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This journal is published two or three times a year by the Study Abroad SIG of the Japan Association for Language Teaching

http://jalt-sa.org/

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Study Abroad Research Artifacts: Exploring the Effects of Survey Implicature in a Likert Agreement Scale
by Tim Newfields & Ken Groger

Abstract

How do the wording of agreement scales about studying abroad and L2 self-efficacy influence informant responses? What rationales do the respondents offer for their opinions? This paper explores how 219 undergraduates at three universities in Japan responded to an agreement scale questionnaire about study abroad and L2 self-efficacy that also contained comment elicitation tasks. Using binary antipodal questionnaire forms, we compared the responses to positively and negatively worded statements about overseas study and L2 learning. Using two-tailed Mann-Whitney U-tests at $p \leq .01$ significance levels, cross-form and cross-gender differences were analyzed. We also compared the 524 informant comments in terms of character length, discourse style, and response rates. Evidence that survey implicature can skew responses appeared in only one of the twelve survey items: in most cases, implicature did not appear to impact responses. The data also revealed some possible gender differences concerning study abroad and L2 self-efficacy. Overall, the written comments were noteworthy for their lack of logical support for stated opinions: tacit, oblique, and hyphenated references characterized this sample. The most prominent research finding was the widespread lack of L2/self-efficacy among the respondents. This paper concludes by discussing the pedagogical implications of the findings as well as the relevance to the findings to study abroad programs.

Keywords: study abroad, L2 self-efficacy, questionnaire implicature, expectancy artifacts, questionnaire design

An ongoing concern among social science researchers is data validity. This may be particularly salient when teacher-researchers use their own students to elicit information. Owing to power disparities, some students might be tempted to respond as they think their...
teacher-researchers wish. Technically, this is known as expectancy bias (Brown, 1988, pp. 33-34), and it is a quandary not only in quantitative research, but qualitative research as well. It is all too easy for some informants to discern contextual cues from survey or interview questions, then match researcher expectations. This problem is compounded by the fact that in many small-scale classroom research settings informants lack true anonymity: their responses might be ostensibly confidential, but it is quite possible for teachers or program administrators to discern the source of at least some of the responses.

This study explores how the wording of survey items influence responses. Specifically, it contrasts how a large sample of students at three Japanese universities responded to two versions of a 12-item, 5-choice Likert-type agreement scale about study abroad and how the informants viewed themselves as L2 learners. It also examines the reasons informants gave for their beliefs. Ways that the nuance of the survey items may have skewed responses are considered. Finally the rhetorical strategies students use to support their beliefs are also examined.

**Literature Review**

This paper weaves together four threads: (1) the concept of L2 self-efficacy, (2) the notion of implicature, (3) ways that response options might influence survey results, and (4) other types of research artifacts. Before outlining the methodology, let us clarify how these terms are used.

(1) **The concept of L2 self-efficacy**

We accept Bandura’s concept of self-efficacy as “people’s beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions” (Bandura, 1997, p. vii, cited in Todaka, 2013, p. 359). Many authors have extended this concept to “L2 self-efficacy” – the reputed beliefs that second language learners have about their ability to achieve desired tasks in a target language (Templin, Guile, & Okuma, 2002; Graham, 2004; Amuzie & Winke, 2009). What seems noteworthy is that self-efficacy is distinctly more task-related than self-esteem. L2 self-efficacy is also thought to be more context-dependent than L2 identity: L2 students who feel competent while interacting with their peers might lack that feeling when asked to do the same task with unfamiliar persons in actual business contexts.

L2 self-efficacy is especially important in terms of attribution theory: the systematic study of the reasons people give for their success or failure (Heider, 1958). A prevalent belief is that self-efficacious learners are likely to ascribe failures to a lack of adequate preparation, whereas those with low self-efficacy are likely to ascribe the same result to inability (Cheng & Chiou, 2010). Not surprisingly, those with low levels of self-efficacy often avoid tasks that might result in failure. By contrast, it is conjectured that those with higher degrees of self-efficiency are more willing to engage in unfamiliar tasks (Hsieh, Sullivan, & Guerra, 2007; Tabenero & Wood, 2009). In this study, ways that 524 learner belief statements were supported were examined in light of Heider’s attribution theory. We are particularly interested in task avoidance (a tendency of persons not to engage in a task to reduce the risk of failure) because that is thought to be a hallmark of low self-efficacy.

(2) **The notion of implicature**

For the purpose of this paper, we describe implicature as an expectancy effect that is probably inherent in every value statement: it is a form of bias that makes one response appear to be more socially preferable than others. One convenient way to study implicature is through agreement scales, in which respondents indicate agreement or disagreement with given
statements. For example, would those responding to a prompt such as “I am keen about study abroad” tend to differ from those reading a prompt on the same topic with an obverse implicature? Agreement scales provide a fertile ground to explore how item implicature might – or might not – sway responses.

Although this paper focuses on implicature in just one particular context, it is good to remember implicature has a broader range of meanings relating to discourse in general. For those seeking a fuller discussion of implicature, we recommend either Carston and Hall (2012) or Goodman and Stuhlmüller (2013).

(3) Response options and survey results

A wide number of studies have been conducted about the way that response options can influence performance. For example, evidence that response order can influence outcomes is provided by Krosnick and Alwin (1987). Using split-ballot research design in which two groups of respondents rated the qualities of children based on a dozen descriptors that were read in differing order, evidence of a serial position effect (Ebbinghaus, 1885 cited in DeLecce, 2013, par 5) was obtained. In other words, the 1351 raters tended to select the qualities that either appeared first and last on the list as more important, ignoring those that were in the middle. This is a type of memory bias that is particularly relevant to questionnaires with a large number of response options.

Another important study by Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko (2009) explores how many survey respondents tend to satisfice (Simon, 1957, pp. 261, 270-271) their responses. Because it often takes time and energy to think carefully about optimal survey responses, to minimize the energy investment some respondents will glibly select the first solution that seems sufficiently satisfactory. The tendency to satisfice (a portmanteau of satisfy, suffice, and sacrifice) is particularly high if (i) the linguistic and cognitive skills of informants are considered low, (ii) the issue being explored does not seem salient to the respondents, or (iii) the survey questions are complex. All three of these conditions can occur in study abroad research contexts. Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko describe satisficing as a form of confounding "noise" that reduces statistical power of a test. To detect that noise, they developed a tool is useful in online survey contexts.

Newfields and Groger (2012) also explored how response options can influence results, using three forms of a survey-test on 170 EFL university students with different response formats: (i) multiple-choice, (ii) scrambled sentence, and (iii) open-ended sentence item types. Not surprisingly, they found that response rates were higher for multiple-choice items than for open-ended tasks. Probably it takes it takes more effort for most informants to construct a sentence than to merely select the best sentence from a list of four possible response options.

(4) Research artifacts: expectancy bias and social desirability bias

Two confounding factors that studies generally seek to avoid – or at least control – are researcher expectancy and social desirability bias. The former occurs when the researcher’s agenda or desired outcome is too obvious to the subjects or informants. The latter can be described as a form of subject reactivity in which in informants feel compelled to alter their responses to avoid appearing in a negative light. Particularly in study abroad contexts, there is often a tendency for researchers (who frequently have multiple roles as teachers/chaperones/program administrators) to self-validate their own programs. As such, the informants – who often have confidentiality but not true anonymity – may feel pressured to match researcher expectations and say more or less what they consider socially desirable. Both researcher expectancy and social desirability bias are potential validity threats. In this study, we attempt to control for researcher expectancy by presenting paired antipodal statements in two different survey forms. Although we cannot eliminate social desirability bias, it is present to an equal degree across forms.
Research Questions

Three questions are systematically explored in this paper:

1. How does the wording of agreement scale Likert items about study abroad and L2 self-efficacy appear to influence informant responses?

2. What written reasons did the informants tend to offer in support of their positions?

3. To what extent do L2 self-efficacy and interest in study abroad appear to vary with gender?

Method

Sampling

This sample consisted of 219 students at three universities in Japan. 99% (n=216) were Japanese undergraduates – three foreign students were not excluded from this sample because their statistical impact was so small. 93% (n=204) stated both of their parents were monolingual and another 93% indicated that neither parent had studied abroad. 56% (n=123) reported never venturing outside of Japan and 25% (n=55) mentioned having only one previous overseas trip. A further 9% (n=20) reported 2-3 overseas trips and the remaining 8% (n=18) stated that they had been overseas four times or more. The average reported TOEIC score was 452 and cross-gender score differences were not significant ($U = 1910, p = 0.194, Z = -1.30, r = 0.09$). However, 37% of the respondents (n=81) did not indicate any score.

Other demographic characteristics of this sample are summarized in Table 1.

| Table 1. A Demographic Profile of this Study's Respondents |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Gender* | Age* | Academic Year* | Major |
| M | F | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22+ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | NR | Edu. | Eco. | Other |
| Form A | 55 | 52 | 37 | 38 | 24 | 8 | 0 | 48 | 50 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 46 | 44 | 17 |
| Form B | 67 | 44 | 31 | 41 | 23 | 10 | 6 | 39 | 58 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 41 | 39 | 31 |
| Total | 122 | 96 | 68 | 79 | 47 | 18 | 6 | 87 | 108 | 17 | 7 | 1 | 87 | 83 | 48 |

* a few respondents left their gender, age, or academic year blank

As in most university EFL classes for non-English majors in Japan, first- and second-year students predominate. Although males are over-represented in this sample in terms of national averages, in other regards this appears to be a typical sample of Japanese university-level EFL learners.

Instrument

A questionnaire modeled after earlier questionnaires by Goldstein & Kim (2006); Lane, (2011); and Newfields (2012a) with some original questions by the authors was used in this study. After nine demographic questions, twelve Likert agreement scale items with a blank space beneath each item appeared. The entire questionnaire was in Japanese and informants were instructed to write comments in Japanese or in English after completing each of the twelve Likert-scale items.

The Likert agreement scale used in this questionnaire is illustrated in Figure 1:
Figure 1. The 5-point Agreement Scale Used in This Questionnaire

1 represents “completely disagree” [mattaku hantai] and 5 “completely agree” [mattaku doi], with 3 indicating “no particular opinion” [dochira demo nai]. Although 5-point Likert scales such as this are widely used, on hindsight we acknowledge that a 6-point scale would have been more appropriate to reduce the tendency of many informants to offer no clear cut opinion (Krosnick, et al., 2002, p. 400).

Form A consisted of a dozen positively worded statements and Form B had the same number of negatively worded ones. To clarify how these differed, let us compare one statement from both forms:

**FORM A:**

1. 私の英語は、留学するのに十分です。

   コメント：

**FORM B:**

1. 私の英語は、留学するのに十分ではありません。

   コメント：

Figure 2. One Questionnaire Item from Forms A and B

The Form A statement might be translated as, “My English is adequate for study abroad.” and Form B as, “My English is not adequate for study abroad.” In other words, Forms A and B were binary antipodals. Whereas Form A consisted of statements of positive ability or interest, Form B consisted of statements of inability or disinterest. Will persons completing these two forms tend to respond differently due to the shift in implicature? Exploring that question is one of the purposes of this study.

Procedure

The time frame and significant steps of this study are outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The Research Timeline for This Study

After a critical reading of the studies mentioned in the Literature Review, we developed a draft questionnaire. Using the translation-validation procedures described in Newfields and Groger (2012, p.6), this was piloted with five students. Three minor changes were made and then the revised questionnaire was administered in May 2013. Ten minutes at the end of a lesson were devoted to the questionnaire. Half of the classes were randomly given Form A and the other half received Form B; no students were asked to complete both forms.

No special incentives to complete the questionnaire were offered. As the questionnaire’s Informed Consent Statement suggests, students could easily opt out. If over 50% of the agreement scale items were unanswered, it was considered a de facto opt out. The response rate was over 98%, with 5 students leaving their responses either mostly or entirely blank. The
Informed Consent Statement at the head of the questionnaire made it clear that informants could skip any question without penalty.

