

Changes in Learners' Perception of Language Learning Environments

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1. Introduction

From the beginning of the 21st century, the proliferation of information and communication technology (ICT) devices, such as smartphones and computers, has had a huge impact on our lives and education. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC, 2020), in 2019, 83.4% of the total population of Japan possessed smartphones and 69% possessed computers. In 2019, An initiative of the Japanese government called “GIGA school” was launched to provide computers/tablets to all students to promote ICT-based education (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2020). Today, all schoolchildren in Japan are equipped with personal computers/tablets, which facilitate learning with technology. Moreover, since the internet has become ubiquitous, online learning, including through massive open online courses (MOOCs) and collaborative online international learning (COIL), is highly promoted and utilized. This has had the effect of changing people’s learning styles and their perceptions of online learning.

The restriction of face-to-face teaching because of the new coronavirus (coronavirus disease of 2019 [COVID-19]) highlights the significance of ICT-based teaching. Since COVID-19 began to spread worldwide, the unprecedented global closure of schools was requested by various governments; as a result, online-based educational systems had to be used in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions (UNESCO, 2020). A survey conducted by The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in June 2020 demonstrated that approximately 60% of universities offered online learning under COVID-19 (MEXT, 2020).

It is apparent that the societal changes exemplified in the advancement of technology and the “side effects” of COVID-19 have altered people’s learning styles and habits. In response to such phenomena from a macro perspective, the traditional concept of online and offline learning has been questioned and redesigned. Both language learners and teachers have been considering how to make the best use of offline and online learning environments. In other words, the environment that should be utilized for teaching a language in a given context has become a central issue for practitioners. Therefore, this article explores the learners’ perception of the offline and online learning environments using the event model, a communication model

developed in the field of linguistic anthropology, discussing the merits of each environment as identified by language learners. Students' interview data are analyzed using this robust communication model. Based on the results, this article calls into questions the traditional separation of offline and online learning; it then reconstructs and redefines the language learning environment under language learners' changed perceptions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Online, Offline, and In Between

Online learning refers to the type of learning that takes place using ICT. Common features of online learning are that the teachers and learners are separated by space, time, or both, and that online resources, such as media and technology, are used. Another characteristic of online learning is successful communication and interaction in the learning process despite the separation of the teacher and learner in time and/or space (UNESCO, 2020). In contrast, offline learning, also referred to as face-to-face learning, refers to learning in a physical environment. Offline learning mainly takes place in a classroom where the teachers and learners are physically present; this is often described as "traditional" learning (see Charles, 2012; Powell et al., 2015).

In academic research, the online and offline learning relationship is not viewed as a strict dichotomy. Indeed, researchers have investigated environments that lie between the only online and only offline contexts. One such instance is blended, or hybrid, learning. Blended learning refers to learning taking place in an environment where both online and offline learning approaches are combined (Charles, 2012; Powell et al., 2015). Charles (2012) elucidated that, with the emergence of ICT, the traditional face-to-face learning domain is being encroached on by the computer-mediated learning domain. For instance, ICT has enabled synchronous interactions that take place in real time, at almost the same level as in a face-to-face environment. Also, Wellman (2001) argued that "the cyberspace-physical space comparison is a false dichotomy. Many ties operate in both cyberspace and physical space, using whatever means of communication is convenient and appropriate at the moment" (p. 248). This suggests that with the development of ICT-based learning, the boundaries between online, offline, and hybrid have become blurred, calling for the necessity of reconsidering the dynamic nature of the learning environments.

