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Short-Term Study Abroad: Attitudes to Intercultural Communication
by Gareth Humphreys (Sojo University)

Abstract

This small scale qualitative interview study, carried out in a Japanese university setting, looks at oral and written reports of short-term study abroad (SA) experiences from two returnee students nine months after their overseas sojourns. It aims firstly to investigate attitudes to intercultural communication using Baker’s (2009) model of intercultural awareness to conceptualise the kinds of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for successful intercultural communication; and secondly, to examine participants’ reports on the type(s) of learning that was carried out in preparation for SA and the extent to which the participants have sought out intercultural learning opportunities independently since. Data was collected via a small focus group, follow up semi-structured interviews, and email interviews nine months after their sojourns. Based on the student reports, the SA sojourns have stimulated their interest in further intercultural experiences. However, this has not translated into active attempts to seek out intercultural learning opportunities. Furthermore, there appears to be a gap between what the participants perceive as important in their learning development and their actual learning behaviours.

Keywords: intercultural communication, short-term study abroad, intercultural awareness

概要

この小規模の質的研究は、帰国後9ヶ月を経た日本大学在学生2人の口述および記述による短期留学体験報告を基に行った。この研究の第一目的は、ベイカーの異文化理解モデル（2009年）を使い、異文化間コミュニケーションへの姿勢を調査し、異文化間コミュニケーションを成功させるために必要な知識、技術、姿勢を概念化することにある。

第二目的は、参加者が短期留学の事前準備として行った学習と留学後、どれぐらい自主的に異文化学習の機会を探したか、参加者のレポートから考察することにある。

データは、帰国後9ヶ月を経て、行われた小規模のフォーカス・グループによる半構造化されたインタビューとEメールでのやりとりによって集められた。学生のリポートによって、短期留学滞在で異文化体験への興味は、さらに刺激されたようだ。しかし、実際に異文化を学習するための機会を自発的に探すことには、繋がっていない。つまり、参加者が学習を進める上で重要だと考える事柄と、実際の学習行動とは、ギャップが見られる。

キーワード：異文化間コミュニケーション、短期留学、異文化意識

This study is concerned with ‘intercultural communication’ — interactions between individuals of different cultural backgrounds. It differs from ‘cross-cultural communication’ studies, which focus on comparing the communication behaviours in different cultures (e.g., Jackson, 2014, p.3). Baker’s (2009) intercultural awareness extends past developments in intercultural communication research, including Byram’s (1997) notion of intercultural communicative competence. Byram’s emphasis was for language teaching and learning to help learners become ‘intercultural speakers’, i.e., committed to understanding the cultural perspective of other interlocutors when communicating. However, this relates to intercultural communication between ‘defined cultural groupings, typically at the national level’ (Baker, 2012, p.65).
In an expanding circle setting like Japan, English is commonly used as a lingua franca in communication between individuals of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. While this form of communication is often viewed negatively due to its non-conformity to the established norms that are often seen to define the ‘standard’ variety (Seidhoffer, 2011, p.94), English as a lingua franca communication instead recognises a plurality of English forms. This is driven both by the functional needs of the interlocutors, irrespective of linguistic or cultural background, and the context of the communication, rather than by formal native English speaker norms (Jenkins, 2007). Intercultural awareness is a model which both recognises the needs of intercultural communication through English as a lingua franca and rejects the association of English with any particular country.

To better understand Baker’s (2009) model of intercultural awareness, there are twelve components thought to characterise the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that an English user needs for effective intercultural communication. They build from a basic understanding of cultural contexts in communication to a more complex understanding of the dynamic role of culture going beyond nationally based cultural generalisations (Baker, 2009). These may not necessarily develop in this sequence as learners may display aspects of later components early in their development.

**List 1. Twelve components of intercultural awareness according to Baker (2012, p.66).**

**Level 1: Basic Cultural Awareness**

An awareness of:
1 culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;
2 the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;
3 our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
4 others’ culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs.

**Level 2: Advanced Cultural Awareness**

An awareness of:
5 the relative nature of cultural norms;
6 cultural understanding as provisional and open to revision;
7 multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping;
8 individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;
9 common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures.

**Level 3: Intercultural Awareness**

An awareness of:
10 culturally based frames of reference, forms, and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in intercultural communication;
11 initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalisations but an ability to move beyond these through:
12 a capacity to negotiate and mediate between different emergent socioculturally grounded communication modes and frames of reference based on the above understanding of culture in intercultural communication.

**English in Japan**

As is the case with many East Asian countries, English education in Japan is characterised by an exam oriented educational system (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009), the continuing use of the grammar-translation method at primary and secondary level (Whitsed & Wright, 2011), and the wide study of English as a subject of knowledge rather than a means for communication. Despite the visibility of English in Japan in terms of advertisements, TV programmes, pop songs, and English publications, the language is primarily used here for communication with individuals from other countries, and not limited to inner circle countries (e.g., Seargeant, 2009). Such communication demonstrates a need for ELT in Japan to acknowledge the sociolinguistic realities of English use as a lingua franca.
However, there is still a deeply held notion of English not as a global language, but as a language belonging to inner circle countries, in particular the U.S. (Daily Yomiuri 2012, cited by Burgess, 2015). Moreover, the message that Japanese learners of English need to acquire native-speaker levels of competence is prominent. This can be seen firstly in an over-representation of native speakers in commercially available ELT material (Galloway & Rose, 2013, p.230); and secondly, in articles on English for learning purposes, written by Japanese researchers, which often provide advice on smooth and appropriate communication with native English speakers and state that L1 ‘interference’ causes misunderstandings (e.g., Allard, Mizoguchi, & Bourdeau, 2006). At an official level, an implied support for this is evidenced by the adoption of a native English speaker model in ministry-approved course books (Harris, 2012) and the recruitment policy of the JET programme in which assistant language teachers tend to be hired from inner circle countries (McConnell, 2000, p.xvii).

The Study

Research Questions

The research addresses three principal research questions:

1. What are the participants’ self-reported attitudes towards intercultural communication following SA, and how can these be seen to have changed in the nine months since their sojourns?
2. What independent learning did the informants report undertaking place in preparation for their sojourns?
3. To what extent have the participants reported seeking out intercultural learning opportunities independently in the nine months since returning to Japan?

Research Setting

The specific setting for the research is a private university of approximately 3,600 students in Kyushu, Japan. English is not available for study as a major, but students in the first two years of study are required to attend two 90-minute communicative English classes per week, following national guidelines. All seventeen teachers in the English Language Centre come from the U.S.A, U.K, Canada, and Australia, and may be described as “native English speakers”. There are also two Japanese learning advisors working in the large self-access centre. This is similar to many ELT settings in Japan where the use of inner circle English speakers as a model for language and cultural input endures. This can also be seen not only in teacher recruitment, but also in the commercial resources and teacher-developed materials utilised in classrooms.

SA is increasingly promoted at the institution as a means to prepare students for functioning in cross-cultural settings in Japan and beyond. In 2015, approximately one hundred and fifty students took part in overseas sojourns at Sojo University. Those options are detailed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Programmes</th>
<th>Chaperoned?</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frances King Language School, London</td>
<td>homestay</td>
<td>English language study &amp; cultural exchange</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Feb 27- Mar 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong University</td>
<td>dorm-stay</td>
<td>study exchange</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Feb 29 - Apr 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta University</td>
<td>dorm-stay</td>
<td>English language study</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Apr 27 - May 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka</td>
<td>hotel-stay</td>
<td>university visit</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>May 3 - May 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidelberg University, Germany</td>
<td>dorm-stay</td>
<td>study exchange &amp; cultural exchange</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Jul 17 - Aug 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTO, Newcastle University, UK  | dorm-stay  | English language study & cultural exchange | N  | Aug 9 - Aug 30

INTO, Oregon State University Summer Program, U.S.A  | dorm-stay  | English language study & cultural exchange | Y  | Aug 12 - Sep 9

Institute of Technology Penetronas, Malaysia  | dorm-stay  | university visit & cultural exchange | N  | Aug 17 - Aug 31

Rajagiri School of Engineering and Technology, Kochi, India  | dorm-stay  | English language study & cultural tour | Y  | Aug 18 - Sep 1

Bangkok, Thailand  | hotel-stay  | corporate visits | Y  | Aug 29 - Sep 5

Silicon Valley, California, U.S.A  | hotel-stay  | corporate visits | N  | Aug 29 - Sep 5

National University of Civil Engineering, Vietnam  | hotel-stay  | university visit & cultural exchange | Y  | Aug 29 - Sep 5

Paris, France  | hotel-stay  | arts & culture tour | Y  | Aug 31 - Sep 6

Lublin University of Technology, Poland  | dorm-stay  | university visit & cultural exchange | Y  | Dec 4 - Dec 14

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**Research Participants**

On the basis of their potential to illuminate the research, students who had taken part in SA in summer 2015 were selected. A *Participant Information Sheet* (Appendix 1) was displayed in key spots around the university, including the self-access centre and the international centre. Eight individuals expressed an interest in taking part; however only three came to the first interview. One of these individuals subsequently withdrew (her responses do not feature in the analysis). This may be considered a low number, but the aim was to build detailed individual accounts with several examples of intercultural communication experiences in which subtle meanings could be uncovered leading to a holistic understanding (Dörnyei, 2007). Participation was voluntary and carried out with written consent from the participants (see Appendix 2).

