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Study abroad, survey-tests, and micro-narratives: Exploring the interface
by Tim Newfields & Ken Groger

Abstract
This article describes how 170 tertiary students at three institutions in Japan envisioned study abroad and overseas travel according to a 12-item instrument using Japanese language prompts to elicit English questions and answers. Statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 17.09, df=5, p$-value=0.00431) were found among male ($n=92$) and female ($n=78$) respondents in terms of interest in study abroad. Non-significant differences in linguistic proficiency and response length by gender were also noted. Interest in study abroad by academic major also appeared to be non-significant. This paper concludes by underscoring the need to address some common misconceptions about study abroad. It also suggests how more spelling, grammar, and pragmatic awareness raising activities are needed by the vast majority of respondents.

Keywords: study abroad, overseas travel, Japanese EFL linguistic proficiency, pragmatic competence.

Since 2009 an estimated 60,000 tertiary students from Japan have been studying overseas each year (Tabuchi, 2012, par. 13). Although only 2% of Japan’s undergraduates study abroad (Yamagami, 2011, par. 1), the country’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology announced in 2009 the ambitious goal of raising this number to 300,000 by 2020 (MEXT, 2011, par. 17). To achieve this, it is necessary to better understand how tertiary students view study abroad. At least 15 papers have been published in Japan about the avowed motivations among Japanese students for studying abroad (SA). Most have consisted either of Likert-scale questionnaires about factors thought to be associated with SA. Another significant portion have consisted of qualitative interviews with a small number of informants. This paper uses a different data collection procedure, one that relies on the short written narratives provided in response to SA questions. As such, this paper not only seeks to explore SA attitudes, but also investigates some issues related to pragmatic competence. More specifically, it explores what 170 tertiary students in Japan think SA programs should include or not include as well as some basic information about their overseas experiences (or lack thereof). Specifically, the following research questions are investigated:

(1) How well can this group of students formulate inquiries about SA in English with written Japanese elicitation prompts?
(2) How much interest do the informants report having in SA?
(3) What is the biggest concern among the informants about SA?
(4) What do the informants express the most interest in doing overseas?

Literature Review
Five studies informed this research, each of which is briefly summarized below.

Van Der Meid (2003)

Van Der Meid (2003) explores factors thought to influence SA participation among 153 Asian American university students. Using one web-based questionnaire for those with no SA experience ($n=75$) and another for those with experience ($n=78$), self-reported reasons among students underlying their SA decisions were explored. The desire to learn about new cultures, enhance foreign language skills, and simply "get away from school" were cited as primary motives for SA. By contrast, 57% of the informants without SA experience felt it "did not fit" their major and another 31% cited financial constraints as impediments to SA. Van Der Meid also found that students with Chinese, Korean, and Japanese ethnic backgrounds were more likely to study abroad than those with Filipino or Vietnamese backgrounds. This suggests family income levels have some impact on SA decisions. Not surprisingly, Asian Americans tended to favor SA destinations in Asia more than non-Asian students. Van Der Meid’s data further underscores how gender and academic major both correlate strongly with SA choices. More women tend to study abroad than men. Those majoring in the humanities are more likely to engage in SA than science majors. One weakness of this study is that the results are expressed as simple raw percentages without any statistical analyses. For that reason it was difficult to ascertain whether observed differences were due to random chance or not. Moreover, the tabular results were hard to interpret since the author did not specify whether a 4- or 5-point Likert scale was being used. Despite these limitations, Van Der Meid does a valuable job in pinpointing some factors thought to be associated with SA.

Ogawa (2006)

Ogawa explored macroscopic factors thought to influence SA decisions among graduate engineering majors, conducting retrospective face-to-face interviews with 54 engineering teachers from Korea, China, and Taiwan who had studied in Japan or the United States. Ogawa posits that Cummings’ (1991) center-periphery hypothesis does not adequately account for why specific SA destinations are chosen. He postulates that respondents make SA decisions on the basis of a range of factors such as future work opportunities, financial costs, and personal foreign language proficiency. The fact that the USA attracts seven times more foreign graduate students than Japan is noted. Although the information in Ogawa’s study may be of limited relevance to undergraduate non-science majors, he aptly underscores how government policies can facilitate or hinder the influx of foreign students. Regrettably, the methodology behind this research is not explained in adequate detail. For example, the sampling procedure and response rates are unspecified. Moreover, the interview format itself is opaque. Finally, the author relied solely on anecdotal stories: the raw data was not categorized or systematically coded. Despite these drawbacks, Ogawa’s study does remind readers to consider the macroscopic policies behind individual SA decisions.

Sato (2012)

Although the focus of Sato’s research was on changes in oral fluency as a consequence of a 3-4 month SA program, the author offers an intriguing conjecture that one reason many Japanese EFL students choose not to study abroad is because they are not "... convinced of the benefits of SA experiences" (p. 63). Sato underscores the need for more convincing empirical data about the benefits of short-term SA in terms of language fluency. An interesting aspect of her research was the detailed case studies of those who made significant changes in terms of their English oral proficiency. She offers some clues about factors thought to influence SA motivation such as self-efficacy and out-of-class L2 social interactions.
Massey and Burrow (2012)

This paper explores factors thought to motivate and influence SA students. Two research questions were explored. The first examined how 187 students with SA experience from a university in Canada made their SA decisions. Out of the ten MC response options, 65% reported that consulting institutional websites had a big impact on their SA choices. Another 52% talked with former SA participants, while 54% visited international centers at their schools. Massey and Burrow also explored why 166 overseas students selected Canada as a SA destination. Of the 13 response options available, the two strongest motivations appeared to be a desire “make acquaintances” in the host country and a wish to “learn more about [local] customs and traditions” by interacting with host community residents. This study underscores the ability of incoming exchange students to seek out information on their own, particularly from websites and school offices. These results also demonstrate the need for institutions to have current information regarding SA options both online and on campus.

One nice thing about this study is that in addition to reporting standard chi-square measures, the authors also indicate effect sizes via both Cramér’s V and Cohen’s d. Effect sizes are a valuable way to assess the difference between two groups (Coe, 2002). One shortcoming of Massey and Burrow’s study was that the questionnaire does not appear to have been adequately alpha- and beta-tested. As a result, one of the survey questions was unclear. However, the authors did provide some useful insights about how SA decisions are made by university students.

Newfields (2012)

Newfields (2012) explored ways that 72 Japanese undergraduates conceptualized SA. This study relied on students’ response to a Japanese prompt that is often translated as "How much interest do you have in study abroad?") Answers were coded by a single rater according to a 5-point Likert scale in which 5 = strong interest and 1 = strong disinterest. Four misconceptions about SA among some informants were subsequently identified: (1) a belief that SA does not necessarily involve study abroad – just going abroad, (2) a belief SA does not necessarily involve traveling overseas, (3) a belief SA invariably entails doing a homestay, and (4) a belief SA occurs only through formal school affiliate programs.

Although this study did bring some common misconceptions about SA to light, it suffers from at least three drawbacks. First, the sample size was modest and drawn from a single faculty at one university. Second, all information was coded by merely one rater. A better practice would be to have at least two coders work independently, reporting their inter-coder agreement index. Third, it relied on only one question and a single response format. A better practice would be to have several questions in diverse formats to elucidate each core research question.

Situating This Study

This study differs from previous studies in four respects. First of all, the format of the research instrument is somewhat novel. Second, a broader sampling is employed: students from three institutions in two Japanese prefectures are surveyed. Thirdly, the results were coded independently by two raters. Finally, this study systematically adjusts for the influence of item types by using three forms of a survey-test with different response formats.

Method

Respondents

A convenience sample of 170 university students at three institutions of higher education in Japan taking EFL classes by the co-authors participated in this study. Their demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 1.
This sample differs slightly from the entire population of Japanese tertiary students in three regards. Whereas only 1.2% of those receiving a tertiary undergraduate education in Japan are non-Japanese (JASSO, 2012), 4.7% of this sample’s respondents (n=8) are. Foreigners are hence slightly over-represented. We were tempted to exclude the 8 non-Japanese from the data sample, but our interest in comparing their responses with the other 162 informants prompted us to use a non-exclusive sample.

Moreover, whereas 55.9% of the tertiary students in Japan are female (MEXT, 2012), only 45.8% of the respondents in this sample were; females are slightly under-represented.