**Analyses**

After the questionnaire was administered, the demographic information and Likert agreement scale items were entered into Excel spreadsheets. To facilitate cross-form comparison, the transposition process outlined in Figure 4 was performed.

![Figure 4. The Procedure Used to Transpose the Form B Agreement Scale Responses](image)

Strongly agreeing with a negative statement was considered equivalent to strongly disagreeing with a positive one. Similarly, “somewhat agreeing” to negative statements was equivalent to “somewhat disagreeing” with positive ones. In this research paper, we accept the belief that agreement with a negative statement is a scalar equivalent to disagreement with a positive one. However, we also acknowledge that on some level, positive and negative implicatures might not be neatly scalar.

Two types of sub-group comparisons were made: (1) inter-form differences, and (2) gender differences. For both comparisons, two-tailed Mann-Whitney U-tests at \( p < .01 \) significance were performed.

The 524 written comments were typed into separate text files for each agreement scale item, then coded post-hoc by the primary author. The secondary author then verified the coding, checking for incongruities and validating the transcription. Although independent coding by each author would have been better, this was considered impractical given the time constraints.

Finally, differences in the character length of the written comments between Form A and B were analyzed using two-tailed Mann-Whitney U-tests at \( p < .01 \). Gender and cross-form response rate differences were analyzed the same way.

**Results**

Let us first examine the results in terms of the twelve survey questions.

(1) **L2 Adequate for Study Abroad?**

The first questionnaire item was whether or not respondents felt their English was “good enough” to study abroad. A majority considered their English was inadequate for that purpose. As Figure 5 illustrates, this lack of self-efficacy was apparent across both forms.
85% (n=91) of Form A and 79% (n=88) of Form B respondents regarded their English as insufficient for overseas study. Only 8% (n=17) felt up to the task of studying in an English-speaking country. The 79 written comments suggest a similar trend. 81% (n=63) lamented their lack of linguistic skills or inability to communicate. Typical responses were:

- [I can't converse with foreigners.] (Respondent 68)
- [I have absolutely no English.] (Respondent 55)
- [I don't have much confidence.] (Respondent 98)

Only 5% (n=4) expressed a degree of confidence in handling study abroad tasks. Another ten cautiously limited the scope of their abilities through disjunctive phrasing, as in these examples:

- [Perhaps (my English) is okay for classes, but daily conversation is difficult.] (Respondent 19)
- [I can understand what is being said, but cannot speak well.] (Respondent 2)

Did responses to Forms A and B differ significantly? The Mann-Whitney U-test results ($U = 5803, p = 0.40, Z = 0.85, r = -0.01$) suggest not. Moreover, male and female respondents were essentially the same ($U = 5265, p = 0.24, Z = 1.18, r = 0.07$).

(2) Study Abroad Costs

Next we looked at perceptions about study abroad costs. As Figure 6 makes it clear, the widespread belief is that study abroad requires considerable sums of money.
The written comments reflect these Likert trends. 83% (n=48) of the 58 narratives emphasize the high cost of studying overseas. Another seven use hedging techniques to point out how the financial burden can be ameliorated through scholarships. Only one person decisively disagreed with the survey implicate, asserting that school scholarships can defray study abroad costs. We should remember that 73% (n=161) of the respondents wrote no written comments. In general, the comment response rates tended to drop while progressing through the questionnaire, perhaps as a consequence of survey fatigue.

The differences between Forms A and B were not significant (U = 5265, p = 0.24, Z = 1.18, r = 0.06) – nor did gender seem to make a difference (U = 5973, p = 0.89, Z = -0.13, r = -0.01).

(3) L2 Writing Self-Efficacy

The third questionnaire item concerned the extent respondents felt they could – or couldn’t – express their thoughts when writing in English. Figure 7 reveals a clear lack of confidence among most respondents.

62% (n=135) of the informants felt unable to express their thoughts in English. The 52 written comments suggest the same tendency. 69% (n=36) emphasized their negative L2 ability with statements such as:

[I have no vocabulary.] (Respondent 169)
Another 27% (n=14) used conditionals to limit the scope of their abilities, as these instances attest:

- 難しい内容でなければ、可能です。 [If the content is not difficult, it is possible.] (Respondent 1)
- 辞書があれば。 [If I have a dictionary (I can communicate).] (Respondent 140)
- 少しならできます。 [If it is just a little, I can do it.] (Respondent 68)

Only one person clearly affirmed his ability, asserting that English composition was a forte. In general, negative self-assessments far outweighed positive ones.

Here too, no significant differences between the survey forms were evident ($U = 5677, p = 0.43, Z = 0.79, r = 0.08$), nor did we detect any gender disparities of note ($U = 5169, p = 0.24, Z = 1.18, r = 0.07$).

(4) **L2 Speaking Self-Efficacy**

Next we examined whether or not the respondents felt capable of expressing themselves when speaking English. As Figure 8 demonstrates, most persons had even less confidence in their speaking ability than they did in their writing ability (which was described in Figure 7). The mean score for writing self-efficacy was 2.40, compared to a speaking mean score of 2.08. Comparing these independent means, we obtained a t-value of 3.11 and p-value of 0.000988, suggesting a significant difference at $p < 0.01$.

![Figure 8](image-url)

*Figure 8. Responses to the statement “I can (Form A) can not (Form B) express myself in English when speaking.”*

The 46 written comments echoed this pattern. 76% ($n=35$) emphasized their incapacity with statements such as:

- 話せなくて残念。 [Unfortunately I can’t speak.] (Respondent 147)
- 緊張してしまう。 [I get all flustered.] (Respondent 162)
- 単語ができません。 [Words do not come out.] (Respondent 219)

The 17% ($n=8$) who expressed some confidence in their oral English ability did so only conditionally. Again, notice how provisional hedges are used to delimit and demarcate performance:

- ジェスチャー等をもって、必要で伝える。 [If I try hard and use gestures, I can.] (Respondent 200)
- 文法無視なら時間はかかるが伝えられるかも。 [If I ignore grammar, maybe - but it takes time.] (Respondent 144)
- ジェスチャー等を使って、伝えられるかもしれない。 [If I use gestures, maybe I can communicate.] (Respondent 188)

The inter-form differences were not statistically significant ($U = 5553, p = 0.64, Z = 0.47, r = -0.07$), nor were the gender contrasts ($U = 5657, p = 0.84, Z = -0.20, r = -0.01$).
(5) *L2 Pragmatic Self-Efficacy*

The next Likert item concerned how well respondents felt they could sustain conversations in English. Although many university level students in Japan can respond to simple questions in English, our classroom experience has been that most do not know how to engage in *sustained* dialogs. Figure 9 confirmed this observation: about two-thirds of the students indicated that they lacked the pragmatic skills to maintain L2 conversations.

![Figure 9](image-url)

*Figure 9. Responses to "I know (Form A) do not know (Form B) how to sustain a conversation in English."*

66% (*n* = 25) of the 38 comments highlighted this lack of confidence. Typical responses included:

すぐに会話につまってしまいましょう。  
すもうずに単語がでない  
日本語でも会話を続けるのは難しいです。  
[I quickly get tongue-tied.] (Respondent 111)  
[Words do not come out smoothly.] (Respondent 175)  
[Even in Japanese, sustaining conversations is difficult.] (Respondent 162)

Only three respondents indicated that they had learned this pragmatic skill; another eight conceded they could carry on extended conversations in limited circumstances:

あいさつぐらいなら、  
わかるときもあります。  
相手によります。  
[If it is just limited to greetings.] (Respondent 144)  
[There are times when I understand (how to do this).] (Respondent 205)  
[It depends on whom I am talking with.] (Respondent 105)

No significant contrast between Forms A and B was noted (*U* = 5805, *p* = 0.70, *Z* = 0.39, *r* = -0.04). Although female respondents did appear to be more confident of their ability to handle extended discourse than males at a *p* = 0.03572 level (*U* = 4216, *Z* = -2.100, *r* = -0.14), this fell short of our a priori *p* ≤ .01 standard and the effect size (Cohen’s *d* = -0.28) was modest. In short, the data was not convincing enough to indicate a clear cut gender difference.

(6) *L2 Grammar Self-Efficacy*

Next we explored how confident respondents were of their English *grammar*. Since most Japanese secondary school EFL syllabi devote considerable attention to grammar (Takeda, Choi, Mochizuki & Watanabe, 2006, p. 73), our guess was that many students would feel competent in this field. As Figure 10 reveals, however, the majority were anxious about their command of grammar.
67% \((n=24)\) of the 36 written comments highlight this trend through statements such as:

- "I am bad at grammar." (Respondent #204)
- "(My grammar) is completely lousy." (Respondent #200)
- "When I speak, my grammar becomes bad." (Respondent #196)

Only two persons unconditionally affirmed their competence; another five cautiously hedged their L2 abilities. For example, Respondent 168 remarked, “I’m good at written grammar, but bad at spoken grammar.”

No significant differences were found between forms \((U = 5627, p = 0.44, Z = 0.78, r = -0.07)\) or across genders \((U = 4645, p = 0.88, Z = 0.15, r = 0.01)\).

(7) L2 Spelling Self-Efficacy

The seventh item explored how confident students were of their English spelling. As Figure 11 suggests, most saw themselves as incompetent spellers. Another large portion had ambivalence about their spelling ability; less than 15% \((n=6)\) viewed themselves as skilled in this regard.

The 27 comments echo this trend. Whereas 56% \((n=15)\) regarded themselves as “lousy spellers” only 15% \((n=4)\) affirmed their ability to spell most English words. Another seven limited the scope of their ability by statements such as, “I don’t use difficult words when writing, so mistakes are rare.” (Respondent 146) or “My spelling is simply average.” (Respondent 175).

Once again, Forms A and B exhibited no significant differences \((U = 5546, p = 0.47, Z = 0.72, r = -0.04)\). Male and female responses \((U = 5036, p = 0.12, Z = 1.56, r = 0.10)\) were also comparable.

(8) Comparative L2 Self-Image
How do informants view themselves as English language learners? The next survey item explored this issue, asking respondents to rate their English abilities vis-à-vis their peers. Theoretically, we might expect a somewhat Gaussian distribution, but the distribution of the data in Figure 12 illustrates how low self-efficacy may impair the ability of people to accurately estimate their abilities in comparison to others. The strong skew of this data makes it clear that the majority of informants believed themselves to be worse off than their peers. Should this be interpreted as an example of socially sanctioned “Japanese humility” (Tsuda, 1992) or perhaps as a lack of self-efficacy? Both interpretations seem possible.

Figure 12. Responses to the statement “Compared with my peers, my English is above average (Form A) / below average (Form B).”

The 26 informant comments point toward the same conclusion: 50% \((n=13)\) made statements about their lack of ability. Only one informant affirmed that her English was "better" than her peers. 19% \((n=5)\) described themselves as "average" and three were uncertain about how they ranked.

Had we accepted \(p \leq 0.05\) as our a priori threshold, it would be tempting to say that responses to Forms A and B differed significantly \((U = 4938, p = 0.03, Z = 2.23, r = -0.18)\). The inter-form effect size (Cohen’s \(d = -0.38\)) suggests a weak correlation. However, since there are twelve test items in this study, the \(z\)-critical value needs to be less than -2.64. That value was not met and we must accept the null hypothesis that the inter-form variation is simply random. Little difference was noted between male and female responses \((U = 5627, p = 0.44, Z = 0.78, r = -0.10)\).

(9) Study Abroad Interest

The ninth questionnaire item concerned interest in study abroad. Earlier studies by Newfields (2012b, p. 129) and Newfields and Groger (2012, p. 8) revealed a moderate interest in overseas study among this general population. However, as Figure 13 makes clear, responses from this sample were widespread, suggesting a broad range of views.