Table 2 provides some information about these participants (both names are pseudonyms).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Approximate English CEFR Level</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>SA destination and duration of stay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minami</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Computer information</td>
<td>India, 2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harumi</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>U.S.A, 1 week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Methodology**

To develop a detailed account of the participants’ perspectives, the investigation used a (1) one-session focus group nine months after their return, (2) one follow-up semi-structured interview with each participant nine months after their return, and (3) follow-up email interviews nine months after the informants returned (see email questions in Appendix 3). The aim of the focus group was to bring into contact multiple viewpoints (Morgan, 1997). While six students were invited, only three came. This was problematic since stimulating discussion can be difficult with fewer than six participants (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996). However, this took place as a ‘mini-focus group’, an approach endorsed in cases where participants bring specialised knowledge or experience to the discussion (Krueger, 1994).

The interviews took place in a private study space at the university and lasted approximately 40 minutes. As with the focus group, they were recorded with participant permission. They were
conducted in English for three reasons: they were seen as an opportunity for English communication practice; conducting the interviews in Japanese may have been perceived as a slight on the participants’ English language ability; and, the researcher’s Japanese competence was limited.

Data were analysed thematically by the interviewer. The coding approach involved some predetermined codes, acknowledging the researcher’s conceptual background and relating to the research questions, and other coding grounded in the data (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Interpretations were drawn from the students’ descriptions and attempts were then made to connect findings with the described model of intercultural awareness. In the individual accounts, efforts were taken to record how English was used by each participant; however, it was decided that in places their comments should be ‘cleaned up’ to facilitate reading (Dörnyei, 2007).

**Results and Discussion**

**Evaluating the SA Experiences**

Both participants reported that they had responded to the challenges of first-time international travel with openness, flexibility and a willingness to adapt some aspects of their cultural behaviour.

Minami spent two weeks in Kochi, India, attending English language classes at a university and participating in a cultural tour. She was joined by three other students and an English-speaking Japanese professor. She was positive about having the opportunity to use English in real communication although she stated, ‘[it was] too short to study English’ and ‘there were few opportunities to talk with local people’.

Harumi participated in a study group consisting of twelve individuals from other Japanese universities in California for one week during which she visited several companies in Silicon Valley. She was also required to give a presentation in English on student life in Japan. She reported a positive experience there and stated that she would recommend SA because, ‘I can feel and see a new world and change my world, so it was a really nice experience’.

**SA Intercultural Communication Experiences**

While the number of opportunities for intercultural communication on their short-term sojourns was reputedly limited, both informants were able to use English in situations outside their classrooms. Harumi believed these had been “successful” and stated that those she had spoken to, whom she identified as native English speakers, could understand her and vice versa. She said that using English during her sojourn had been interesting and remarked, “I like English, so I enjoyed talking with people from another country in English”. Minami’s experience in India was more challenging. She stated, “I couldn’t adjust. They talked to me, but I couldn't answer…. their English is almost another language…their pronunciation…is not clear”. She referred to past learning experiences in which “teachers taught us American English, so that is familiar to me”. Comparing this to her experiences in India, she stated, “At first I couldn't understand that their language was English”. Regarding her attitude towards her own English use, she added, “I speak English with a Japanese accent…when I stayed in India, Indians sometimes couldn’t understand what I said”.

**Attitudes to Intercultural Communication**

The accounts indicate that neither informant had previously been exposed to diverse English use among individuals of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which is typical of ELT learners in Japan. Minami stated that she had studied English “from junior high school, but almost all of the class was for English grammar, so I didn’t study talking English enough and I’m not used to talking
with foreign people”. Harumi’s experience was similar: “when I was high school student I studied for tests….I didn't talk in English”. She stated that the first time she had used English in communication was after entering university. Comparing her past and present English learning experiences, she stated, “I didn’t have native English teachers then, but now I can listen many times to real English”. While their attitudes towards English use among Japanese speakers differed, both expressed a preference for inner circle English speakers.

Minami visited a country where English was used differently from how she had previously encountered, whereas Harumi encountered a more familiar use of English and subsequently she had fewer communication breakdowns. Minami reported challenges dealing with the English use that she came across, but her awareness of diverse English use also developed while in India. Minami stated that her objectives for studying English were, “to broaden my outlook…to know new things….new things give me new world, so I want to know something I didn't know before about foreign countries’ cultures”. However, she also reported studying English language but not “[studying] English cultures…so mm I know a few things about other countries culture, but I don't know their cultures deeply”. Talking about her reasons for participating in SA, Harumi remarked, “I like English, so want to talk in foreign countries with many people and improve my English and feel different cultures”. Her main hope for SA was to, “feel different cultures and improve my English skills”.

**What Learning Took Place Before the SA?**

Minami indicated that she had not done any reading, in English or Japanese, about India, and that she knew little about that country prior to departure. Despite the lack of structured study to prepare for her sojourn, Minami reported using the self-access centre independently in the lead up to SA. Harumi, however, demonstrated more independent learning by using a broader range of self-access facilities. She believed that this had helped her prepare for her sojourn, particularly in terms of speaking practice: “Most useful was talking with teachers and friends in English”. She also visited the home pages of the companies she planned to visit in order to prepare questions because she thought, “I may not understand their spoken English so I prepared written questions”.

In terms of institutional pre-SA support, both informants reported that this had been brief and limited, focusing on the potential risks rather than benefits. Furthermore, the institution had not provided any learner training or advice on tasks that could be carried out independently in preparation. Minami and Harumi both reported taking part in “short” meetings with the university’s international office staff. She said that only one brief pre-departure meeting was held and added that the meeting was, ‘very short…like /hotondo nakatta tte nan te ieba ii/ [how do I say - almost nothing]’. As Kim (1995, cited in Segawa, 1994, p.34) suggests, providing more appropriate pre-departure preparation may help learners both develop attitudes towards intercultural communication and more effectively handle miscommunication and misunderstandings.

**Nine Months Later**

The impact of the SA experience nine months later was significant in Minami’s case. She stated, “Before I decided to go India, I had interest in studying abroad. But, I had thought it was too difficult. By the experiences of studying abroad, however, I can enjoy going abroad now. So now, I want to stay overseas for a long time”. Since her trip to India, she has taken part in a second ten-day SA sojourn in Poland and has been active in sharing her experiences with prospective SA students. She stated, “I had studied English since junior high school, but had no goal”. She reported that this has now changed as her goal has become clear: “Through staying India and Poland, I learned the reason why I study English. My goal is to talk with people from other countries in English.”
added, “I don’t think that speaking English fluently is most important thing, but it will help me a lot”.

In terms of using English since their return, Minami said that there had been, “little occasion to use English” since returning from Poland six months ago. She appeared frustrated for not seeking out opportunities to engage in intercultural communication since being abroad. She stated, “I think it is failure. I should have tried to communicate positively”. However, she has recently started to study for the TOEFL with the intention of enrolling in a postgraduate course overseas.

Harumi’s English use in intercultural communication since returning from the USA has also been limited. She reported that in addition to using English in her language classes she joined one seminar with a visiting U.S professor, with whom she had spoken in English. She felt this was a positive experience and commented, “It became easy for me to speak English. Maybe I have gained confidence since study abroad”. Harumi affirmed that she plans to go abroad sometime next year. She also voiced a strong interest in using English in communicative contexts by adding, “The reason I have started learning English is I want to communicate with many foreigners. Japanese is used only in Japan, but English is spoken around the world”.