Finally, 99% of the respondents (n=168) were first or second year students and the mean age was about 19.3 years. Third and fourth year-students are significantly under-represented. Since English is required only during the first two years for non-English majors, this is no surprise. Only 13% (n=21) of the respondents in this sample were English majors. Others were either economics majors at a private university in Tokyo (n=93), education majors at a national university in Shizuoka (n=67), or students majoring in other subjects at a private college in Shizuoka (n=10).

**Instruments**

Three forms of the 12-item survey-test appearing in Appendix A (and online) were used in this study. Since survey-tests are not widely used, a brief explanation may be in order. If we conceive of "questionnaires" and "tests" in terms of an information-gathering continuum, then within the bounds of the spectrum something akin to a "survey-test" is postulated to exist. As Table 2 suggests, survey-tests share some of features of standard questionnaires as well as other features associated with criteria reference tests (CRTs).

**Table 1. A Demographic Profile of this Study’s Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male: 92</th>
<th>Female: 78</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Year</td>
<td>1st: 54</td>
<td>2nd: 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Econ.: 93</td>
<td>Edu.: 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Jpn.: 162</td>
<td>Chinese: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times Abroad*</td>
<td>83 - 85</td>
<td>1x only: 26-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents SA?</td>
<td>No: 137</td>
<td>Father only: 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents FL Fluent?</td>
<td>No: 133</td>
<td>Father only: 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The numbers fluctuate since the answers were based on two differently worded questions coded independently by two raters.

**Table 2. Some Key Differences between Questionnaires, Survey-Tests, and CRTs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>Survey-Tests</th>
<th>CRTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graded?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect Lesson Content?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (ideally)</td>
<td>Yes (ideally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Used for Detailed Content Analysis?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Consent Required?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Opt Out without Penalty?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive to Complete All Items?</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Questions Included?</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>Usually Not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short, survey-tests have characteristics of both standard questionnaires and traditional CRTs. What distinguishes them from these other two instruments is not so much the structure of the questions per se, but how the information is used. In survey-tests, items are graded in the same way as regular exams, but there is a detailed post-hoc content analysis. Also, standard questionnaires are usually...
conducted in the respondents’ native languages to facilitate speedy responses. However, in foreign language teaching contexts, survey-tests would likely be mainly in the classroom target language, similar to ordinary tests.

Why should teachers go to the trouble of creating survey-tests? One reason is that response rates are likely to be higher than with standard questionnaires. Whereas there is seldom any incentive for students to complete classroom questionnaires, there is a graded incentive to finish survey-tests.

Another merit is that survey-tests do not reduce the amount of classroom time devoted to time on task (Partin, 2009, p. 76): well-designed survey-tests cover class content. However, it should also be conceded they are also driven by research agendas. Only if a researcher’s agenda is congruent with a course’s instructional agenda can survey-tests be ethically used.

In this study, six demographic questions were combined with six questions about SA or international travel as part of a mid-semester exam. In this design, students were asked to translate 12 questions in Japanese into English in three formats: (1) multiple-choice, (2) scrambled sentence, and (3) open-ended question. The responses to all questions were open-ended. Moreover, students were asked to respond “in a conversational manner” as if they were part of an ongoing exchange. Developing pragmatic competence was one of the main goals of the EFL courses taught by both instructors. Moreover, examples of so-called “conversational responses” appeared before each task type in the survey-test. For a discussion about how what might be termed “conversational responses” differ from standard test responses, refer to Newfields (2012, pp. 124-126).

The survey-test questions explored the ability of the respondents to inquire about SA issues in English, addressing Research Question 1. The answers explored their reported attitudes and experiences about SA and overseas travel, addressing Research Questions 2-4.

The Japanese prompts used in the survey test were created and validated according to a procedure recommended by Chen (2009) and outlined in Figure 1.

One limitation that should be acknowledged in developing the Survey-Test in Appendix A is that it was piloted with just two students at one school. We concede that a larger and more diverse group should have been employed in the pilot testing.

In addition to the survey-test, a rating rubric appearing in Appendix B was used to code responses. This was developed inductively without much theoretical sensitivity by examining actual student responses: frequent response patterns were categorized and uncommon ones were subsumed into a convenient “other response” heading. The actual coding form (with one student’s responses and one rater’s categorization of those responses) appears in Appendix C. A profile matrix of that form reveals 110 data cells for 38 different fields.

Procedures
The procedures used in this research are summarized in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Research Timeline for This Study](image)

In actuality, the process was more iterative than Figure 2 suggests. For example, even after the primary coding was complete we continued to explore new published studies. However, the primary steps outlined in Figure 2 are accurate. Two items mentioned in Figure 2 merit further explanation.

**Rater Training**

Before grading the survey-test was coded, the co-authors developed a tentative rating rubric and then rated four simulated responses independently. After each session, they discussed their coding choices by phone. By the fourth time, both felt they were in agreement about the coding criteria. Indeed, the inter-coder agreement ratings ($p_o$) ranged from .88 to .99 with a mean of 96. Adjusting for random chance agreements through Cohen’s kappa, ranges from .84 to .96 were obtained. The mean Cohen’s $\kappa$ was .89. Since agreements of .61 or higher are considered “good” (Landis & Koch, 1977, cited in Sim & Wright, 2005, p. 261), it appears that both coders were adhering to the same criteria.

**Rubric Revision**

After piloting the survey-test, it was decided to truncate the “no response” and “no comprehensible response” categories. Also, one extra response category was added to Question IV to accommodate a wider range of replies.

**Results**

Let us now consider the results in terms of each of the four research questions.

1. **How well can this group of tertiary students formulate written inquires about study abroad in English with Japanese elicitation prompts?**

   It is probably best to answer this question in terms of the four different sub-groups comprising this sample. The 96 economics majors had a mean score of 2.42 ($SD=1.14$). In other words, the majority of them could formulate less than half of the six questions correctly. The 21 English majors fared only slightly better with mean score of 3.41 ($SD=.89$). The other 46 national university non-English majors had the highest mean at 3.51 ($SD=1.20$). The remaining 10 private college students had
score distributions similar to the economics majors ($M=2.47$, $SD=.68$). Regrettably, two students in this sample failed to get even a single question partly correct.

Female students ($M=3.11$, $SD=1.8$, $VAR_{run}=1.16$) tended to do slightly better than males ($M=2.66$, $SD=3.25$, $VAR_{run}=1.87$). However, when a 2-sample $z$-test comparing both means was conducted, no significant gender difference was detected at a 95% confidence interval ($Z=.64$, 2-tail probability=.52).

This data makes clear is that most students are not able to formulate even basic questions in English regarding overseas study or travel. The total mean score was 2.87, which means the average student could not express even half of the questions in English. However, the wide standard deviation of 3.64 suggests significantly different sub-groups existed within this sample.

An item analysis of the six questions reveals the mean item difficulty was .48 ($SD=.08$). Question II [Have you (ever)(traveled/been) overseas before?] was easiest ($ID=.63$, $SD=.42$) and Question I [How interested are you in study abroad?] was the most difficult ($ID=.32$, $SD=.40$). Now let us consider how students responded to some of those questions.

(2) How much interest do the informants report having in SA?

Question I explored the informants’ interest in SA and 84% of them ($n=143$) offered intelligible responses. Those responses could be interpreted as pseudo-ordinal data in which 5 represents “a strong interest in SA” and 1 “a strong disinterest.” 64% of the informants ($n=103$) indicated either a “strong” or “mild” interest in SA, with a mean of 3.88 ($SD=1.46$, 95% CI=1.96).