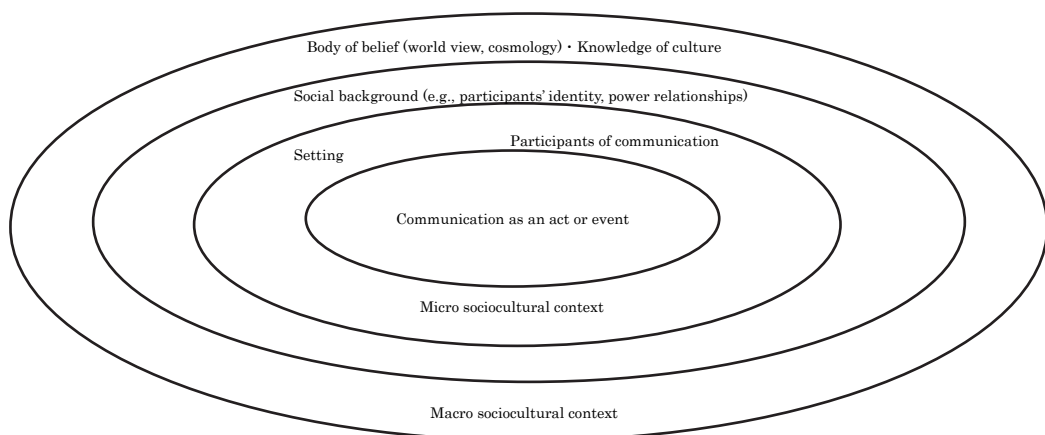
The definition of online/offline environments outlined above has been developed from a traditional perspective in that it focuses solely on a difference in space. That is, other elements—such as lag time and non-verbal cues—are not included or well discussed. Although Charles (2012) presented a continuum of four

critical dimensions of interactions—namely, space, time, fidelity, and humanness—the relationships among those four elements are still unclear. Moreover, this framework does not reflect social perspectives on how technology advancement, for instance, influences people's change in perception over those learning environments at the macro level. Hence, the current research introduces the event model, a communication model developed in the field of linguistic anthropology and semiotics, to overcome the defects of the previous definition of online/offline environments.

2.2 The Event Model

The model employed in this research is the event model, a semiotics-based communication framework advanced by Koyama (2008, 2012). The event model sees communication as an event, and in a sociocultural context, its focus is on human–human, human–object, and object–object encounters (Koyama, 2012). Context is expanded and developed from a deictic center, the place or the time where the interaction takes place, and out of countless numbers of social and natural phenomena, only a few phenomena related to the deictic center emerge; these do so rather coincidentally, and they are sublimated into the context. In other words, context is contextualized from the perspective of a communication act or event, which happens at the deictic center.