Both Minami and Harumi remain positive about their SA experiences, but this has not translated into more demonstrable active learning in both cases. In addition, neither has actively sought intercultural communication opportunities in Japan, despite claims of continuing motivation to use English in communication. There is a clear contrast between what the participants perceived as important to their development with their actual learning behaviours. This may be seen to correspond with Dörnyei’s (2005) notion of multiple selves. The participants both made clear their interest in using English in intercultural communication in their interviews, which can be interpreted as an ‘idealised’ versions of themselves representing the persons they wished to become. This idealised construed may be a motivating factor in their learning experiences, perhaps demonstrated more so, at present, in the case of Minami than Harumi who reports more active learning now as she explores opportunities to use English for her postgraduate plans.

Relevance to ELT in Japan

Minami and Harumi talked about their past learning experiences and how they felt this had affected their attitudes to language and culture in communication. For both, their previous learning experiences had involved exam preparation with limited communication practice. In addition, they had not encountered much diversity of English use, nor become aware of communicating using English as a lingua franca. According to Liu and Littlewood (1997), such experiences characterise many English language classrooms in parts of East Asia.

Both informants also reflected on their tertiary English experiences. They reported an appreciation for more communicative language learning in their university English classes. In addition, they were positive about being able to access what was considered “real English” use among native English teachers. However, these classes did not provide them with much exposure to a diversity of English use. More exposure to how English is often used as a lingua franca in intercultural communication may help support the development of skills and attitudes associated with intercultural awareness.

This development is likely to be beneficial to SA participants in order to better prepare them to deal with an increasingly interconnected world. It is unlikely for this to develop only through SA; rather, appropriate support and reflection is seen as critical for effective intercultural development (Byram & Feng, 2006). Developing independent learning skills through teacher support may help learners to self-direct more effectively and seek out both intercultural learning resources and opportunities for intercultural interactions.

In terms of institutional pre-SA preparation, both informants reported this was limited. This is unfortunate as providing more appropriate pre-departure preparation and independent learning
support may help learner development. Much SA preparation is, however, often based on the national languages and cultures of the destination countries, but a sole focus on this fails to recognise the transnational and multicultural settings in which students may find themselves on completion of their studies (Jackson, 2012).

**Limitations and Conclusion**

This study looked closely at the accounts of two individuals. This is a small number, but it was considered appropriate here given the detailed accounts. It has sought to provide an in-depth analysis that may resonate with other study abroad research contexts (e.g., Richards, 2003). That said, the study would have been more comprehensive with further accounts from which comparisons could be made across the dataset. In addition, the analysis is based on self-reports which depend on personal recollection and openness. The extent that these reports accurately represent what happened is open to discussion. It is also possible that their presentations were constructed based on their perceptions of my expectations. Finally, it should be noted that since the interviews were conducted in English, the informants may have had difficulty expressing some ideas that would be easier to express in their mother tongue.

This interview study examined the experiences of two individuals who took part in short-term SA programmes in order to examine their attitudes to intercultural communication from an English as a global lingua franca perspective. In addition, it looked at the reports of learning that took place in preparation for SA and the pre-departure support from the institution. Each sojourn was reported as positive by the individuals, and both stated that they would recommend SA to future participants. While attitudes were positive to learning about other cultures, this has not translated into active efforts to engage in intercultural communication since their sojourns, despite claims of continued motivation. While SA may help participants develop an awareness of diverse English use, it is important for teachers within institutions to help SA students develop an understanding of the role of English in intercultural communication. This may help them operate more successfully in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world.

**References**


Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**Study Title:** Study abroad and intercultural awareness

What is the research about?
I am a researcher with the University of Southampton, UK. This is for a postgraduate qualification. I am conducting research in English.

What will happen to me if I take part?
There will be 1 discussion with other study abroad students in the SALC. There will be 1 interview with Gareth in English. The interviews will be recorded, but only Gareth will listen to them.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?
You can practise English communication. You can talk about your study abroad experiences. This could help other students to learn from your experiences. You will receive a ¥1000 Kinokuniya book voucher.

Will my participation be confidential?
Yes. In compliance with the Data Protection Act (U.K) and University of Southampton policy.

What happens if I change my mind?
You can withdraw at any time without any penalty.

Where can I get more information?
You can speak to Gareth Humphreys in the SILC or by email (humphreysgareth@hotmail.com).

Appendix 2: Consent Form

**CONSENT FORM**

**Study Title:** Study Abroad and Intercultural Awareness

**Researcher name:** Gareth Humphreys

**Researcher number:** 15484

**Staff/Student number:** 26452154

**ERGO reference number:** 15484

Please initial the boxes if you agree with the statements:

I have read and understood the information sheet (7th October 2015/ Version 0.2) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.

I consent to the audio recording of interviews.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without any penalty.

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored in a password-protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous. All audio files will be deleted after the research is complete.

Name of participant (please print)

Signature of participant

Date

Appendix 3: Email Interview Questions

1. You said you felt your study abroad was positive. Do you still think it was positive? Why / why not?
2. Do you have plans to study abroad again? Why / why not?
3. How have you used English since you came back? In class only, or in other situations?
4. Have you had intercultural communication with people from other countries since your study abroad? What happened? Were they / Was it successful?
5. Have you studied English since you returned to Japan? How have you studied? What have you studied?
Book Review

Assessing Study Abroad: Theory, Tools and Practice
Edited by Victor Saviki & Elizabeth Brewer
Sterling, VA: Stylus (2015)

ISBN(Paperback): 978-1620362143
ISBN(Cloth): 978-1620362136
ISBN(E-Book): 978-1620362167

As study abroad programs become more prevalent among universities throughout many parts of the world, the question of how to assess the effectiveness of such programs arises. What are the best ways to evaluate whether or not overseas education programs are fulfilling their aims? This 336-page text is an attempt to answer that question. Written primarily for study abroad program administrators in the United States, much of the material in its 18 chapters is also relevant to international educators worldwide.

Although this volume’s 23 authors sometimes have varied opinions about program assessment, a number of common threads stand out. In particular, the following seven points regarding study abroad assessment are underscored by multiple contributors.

(1) Assessment should be regarded as an ongoing, iterative process rather than as a single snapshot. Several contributors suggest that study abroad’s most significant changes are apt to develop gradually over long time frames. Single-sitting measures, often taken immediately after an overseas abroad program is finished, seldom yield accurate pictures of any enduring effects. Savicki and Price (p. 230) recommend conceptualizing study abroad assessment in terms of the Japanese notion of kaizen or ‘continuous improvement’ (Imai, 1986). Salisbury makes a similar point by stating:

Assessment is a process that should situate improvement as its primary intended outcome. Organizations and institutions that fail to introduce changes based on assessment findings have not really assessed. Unfortunately, higher education generally and study abroad specifically have often fallen into the trap of assessing for the purpose of proving what is already believed to be so. (p. 24)

(2) Rather than having a few experts evaluate a program, key stakeholders should be involved in the planning, implementation, and assessment process. Getting stakeholders to agree on what is being assessed – and also why and how the evaluation is occurring – is essential to program success. As Braskamp and Engberg (2014) emphasize, educational assessment should be a collaborative effort combining the voices of diverse constituents. Although working with differing parties is often time-consuming, in this volume Brewer notes that:

When study abroad assessment is a shared enterprise, it can lead to shared ownership and responsibility for study abroad and also allow for multiple insights and perspectives into assessment processes and findings. (p. 299)

(3) Assessment should be structured into a study abroad program from the onset so that its goals and components are linked with broader institutional goals. Assessment should not be regarded as an ancillary task after a program is organized. Ideally, it should be an integral facet of each program and way of fostering alignment between various program components. Too often, there is a lack of congruence between study abroad program goals, measurement methods, program content, and student expectations. Noting this, in Chapter 3 Gozik enjoins:
Regardless of where one begins, it is critical that each of the components of a plan—the mission statement, learning goals and outcomes, assessment tools, and distribution of results to key constituents—link together within a cohesive cycle . . . this ordering ensures that learning outcomes align with the office and institutional mission and priorities and that there is a method for measuring each of the stated goals and outcomes. (p. 66)

(4) Multiple instruments are needed to get an accurate picture of what changes—if any—occur as a result of study abroad. Several authors in this text advocate using mixed-methods incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research tools. The dangers of relying too heavily on one instrument are underscored repeatedly. This work outlines a number of ways to triangulate data and briefly mentions a broad variety of research instruments.