Figure 13. Responses to the statement “I do (Form A) / do not (Form B) really want to study abroad.”
The 41 written comments attest to this diversity of opinion. 32% \((n=13)\) voiced a positive desire to study abroad. An equal number expressed a lack of desire. Another common response \((n=10)\) was conditional affirmation. Notice how conditional qualifiers are used to avoid pragmatic entailment in these examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>时间とお金に余裕があればみたい。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>機会があればしたい。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>条件があれば留学したい。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I have sufficient time and money, I'd like to try it. (Respondent 137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there is a chance, I want to. (Respondent 200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If conditions are right I want to study abroad. (Respondent 215)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ambivalence about study abroad was expressed by three respondents through statements such as “Either way is okay.” (Respondent #65).

Comparing Forms A and B, no significant differences appeared \((U = 4963, p = 0.12, Z = 1.57, r = -0.11)\). Gender differences were also non-significant \((U = 5627, p = 0.44, Z = 0.78, r = -0.18)\).

(10) Interest in International Friendships

Survey item #10 explored interest in international friendships. Figure 14 shows how a majority of students wanted friends from overseas, even though some wondered whether it was feasible.

The 47 written comments further confirm this trend. 70% \((n=33)\) of the informants voiced a desire for overseas friends. Only 14% \((n=5)\) expressed a lack of desire or skepticism about this possibility. Five informants mentioned that they already had foreign friends – a low figure since three foreigners are already in this sample. The remaining few offered hedged responses \((n=2)\) or evasive answers \((n=2)\).

No significant differences were discernable between across forms \((U = 5922, p = 0.36, Z = 0.92, r = -0.07)\). We did find some indication that females might be more interested in forming international friendships than males \((U = 4561, p = 0.03, Z = -2.21, r = -0.15)\). This merits further study, but cannot be considered significant at a \(p \leq 0.01\) level, particularly since the effect size (Cohen’s \(d = -0.29\)) was somewhat modest.

(11) Parental Attitudes towards Study Abroad

Next we investigated how parents felt about their children studying abroad, or more precisely: how the students themselves believed their parents felt. As Table 2 and Figure 15 make it clear, the cross-form results varied markedly. Whereas the Form A data suggests most parents were ambivalent about their children studying abroad, the Form B data would lead us to believe most parents wanted them to study overseas. This item offers the strongest evidence in this study of how questionnaire wording can sometimes significantly influence responses.
Table 2. A Comparison of the Responses to Question 11 in Forms A and B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>VAR</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Z-Score</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form A</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>3088</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>* .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form B</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at p < 0.01.

Figure 15. Responses to the statement “My parents do (Form A) / do not (Form B) really want me to study abroad.”

The effect size measures ($r = -0.15$, Cohen’s $d = -0.30$) are not inconsequential: cross-form implicature appears to account for some of the variance.

When we examine the 30 comments, responses fall into four main patterns. In order of frequency, these were: parental discouragement, parental encouragement, non-discussion, and support for children’s choices. Let us consider each pattern briefly. 31% of the Form A ($n=5$) and 40% ($n=8$) of the Form B respondents stated that their parents did not want them to study overseas. Financial worries and safety concerns were widely cited. By contrast, 19% ($n=7$) indicated that their parents did want them to study overseas. However, none of the comments specified why this was so. Indeed, few respondents attempted to support any of the statements they made.

22% ($n=8$) of the informants stated that they had no idea what their parents were thinking about this topic - it was never discussed. Finally, 14% ($n=5$) wrote that their parents would support whatever decision their children made: children were given the authority to make their own independent choices.

Male and female responses did not differ significantly ($U = 5325, p = 0.52, Z = -0.63, r = 0.03$).

(12) Job Hunting and Study Abroad

The final item was about the perceived usefulness of study abroad in the job market. Figure 16 highlights how two-thirds of the informants saw the practical value of study abroad when seeking jobs. About 16% ($n=36$) were unsure and only 6% ($n=13$) disagreed.
The 44 comments mirror the trends in Figure 16. Four main response patterns are evident. The most common is agreement: 57% (n=25) considered study abroad experience to be helpful when seeking a job. A second pattern was conditional hedging: 14% (n=6) were either unsure about the practical benefit of this, often pointing out how it depended on one’s career choice. A third pattern was disagreement: 11% (n=5) did not see any value of study abroad in terms of obtaining work. Finally, six respondents pointed out how study abroad might have non-work related benefits, making statements such as:

- [I think that you may grow a lot as a human being.] (Respondent 141)
- [I think your perspectives will widen.] (Respondent 188)
- [I think it would be an invaluably unique experience.] (Respondent 1)

For this item, no significant differences between Forms A and B was apparent (U = 5276, p = 0.23, Z = 1.20, r = -0.07). However, female respondents were significantly more likely to consider study abroad more “useful” for job-hunting than males (U = 2764, p = 0.001, Z = 4.13, r = -0.32). The effect size (Cohen’s d = -0.68) was somewhat substantial.

**Discussion**

Now let us discuss the results in terms of the three research questions.

1) **How does the wording of Likert items influence the responses?**

Only one of the twelve agreement scale items from Forms A and B showed significantly different patterns at a p ≤ 0.01 level. This suggests that survey questionnaire implicature occasionally can sway responses, partly refuting Stouffer and DeVinney's (1949, cited in Chan, 1991, p. 533) form-resistant correlation hypothesis. However, in most cases respondents in this sample were not swayed by negatively or positively worded statements. This indicates that textual implicature does not necessarily influence how informants respond to survey items. Instead of thinking of form-independence or independence in binary terms, perhaps we should regard it as a continuum. The data from this study indicates questionnaire wording often has no impact, but even one exception is enough make us think carefully about implicature effects.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the Form A and B comments had different quantitative distributions since the response rate was only 21% (SD = 7.1, VAR = 51.52, SEM = 1.46), which gives us a possible sample error of 20% at a 95% confidence interval. Since coded cell sizes tended to be small (M = 9.85) and they were widely distributed (SD = 12.62, VAR = 159.3, SEM = 1.46), the effect size (Cohen’s d = -0.68) was somewhat substantial.
1.71), the data was not readily amenable to quantitative analysis. Qualitatively speaking, neither of us detected a marked difference between the comments in Forms A and B.

(2) How did the informants tend to support their positions?

The simplest answer is that most students did not bother to give any support for their positions. Indeed, it is tempting to consider “questionnaire-ese” as a distinct writing genre unlike the other genres described by Kruse and Chitez (2012, p. 68). Unless incentives to conscientiously respond to questionnaires are created, there is a tendency to complete survey items as quickly as possible with minimal energy. Only 10% (n=50) of the 524 written comments contained explicit statements in support of their opinions. For example, Respondent 158 supported her belief that her English was worse than her peers by stating, “Because I’ve had no experience studying abroad.” A wider number of Japanese respondents used implicit statements to convey causality. Notice how indirect support for a given belief is used in these examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOEIC 点数とれません</td>
<td>[I can’t get a high TOEIC score &lt;so feel my English is sub-standard&gt;] (Respondent 89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>みんなでできると思います。</td>
<td>[I think everyone else around me is competent &lt;so I feel sub-standard&gt;] (Respondent 148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>英作文が苦手。</td>
<td>[I’m not good at English composition &lt;so feel worse than my peers&gt;] (Respondent 91)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Ido (2009, p. 75) briefly suggests, whereas English writers might be more inclined to explicitly state the material within the chevrons, Japanese writers are more likely to delete such information, inferring null objects from contextual cues.

(3) How does L2 self-efficacy and interest in study abroad tend to vary with gender?

Various facets of L2 self-efficacy were explored in six of the agreement-scale items. At a conservative \(p \leq 0.01\) level, no gender differences were significant. Future studies should explore the possibility that female Japanese university EFL students might have pragmatic L2 self-efficacy than males.

If we examine the 524 written comments from this study, four possible trends are evident. First, response rates seemed to vary with gender (\(U = 29.5, p = 0.01, Z = 2.45, r = -0.51\)). Whereas only 16.25% of the females (n=112) wrote comments, 25% of the males (n=122) did so.

Second, although males wrote more often than females, their responses tended to be shorter. The average male character count was 12.13 characters (\(SD = 6.55, VAR = 42.86, SEM = 0.36\)). By contrast, a typical female comment tended to be 15.57 characters in length (\(SD = 7.59, VAR = 57.61, SEM = 0.54\)). This disparity was wide enough be considered non-random (\(U = 40033, p = 0.001, Z = -5.03, r = 0.24\)).

Third, the comments suggest that motives for study abroad might vary by gender. Conservatively speaking, additional evidence is needed, but it seems quite possible that interest in developing “international friendships” is an example of Shields and Dicicco (2011, p. 492) refer to as a gendered behavior.

Finally, the females who did write comments tended to feel study abroad would be more useful for job-hunting than males. However, this tendency is not supported by the Likert scale data. Since the written comment response rate was low, the results are inconclusive.

**Conclusion**

Perhaps four findings are noteworthy from this study. First, some evidence was offered regarding how survey implicature can occasionally skew how respondents react to Likert scale items. However, we should also point out than in eleven of the twelve cases explored in this study, implicature had no significant impact on survey responses. It seems likely that some types of questionnaire items are more prone to social desirability bias or expectancy effects
than others. Future studies should explore this issue from a Rasch perspective, investigating the interaction of items with persons.

Second, this study also explored how L2 self-efficacy and attitudes toward study abroad varied by gender. A conservative interpretation would be that more research is needed before any statements can be made. This study suggested that pragmatic self-efficacy, reasons for studying abroad, and interest in forming “international friendships” might vary with gender, but the statistical evidence was not compelling enough to make any definitive statements. Future studies should address these issues through richer textual media such as SNS entries and/or extended journaling.

A third finding in this study concerned how the rhetorical style exhibited in the 524 short responses to this questionnaire differed from other writing styles. Evidence of how “questionnaire-ese” is distinct from careful, systematic writing was briefly provided. We should remember than most students are motivated to get through their questionnaires as quickly as possible: it is likely that few perceived any direct benefits to writing detailed answers.

Regarding the written comments themselves, we alluded to some of the ways that Japanese and English language questionnaire responses appear to differ. Future studies should compare similar demographic samples of English and Japanese university students, contrasting how they respond to the same set of questionnaire items in their respective native languages. The fact that only one of the 219 students who completed the questionnaire in this study attempted to do so in English should be considered striking. (That student was a Japanese education major with one overseas experience and a modest TOEIC score of 400.)

Finally, the most salient finding of this study was the broad lack of self-efficacy among most of the respondents regarding their own English ability. A majority of the students in this sample exhibited a clear belief that their English was inadequate and they did not feel capable of engaging in anything beyond CEFR Level A2 interactions, despite having studied English at least six years. Most informants saw themselves as inept English language users who could not successfully complete even basic L2 communicative tasks. Future studies should employ extended think aloud protocols and precise “can do” statements to see how this endemic perception of failure develops, and contrast one group of students who consider themselves “successful” as foreign language learners with another group who regard themselves as “unsuccessful” at the same task.

What educational implications does this research have? For EFL teachers, the most obvious point is the need to increase L2 self-efficacy levels among students. Canfield and Wells (1994) have discussed a number of ways to do this. Providing achievable structured tasks that are “fun” for participants as well as positive feedback may enhance self-efficacy. However, we should candidly concede this task is daunting. At the university level is it possible to make a significant difference in most students’ L2 self-efficacy levels? That should be a theme for ongoing research. Regarding Japanese English education, the prevailing attitude towards mistakes may also merit reappraisal. Many respondents expressed a dreadful fear of mistakes. For example, Student 146 made the comment, “There are too many chances of failure even without studying abroad” in response to the first agreement scale item. This student is exhibiting task avoidance - a common strategy for those with those with low levels of self-efficacy. Teachers need to help students reframe mistakes as natural occurrences whenever working with any foreign language rather than things to be ashamed of. We also point out how meaningful communication can often occur in spite of mistakes.