As expected, females had more interest in SA than males. A chi-square test revealed this was significant at a $p>.01$ level ($\chi^2=17.09$, $df=5$, $p$-value=0.00431). With Yates correction, this came to 13.66 and the revised $p$-value was 0.017919 – still comfortably within a $p>.05$ range. Whereas the mean interest level among females was 4.35, among males it was a modest 3.88. Congruent with other studies, interest in SA also appeared to vary with institute and with academic major. English majors expressed more interest in SA than economics majors. The results are summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Interest in SA among 170 Tertiary Students according to Gender and Schools/ Majors

The reasons given for the responses are revealing. Although 68% ($n=100$) of the 146 students answering this question suggested no reason behind their preferences, others did the pragmatically appropriate thing of indicating a brief rationale for their preferences. A desire to improve foreign language skills was the most frequently reason for SA interest ($n=9$). By contrast, worries about time/cost were among the most common reasons for disinterest ($n=5$). Some reasons for SA disinterest were enigmatic. Three respondents, for example, expressed xenophobia by stating:

- I want to live in Japan because I love Japan. And you? [S151, a 19 yr. old female economics major]
- I have not [sic] interest. I like Japan. And you? [S161, a 19 yr. old male economics major]
- I’m nothing [sic]. I like Japan school [sic]. And you? [S167, a 20 yr. old male economics major]
It is noteworthy that only 11% (n=18) of the students provided responses that were pragmatically complete in terms envisioned by Sacks et al (1974, p. 10, as cited by Hansen, 1998, p. 128). In addition to answering the question, such responses include information that actually helps a communicative exchange flow. Typically, complete responses consist of a short answer, followed by a comment [elaboration or expansion], and finally a rejoinder [question]. Notice how this response contains all those elements:

I'm really interested in abroad study. It's so cool, isn't it? [S85, a 18 yr. old female economics major]

19% (n=32) of the informants offered only a short answer and comment with no rejoinder. Although such answers are not grammatically wrong, they lack a final turn-constructional unit. As a result, they contain no signal to continue a conversation. Pragmatically, this may indicate a lack of desire to sustain a dialog. Notice how the following response is less engaging than the previous one:

I'm interested in it so much. Next year I go to France. [S40, a 19 yr. old female education major]

11% (n =20) included a rejoinder with their short answers, but without any details about their responses. Although pragmatically engaging, such replies lack depth. Notice how the following informant swiftly – and almost glibly – turns the conversation back:

I'm interesting [sic] about going abroad a lot. And you? [S21, a 19 yr. old female education major]

More problematic, 47% (n=80) offered terse answers with no elaborations or rejoinders. Pragmatically, this is could be interpreted as either as inability to communicate or as a lack of interest in extending a communicative exchange, as these examples attest:

I'm not interested in [incomplete sentence] [S32, a 19 yr. old male education major]
I don't interest [sic] [S145, a 20 yr. old female economics major]
A little. [S74, a 19 yr. old female education major]

These responses suggest how many students appear to lack pragmatic competence: quite likely they do not know how to strategically continue ongoing exchanges in English. Although the possibility of a design artifact in the survey-test itself cannot be ruled out, more than a few students do not seem to understand that a "grammatically correct" response is not necessarily a pragmatically appropriate one.

Sadly, 14% (n =24) offered no comprehensible response to Question I, representing a complete pragmatic failure.

(3) What is the biggest concern among the informants about SA?

Figure 4 indicates how students reacted to the prompt: 留学について最も心配な事は何ですか? This is often translated as, “What worries you most about study abroad?” 92% of the respondents (n=156) responded intelligibly to this question. Those open responses were coded into eight categories. Since some students mentioned multiple concerns, the y-axis indicates raw numerical responses.

Figure 4. Concerns about SA among 170 Tertiary Students According to Gender, Schools, and Majors
As Figure 4 suggests, the foremost concern was communicating in a foreign language. 46% (n=78) expressed anxiety about conversing in another tongue. Monetary worries (n=54) and trepidation about foreign food (n=38) were also salient.

The micro-narratives shed further light on these concerns and revealed the pragmatic weakness of most informants. 66% (n=112) gave terse answers to Question III without any elaboration or rejoinders, as in these examples:

I worry about the problem of language. [S23, a 18 yr. old male education major]
My worry is food. [S27, a 18 yr. old female education major]
Culture gap is my biggest worry [sic]. [S31, a 18 yr. old male education major]
I’m worry money [sic]. [S165, a 19 yr. old female economics major]

Responses such as these often fail to fulfill the Gricean maxims of quantity and manner (Grice, 1989, p. 28). 9% of the students (n=19) offered brief answers and comments, neglecting to add rejoinders to sustain the communicative exchange. Notice how these examples are grammatically correct, but not socially engaging since they lack a turn-constructional unit:

I worry about money. I don’t have so much money. [S1, a 19 yr. old female education major]
It is speaking English. I cannot speak English well. [S168, a 20 yr. old male economics major]

Another 9% (n=16) provided brief answers that were followed by rejoinders without contextual details. Notice how that lack makes these responses appear tersely formulaic:

I am worried about language. And you? [S135, a 20 yr. old male economics major]
It is expensive to study abroad. And you? [S136, a male economics major – age not specified]
I worry to different culcher. [sic] What do you think? [S162, a 21 yr. old male economics major]

Only 5% (n=9) of the students offered “pragmatically complete” responses as in these examples:

It is language. So, I’m studying hard. And you? [S13, a 20 yr. old male education major]
I worry about money. My home is not rich. How about you? [S20, a 20 yr. old male education major]
Whether I can talk there. Maybe I can’t speak. And you? [S86, a 20 yr. old male education major]

The overall data makes the need for more pragmatic competence abundantly clear.

(4) What do informants express the most interest in doing overseas?

Figure 5 summarizes how students reacted to the prompt: もしあなたが海外行ったたら、何をしたいですか？ This is usually translated as, “If you went abroad what would you like to do?” 90% of the respondents (n=160) responded to this question. Those open responses were coded into eight categories. Since some mentioned multiple activities, the y-axis indicates raw responses.

![Figure 5. Preferred Overseas Activities among 170 Tertiary Students](image-url)
Touristic activities such as sightseeing (45%, n=76) or tasting unusual foods/beverages (39%, n=66) were especially salient. Shopping was also a popular activity, and one with a clear gender gap. Whereas 46% (n=36) of the female respondents expressed an interest in this pursuit, only 16% (n=15) of the males did.

Academic study was an activity that few students appeared to be keenly interested in. Only 7% (n=12) expressed an interest in formal language studies, and a modest 6% (n=10) were interested in “studying culture.” Congruent with findings by Burrow (2010, p. 41), formal study does not appear to be the primary motivating reason for most students to go abroad.

The pragmatic responses for Question IV paralleled other survey-test questions. Again, a mere 9% (n=15) of the respondents offered “pragmatically complete” responses, while 64% (n=108) wrote answers without any elaborations or rejoinders. Only one person (S158) offered a response that was both grammatically correct and pragmatically appropriate. Most students seemed to focus on grammatical correctness and avoid using many words. Indeed, the average response was merely 7.6 words (SD=3.28, VAR_sam=10.8). Although responses by female respondents tended to be longer than those by males, a chi-square test revealed this was not statistically significant ($\chi^2=.25$, df=5, p-value=0.9985). National university students also tended to write longer sentences than private university/college students, but this was statistically insignificant ($\chi^2=.16$, df=6, p-value=0.9999).

**Discussion**

Two issues raised in this paper merit further discussion. First, we should consider the implications of these results for EFL teachers in general. After that, let us turn our attention to what the results might mean to those organizing SA programs.

**Implications for EFL Teachers in General**

1. **The need for more pragmatic instruction**

   Three classroom implications are suggested by this research. The first is the need to raise the pragmatic awareness of EFL students. A pragmatic analysis of the micro-narratives by the 170 students in this study makes it clear that most merely focused on sentence-level grammar, demonstrating little awareness of the macroscopic features of extended discourse. Although this might be discounted as a research artifact, our interactions with these students over the course of a year suggest there is a genuine lack of pragmatic awareness among most. The distinction between a response in which only a minimal level of information is exchanged and a so-called “pragmatically complete” response seems opaque to the vast majority. For this reason, we believe more time needs to be devoted to pragmatic instruction. Jones (2004) describes one possible way of doing this.