(5) Assessment standards need to be transparent, and assessment criteria and program goals need to be communicated clearly to all stakeholders. Too often study abroad participants are unsure how their participation will be assessed, or even what the desired outcomes of a given program are. Particularly if students are receiving academic credit for their overseas experiences, study abroad organizers need to communicate evaluation criteria actively and make sure that participants have realistic goals. Echoing Earl (2003), in Chapter 7 Brewer and Moore encourage study abroad stakeholders to view assessment as a key component of the learning process—not merely as a judgment about what has been learned (p. 145).

(6) The assessment process can be embedded in tasks directly related to the goals and objectives of a study abroad program, which is often better than asking participants to complete activities that they might perceive as irrelevant. Study abroad researchers are often plagued by low response rates and overseas sojourners can feel uninterested in completing the questionnaires or interviews. As conceptualized by William (2011), embedded assessment—also known as construct-referenced assessment or stealth assessment—is a type of formative evaluation in which tasks (such as student diary entries) contain prompts that can be used to evaluate learning. In Chapter 14 Gillespie, Ciner, and Schodt encourage study abroad programs to utilize embedded assessment by stating:

The advantages of an embedded assessment are that it is based on a pedagogically valid activity in the context of a course or program, as opposed to a method that occurs after the fact, and students are more likely to take the assignment seriously as a course requirement (p. 264).

(7) Don’t worry about having a “perfect” assessment—there is no such thing. Assessment of complex change is inherently complex, often messy, and prone to biases. Particularly in study abroad scenarios, in which true control groups are difficult to achieve, many constraints are inherent in the assessment process. However, a number of authors overcoming paralysis by focusing on simple, attainable assessment goals at first. On this note, in Chapter 7 Brewer and Moore advise:

It is important to embark on assessment incrementally. Make modest starts that do not demand a large learning curve. As experience is gained, new tools are learned, and findings suggest new questions, assessment practice can evolve and become richer. (p. 160)

Some Pros and Cons

One nice feature of this book is that it offers an inside view of ways study abroad administrators can assess their programs. The process is seldom clean or clear-cut, and sometimes the data do not generate the results hoped for. I particularly liked the way Savicki and Price described the development of an in-house assessment tool at Wesleyan University in Chapter 12. That tool can be adapted for use at other institutions freely if proper citations are made. This is welcome because many commercial assessment tools such as the BEVI, GPI, and IDI cost over $20 per participant (Roy, Wandschneider, & Steglitz, 2012) - a figure that may be beyond the budget range of some schools.
Another nice feature of this book is that it introduces a wide range of theoretical concepts. Although few of these are explained in detail, proactive readers will be able to find more information about unfamiliar ideas and terminology elsewhere. In particular, I felt Saunders, Hogan, and Olson's discussion of a "backward design" assessment process in Chapter 4 was helpful. The final overview of study abroad assessment resources by Brewer was also useful.

This book has two major drawbacks. First, it is Americentric: all of the contributors are working in the United States and some of the instruments are designed primarily for American students. I wish some works of Asian, European, African, and Australian scholars could have been used to balance out insights from the USA.

Second, some of the information could have been scaffolded more effectively. Adding some exploratory questions to the beginning of each chapter as well as a few reflection questions at the end would make this text more “experiential” and encourage critical reflection. The quality of the chapters is uneven, and this text could have been designed in a more interactive way.

The Bottom Line

In recent years several excellent texts about international program evaluation have come out, making the task of recommending a single book more daunting. This text covers some of the same topics as Bolen's *A Guide to Outcomes Assessment in Education Abroad* (2007), but has the advantage of offering an in-depth comparison of how nine institutions evaluate their study abroad programs. If you are fairly new to the field of educational assessment and hoping to garner a range of different ideas about how to evaluate the international programs at your school, Saviki and Brewer's book is worth reading. If, however, you are looking for a more practical “cookbook” approach to assessing study abroad outcomes, perhaps Deardorff’s *Demystifying Outcomes Assessment for International Educators: A Practical Approach* (2015) might be more useful. That volume offers many handouts, worksheets, and practical ideas for administrators wanting to evaluate their programs. Then again, if you are interested in larger issues of program design and how to optimize pedagogical interventions in addition to assessment issues, I believe that Berg, Paige, and Lou’s *Student Learning Abroad: What Our Students Are Learning, What They’re Not* (2012) is certainly worth a read. Since more and more financial resources are being devoted to study abroad at many institutions around the world, study abroad advisors and program directors should probably become acquainted with each of these books.

- Tim Newfields
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Works Cited


Classroom Ideas

Introducing Study Abroad On Screen: English Vinglish
Tim Newfields (Toyo University)

As the number of people studying abroad across the globe increases, it is not surprising that the number of study abroad themed films has also increased. One of the earliest films from Japan with a study abroad theme is Tsuchimoto’s Ryugakusei Chua Sui-Rin (1965): a documentary about a Chiba University student from Malaysia during the early 1950s who experienced visa problems due to his pro-communist sympathies. This film underscores how vulnerable foreigners can be in some countries if their political views run counter to the status quo. Another study abroad themed cinema is Kumazawa’s Jinkusu!!! (2013), a drama about a Korean college student spending a semester at a Japanese university. This bildungsroman offers glimpses of how Japanese and Korean cultural norms differ.

On the other side of the globe, Girault’s Les Grandes Vacances (1967) is a pioneering study abroad film. In this Franco-Italian comedy, a straight-laced French headmaster sends one son off to England to study as punishment for failing an important exam. The headmaster’s other son then falls in love with a British exchange student. Girault’s work frames study abroad as a light-hearted vacation and illustrates what can happen if students reluctantly study overseas.

At least twenty study-abroad themed films have come out since the 1980s, discounting an entire adult entertainment genre that portrays foreign exchange students as exotic objects with twisted psychological needs. An analysis of such films is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the ways overseas students are depicted as cunning and unscrupulous as in Milton’s The Foreign Exchange Student (2015) or as withdrawn and abnormal as in Paradis-Barrère’s Kana, Ici Ou Là (2014) exemplifies how often they are peripheralized.

This article describes one possible way of highlighting a few of the dilemmas that can happen during study abroad by critically examining one film. Although Shinde’s English Vinglish (2012) is mainly about an Indian housewife in New York, it depicts more than a few of the culture shocks that Asians in Europe or North America are likely to face. It also skillfully exposes students to varieties of English that are seldom heard in Japanese university classrooms.

Target Audience and Time Frame

This film was originally produced in Hindi, Tamil, and English and it has since been dubbed into over a dozen languages. Although the Japanese version of this movie could be adapted for Japanese EFL classroom use, this activity describes one way of using its English video clips without any Japanese sub-titles. Hence, it best suited for university students with CEFR B1 levels of English proficiency or higher. Since that is above the level of most undergraduates in Japan, this would probably be apt for students who have spent a semester or more abroad. This activity could be
incorporated as part of a study abroad post-return course. It might also be used in a pre-departure context for students with CEFR A2 proficiency, if ample linguistic accommodations are provided.

This activity could be implemented in various time frames. Personally, I recommend five thirty-minute class sessions. However, it might also be done in one or two extended sessions.

**Materials Needed**

I recommend critically examining six YouTube video clips of *English Vinglish* to stimulate discussions. Some teachers might prefer to skip Video Clips #4 and #5 since they are about cross-cultural taboos that might be difficult to broach.

In addition to the six video clips outlined in the References, these two handouts are recommended:

- **Handout 1** outlines six specific ways of dealing with linguacultural misunderstandings. Each participant should receive a copy of this handout, which is in Appendix A, on the first session.

- **Handout 2** provides five cross-cultural vignettes about conflicts that sometimes happen during study abroad. This handout, which is in Appendix B, can be distributed either together with Handout 1, or at some latter point during this activity.

Finally, you may want to print out posters from this film to make the narrative more vivid. Many students will want to watch the entire video, so inform them of legal viewing options.

**Procedure**

One way of doing this activity is through the following nine steps:

1. **Introduce the film**

   This film could be introduced in many ways. I prefer to introduce it through a short mini-listening task, as in this introduction:

   People study abroad for various reasons. Today we’re going to examine a film about an Indian housewife who went to New York to help with a niece’s wedding. The English title of this film is *English Vinglish* and it came out in 2012. The word “Vinglish” usually means “Vietnamese style English” just as “Japlish” sometimes refers to “Japanese style English.” Both of these expressions are derogatory - that means impolite or insulting. In the context of this film, the word “Vinglish” means “non-standard English.” People who speak non-standard English, or those who do not speak English well are sometimes looked down upon. This film is the story of one such person, and what she does to change that.