A second implication of this research is for study abroad program administrators. Since this study indicates that male and female respondents may study abroad for different reasons, a natural implication concerns the marketing of such programs. If a study abroad program is being designed for mostly female participants, then the possibility of developing “friendships
with persons from abroad” and its potential in terms of job hunting should be underscored. Shirley (2006) has provided some useful information about how to make study abroad more appealing to American male university students. Many of his ideas may be applicable to Japanese males. Finally, those organizing study abroad programs need to challenge the widespread myth that the best time to study abroad is after a person’s English is fluent. Particularly in short-term programs, L2 fluency is seldom a requirement. Indeed, in best-case scenarios study abroad might provide a valuable stimulus to work towards fluency in a target language.

This study has some practical implications for researchers. First, it points out the need to be sensitive to the implicature of questionnaire items. Particularly when teachers also take on roles as researchers and student/informants have confidentiality without actual anonymity, the temptation for students to satifice with answers that are “more or less acceptable” can be great. Also, this study provides evidence of survey fatigue – a tendency of many questionnaire respondents to complete the first questions conscientiously, then gradually speed through the survey. For that reason, it might be worthwhile arranging the sequence of some questions in multiple forms and/or using multiple survey administrations rather than one session. An EFL writing class might be a particularly good venue because curricular objectives of writing in a target language could easily connect with the research objectives of exploring L2 self-efficacy.

The following three limitations of this study need to be acknowledged.

First, it is based on two contrasting forms of one questionnaire that was completed in merely ten minutes at the end of a single class with little encouragement to write out detailed comments. As such, the best that it can offer is a snapshot of how informants may have felt at one time. It is quite possible that many students’ attitudes towards study abroad and/or English study might change over the course of the survey. For this reason, a longitudinal design would offer a better picture of attitudinal shifts. Also, instead of conducting the survey at the end of class when students are tired and anxious to move on, it might be better to administer it at the beginning of class when respondents are fresher and there are less time constraints.

Second, this study has relied on strong assumptions about implicature scalability. In order to contrast the two differently worded forms, we accepted that agreeing with a positive statement was a scalar equivalent to disagreeing with a negative statement. Although this belief facilitates statistical comparisons, a lingering question is whether or not it is psycholinguistically viable.

Finally, the written comments in this study are problematic in two respects. First, the overall response rate was low: just 21% of the students bothered to write out comments about their responses. Second, such comments tended to be short: most were under twelve characters. Other writing genres such as homework essay reports in which students are less pressured to write quickly could offer a more comprehensive picture of how students felt about study abroad and their identities as English learners/users.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to these persons for kindly looking over this manuscript and/or the Japanese translations: Andrew Atkins, Naotoshi Furuta, Paul Horness, Russell Hubert, Lars Molloy, Joseph Ring, Kaya Taguchi, Melissa Tsuchiya, Noriko Yoshida, as well as many Japanese friends on the Lang-8 SNS.

References


Appendix A. Original Japanese Questionnaire

承諾同意書
私たちは、海外留学の意識調査の研究を行っており、このプロジェクトへの自主的な参加者を求めています。調査は、いくつかの日本語の質問に対し、記述形式で答えるようになっております。また、その後、パートナーチェック及び英語のインタビューに参加していただきます。記述調査は授業内に

参加者のデメリットはありませんが、英語のインタビューには、難しい質問が含まれており、悔しい思いをする人がいらっしゃるかもしれません。すべての個人情報は、保護されると同時に、すべての回答は、匿名で扱われます。また、あなたが望まない質問に回答する必要はありません。希望する場合は、研究への参加を中止することもできます。

この研究に関する質問は、下記のアドレスから個別に研究者と連絡を取ることができます。

ティモシー・ニューフィールズ
東洋大学経済学部

ケン・グローガー
静岡大学教育学部

ご協力をいただき、ありがとうございます。

署名：
日付：

パートⅠ：人口学的情報

1. Your Name (in Roman letters): ___________________ 2. 学生番号：__________________

3. ご専門・専攻： □ 経済 □ 教育 □ その他：__________________

4. 学年(1つのボックスをチェックしてください)： □ 1年生 □ 2年生 □ 3年生 □ 4年生

5. 性別 (check one)： □ 男性 □ 女性

6. 年齢 (check one)： □ 18歳 □ 19歳 □ 20歳 □ 21歳 □ 22歳 □ 23+歳

7. 国籍 (check one)： □ 日本 □ 中国 □ 韓国 □ 北朝鮮 □ その他：__________________

8. 回日本国外これまでのところ(1つのボックスをチェックしてください)： □ 0 回 □ 1 回 □ 2 回 □ 3 回 □ 4 回 □ 5+回

9. あなたの両親のうちの誰でも外国で以前に勉強したことがありますか。 (check one)
   □ はい □ いいえ, 父は： □ はい, 母は： □ はい, 両方の親はそうです。

10. あなたの両親のいずれかの外国語を流暢に話しますか？ (check one)
    □ はい □ いいえ, 父は： □ はい, 母は： □ はい, 両方の親はそうです。

11. 私の最も最近のTOEICのスコアを示されました： __点(メモ:この情報はたったの参考に留めることはありません。)

第二部: リクートご承認反対項目

指示: 以下の選択肢を選んで反対か賛成か答えさせるものです。

全く反対 やや反対 どちらでもない やや同意 全く同意
□ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5

例: バニラアイスクリームが一番おいしいアイスクリームのフレーバーです。
□ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5

コメント: これはブランドによります。普通の抹茶アイスクリームを好みます。

[A] □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5
[B] □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5

1. 私の英語は留学するために十分である。

2. 海外留学するためにたくさんのお金が必要である。

3. 通常英語で書くとき自分自身の基本的な考えを伝えます。

4. 英語で話す時、いつも思ったことを手手伝えることができます。

5. 英語で話す時、いつも思ったことを手手伝えることができない。

6. 全体的に、私の英語の文法はかなり良いです。

7. 全体的に、私の英語の文法はかなりお粗末です。

8. 英語では、スペルミスが少ない。

9. 英語では、スペルミスが多い。

[B] □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5
Appendix B. English Translation of the Questionnaire

Informed Consent Statement

We are conducting research on attitudes about study abroad and are asking for your voluntary participation in this project. You will be asked to respond to some Japanese questions in writing. After this, you will have an opportunity to participate in a paired interview with a partner of your choice in English. The written survey below takes about 5 minutes to complete and will be done in class. If you wish, you may also receive a copy of our completed research paper. Participating in this research involves no risks that we are aware of. All information will be confidential and all responses anonymous. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish. Moreover, you may also discontinue this study at any time if you wish. If you have any questions about this study, please contact either the researchers at these addresses:

Tim Newfields
Toyo University Faculty of Economics

Ken Groger
Shizouka University Faculty of Education

Thank you kindly for your assistance.

YOUR SIGNATURE: ____________________      DATE: _____________

PART I: Demographic Information

1. Your Name (in Roman letters): ____________________ 2. Student #: ____________
3. Your Major (check one): □ Economics □ Education □ Other: ____________
4. Academic Year (check one): □ 1st year □ 2nd year □ 3rd year □ 4th year
5. Gender (check one): □ Male □ Female
6. Age (check one): □ 18 □ 19 □ 20 □ 21 □ 22 □ 23+ 
7. Nationality (check one): □ Japanese □ Chinese □ Korean □ Other: ____________
8. Times outside of Japan so far (check one): □ 0 □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5+ 
9. Have any of your parents studied abroad before? (check one) □ No. □ Yes, my father has. □ Yes, my mother has. □ Yes, both parents have.
10. Do either of your parents speak a foreign language fluently? (check one) □ No. □ Yes, my father does. □ Yes, my mother does. □ Yes, both parents do.
11. My most recent TOEIC score was: ____________

PART II: Likert Agreement Scale Items

INSTRUCTIONS: Agree or disagree with each of the following statements according to the following scale:

completely disagree  somewhat disagree  no opinion  somewhat agree  completely agree
□1 □2 □3 □4 □5

Feel free to add comments in Japanese or English after each statement.

Example: Vanilla ice cream is the most delicious ice cream flavor. □1 □2 □3 □4 □5

COMMENT(S): Well, it depends on the brand. Usually I prefer green tea ice cream.

NOTE: To conserve space, the comment space has been omitted.
Also, Forms A (in blue) & B (in brown) are combined.

1. My English is good enough to study abroad.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
1. My English is not good enough to study abroad.  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

2. I do not think you need a lot of money to study abroad.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
2. I think you need a lot of money to study abroad.  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

3. I can usually communicate my basic ideas in English when writing.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
3. I usually can’t communicate my basic ideas in English when writing.  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

4. I can usually communicate my basic ideas in English when speaking.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
4. I usually can’t communicate my basic ideas in English when speaking.  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

5. I know how to sustain a basic conversation in English.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
5. I don’t know how to sustain a basic conversation in English.  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

6. My English grammar is pretty good.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
6. My English grammar is rather lousy.  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

7. I make few English spelling mistakes.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
7. I make a lot of English spelling mistakes.  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

8. My English skills are better than most classmates my age.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
8. My English skills are worse than most classmates my age  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

9. I am keen about studying abroad.  
   [A] 1 2 3 4 5
9. I am not so keen about studying abroad.  
   [B] 1 2 3 4 5

10. I am interested in making friends from abroad.  
    [A] 1 2 3 4 5
10. I am not so interested in making friends from abroad.  
    [B] 1 2 3 4 5

11. My parents really want me to study abroad.  
    [A] 1 2 3 4 5
11. My parents don’t want me to study abroad so much.  
    [B] 1 2 3 4 5

12. I think studying abroad will help me with job-hunting.  
    [A] 1 2 3 4 5
12. I don’t think studying abroad will help me with job-hunting.  
    [B] 1 2 3 4 5
A Social Narrative Inquiry of Three Japanese University Participants
In a Short-term Study Abroad Program
by Paul Horness (Atomi University)

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of a newly introduced study abroad program at a private Japanese university. It examines the linguistic, cultural, and personal experiences of three Japanese university students who studied in English for four weeks. After interviewing the participants at least once individually and once in a group, two main findings emerged. First, the students expressed a desire to experience foreign culture firsthand, but their experience appears to have had limited effects on their language learning motivation upon their return to Japan. Second, although the short-term impact of the study abroad experience left favorable impressions on the learners, specific details concerning tangible effects were unclear. Further investigation into the long-term effect of the study abroad program is necessary to help university administrators develop the program further.

Keywords: Study abroad, narrative case study, cultural knowledge, linguistic development, personal growth

Dewey (1938), Lewin (1957), and Kolb (1984), have argued adults learn best by experiencing situations firsthand. Kolb (1984) developed the four-stage model of experiential learning shown in Figure 1. The first stage begins with a concrete, active experience. Learning is said to take place because of active involvement in the task rather than by simply watching or reading. The second stage is reflective observation. After learners participate in the task, they must take time to reflect on the experience. Learners explain the task to themselves by comparing it with previous experiences or by analyzing it within the context of the situation. The third stage, abstract conceptualization, is where learners analyze the experience to put it into a conceptual form and generalize from the experience. In essence this is a metacognitive activity in which people think about how they learn. In the final stage, active experimentation, learners take a conceptual form and apply it to a new situation. This involves applying problem solving skills and concepts from the previous experience to the new situation.

![Kolb's Process of Experiential Learning (1984)](image-url)
Kolb’s theory, however, has limitations. Rodgers (1996) pointed out that learning includes other factors, such as motivation, goals, or choice. In addition, Seaman (2007) argued that Kolb’s model lacks a social dimension. He suggested that the meaning derived from an experience in not an individual event, but rather a collaborative process in which individuals reflect upon a contextual experience within a given environment.

**Imagined Communities**

Norton (2001) expanded upon the term *imagined communities*, first introduced by Anderson (1991), when discussing the role of learner identity in foreign language learning. According to Norton, “different learners have different imagined communities, and these imagined communities are best understood in the context of a learner’s unique investment in the target language and the conditions under which he or she speaks and practices it” (p. 165). She highlighted how a foreign language learner might be individually motivated, but that social contextual conditions affect motivation because learners are intertwined in a social milieu. Norton was critical of the artificial divide between the individual and the social world and hypothesized that a learner’s commitment to a L2 was also an investment in his or her own identity. Thus, the social environment in which individuals study an L2 directly impacts their identities and motivation levels.

