an “old crone” or “witch” character archetype. Mel found this exaggerated enactment quite funny, as indicated by her laughter in line 4. However, perhaps due to the vocal strain coupled with the necessity to think and produce utterances in the L2, Kai gradually tones down his witch voice in line 9.

Excerpt 9

- 1 Kai: **ohhh ((in spooky voice))**
- 2 Mel: [mmm uhhh ura-
[mmm uhhh fortune tell-
- 3 Kai: **[irasshaimasse ((in witch voice))**
[welcome
- 4 Mel: ((laughter)) uranaishi oh wait uranai- yeah uranaishi: san
((laughter)) fortune teller oh wait fortune- yeah fortune
teller:
- 5 Kai: **hai! ((in witch voice))**
yes!
- 6 Mel: konnichiwa uhh
hello uhh
- 7 Kai: **[konnichiwa ((in "witch" voice))**
[hello
- 8 Mel: juunengo: um petto ga iru to omoimasu ka?
do you think I will have a pet in ten years?
- 9 Kai: **ohh hai takusan neko ga imasu ((begins with witch**
voice and gradually returns to their normal voice with a
slight affect))
ohh yes you will have many cats

Excerpt 10 shows the final exchange between Mel and Kai during the *Uranaiishi* task. Mel and Kai both engage in dramatic enactment during a round of semantic play. In the exchange, Mel asks if she will be rich in twenty years. Kai responds in the affirmative, including a detail that Mel will get a “very good lottery ticket” in line 4. In line 7, Mel responds “How wonderful.” Not missing a chance to play, Kai follows up by asking Mel to bring him money in

line 8. Mel sustains the playful atmosphere with a tentative “mmm” in line 9. Kai, acting out as a desperate fortune teller, pleads in line 10. Here, Kai’s voice sounds like someone who is desperate and showing deference to his addressee. Mel and Kai continue to play, echoing tentative “mmms” interspersed with laughter in their responses. Mel seems to find humor in Kai’s playful orientation to the task, as indicated by her laughter and comment about the things he says in line 13. They still seem to be in a playful frame by the time the instructor ends the activity. In line 16, Kai refers to a Mustang, which was brought up at the beginning of the task when he role played as a customer. Like other dyads, these learners repeated playful references they established at earlier points in the task.

Excerpt 10

- 1 Mel: umm umm ja uhh uhh nijuunengo takusan wait okanemochi: naru
to omo-
*umm umm well umm twenty years from now a lot wait do you think I
will be rich:-*
- 2 Kai: [mmm.
- 3 Mel: yeah. yeah.
- 4 Kai: **hai. eh. lottery no kippu o kaima- uh kai uh kau to omoimasu.
uh tottemo ii kippu desu.
yes. yes. you’ll buy a lottery ticket- uh I think you’ll buy. uh
it’s a very good ticket.**
- 5 Mel: ahh sou desu ka.
ahh is that so.
- 6 Kai: okane mochi da to omoimasu.
I think you’ll be rich.
- 7 Mel: **yokatta: ((sounding relieved))
how wonderful**
- 8 Kai: **uhh watashi ni okane o mottekite kudasai.
uhh please bring me money.**
- 9 Mel: mmm:
- 10 Kai: **onegai shimasu ((with affect that seems to indicate deference
or desperation))
please**

- 11 Mel: ((laughter)) mmm.
- 12 Kai: mmm.
- 13 Mel: **the things that you ((laughing while speaking)) mmm.**
- 14 Kai: ((laughter))
- 15 Mel: mmm. ((laughter))
- 16 Kai: sumimasen ((with desperation)) douzo. e:to: ii desu ne.
watashi wa mustang motte-
*sorry ((with desperation)) here. u:hh it's fine. **I have a***
mustang-
- 17 Mel: un.
 ok.
- 18 ((instructor ends activity))

Playing with reality in the Konbini Kuji task

Compared to the *Uranaishi* task, the *Konbini Kuji* task was situated in a relatively more common setting: a Japanese convenience store during a promotional prize drawing campaign. Convenience stores across Japan often implement promotions in which customers may draw prizes from a box after spending a certain amount of money or fulfilling some other conditions. Typically, the prizes range from coupons to larger, more expensive items like toys, bicycles, computers, and other products. For this activity, I incorporated prizes (refer to Figure 1 for an example or Appendix 2 for images of all prize cards) that were meant to excite, amuse, or confuse participants during the task in the hopes that playful interactions would unfold as a result. I also hoped that the participants would find humor in the incongruity of the prizes. The bolded text in the excerpts indicates instances of LP during learner interactions.

Figure 1. Konbini Kuji prize card for an old Toyota



In excerpt 11, Al and Mark engage in semantic play after discussing their prizes. Mark drew one of the prize cards designed to be playful. The prize was an old Toyota car, presented with an advertisement from the 80's that has the word “sexy” written on it. I chose this specific image precisely because I expected students to find humor in the advertisement’s use of “sexy” to describe these vehicles. The transcripts show that participants found this card amusing, as indicated by their laughter, prosody, and repetition of the word *sekushii* (‘sexy’) in lines 4 and 5.

During the exchange, Al and Mark utilize both of their prizes to engage in semantic play. After establishing that Al received a two week vacation to Okinawa, Mark initiates play in lines 18 and 20, where he says they will ride together on a ferry to Okinawa with his old Toyota. In line 21, Al asks if there is a ferry that goes from Seattle to Okinawa, to which Mark responds yes in line 22. They co-construct a playful exchange in lines 25-28 where Mark claims that there is indeed a ferry that goes from Seattle to Okinawa (there is not) and they decide to go on a vacation together. In this exchange, Al and Mark playfully create an alternate reality where they go on a fictional vacation through impossible means (a ferry from Seattle to Okinawa) using the prizes they won from a convenience store lottery.

Excerpt 11

- 1 Al: nani o moratta?
what did you get?
- 2 Mark: **furui toyota: hehe**
an old Toyota hehe
- 3 Al: **hahaha**
- 4 Mark: **sekushi: ((the advertisement used for the prize card had the words sexy written on it))**
sexy:
- 5 Al: **sekushi:**
sexy:
- 6 T: ahh furui Toyota
ahh an old toyota
- 7 Al: ohh nani o suru? hehe
ohh what will you do? hehe
- 8 Mark: (.) doraibu o suru hehe
(.) I'll go on a drive hehe
- 9 Al: ohh sou desu.
ohh that's right.
- 10 Mark: kurashikku. kurashikku kuruma.
classic. it's a classic car.
- 11 Al: kurashikku.
a classic.
- 12 Mark: tabu wa ((inaudible))
the tabs are ((inaudible))
- 13 Al: oh:. ((inaudible))su ka.
- 14 Mark: ka na. nani o ((inaudible))
- 15 Al: nani o mora- okinawan- okinawa e no ooh something oh that's
the t- two shuukan- ni shuukan ryokou o moratta.
*what did I get- Okinawan- to Okinawa ooh something oh that's the
t-two two weeks- I got a two week vacation*
- 16 Mark: ah:! nani o suru?
ah:! what will you do?
- 17 Al: mmm. ya:su:mitai. yasumitai. soretomo umi de oyogitai.
soretomo takusan oishii tabemono tabetai.
*mmm. I want to rest. I want to rest. I also want to swim in the
ocean. I also want to eat a lot of tasty foods.*
- 18 Mark: a sou desu ka. **watashi wa furui toyota: de**
I see. With my old Toyota, I will

- 19 Al: [toyota?
- 20 Mark: Toyota de:(.) isscho ni: feari: ni norimasu
With the Toyota. We'll ride a ferry together.
- 21 Al: shiatoru kara okiniawa made fune ga arimasen: ka?
is there not a ferry that goes from Seattle to Okinawa?
- 22 Mark: hehe hai. arimasu hehe. ((smile voice))
hehe yes. there is one hehe.
- 23 Al: [hehe.
- 24 Al: shiatoru kara okinawa made? hehe
from Seattle to Okinawa? hehe
- 25 Mark: ha:i. isscho ni okinawa- hehe
ye:s. Together, to Okinawa- hehe
- 26 Al: watashi ga? ((smile voice))
me?
- 27 Mark: okinawa ni ikimashou ka?
shall we go to Okinawa?
- 28 Al: ikou! ii ne.
Let's go! sounds great.
- 29 Mark: I'm inviting myself.
- 30 Al: hehe
- 31 Mark: quite rude hehe.
- 32 Al: oh you:
- 33 Mark: I offer to drive but.
- 34 Al: mm hmm.
- 35 Mark: ((inaudible)) hawaii.