   First of all, the main character in this film is named Shashi, and she is portrayed by a famous Indian actress. Her husband is fluent in English and her daughter also speaks English well. In fact, apart from her grandmother and young son, Shashi is the only person in her family who isn’t fluent in English. In India, English is often considered a social status marker - a sign of being well educated or upper class. So Shashi has an inferiority complex about her English. In other words, she feels that she is stupid because she cannot speak much English. People often disparage Shashi for her poor English. That is to say, they speak badly about her, laugh at her, or imply she is not smart.

   Shashi’s sister is in New York, and Shashi decides to go there to help out with a family wedding. Indian weddings are often huge and Shashi has a special talent for making sweets, which will be useful for the wedding. Shortly we will see the first video clip about her experience at a deli in New York – a place where people buy food and beverages.

   It may be good to pre-teach some vocabulary items that are likely unfamiliar to some. Here are some core vocabulary items that might facilitate the understanding of this clip:

   * Vinglish, Japlish * derogatory * status marker * inferiority complex * disparage * deli * imply

   If you are working in a multilingual setting, pointing out how this film’s titles in various languages differ could be interesting:

   * * English Title: English Vinglish
   * German Title: Englisch für Anfänger (lit. “English for Beginners”)
   * Japanese Title: マダム・イン・ニューヨーク (lit. “Madam in New York”)
(2) Warm Up

Confirm that students understood the introduction and core vocabulary. Also, before viewing the first video clip, I recommend that participants discuss these warm up questions in pairs or small groups:

1. How are people who don’t speak much Japanese often treated inside Japan?
2. How are Japanese who cannot speak English well sometimes treated in English-speaking countries?
3. Have you ever had an inferiority complex about your English? (If so, how did you overcome it?)
4. Have you ever disparaged (spoken ill of) anyone because of the way they spoke?
5. What is the best way to deal with someone if they disparage you because of your accent, grammar, or vocabulary?

Now we are going to see the main character of this movie, Shashi, enter a deli (a shop that is somewhat similar to a cafeteria) in New York City.

(3) First Video Clip

Have students view the clip entitled *Sridevi places her million dollar order*. This clip is 4 minutes and 32 seconds long and takes place near the beginning of this 113-minute film. After viewing the clip, I recommend discussing these questions:

1. What were the various customers inside this shop doing? And does that differ from what customers inside Japanese shops generally do?
2. How did Shashi respond to the deli clerk’s first question?
3. How do you think that Shashi should have responded to that inquiry?
4. What was the attitude of the deli clerk behind the counter toward Shashi?
5. Why did Shashi rush out of this deli?
6. After Shashi left the deli, she began to cry. Why?
7. At the end of this clip, a French man helped Shashi. What did he do - and why?

At this point, it might be good to talk about cultural shock and linguistic breakdowns. Depending on student responses and the time available, this could also be a good chance to mention ways of dealing with linguistic misunderstandings, as outlined in Appendix A.

If you plan to do this activity in several short 30-minute increments, an apt way to conclude today’s session would be to ask participants to write a letter of advice for Shashi in a “Dear Abby” format. You could encourage them to specify two or three things that Shashi could do to make her overseas experiences overseas more productive. If, however, you prefer doing this activity in one extended session, proceed directly to the next step.

(4) Second Video Clip

I recommend starting off by providing a synopsis of what has happened so far in this movie. Here is a short summary in sheltered English:

So we are learning about the experiences of an Indian woman in New York. Some of those experiences might be similar to what some of you have had - or will have - when traveling overseas. The main character of this film, Shashi, is in New York to help with a family wedding. She had a humiliating experience at a deli there because she could not communicate clearly in English. In other words, she felt embarrassed because her English was not understood. The clerk at that deli was impatient with her, and Shashi became very upset. She split her coffee, then ran out of the shop. Shashi started crying soon after that, but a kind man from France cheered her up and gave her some coffee. Let’s see what Shashi decides to do now to overcome her linguistic handicap and make better use of her time in New York. Will she withdraw into a shell by only speaking with others who speak Hindi, her mother tongue? Or will she confront her linguistic handicap and try to improve her English? Let’s see!
Depending on the audience, you might want to pre-teach these core vocabulary terms:

- humiliating
- cheer up
- linguistic handicap
- respond
- enroll
- prompt (somebody) to + [verb]

The second video clip, *Shashi Enquires About English Tutions* [sic], is under two minutes in length. After playing the entire clip, have students explore these questions:

1. Why did Shashi telephone the New York Language Center?
2. How did the woman answering the phone at that language school respond?
3. In what ways was this phone call a success?
4. How do you think Shashi's phone call could have been smoother?
5. What prompted Shashi to enroll in the New York Language Center?
6. What prompted you to enroll in this class?

Depending on the class context and time available, you could have students role model the process of making telephone appointments in pairs. Many Japanese students need more pragmatic practice politely asking others to adjust their speed and content. Also, some Japanese need to hone their telephone skills. In this video clip, Shashi ended her phone call rather abruptly without any pragmatic close. If many students seem to need help in this area, this video clip offers a teachable moment.

(5) **Third Video Clip**

In the third video clip, *Sridevi attends* [sic] *her* *English* [sic] *speaking classes*, four students at the New York Language Center introduce themselves. Play this clip once and have those in class fill in the information gap below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Why Learning English?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salman Khan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shashi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before playing this 4-minute and 36-second video clip a second time, it might be good to confirm the understanding of these core vocabulary terms:

- innuendo(s)
- queen [slang]
- idiom: out of the closet
- LGBT
- reframe
- suspect

At this point, play the video clip in segments, pausing the clip at each bracketed time frame following the discussion questions below.

1. [0:46] Do you feel Eva's self-introduction was successful? Why or Why not?
2. [1:00] Why did people laugh when Salman Khan, the man from Lahore, implied he was a “queen”?
3. [1:46] What sort of innuendos about gender stereotypes did you notice in this film clip?
4. [1:46] In your view, did David (the teacher) and Salman Khan (the man from Pakistan) differ in their attitudes towards LGBT folks?
5. [2:21] How does Laurent describe his English? How would you describe your English?
6. [3:48] How did the teacher help Shashi reframe her identity (see herself in another way)?
7. [3:59] Why do you suspect (think) Laurent was waiting for Shashi after class?
8. [4:18] How did Shashi feel after her class just finished?

Depending on the classroom goals and time available, this video clip can serve as a springboard for a discussion of sexual identities, homophobia, and notions of normalcy. If you are using this clip as part of a post-return study abroad session, it might be interesting to ask participants how taboo topics varied in their host countries and in Japan. However, not all Japanese will feel comfortable...
discussing such topics. That in itself can be a good chance to consider which topics should remain private (‘in the closet’) and which should become public (‘out of the closet’). Point out that the answers to such issues are not constant across cultures: what is considered a valid conversation topic in one culture might be regarded as taboo or offensive in another.

If you plan to do this activity in several short increments, a good way to conclude today’s session would be to ask participants to contrast some taboo topics in Japanese society with any culture of their choice. This might be a culture that they have recently visited while studying abroad - or perhaps a place they are planning to visit. If you have decided to do this activity in a single extended session, however, proceed directly to the next step.

(6) Fourth Video Clip

Start off with a brief synopsis of what has happened in the film so far. Here is one possible summary:

We are roughly halfway through the film English Vinglish. Shashi has been attending a four-week English language course at a school in New York City for two weeks. Her husband and children are still in India, but they will be coming to New York to attend a huge family wedding in about ten days. By this time, the students in David’s English class have come to know that their teacher is gay. Some of his students accept that, but others struggle and believe it is somehow scandalous (shocking). Because of cultural conditioning – the ways they were taught to think while growing up – not all of them they can accept LGBT persons. Today we are going to see a short video clip that highlights some cross-cultural taboos. We will reflect on what is proscribed (not permitted) in Japanese society, and how this sometimes differs from what is considered taboo (forbidden) in other societies.

Before playing the video clip, it might be good to confirm these core vocabulary items:
* gossip  * taboo  * scandalous  * ridicule  * have an affair  * confession  * be outcast  * sexual orientation

Play the clip Shashi finishes the task in segments, pausing at each bracketed time frame to discuss each of these questions:

1. [0:56] At the start of this video clip, students were gossiping about their teacher’s sexual orientation. How did various students respond when learning David was openly gay?
2. [2:08] The Indian software engineer Ramamurthy is often ridiculed by his colleagues. He mentioned that his coworkers considered him “an idiot.” Why?
3. [2:58] How does Salman Khan, the taxi driver, describe his English class? How would you describe most of your English classes? Are English classes in Japan and overseas very different? (If so, why?)
4. [4:04] Udumbke is a quiet student from Africa. What confession does he make to his classmates?
5. [5:05] The French cook Laurent said something that shocked most students in this class. Why?
6. [5:35] Shashi is reluctant to accept Laurent’s feelings and several students felt Laurent’s behavior was immoral and inexcusable (unacceptable). Although Shashi’s marriage is not happy, she does love her children and wants to avoid becoming a social outcast – rejected by her community. What would you do if you were in Shashi’s situation?