The concept of imagined communities has many proponents. Researchers such as Kanno and Norton (2003), Lave and Wenger (1991), Pavlenko and Norton (2005), and Wenger (1998) have argued that an imagined community can be both spatial and temporal. One’s imagination is the mediating factor between appropriating meaning and developing new identities. Learners make a conscious decision to join a community, and their decision has both immediate and future effects. Prior to joining the community, learners can prepare themselves by building language skills and developing a new identity that will allow them to interact in the imagined community. Their sense of closeness to the imagined community affects the amount of investment they make in it. As Kanno and Norton (2003) point out, imagined communities can also be based on past experiences, which can affect future action. Conflicts can occur when the imagined community based on previous experience differs from the present community.

**Selected Studies Related to this Study**

The following studies have been selected to frame the present study in two ways. First, two qualitative studies are examined because this study uses narrative inquiry as its main methodological approach. After this, two mixed method studies in which Japanese university students experience short-term stays of less than two months since this study has a similar time frame.

1. **Qualitative Studies**

Drake (1997) used written feedback from an anonymous, free-write questionnaire based on seven general questions from 19 Japanese university students immediately after they returned from a six-week study abroad program in the United States. Drake concluded that although some of the students were dissatisfied with certain aspects of the program, the overall responses were supportive. She recommended that the university’s study abroad program take active steps in helping visiting students better integrate into the various host communities. Although the study abroad program afforded many opportunities to the students to integrate into these communities, it seemed some the participants were not prepared to do so. The study does not state whether the students had orientation classes prior to the trip. In addition, the questionnaire focused on the quality of the program by asking questions, such as “what activity did you like the best?” These types of questions make it difficult to know how much the students got out of the experience through their responses. One final drawback of the study is that information comes from only one source.
Geis and Fukushima (1997) used personal experiences and academic evaluations to examine a credited six-week study abroad program at a university in the United States. This study reported the basis for selecting the program in the United States and how the Japanese university handled any problems arising from the program. They reported that the pre- and post-TOEFL scores showed no statistically significant language proficiency gains. In addition, they stated that L2 learning motivation increased upon returning to Japan. They felt that students that participated in the study abroad program were observed as having greater participation in EFL classes in the second semester, especially when speaking about everyday topics. Although not stated clearly, it was assumed that Geis and Fukushima were actively involved in the decision-making process of the program and escorted the students to the United States. Their personal involvement gives us good insight on the decision-making process of the program, but the lack of confirming documents limits what can be drawn from their conclusion. They could have used a questionnaire to support their observations. Finally, as they noted the use of the TOEFL test is limited in a six-week program, a more sensitive test could have been selected to measure proficiency. Their choice of measurements seemed to be a reaction to the situation rather than a concrete plan.

(2) Mixed Method Studies

Woodman (1998) conducted a mixed-method study in which 28 female university students were interviewed from a larger cohort of 384 Japanese students studying 3 weeks in Canada. She used the Linguistic, Perceptual, and Pedagogical Change (LPPC) Interactive Model of second language acquisition based on Gardner's 1985 socio-educational model and Woods' 1996 beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge (BAK) structure. She ran multiple statistical analyses of LPPC and compared the data with responses from interviews and questionnaires. The students stayed in a university dormitory, had a one-day homestay experience, and traveled to several cities outside their immediate area. Her results indicated that many of the students’ and Japanese teachers’ expectations of the program differed. Overall students expected more homework and tests would be given, whereas 7 of the 14 teachers interviewed did not expect this. The interviewed participants stated that they felt their listening skills improved initially and their speaking skills improved later in the program. Their perceived improvement also decreased their anxiety and increased their participation in extracurricular activities with native speakers of English. In order to confirm the participants’ beliefs, she conducted a repeated ANOVA using eight variables related to speaking, such as utterance length or number of utterances. She confirmed in the statistical analysis the participants’ belief that they made more utterances, \( p = .003 \), and at greater length, \( p = .056 \). With greater production in speaking, however, the learners also produced a greater number of errors, most of which were lexical, \( p = .023 \), or incomplete utterances, \( p = .001 \). She noted that these findings were consistent with the results of Moehle and Raupach (1983) in that accuracy decreases when fluency increases for study abroad students.

Fujioka and Agawa (2007) examined a four-week university study abroad program where 61 Japanese students went to the United States and stayed with host families, studied 20 hours a week in a classroom, and participated in various afternoon and weekend activities. The researchers administered a two-item questionnaire and had follow-up interviews with four selected students that participated voluntarily in a Japanese class helping American students. Their findings indicated that four features of the study abroad program affected student motivation. First, students that helped American students learn Japanese felt their motivation to learn English increased because they could reflect on their roles as a student, teacher, and friend. Second, the homestay environment helped increase motivation because the students realized they could not state their feelings adequately. Third, the classes increased motivation as the curriculum was designed to increase cultural awareness and improve communication skills. Finally, outside-of-class assignments, such as interviewing a local individual, appeared to increase motivation. Other than the drawbacks duly noted by the authors, this study had two additional shortcomings. First, the questionnaire was extremely limited in nature and did not measure motivation other than comparing the pre-departure
and post-return attitudes. The comparison leaves little room for interpretation. Second, the process for interviewing the participants was limited. They only had one 30-minute interview with each participant, and how much time had passed between the return and interview should have been stated. In addition to a more diverse selection of the interviewees, the authors could have examined how time might have influenced their motivation.

In sum, these studies indicate that short study abroad programs can be beneficial to students in several ways. First, it appears as if L2 learning motivation tends to increase, at least for the short term. Second, students often report an improvement in their receptive listening skills for short-term SA and improvements in their active speaking skills with longer-term SA. Third, extracurricular activities increase native speaker community contact, fostering more linguistic growth. Churchill and Dufon (2006) observed that “studies conducted in different programs and target language contexts could go a long way towards improving our understanding of what is learned, by whom and under what conditions…. [R]esearch on study abroad is potentially rich as ever and we are only beginning to reveal its complexities” (p. 27).

**Gaps in the Literature and Research Questions**

As highlighted in the review, study abroad often appears to have many positive outcomes, such as linguistic development or cultural awareness. One gap in the literature is lack of understanding of study abroad programs that are shorter than one-month. Thus, the first purpose of the study was to find out what type of linguistic, cultural, and personal impact the study abroad program had on the students. A second gap is that little is known about the potential weaknesses in study abroad programs that can occur if the participants are “sheltered” in their stay-abroad program. Being sheltered includes the creation of island-like situations in which the participants are always grouped together in activities, such as group tours or in intact classes. The second purpose of this study was to find out how the participants felt about the sheltered activities.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does the study abroad program fulfill student expectations in regards to language skills development?
2. What are the students’ expectations, if any, in regards to developing or understanding cultural knowledge from the study abroad experience?
3. How has the study abroad experience affected any self-reported personal development changes, such as volunteerism or self-confidence?

**Method**

**Participants**

Forty students went to the UK in 2012, and ten gave written permission (See Appendix A) to collect data. Three of these ten participants were chosen for two reasons. First, each participant came from a different proficiency group that they had been placed into at the start of their study abroad experience by an in-house exam. Second, only these participants were interviewed more than once due a variety of reasons. Table 1 provides basic background information about the three participants, all of whom have pseudonyms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Travel Year</th>
<th>1st Time Abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bess</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

Data were collected according to the procedures outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Data Collection Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of information</th>
<th>Collection place</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field notes</td>
<td>Host institution</td>
<td>August 2012</td>
<td>These notes were written during my stay and once after I returned I wrote down additional reflections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study abroad summaries</td>
<td>Plane</td>
<td>Return flight</td>
<td>Students were required to write a personal account of their experience in Japanese to receive university credit. It is one page in length. Although I did not have access to these summaries, I asked the students what they wrote in the interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial interview</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>October-November 2012</td>
<td>This information is taken from the questions in Appendix A. During this time I explained the research project and asked for their assistance to do follow-up interviews at a later date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview #1</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>January-February 2013</td>
<td>These interviews were either individual or group depending on the student. Questions from Appendix B were used to guide the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview #2</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>March-April 2013</td>
<td>These interviews were either individual or group depending on the student. Questions from Appendix B were used to guide the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview notes</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>January-April 2013</td>
<td>After each interview session, I wrote down general impressions from the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University's study abroad pamphlet</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>Upon recommendation, the students were asked to write about their study abroad experience for this pamphlet. The university uses it as a recruiting tool now. Students interested in the study abroad program could read about the experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final follow-up check</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
<td>All three participants were asked to read their comments taken from the interviews and confirm the accuracy. I know that their reading proficiency in English might be limited so I also went over the comments with them verbally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It has been suggested that multiple interviews be conducted (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Seidman, 1998) as this can help build the relationship between the interviewer and interviewees, and
it also allow the interview to cover a larger range of information. Some of the information can be confirmed in the second interview. I decided to ask students to come in for multiple interviews. One semi-structured interview was conducted one-to-one, and the other(s) were conducted in a group. In the initial interview, they received questions related to the interview (See Appendix C), a release form to sign (See Appendix A), and a general explanation of the study. Thereafter arrangements were made to interview them. Interviews were conducted and recorded in my office from January to May 2013. After completing the interviews, the participants were given a gift card worth 1,000 yen.

The interviews covered a range of ideas. At the outset, I wanted to quickly get the participants’ thoughts through a set of simple questions that could help me understand some of the issues and experiences of the students, and allow me to refer to personal information in order to highlight particular questions. I allowed either Japanese or English to be used in the interviews. As interviews are co-constructed, I felt it was necessary to use both languages. My Japanese speaking and listening skills are higher than most of the students’ English skills, but most students do not know my proficiency level as I encourage them to use English with me. In the one-to-one interview, students mainly spoke in English, but in the group interviews, they often switched between Japanese and English. In cases where the Japanese became too complex for me, I asked the students to translate so that I could understand the conversation more fully. Afterwards, I asked a bilingual colleague to help clarify any misunderstandings on my part. In some cases, I used the group ideas in the one-to-one interviews. For the most part, I used the questions in Appendix D to frame the interview questions, but the students were encouraged to express any ideas related to their experience. Table 2 outlines the source of information and when the collection took place.

Each participant’s timeline is slightly different because they were in different group interviews. Some did individual interviews prior to the group interview and vice versa. Amy’s individual interview took place five months after she returned. Her group interview took place seven months after she returned. In the case of Bess, she had two group interviews prior to her individual interview. Both group interviews were around the five-month mark. Her individual interview took place about three weeks after the second group interview. Cass also had the group interview first, five months after return. Her individual interview was a month later.

**Data Analysis**

After the interviews were transcribed, the participants’ statements were analyzed in several ways. First, the responses from one question were gathered as one set. As the interviews were guided by the same set of questions, groupings of the responses were straightforward. Second, the responses were grouped according to key words or phrases. For example, the term culture was highlighted throughout the transcript. The statements made around the term were grouped together. The statements were then compared to the first set of groupings. Finally, the groupings were compared to dates and field notes. Any remaining information outside these filtering processes was ignored.

**Findings**

**Research Question 1. Linguistic Expectations**

All three of the participants expected greater gains in language proficiency development through the program. All three students held the belief that their study abroad classes would offer better chances to speak English than in their Japanese EFL classes. Even though the participants’ proficiency levels were different, they stated their Japanese EFL classes were not conducive for speaking. I sensed the students had an underlying bias toward their English classes with Japanese instructors because Amy and Cass have not had any classes with native English speakers in high school or university so far. They thought the classes in Japan focused on skills other than speaking or listening because their classmates were not capable of understanding the content, the Japanese
Instructors were not patient enough, or the focus of the class was on the textbook. Amy was quick to point out the drawback of her EFL university classes.