The “you win tons of nattō” (see Figure 2) card was also designed specifically to elicit playful interactions. Nattō is a fermented soybean dish that is known for its divisiveness as many people strongly dislike the flavor, aroma, and look. There is also an enduring stereotype that non-Japanese people cannot appreciate nattō. I often bring up nattō in my classes to gauge student awareness and reactions to the dish, as well as to engage in playful topics about food my students dislike. In my experience, the majority of students I have taught who are aware of nattō tend to dislike the dish (full disclosure: I think nattō is delicious). With that in mind, I included “tons of

nattō” as a prize card to see if I could elicit funny reactions and interesting exchanges from my participants. In the corpus, two groups drew the nattō card and engaged in playful interactions.

Figure 2. Konbini Kuji prize card for tons of natto



Excerpt 12 shows an exchange that unfolded after Gene, Chris, and Art grabbed new prizes. In line 3, Chris draws the “tons of nattō” card and dramatically enacts his disappointment with the slang term *yabai*, which can be used to evaluate something as good or bad (much like colloquial uses of ‘sick’ in American English). In line 7, Gene teases Chris by saying “yummy!” to which Chris emphatically disagrees in line 9. In line 15, Gene shares that he won two movie tickets. Gene and Chris co-construct semantic play in line 21 when Chris asks if Gene has a date. Gene says he does not and asks to trade his movie tickets for Chris’s nattō in line 26. Chris agrees, and Gene expresses his happiness in line 28 and claims he wants to eat tons of nattō in line 30. Throughout the exchange, Art is observing and actively listening as evidenced by repeatedly saying nattō throughout and giggling at some of their exchanges. In this excerpt, we see how Gene and Chris successfully negotiated an exchange of their prizes while simultaneously building a playful fiction about nattō, movie tickets, and having no dates.

Excerpt 12

1 Gene: mm.

2 Art: Ah!

3 Chris: **oh wait. ehh?! yabai. ((sounding disappointed))**
oh wait. ehh?! gross.

4 (.)

5 Gene: ja nani o uh moratta?
what did you get?

6 Chris: eh:: takusan no nattou o moratta.
uh:: I got a ton of natto.

7 Gene: [ahh oishii ne!
[ahh yummy!

8 Art: [nattou nattou

9 Chris: **oishikunai! totemo oishikunai heheh**
it's not yummy! it's really gross heheh

10 Gene: [ohh:! nattou ga kirai ne.
[ohh:! *you really don't like natto.*

11 Chris: hai.
yes.

12 Art: **[nattou**

13 Gene: ah: zannen.
ah: that's too bad.

14 Chris: Gene san wa?
How about Gene?

15 Gene: uh eiga no kippu o fu- ni- nimai um nimai moratta.
uh I got tw- two movie tickets.

16 Art: **[nattou**

17 Chris: ahh uhh

18 Art: [hmm

19 Gene: [totemo ureshii.
[I'm very happy.

20 Art: hehe

21 Chris: **ehh? ahh. deeto ga uh uh imasu ka?**
ehh? ahh. Do you have a date?

22 Art: [hokkai

23 Gene: **demo deeto um ga inai hehe**
but I don't have a date hehe

24 Chris: **ahh: zannen desu ne:!**
ahh: that's too bad!

25 Art: [hehe

- 26 Gene: [**eto: koukan shinai?**
 [**eto: can we trade?**
- 27 Chris: ja ya koukan suru shi yo
 yeah we can trade
- 28 Gene: **ehh ureshii hehe**
 ehh I'm happy hehe
- 29 Chris: ehh hehehe
- 30 Gene: **takusan nattou o uh tabetai hehe**
 I want to eat lots of natto hehe

Seb and Ken also engaged in semantic play after one of them drew the nattō card. In excerpt 13, Ken tells Seb he won lots of nattō in line 2. The pair role play how exciting it is to win nattō, and both claim that they think nattō is very tasty in lines 3-7. However, their smile voice coupled with laughter and giggling in these lines reveals that they seem to be having fun with this exchange. Nattō continues to be the object of play as they interact. In line 9, Seb indicates that he received a 5,000 yen (approx. \$45) Amazon gift card. When Ken asks what Seb plans to buy with the gift card, Seb responds “I’ll probably buy nattō” in line 13. Seb continues to play by saying he wants to buy “very delicious nattō” with his gift card money in line 19 and comments that convenience store nattō is not very good in line 21. Ken’s dejected response in line 22 reveals that this is semantic play in which Seb disappoints Ken by deciding to buy his own tastier, more expensive nattō with his gift card rather than trade it for the nattō that Ken won from the convenience store. Even when the dyad gets distracted by people outside and starts speaking in English in lines 30-34, Seb brings up nattō again in the L2 in line 35, ending the activity on a playful note. In this exchange, we see how a round of semantic play unfolded after drawing a card that was meant to elicit language play.

Excerpt 13

- 1 Seb: hehe ja: nani o moratta?

- hehe well: what did you get?*
- 2 Ken: **takusan natto o moratta hehe**
I got a ton of natto hehe
- 3 Seb: **oh natto! oh sugoi!**
oh natto! oh amazing!
- 4 Ken: **hehe takusan natto ((smile voice))**
hehe lots of natto
- 5 Seb: *haha takusan ohh:! jaa*
haha lots ohhh:! well
- 6 Ken: **[oishii ne: ((smile voice))**
[how tasty:
- 7 Seb: **hehe un sugoku oishii desu ne:.**
hehe yup it's super tasty.
- 8 Ken: *ja:. natto wa moratta umm nani ga moratta.*
well then. I got natto umm what did you get?
- 9 Seb: *ohh: watashi wa:. amazon de: gosen en moratta. hehe*
ohhh: I got 5000 yen for Amazon. hehe
- 10 Ken: *ii ne:.*
nice.
- 11 Seb: *mmm.*
- 12 Ken: *ja:. (.) amazon ni nani o kaimasu ka? kai-*
well: (.) what will you buy on amazon? buy-
- 13 Seb: **mm tabun natto o kaima- kaimashou.**
mm I'll probably buy natto.
- 14 Ken: *sou desu ka?*
really?
- 15 Seb: *mm mm.*
- 16 Ken: *ja: eto: uh*
well then uh: uh
- 17 Seb: *ohh sore ga*
ohh that is
- 18 Ken: *[umm*
- 19 Seb: **takusan no natto kedo: gosen en no natto wa mm. (.) sugoku**
oishii natto o kaima- err kaitai.
a lot of natto bu:t 5,000 yen natto is mm. (.) I will- I want to
buy very delicious natto.
- 20 Ken: *hehe*
- 21 Seb: **((inhales)) konbini no natto wa chotto:. hehe**

- 22 Ken: **((inhales)) convenience store natto is a little: hehe**
sou desu ka:. ((sounding dejected))
I see:
- 23 Seb: [heheh
- 24 Ken: **jaa mainichi natto o tabe- tabemasu.**
well I'll eat- eat natto every day.
- 25 Seb: ((starts laughing))
- 26 Ken: err I guess I can use tabeta
err I guess I can use ate
- 27 Seb: tabeta? taberu. hehe
ate? eat. hehe
- 28 Ken: taberu.
eat.
- 29 (.)
- 30 Ken: enjoy your fancy amazon natto ((smile voice))
- 31 Seb: ((laughing)) yeah.
- 32 Ken: some people eating oh!
- 33 Seb: I know right it looks so pleasant.
- 34 Ken: they're all taunting me with their food there outside ((smile voice))
- 35 Seb: **demo natto tabeteinai.**
but they aren't eating natto.
- 36 Ken: ((inaudible)) **delivered ((inaudible))**
wa natto o tabemasen? er- tabenai?
((inaudible)) delivered ((inaudible)) wouldn't you eat natto?
- 37 Seb: mm.