This video clip can set the stage for a discussion of ethno-relativism and ways that we often stigmatize or peripheralize others we disagree with. Since many students will be unfamiliar with those concepts, introduce them briefly to the class, contrasting ethno-relativism with ethnocentrism. Chances are, students will have varied views on this topic. Quite likely, this classroom activity should be framed as an introductory discussion. Encourage people to share their views, but also alert to the possibility some students might try to dogmatically co-opt others. Although classroom discussion of this issue is unlikely to dramatically change anyone’s opinion at first, perhaps it can facilitate the exploration of issues that are often glossed over in classes in Japan.

If time allows, discuss the process of stigmatization – socially outcasting others because they possess characteristics that are considered undesirable. This can occur as a result of language, race, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation. Mention concrete examples of stigmatization in Japanese history and some current groups that are being stigmatized by various factions in Japan. Stigmatization and peripheralization involve complex questions and overseas sojourners sometimes
confront them in messy ways. Appendix B provides a five sample vignettes and possible ways for dealing with such problems.

If you are doing this activity in short 30-minute increments, one way to conclude today’s session would be to ask participants to write about any moral quandary: any situation in which their values differed from others around them, then how they deal with that. Chances are, those who have studied abroad over a month have experienced such dilemmas. However, even those who haven’t probably have experienced a values clash at some point in their lives.

(7) Video Clip #5

Before showing the next video clip, it might be good to summarize the film so far. Here is a brief synopsis:

Now Shashi is in in the third week of her four-week English class at the New York Language Center. She is gaining confidence in her English and becoming friends with the students in her class. One student, a man from France named Laurent, has been coming on to her. In other words, he is infatuated with her. More casually, we can say he is “crazy about” her. However, in Shashi’s culture it is taboo for married people to have close relations with persons of the opposite sex outside of their families. If Shashi spends too much time with Laurent, she will be stigmatized and outcast. In other words, it would amount to a major scandal and her reputation would be ruined (damaged). Laurent seems unaware of this: in his culture, many people believe that marriage is old-fashioned, and emotional candor (frank expression) is valued. In today’s video clip, please notice how Shashi and Laurent interact (behave with each other). To what extent are their feelings mutual (two-way)? To what extent is Laurent likely deluded (fantasizing)? How does our own cultural conditioning (programming) likely influence the ways that we perceive things?

These core vocabulary items should probably be reviewed before watching the video clip:

* come on to  be infatuated with  be deluded
* stigmatize(d)  outcast  convention(s)
* be deluded  sexual harassment  sensitive
* confession  liberated  immoral

Next, play the video clip *Laurent & Shashi get too close*, pausing at each bracketed time frame to discuss the questions below.

1. [0:17] Why did the software engineer Ramamurthy get so emotional about the food that Shashi made for him? Have you ever felt very emotional about the food from your hometown?
2. [1:08] How did the students respond when the teacher announced a class examination? How do you usually respond when your teachers tell you about an upcoming exam?
3. [1:18] Shashi was upset when hearing about the exam because she has promised to attend a wedding on the exam date. What do you think Shashi should do?
4. [3:39] Laurent does something that makes Shashi feel uncomfortable in this clip. What was it? In your view, is Laurent a playboy or a fool?
5. [3:39] In some societies, Laurent’s behavior would be described as “sexual harassment” and immoral. What is your view?
6. [3:39] What are some appropriate ways of avoiding sexual harassment when traveling overseas? What should you say to someone if someone was infatuated with you, but you felt no interest in them?

If you wish to add a reading/writing component to this lesson, have students read and discuss the comments on this video clip’s YouTube website. Ask students which comments they agree with and which they disagree with. Since many Japanese are reticent to express personal feelings about sensitive topics, this might be a good exercise to have them comment on complex issues that involve strong emotions and societal norms.

Another option would be to ask students to provide advice for Laurent and Shashi: two people who have been culturally conditioned in vastly different ways. Many overseas travelers are likely to confront perplexing questions about human relationships, and often their values will contrast with the norms of their target location. This video clip can offer a good chance to reflect on how to deal with cultural clashes that can arise in such scenarios.

(8) Video Clip #6

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An interactive way of doing this lesson would be to have students summarize what has happened in the film so far. If students have already watched this video outside of class and are fairly proficient at English, this can be done through a round robin technique in which each student makes one sentence about the film in a chronological fashion. An opening sentence might go like this: *This is a story about an Indian woman named Shashi who travels to New York to help out with a family wedding.* A next sentence that could naturally follow might be something like this: *At first she felt lost and she was not even able to successfully order a cup of coffee at a deli.* Encourage students to continue the narrative in a round robin fashion, adding corrections and/or hints as necessary.

If students have not watched this video outside of class, then perhaps a review of the movie in sentence completion format would be more appropriate. In this approach, the instructor begins a sentence about the film and then invites participants to complete it as they deem appropriate. In most cases, each sentence-head can have many possible endings. Here is one possible sentence-completion review of this movie, with possible endings in italics:

1. We have been watching some video clips about one Indian woman's experience in New York.
2. The main character of this movie is a housewife named Shashi who is not proficient at English.
3. Many people look down on Shashi because her English is not so good.
5. One of the biggest challenges about living in New York for Shashi is understanding the language.
6. Shashi decides to enroll in an English language school in New York to improve her English skills.
7. The students in that class come from diverse parts of the world and have differing occupations.
8. The class teacher, David, is openly gay and this is hard for some students to accept.
9. Shashi encourages other students to be tolerant and to avoid becoming too judgmental.
10. One student in the class, Laurent, feels very attracted to Shashi and this makes her uncomfortable.
11. To graduate from the class, each student has to deliver a five-minute speech in English.
12. Shashi will give her final speech at a wedding and she invites all of her classmates to attend.

In many Asian EFL classes, spontaneous extemporization is atypical: most students are told to rely on their books or a series of printed exercises (Furuyama, 2008). However, in real-time pragmatic interactions extemporizing is often called for, so this type of activity might have value.

If a less linguistically demanding review activity is called for, one option would be to give each student just one sentence about the film in scrambled order, then invite the entire class to figure the overall sequence. The scrambled sentences should contain enough explicit discourse markers to provide hints about how to sequence the narrative. If you wish, this activity can also help students understand discourse markers better — a topic which is seldom covered in Japanese EFL classes since the focus is generally on sentence-level grammar (Hirose, 1998, p. 51). Here is one possible summary of the film. (The sentences are scrambled, but correct sequence is in Devanagari numerals. After students have had some time to work on the sentences, you can mention how the numbers 0 – 9 are represented in Devangari to help them unravel this.)

And now we shall hear Shashi's final wedding speech!

Following this, Shashi decided to enroll in an English school to become more adept at English.

For example, she tried to order some food at a deli, but the clerk became irate (impatient) with her.

One student in the class named Laurant fell in love with Shashi, but she didn't want to enter a relation with him because she was married and that would violate a major social taboo in India.

Shashi's husband is a wealthy Indian business executive and quite proud of his English.

Shashi decided to invite all the English class members to the wedding and to give her final speech there.

Shashi got flustered (upset), spilled some coffee on some customers, and then rushed out of that deli.

Shashi made friends with the students in that class, gradually gaining more confidence in her English.

Shashi receives an invitation to travel to New York to help out with her niece's wedding.

She accepts that invitation, but feels out-of-place in New York City because of her English is so limited.

She is an Indian housewife who sells ladoos (a type of Indian sweet) as a part-time job.

The final English class assignment was to give a 5-minute speech in English.
These things made some students uncomfortable, but all of the class members helped each other.

The teacher in Shashi's class, David, was candid (open) about his gay sexual identity.

This gave one student in the class, Udumbke, the courage to announce that he was also gay.

This is the story of an Indian woman named Shashi who visits the USA to help with a family wedding.

Unfortunately, Shashi's family wedding was scheduled at the same time as her final class.

