Geographical imagination: student perceptions of using maps in EFL university classes

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EFL

Abstract: This study explores the use of maps as a tool to build a sense of interest and imagined connections with English speaking countries. It examines student perceptions of map usage within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university classes. By utilizing a Map Perception Questionnaire (MPQ), the study examines perceptions across a range of nodes related to perceived interest, enjoyment, learning and inspiration derived from interactions with maps of various scales. The rationale behind the study is to investigate levels of engagement with the mapping medium from the undergraduate EFL student perspective. The MPQ was administered at a median program waypoint after eight of fifteen lessons had occurred across five separate class groups. All of the aforementioned lessons incorporated map questions and related materials. Results of the study demonstrate a significantly positive response amongst the students to map related activities, and further, that maps generally serve as an inspirational trigger related to travel or experiencing cultures in English-speaking countries. The paper illustrates that maps can be impactful tools in sparking geographical imagination within EFL learners.

Key words: EFL, maps, geographical imagination, Japan

1. Introduction

Within the human experience places are centers within which meaning usually unfolds through lived practices. Places of significance in our daily lives have the capacity to allow for what social scientists call a 'sense of place' to be evoked in myriad ways (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1999). This sense of place facilitates relational bonds to develop between people and locations and this in turn can generate a range of affective responses such as responsibility, empathy and feelings of authenticity (Massey, 1991; Relph, 1976; Seamon 1979). However, for many EFL students in Japan the countries and places where English is spoken are geographically removed from their quotidian experience. In this context a risk exists of their language

learning experiences occurring in the form of a non-spatialized bubble, without being rooted in cognitively tangible locations, or supported by adequate Place Location Knowledge (PLK) (Habte-Gabr, 2017, p. 70).

While the actual physical locations may remain unavoidably distanced, geographical imagination (Harvey, 1990) may be used as a tool to inspire a sense of connectedness, interest or even future plans to physically travel to English-speaking locations. We can identify these as imaginative practices of place rather than lived practices of place. Geographical imagination has the potential to be sparked by interweaving relevant geographic/PLK foundations, such as map questions into EFL classes.

Research has shown that maps can be effectively used by teachers to enhance students learning in Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) scenarios and also to foster the learning of English (Bernaus and Gardner, 2008; Habte-Gabr, 2017). However, scant research has been conducted regarding the integration of map elements into EFL rather than CLIL classes in the Japanese education system despite international research indicating that cultivating spatial intelligence assists with effective language learning (Markovic, Penjat and Adendekovic, 2016), and that "English instructors often complain about a lack of geographical knowledge impeding comprehension" (Bryan and Habte-Gabr, 2008, p. 2). This study contributes to addressing the aforementioned literature gap within a Japanese higher education context.

2.   Points of Departure

In order to gauge the success of maps as particular tools in the EFL university classroom, the study presented herein burrows down from the preceding theoretical abstract levels of place and sense of place to focus on the concrete situated practice in the classroom. By utilizing a Map Perceptions Questionnaire (MPQ), students' perceptions regarding the use of maps, and map question interactions become more charted and thus actionable territory.

Formulating motivational pedagogic practices and teaching resources that incorporate elements which stimulate forms of cultural interest or international connection to distant locations can be difficult (Bernaus and Gardner, 2008). These difficulties are concealed in the spaces between the potential diversity amongst a class of EFL learners and in the particular personality and biases of the educator. Therefore, when integrating original material into lessons a periodic exploration of student perspectives on such materials is a valuable method of pedagogic refinement. In this manner the study in question represents action research as it is a reflective instrument used in improving the quality of the author's teaching, in addition to being a research endeavor in closing a literature gap and producing new knowledge.

While maps feature strongly in elective subjects connected to the built environment, earth sciences or parts of social science, such as human and physical geography, their potential remains under examined and thus potentially underutilized in EFL settings. As stated by Bednarz, Acheson and Bednarz (2006, p. 399) "maps are not just for geography anymore". By showing maps, questions and associated cultural/PLK information the unknown becomes more known territory for learners. In pedagogic terms this can be conceptualized as the student beginning with a blank leaf of paper and gradually mapping territory as their knowledge and connection grows in relation to locations.

Plentiful research (Dalton, 1998; Doherty, William, Soleste, America and Tharp, 2002; Tharp, 1999) has shown that utilizing a varied pedagogic approach is important in learning situations, and further, that it is central in promoting engagement amongst students (Carini, Kuh and Klein, 2006). Integrating map questions and related elements into EFL lessons for English Communication (EC) and General English Seminar (GES) classes (refer to Methodology section for details on class structures) embody an attempt to manifest that philosophy of a beneficial diverse approach both in content and in an overarching perspective that learners are becoming "intercultural speakers" (Nguyen, 2013) in addition to English speakers. Additionally, the integration of maps represents a step towards enculturation, albeit using representations of space rather than purely lived experiences.

While this paper is of an applied nature within the Japanese EFL university classroom context it is beneficial to examine the underlying theoretical position, which informs the cogitative point of departure for the study. This particular point is rooted in Henri Lefebvre's (1991) theoretical framework as he conceptualizes a spatial triad. This triad is an important theoretical construction in the production of space but inspires usage beyond that setting in areas such as ecology and economics (Foster, Napoletano, Clark and Urquijo, 2019). Indeed, it inspired initial considerations by the author when considering EFL learners in-class map usage in relation to geographically distanced English-speaking locations.