Figure 1. Event model

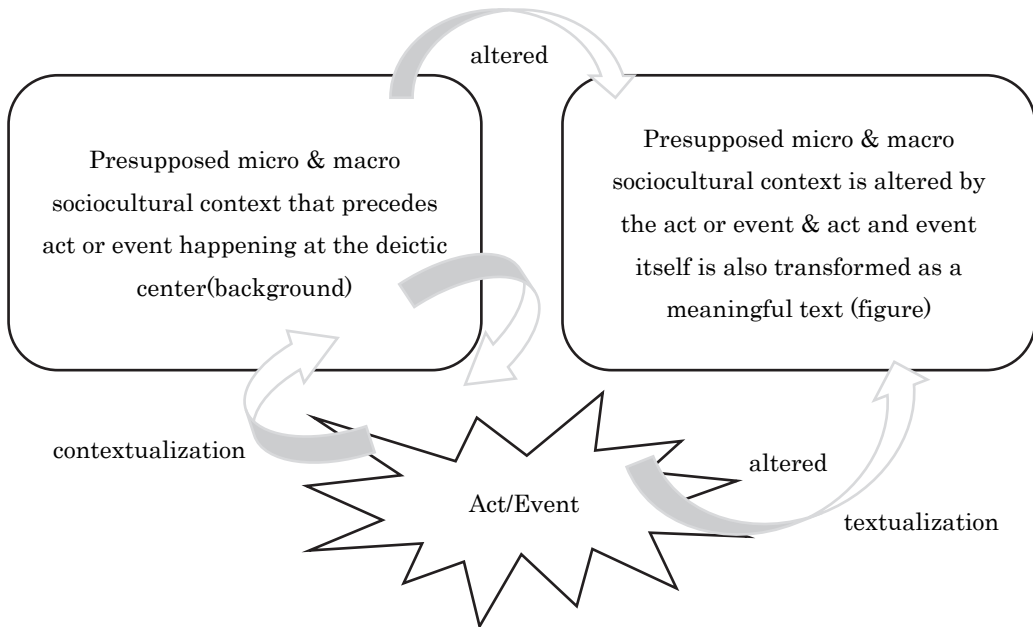


(Retrieved from Koyama, 2008; translated and modified by the author)

Figure 1 illustrates the event model and some important concepts necessary to comprehend it. As stated above, this model views communication as a social act or event, and its meaning is indexically defined in both micro and macro contexts. The context starts from the oligo (i.e., deictic center), which is indexed and contextualized by

the preceding background, and then the preceding background will be transformed to a new context triggered by what is happening at the oligo. In other words, the presupposed sociocultural background is altered by the event or act at the deictic center, and the event per se becomes a new text that is meaningful as a sociocultural creation (cf. Figure 2). The model regards communication as a dynamic, rich process in which meaning that arises later also modifies the meaning of the previous context (Koyama & Ayabe, 2009).

Figure 2. Interactive process of contextualization and textualization



(Retrieved from Koyama & Ayabe, 2009, translated and modified by the author)

In brief, communication is always generated in a sociocultural–historical sphere. The events and interactions that occur in the deictic center are contingent happenings and encounters that resemble amorphous sparks, and as such, they have no formal order that can be given meaning in a sociocultural context. However, in the process of contextualization and textualization, contingent events are transformed into “texts of interaction” (i.e., forms that have sociocultural–historical meaning). In communication, the process of context creation occurs via one event after another in a chain of events, and the text created by one event is presuppositionally indexed and transformed by the next act or event (Koyama, 2008).

The event model has been adopted as a theoretical framework for this paper for two reasons. First, when considering learners’ perceptual change as a process, it is helpful to apply a lucidly theorized framework like the event model, which deals with a

macro–micro world process, represented by contextualization, and a micro world process, represented by textualization, to help analyze learners' perceptual process in detail. Second, the model is suitable for analyzing the social context in which a certain conversation occurs. Koyama and Ayabe (2009) stated that the event model places more emphasis on social relations as opposed to information content per se as done in the Shannon model (Shannon, 1948) or functions of communication as done in the Jakobson six-function model (Jakobson & Sebeok, 1960). Thus, this model best describes the rich and dynamic nature of learners' perceptual changes from both the macro and micro perspectives.

3. Methods

3.1 General Overview

In this research, semi-structured interviews were employed. The interview data of the present study were provided by the preceding study of Higuchi (2021), and this article utilizes the same data, analyzing it from a different perspective.

Six college and university students from among the 414 online survey respondents were selected by convenience sampling to explore how learners' perceptions of each sphere of learning have changed over recent years. Although convenience sampling is considered unreliable in that it produces a limited amount of information (Merriam, 1998), the participants' diversity in college/university, grade level, and foreign language study history allows for a more diverse small sample to produce findings that would generate important common patterns used as a basis for other various cases. Five interviews were recorded via Zoom, an online video-conferencing application, whereas one interview was conducted offline and recorded via smartphone.

3.2 Interviews and Participants

Semi-structured interviews were conducted following a prewritten interview script. The researcher could ask follow-up questions to probe the participants' answers. All the interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

The interviews were carried out with six participants. Pseudonyms were utilized to protect the interviewees' privacy. They were all college or university students when the interview was recorded. "Interview length" indicates the recording time, and the English proficiency was self-declared based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Table 1 gives general information about the participants, and more detailed descriptions are provided below.