At this university, many teachers speak English, but the students cannot understand what they say. I can understand, but other students can’t understand, so the class is not going on…, and then stop….., then the teacher is going to speak Japanese…. And the textbook is really easy for me. (Group interview, seven months after return)

Bess stated something similar and compared her experience between the two universities by adding: The class style was not similar [between Japanese and British universities],…. [Japanese teacher’s name] want to us, students, more speak, but students don’t speak. So, [Japanese teacher’s name] only speaks. [British teacher’s name] wa kyouseitekini shaberaseru [forces us to speak]. One question gave us and [British teacher’s name] only listens …. makaseru mitai [teacher leaves it to us]. Shaberinasai [please speak]. (Individual interview, 6 months after return)

Cass also compared her experience between the two universities, remarking that:
In Japanese style is just … book (mimics book). But, we almost write and just solve some questions…. Maybe typical Japanese style…. [British teacher’s name] is really good to us. We never feel awkward or anything…. He made us more comfortable, so… we can more easily, say something. He can listen… and then fix it. (Individual interview, 6 months after return)

**Research Question 2. Cultural Expectations**

Similar to language skill development, all three students stated they wanted to experience British culture firsthand by visiting the country. Although not stated directly, I felt the students were distinguishing British cultural experiences in Japan differently than those in the host country. This was the first time for each of them to visit the UK, so the experience took on a touristic aspect. Most students ate traditional meals and visited pubs. Most of their comments centered on visiting well-known specific sites such as Abbey Road or Platform 9 3/4. All mentioned an interest in learning or partaking in the cultural traditions. Although Amy was not able to specifically identify any particular cultural point, her interest in experiencing it is clear from statements such as:

All tradition is really strong, all strong because like dancing or clothes…or other…food like that….so it’s different than the US…. I don’t think there is no… not no…. no tradition, like strong tradition. I know there is ….uh….Thanksgiving Day or something like that, but just only a special day…. I just wanna see and ….uh….try it in that country. (Individual interview, 5 months after return)

When pressed for further details, Amy admitted that she did not visit any sites outside the school-guided activities even though she remarked that there was enough time given. Once she was exposed to sites from the school-guided trips, she felt it was enough. There are several sites located near the university, but she made no attempt to visit those places again even though there was ample time and opportunity.

In their second interview, approximately six months after their return to Japan, the students were able to express more about their UK experience. All three felt the first interview helped them understand their UK experience more deeply especially questions related to culture. The second interview indicated that they compared Japanese culture to their UK cultural experience. Bess in particular thought the interviews helped her to think about and understand Japanese culture. Through the interview questions, she remembered explaining things to Chinese students about Japan. The question helped to think over her thoughts again.

When the students were asked if there should be more guided or structured cultural opportunities during their study abroad period, the idea was met with reluctance. Each student was asked specifically if they thought an after-class task related to a classroom idea would be appropriate. For example, one task could be to return a purchased item from a store. Each student stated that she did not like the idea and each one responded with the sentiment that the time after the
morning classes should be left open for them to decide what to do. Instead of connecting the classroom activities to tasks outside the classroom, the participants mainly offered practical ideas to help further their study abroad experience. The first idea was that some information should be given in a pre-departure orientation. One complaint about the program was that it took several weeks to figure out the basic transport system. If this information were given prior to departure, students would have more time to get involved early. The second idea for the program was that students from the previous years should give personal stories to the students intending to join the current study abroad program. The final idea was that students be given specific historical information prior to leaving so that they could enhance their experience. All three mentioned their lack of knowledge about the host country’s history that limited their understanding of sites visited.

**Research Question 3. Personal Impact**

This section focuses on specific changes that the three participants thought occurred from the study abroad program.

Amy was asked if the study abroad event made a major impact on her and her response was, “ummm.” For her, the program was a steppingstone, as she intends to study in the US after graduating. Her parents encouraged her to use the study abroad program as a way to become more independent prior to travelling abroad alone. Amy has been abroad more than ten times, but this was her first trip without her parents. From a slightly different perspective, Amy realized a conflict between her goals and situation in the study abroad context. After class, she often met friends and returned to the dormitory to socialize. She was disappointed by her behavior outside of the class because she was not using English after class, even though in the class she would use English with the same people she was socializing with. During the trip on several occasions she would approach me and speak in English. If her friends were present, she would speak some English and quickly translate it for her friends. I did not think the translations were necessary, but it seemed more of a conversation mechanism to keep the group atmosphere flowing and enjoyable for everyone.

Bess feels more confident in her English language skills and travelling abroad. She travelled to France for a week for the personal experience. She thought her UK experience helped her to be more active during the trip. In addition, she thought the first interview helped her to think about her linguistic, cultural, and personal experiences.

As for Cass, it was not clear what impact the study abroad experience had on her personally. She did not mention anything specifically other than she has relatives in the UK. Although all three mentioned they had changed, they were not sure the personal changes came from the study abroad experience. Rather, they thought any personal changes that occurred would have happened even if they had not taken part in the study abroad program. Beyond the experience of being abroad, the goals and motivation for Bess and Cass back in Japan were not clear.

Even six months after returning to Japan, the interviewees reported having trouble integrating their experiences in the U.K. with their lives in Japan, resulting in what La Brack (2012) has termed “shoeboxing”: a tendency to avoid integrating the insights and skills obtained overseas with ones native pre-departure context. Most of the follow-up questions in regards to language development or cultural understanding were answered with a negative or uncertain response. As stated earlier, Amy used the study abroad program as a steppingstone, but she saw the experience as an encapsulated event outside of her university life in Japan. Even though she was disappointed and critical of herself at times, there were many positive events that outweighed the negative ones. In the case of Bess, she had travelled abroad between the second and third interview, and her comments changed. At first, when asked if she would keep her positive studying attitude from the study abroad program for the university English language classes in the coming year, she responded, “ummm…Not sure.” However, in her written remarks for incoming students to the study abroad program, she wrote, “don’t be afraid to say something.” After returning from France, she felt the UK study abroad experience helped her because she had realized through the interviews with me how the experience could help her. Interestingly though, she is reluctant to use her
knowledge in her university courses. Notice how Cass contrasts her French classes from her English classes:

My English class is really typical Japanese style, but … Lucky, my French teacher was is so nice, …so more comfortable, so many students can speak or something easily.

In the cases of Bess and Cass, the general feeling was that the class culture at their Japanese university limited their L2 interaction and motivation. In effect, for them it is the teacher that provides motivation to the class to allow them to be active. They do not consider their role in the class atmosphere as the most important variable.

**Discussion**

The aim of this study was to examine the study abroad experience of the students from several perspectives. The first perspective of language, cultural, and personal changes has reinforced ideas supporting study abroad programs. In one aspect, it supports Kolb’s (1984) model of concrete experience in that all of the participants were satisfied with the study abroad program. They felt they made improvements in their language skills, but more importantly, they experienced a new learning environment. For the second and third stages, the participants experienced a different cultural setting first-hand and adjusted to it through personal decision-making. They could make the choice of how involved they wanted to be. The final stage of active conceptualization was successful for one participant because she could use the experience in her personal travel to France. However, their conceptualization remains limited in that their learning experience in UK has not been transferred back to Japan. The participants were happy with the experience, but upon returning to Japan, they went back to their previous norms of behavior, especially in their English classes. Additionally, the participants have not engaged in any other study abroad programs so far. All three participants stated they would be more aggressive in creating opportunities for communication outside the classroom.

As Norton (2001) pointed out, the social contextual conditions can affect the participants’ imagined communities and motivation. In this study abroad experience, all three participants were excited to “touch the culture” of Britain. However, the short time span and sheltered activities limited their interactions with the community. It was clear the participants wanted to participate in the study abroad classroom differently than in their university classroom. In both cases though, the participant’s desire was affected by the teacher’s willingness to control the class and their classmates’ willingness to speak. In Japan, they were passive and did not see how their behavior influenced the classroom dynamic. Outside the classroom, the participants were able to enjoy cultural sites, but these experiences were conducted in Japanese. The participants admitted that in large group excursions, they spoke to each other in Japanese because it was convenient. Outside the classroom, they felt it odd to speak to each other in English. Additionally, by staying together in a group, they were less likely to join community activities. In essence, they changed from being students to being tourists. The change is not necessarily negative. It did provide an opportunity for students to understand their experiences in a shared way. By being in a group, students could feel safe in approaching people in the community in a limited way.

As stated previously, students lacked any detailed background knowledge of the UK. They were unaware of certain historical features and characters and that made it difficult to have a culturally meaningful or rich experience. All three participants mentioned that greater understanding prior to arriving in the UK would have given them more opportunities to appreciate their experience.

The participants’ responses have implications for teachers and the study abroad program. First, teachers can use the events outside the classroom as teaching opportunities. They can highlight how being in a group can help the students take on tasks that would not do alone. They can help students recognize these situations so that they become more aware of them and handle them more effectively in the future. As for program organizers, it is important that they are aware of
island-like activities. Although keeping students together for transport is efficient, alternative activities need to be incorporated so that the students can benefit from the groupings as well.

This study differs from previous study abroad research in two ways. First, it calls into question the claim made by Drake (1997) that student-organized activities lead to greater participation in the host community. The interactions by the participants in this study with the host community were limited to the role of customers in a shop. Basically, they bought and consumed goods from a shop, but they did not interact socially beyond that. It is also noteworthy that the students expressed no desire for more guided activities to join the host community. In essence, the “study abroad” experience was offered like a consumer product in which the participants casually “consumed” it. The participants’ linguistic and cultural identities throughout the program remained firmly Japanese.

Second, this study also should lead us to question the claim by Geis and Fukushima (1997), and Fujioka and Agawa (2007) that EFL students returning from study abroad actively engage in their English classes more than other students upon returning to Japan. Although the students in this study felt that their English communication had improved, they felt they could not speak more in class because of uncooperative classmates or the focus on their textbooks. As Ellis (2008) pointed out, learners’ beliefs derive from a variety of sources and can be constrained by the environment in which the learner is situated. The amount of learning is influenced by the strength of the learners’ beliefs and how willing they are to act on them in the learning environment. The interviews and observations indicate that the students allowed the learning environment to influence their actions in the classroom. Outside the classroom, the study abroad program added to their maturation process of becoming more confident and independent.

**Conclusion**

Two features of this study seem particularly salient. First, participants’ responses suggest that their English language usage was highly situation-dependent. Although all three students were passive in their EFL classes in Japan both before and after their study abroad experiences, their L2 self-efficacy - unlike L2 identity - is situational. The participants felt that English use in Japanese classroom contexts was artificial and they were more inclined to use their mother tongue in Japan. Overseas however, English use was expected and the participants seemed more willing to make tentative attempts to use English for communicative purposes. The perceived classroom dynamics of British and Japanese English classes also differed: the students felt the British classes were somehow “more authentic”.

Second, the participants were underprepared for the cultural experiences. They admitted having very limited knowledge of the host country. The university’s orientation did not prepare them well enough to maximize their time overseas. In addition, the participants restricted themselves to island-like activities such as traveling in groups to historic spots outside the host university.

There are several limitations to this study. First, only three first year participants were involved due to interview constraints. Future research should include a greater number of respondents of varied academic year and gender. A second limitation is that the participants used English when giving most of their responses. Perhaps many thought of the interviews as a means of practicing their English. At any rate, interview responses may have been affected by linguistic constraints. Future research should offer participants the option of interacting with a proficient Japanese interlocutor. A final limitation concerns the short time frame of this study. These interviews were conducted during a small window of changes in the participants’ lives. The changes in thoughts and emotions of these young participants might be different in a year from now. Future studies should attempt to examine the possible impact of study abroad from a longer time frame.