The three parts of Lefebvre's (1991, p. 16) triad include, spatial practice, representations of space and representational space. Spatial practice is the perceived physical space. Representations of space include maps and abstract conceptions. Representational space is considered to be the directly lived space. For EFL leaners in Japan representational space in English-speaking countries cannot form a constituent part of their localized everyday experiences and as such questions arise regarding their connectedness to those locations. For example, from a phenomenological perspective, the *genius loci* of a place (Norberg-Schulz, 1980), or in other words, its inherent qualities and particular atmosphere as perceived by the individual, may remain inaccessible to many learners. Could representations of space such as maps assist with bridging such experiential gaps amongst students and enhance perceptions of connection with significant places in EFL contexts such as English-speaking countries or cities?

It is important for EFL instructors to focus not only on the target language but also on the contextual strands attached to the language. A sense of connection or association with significant places is crucial, as Relph (1976, p. 147) states:

> A deep human need exists for associations with significant places. If we choose to ignore that need, and to allow the forces of placelessness to continue unchallenged, then the future can only hold an environment in which places simply do not matter. If, on the other hand, we choose to respond to that need and to transcend placelessness, then the potential exists for the development of an environment in which places are for man, reflecting and enhancing the variety of human experience.

If students possess a strong sense of connection to a significant place in English-speaking countries, then there is an opportunity for developing empathetic attention and meaningful bonds. In a situation where students are learning English with meagre references to the places from which the language emerges then there is a risk of 'placelessness' blocking or interfering with optimum potential connections (Relph, 1976).

Lefebvre's Spatial Triad
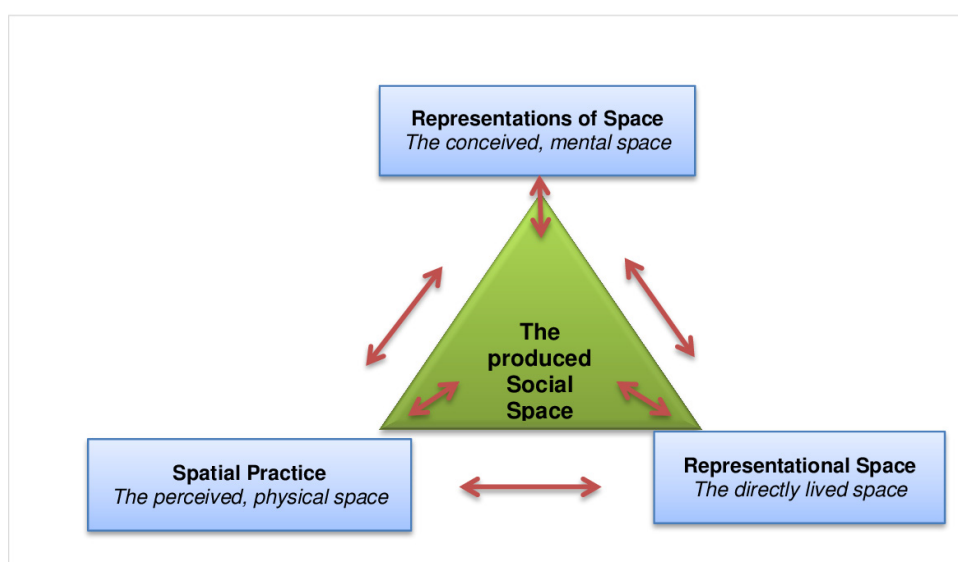
Figure 1: Lefebvre's Spatial Triad. Source -Tatiana Gorbuntsova.

Representational space involves being in a place and to be in a place facilitates opportunities to make sense of it, yet representations of space (such as maps) also allow for developing useful knowledge. This knowledge development occurs in myriad ways, but Golledge (2002, 10) identifies two fundamental ways: (1) to *establish* where things are and (2) to *remember* where things are to help us in the process of making decisions and solving problems. By charting this potential knowledge development onto EFL students we can see the potential usefulness in both (1) and (2). Regarding (1) for example, the utterance of city names or countries in passing helps transform them from being nebulous entities into known elements. They become established and identified points and positioned in relation to the learners' home country, in this case Japan. For (2), remembering where things are aids the learner in making decisions and solving problems such as where a native speaker they encounter is from or in mixed cultural exchange scenarios.

3.   Methodology

This study took place at Muroran Institute of Technology (Muroran IT) in December 2020. Muroran IT is a national university located in Hokkaido, the northernmost prefecture in Japan. The university is focused on engineering and hard science. Muroran IT has approximately 3,300 currently enrolled students. Within the relevant study there were 103 respondents and each of them were in the second year of their undergraduate degrees. The respondents were spread across a total of five class groups. Three of these classes were EC classes, while the remaining two were GES classes. The focus of the two class types differ in that

GES classes incorporate the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. EC classes emphasize listening and speaking to a much greater extent than GES classes. Enrollment in a particular GES class is at the discretion of the student as they can select a syllabus which they find stimulating from several options. EC classes are mandatory as part of English education at Muroran IT. The students' proficiency in English across the five class groups is approximately A2 to B1 on the CEFR.

Eight lessons had been completed in both EC and GES classes when the MPQ was conducted. EC and GES classes both consist of a fifteen-week program and thus the MPQ was distributed at approximately halfway through the respective courses. The rationale underpinning the timing of conducting the MPQ near that halfway point in the program was so that the students would have had an opportunity to become amply familiar with map related activities during EFL class.

