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Enhancing fluency and autonomy: A three-step DeepL quick-writes activity

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This presentation outlines a three-step quick-writes activity conducted over a one-year period in 2023 at the intermediate level first-year EFL class at a private university in the Kanto region. The aim was for students to develop fluency in writing, as well as develop a sense of ownership of English through learner autonomy facilitated by DeepL. The first step involved a five-minute quick-write in response to prompts, encouraging students to react to news headlines or textbook content. Using an honor-system, students were asked to refrain from using dictionaries, online translation tools or AI for this step, but could use the right-click function to correct misspellings. The second step was to copy this text into DeepL, whereby English (left) was translated to Japanese (right) by DeepL. Students were asked to read the Japanese for coherence, then make any changes to the English until they were satisfied with the Japanese translation. The third step involved a reversal of languages, with English and Japanese switched, prompting students to explore synonyms and alternative phrasing using DeepL's suggestions to enhance language skills. DeepL provided a number of synonyms and alternative phrasing, and students were encouraged to take ownership of and to develop their own English language learning. Both the first and the second drafts were submitted to the Google Classroom for feedback. This study focuses on the 2024 fall semester by tracing the development of three students at the start, middle and end of the semester. The study was piloted as a one-year project for the cohort of 2023, yet its success has meant that it has been included in the 2024 syllabus for the incoming cohort.

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Keywords

DeepL, Quick writes, learner fluency, learner autonomy

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