Expressing surprise at the task materials

As mentioned earlier, I included prompts and materials in the *Uranaiishi* and *Konbini Kuji* tasks that were intentionally bizarre or unusual in order to see how learners would react to them. In both tasks, there were instances in which one or both partners would express surprise at the materials which would sometimes be followed by laughter and a round of semantic LP. The bolded text in the excerpts indicates surprise and instances of LP during learner interaction.

In excerpt 14, Seb and Ken are doing the *Uranaishi* task. Seb draws a question card that asks “Will I ride a bike from Seattle to New York?” When Seb asks this question in line 3, Ken shows surprise by saying “is that actually the card?” in English in line 4. When Seb responds yes, both break down into laughter. Clearly, they find this question funny. Role-playing the fortune teller in line 7, Ken provides a playful response: “No, you will ride from Seattle to Florida.” Ken changes the destination from New York to Florida while preserving the crucial aspect of riding a bike across the country. Ken then charges an exorbitant fee in line 11 (approx. \$200,000) to which Seb playfully responds “I don’t have any money” in line 12. At the conclusion of this exchange, they switch to their L1. In lines 25 – 27 they comment on the prompt they played with, citing it “weird” and “specific” in a smile voice register before grabbing a new set of card prompts at the front of the room.

Excerpt 14

- 1 Seb: uranaishi san.
fortune teller.
- 2 Ken: hai.
yes.
- 3 Seb: **ichinengo watashi wa jitensha de shiatoru kara nyuu yooku
made iku to omoimasu ka.**
*Do you think I will ride a bike from Seattle to New York in a
year?*
- 4 Ken: **is that actually the card? hehe**
- 5 Seb: **hehe yes**
- 6 **((both laughing))**
- 7 Ken: **iie. shiatoru made or kara uh sorry shiatoru kara (.) florida
made hehe**
no. to Seattle or from uh sorry from Seattle (.) to Florida hehe
- 8 Seb: hehehe
- 9 Ken: **jitensha de iku tsumori desu.**
intend to go by bike.
- 10 Seb: [a sou desu ka. mmm. ja o ikutsu desu ka.

[is that so. mmm. well then how many?

- 11 Ken: **mm. nisen nihyaku nijuniman er en desu.**
mm. twenty two million two hundred twenty thousand er yen.
- 12 Seb: **sou desu ka. demo okane ga nai hehe**
I see. but I don't have any money hehe
- 13 Ken: ja
well then
- 14 Seb: [((giggling))
- 15 ((both start laughing))
- 16 Ken: I don't know what I'm gonna do.
- 17 Seb: yeah oh well
- 18 Ken: you tell my fortune hehe
- 19 Seb: hehe
- 20 Ken: then we call it even.
- 21 (.)
- 22 Seb: well
- 23 Ken: I guess I'll get another one
- 24 Seb: hehe
- 25 Ken: **that's such a weird one hehe**
- 26 Seb: **very specific.**
- 27 Ken: **heh very.**

In the corpus, the *Konbini Kuji* task exhibited the most instances of learners expressing surprise at the intentionally bizarre materials. By design, the prizes were more outlandish than even the somewhat unusual prompts I included in the *Uraishaishi* task.

In excerpt 15, Al and Mark both draw bizarre prizes and react with laughter and playful interactions. In this exchange, Al received a “mean upperclassman” while Mark received “fourteen horses” (refer to Figure 3). One would not expect to win such prizes from a typical Japanese convenience store contest, to say the least. Al and Mark clearly find humor in the absurdity of these prizes, as evidenced by their mutual laughter that begins in line 6 and continues throughout the exchange. Nevertheless, they engage in the task by discussing what they plan to do with such prizes and even try to negotiate a trade. In line 14, Mark says that he

will sell the horses. In line 15, Al expresses that she does not want to receive a mean upperclassman. In line 18, Mark responds, “will you sell the upperclassman?” In line 19, Al asks if Mark wants to trade. Mark displays hesitation in line 20. Al’s “eh? eh? eh?” in line 21 sounds like playful “egging on” to get Mark to trade. They seem to have exhausted playful possibilities within this exchange and return to L1 usage to comment on the task materials. Their comments in lines 23-33 evidence that they found the strange prize cards funny.

Figure 3. 14 horses and a mean upperclassman



Excerpt 15

- 1 Al: **ijiaru na se::?! hehe**
a mean upperclass:?! hehe
- 2 Mark: **heh? hontou?**
heh? really?
- 3 Al: nani o moratta?
what did you get?
- 4 Mark: **uma: juuyon hiki.**
14 horses
- 5 Al: **oh?!**
- 6 ((both burst out in laughter))
- 7 Al: **you got fourteen horses? haha**
- 8 Mark: **haha sou desu ne:**
haha yes indeed
- 9 Al: **ima ijiwaru na senpai o moratta haha**

- I just got a mean upperclassmen haha*
- 10 Mark: **ah! kowai desu ne:.**
ah! how scary:.
- 11 Al: **kowai desu ne hehe. (.) uma juu yon hiki: nani o nani o suru?**
scary indeed hehe. (.) what what will you do with 14 horses?
- 12 Mark: wakannai desu ne.
I don't know.
- 13 Al: hehe
- 14 Mark: **uma juuyon hiki: mmm. urimasu.**
14 horses: mmm. I'll sell them.
- 15 Al: watashi wa (.) ijiwaru na senpai:::? o::: (.) i: morat-
ijiwaru na senpai o morattakunai. heh
*I (.) a mean upperclassmen:::? o::: (.) I don't- I don't want a
mean upperclassmen. heh*
- 16 Mark: moraitakuna:i.
I don't want i:t.
- 17 Al: moraitakuna:i.
I don't want i:t.
- 18 Mark: **senpai o (.) urimasu ka? hehe**
will you (.) sell the upperclassmen? hehe
- 19 Al: **kirai. (.) koukan shinai?**
I don't like them. (.) can we trade?
- 20 Mark: mmm. eto: hehehe
mmm. uhh: hehehe
- 21 Al: **[eh? eh? eh? eh?**
- 22 Al: ijiwaru na senpai ((smile voice)).
a mean upperclassmen ((smile voice)).
- 23 Mark: hahaha.
- 24 Al: **how can you receive?**
- 25 Mark: **he just shows up.**
- 26 Al: **a scary senpai? ((smile voice))**
- 27 Mark: **[he just appears and is like ((inaudible))**
- 28 ((Instructor reminds students that they can grab a new prize any time))
- 29 Al: atarashii? you wanna get it this time?
- 30 Mark: yeah.
- 31 Al: **hehe like I just love this like you got a mean senpai and**
- 32 **fourteen horses ((smile voice)) ohhh**
- 33 Mark: **[fourteen horses ((smile voice)) haha**

Another prize that elicited strong reactions from participants was a Windows 95 disc (refer to Figure 4). In lines 2 and 3 of excerpt 16, Al and Mark break down into laughter after Mark draws this prize:

Excerpt 16

- 1 Al: nani o moratta?
what did you get?
- 2 Mark: **windo:zu 95 no disuku o moratta hahaha**
I got a Windows 95 disc hahaha
- 3 Al: [pffftt hahahaha
- 4 Mark: hehe Al-san wa?
hehe how about you?
- 5 Al: hehe watashi wa (.) ichiman en o moratta
hehe I got (.) 10,000 yen
- 6 Mark: [ah:!