While the particular pedagogic focus is different in EC and GES classes, a constant feature was the use of maps, materials and related questions to support language learning and broadening cultural knowledge in each 90-minute class session. Within the GES classes the author created the entirety of both the course structure and class content. This allowed for optimum integration of map related elements. The EC classes utilized a textbook yet enough discretion existed for the integration of the author's own pertinent teaching materials to unproblematically include maps. This mirroring in technique in both EC and GES classes facilitated the analysis of the responses to be considered together as a uniform sample. Additionally, by conducting the MPQ at the median program waypoint it was hoped that the results would indicate if any pedagogical changes needed to be made based on the perceptions of the students, or if continuing to utilize maps in their current form was the most beneficial action.

The MPQ was semi-anonymous. This means that students were not initially identifiable beyond the broad class group level when the MPQ was distributed and collected by the author. Class group sizes ranged from 23 to 29 students across EC and GES classes. The methodological decision to make the MPQ anonymous was to enable respondents to provide their opinions without potential concerns surrounding any negative consequences being actioned on their feedback. Research (Habte-Gabr, 2017; Murdoch *et al.*, 2014) has shown the benefits of selecting anonymous survey methods in that respondents tend to provide more accurate information about their perceptions.

Once the physical collection of the MPQ was completed with each class group the materials were collated and the respondents' answers were transferred into a digital format. For the open style question (Question 7) digital photographs were taken of each of the respondents' answers. This was to enable ease of teacher reflection upon class procedures or potential teaching practice changes. All of the 103 respondents answered the closed questions (questions 1-6). 29 of the 103 respondents chose to answer Question 7.

Within the teaching procedure for both EC and GES classes map questions were utilized to stimulate memory verification from a preceding lesson and to introduce new PLK information about a relevant location. The in-class map questions took the form of a partner discussion to use the map as a platform to build communicative actions around. The maps were also projected onto a screen via PowerPoint to enable a shared visual experience. Additionally, each student was requested to bring a printed A4 copy of a blank world map with them to each lesson. This request was made at the course introductory lesson and

reinforced in subsequent lessons. An accessible file was made available on Moodle to enable ease of access for each student. Through students having their own printed map they were able to physically mark locations and PLK information on their personal map copies. This enabled a beneficial deposition of information to occur as each lesson brought new geographic, cultural and socially related information. Additionally, by displaying maps via a projector in each class any student that forgot their personal maps during a particular class could still participate in an inclusive manner.

As previously stated, the MPQ itself comprised of a total of seven questions. Six of the questions were single-answer multiple choice questions. In these questions the respondents were asked to circle their answer among one of four options. The seventh question was an open question allowing for any written comments regarding using maps in EFL class. This openness was an important component of the MPQ as it allowed freedom for opinions to be expressed beyond the closed questions. The MPQ took approximately six minutes to be completed by the respondents. The particular aspects of using maps that were gauged by the MPQ included: general interest, usage and visual enjoyment, interest generated in other countries, learning value, frequency, experiential inspiration, general comments on map usage.

The MPQ was written in both Japanese and English. Respondents could choose which version they wanted to use to provide their answers. The decision to provide both languages was to enable students to be engaged with the MPQ as an opportunity to express their opinions rather than creating the impression that the document was a form of English test or examination.

The following examples from a GES class on Australia illustrate specific ways map questions were used in the classes. These examples are presented in order to ground the discussion in the practical flow of the classroom. The questions were designed to incorporate a range of difficulty progressing from easy to difficult and scaling from the general to the specific.

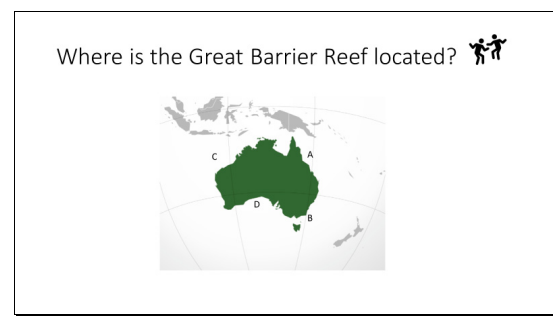**Figure 2: General Country Locational Partner Question.**

Figure 3: General Country Locational Partner Answer.

Figure 4: Political Knowledge & Locational Partner

Question.

Figure 5: Political Knowledge & Locational Partner Answer.

Figure 6: UNESCO Site & Environmental Partner Question.

Figure 7: UNESCO Site & Environmental Partner Answ

The preceding style of map centric questions were integrated into the class procedure for language learning to impart additional geographic, cultural, social and political knowledge in the answers. The rationale behind this was to boost/reinforce students' PLK knowledge and to simultaneously act as platforms for discussion and interaction between students through partner conversation exercises. If a number of the students were knowledgeable in the question topics it facilitated micro-temporal nodes of peer-to-peer teaching through pair work. The benefits of facilitating peer to peer learning has been examined in much research (Anderson and Boud, 1996; Mastropieri, Scruggs and Berkeley, 2007; Greenwood, Carta and Hall, 1988).

For students that are being exposed to new knowledge the questions were designed to be visually stimulating to encourage interactive supposition and subsequent successful future recall. Previous research on using maps in EFL classes has shown that it "generates a need for more language in terms of vocabulary, sequencing, comparing, contrasting and speculating" (Habte-Gabr, 2017, p. 71). Additionally, intermittently a student was requested to volunteer to come to the front of the class and physically indicate the location of a place on the large map via a projector screen. This form of activity has two primary benefits.

