

Graduate School of International
Culture and Communication Studies
Examination Report on the Doctoral Dissertation

Applicant	
Name	ITO, Yurika (Last Name / (Middle Name) / First Name)

Dissertation Title · Subtitle : (English)	Learning about Technology for Language Teaching Purposes: The Role of Online Communities for Supporting Language Teachers
Dissertation Title · Subtitle : (Japanese)	言語教育におけるテクノロジー習得: 教師を支援するオンラインコミュニティの役割

*Even if the dissertation is written in English, a Japanese language translation of the title and subtitle must also be submitted.

YYYY/MM/DD

To Dean of Graduate School of International
Culture and Communication Studies,

Examination Committee

Chief Examiner STOCKWELL, Glenn 印 Signature

(Affiliation・Title: Faculty of Law/Professor)

Sub-Examiner HOSHII, Makiko 印 Signature

(Affiliation・Title: Faculty of Law/Professor)

Sub-Examiner OTOGURO, Ryo 印 Signature

(Affiliation・Title: Faculty of Law/Professor)

Sub-Examiner TANAKA-ELLIS Nobue 印 Signature

(Affiliation・Title: Tokai University/Associate Professor)

The Examination Committee members report the results of the dissertation examination and the oral defense below.

1. Degree: Doctor of Philosophy (in International Culture and Communication Studies)

2. Curriculum Doctorate (*Katei Hakase*) ・ Dissertation Doctorate (*Ronbun Hakase*)

*Please delete either one.

3. Examination period

Dissertation examination: From 2022/11/11 To 2022/12/27

YYYY/MM/DD

YYYY/MM/DD

Oral defense: 2022/12/27
YYYY/MM/DD

4. The results of the dissertation examination and the oral defense

*Please write down Pass or Fail in both categories.

Dissertation examination: Pass

Oral defense: Pass

5. Summary of the Dissertation

As per attached sheet

6. Table of Contents

As per attached sheet

7. The results of the dissertation examination and the oral defense

(About 3,000 characters in Japanese or 1,000 words in English)

(1) Evaluation and summary of the dissertation examination

(Including Summary of the Dissertation)

The dissertation was a total of 339 pages (including front matter and appendices), which is a very solid piece of work. She has included a very solid literature review that clearly indicated an understanding of the past research and how her research related to this.

Although the study was conceptualised before the pandemic, it has been guided by the events of the pandemic as they unfolded, and in that way, the dissertation forms an extremely interesting window on the changes in needs and perspectives of language teachers in the reasons why and how they engaged in online forums.

(2) Summary of the oral defense (including Comments and Questions)

The oral defense was conducted face-to-face on December 27, 2022, and was well attended by 11 past and current GSICCS postgraduate students. The candidate spent approximately 40 minutes briefly describing the methodology and then going over the primary results of the

study.

The candidate gave an overview of the primary results in terms of the factors that influenced the ways in which teachers learned about technology, most notably including the financial constraints, time, accessibility and the amount of support from colleagues. Notably, there was a clear drop in the number of people asking for techno-pedagogical assistance from the beginning of the pandemic compared to after teachers had had time to get used to online teaching. Many people migrated to other communities (see p. 99 of the dissertation for the different groups)

The candidate has discussed further directions for research which deserve further attention on completion of the PhD – how teachers use these communities post-COVID, those who never used them, and the role of online communities for other difficult circumstances apart from the pandemic (i.e., war in Ukraine, etc.). In all, it was an excellent presentation that reflected an extremely well-written dissertation, and the comments that the examiners had were to further improve upon what is already a very good piece of research.

The comments/questions from the reviewers were as follows, with the responses from the candidate provided in blue:

GS: Please tell us a little more about how the different online communities were chosen (see p. 99 of the dissertation)

YI: Some discussion groups that were held in languages other than English were omitted because she could not read them without translation software, which may provide an inaccurate representation of the intended posts.

GS: I felt that there were differences between full-time and part-time staff and their needs for online communities. Could you please elaborate (touched on also by MH)?

YI: This might be difficult to include in the dissertation as there did not appear to be data collected in a systematic way, but the data will be checked again to check.

GS: The pandemic seems to have overshadowed other uses of the online communities – could you describe any others that you thought were interesting/relevant?

YI: The study revealed that nearly everything appeared to be overshadowed by the pandemic, and while there were discussions about using technology, these mainly pertained to online teaching during the pandemic.

RO: Could you discuss the differences between public and private communities?

YI: Teachers felt more comfortable discussing sensitive issues in private groups, as they were concerned about the ramifications if their employers found out about any complaints.

RO: Traditional mailing lists and BBS for language learning are still widely used. Could you please explain more about these?

YI: There are a few that are still active and a tight-knit community, but there are no recent studies on these. It did appear that the number of active users is small in the same way as Facebook.

GS: Perhaps these groups are psychologically more difficult to join, and this is a point that might be worthy of further research on completing the PhD.

NTE: Teachers are seen as the most unhappy people in the world. Teaching well-being is an important issue that you have covered well through the online community. Question about the lit review – covered motivation in the literature review but not covered as much as one might expect.

YI: One of the reasons it was covered so much in the Literature Review is because there is a lot to tell in the field. There may have been a place for Communities of Practice more than is currently there in the study, but it turned out that the results did not show as much on autonomy as hoped.

MH: The problems of networking of non-Japanese teachers who feel isolated. Would it have been possible to use Japanese speakers in FBC-1-JP?

YI: Subjects were selected by convenience sampling, so it was difficult to get data from other languages. **MH:** it is important for us as teachers to understand the problems faced by NNS.

MH: There were some errors in the table on page 148.

YI: These will be corrected.

NTE: Why are all of these categories included in the table on page 165 when some are zero?

YI: It shows that other communities didn't include it even though it was in FBC-1-JP.

NTE: Why is the literature review only focusing on CALL? Could you have used other fields?

YI: These were explored in quite a lot of detail, but it may be not as clear as it should be in the Literature Review. This will be check to see if revisions can be made to achieve this.

MH: I use technology but I have psychological barriers towards FB. I use Slack and LINE.

YI: There is a need to show these teachers how to use them and perhaps it might be possible to change their attitudes – privacy online, and large groups are “private” but with so many members.

MH: Need to see how users developed their attitudes over time.

YI: Yes, this is cross-sectional, and there is a need for a longitudinal

NTE: Conclusion - last page of the conclusion could be more impactful and “provocative” - more of a statement that encapsulates the 339 pages—all of the “strong” social issues could be covered.

YI: The conclusion will be revised to reflect these issues as well.

MH: The title could include the latter half only (i.e., omit the first half) - if the title cannot be changed, then in the final remarks see how to include the first half for this/future research.

YI: The title is not able to be changed (this was checked after the examination), so the final remarks will be adjusted accordingly.