Figure 4. Windows 95 disc prize



Gene, Chris, and Art also appeared to find the Windows 95 disc funny to receive as a prize. In excerpt 17, a playful exchange unfolds as Gene and Chris negotiate a trade involving this prize. The exchange begins by Chris saying that he won a computer in line 2. Gene follows up by noticing that the prize is an Apple brand computer and voices his disappointment. In lines 3-8, Gene and Chris play with how they would refer to an Apple brand computer in Japanese. In

line 3, Gene first says *appuru* ('apple' transliterated), then *ringo* ('apple' translated). In line 6, Chris follows up by saying perhaps it is called *makintosh* ('Macintosh') in Japanese. Gene then says "Macintosh computers are bad" in line 7. In line 8, Chris plays with the words *ringo* and apple. Throughout this exchange, their sing-song prosody, experimentation with proper nouns, and giggling indicate that this is a playful exchange for Gene and Chris.

Perhaps by sheer luck, in line 11 Gene shares that he also received a computer-related prize: the Windows 95 disc. Chris is clearly amused at this prize, as indicated by his clapping, excited voice, and giggling in line 12. Art and Gene also seem to find the Windows 95 disc funny, as they start laughing in lines 13 and 14. Gene even calls himself "lucky" in line 13, perhaps to contrast with the Apple computer that he was playfully deriding earlier.

In line 17, Chris tries to negotiate an exchange of their prizes. However, he cannot quite phrase it at first. In line 20, Gene offers assistance through providing a recast of the phrase necessary to make a trade. Chris attempts to repeat what Gene says in line 21, and Gene kindly agrees to the trade. Chris calls himself lucky in line 23. The participants' mutual laughter keys this as a playful interaction. They end on a happy note, repeating how much both of them love Windows in lines 25 and 26.

Excerpt 17

- 1 Gene: nani o moratta?
what did you get?
- 2 Chris: ahh. pasokon o uh morau.
ahh. I get a computer.
- 3 Gene: [ohhh. *appuru no- ringo no pasokon desu ne:.
dame:.*
[ohhh. *an Apple no- an apple computer. that's
no good.*
- 4 Chris: oh.ahaha.
- 5 Gene: **hehe ringo no pasokon**
hehe an apple computer

6 Chris: I think it'd be like makintosh: ((smile voice))

7 Gene: makintosshu no pasokon dame:.
Macintosh computers are bad.

8 Chris: [ringo: hehe apple.

9 Gene: hehe.

10 Chris: ringo- hai hai hai uh. ((inaudible)) nani o uh moratta?
apple- yes yes yes uh. ((inaudible)) what did you get?

11 Gene: windo:zu ninety- ninety faivu no disuku o moratta hehe
I got a Windows ninety- ninety five disc hehe

12 Chris: ohhh! ((clapping)) ii ne:! hehe
ohhh! ((clapping)) how nice:! hehe

13 Gene: ehehe totemo rakki desu
ehehe I'm very lucky

14 Art: [haha

15 Chris: hai rakki:. uh
yes lucky:. uh

16 Art: haha. ii ne.
haha. nice.

17 Chris: konban uh shi- uh shiyou shou? no you shall we trade.
tonight uh sh- uh shall shall we? no you shall we trade.

18 Gene: oh. koukan.
oh. trade.

19 Art: chotto m-
wait a sec-

20 Gene: [koukan shiyou
[let's trade

21 Chris: [oh koukan shou.
[oh let's trade ((mispronounced))

22 Gene: ja:: so shim- sou shiyou
well:: let's- let's do that

23 Chris: [ha: ahh rakki:::
[ha: ahh lucky:::

24 Gene: ((laughs)) ja:
((laughs)) well then

25 Chris: windows ga daisuki daisuki
I love love Windows

26 Gene: ehh daisuki daisuki
yeah I love it too

LREs and peer support

The corpus was coded for LREs and instances of peer support. Exchanges in which participants explicitly talked about the language they were trying to produce were coded as LREs. In the corpus I found 12 LREs. 5 were coded as lexical LREs, 6 were coded as formal LREs, and 1 was coded as a lexical PLRE. In terms of successfully resolved LREs, there were 5 out of 5 lexical LREs, 4 out of 6 formal LREs, and 1 out of 1 lexical PLRE (see Table 11). The bolded text in the excerpts indicates instances of LREs in learner discourse.

Table 11. LREs in the corpus

LRE Type	Total	Resolved
Lexical LRE	5	5
Formal LRE	6	4
Lexical PLRE	1	1

Lexical LREs occurred when participants were trying to find words to either communicate their message or understand a prompt. Some lexical LREs were successfully resolved when the speaker asked their partner, usually in English, for specific vocabulary items. In excerpt 18 line 2, Gene provides Chris with the word he was looking for. In excerpt 19 line 2, Seb does the same for Ken. Both of the excerpts occurred during the *Uranaiishi* task. In both cases, participants used their L1 to ask their partner if they knew the word they were looking for.

Excerpt 18

- 1 Chris: **hehe ok e:to uhh what was the word for future was?**
 2 Gene: **shourai.**
future.
 3 Chris: shourai no shitsumon ga arimasu.
I have a question about the future.

Excerpt 19

- 1 Ken: I got a couple. u:m. (.) do you remember what seikatsu was?
 2 Seb: oh. what kind of lifestyle

In excerpt 20, Chris appears to not immediately understand Gene's question in line 1. In line 6, Chris struggles to recall what *zasshi* ('magazine') means. In line 7, Gene provides a candidate form. In line 8, Chris appears to have come to an understanding as evidenced by his "Ohh!" followed by his correct English translation of the initial question.

Excerpt 20

- 1 Gene: ahh hoka ni. ahh. hai. uhh zasshi no gaba- kabaa- ni- ga-
 kabaa.
ahh what else. ahh. yes. uhh magazine cover- cover- on a- cover.
- 2 Chris: hmm?
- 3 Gene: zasshi no kabaa ni deru?
will I be on a magazine cover?
- 4 Chris: **hmm?**
- 5 Gene: **zasshi no kabaa**
a magazine cover
- 6 Chris: **zasshi: zasshi's just uhh:**
- 7 Gene: **Isn't zasshi magazine?**
- 8 Chris: **I was trying to say zasshi no kabaa? Ohh! Will you appear on
 the cover of a magazine.**
- 9 Gene: Ohh ok. kabaa oh yeah.
- 10 Chris: Yeah that's it.
- 11 Gene: hehehe

In some cases, the struggling partner is able to locate a word even when their partner cannot initially provide it. Excerpt 21 shows a lexical LRE that happened during the *Konbini Kuji* task. In line 1, Al is trying to remember the word *kōkyū* ('high class') and asks Mark for help. Mark is unable to provide help in line 2. Nevertheless, Al is able to correctly recall the word she was looking for in line 3 and formulates an utterance with the new item in line 5. Even without overt help from Mark, the simple act of taking a moment to look for a word appears to

have given Al the time and space to mentally locate and incorporate this lexical item into her speech.

Excerpt 21

- 1 Al: [dakara (.) high level. was it like go kyuu? was that what high level was?
 2 Mark: I dunno.
 3 Al: koukyuu resutoran?
high class restaurant?
 4 Mark: that sounds about right.
 5 Al: koukyuu resutoran ni ikimasu.
I'll go to a high class restaurant.

Excerpt 22 also occurred during the *Konbini Kuji* task. Like excerpt 21, the partner here does not immediately provide the lexical item the other partner is looking for. Nevertheless, they are able to find the right word. In line 1, Gene asks Chris what the word for 'get' is in Japanese. While Chris is struggling to provide an answer in line 2, Gene continues to think out loud in line 3. Gene and Chris simultaneously recall the word *morau* ('to get, to receive') in line 4.

Excerpt 22

- 1 Gene: [um sore wa um at- um to get wa nan desu ka?
[um that is um at- um what is to get?
 2 Chris: uhh uhh uhh
 3 Gene: to ge- to recei- morau? oh.
 4 Chris: [morau
[to receive

Formal LREs were resolved through varying degrees of collaboration. In excerpt 23, both Chris and Gene encounter LREs during an exchange and they both find their answer without the other chiming in. In line 1, Chris vocalizes his thought process using a mix of English and Japanese as he tries to figure out the correct pronunciation for counting years in Japanese. In line

1, he demonstrates that he is trying to recall the correct pronunciation when saying “what was it I guess” followed by a candidate form *ni toshi go*. While he is on the right track, *toshi* (‘year’) is not the correct pronunciation of this sentence. Chris quickly realizes this when he says “no” followed by the correct pronunciation, *ninengo* (‘two years later’).