Although this study abroad experience was enjoyable for the participants, the evidence from this study suggests it needs to develop further. In particular, the pre-departure and post-return
components of the program should be expanded. The university has begun to take some steps in that direction. In 2013 they added an extra orientation day for returning students to talk about their experiences. In addition, the same year they added a 20-item questionnaire on expectations of the study abroad program for participants to complete prior to departure. Due to time constraints and budgeting issues, the university has not taken any steps to develop its post-return orientation program. Future research might examine how a post-return component of the program could be implemented. A final avenue might be to examine how short-term and long-term study abroad outcomes differ.

References


**Appendix A. Original Japanese Informed Consent Form**

同致書

本状は、英語を学ぶ日本学生のための短期留学プログラムに関する調査研究へのご協力をお願いするためのものです。

研究の概要

本研究のねらいは、日本学生がこのような短期留学プログラムに参加することによって、よりよく言語学習が体験できるかを研究することです。私がこの研究のために使用する資料は、次のものです。

（1）この短期留学プログラムに参加する自身の観察。
（2）短期留学を運営している学校事務局に提供された書類。
（3）学生とのインタビュー。

協力者の権利

・あなたのこの研究への協力は、任意のものです。
・あなたのこの研究への協力は、匿名のです。この研究で使用される情報は全て机密扱いとなります。協力者の名前もこのレポートには記載されません。個々の協力者を参照するためには仮名を使用します。
・あなたは、いつでもこの研究の協力を取りやめることができる。もし、あなたが、協力をとりやめるときは、あなたに関するいっさいの情報はこの研究に含みません。
・あなたは、この研究の協力についてどんな質問でも私にすることが可能です。

研究協力に関する同意書

私は、この書類に記述されている研究に協力することに同意します。私は、この協力は任意であり、研究者ポール・ホーネスに申し出ることによって、いつでもこの協力を撤回することができることとします。私は、本同意書の署名済みのコピーを受け取ることとします。

名前（楷書）

/ 署名

/ 日付

私は、この研究への協力のために本質と目的を説明し、協力者の権利を説明し、挙げられた質問に対して回答致しました。

/ 研究者の署名

/ 日付

**Appendix B. English Translation of the Original Informed Consent Form**

I, Paul Horness, am doing research on study abroad programs for Japanese students of English. I would like to ask you to participate in this study.
Explanation of the study
The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of Japanese students in a study abroad program in order to better understand the effect that such programs have on the participants. The materials that I would like to use for this study will include 1) my observations in the study abroad program, 2) written material that study abroad students have provided to the school office that is organizing the study abroad program, 3) interviews with students, and 4) discussions with students, teachers, and staff involved in the program.

Your rights as a research participant
• Your participation in this study is voluntary.
• Your participation in this study is anonymous. All the information used in this study will be kept confidential. No name of any participant will appear in the final report. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to individual participants.
• You are free to withdraw from participation in this project at any time. If you decide not to participate, no information related to you will be included in this study.
• You may ask me any questions that you have about your participation in this study.

Your consent to participate in this study
I agree to participate in the research project that has been described in this document. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from this study at any time by telling the researcher, Paul Horness. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Name (please print) ____________________________
Signature ____________________________
Date ____________________________

I have explained the nature and purpose of this study to the participants. I have explained their rights as participants and I have answered any questions that have been raised.

Researcher’s Signature ____________________________
Date ____________________________

Appendix C. Individual Interview Core Questions

1. Had you been abroad prior to this trip? A. Yes B. No
2. What English skill is your strongest?
   A. Reading B. Writing C. Speaking D. Listening
3. What English skill is your weakest?
   A. Reading B. Writing C. Speaking D. Listening
4. Did you think your English lessons would be different from your English lessons at this university? A. Yes B. No
5. Prior to the trip, did you speak or use English outside of class besides to your English teachers? If so, where? ____________________________
6. Did you think the university’s preparation such as the orientation was sufficient? A. Yes B. No
7. How did your parents feel about you going to Celtic University?
A. Nervous  B. Supportive  C. Other

8. Were you worried about anything?  
   A. Yes  B. No

9. Were you satisfied with the cost of the trip?  
   A. Yes  B. No

10. Overall, were you satisfied with the trip?  A. Yes  B. No  C. Undecided

**Appendix D. Group Interview Core Questions**

1. Did you speak to native speakers outside the class or non-related activities?
2. What surprised you most about your stay?
3. Do you feel your English has improved?
4. Have your feelings about learning English changed as a result of the program?
5. What was the best experience for you in the program?
6. What was the worst experience for you in the program?
7. Do you think you will be more active in English classes at the university from now on?
8. Do you plan to improve your English in the future?
9. Do you think this experience will help you get a job in the future?
10. Do you think your views of UK culture have changed?
11. Do you think your views of Japanese culture have changed?
12. What are some good things about people in the UK?
13. What are some bad things about people in the UK?
14. What are some good things about life in UK?
15. What are some bad things about life in UK?
16. After reading your written comments for the university, have you anything to change?
17. Do you have any other comments about your experiences in the program? What are they?
Study Abroad Perspectives: An Interview with Brett Rumminger
by Karen Yabuno

Brett Rumminger has been the director of the Study Abroad Foundation Japan Office since 2006. He has a B.A. in East Asian Languages and Cultures and a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Brett spent one year studying at Waseda University and an additional year at the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies (Stanford University) in Yokohama as an international research student. This interview was conducted by email during the spring of 2014.

Can you tell me a little about the Study Abroad Foundation (SAF)?

SAF was founded in 2000 and is a chartered non-profit organization based in Indiana, USA. All income including grants and benefits are used to develop the foundation and strengthen its international network. The Institute for Study Abroad, Butler University assisted in the establishment of SAF as part of its mission to strengthen international student mobility.

SAF’s purpose is to provide high quality study abroad opportunities for qualified tertiary students enrolled at member universities. There are currently 181 SAF member universities (115 home universities and 66 host universities). The majority of students study abroad for one year or one semester in undergraduate academic classes alongside domestic students, but certain programs also include language learning or an internship component as part of the curriculum. SAF works with home universities to allow students to earn transfer credit for their study abroad experience to the fullest extent possible.

SAF has 15 staff members based in Japan. Approximately 4,200 students from Asian universities have participated in semester or yearlong SAF study programs since 2007. In the previous year, about 1,150 students participated in a SAF study abroad program. Thirty percent of the students came from Japan.

What are some benefits for SAF’s member universities?

Member universities work with SAF to share resources and to develop the specialized knowledge, skills, and systems necessary for study abroad to be a strong part of their curricula. The purpose is to enable member university partners to effectively and professionally respond to increased and more specialized demand for study abroad opportunities by their students. Often this involves serving students for whom there are insufficient places in bilateral exchange and other programs. For some universities, the opportunities provided through SAF membership will be central to their internationalization and student mobility plans, while for other universities, membership will supplement well-developed and long-standing programs.

Working in this way is relatively new to universities in Asia, and as such SAF and member universities are pioneering a new model to increase international student mobility. Considerable progress has been made with SAF and its member universities experiencing good annual rates of increase in student participation in study abroad. The SAF model has worked well in Asia, notably in Japan.

What prompted your interest in working for a study abroad program?
I had several opportunities to study abroad in Japan through programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where I completed my undergraduate studies. After graduation, I worked in Japan on the JET Programme as both an ALT and CIR. After that, I began working for a Japanese study abroad agency in 2000.

I was never fully satisfied in my work as a study abroad agent, so when the opportunity arose to work with SAF, I shifted my focus to providing opportunities to students in partnership with universities and within a strong educational environment. It is within this context that I am currently working as director of the SAF Japan Office.

What trends have you noticed with Japanese students studying abroad in general?

There has been discussion in the media in recent years suggesting Japanese students have become inward looking and consequently many are failing to take full advantage of opportunities to study abroad, but from our experience, this does not appear to be the case. I believe Japanese university students have always been interested in studying overseas. Whether or not they are able to actually study abroad depends greatly upon how much financial support is provided by their home universities and the Japanese government. Even within the current exchange program system, study abroad can be expensive, and as overseas educational and living costs rise and income disparities in Japan widen, the number of Japanese students who can afford to do so may be decreasing.

We have found that certain universities are becoming better equipped than others to handle the diverse needs of students when it comes to study abroad. These universities have been making changes to their financial systems—most importantly, how home university tuitions are assessed while students are studying abroad on non-exchange programs. Many have revised their credit-transfer systems, which have frequently been barriers to university students going abroad. Through such progressive changes, some of the universities SAF is working with have been able to significantly increase the number of their students heading overseas. Unfortunately, some universities appear to be entrenched in a more conservative environment that does not meet the ever-changing needs and demands of their students.

In recent years, we have also seen increased interest in overseas internship programs as well as in programs that combine language education with university-level coursework. Perhaps this is because both of these program types are not readily available through traditional exchange frameworks.

SAF offers undergraduate, graduate, and international career development programs. Which of these is the most popular?

Our undergraduate program—which includes both language and academic courses—is the most popular. However, we have seen increased interest in long-term overseas internship programs or in programs with internship components. Gaining home university approval to allow students to study on these programs has been problematic, though. SAF is currently working with several universities to create short-term overseas career development programs, which will focus on career exploration and/or corporate projects overseas. We expect that these will attract many Japanese students.

Study abroad at the graduate level can be quite tricky, as it is not a simple task to align the curriculum and research areas of home universities with their overseas counterparts. SAF sees a large number of students interested in graduate study overseas, particularly from Mainland China. However, the best way for SAF to currently serve these students is to provide them with undergraduate study opportunities that may link to acceptance into a graduate school abroad. From Japan, perhaps due to differences in the job market, SAF does not see as many students interested in graduate study overseas as compared to the other countries. We find that in Mainland China, and to a lesser extent in Taiwan and Korea, companies place a high value on students receiving Master’s or PhD degrees abroad. It is
becoming more and more expected that prospective employees have such qualifications. In Japan, companies are still very focused on the hiring of students immediately after completion of their bachelor’s degrees, and outside of certain fields there is relatively little perceived value for prospective employees receiving advanced degrees overseas. It is for such reasons we see many more of our Chinese students using study abroad as a steppingstone to advanced degrees compared to Japan.

**How have trends and demand for your programs changed in recent years?**

As SAF works closely with Japanese universities to supplement and expand their study abroad opportunities, the trends and demand for SAF programs are closely linked with the policies and initiatives of SAF member universities in Japan. Over the past several years we have seen positive change in some Japanese universities becoming more flexible in how they develop study abroad programs and how they approve study abroad and transfer credit. We have also seen positive improvements in the financial systems related to the cost of study abroad. In concrete terms, at certain universities these improvements have involved awarding credit to study abroad for students wishing to combine intensive language study with undergraduate coursework. Also, the establishment of a quarter system in Japan has provided additional opportunities for students to study abroad. Finally, the waiving of home university tuition fees while students are studying abroad at approved programs has also been a positive move.

That said, in general, it is often quite challenging to get faculty committee approval of proposals from university international offices. Some committee members are not fully informed or sufficiently motivated to advance internationalization. As a consequence, it is sometimes difficult to see progress. We look forward to continuing discussions with interested Japanese universities about how to establish internal systems that will allow and encourage more students to study abroad.

**Is the Japanese government doing anything to promote study abroad?**

MEXT has initiated several funding programs over the past few years to provide universities with the resources necessary to further internationalization. In addition, MEXT has provided universities with increased autonomy and flexibility as to how they may internationalize their campuses or expand their study abroad opportunities, including the recommendation to make use of international university networks such as SAF.

What we have seen is that while through such initiatives MEXT is providing the funding and flexibility for universities to further their internationalization efforts, some universities may not be fully prepared to handle the increased flexibility. Others may not know how to best make use of the funding. Therefore, the full benefits of the government initiatives may not have been realized. Regarding the current funding projects, the final outcomes remain to be seen. The worst-case scenario is that when funding runs out, the initiatives will come to a halt. Our goal therefore is of course to use funding to create self-sustaining models that will continue to benefit students long after the initial funding has expired.