The first of those being an opportunity to incorporate physical movement into the lesson which shifts expectations surrounding both the focal point of attention and the division of roles. Regarding attention, the learner's attention is most often directed towards the instructor. A peer entering the traditional physical space occupied by the instructor refreshes this dynamic through a form of micro classroom flipping and a learner-centered approach towards what is being presented (Brooks and Wilson, 2015; Lee and Martin, 2020).

The second benefit is that the activity fosters opportunities for students to experience micro presentational moments where they are in front of a group of people and orally relating information to that group (Al-Issa and Al-Qubtan, 2010). Research within the Japanese university context has shown that students find doing presentations extremely challenging as they "have only a limited exposure to spoken English prior to entering university" (Brooks and Wilson, 2015, p. 199). Thus, these short presentation moments were utilized in lessons to enable students to become progressively comfortable with being in front of groups and engaging in micro demonstrations of their locational knowledge.

4.   Results

Within this section I will present the results of the MPQ. The respondents' answers to each question will be shown from Question 1 through Question 7. The complexity of the questions scale up in difficulty ordinally with Question 7 being an open question. This design choice was made to help ensure an initial sense of ease when respondents began recording their answers into the MPQ. By presenting different aspects of map usage in the closed questions (1-6) the aim was for respondents to be cognizant of those elements when formulating responses to Question 7.

Question 1 in the MPQ was designed to assess the basic level of interest amongst the respondents in using maps in EFL class. There was a clear positive response to this question with 69.9% (n=72) of respondents in the definitively affirmative category. 19.4% (n=20) can be classified as moderately affirmative in their interest. This gives a broadly positive response percentage of 89.3% (n=92). 9.7% (n=10) of respondents were in the definitively negative category. The least selected answer by respondents concerning their level of interest was the uncertain category with .97% (n=1). The results for Question 1 are indicative of what will be detailed in the subsequent result sections, as the patterns retain significantly positive characteristics with the presence of a small but consistent definitively negative vein running through the answers.
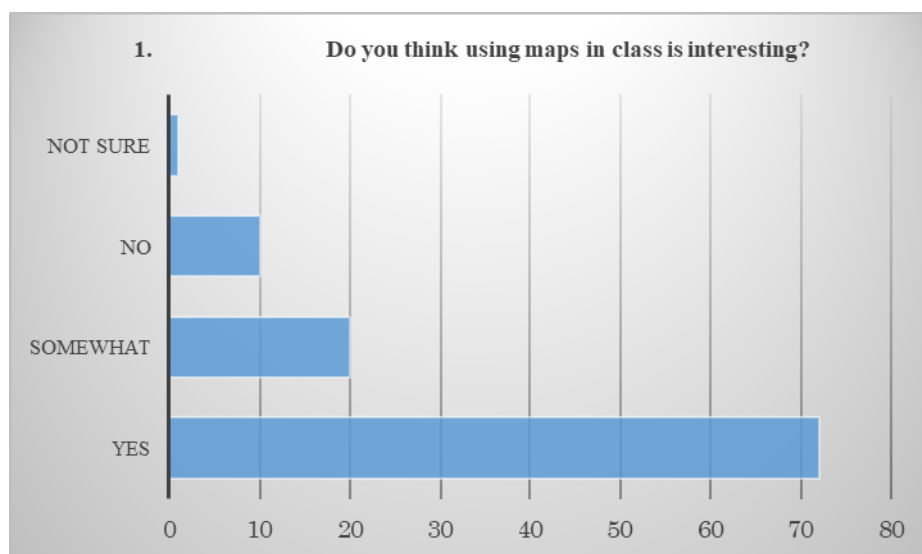

Figure 8: MPQ Question 1 – number of replies gauging perceptions of interest in using maps in class.

Question 2 sought to tease out any potential differences in perceptions regarding enjoyment and visual engagement with map usage compared to the interest factor presented in Question 1. Research (Reeve, 1989; Ainley and Hindi, 2014) has shown that interest and enjoyment, while relational emotions, are not identical elements. Consequently, Question 2 sought to investigate any nuance in the distinction. 66.9% (n=69) were in the affirmatively positive category for this question. 22.3% (n=23) constituted the moderately affirmative category. This gives an overall positive percentage of 89.2% (n=92). The definitively negative category dipped to a slightly lower percentage in Question 2 with 8.7% (n=9). A slight increase was seen in the uncertain category at 1.9% (n=2). The significantly positive results are encouraging when Question 1 and Question 2 of the MPQ are considered in tandem. They demonstrate that respondents were both enjoying and interested in using maps in their EFL classes.
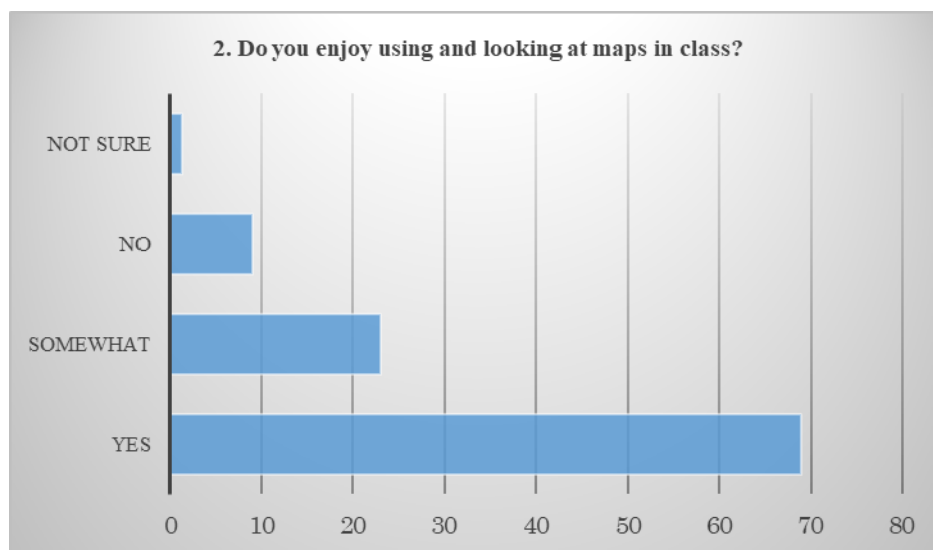
Figure 9: MPQ Question 2 – number of replies gauging perceptions of enjoyment in using and looking at maps in class.