2. **The need for more grammar awareness**

   A second point borne out by this research is that many students are making fairly basic grammatical mistakes. An analysis of the survey-tests in Appendix A revealed well over 1,200 errors. The most frequent appear in Table 3.
Table 3. Some Frequent Grammar Mistakes Among This Survey-Test Sample (n=170)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type of error</th>
<th>sample lexis</th>
<th>sample incorrect sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agentic adj. / past part.</td>
<td>interested vs. interesting</td>
<td>* I have great interesting in study abroad. (S24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singular vs. plural</td>
<td>other vs. others</td>
<td>* I’m afraid of communicating with other very well. (S132)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superlatives</td>
<td>biggest vs. most</td>
<td>* My most worry is talking. (S146)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>null quantity adjectives</td>
<td>not at all vs. nothing</td>
<td>* I have nothing it. (S163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambiguous sub. / object</td>
<td>it is vs. I am</td>
<td>* It is so-so. (S43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present perfect</td>
<td>been vs. gone</td>
<td>* I have never gone to abroad. (S11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun / verb contrast</td>
<td>worry vs. be worried</td>
<td>* I’m worry money. (S165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjectives of degree</td>
<td>little vs. a little</td>
<td>* A little, I’m not going to study abroad. (S63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>null prepositions</td>
<td>been abroad vs. been to</td>
<td>* I have never gone to abroad yet. (S111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articles</td>
<td>a/an vs. the vs. Ø</td>
<td>* I want to travel while I’m university student. (S84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gerund / gerund part.</td>
<td>shopping vs. go shopping</td>
<td>* I want to shopping. (S21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our position is that sentence-level grammar should not be considered irrelevant – it needs to be expanded to include awareness of discourse level features. Activities such as the “Grammar Awareness Raising Exercise” in Appendix D might be useful in elucidating some of the most frequent mistakes evident in this survey-test.

3. Engrish superring practice?

Finally, this survey-test revealed how many students were unable to spell even basic words. 66% of the 38 spelling errors within the raw data were within the 1000-word level vocabulary range envisioned by Heatley, Nation, and Coxhead (2002). Many were CEFR A1 or A2 level words according to the LexiCLIL database (Lextronics, 2009). As Table 4 reveals, the assumption that most Japanese university students are competent spellers needs to be reevaluated.

Table 4. Spelling Mistakes Among This Survey-Test Sample (n=170)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>CEFR</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Misspelling(s)</th>
<th>Student(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abroad</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>2000 level</td>
<td>abrod</td>
<td>[S149]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>airplanes</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>2000 level</td>
<td>air plains</td>
<td>[S81]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>beautify</td>
<td>[S98]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>AWL</td>
<td>culcher</td>
<td>[S161]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delicious</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>delisious, deliciouis</td>
<td>[S6, 14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>A17</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>[S44]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>famous</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>famos</td>
<td>[S136]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>fell</td>
<td>[S2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreign</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>forign</td>
<td>[S114]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gone</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>goen</td>
<td>[S117]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Hawai</td>
<td>[S86]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Itaria</td>
<td>[S165]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Koria</td>
<td>[S98, 139, 158]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>little</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>lettle</td>
<td>[S104]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>money</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>monwy, maney</td>
<td>[S80, 124]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nothing</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>noting</td>
<td>[S167]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>now</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>nom</td>
<td>[S114]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>places</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>praces</td>
<td>[S87]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1000 level</td>
<td>onece</td>
<td>[S120]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The word frequency ratings in Table 4 were calculated through the University of Hong Kong’s Vocabulary Profiler (2001). Unfortunately, few (if any) EFL materials for university level students in Japan appear to systematically address the issue of spelling. This paper emphasizes the need to develop such materials.

**Implications for Those Organizing SA Programs or Doing SA Research**

Four points are highlighted by this study are pertinent to those administering SA programs or undertaking SA research:

1. **Be realistic about the linguistic handicaps of most SA participants.**

   The data from this study made it clear that most students could offer only limited, short responses to questions about SA in English. The average response to each question was only 6.9 words. Many replies were hard to understand. SA researchers working with informants like those in this sample probably need to include some L1 support in their data collection procedures: the majority from this sample were unable to communicate how they felt in English with any degree of textured nuance.

   This study confirms other research about typical Japanese university student English proficiency. A study by Negishi, Takada, and Tono (2011) suggests that a sizable chunk of incoming university students are actually at a CEFR Pre-1 level, with the remaining bulk at either A1 or A2 level. Due to sampling and methodological problems, their findings should be regarded as indicative rather than exact. However, a close look at Table 4 reveals that even students who are unsure about how the letters “m” and “w” differ sometimes manage to enter Japanese universities.

2. **Seek to alleviate mistaken fears that SA requires foreign language proficiency**

   24% (n=40) of the informants hesitated to embark on SA because they believed their English was not “fluent enough.” Study abroad organizers need to remind such students that fluency is not a requirement for many SA programs. In particular, short-programs are able to accommodate foreign students at any proficiency level (ISEP, 2010).

   Unfortunately, at least 6% (n=11) of the students in this study seemed to associate SA with travel to English-speaking countries. SA organizers should let students know that Anglo-sphere countries are not the only SA destinations: increasingly Japanese are studying elsewhere in Asia or Europe (Asai, 2012, p. 33). In such programs, participants either learn other languages besides English or study English in tandem with a local language.

3. **Show students how low-cost SA options also exist.**
14% (n=24) of students expressed a mistaken view that SA invariably involves huge sums of money. The fact is that low-cost SA options in places such as the Philippines, China, Vietnam, and Chile also exist (CSA, 2013; Colorito, 2012). Even if students choose to go to Anglo-sphere “inner circle” countries such as Britain, the USA, or Australia, innovative low-budget SA options are available. For example, one Japanese student we are aware of served as a JSL teaching aide at a secondary school near Washington D.C. during her junior year in college. She earned just enough money to cover her room and board for two semesters by teaching Japanese to American students. Another student worked at a souvenir shop in Alaska during her summer vacation, effectively covering her overseas expenses. Unfortunately, as Higuchi (2012, p. 54) points out, many Japanese university students are not knowledgeable about the wide range of SA scholarships available.

(4) Exploit the touristic interests among respondents and see if they can be turned into learning experiences.

SA organizers should recognize that many participants are initially motivated by touristic motives: desires to shop, taste exotic food, see unusual sights, or meet different people tend to outweigh formal academic interests in foreign languages or cultures. It is our belief that well-organized SA programs can tap into the seemingly superficial interests of participants and encourage critical reflection, turning cursory observations into deeper learning opportunities. Elder and Paul (2002) describe one possible way to achieve this.

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This paper has addressed four research questions. It provided clear evidence that most students have difficulty answering even basic questions about overseas travel and study abroad in English. It also suggested that although many students are interested in SA, misconceptions about it abound. Congruent with a 2009 MITI report of 2,150 Japanese with SA experience cited in Benesse (2012, p. 60), difficulties associated with communicating in a foreign language and getting used to foreign foods were among the biggest concerns Japanese thinking of SA have. Moreover, this paper has provided evidence that touristic motives for embarking on SA should not be underestimated.

Several limitations of this study need to be conceded. First of all, there were unquestionably some artifacts inherent in the design of this study. This study relied on written responses to open-ended questions with Japanese language prompts. As such, it should be regarded as a partial measure of Japanese/English translation ability. Particularly for the eight non-Japanese informants, the translation task raised some problematic issues. Also, although the survey-test asked respondents to write as if it were an “online keyboard chat” there is something admittedly artificial about this. Some students were no doubt writing in a typical test-response discourse style. In a genuine keyboard chat they might have used a different style. However, our close observations of the informants over the course of an entire year reveals most of them simply do not have multiple discourse styles in English: their English levels are so basic that they do not know how to switch, for example, from a “conversational style” to a socially-distant “cold” style.

Nonetheless, future research studies should explore how informants respond to oral prompts directly in English. More realistically, it might be good to include a dual-language design: if the informants are unable to respond to an English-language prompt within a 5-second time frame, a Japanese equivalent could be asked. This might allow those at a very basic CEFR level to respond to more prompts. A further accommodation would be to permit responses in Japanese, allowing even functionally monolingual respondents to participate.

A second limitation of this study concerns sampling: these 170 informants differ slightly from the entire population of university students in Japan in terms of age, academic major, gender, and nationality. This study makes no claim of being representative of all university students in Japan. Future research should explore how students at a wider range of institutions regard study abroad. In
particular, a larger number of female respondents and third- and fourth-year undergraduates should be included. Moreover, the attitudes of high school students towards SA are also worth exploring.

A final limitation of this study concerns the issue of triangulation. This study relied solely on three forms of a 12-item survey-test. There were not enough items in that test to evaluate the impact of the item types on response accuracy. Longer tests with more items and at least the same number of respondents are needed to do that accurately. Moreover, future studies should triangulate survey-test data with selected interviews and teacher observations. If researchers are working with students over two semesters, it should be possible come up with more richly textured data.