**What impact (if any) is the 2014 UK ETS scandal having on study abroad programs?**

Unfortunately, we have come to expect a certain level of surprise in the UK policies regarding student visas. The recent issues related to the acceptance of TOEFL and TOEIC scores for student visas did not cause problems for SAF students in terms of their Fall 2014 admissions. However, it did create a great deal of confusion that left students feeling unsupported in their valid efforts to study in Great Britain. For several weeks after the initial announcement there were conflicting reports from various
sources, including our partner universities in the UK. It took some time to sort through the information and assess the actual situation. Provided that students now have concrete information as to the current situation regarding visas, I do not believe that the situation will have an impact on SAF student numbers to the UK for 2015, but it is one more factor that shows the importance of students thinking ahead and being prepared for sudden changes in policy which may affect their plans.

**Where do you see future demands for study abroad programs?**

It is difficult to predict, but I see student demand for study programs overseas continuing to rise, particularly regarding long-term study abroad. We have seen an increased interest in international career development programs, including overseas academic internship programs, but whether this trend continues relates to how corporations in Japan recognize and evaluate overseas experience. While some companies have definitely changed over the past several years, there are still a good number of major corporations in Japan who seem to place little emphasis on international experience or study abroad, and if the stance of these companies does not change, student demand in turn may remain stagnant or even decrease.

In addition, while the demand for study abroad is primarily driven by students, it is in fact controlled by universities, through policies and procedures which are often based on a past track record rather than a forward-thinking agenda. Japanese universities need to make efforts to fully understand the true needs of their students and then have the flexibility that will allow the universities to effectively develop and administer programs on a large scale. At the moment, there are still relatively few universities in Japan fully equipped to handle this.

It is SAF’s hope that both universities and corporations will take a more progressive approach, thinking five and ten years down the line rather than in the immediate future, and that we will see the structural changes necessary to allow the future needs and demands of the students to be met.
Text Review

Travel Abroad Project
by Richard McMahon

Currently there are at least ten texts in the Japanese ELT market devoted to study abroad-related themes. Many focus on travel to specific destinations such as Let’s Go Abroad: Takeshi’s Journey to the USA (Nishikage, Haginoya, Tamura & Dillon, 2010) or London Alive: Survival English (Snowden & Snowden, 2012). McMahon’s text allows students to select their own destinations and adopts a task-based learning framework. This text is designed to help university level students improve their English research and presentation skills and also to increase their familiarity with various travel abroad destinations. The 63-page text includes a 39-page student workbook and a CD-ROM. A detailed Teacher’s Manual is also available.

During the 2013 academic year I used this text for two university EFL classes: a group of 28 first-year students with TOEIC scores ranging from 380 - 420 and another for 24 second-year students with slightly higher TOEIC scores. At the end of the academic year, a textbook evaluation questionnaire was administered to the 38 students who were in the class that day. A copy of that form is online at http://jalt-sa.org/PDF/7-1-ApA.pdf and its English translation (with student responses) appears in Appendix B. I also completed a teacher textbook evaluation form, as seen in Appendix C. The semester-final exams, which I developed based mainly on the text material, provided additional evidence about how well students were meeting text objectives. Those exams are available online at http://jalt-sa.org/PDF/7-1-ApD.pdf

The Nuts & Bolts

Each of the text’s ten main units starts off with an explicit vocabulary priming activity. 7 - 8 English words are matched with an equal number of English synonyms or descriptive phrases. This was rated as the “most useful” part of this text by 27 of the 38 students who completed the form in Appendix A. Although this text is laudable for its avoidance of Japanese, the semester final exams suggest that most students mastered only half of the textbook vocabulary. More precisely, when asked to construct a meaningful question using eight random vocabulary items from the text, the average student could do so with only about half of the items. This suggests that only some of the students engaged in “deep vocabulary learning” as envisioned by Craik and Lockhart (1972).

The next section of each main unit is a 2 – 3 paragraph reading passage about a travel theme. From a language learning perspective, I felt that this passage should have been more task-based by adopting a cloze format to give students a specific task to attend to. As Ellis (2003, p. 87) reminds us, without concrete tasks to perform, it is easy for some students to become disengaged.

After this, three pair discussion questions appeared. What surprised me most about these questions is how widely their CEFR difficulty levels varied. Whereas questions such as “Have you ever flown in a helicopter?” (p. 44) presented no problem to students, others such as “How does knowing about the arts raise your awareness?” (p. 20) were too difficult. As Fujiwara (2010, p. 136) indicates, many texts now target their content to specific CEFR levels. I feel this text would have been more successful with a tighter degree of vocabulary control.

Subsequent activities in this text varied somewhat from chapter to chapter. A particularly nice feature of the text was the self-reflective question section towards the end of each chapter. Those...
helped at least some students consider what they are actually learning and indirectly promoted more reflectivity.

The accompanying student workbook received lukewarm student ratings. Although some of its activities are well designed, others were not. For example, having students write down (or photocopy) their credit cards, passports, and detailed personal contacts puts too much personal information in a non-secure place. It also violates government privacy guidelines (MEXT, 2006). In my opinion, what should appear in the workbook is more grammar, vocabulary, and spelling exercises. The need to highlight how related terms such as cooks, cooking, dishes, dinners, and diners differ was evident when a few students wrote questions such as, “Have you ever eaten Russian cooks?”

**The Bottom Line**

In many ways, this textbook is a diamond in the rough. The overall idea behind it is engaging and there is a laudable clarity in its aims. If I likened this text to a computer software program, it would be tempting to describe it as a “Beta Version” product. It does have a number of attractive features, but also notable bugs.

When students were asked, “To what extent would you recommend this text for next year’s course?” the response was tepid: with a 7-point Likert scale ranging from +3 to -3, the mean response for this sample was a neutral zero (SD = 1.39). This suggests that classroom opinions were equally divided about this text. Although I feel lots of it is excellent, the current version (now in its sixth printing) is overdue for an upgrade.

- reviewed by Tim Newfields
  Toyo University

**Works Cited**


Appendix A: The original Japanese survey

(Appendix B: English Translation of the Travel Abroad Project Student Evaluation Form with Student Responses

NOTE: Student ratings and comments appear in blue. – T. N.

Part I. Respond to each of the questions below by checking the number that most closely matches your opinion according to the following scale:

-3 = very much not so  -2 = clearly not so  -1 = slightly not so  0 = neutral  +1 = slightly so  +2 = clearly so  +3 = very much so

1. How well did this textbook cover the material outlined in the course syllabus?
   -3: ∅  -2: 3% (n=1)  -1: ∅  0: 42% (n=16)  +1: 16% (n=11)  +2: 16% (n=9)  +3: ∅  NR=3% (n=1)

2. How clear were the objectives of this text?
   -3: ∅  -2: 5% (n=2)  -1: 8% (n=3)  0: 16% (n=7)  +1: 18% (n=8)  +2: 39% (n=8)  +3: 3% (n=1)  NR=5% (n=2)

3. How helpful were the audio recordings that accompanied this text?
   -3: 21% (n=8)  -2: 13% (n=5)  -1: 10% (n=4)  0: 29% (n=11)  +1: 16% (n=6)  +2: 3% (n=1)  +3: ∅  NR=8% (n=3)

4. To what extent did this textbook help you to improve your presentation skills?
   -3: 3% (n=1)  -2: 8% (n=3)  -1: 5% (n=2)  0: 18% (n=7)  +1: 50% (n=19)  +2: 8% (n=3)  +3: ∅  NR=8% (n=3)

5. How clear were the instructions for the various activities in this text?
   -3: ∅  -2: 5% (n=2)  -1: 8% (n=3)  0: 37% (n=14)  +1: 29% (n=11)  +2: 8% (n=5)  +3: 3% (n=1)  NR=5% (n=2)

6. To what extent would you recommend this text for students in next year’s course?
   -3: 5% (n=2)  -2: 16% (n=6)  -1: 3% (n=1)  0: 29% (n=11)  +1: 34% (n=13)  +2: 8% (n=3)  +3: ∅  NR=5% (n=2)

Part II. Agree or disagree with each of the following statements by checking the number that most closely matches your opinion according to this scale:

-3 = strongly disagree  -2 = disagree  -1 = slightly disagree  0 = neutral  +1 = slightly agree  +2 = agree  +3 = strongly agree

1. The overall length of this text was appropriate: there was just enough material.
   -3: ∅  -2: ∅  -1: 26% (n=10)  0: 29% (n=7)  +1: 29% (n=11)  +2: 21% (n=8)  +3: 3% (n=1)  NR=3% (n=1)

2. The cost of this text (¥2000 + tax) was fair.
   -3: 18% (n=7)  -2: 13% (n=5)  -1: 24% (n=9)  0: 16% (n=6)  +1: 11% (n=4)  +2: 5% (n=2)  +3: 3% (n=1)  NR=11% (n=4)

3. The illustrations in this text were clear and helpful.
   -3: 3% (n=1)  -2: 8% (n=3)  -1: 33% (n=12)  0: 21% (n=8)  +1: 11% (n=7)  +2: 11% (n=4)  +3: 5% (n=2)  NR=3% (n=1)

4. This difficulty level of this text was just right for me.
   -3: 3% (n=1)  -2: 8% (n=3)  -1: 18% (n=7)  0: 32% (n=12)  +1: 16% (n=6)  +2: 14% (n=5)  +3: 3% (n=1)  NR=8% (n=3)

5. My interest in overseas travel has changed as a result of this text.
   -3: ∅  -2: 5% (n=2)  -1: 8% (n=3)  0: 21% (n=8)  +1: 42% (n=16)  +2: 11% (n=4)  +3: 8% (n=3)  NR=5% (n=2)
Part III.

1. Which of the chapters in this text were most helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Getting Ready</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Choosing a Country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>About Your Country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Presentation 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Information for Visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Presentation 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Presentation 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Getting There</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Exploring Regions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Traveling Around the Country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Presentation 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Final Itinerary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Presentation 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Which of the chapters in this text were least helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Presentation 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Final Itinerary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Presentation 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Which of the following parts of each chapter were most helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Vocabulary</th>
<th>Preview</th>
<th>Are You Ready?</th>
<th>Infosearch</th>
<th>Quick Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>(n=11)</td>
<td>(n=14)</td>
<td>(n=1)</td>
<td>(n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus Activity</td>
<td>How We Evaluate Each Other</td>
<td>Travel Journey Workbook Activity</td>
<td>Other: Ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=2)</td>
<td>(n=2)</td>
<td>(n=5)</td>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Which of the following parts of each chapter were least helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Vocabulary</th>
<th>Preview</th>
<th>Are You Ready?</th>
<th>Infosearch</th>
<th>Quick Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>(n=61)</td>
<td>(n=4)</td>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td>(n=10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonus Activity</td>
<td>How We Evaluate Each Other</td>
<td>Travel Journey Workbook Activity</td>
<td>Other: Ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=12)</td>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. What were the most outstanding features of this text? (mention as many as you wish in English or Japanese)

- The text was easy to read. 4
- The text was entirely in English. 2
- I could work out a practical travel plan. 2
- There were lots of things to check outside the text, so my English improved. 1
- Learned words were soon actively applied. 1
- No response: 25

6. What were the main shortcomings of this text? (mention as many as you wish in English or Japanese)

- Some parts of the text weren’t used. 3
- There were some things I couldn’t understand. 3
- The text was expensive. 2
- Talking about travel all the time was tedious. 1
- There was a mistake in the Key Vocabulary. 1
- The text was all English (no Japanese). 1
- No response: 27

\textit{Thanks for your feedback.}
\textit{All comments will remain anonymous and will not influence your grades in any way.}

\textbf{Appendix C: Travel Abroad Project Teacher Evaluation Form}

( Available online at http://jalt-sa.org/PDF/7-1-ApC.pdf )

\textbf{Appendix D: Travel Abroad Project Semester Final Exams}

( Available online at http://jalt-sa.org/PDF/7-1-ApD.pdf )