In line 2, Gene undergoes a similar process as he crafts his response. Here, he exhibits his thought process when he says, “How do you say like you won’t be?” However, before Chris can chime in, Gene produces the correct form, *sensei ja nai* (‘not a teacher’). In this exchange, both participants come to a correct solution after taking a moment to verbally address the linguistic item they were struggling with.

Excerpt 23

- 1 Chris: onegai shimasu. **uhh hmm sensei what was it I guess ni- ni toshi go? no. ninengo. ninengo wa sensei ni na- narimasu. narimasu ka.**
please. uhh hmm teacher what was it I guess two- two years from now? no. two years from now. two years from now I will become a teacher. will I become?
- 2 Gene: hmm sou desu ne. hmm. watashi wa uhh sensei uh er Chris-san wa uh sen- uh ninengo uh sensei um (.) um **How do say like you won't be? Sensei ja nai**
hmm let's see. hmm. I uhh teacher uh er Chris will uh teach- uh two years from now teacher um (.) um how do you say like you won't be? Won't be a teacher.

Excerpt 24 happened during the *Uranaishi* task. In this case, Mel was looking for the counting expression for animals. In line 1, Mel asks Kai if they have not learned animal counters yet. Kai suggests that they have not yet learned these phrases in line 2. Nevertheless, Mel was able to find the correct counting expression (*nanbiki*, ‘how many small animals’) in line 3.

Excerpt 24

- 1 Mel: ((high pitched laugh)) **uhh mm umm we don't know- we don't know what counters right?**
- 2 Kai: animals. iie.
- 3 Mel: **yeah ok. um nanbiki? I think that's the counter.**
- 4 Kai: mm.

In excerpt 25, Seb helps Ken resolve a formal LRE by providing a candidate form in response to Ken experimenting with grammar. In line 1, Ken says he will eat *nattō* every day, making Seb laugh in line 2. In line 3, Ken uses English to vocalize his thoughts about using short-form to communicate the same idea, saying he could use *tabeta* ('to eat' past-tense). However, this would be erroneous in the context of their utterance. Seb notices in line 4, and provides the correctly tensed verb *taberu* ('to eat' non-past, habitual) whereupon Ken appropriates it in line 5.

Excerpt 25

- 1 Ken: jaa mainichi natto o tabe- tabemasu.
well I'll eat- eat natto every day.
- 2 Seb: ((starts laughing))
- 3 Ken: **err I guess I can use tabeta**
err I guess I can use ate
- 4 Seb: **tabeta? taberu. hehe**
ate? eat. hehe
- 5 Ken: **taberu.**
eat.

Excerpt 26 shows an unresolved formal LRE. Here, Chris and Gene are trying to help Art talk about a vacation in Hokkaido during the *Konbini Kuji* task. They discuss whether *koto* ('thing', intangible) or *mono* ('thing', tangible) would be appropriate in this instance. While they are on the right track, with Gene providing an accurate candidate response in line 1, they are unable to come to a consensus on which utterance is correct before moving on.

Excerpt 26

- 1 Gene: takusan tanoshii koto ga aru? think? wait things?
are there lots of fun things to do? think? wait things?
- 2 Chris: [mm.]
- 3 Gene: wait it's like mono right or?
- 4 Chris: well I think uh: well like
- 5 Gene: or iroiro
- 6 Chris: [to- to:ko:? like one of them is tangible and one of them is
intangible things. I believe
- 7 Gene: [oh yeah I don't- we haven't learned it yet so it's fine
- 8 Chris: well I think well we know mono.
- 9 Gene: mono:
- 10 Chris: I'll ask afterwards.
- 11 Art: hah
- 12 Gene: hehe he just switches to a new one

Another unresolved formal LRE came at the end of an exchange between Seb and Ken during the *Uranaishi* task. In excerpt 27, Ken asks Seb how one says, “please come again.” Seb does not remember. They decide to move on with the task instead of figuring out how to make this phrase.

Excerpt 27

- 1 Ken: how do I say please come again?
- 2 Seb: how do you say?
- 3 Ken: [i don't remember.]
- 4 (.)
- 5 Seb: yeah I forgot heh
- 6 Ken: oh well heh that's the end get out of here. hehe
- 7 Seb: [heheh

The sole PLRE identified in the corpus happened during the *Uranaishi* task with Mel and Kai. Bell (2012) defined PLREs as LREs with some sort of playful orientation by the interlocutors. I coded the exchange in excerpt 28 as a lexical PLRE due to how the LRE was

initiated by Kai attempting to play in the L2. In the exchange, Mel is role-playing the customer and Kai is role-playing the fortune teller. Kai just finished reading Mel's fortune and Mel is asking how much the visit will cost in line 1. Kai playfully says "*rei en desu*" ('zero yen') in line 2 in a "spooky" voice. While I was not able to confirm this with Kai, it is possible that Kai is making an L2 pun here. There is an abundance of homonyms in the Japanese language, creating lots of potential for punning language play. Here, it is possible that Kai knew *rei* can refer to both the words for 'zero' and 'spirit/soul/ghost'. Pun intended or not, Kai's use of "spooky voice" in the supernatural context of the fortune teller marks this as a playful utterance. In response, Mel asks in English if *rei en* means free, signaling that Mel may have known that *rei* means 'zero'. I should note that Mel was the sole participant who reported that she spoke some Japanese at home while growing up. In line 4, Kai confirms that *rei en* can mean free, and rephrases the statement to *zero en desu* ('It's 0 yen') in line 6. Mel starts to laugh in line 7. In line 8, Kai brings back the "spooky voice" and says "how scaaary" in Japanese. Both start to laugh as a result.

I coded this as a lexical PLRE due to the following playful elements: Kai's adoption of "spooky voice", Kai's perhaps unintentional pun on *rei*, and the mutual laughter that concludes the exchange.

Excerpt 28

- 1 Mel: ii desu ne. ja ah uhh ikura desu ka.
how nice. well ah uhh how much?
- 2 Kai: mmm. ahh (.) **rei desu. ooohhh ((spooky voice)) rei en desu.**
mmm. ahh (.) zero. ooohhh ((spooky voice)) zero yen.
- 3 Mel: **is that free?**
- 4 Kai: hai.
yes.
- 5 Mel: ohhh hehe

- 6 Kai: **zero en desu.**
it'll be zero yen.
- 7 Mel: hehehe
- 8 Kai: **ooohh kowai: desu ((spooky voice))**
ooohh scary: ((spooky voice))
- 9 Mel: **((laughter))**
- 10 Kai: **((laughter))**

Peer assistance

The corpus was also coded for instances of peer assistance. The following forms of assistance were observed: co-construction, recasts, waiting, and explaining in the L1. Table 12 shows the amount of times each form of peer assistance was observed in the data, and in which task they occurred. More instances of peer assistance were observed in *Konbini Kuji* compared to the *Uranaishi* task. Perhaps this was due to the interactional components of the *Konbini Kuji* task: making evaluations and comparisons, talking about hypothetical plans, and negotiating trades. Furthermore, learners were not given any prompts beyond the prize cards. On the other hand, the *Uranaishi* task had fully formed sentences as prompts on the question cards, taking away some of the burden of producing completely original utterances. Thus, the *Konbini Kuji* task was more challenging than the *Uranaishi* task due to the fact that it provided less linguistic support and required participants to utilize a wider variety of structural patterns to successfully accomplish the task. The bolded text in the excerpts indicates instances of peer assistance during learner interactions.

Table 12. Peer assistance in the two tasks

	<i>Uranaishi</i>	<i>Konbini Kuji</i>
Co-construction (2)	0/2	2/2
Recast (5)	1/5	4/5

Waiting (5)	0/5	5/5
L1 Explanation (1)	0/1	1/1

Waiting was one of the most common forms of assistance observed within the corpus. Furthermore, all coded instances of waiting occurred during the *Konbini Kuji* task in the Gene, Chris, and Art triad. Several times throughout this task, these group members patiently waited as a speaker worked to produce an utterance. In excerpt 29, Chris waits while Gene formulates an utterance in line 1.