Despite these limitations, we believe this study has made the need for more pragmatic instruction clear. It has also underscored the need to address some common misconceptions about study abroad. Students need to learn that overseas study does not necessarily require a high level of language proficiency or entail huge costs, or even involve visiting “inner circle” Anglo-sphere nations. Finally, this study has also highlighted the need to address common grammar and spelling errors. The fact that roughly half of the students have not yet reached a CEFR B1 level of language proficiency despite over six years of English instruction is cause for reflection.

Acknowledgements
Many thanks to Noriko Saitoh, Kaya Taguchi, Erena Ogawa, and Michael Schulman for their feedback on this paper. Special thanks to JD Brown for his kind help with Cohen’s kappa.

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Appendix A. The Survey-Test Used in This Study


(Alpha Form)

PART I: Translate each question below into English, then write a "conversational" answer (using the 3A’s) to each question.

Example: Q: たばこを吸いますか？Q: Do you smoke? A: No. It is bad for health and an expensive habit. And you?

1. Q: 留学にどの程度関心がありますか？Q: __________
   A: __________

2. Q: 今まで海外に旅行したことがありますか？Q: __________
   A: __________

3. Q: あなたの専攻は何ですか？Q: __________
   A: __________

4. Q: あなたの年令を尋ねてもよいですか？Q: __________
   A: __________

PART II: Mark the choice (A-D) matching the Japanese question best, then write a "conversational" answer (using the 3A’s) to each question.

Example: Q: あなたは通学にどれくらい時間がかかりますか？
   ___(A) How much time do you come to school?
   ___(B) How long do you come to school?
   ___(C) How long does it take you to get to school?
   ___(D) How do you commute from this school?
Your answer to this question: A: It takes me about 30 minutes. I usually bicycle here. And you?

1. Q: 留学について最も心配な事は何ですか？
   ___(A) What is the most worry about your study abroad?
   ___(C) What do you worry about most regarding study abroad?

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2. Q: もしあなたは海外へ行ったら何をしたいですか？
   _ (A) If you ventured overseas, what would you like to do? _ (C) If you will go to the abroad, what is the most thing to do?
   _ (B) If you went to abroad, what do you want to do? _ (D) If you go to overseas, what would you want to do?

   Your answer to this question: A: _____________________________

3. Q: あなたの国籍はどちらですか？
   _ (A) What is your nationality? _ (C) What country do you belong to?
   _ (B) Where is your country? _ (D) Where are you a citizen?

   Your answer to this question: A: _____________________________

4. Q: あなたは大学の何年生ですか？
   _ (A) What grade of college are you in? _ (C) What year did you enter university?
   _ (B) What year are you in college? _ (D) How is your university's grade?

   Your answer to this question: A: _____________________________

PART III: Look at the Japanese question, then unscramble the English words to fit the question. Finally write a "conversational" answer (using the 3A's) to each question.

例 Q: あなたの英語の力は上達していますか、それとも低下していますか？
   Do [ ability English feel increasing or is you your ] decreasing?

   正しい順：Do [you feel your English ability is increasing or ] decreasing?
   Your answer to this question: I hope it is improving, but am unsure. How about yours?

1. Q: 今まで、海外旅行に何回行ったことがありますか？
   So [ been have you far how many been outside of times ] Japan?

   正しい順：So [______________________________] Japan?
   Your answer to this question: _____________________________

2. Q: 今後5年以内に外国に旅行する予定はありませんか？
   Are you [ foreign countries next planning to travel to any in the ] 5 years?

   正しい順：Are you [______________________________] 5 years?
   Your answer to this question: _____________________________

3. Q: あなたの両親のうちどちらかは、以前、海外で勉強したことがありますか？
   Have [ (a) either (b) parents (c) of (d) previously (e) studied (f) your ] overseas?

   正しい順：Have [______________________________] overseas?
   Your answer to this question: _____________________________

4. Q: あなたの両親のうちどちらかは流暢に外国语を話しますか？
   Do [ (a) either (b) a foreign (c) language (d) of (e) parents (f) your (g) speak ] fluently?

   正しい順：Do [______________________________] fluently?
   Your answer to this question: _____________________________

FEEDBACK: Take a brief moment to answer this question -
Which type of question was easiest for you in this test? (Check the appropriate box)
   _ (a) the multiple-choice questions, _ (b) the scrambled questions _ (c) the open questions
Appendix B. The rating rubric used in this study

QUESTIONS

Open format questions should be rated by the following 5-level scale:

1 point The English question was grammatically correct and communicated the Japanese meaning.
Exemplars for Question I: How interested are you in study abroad? / How keen are you about overseas study?

.75 points Most core ideas are expressed, but the grammar/syntax were somewhat amiss.
Exemplars for Question I: How much interest do you have in study abroad? / How is your interest for study abroad?

.5 points About half the core information was conveyed, and grammar/syntax was rather amiss.
Exemplars for Question I: How much interest are you study abroad? / How are you interested in foreign study?

.25 points Only one of the core ideas were expressed in English – most information was missing.
Exemplars for Question I: How interested do you in _______? / How interesting in study are you?

0 points None of the core ideas were expressed and/or no comprehensible response in English appeared.
Exemplars for Question I: How concern foreign? / Q: _________

NOTE: Questions in multiple choice and scrambled formats, by contrast, should be rated by a simple dichotomous scale in which 1 represents "correct" and 0 represents “incorrect”.

ANSWERS

Each answer should be rated according to a slightly different rubric, as summarized below -

Item I 留学にどの程度関心がありますか? [Tr: How interested are you in study abroad?]

| <A> | A strong interest in SA | Ex: I'm very interested in abroad study because I want to speak English fluently. [T1] |
| <B> | A mild interest in SA | Ex: A little, But, I like to go abroad. [K4] |
| <C> | Neutral and/or ambivalent | Ex: It's so so. I want to study abroad, but I don't have money. And you? [T30] |
| <D> | Little interest in SA | Ex: I have just little interested about study abroad. [K28] |
| <E> | A strong disinterest in SA | Ex: I'm nothing. I like Japan school. And you? [T90] |
| <NR> | Vague or incompressible response | Ex: Any blank response. |

Item II 今まで海外旅行をしたことがありますか? [Tr: Have you (ever)(traveled/been) overseas before?]

| <A> | 4 or more overseas experiences | Ex: Yes, I have. I went to about 5 countries. How about you? [T0] |
| <B> | 3 overseas experiences | Ex: Yes, I have three times. And you? [T55] |
| <C> | 2 overseas experiences | Ex: Yes, I went to France and Hawaii. [T9] |
| <D> | 1 overseas experience | Ex: Yes, I have. I have been to Koria. How are you? [T31] |
| <E> | no experiences outside of Japan | Ex: No, I haven't. But, I will go outside in this summer. [T2] |
| <NR> | NR or no compreh. response | Ex: Yes, I have travel overseas. [K54] [NOTE: No indication of how many times.] |

Item III* 留学について最も心配な事は何ですか? [Tr: What do you worry about most regarding SA?]

| <A> | no worry | Ex: Nothing. I want to go. Hurry up!. [T81] |
| <B> | communication | Ex: I don't know how to take a communicate. How about yours? [T39] |
| <C> | safety or crime | Ex: Safety. [sic] I have heard many foreign countries are so dangerous ... [T62] |
| <D> | health | Ex: It is water quality. [T83] |
| <E> | money/finances | Ex: Money is the most concerning thing. [S07] |
| <F> | food | Ex: I worry about the food. |
| <G> | other | Ex: I worry if I become "Homesick". [S4] |
| <NR> | NR or no compreh. response | Ex: It's life. I'm very worry. [S15] |

Item IV* もしあなたが海外に行ったら、何をしたいですか? [Tr: If you ventured overseas, what would you like to do most?]

| <A> | study language | Ex: I want study in English. And you? [S15] |
| <B> | study culture | Ex: I want to study the place’s tradition. And you? [T16] |
| <C> | communicate | Ex: I want to speek with native speakers ... And you? [S139] |
| <D> | sight-see | Ex: I want to go to sightseeing. About you? [S50] |
| <E> | shopping | Ex: I want to go to shopping. [S16] |
| <F> | culinary: eating & drinking adventures | Ex: I want to eat this country foods. And you? [T90] |
| <G> | other | Ex: I want to listen to music. [T75] |
| <NR> | NR or no compreh. response | Ex: Any blank response. |

Item V 今まで、海外旅行に伺って旅行がありましたか？ [Tr: So far how many times have you been outside of Japan?]

| <A> | 4 or more times | Ex: I have been abroad four times. [K14] |
| <B> | 3 times | Ex: I have traveled overseas three times. [S39] |
| <C> | 2 times | Ex: I had gone to abroad about 2. [S135] |
| <D> | 1 time | Ex: I traveled abroad only once. [S135] |
| <E> | never | Ex: It's zero. [S15] |
Item VI 今後5年以内に外国に旅行する予定はありますか？
[Tr: Are you planning to travel to any foreign countries in the next 5 years?]