Respondents perceptions regarding the ability of maps to generate interest in foreign countries (i.e. not Japan) through visual observations were examined in Question 3. Interestingly, a large increase occurred in the responses for the uncertain category when compared to the two preceding questions. It jumped to 11.6% (n=12). The definitively affirmative category constituted 67.9% (n=70). 10.6% (n=11) of respondents were moderately affirmative in the additional foreign interest generated by looking at maps. By combining the definitively affirmative and moderately affirmative categories we get 78.5% (n=81). This is an encouraging figure for establishing the potential of maps to strengthen interest in learners. Mirroring Question 1, 9.7% (n=10) of respondents were in the definitively negative category.
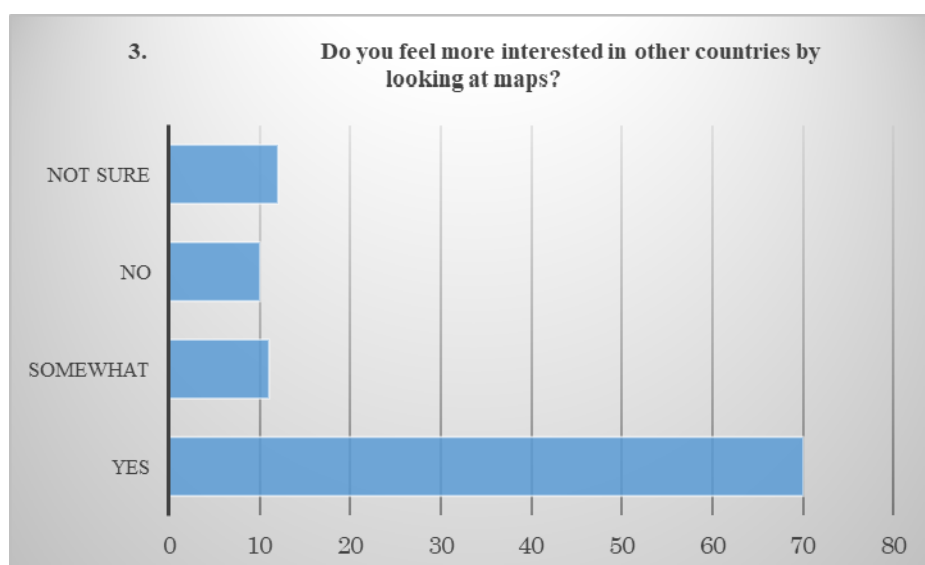

Figure 10: MPQ Question 3 – number of replies gauging perceptions of interest generated in other countries by looking at maps.

Question 4 explored perceptions of interest linked specifically to learning through answering map questions. Thus, it differs from Question 1's aim of gauging general interest. An example was included in this MPQ question to assist respondents to conceptualize a typical aspect covered by map questions utilized

in their EC and GES classes. This question saw the highest responses for the definitively affirmative category thus far in the MPQ with 70.8% (n=73). 12.6% (n=13) formed the moderately affirmative category. By combining the directly preceding categories a notable total of 83.4% (n=86) is reached for the broadly positive perceptions of learning. This is an important result as research has shown that students' self-assessment of not only the work they produce (Falchikov and Boud, 1989; Jamrus and Bakar, 2019), but also what they are learning is valuable data within EFL classes. Responses constituting the uncertain category for this question equaled 9.7% (n=10). Interestingly, this question had the lowest definitively negative category total at just 6.8% (n=7).
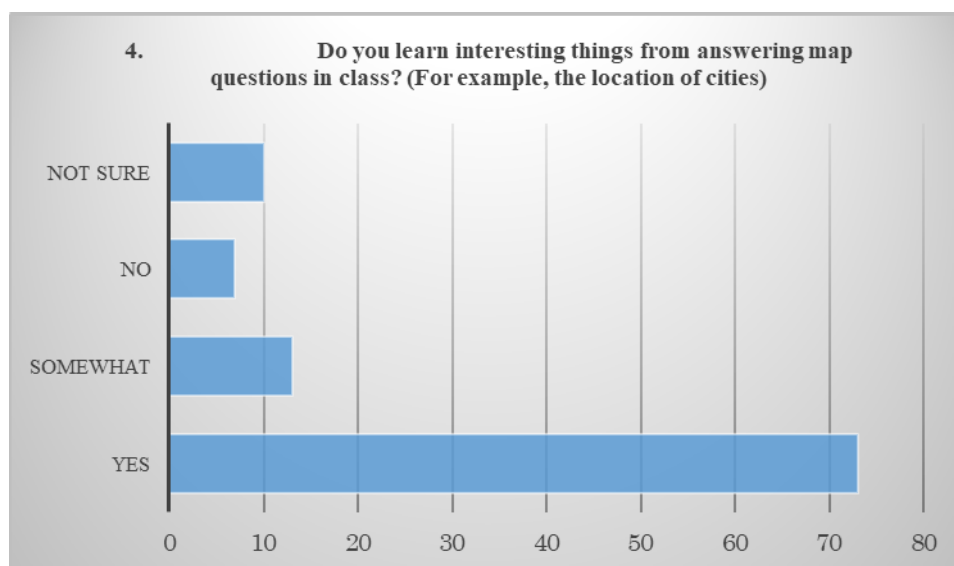