Excerpt 29

- 1 Gene: ja. mo- oh um uh takusan uh um takusan tabemono o um katta
hehe
ok. mo- oh um uh many uh um I bought many foods hehe
- 2 Chris: ohh
- 3 Gene: [err um kai- um kautsumori- tsumori desu.
[err um buy- um intend to buy- I intend to buy.
- 4 Chris: eh:! doko?
eh:! where?

In excerpt 30, the same thing happens, only with Gene working on a longer utterance with more turns in lines 1, 3, and 5.

Excerpt 30

- 1 Gene: ah nani- um
ah what- um
- 2 Chris: koukan suru?
will you trade?
- 3 Gene: uh nani m- uh mazu nani o- uh suru tsumori desu ka? (.) kono
tsu- um sono kunu tunu- tuna can
uh what f- uh first what o- uh do you plan to do? (.) with this
tu- um with the tunu- tuna can
- 4 Chris: [oh
- 5 Gene: wa nani o- or kono tuna can o nani suru tsumori desu
ka?

- what o- or what do you plan to do with these tuna cans?*
- 6 Chris: eh tsuna o tsumo- su- su: no. moratta? hai. what was the question?
eh tuna o intend- do- do: no. I received? yes. what was the question?

In excerpt 31, Gene and Chris wait as Art crafts his own utterance in line 1. In these three excerpts, partners patiently waited while the speaker worked on producing contextually appropriate and grammatically accurate utterances during the activity.

Excerpt 31

- 1 Art: *sumimasen ga ah (.) su- sumimasen kedo uh pasokon uh pasokon
o uh uh ir- pasokon irana:i
sorry but ah (.) s- sorry but uh computer uh computer oh uh ir-
I don't need a computer*
- 2 Gene: ahh.
- 3 Chris: [ah::.

Participants demonstrated active listening while they waited by following up with questions or elaborations in response to their partners' utterances, indicating that they were not only paying attention to their partners' language use, but that they may also have been anticipating what their partner was trying to say and planned their response. In excerpt 32, Chris and Gene wait as Art works to produce his utterance in lines 1, 3, 6, 8, and 11. Once Art has completed his utterance, Gene and Chris provide contextually appropriate follow-up: Chris comments in line 12, "That's nice." Gene and Chris in lines 13 and 14 comment on the brown color of the giant teddy bear.

Excerpt 32

- 1 Art: *[hehe Chr- Chris san uh
[hehe Chr- Chris uh*
- 2 Chris: [hai. oh. ookii teddy
[yes. oh. big teddy

- 3 Art: [kum- ookii kum- ookii kuma
[bea- big bea- big bear
- 4 Chris: ookii kuma.
big bear.
- 5 (.)
- 6 Art: **ookii (.)**
big (.)
- 7 Chris: nani
what
- 8 Art: **ookii kuma no omo- omocha uh moratta.**
big bear to- toy uh I received.
- 9 Chris: [o mo cha
[t o y
- 10 Gene: ooh.
- 11 Art: **moratta. um**
I received. um
- 12 Chris: ohh: ii ne.
ohh: nice.
- 13 Gene: chairo
brown
- 14 Chris: chairo.
brown.

While waiting provides participants the space and time to formulate an utterance, one exchange showed how it can also produce humor. In excerpt 33, Gene is trying to ask Art if he wants his prize (Giant Pocky, a Japanese chocolate snack). In line 1, Gene verbalizes that he is searching for the word ‘to get’ (*morau*). He is able to figure this out by line 3. Then, in line 5, Gene tries to conjugate *morau* into its desiderative form, *moraitai* (‘I want to get’). After a few false starts, he is able to finally say what he was trying to say. In the audio file, it takes Gene about six seconds to complete his utterance in line 5. Whereupon, Art responds with a curt “No.” in line 6. The partners find this sudden refusal funny, as indicated by their laughter that animates the rest of the exchange. Nevertheless, they stay on task and produce contextually appropriate

responses. Gene asks “why?” in lines 8 and 10. He also comments how cold (*tsumetai*) of a response that was in line 11. Art is able to explain himself in line 12, with Gene and Chris signaling understanding in lines 15 and 16. They end by playfully commenting that Art is *ijiiwaru* (‘mean-spirited’) in lines 17 and 18. Here, waiting not only gave Gene a chance to practice formulating an utterance, but also produced humor within the interaction that led to a playful, and pragmatically appropriate, elaboration on behalf of the speaking partners.

Excerpt 33

- 1 Gene: [um sore wa um at- um to get wa nan desu ka?
[um that is um at- um what is to get?
- 2 Chris: uhh uhh uhh
- 3 Gene: to ge- to recei- morau? oh.
- 4 Chris: [morau
[to receive
- 5 Gene: um sore wa mora:- mora:- um morai tai. hai sore wa moraitai.
um that I want to ge:- ge:- um I want to get. yes I want to get that.
- 6 Art: **ie.**
no.
- 7 Chris: **((bursts into laughter with a clap))**
- 8 Gene: **ehh: doushite? ((laughing))**
ehh: why? ((laughing))
- 9 Art: **huh?**
- 10 Gene: **doushite heheh ((laughing))**
why? hehehh ((laughing))
- 11 Gene: **tsumetai ((smile voice))**
how cold ((smile voice))
- 12 Art: nattou kara. nattou dakara.
because it's natto. because it's natto.
- 13 Gene: [ahh:
- 14 Art: nattou dakara:
because it's natto:.
- 15 Gene: ahh:.
- 16 Chris: ehh.
- 17 Gene: ijiiwaru hehe.

- how mean hehe.*
- 18 Chris: *ijiwaru ne.*
mean indeed.
- 19 Art: *hehe.*

Discussion

In this section, I discuss the results of the study with regard to my research questions. Then, I explore some pedagogical considerations regarding play and classroom language learning. Finally, I propose some questions for future research on implementing LP in the classroom.

Research question 1: What happens when playful tasks, designed with an eye to promoting semantic language play, are incorporated into foreign language instruction?

The transcripts in the analysis showed that playful tasks can be effectively incorporated into the classroom curriculum to foster semantic language play and linguistic development. The data suggests that these tasks facilitated classroom learning, as evidenced by the study participants' adherence to the task guidelines while they interacted in the L2 and provided peer assistance. Furthermore, the corpus shows that all participants played with language during these tasks in some way or form.

The corpus shows how playful partners elaborated on each other's responses, co-constructed alternate realities, and made humor in the TL as they accomplished the tasks. However, task design and implementation may have influenced these results. The *Uranaishi* and *Konbini Kuji* tasks were designed so that learners could continuously replenish task content at their own pace. I provided numerous unique question prompts and prize cards so that students would be more likely to draw something new each time. Furthermore, the tasks were open-

ended, leaving room for creativity, expression, and experimentation in the L2. These measures helped keep the task “fresh” throughout its duration. Perhaps this is one means by which instructors can make tasks less monotonous and boring for learners, on top of providing engaging materials.

Research question 2: Do peers engage in productive learning behaviors during playful tasks? What kinds of behaviors?

As shown in the analysis, the participants did engage in what I categorized as productive learning behaviors. Learners addressed difficulties when they noticed them (which were coded as LREs), provided support to struggling partners, and co-constructed utterances. Waiting was a common form of assistance provided within the corpus. The analysis showed how partners waited while others crafted utterances, giving them time to use their developing language to produce comprehensible output. The partners who were waiting also had time to anticipate their partners’ utterances and plan their responses. However, there were times in which participants could not successfully craft utterances. There were also minor errors that went unnoticed. As noted earlier, the semantic LP tasks were meaning-based comprehensive tasks. Therefore, minor errors that did not impede comprehension were not always addressed.