- <Y> yes  Ex: Yes, I will go America. And you?
- <N> no  Ex: No, I'm not. But I think I want to go overseas.
- <?> equivocal  Ex: Maybe.
- <NR> NR or no compreh. response  Ex: Any blank response.

Appendix C. The Actual Coding Form with One Student’s Responses
And One Rater’s Categorization of Those Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey-Test Data Entry &amp; Coding Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informant #:</strong> T-75</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Informant's Test Form:</strong> Alpha</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Informant's Test Score:</strong> 21.25/48</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong> M</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major:</strong> Economics</td>
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<td><strong>Academic Year:</strong> 3</td>
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<td><strong>Nationality:</strong> Japanese</td>
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<td><strong>Parents SA?</strong> Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents FL Fluent?</strong> Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Easiest Question Type:</strong> Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This coding was done by: Tim Ken

I 留学にどの程度興味がありますか？ [Tr: How interested are you in study abroad?]
Question Format: Open | MC | Scrambled
Informant’s Question: How interested are you in study abroad?
Informant’s Answer: So, I want to speak English, and you?

II 今まで海外旅行をしたことがありますか？ [Tr: Have you (ever) traveled overseas before?]
Question Format: Open | MC | Scrambled
Informant’s Question: Have you ever traveled overseas before?
Informant’s Answer: Yes, I have. I traveled America. And you?

III 留学について最も心配な事は何ですか？ [Tr: What do you worry about most regarding SA?]
Question Format: Open | MC
Informant’s Question: What is the most wrong about study abroad?
Informant’s Answer: I don't speak English, and I have to study English.

IV おもしろがるが海外に行くなら、何をしたいですか？ [Tr: If you ventured overseas, what would you like to do most?]
Question Format: Open | MC
Informant’s Question: If you went to foreign abroad, what's want to?
Informant’s Answer: I want to eat famous things. I love eating. And you?

V 今まで、海外旅行に何回行ったことがありますか？ [Tr: So far how many times have you been outside of Japan?]
Question Format: Open | MC | Scrambled
Informant’s Question: [A] |
Informant’s Answer: It is two times, I went to Hawaii and America. And you?

VI 今後5年以内に外国に旅行する予定はありますか？ [Tr: Are you planning to travel to any foreign countries in the next 5 yrs?]
Question Format: Open | MC | Scrambled
Informant’s Question: [A] |
Informant’s Answer: Yes, I have. I go to America. And you?
Appendix D. A Grammar Awareness Activity about Study Abroad

PART I

Instructions: Check the sentences below (A or B) that match the Japanese text.

Ex. 地元の人々と話し合いたいと思います。

__ (A) I want to communicate with native people. ✔ (B) I want to communicate with local people.

1. 留学には、どのくらい興味を持っていますか。

__ (A) How interested are you in study abroad? __ (B) How are you interested in study abroad?

2. 私は留学の少し興味があります。

__ (A) I have a little interest in studying abroad. __ (B) I have little interest in studying abroad.

3. この5年以内に、あなたは海外へ行くと思いますか？

__ (A) Will you go to overseas within 5 years? __ (B) Will you go to overseas for 5 years?

4. 彼女は海外に行ったことがあります。

__ (A) She has gone overseas. __ (B) She has been overseas.

5. 私はアメリカへ行きました。

__ (A) I traveled America. __ (B) I traveled to America.

Extra Challenge: Explain how each pair of sentences above differ. If you can do that in English, great! If you need to use a little Japanese, that is also okay.

PART II

Instructions: Only one sentence in each pair below is correct. The other has either a “mistake” or unusual meaning. Check the sentences below (A or B) that are both grammatical correct and pragmatically common.

Ex. __ (A) I have never tripped abroad. ✔ (B) I have never traveled abroad.

1. __ (A) I think go to study abroad. __ (B) I am thinking about studying abroad.

2. __ (A) I have not been abroad __ (B) I have not go to abroad.

3. __ (A) I have no interest in that. __ (B) I have not interest in that.

4. __ (A) I want to sightseeing. __ (B) I want to go sightseeing.

5. __ (A) My biggest worry is talking with people from overseas. __ (B) My most worry is talking with foreigners.

Extra Challenge: Correct the mistakes in each of the sentences above.
(Additional challenge: Paraphrase each sentence.)

PART III.

Instructions: Correct the mistakes in the following sentences. Each sentence has 2-4 mistakes.

Ex. So far I had gone abroad twice or also 2 times.

1. I have never been to overseas. I want to go finland. And you?

2. I have been to Koria. How are you?

3. I want to speek with native speekers when I travel to overseas.

4. I am interesting in abroad study, but familly has little maney.

5. My farther studied in UK when he was a collage stewdent.
Study Abroad & EAP: An Interview with Olwyn Alexander
by Elaine C. Gilmour

Olwyn Alexander is a Teaching Fellow (what we would call a Professor in Japan) of English for Academic Purposes at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, supporting engineering, applied sciences, management, and translation students. She was born and brought up in New Zealand, but moved to the UK in 1978 and now regards Edinburgh as her home. She studied chemistry and physics as an undergraduate, and worked as an analytical chemist for 15 years before changing to her current career. Together with Sue Argent and Jenifer Spencer she wrote EAP Essentials: A teacher's guide to principles and practice (2008). With Sue Argent she has also authored two coursebooks, Access EAP: Foundations and Frameworks (2010, forthcoming). She is currently chair of the British Association for Lecturers of English for Academic Purposes, which since 2010 has become known simply as BALEAP. This interview was conducted in person and by email during the winter of 2012.

Many university language teachers in Europe are familiar with BALEAP, but not so many teachers in Asia seem to know about that organization. Could you explain something about the background of BALEAP, and what the main provisions of the organisation are?

BALEAP was established to support the professional development of EAP teachers, mainly in the UK, but increasingly in Europe and elsewhere, by running professional issues meetings (PIMs) and a biennial conference, and hosting a discussion Listserv for members. In addition, it oversees the quality of EAP pre-sessional courses in the UK through a voluntary accreditation scheme and is about to introduce accreditation for individuals using e-portfolios. Individual members who wish to become accredited fellows of BALEAP will have a dedicated space on the BALEAP website (www.baleap.org.uk) where they can store their e-portfolios and make them available to prospective employers. Institutions regularly advertise EAP jobs on the website. BALEAP also establishes working parties to carry out projects, for example drawing up the BALEAP TEAP Competency Framework and the BALEAP Guidelines on English Language Tests. We also have a research and publications sub-committee to promote and encourage research and publishing amongst members.

What prompted you to write your groundbreaking book EAP Essentials: A teacher's guide to principles and practice and then to go on to write Access EAP: Foundations?

Sue Argent, Jenifer Spencer, and I were commissioned to write a set of distance learning materials that became Academic English for Business Studies in 2001. These were based on a corpus of first year undergraduate business texts which formed part of a distance learning programme at Heriot-Watt University. Researching the corpus and talking to the lecturers who wrote the texts gave us a good understanding of what the university expected from students. We decided to share these insights through short professional development courses for ELT teachers who were interested in teaching EAP.