As you might notice, more than one sequence is possible. Not insisting on only one “correct” answer is itself an apt metaphor cultural relativism. Moreover, some students will no doubt guess that what many of the Devangari numerals represent: *x* is quite similar to “*2*” and the Arabic version of the Devangari script is easily downloadable from many Internet sites. Guessing is fine, but if some students seem obsessed about the numbers rather than the content, gently encourage them to focus on the meaning of each sentence. In some classes, you might even ask students to paraphrase each sentence they receive. Japanese EFL students are generally not adept at paraphrasing (Oda & Yamamoto, 2007), and this review activity can provide such practice.

Before showing the video clip *English Vinglish Climax Speech*, it would probably be good to confirm that these vocabulary items are clear:

* adept * assert * stand up to * get flustered * metaphor(s)  
* judgmental * put (somebody) down * candid * underscore * idealize/idealise

Next, play this video clip, pausing at the bracketed time frames to discuss the questions below:

1. [0:32] How did Shashi stand up to her husband in this video clip and assert herself?
   - When do you switch from English into Hindi? This is known as “code-switching”.
   - When is it appropriate?

2. [0:54] At first Shashi briefly switched from English into Hindi. This is known as “code-switching”.
   - What metaphors did Shashi use to describe marriage? What metaphors would you use?


4. [3:51] What did Shashi underscore during her wedding speech?

5. [3:51] In your view, how often is equality actually achieved in marriage?

6. [3:51] To what extent do you feel Shashi has idealized marriage? Do people in Japan often do that?

7. [4:43] How did the audience respond to Shashi’s speech? What about her English teacher?

   **Note:** Be sure to stop this video clip at the 4:43 time frame. The remainder of this clip is not in English.

(9) Conclusion and Feedback

I recommend concluding this lesson by discussing the notion of *critical incidents* – events that can change life trajectories (Newfields, 2011). Outline how Shashi’s experience in a New York deli could be interpreted as a critical incident that prompted her to enroll in an English school, and gradually to improve her English. Not all critical incidents result in positive outcomes. Some in fact result in withdrawal or negative stereotyping (Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, & Klute, 2012).

Listed below are some possible final discussion questions for this film. Although teachers will likely wish to modify some of the questions on this list, these inquiries might be a useful starting point:

1. In what ways did the main character of this film change during her study abroad experience?
2. *For pre-departure classes:* How do you hope to change as a result of your study abroad experience?  
   *For post-return classes:* How do you feel you have changed since starting your study abroad?
3. In what ways did Shashi embrace traditional cultural norms? In what ways did she challenge them?
4. If you met a person like Laurent, how would you respond?
5. Notions of what a “good teacher” sometimes vary from culture to culture.
   - In your view, was David a good teacher? (Specify how so or how not.)
6. Did you learn from this film or the discussion activities? What questions remain unanswered?

If you want to foster reading/writing skills, it might be good to ask students to write a critique of this film. You could also extend this activity further by asking students to compare this film with any other study abroad-themed film. Many students will expect a specific word length for this assignment. The suggested word length should vary from depending on the proficiency level of each class.
At this point, some teachers may want to include a formal assessment of this activity, while others might prefer to garner informal impressions. Since this film could be used in so many different teaching contexts and for a wide variety of goals, each teacher should reflect on what sort of assessment would be most appropriate for their needs.

**Conclusion**

This activity has described one way of using video clips from *English – Vinglish* to forefront issues pertaining to peripherization, identity, and divergent cultural norms that persons studying abroad for extended time frames are likely to experience. This famous Bollywood film can be a useful platform to critically examine a wide range of issues that overseas sojourners frequently confront. At the same time, this film involves a certain amount of idealization and it might actually reinforce some myths about study abroad. If this film is being used as part of a post-return program, it would be a good chance to reflect on how the experiences of participants overseas differed from this Bollywood drama. Can real life conflicts be resolved as easily as in a comedy drama?

Teachers working at conservative religious institutions and/or with very orthodox views might not feel comfortable with the themes concerning gender politics, linguistic hegemony, and race raised in this film. However, examining the narrative of one woman’s struggle for dignity, equality, and better mastery of her environment may inspire participants to consider their own narratives and “rescript” some elements of their lives.

**Acknowledgement**

Many thanks for Marcus Grandon and Russell Hubert for their kind feedback on this article.

**Works Cited**


Appendix A: Handout #1 – A Six-Step Procedure of Dealing with Some Linguacultural Misunderstandings

Misunderstandings based on differences in language and culture have many possible reasons, and vary widely in intensity (degree). You may prefer to gloss over (ignore) relatively minor ones, but significant and/or persistent (ongoing) misunderstandings might need to be discussed, and hopefully resolved.

The following six-step procedure is based on guidelines published by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (2008) and also influenced by Toomey and Chung (2011). Although these guidelines will not function well for all overseas scenarios, they might be something to add to your “communication toolbox” when studying abroad.

Step 1: Keep your cool — try not to respond emotionally.

It is not uncommon to feel an instinctive urge to lash out (get angry) at blunders (mistakes) or perceived transgressions (wrong-doings), but this is seldom productive. Instead, detach yourself for a moment and try to observe what is going on around you. How are other people reacting? What can you learn from their body language? Even if others are using a language you are not fully familiar with, if you observe the environment closely you should be able to pick up on many non-verbal cues.

Step 2: Tell the instigator promptly, clearly and calmly that you find their actions upsetting or that there is a problem.

Sometimes a person who is upsetting you (or who has seriously misunderstood your intentions) does not even realize a problem exists - they might believe that the situation is perfectly "normal." At this stage your goal should be to inform such a person that indeed there is a problem. However, try to focus on the problematic behavior rather than the actual person. You might feel tempted to ridicule or attack a person who has made you uncomfortable. However, it is wiser to concentrate on the actual behavior, rather than the individual. If your response is directed to the person, chances are they will merely become defensive, and tensions will escalate (increase).

Step 3: If the person apologizes, accept it.

Recognize that nearly everyone makes mistakes, misunderstands important cues, or does foolish things from time to time. If that person makes an apology, thank them for doing so. Also, be candid with yourself and explore whether or not you might have contributed to the current misunderstanding. In some cases, the answer will be clearly "no." In other cases, however, it is possible that both parties failed to recognize important points and mutual apologies might be called for.
Step 4: *If the person doesn't apologize, let it go once.*

After conflicts or misunderstandings occur, a common strategy is simply to avoid that person – or persons. If genuine reconciliation does not seem realistic, you may prefer to steer clear of any further conflict by simply keeping away from the individual(s) involved.

Step 5: *If the offensive behavior happens again, action needs to be taken.*

If a problem is persistent, consult with a teacher or school counselor about what should be done. The important thing at this stage is to get expert advice. What often prevents some people from taking concrete steps towards resolution are feelings of shame or guilt. Disempowered populations - women, ethnic minorities, people lacking fluency in a target language - are particularly vulnerable and might be tempted to avoid taking pro-active steps towards resolving a problem.

Step 6: *The action taken will depend on the parties involved - and on local contexts.*

The type of specific action that should be taken in a conflict will vary widely from situation to situation. Outcomes will also differ from culture to culture. Because study abroad participants are often regarded as transients (temporary tourists) by local authorities, they are often ignored. However, as Gladwell (2000) points out, periodically “tipping points” do occur and actions that were previously viewed as “acceptable” can later be seen as problematic – vice versa. In other words, as social contexts change so can our notions of what is appropriate. Many of the forms of disempowerment and stigmatization we saw in this film persist because the people who doing it are in positions of power and think it is unproblematic and that they can get away with it. *English Vinglish* illustrates how one person can change the world around her.

References


**Appendix B: Handout #2 – Five Study Abroad Scenarios**

In Handout #1 a six-step procedure for resolving some types of conflict was outlined. Now let us consider how to apply those principles in five actual scenarios that sometimes occur during study abroad. First, read through each scenario in small groups to make sure you understand each context clearly. Then, discuss what you would actually do with your group members.

**Scenario #1 - A Christian Homestay Dilemma**

Hayate’s family is devoutly Buddhist and he grew up on a mainly vegetarian diet. A few times he has eaten meat, but never really liked it. Now he is doing a homestay with a born again Christian family in Australia. They are encouraging him to attend church with them on Sunday and feel it is a good way to “understand Western culture more deeply.” Now and then, they have also made a few disparaging (negative) remarks about Buddhism, suggesting that, “true salvation is only through Jesus.” Most of the time, however, they are pleasant and Hayate likes his host family in many respects. At times Hayate feels they are trying to convert him (make him a Christian, too). Their anti-Buddhist talk and repeated requests to attend church are starting to grate on (annoy) him. And although they do provide non-meat dishes for Hayate, the host mother lightly dismisses Hayate’s vegetarian diet as nothing but a “foolish fad” that he will “eventually outgrow.” If you were in Hayate’s situation, what would you do?