Table 1. Interview participants

Pseudonym	Year	Gender	Date	Interview length	English proficiency
Yoshida	Freshman	Female	2020/7/10	49:23	N/A
Imai	Freshman	Male	2020/8/2	1:13:35	B2 (IELTS 5.5)
Komori	Senior	Male	2020/11/14	40:29	B1
Komiyama	Senior	Male	2020/11/23	25:15	B2-C1
Kato	Freshman	Male	2020/11/23	34:53	B2
Taguchi	Sophomore	Male	2020/11/23	1:04:37	B1

Yoshida was a first-year college student who was eager to learn English. She attended a private two-year college in Tokyo and had studied abroad in the United States for about a month when she was in high school. She was chosen as an interviewee because she was one of the few two-year college students who responded to the Google survey and used several online learning tools. She was also a former student of the researcher.

Imai was a freshman majoring in communications at a private university in Tokyo. He had been a student of the researcher when he was in high school. He learned languages using *Duolingo*, *YouTube*, *Spotify*, *VK*, and *HelloTalk*. He was nominated as an interviewee because he had learned Russian and English via *YouTube*, and the researcher wanted to know how he perceived the learning process online.

Komori was a senior at a private university in Japan. A law major, he had taken German and English classes during his freshman year, but he had not taken a language class since his sophomore year. He sometimes used Facebook to contact musicians when he had a music-related question. Unlike the other interviewees, Komori said he had few opportunities to learn languages. Since the Google survey included responses from people who were not really interested in learning languages, he was chosen to find out if such people use any technology to handle foreign languages. He and the researcher were in the same brass band club in high school.

Komiyama was a senior at a public university in Osaka. He was enrolled at a university in Tokyo, but he had transferred during his junior year. He was chosen as an interviewee because he had studied abroad for a year and was fluent in English. The researcher belonged to the same brass band club as Komiyama when they were university students. The interview was conducted offline because of an unstable internet connection when attempting to record it online.

Kato was a first-year student at a university in Tokyo. He was enthusiastic about learning languages and studied independently for about one hour per day. He learned English in a variety of ways and was chosen as an interviewee because the

researcher wanted to know how he conceptualized learning. He was a member of the TEDx club, which the researcher previously belonged to.

Taguchi was a sophomore at a university in Tokyo; he was the only sophomore who agreed to be interviewed. He was not taking any language classes at the time, but he had a cousin in Hong Kong with whom he would chat in English and Japanese. He was majoring in communications and planned to study abroad starting in September 2020. The researcher wanted to know how he had continued his online language learning under the COVID-19 outbreak. The researcher was a member of the same brass band club as Taguchi in high school.

4. Interview Results and Discussion

This section describes the data from the six-interviews. From the interviewees' comments, a dynamic relationship between learning environments and participants was observed.

Yoshida said that she liked the online class because she felt it was more secure to take classes online:

(R: Researcher, Y: Yoshida)

R: 対面でやってるものもあるじゃない英会話とか。なんか、どう違うとか全体的にどっちがいいとかさなんかある？

Y: そらもう断然対面の方が圧倒的に有利ではあるけど、オンラインのメリットは例えばその初対面で怖くないのは良いなって。

R: なるほどちょっと詳しく。

Y: えっとなんだっけ。世の中って結構危ないじゃないですか。変なことしてきたりとか。初めて対面でかしまって会うかよりは。普通にリラックスして落ち着いて受けたほうが私は結構いいかな。

R: There are some things you do face-to-face, like English conversation. Which do you prefer, online or offline? Do you have any comments on that?

Y: Well, I mean, face-to-face meetings are definitely more advantageous, but the advantage of online is that you don't have to be afraid of meeting people, for example.

R: Okay, can you give details about that?