EAP Essentials grew out of conversations with some of the 200 teachers who attended these courses over a period of eight years. We wanted to show how and why teaching EAP was different from general ELT. We also included a CD ROM of classroom materials that have been found to be effective in our EAP classes. However, Sue and I felt that if we wanted teachers to adopt our approach, we needed to write a coursebook to demonstrate how to put the ideas into practice. We also wanted to counter the prevailing belief that EAP could not be taught to low-level learners, by showing teachers just how it could be done. And so we started with the CEFR A2/B1 level book Access EAP: Foundations, and we have just completed the CEFR B2/C1 level Access EAP: Frameworks, which takes students towards university courses. Frameworks is intended for students going into research degrees, where they have to show ability to use the language in their field; it is set to be published in 2013.
What are the key principles on which your approach is based?

Our approach follows principles outlined by John Swales and Christine Feak, Ann Johns, Ken Hyland and others. Studying at university is like learning to drive or play the piano – it is a performance which involves mastering discipline-specific genres. Students are encouraged to become ‘text detectives’, learning how to access academic genres by identifying the purpose and audience of a range of academic texts, both written and spoken, and analyzing their structure and language. This meta-cognitive awareness of genre equips students to find and select information easily from academic sources and to complete academic tasks using similar genres. It is generally assumed that students can easily transfer this knowledge about text purpose and structure to the specific texts and tasks they will find in their disciplines but these can often be very different from the texts and tasks that are practiced in language classrooms. In Access EAP: Foundations, we attempt to facilitate this transfer by creating a specific academic context, Gateway University in the city of Summerford somewhere in the UK. The student readers follow several student characters studying at Gateway University as they face problems, make choices about how to study and complete tasks within specific disciplines (Management, Information Technology and Environmental Studies). In Access EAP: Frameworks we developed this further by using the concept of graduate attributes: "skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts and are acquired as a result of completing any undergraduate" Barrie (2006, p. 217). These frame typical academic activities and tasks and are presented as ‘what the university expects’.

Could you tell us about the study abroad programmes Heriot Watt offers and your role in those programmes?

I am not directly involved in study abroad programmes, but Heriot-Watt prides itself on being Scotland’s most international university. As well as a campus in Riccarton to the west of Edinburgh, it has a campus in Dubai and another opening in Malaysia in 2014. It has several distance learning programmes run through Approved Learning Partners (ALPs). Students may transfer from Dubai to Riccarton and vice versa for part of their studies or from distance learning to on-campus study mode. In addition the university has articulation agreements with institutions in China and elsewhere so that students can come to Heriot-Watt for a single semester or a full year of study as part of their degree. The university participates in the Erasmus programme for language exchange students and has established a number of Erasmus Mundus masters degrees, which are delivered at three partner institutions within Europe. Students from outside the EU can apply for funding to obtain those degrees. Those coming to study on the Edinburgh campus may choose to prepare for their studies by attending a summer pre-sessional course in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). There are also EAP classes offered to students while they are studying to further develop their study competence. A lot of what we need to do on these courses is to correct students’ mistaken assumptions about academic writing. Many students show evidence of their ability in English through a university admissions English test such as IELTS or TOEFL. However, the kind of writing that gains high marks in these tests is very different from what is expected at university. Students are usually surprised and upset to discover this.

British universities have enthusiastically implemented study abroad programmes in their undergraduate modern language degrees. However, engineering and science majors tend to study abroad less than other majors. Why do you think this is so?

Sadly I think this may reflect the declining interest in studying foreign languages although Heriot-Watt does offer language electives in a range of modern foreign languages together with Chinese, Arabic and British Sign Language, which are well attended. However, it may also reflect
the fact that for the kinds of degrees Heriot-Watt offers, e.g. applied science, engineering and management, there is a lot of content to cover with little room for additional subjects such as languages. This is particularly the case for degrees in subjects such as accountancy, surveying, engineering, which are tied to professional bodies with specific requirements. That said, I know that there is increasing interest in the concept of internships, where students can spend part of their degree working for a company, and some of these could be located in other countries.

**Somewhat related to this, to what extent do you feel study abroad should be interpreted as a gendered experience?**

I’m not sure that study abroad really ought to be interpreted as a gendered experience. It is well known that more women than men tend to study languages, and given that you need a language to study abroad, it is reasonable to assume that more women are likely to study abroad than men. Heriot Watt has a relatively small number of students participating on SA programmes. For example, around 25 Chinese students are coming to study undergraduate Accounting or Economics or Business Management in 2013 and the split between male and female is about equal. Based on the student profile of our summer pre-sessional course, a sizeable minority of international students choosing to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects at masters level are female. The School of Management and Languages at Heriot-Watt offers mainly vocational masters degrees such as Logistics, International Business Management, Strategic Project Management and Translation and Interpreting, which lead more directly to employment than theoretical degree courses. In terms of financial outlay, international students taking these degrees have chosen to invest in their own ‘professional’ futures. At the moment, Heriot Watt has no articulation agreement with Japanese universities that I am aware of. We do however see one or two Japanese students on the pre-sessional EAP courses before they enter postgraduate degrees in brewing and distilling. These students tend to be male, on one-year secondments from their companies. So, not only gender, but nationality and professional enthusiasm influences the choice of subject specialisms. This is an interesting area for investigation, though without having access to real data on the profiles of the international student population in each school, I hesitate to comment further.

*Heriot Watt University has the largest proportion of undergraduate and post-graduate international students on campus in the UK (around 45%). Why do you feel so many international students opt to study at its technology, engineering and business faculties?*

These faculties consistently offer better job prospects than do the humanities. A recent survey (BBC News, 4.12.12) noted that Heriot-Watt graduates can expect to earn 14% more across their working lives than the average for graduates from other institutions in the UK. Heriot-Watt graduates also have an excellent chance of securing a job after they graduate with 94% in employment or further study six months after graduating (HESA, 2012). It seems international students are becoming much more discerning in their choice of institution, taking account of a variety of features and not simply the institution's reputation for world class research.

*What language learning/skill areas should international students focus on to prepare for their study in the UK universities?*

In my experience, foreign students worry most about listening and speaking when they first arrive because they find the English accent – wherever they go – to be different from the one they learned to recognize in language classes. This often reduces their confidence to speak up for themselves. However, once they settle into their courses and realize that they do have something to
contribute, the main concern usually shifts to the huge amount of reading and writing they have to do to complete assignments.

The difficulty here is that most university admissions English exams do not prepare students for the kinds of texts they will need to read or articles they will need to write. Hence, most students are unprepared for the tasks that lie ahead in their disciplines. Usually overseas faculties put out reading lists for students to encourage them to prepare for their subject. The more of this kind of reading they can do, the better. During our pre-sessional course at Heriot-Watt, we encourage students to engage with the texts in their disciplines by setting assignments that require them to define a concept and/or explain a problem in their field.

You are currently chair of BALEAP, what 'improved or new directions' has BALEAP achieved whilst you have held office?

BALEAP has undergone a number of changes while I have been the Chair, most notably the change to become a company with charitable status. BALEAP was originally an association of institutions and all members had to work for an institution. This may have contributed to a somewhat elitist view of the organization from those outside it. Now, the ways in which EAP teachers are employed has changed and we welcome individual members looking for advice and support for their professional development. Along with the change of status came a change of name from an acronym (formerly the British Association for Lecturers of English for Academic Purposes) to a word and a strapline, BALEAP: the global forum for EAP Professionals. The strapline is aspirational rather than an accurate description of the current status, but the BALEAP conference attracts delegates from North America, Australasia and South-East Asia as well as Europe and the UK, and we have a number of overseas members both institutional and individual. The organization is keen to make links with other groups who have similar aims in order to share good practice. Our website was given a major overhaul and now supports a book reviews section with plans to establish Open Access resources in future. While I have been Chair, we have strengthened our links with the Journal of English for Academic Purposes and raised the profile of research in EAP through a series of research training events (ResTES), an award for the best MA on an EAP subject and a network for PhD researchers. None of these activities are a result of my actions alone, as we have an executive committee of volunteer members together with others who participate in working parties and sub-committees. I hope I’ve been able to encourage more members to put themselves forward for these activities.

What research projects are on your horizon now?