This leads to a broader question about addressing errors during open-ended semantic play tasks. The participants in this study most likely fall within the novice-high to intermediate-low levels of proficiency according to the ACTFL OPI guidelines for Japanese speaking proficiency. The speech of learners within these levels is characterized by frequent pauses, errors, and a strong influence of the L1 on their speech style. Furthermore, learners at these levels may also need repetition and rephrasing in order to come to an understanding. They are able to effectively

communicate with and be understood by sympathetic native speakers. Therefore, errors and stilted speech are an expected part of the speech of learners at this level.

In this light, errors and communication challenges should be seen as a necessary and expected part of language development. Within this study, there were instances in which learners attempted to say something but were not able to say it. These are valuable moments for language learners. On top of being evidence of the learner pushing themselves, which can drive development, the learner is gaining a greater awareness of where they are at in their L2 development. In the fortunate instances in which a partner provides peer support that allows them to successfully craft a complex utterance, we may be seeing a glimpse into what the learner will be able to accomplish independently in the future. This is why it is beneficial to create a space in which learners can test the limits of what they are capable of in the L2. It opens up opportunities for development and a growing sense of self-awareness as a language learner.

Pedagogical considerations

The semantic LP tasks in this study gave participants freedom to craft utterances and determine the course of their interactions. As exhibited in the corpus, learners took advantage of this by making jokes, being silly, teasing, and making up humorous references they would refer to later in the task. This freedom also gave them chances to experiment and push themselves to craft complex utterances. The data suggests that open-ended tasks with a playful component can encourage creativity and experimentation in the L2.

It is worth considering how playful tasks can influence the classroom environment. Do students feel comfortable speaking in the L2? Do the classroom tasks motivate learners to interact in the L2? The “safe house” effect of classroom humor (Pomerantz and Bell, 2011) is

one way to consider this issue. The “safe house” refers to how humor and play can be used to protect speakers from negative social consequences when utterances are framed as a joke (or play) and thus deniable. The language classroom has been described as a highly face-threatening environment in which learners must produce and comprehend speech in a developing and limited language (Dornyei 2001 as cited in Wagner 2011; Bell, 2019). Bell (2019) found that instructors who were more willing to play gave students a structured “environment within which learners could test out their knowledge of and ability to speak through [L2] voices” (p. 67). Moreover, discouraging “off-task” talk can take away opportunities for spontaneous, nonserious talk. Orienting classroom tasks towards play may mitigate face threats, lessen language anxiety, and encourage active participation and experimentation within the classroom. Furthermore, if the participants start to have fun with the tasks, then they may become intrinsically motivated in the moment to continue playing and pushing themselves in the L2.

Another point worth exploring is play as a linguistic activity. Particularly humorous play in which the goal is to make someone laugh. Within the classroom context, sometimes it is difficult to make language practice practical in the sense that learners feel like they are actually doing something with language. Making a joke and getting a reaction is one means by which learners can do things with words. Humor is a powerful tool of language, as it can directly influence the affective state of the interlocutors. Furthermore, being funny and making people laugh while using the L2 can build a learner’s confidence, as they are receiving direct evidence of their utterances producing an intended effect on the addressee. Moreover, playful talk not only mirrors serious talk (Bell 2019) but is also a “pervasive feature of everyday conversation” (Shively, 2013, p. 930). Thus, playful tasks may have the added benefit of simulating realistic,

everyday talk. Finally, we cannot discount the fun and pleasure learners may experience by having silly conversations in the L2.

We could consider play as one means by which students use language to experiment, push themselves, and learn to cope with linguistic ambiguity, among other things. However, Cook (2000) emphasizes that the functions of language play cannot be fully encompassed by utilitarian perspectives. He suggests that people play for the *sake of play itself*.

[T]here is good reason to regard language play both as a means and end of language learning. **It is an end for the simple reason that it constitutes a large proportion of personally and socially significant language use.** In addition, like the work needs by which it may be motivated, it involves **competition, the creation of social networks, and creative thinking** ... A person who can play with a language in creative and socially-effective ways—to tell a joke or a story—could certainly also buy an airline ticket. The reverse however is not necessarily true (204, my emphasis).

It may be that we often interact in order to play. This boils down to Cook's notion that play is a naturally occurring, ubiquitous aspect of linguistic behavior that is fundamentally human.

The cognitive and social processes that facilitate second language development have been described through computational metaphors, like acquisition, and other metaphors, like participation (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). But what if we taught learners to play a language, much like how one plays a game, a sport, or an instrument? Similar to the novice athlete or musician, beginning language players have a limited but developing set of tools they can use for participation within some specific community that behaves according to a set of norms. There is also the individual component of practice and repetition that characterize these activities; proficient *players* may have “talent”, but they also practice. This may be subjective, but there is a connotation of finality behind the notions of “learning” or “acquiring” language. To say “I learned Japanese” implies that the process of learning has concluded. However, if we recognize language development as a dynamic, lifelong process always subject to change, then perhaps the

play metaphor lends itself well to language study. Play does not connote the end of a process. If anything, play is a space in which dynamism can flourish because, in play, the outcome is never planned ahead of time. In sports, a fixed outcome is met with outrage by spectators and players. In music, the success or quality of a performance can only be determined through experiencing the process of music making, either as a participant or audience member. Thus, anything can happen during a round of play. While there may be an end goal for play, how play manifests itself is inevitably influenced by the choices the player(s) make in response to the moment they find themselves in. Simply put, play is improvisational, unpredictable, always new, and, like sports and music, a form of expression. In this regard, play certainly mirrors the dynamism and unexpected nature of interactions that occur in real-life. Thus, instead of asking prospective students, “do you want to learn Japanese?”, we may consider asking “do you want to play Japanese?” instead.

Questions for future research

SLA writing from an ecological perspective places critical importance on the links between the social environment and cognitive processes within the minds of learners (van Lier, 2000). Humor studies have found positive correlation between uses of humor and attitudes towards learning within the classroom (Wagner, 2011; Bell, 2019). More research on how LP tasks influence the classroom environment may illuminate how playful tasks can contribute to an atmosphere that encourages creativity and participation in the L2.

Exploring the relationship between proficiency and play may also help with task design. Can LP tasks only be implemented effectively within a classroom of highly proficient and intrinsically motivated learners? Are less proficient learners at a unique disadvantage when

encouraged to play with language? Could LP tasks have a negative effect on these learners' performance and confidence as a result? It is possible that being unable to join in the laughter and fun that others are having in the L2 could make struggling learners feel left behind. This is worth considering especially when some forms of play, like displays of humor, wit, and punning, are often competitive in nature (Cook 2000). Learners who are less proficient in their verbal skills may end up feeling acutely marginalized if they cannot play at the pace of the rest of the class.

It is not clear whether the semantic LP tasks I implemented in this study had a lasting effect on the learners' language development. Future studies could explore this by adopting a pre-, during-, post-, and delayed-post-test design to see how meaning-based semantic play can influence the broader development of the learner. Explorations of formal, semantic, and pragmatic play may also shine light on how different categories of play lend themselves more readily to classroom instruction.

Incorporating TL humor into instruction may also be an avenue worth exploring. Some studies of EFL and ESL learners have done this (Kim and Lantolf, 2014 & 2018; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2007). However, I am unaware of any studies that explored how learners of Japanese, for example, engaged with target culture forms of humor during pedagogical tasks. As mentioned earlier, I did implement a series of Japanese pun and poetry tasks as a means of practicing grammar and vocabulary while simultaneously introducing learners to these Japanese forms of creative (playful) writing. However, that data fell out of the scope of this thesis and thus was not included in the analysis. As an area of future research, I can look at interactional data from the other play-oriented activities I developed for this study.

Conclusion

In this thesis about language play in a Japanese as a foreign language classroom, I showed how learners played, addressed linguistic problems, and provided peer assistance during tasks that were designed to encourage semantic language play. As they interacted, participants played with language by dramatically role-playing characters, making jokes, and creating elaborate fictional scenarios that they sometimes referred back to later in the task. Learners also tried to push themselves by crafting utterances that were sometimes too complex for them at the time, allowing them to push beyond their limits. I touched on how intentionally bizarre pedagogical materials can create humorous moments for learners, which sometimes unfolded into playful exchanges amongst participants. I discussed how open-ended tasks that allow for freedom for expression provide students with opportunities to be creative with their developing L2. I argued that the playful tasks helped facilitate a relaxed atmosphere in which learners were willing to be creative and have fun with their language.