Y: Well, what can I say? The world is a dangerous place, isn't it? Like doing something strange to me. Rather than a formal in-person meeting for the first time, I'd rather have a normal, relaxed environment to take a language learning class. (Translated by the author)

While Yoshida liked some parts of the online class, she also admitted that offline learning was better for learning a language than online learning because she wanted to listen to pronunciation carefully. She complained that in online classes, she could not ask for help, and the lectures went on without her understanding the content. She attributed this to a bad internet connection.

Yoshida's attitude toward the online learning environment was not straightforward. Moreover, it was ambivalent in that she preferred certain aspects of online learning but did not like other aspects. Her attributing her negative view of online learning to a bad internet connection indicated that her view of online learning could change moment by moment because the quality of the internet connection could change rapidly. Her comments show that the relationship between the learning environment and humans is rather dynamic. Moreover, the meaning-making process of how language learners interact with and perceive the learning environment is constantly changing.

Komori described his experience with offline language school and explained his preference for online as follows:

(R: Researcher, K: Komori)

K: なんか俺が通ってたその英語スクールは全員先生が外人なんだよね。でも優しくはしてくれたけど威圧感あるし、意味が分かんなかったらこっちイライラするだけなんで、対面はねそままでいい印象がないんですね。まあでも個人塾だったんですけどね。オンライン、オンラインねえ。なんかそのね YouTube のもの、どういうものかあまり分からないですけど、対面に比べたらオンラインの方がやろうとは思いますね

R: あ、そう。それはなんで？

K: 適度な距離感を取れるから

R: なるほど

K: なんかいきなりその外人と目の前に、外人って言い方良くないけど、外人が目の前にいて威圧感でこられてもこっち萎縮しちゃうんで。なんか最初に慣れるまでのしゃべるのに慣れるまでの間は、なんか、こういうオンラインの方がみんな気負わずでできるかなって感じですね

K: At the English school I went to, all the teachers were foreigners. They were kind to me, but they were intimidating, and if I didn't understand what they meant, I would just get annoyed. Well, it was a private tutoring school. Online, online, you know, I don't really know what *You Tube* is like, but I think I'd rather do it online than in person.

R: Oh, yes. Why is that?

K: Because you can keep an appropriate physical distance.

R: I see.

K: I don't know if it's good to say *gaijin* [foreigner], but if a *gaijin* is suddenly in front of me, I feel intimidated, so until I get used to talking with a *gaijin*, I feel that online is easier for everyone. (Translated by the author)

Komori's negative experience with offline language school made him feel intimidated when talking with a foreigner offline. His statement that "online is easier for everyone" until "I get used to talking with a *gaijin*" indicates a similar message to that of Yoshida in that both participants regarded the offline environment as a more relaxing,

comfortable, and secure atmosphere. Here, out of countless experiences Komori had undergone, the experience at the offline language school was selected and became the preceding context of the conversation.

Komiyama had a different reason for liking online learning, articulating his preference for online learning as follows:

真面目に受けてないから正直分からないっていうのがまあ一番だけど。強いて言うだったら、オンラインの方が、個人的にはしっかり、授業を聞いているような気がする。個人的にはね。なんでかって言うと、対面だとその授業に行って、俺大抵あの言語の授業を真面目に聞いてないから内職みたいなのをやりながら授業を受けるんだけど、対面でやってると結構ビビリだから。内職やってるっていうこの罪悪感とバレたらどうしようって言うビビリーをやりながら対面でやってると内職に集中する、バレないようにやる、授業聞いている風にやるって言うので結局授業の方の中身入ってないんだけど、オンラインでやると安心して内職できるからかえって内職もはかどるし授業もなんとなく聞けるし。なんかね、オンラインの方が俺は聞いている気がする。

To be honest, I don't know because I haven't taken it seriously. If I had to say something, I personally feel that I listen to lessons better online. Personally, though, the reason for this is that when I go to an in-person class, you know, I usually don't take the language class seriously, so I work on something else while I am in class. When I go to an in-person class, I'm a chicken; when I'm attending offline class, I feel guilty that I'm doing something else, and I'm scared of being caught. So I concentrate on whatever I'm working on, try not to get caught, and try to act like I'm listening to the class. But when I attend class online, I can do my other activity with peace of mind, and I can listen to the class much better. I feel like I listen more online. (Translated by the author)

The reason Komiyama listened more to the online class was unique, but it clearly showed the differences between online and offline learning in terms of how the environment affected the students. The online environment was comfortable and relaxing for Komiyama, whereas the offline environment was scary and made him feel guilty.