I’m currently thinking about an article for the journal Language Teaching, called 'Thinking Allowed'. The aim is to critically consider what research is or is not getting into classroom practice and why that might be. I'm interested in the concept of information structure, as outlined in Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. This involves the development of ideas in texts from what is familiar to what is new to a reader. This is explained in more detail in Alexander, Argent and Spencer (2008, 59–69). It tends to be an important aspect of texts written in English, which have been called 'writer responsible' (Hinds, 1987). That means the writer must take responsibility for making the meaning clear for the reader, and contrasts with texts written in languages such as Japanese and Chinese where the reader often has to do a lot more interpretive work to understand the meaning. These ideas have been in circulation at least since 1991 when Michael McCarthy included them in *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers*, but two recent EAP coursebooks still do not include them.
References


JALT Study Abroad SIG

The JALT Study Abroad SIG was established in 2008 to promote research on overseas study and facilitate networking among those interesting in learning more about study abroad.

For information about joining, visit http://jalt-sa.org/back.htm

Members receive three newsletters a year in .PDF format and also gain a chance to participate in SIG events.
Non-members can access past issues of our newsletter that are over one year old at this URL:

http://jalt-sa.org/pub.htm
Book Review

Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches
H. Russell Bernard & Gery W. Ryan

Since a good portion of study abroad research involves more than quantitative data, the need to be adept at a range of qualitative methodologies is obvious. Bernard and Ryan provide a lucid overview of today’s leading social science qualitative research methodologies. The main strength of their work is its comprehensiveness: a wide variety of data collection and analysis procedures are elucidated.

Readers familiar with the basic principles of social science research will likely prefer to skim through this book – particularly its first six introductory chapters. Although parts of this text are best suited to novice readers, it also contains valuable nuggets for all those engaged in social science research. For example, the coding rubric on page 99 judiciously outlines some ways to increase inter-rater coding agreement.

Some Great Features

This book offers many excellent features. Reading it carefully, readers can begin to recognize which methodology is appropriate for different types of research questions. The authors are not ideologically rigid and many theoretical views and practical research methodologies are discussed.

Foreign language researchers will appreciate how methodological decisions can be influenced by language fluency levels. For instance, not much language proficiency is required to conduct raw word counts or map lexical collocations. However, to discern missing data or to identify specialized word uses - which Marshall and Rossman (1989) refer to as indigenous typologies - considerable linguistic (and cultural) fluency is needed. Study abroad researchers in Japan writing in English need to especially sensitive about how terms such as amai, hikikomori, kokusaijin, setsunai and yoroshiku are interpreted since these words do not translate well into English.

The coverage of grounded theory in Chapter 12 and content analysis in Chapter 13 are particularly cogent. Bernard and Ryan reveal how these approaches draw from different philosophical positions and how each have strengths and weaknesses. In an oblique criticism, they write that, “many studies today that fly under the banner of grounded theory are based on the analysis of already collected interview texts” (p. 270). In other words, theoretical sampling – an iterative process of concurrent data collection, coding, theory-building (Glasser & Strauss. 1967, p. 45) and a key element of grounded theory – appears to be missing from some so-called “grounded theory” studies. While examining one content analysis study, readers are briefly introduced to Homans' (1958) social exchange theory – a notion with intriguing implications for study abroad research.

The authors also deserve plaudits for outlining several possible reasons why some data are never recorded. Perhaps one informant may consider some data too embarrassing to express, while a different informant might regard it as too obvious to merit mentioning. Recording/transcription errors are yet another possibility. Distinguishing between these various scenarios requires considerable interpretive skill. Indeed, of all the types of data analysis methods outlined in this book, trying to notice “patterns within silence” in order to interpret missing information is perhaps the most difficult.
One final nice feature of this text is that it introduces software programs often used in qualitative research. Readers will find the descriptions of ANTROPAC, UCINET, SYSTAT, and ATLAS.ti far from detailed – but enough to generate curiosity and perhaps stimulate some to delve into the literature further.

**Some Criticisms**

This text is not without problematic issues. In my view, a primary one concerns its use of space: 48 of its 451-pages are devoted to references that could easily be placed online. The 8-page author reference also belongs on the Internet. Moreover, I was disappointed to find that the recommended resources at www.qualquant.net/AQD link lead to a password-protected website consisting mostly of advertisements.

Perhaps my biggest criticism of the text is how so many words are alluded to without sufficient explanations. For example, on page 56 interview protocols are briefly introduced, but not explained in adequate detail. Moreover, axial coding (p. 270) receives a very scant description. Part of the problem is that there are a vast number of terms in qualitative research and usage is far from uniform.

Although the authors’ writing is generally clear, this is not invariably so. For example, the distinction between prompting (a disfavored practice of putting words in interviewees’ mouths, p. 31) and phased-assertion or baiting, which is lauded as a “particularly effective probing technique” (p. 33) seems unclear. Moreover, the ways these two practices differ from aided recall (offering interviewees a list of possible responses, p. 38) and semantic cueing (suggesting items from a list, p. 168) should be explained further.

One final quibble: while discussing folk taxonomies (vernacular naming systems embedded in a given culture) on p. 185 the authors seem unduly Americo-centric by suggesting an informant be “a native speaker of American English.” To me the notion of “native speakerism” (Holliday, 2006, pp. 385-387) merits further deconstruction.

**The Bottom Line**

Despite its limitations, this text is valuable for study abroad researchers. Not only does it contain ample information about interesting social science studies, but it also raises many intriguing research possibilities. For example, after reading about an ethnological classification system developed by Murdock in the 1940s and now maintained by the Human Relations Area Files, Inc. it became clear how this list could be helpful in cataloging study abroad data. However, in Japan it seems that little – if any – study abroad research so far has employed this coding system. Matsuzawa (1992) suggests that many researchers in Japan are simply unaware of this coding system.

One factor potential buyers of this book need to consider is the large number of other qualitative research texts in English already on the market. For example, Creswell’s *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (1998) covers much of the same ground as this text. Those looking for more technical detail might prefer Cooper, Hedges, and Valentine’s *Handbook of Research Synthesis and Meta-Analysis* (2009). Though methodological junkies will want to read all of these as well as other related texts, ordinary classroom teachers will likely settle for just one text. If you are hesitant about purchasing this book, a look at one of its online chapters at http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/30485_Chapter3.pdf might help you reach a decision. Another option is to go at the checklist at the end of this review. If over half of the items in that list seem unfamiliar, this book is likely a useful investment.

Reviewed by Tim Newfields
(Toyo University)
Main Learning Objectives for Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches

To ascertain whether or not this text might be helpful for you, go through this simple checklist that outlines some of its main learning objectives. Add 1-point for each "NO" answer and if your total score is over 12 out of 25 possible points, consider purchasing this (or a similar) book on qualitative research.

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I understand the key differences/similarities between qualitative and quantitative research.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>I grasp the main goals of qualitative research and its most common data forms.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>I am clear about how the most common data collection techniques differ.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>I am familiar with the most prevalent interview formats and domain elicitation procedures.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>I understand the main types of in depth interview probes and when they should be used.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>I know how to increase interview accuracy by means of cued recalls, aided recalls, and landmarks.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>I am acquainted with the main ways to identify data themes (i.e. categories/codes/units).</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>I am aware of the merits/demers of the main techniques for classifying textual data.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>I realize when to use structural codes, thematic codes, and various types of memos.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>I know how the standard ways to measure and enhance inter-rater reliability.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>I recognize profile matrices and proximity matrices differ.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>The basic principles behind multidimensional scaling (MDS) are clear to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>The key steps generally used in building conceptual models are familiar to me.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>I have some idea about how to classify different types of qualitative variables.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>I can surmise what levels of aggregation are appropriate for what types of data.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>The rudiments of cultural domain analysis (CDA) and cluster analysis make sense to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>The most widespread methods used in developing folk taxonomies are clear to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>I can segment texts into their main components through KWIC analyses and semantic network analyses.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>The leading approaches to discourse analysis are familiar to me.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>I understand the four main traditions of narrative analysis in the social sciences.</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>I can spot some of the core differences between the leading approaches to grounded theory.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>The basics of schema analysis are understood by me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>I can describe the key differences between analytic induction and qualitative comparative analysis.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>I know how to construct ethnographic decision models (EDMs) and evaluate their validity.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>I can decide which sampling methodology is most appropriate for my research.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
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Works Cited


SEEKING SUBMISSIONS

Interested in contributing to this newsletter? We welcome articles, book reviews, interviews, opinion pieces about any topics related to study abroad or multicultural education. Please read http://jalt-sa.org/guide.htm for details. The deadline for the next issue is June 30th, 2013.