Figure 11: MPQ Question 4 - number of replies gauging perceptions of learning through answering map questions.

The penultimate closed question in the MPQ, Question 5, investigated respondent preferences regarding intensifying map usage as a tool to learn about foreign countries (please refer to the Figures 2-7 for examples of the geographic and PLK information covered in such map usage). As indicated previously, each EC and GES class were designed with a map component and as such this question sought to explore if there was a capacity for an intensification of usage. Question 5 yielded the highest definitively affirmative responses within the MPQ with 81.5% (n=84). As a standalone figure this percentage is a significant indicator of an existing capacity for greater map usage within EFL classes to learn about foreign places. The broadly positive response to this question rises further to 90.2% (n=93) when the moderately affirmative category at 8.7% (n=9) is also included. The definitively negative category matches the preceding category with 8.7% (n=9). For Question 5 a negligible .97% (n=1) formed the uncertain category.
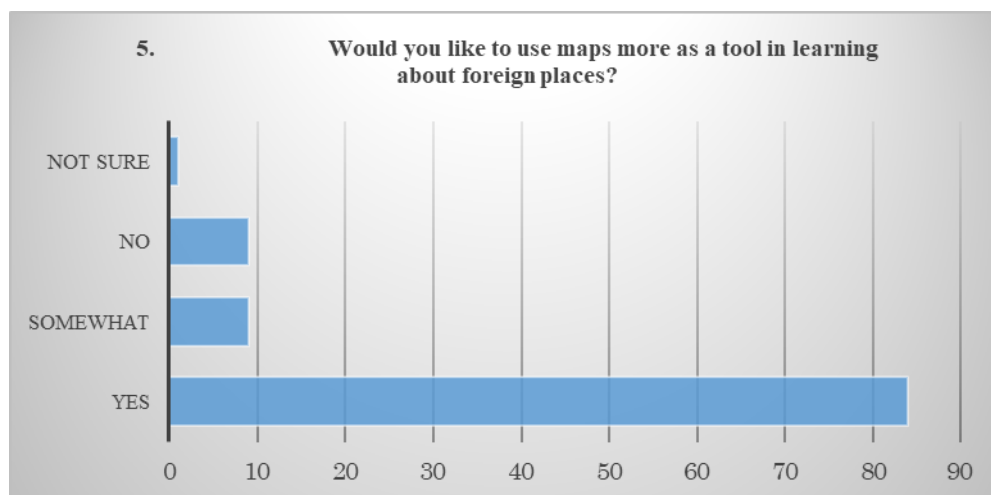
Figure 12: MPQ Question 5 – number of replies gauging perceptions of preference in future potential map usage.

While aspects of the preceding questions connected to facets of geographical imagination, Question 6 directly examined if maps activated a positive geographical imagination within the respondents. The question was designed to asses if this occurred in a significant enough way to stimulate inspiration for travel or to experience cultures in English speaking countries. The results of this question are of particular importance because the responses indicate if the usage of maps manifests into the desires of the respondent to engage with physical locations and cultural mediums of the target language.

Beginning with the lowest category percentage, 2.9% (n=3) were uncertain while a relatively consistent figure within the MPQ of 8.7% (n=9) were definitively negative. 10.6% (n=11) constituted the moderately affirmative category. 77.6% (n=80) were definitively affirmative. This is a heartening result as it demonstrates a clear linkage amongst respondents between map usage in the EFL classroom and that usage converting into positive inspirations and imagined scenarios for both travel and experiences. A combined total of 88.2% (n=91) for the two preceding categories illustrates a meaningful role for maps as a tool in EC and GES classes moving forward.
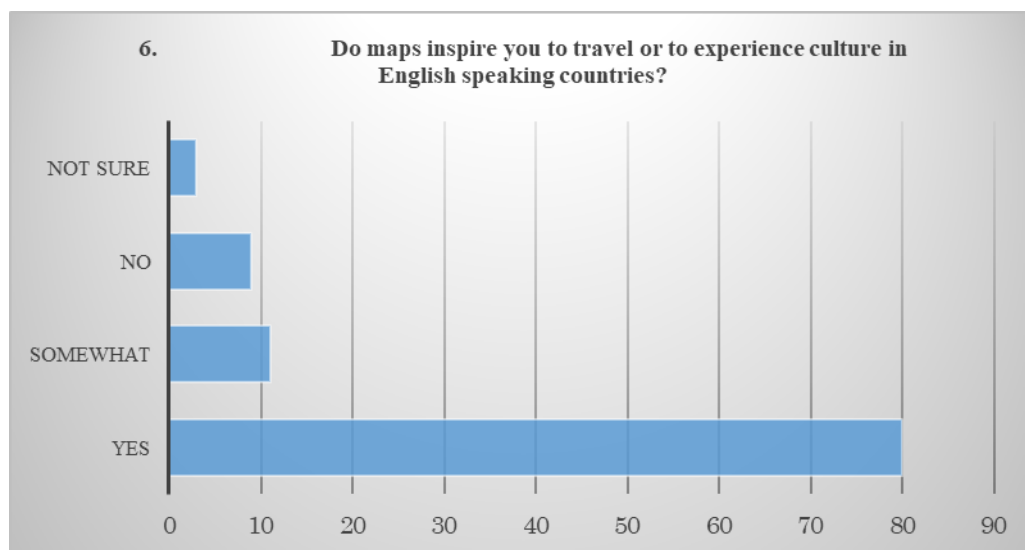
Figure 13: MPQ Question 6 – number of replies gauging perceptions inspiration through map usage.