Gibson (1977, 1986) used the term "affordances" to describe the relationship where the environment interacts with humans and affords them certain feelings or acts. An affordance of anything is defined as "a specific combination of properties of its substance and its surfaces taken with respect to an animal" (Gibson, 1977, p. 67). Hammond (2009) explained that the concept of affordance "suggests a way of seeing the world as a meaning-laden environment offering countless opportunities for actions and countless constraints on actions. The world is full of potential, not of things" (p. 206). In Komiyama's case, for instance, the offline environment affords him comfort

and focus, while the offline affords him guilt. It indicates that such opportunities and constraints provided by each environment define the dynamic relationship between the environment and the person who enjoys the opportunities and the constraints.

Some interviewees expressed the view that there is no difference between online and offline instruction when it comes to learning a foreign language. To illustrate, Imai did not make a clear distinction between online and offline learning:

(R: Researcher, I: Imai)

R: 対面の学習と比べてさどうですか、そのオンラインの学習っていうのは？

I: あんまり変わってる気がしないですね。

R: How do you feel about online learning compared with offline learning?

I: I don't feel like there is much difference. (Translated by the author)

Kato stated that he perceived online and offline learning contexts as similar in some situations, but he also expressed that they are not always similar:

オンラインだとディスカッションとかディベートとかはラグが発生するんでちょっとやりづらい部分もあります。リーライ(Reading & Writing)とかはただ読むだけなので大丈夫ですけどやっぱ喋るってなるとちょっとラグが気になります ※()は筆者加筆

Online discussions and debates in class are a bit difficult to handle because of the lag time between when someone speaks and when others react. Reading and writing are fine since they are just textual, but when it comes to speaking, the lag time is a bit of a problem. (Translated by the author)

This suggests that how students perceive online/offline instruction depends on what kind of communication act is happening at the oligo. Although Komiyama preferred online learning, he claimed that letting students choose the environment they want to learn in leads them to be motivated:

正直どれでもそんなに変わらないな一っていう風に思っていて、でもこのオンラインにするかオフラインにするかハイブリッドにするかっていう選択肢を選ばなきゃいけない状況っていうのが言語学習を意欲的にさせるとは思っている。どれがいいかっていうよりはどれかを選ばなきゃいけないっていうこの状況が言語学習に良いような気がする。

To be honest, I don't think there's much difference between them, but I think the situation where you have to choose between online, offline, and hybrid is what motivates language learning. Rather than thinking about which one is better, this situation in which you have to choose between online, offline, or hybrid is good for language learning. (Translated by the author)

He expressed that the online, offline, and hybrid categorizations for classes are not such important distinctions in terms of language learning. Rather, it is the choice of the environment in which the learner takes the initiative that allows the learner to actively participate in the class. It can be said that it is in the macro context of

technological development and COVID-19's influence that online and hybrid options have emerged as new forms.

Reflecting on online learning he had experienced in the COVID-19 context, Taguchi expressed a similar opinion to that of Komiyama in that he saw online learning—representing a new form of learning environment—as normal and established as a new option for learning:

なんかこういうオンラインっていう新しい形ができたからこそ、そのディスカッションとかは、その、できる形が増えたじゃないか。全然オンラインでも問題なく自分はやれるかなと思ってて。その人によっては生じゃないと、対面じゃないと、オンライン、あ、対面じゃないとディスカッションしづらいとか言ってる人結構いるんですけど、まあ自分的にはそのオンラインでも一応コミュニケーション自体はだいぶ思ったよりもとりやすいなって思ってて、そこは逆に今年の春学期に分かった一つのなんか、まあコロナ禍でもできる、その強みと言うか、コロナ禍でも関係なくディスカッションできるよっていう新しい発見があったと思います。