Above all, this thesis explored what might happen if classroom language tasks embraced the strange, silly, or bizarre, rather than dismissing it as off-task or frivolous. While no conclusions can be made about the learning outcomes of these tasks, the excerpts showed that learners engaged in productive learning behaviors within the language classroom, all the while having fun, during these playful activities. Hopefully, this thesis provides a glimpse into how language play can be effectively and deliberately incorporated into a language classroom.

References

- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (n.d.) *ACTFL proficiency guidelines 2012*. <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-an-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012/japanese/スピーキング>
- Ahn, S.Y. (2015). Exploring language awareness through students' engagement in language play. *Language Awareness*, 1-15.
- Bell, N. & Attardo, S. (2010). Failed humor: Issues in non-native speakers' appreciation and understanding of humor. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 7(3), 423-447.
- Bell, N. (2012). Comparing playful and nonplayful incidental attention to form. *Language Learning*, 62(1), 236-265.
- Bell, N., & Pomerantz, A. (2015). *Humor in the classroom: A guide for language teachers and education researchers*. Routledge.
- Bell, N., & Pomerantz, A. (2019). Humor in L2 pragmatics research. In N. Taguchi (ed.), *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and pragmatics* (pp. 63-77). Routledge.
- Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. J. (2015). Vygotskian and post-Vygotskian views on children's play. *American Journal of Play*, 7(3), 371-388.
- Broner, M. A., & Tarone, E. E. (2011). Is it fun? Language play in a fifth-grade Spanish immersion classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85(3), 363-379.
- Bushnell, C. (2009). 'Lego my keego!': An analysis of language play in a beginning Japanese as a foreign language classroom. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(1), 49-69.
- Cekaite, A., & Aronsson, K. (2005). Language play, a collaborative resource in children's L2 learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 26(2), 169-191.
- Cook, G. (2000). *Language Play, Language Learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Davies, C. (2015). Humor in intercultural interaction as both content and process in the classroom. *Humor*, 28(3), 375-395.
- Fernandez, B. M., & Fontecha, A. F. (2008). The teachability of Pragmatics in SLA: *Friends' humour through Grice*. *Porta Linguarum*, 10, 31-43.
- Foster, P., & Ohta, A. S. (2005). Negotiation for meaning and peer assistance in second language classrooms. *Applied Linguistics*, 26(3), 402-430.

- Kim, J., & Lantolf, J. P. (2018). Developing conceptual understanding of sarcasm in L2 English through explicit instruction. *Language Teaching Research*, 22(2), 208-229.
- Lantolf, J. (1997). The function of language play in the acquisition of L2 Spanish. In W. R. Glass & A. T. Perez-Leroux (Eds.), *Contemporary perspectives on the acquisition of Spanish* (pp. 3–24). Cascadilla Press.
- Jorden, E.H., & Noda M. (1987). *Japanese: the spoken language. Part 1*. Yale University Press.
- Lantolf, J.P. (2000). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J.P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp.1-26). Oxford University Press.
- Moody, S.J. (2014). “Well, I’m a *Gaijin*”: Constructing identity through English and humor in the international workplace. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 60, 75-88.
- Moody, S.J. (2018). Fitting in or standing out? A conflict of belonging and identity in intercultural polite talk at work. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(6), 775-798.
- Ohta, A.S. (2001). *Second language acquisition processes in the classroom: Learning Japanese*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Pavlenko, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In J.P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 153-177). Oxford University Press.
- Pomerantz, A., & Bell, N. (2011). Humor as safe house in the foreign language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95, 148-161.
- Reddington, E. (2015). Humor and play in language classroom interaction: A review of the literature. *Teachers College, Columbia University Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics*, 15(2), 22-38.
- Shively, R. (2013). Learning to be funny in Spanish during study abroad: L2 humor development. *The Modern Language Journal*, 97(4), 930-946.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1998). Interaction and Second Language Learning: Two Adolescent French Immersion Students Working Together. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(3), 320-337.
- Swain, M., Kinnear, P., & Steinman, L. (2011). *Sociocultural theory in second language education: An introduction through narratives*. Multilingual Matters.
- Taguchi, N., & Roever, C. (2017). *Second Language Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

- Tocalli-Beller, A., & Swain, M. (2007). Riddles and puns in the ESL classroom: Adults talk to learn. In A. Mackey (Ed.), *Conversational interaction in second language acquisition: Empirical studies*, 143-167. Oxford University Press.
- Van Lier, L. (2000). From input to affordance: social-interactive learning from an ecological perspective. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 245-259). Oxford University Press.
- Van Oers, B., & Duijkers, D. (2013). Teaching in a play-based curriculum: Theory, practice and evidence of developmental education for young children. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 45(4), 511-534.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1987). *Thinking and Speech* (N. Minick, Trans.). In R.W. Riber and A.S. Carton (Eds.). *The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky. Volume 1. Problems of General Psychology* (pp. 37-285). Plenum Press.
- Wagner, M. & Urios-Aparisi, E. (2011). The use of humor in the foreign language classroom: Funny and effective? *International Journal of Humor Research*, 24(4), 399-434.
- Waring, H.S. (2013). Doing being playful in the second language classroom. *Applied Linguistics*, 34(2), 191-210.

Appendix 1: *Uranaishi* question card prompts

かっこいい？	きれい？	友だちがたくさんいる？	ゆうめい？
仕事は何？	りょうりが上手？	スポーツがすき？	映画に出る？
よく仕事をする？	日本語をはなす？	誰と結婚している？	どこにすんでいる？
お金持ち？	お金がない？	踊るのが上手？	とても元気？
医者になる？	どんな生活？	世界を旅行する？	本を書く？
船で世界を旅行する？	お酒をいつも飲む？	どんな車をもっている？	子どもがいる？ 何人？
自転車でシアトルからニューヨークまで行く？	日本のコマーシャルに出る？ どんなコマーシャル？	自分の会社を持っている？ どんな会社？	オリンピックに出る？ どんなスポーツで？

家族が幸せ？	ストレスがある？	弁護士になる？	いい人？
人気がある？	タバコをすう？	運動を全然しない？	日本語を忘れた？
ニュースに出る？ どうして？	漢字を2,000字覚えている？	カラオケが上手？ どんな歌を歌う？	日本に住んでいる？ 日本のどこ？
専攻の先生になる？	有名な会社に務めている？	毎朝、公園を散歩する？	家族がいる？ 何人家族？
雑誌のカバーに出る？ どんな雑誌？	仕事が好き？ どんな仕事？	仕事が嫌い？ どんな仕事？	先生になる？ どんな先生？
海の近くに住んでいる？	山の中に住んでいる？	公園でギターをひいてお金をもらう？	ペットがいる？ 何匹？ どんな？

Appendix 2: Konbini Kuji prize cards

<p>一万円!!!</p> 	<p>うま ひき 馬14匹</p> 
<p>ウィンドウズ95のディスク</p> 	<p>けいたい 古い携帯</p> 
<p>くま 大きい熊のおもちゃ</p>  	<p>せんぱい いじわるな先輩</p> 
<p>たくさんのなっとう</p>  	<p>5,000円 amazon</p> 

 <p>1,000円 amazon</p>	<p>かん ツナ缶！！！！</p> <p>12缶セット</p> 
 <p>50 4K HDR Hisense</p>	<p>ニンテンドースイッチ！！！！</p> 
	<p>新しいメルセデスベンツ！！！！</p> 
<p>ジャイアントポッキー！！！！</p> 	<p>五百円！！！！</p> 

ほっかいどう りょこう
北海道への1週間旅行！！！！

古いたヨタ！！
誕生、SEXYセダン。

えいが きっぷ
映画の切符 二枚！！！！

おきなわ りょこう
沖縄への二週間旅行！！！！

百万円！！！！

じてんしゃ
自転車！！！！