The final question in the MPQ, Question 7, was in an open qualitative style allowing for comments regarding using maps in class. 29 of the 103 respondents chose to answer this question. Respondents were told they could write their answers in either English or Japanese. This gives Question 7 a response rate of 28.1% compared to 100% for Questions 1-6. Within the Question7 responses approximately 89.6% were classified as positive feedback, 6.9% (n=2) as negative and 3.4% (n=1) as moderately positive. While ideally each of the respondents would have chosen to complete Question 7 valuable feedback was nevertheless provided from differing perspectives.

The overall positivity amongst the respondents regarding map usage was directly reflected in most comments with basic statements such as "I like to watch [sic] a map", to more detailed feedback such as "I didn't know the location of countries even after hearing their names. So, it is a really good thing to know their location". Other examples illustrating general positivity could be seen in myriad responses such as the following related to an increasing interest in the world being sparked, "I think the interest of [sic] the world is growing about [sic] using maps in class".

Another respondent wrote of the challenges they face in map usage but that it is continually stimulating to learn about overseas locations: "I am bad with maps but it is always interesting to learn about foreign places using the map. Although it is hard for me to remember them.". Other positive endorsements included comments such as: "It's a very good idea! I like it, this work!", further, "I want to continue to use maps in class", and "It's fun to know the location of a country that I don't know". Some comments indicated specific desires for future map usage, for example. "I want to know more capital [sic]". The connective thread running through these comments inclusively from the basic to the complex is an apparent communal sense of engagement.

As the results have shown thus far, the majority of respondents viewed their map usage positively, however, this was not a universal perspective given the consistently recurring percentage of those who were not engaged by using maps across the results for questions 1-6. One respondent commented that, "When I see the map, I don't think not funny [sic]. But what [sic] I see some picture of everywhere I learn is interesting. What [sic] I see map is not good". Accounting for grammatical errors in this particular feedback, the meaning can still be deciphered in that the respondent prefers pictures rather than maps as a learning tool.

Frequently, images were included (refer to Figure 5 for an example of this) in the map component of the EC and GES lessons based on research demonstrating associated pedagogic benefits in EFL 'scaffolding' (Birdsell, 2017, p. 9), but this feedback is a useful nudge towards remaining cognizant of catering to visual learners. The comment also represents an interesting distinction that can be drawn between different forms of visuals. For example, whilst a map is a visual medium it is a visual representation of an area or regions. While a picture is real or imagined representation of a thing. Thus, combining photographs with maps as seen in Figure 4 and 5 are crucial in building linkages between the different forms of visual representation.

A more moderate outlook was also represented as one respondent indicated, "It helps in some way, but there's no big influence if we cancel it." This demonstrates that for some learners the map usage element was not an especially critical tool for their personal learning experience. To surmise, Question 7 demonstrated significant positivity amongst the EC and GES respondents for the continued usage and intensification of map usage within their EFL classes with caveats for some learners.

5. Discussion

The rate of positive feedback in the empirical evidence presented hitherto are an ample enough endorsement by the MPQ respondents to continue with the utilization of map components in EFL classes, and indeed to expand them (see Figure 12). This expansion could proceed through using group-based activities where a map with overlaid place-based photographs is employed as a starting point for discussions in English about future aspirations related to travel, personal preferences and opinions. The parameters of the discussions could be tuned to the abilties of a particular group depending on if they are low learners for example. This would broaden discussions beyond the current pair work centric approach and enable a greater degree of interaction amongst learners in group-based dynamics. This expansion is not limited to the physical classroom but would also be eminently possible in online learning scenarios through breakout groups. In contemporary settings being cognizant of online practicalities and possibilities is increasingly important.

A second potential route forward for the expansion of map usage would be a visio-spatial mapping exercise often used in environmental learning (Coluccia, Bosco and Brandimonte, 2007). Visio-spatial mapping exercises involve students expressing their "spatial schemes" of particular places (Coluccia, Bosco and Brandimonte, 2007, p.52) through sketches and drawing activities. The benefit of such exercises is that

they aid in the retention of map memory formation and thus the English-speaking countries and locations the learners encounter in their lessons actively remain within the learners' knowledge base. The second benefit is the potential such student created sketches have as foundations for building discursive, speculative and interrogative EFL activities around.