I think that the new online format has increased the number of ways in which discussions can be held. I think I can have a discussion online without any problems at all. Some people say that it is difficult to have a discussion without face-to-face meetings, but I think that online communication is much easier than I had expected. I think this is one of the strengths of online communication, which I learned in the spring semester of this year. (Translated by the author)

By analyzing online and offline learning environments while considering the social context in which the event of the interview was based, it becomes possible to understand which environment facilitates learning more for which person in which situation. Until now, online and offline learning have been distinguished by comparing cyberspace to physical space. Thus, many prior studies have focused solely on (static) space when distinguishing between online and offline learning. However, such distinctions do not help us understand the inherently dynamic nature of how learners perceive the learning environment.

The interviews allowed us to see how the definition of online instruction has taken on a public nature in a macro and micro context. From this perspective, online and offline learning can be viewed as dynamic, presupposing students' experiences and social conditions. As a result, it is being transformed and reinterpreted from here-and-now communication.

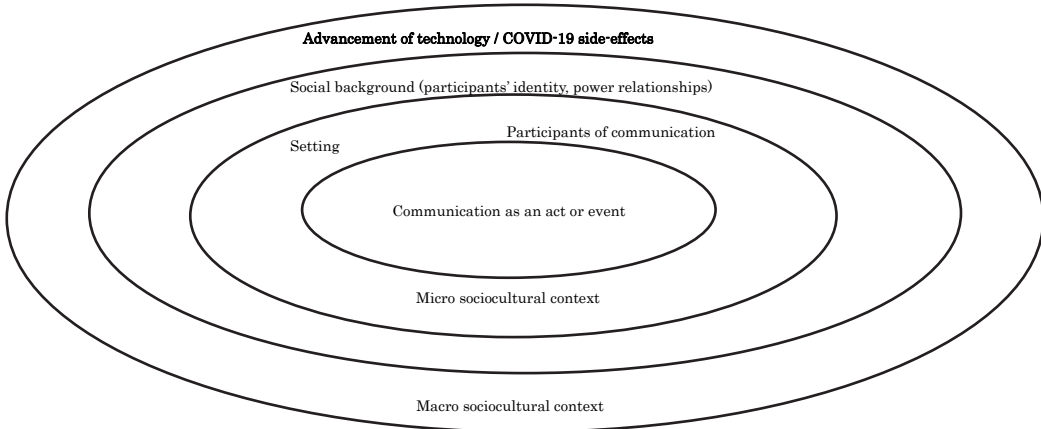
5. General Discussion

As stated in the Introduction, COVID-19 and the advancement of technology have played significant roles in changing peoples' learning styles in the last few years. In fact, the data from the six interviews provided insight into offline/offline learning

and participants' perceptions of their respective environments, and revealed that the relationship between them is constantly changing within macro and micro contexts. In addition, based on the theory of affordance, the interview data offered a perspective on what each environment affords participants and vice versa. It is also suggested that the relationship between each environment and the participants should be perceived in a dynamic relationship. Based on such findings, in this section, the interview results are further deepened by considering the event model.

Figure 3 is a modified version of the event model; interview results and the surrounding macro-micro perspective are adapted. Changes from Figure 1 are noted in bold.