The results of the MPQ indicate that there was a consistently yet small number of respondents who did not engage with the map materials. The percentages shown in the previous section demonstrate that while it's a low number in comparison to those respondents who viewed maps positively (or somewhat positively), not all pedagogic approaches or material harmonize with the preferences of each learner completely. Potential ongoing disengagement of these respondents could be mitigated by incorporating additional components into the map portions of lessons. One of these components could be the expansion of supporting images, such as photographs of targeted locations or landscapes. This is based on the feedback in the previous section for Question 7 when a respondent commented that "seeing pictures" was useful. Thus, targeted lesson planning reconfiguration could be advantageous through the inclusion of images of English-speaking locations to maximize inclusivity for visual learners.

Another expansive feature that may be beneficial for visual learners would be the introduction of location-based video snippets. Previous specific research (Cakir, 2006; Canning-Wilson and Wallace, 2000; Philominraj, Jeyabalan and Vidal, 2017) on video usage in English language learning scenarios has shown the positive possibilities of this medium. As stated on the topic by Philominraj, Jeyabalan and Vidal (2017, p.55) "it clearly contributes to the understanding of another culture by providing vicarious contact with speakers of the language, through both audio and visual means". The potential of video does not necessarily need to be limited to pre-recorded material but could also include media such as live place-based webcams throughout English-speaking countries and cities. This would allow potential insights into factors such as architecture, weather, intricacies of daily life and myriad other points for potential discussion and language learning.

A further alternative could be the development of learner led online video linkages with native speakers living in locations covered within the map components. Research has shown (llés and Akcan, 2017) that there are benefits to bringing real-life language use into the EFL classroom via real-time video exchange. llés and Akcan (2017, p.3) have demonstrated that "such interactions can create conditions which give rise to humour and linguistic creativity" in EFL classes. Both of these aspects are hugely valuable to student development.

An important point to note is that the map portions of lessons were not excessively time consuming within the typical ninety-minute sessions for both the EC and GES classes. Approximately four to five minutes of the total lesson time included map related questions and activities. This temporal factor could facilitate the reconfiguration and preceding expansionary ideas to match the learner desires in the received MPQ feedback.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine EFL student perceptions of map usage within a sample of five undergraduate university classes. This examination was facilitated by utilizing an MPQ which gauged perceived levels of interest, enjoyment, learning and inspiration resulting from map usage. The significantly positive results of the MPQ showed a successful connection between this pedagogic tool and the respondents. This reflects positive results presented in previous research on integrating geographic elements into EFL classes (Bryan and Habte-Gabr, 2008; Habte-Gabr, 2017). When viewed holistically the results indicate that map usage sparks the geographical imagination of learners. Bridging the gap between language learning in the classroom and real-world locations, lived experiences, and indeed "real contexts" (Akbari, 2015, p.395) in target language countries can be challenging. The map component used in EC and GES classes embodies a small step in closing that gap as a supporting tool in stimulating learning experiences.

Regarding future research on this topic, a broader examination of classes across each of the undergraduate years would be most beneficial in establishing any distinctions based on deviations in age or waypoints within degree programs. Additionally, the results presented in this study would possibly benefit from semi-structured interviews to deepen levels of understanding regarding qualitative feedback. While beyond the scope of this MPQ given its anonymous design, future research should strongly consider incorporating such a methodological instrument. This would be especially useful for not only learners who feel inspired and invested in using maps, but also those who feel disengaged or at least not fully interested. Hearteningly, in this particular study, the results illustrated that the majority of learners did feel engaged and that their knowledge base was increasing. By spatializing the places where their target language resides culturally it is hoped that closer and more concrete networks will be established and that this in turn leads to real-world closeness and learner connectedness.

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Appendix. The MPQ completed by respondents.

This is a research questionnaire about using maps in English class. Your answers will be anonymous. You can answer freely. Thank you for your participation.

Please circle 1 answer ○

1. **Do you think using maps in class is interesting?**

    Yes　　　　Somewhat　　　　No　　　　Not sure

2. **Do you enjoy using and looking at maps in class?**

    Yes　　　　Somewhat　　　　No　　　　Not sure

3. **Do you feel more interested in other countries by looking at maps?**

    Yes　　　　Somewhat　　　　No　　　　Not sure

4. **Do you learn interesting things from answering map questions in class? (For example, the location of cities)**

    Yes　　　　Somewhat　　　　No　　　　Not sure

5. **Would you like to use maps more as a tool in learning about foreign places?**

    Yes　　　　Somewhat　　　　No　　　　Not sure

6. **Do maps inspire you to travel or to experience culture in English speaking countries? (For example, does looking at Australia on a map make you feel like you want to go there?)**

    Yes　　　　Somewhat　　　　No　　　　Not sure

7. **Do you have any comments about using maps in class?**

1   。

1. 授業で地図を使うのは面白いと思いますか？

2. 授業で地図を使ったり、見たりするのは楽しいですか？

3. 地図を見て、他の国への興味を感じることはありますか？

4. 授業で地図の問題に答えることで、面白いことを学びますか？例えば、都市の位置など。

     噫   多少   否   確信が持てない

5

     噫   多少   否   確信が持てない

６．地図は、英語圏の国を旅行したり、文化を体験したりするためのインスピレーションを与えてくれますか？例えば、地図でオーストラリアを見ると、そこに行きたいと感じますか？

     噫   多少   否   確信が持てない