Figure 3. Event model in this research



A micro sociocultural context that included but was not limited to technological development and the COVID-19 pandemic was presupposed in the interview setting; this was borne out in that all the interviewees had experience with online language learning and supported in terms of Higuchi's (2021) finding that many university students use online language services. This macro change in the language learning situation has brought the notion of the online/offline dichotomy to the next level. That is, online learning has become as normal as offline learning; indeed, several interviewees affirmed that they saw no difference between online and offline learning, and these choices had become parallel options for them. In the context of such a worldview, the interviewees described how each environment provided them with opportunities or constraints to learn and options to choose. As for the macro sociocultural perspective, although it is not sufficient to address only two phenomena—namely, the advancement of technology and the side effects of COVID-19—from the interviews, it was evident that these two phenomena played a

key role in shaping the view of the online/offline dichotomy in today's society.

In terms of social background, the participants and researcher have known each other for some time; although the participants come from diverse background (i.e., college/university, grade level, and foreign language study history), they are all younger than the researcher, indicating a certain power relationship. This implies that interviewees' response might have been inadequately elicited by the researcher. Hence, more research will be needed to deepen the understanding of dynamic nature of language learning environments, and how certain communication events are textualized and contextualized.

Communication events were outlined in the Interview Results and Discussion section. During the event (i.e., the interview session), the dialogue that the participants and the researcher created was textualized at the deictic center. Moreover, it was triggered and indexed by the micro and macro contexts. In addition, the presupposed contexts were altered as the communication continued, transforming the definition of online/offline from a static perspective to the dynamic nature of the process. As stated in the Literature Review section, the traditional definition of online/offline environments mainly focused on a difference in space. Such a definition, however, was altered gradually in the interview process because how interviewees perceived online/offline environments presupposed rather dynamic and fluid nature, including their personal experiences and social conditions.

The event model can vividly depict how communication is textualized and contextualized while capturing social changes at the macro and micro levels. The results of the interviews showed that online learning has become a more normal option. A distinction between offline and online certainly exists in terms of what each environment affords; some interviewees preferred a gradual transition, favoring the psychological safety of the online environment until they were comfortable with the conversation. In contrast, the distinctions between learning environments were blurred in some learners' perspectives, and they did not see a difference between them when learning.

Based on the analysis performed using the event model, the relationship between offline and online learning is rather fluid, encompassing the social relationships of each moment and the learner's previous experiences. As Jewitt (2016) suggested, "meaning [can be] understood as arising in the iterative connection between the meaning potential of a material semiotic text (e.g., a worksheet or website) or artifact (e.g., a tool); the meaning potential of the social and cultural environment where it is encountered (e.g., at home or in a museum); and the resources, intentions, and knowledge that people bring to that encounter" (p.69). In this sense, it is critical to view the relationship as a communication act in society rather than as a dichotomous

relationship or a relationship based on such concepts as time and space.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to overcome the defects of the traditional definition of online/offline (and hybrid) environments by utilizing interview data and the event model. The results showed that the presupposed, societal, or individual experiences of the interviewees were reflected and transformed into a modified context via contextualizing and textualizing. Each learning environment afforded some possibilities and constraints to the language learner in the background indexed as a precondition, bringing new social meaning (i.e., textualization) and transforming the context in the here-and-now communicative act of interviewing.

As mentioned in the General Discussion section, this paper analyzed the common patterns of perceptions shared by a small sample of more diverse individuals at the macro and micro levels based on the event model. However, to capture wider range of perceptions of online and offline learning environments based on ever-changing communication, more research with different group of people will be needed. In the consideration of social change, perspectives other than just the development of information technology and the coronavirus pandemic must also be taken as the experience of the participants in the premise on which communication occurs.

This research is prominent in that it contributes to academia in two ways. First, environmental differences were analyzed in depth through macro and micro perspectives with a solid communication model. The analysis of learners' interviews based on the event model sheds light on societal change and how the meaning-making process is constantly changing in response. Second, the study bridged prior gaps in the literature between the views of linguistic anthropology and language learning, as well as theory and practice. Communication models rooted in semiotics or anthropology are rarely incorporated into or discussed in English education (Koyama & Ayabe, 2009). However, this study aimed to utilize such a communication model to illustrate the dynamic nature of communication from both the macro and micro perspectives.

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