**Scenario #2 - Too Much Sweet-Talk?**
Yuuna is interested in flamenco dancing and eventually hopes to open a dance studio in Japan. Now she is studying dance and Spanish in Seville, Spain. Anyway, Yuuna is enjoying most aspects of her overseas experience. One thing that makes her flustered (upset), however, is that some men come on to her too directly. On the street, she often hears men whistle at her. In particular, the man in an apartment near hers often says things like, “Ah, señorita - how gorgeous you look!” or “What an angel you are! I wish that I could kiss you!” At first she ignored such piropos*. Yuuna already has a fiancé in Japan and is not romantically interested in any Spanish men. What do she should do?

*There is no exact word for this in Japanese and even the English translation - “flirtatious compliment” – does not convey the Spanish nuance precisely.

**Scenario #3 - Up in Smoke?**

Kenshin is doing a homestay in Colorado, a place where marijuana is now legal for adults over age 21. He is enjoying his homestay experience, but surprised by the heavy smoking, beer drinking, and recreational drug use that happens on some weekends. Because English is not his native language, Kenshin has to work extra hard to keep up with her studies. He is receiving a study abroad scholarship and wants a high grade point average. His American friends have invited him to “get smashed” (use drugs) at a rock concert that is happening this weekend. Kenshin does not want to alienate (become distant from) his friends, but he is really not into the “heavy party scene” (lots of drinking or drugs). He dislikes tobacco smoke, only drinks a beer or two on occassion, and has no interest in taking any drugs. One classmate is urging Kenshin “loosen up and party more” – and suggesting if he spends the whole weekend studying he will become “a boring wimp” (uninteresting person). What would you do if you were Kenshin?

**Scenario #4 - A Gender Bender**

Kei is experiencing a conflict between her private self and her public self. Privately, she describes herself in Japanese as 「X ジェンダー」, which is sometimes translated in English as “third gender.” Publicly, however, she pretends to be an “ordinary” Japanese college student. Only a few close friends know about her attraction to both men and women, and she prefers to remain “in the closet” (silent) about her sexual identity because soon she will start job hunting and Kei does not want to lessen her job prospects in any way. Now she is studying in Shanghai and most of the time she enjoys China. To improve her Chinese, recently she watched an award-winning movie called Cìqìng「刺青」(2007) with her roommates. Translated as “Spider Lilies”, this 94-minute film made in Taiwan depicts a love affair between two women. After watching the movie, one of Kei’s roommates commented how “disgusting” it was to see the women physically attracted to each other. The other roommate agreed, addint that she, “wanted to vomit” (throw up) when those two women kissed. Kei has been silent so far. What do you think she should say?

**Scenario #5 - Sex, Lies, and Study Abroad**

Ryuu is a third-year Japanese university student studying at a university in Ireland. By the middle of his first semester, he fell in love with a student from Brazil named Dorita who was at the same university. At first everything went well and they both used English to communicate with each other. Ryuu could express many of his emotions with Dorita, but at times he felt that she did not really understand him. Dorita considered Ryuu a nice guy, but a bit too stubborn, aloof (distant), and stiff (formal). She came to see him as a “partner for now” rather than a “serious marriage possibility.” Dorita also had a secret: she had a common STD known as Type 2 herpes. About 10% of people in Western Europe have this*, and often the symptoms (signs) are mild – but reactions can vary widely. Dorita chose not to tell Ryuu about her disease because she was afraid of being rejected. Towards the end their study abroad, this couple made love. Shortly after that, Ryuu noticed an itchy sensation in his groins (below the belt). After visiting the campus clinic, Ryuu was told that he had herpes: a disease without any cure, but usually with mild symptoms. What should Ryuu say to Dorita? What should Dorita have done differently? What do you think should Ryuu do from now on?

あなたの留学の結末
新田博

留学したい、絶対したい！
本場のファッション、カッコいい！

海外見るなら、今しかない
今、行かないと、チャンスはない！

見知らぬ異国は
冒険とロマンス、楽しそうにいっぱい

輝く太陽、灼けつく砂浜、暖かな海
私の海の向こうに連れてって

遊んで卒業単位がもらえるなんて、
最高！
私の海の向こうに連れてって

国際派に憧れるうー
私は1カ国語しか話せない、
おバカじゃない

多くの学生がいて
それぞれに異なる
終着点が待ち受ける

さて、
あなたの留学は
どんな結末か
よく考えてみてね

Your Study Abroad Outcomes
by Hirou Nitta

I want to study abroad
the shopping is great

I want to venture overseas
later may be too late

I want to head to foreign lands
for adventure, romance, and fun

Take me across the ocean
to tropical beaches
warm waters, and sun

Help me get overseas:
a holiday with academic credit
sounds cool

I yearn to be “international” -
not jes’ a monolingual fool

So many different students
So many different goals

Reflecting on this
ask yourself
when you study abroad
what outcomes will your aspire for?
what will be your roles?

(Tr.: N. Yoshida)
海外留学への展望：『留学ジャーナル』編集長

毛利章子氏へのインタビュー

Tim Newfields

ホテル・飲食業界専門誌、朝日新聞社（現朝日新聞出版）での雑誌編集、PR会社の広報職を経て、2002年『留学ジャーナル』に入社。2009年より『留学ジャーナル』編集長。このインタビューは、2016年5月、電子メールによって行われた。

『留学ジャーナル』出版の歴史と背景を簡単に説明していただけますか？

1983年に『留学ジャーナル』は創刊されました。会社としての創業は1971年で、当時の社名は㈱ICS国際文化交流センター。ボランティアで留学相談をしていた団体が母体となっています。留学希望者の支援をする中、留学という言葉や意識、そしてどのようなものを広めるため、雑誌『留学ジャーナル』は作られました。最初の版は中として、サイズもひと回り小さいものでした。社員が雑誌を抱えて、書店をまわって置いてもらうなどの苦労もありました。その頃、1ドルは300円以上。留学は高額なもので、大学・大学院院留査が主流でした。創刊号では、当時、初めて語学留学を紹介し、アメリカとイギリスの語学学校・機関168校を掲載しました。日本の語学留学の普及には、当社がひと役買っているのではないかと、自負しています。

出版以来、『留学ジャーナル』がターゲットとする読者層は、どのように変化しましたか？

実は長年、留学ジャーナルのメンターゲットは変わっていません。18歳～24歳がメインの読者です。その理由としては、大学生と社会人3年未満くらいの方が最も留学をされるからです。大学生は長期間休みが取れやすく、留学に適した時間が最もある時期といっても過言ではありません。社会人は3年くらい働くと、次のステップを見据え、会社を辞めて留学する方が多くなります。また、近年留学する層の年齢帯が広がりはじめ、高校生、そしてシニア層も増加しつつあります。いったい方に応えられる企画も、号によっては掲載しています。

多くの『留学ジャーナル』読者に共通する留学についての誤解は何かですか？

誤解、というより、よくあるのが留学への思い込みです。たとえば、留学でどこがもっとも人と国の何か」とよく聞かれますが、語学留学なのか、大学留学なのかによって、傾向はまったく異なります。しかし、おそらく質問した方は一つのイマネのみで質問されているのでしょうか。留学にはさまざまなスタイルがあり、人気の国の傾向も、醸造酒もそれぞれ違います。それがまず知ってもらいたいことのひとつです。

また1、2週間からでも留学できることを存在しない方もいらっしゃいます。短期間でフレキシブルに留学できることがわかると、選択肢がぐっと増えると思います。

一部の国で区別されている「留学」と「海外インターンシップ」「海外ボランティア」の区別やその方法は、重要な情報ですか。「留学ジャーナル」では、これらに関する情報も提供されていますか？

「海外インターンシップ」と「海外ボランティア」は区別しています。基本的には、企業で無償で働き、その体験を将来の就職に生かそうとするのが「海外インターンシップ」です。仕事で役に立た
日本人の留学傾向で気づくことは何ですか？毛利さんのご意見をお聞かせください。

留学の歴史の中で、最も大きな転換期は、1985 年のブラジル合意です。NY のブラジルホテルで行われた G5 で、ドル安に向けての合意が発表されました。翌日から円相場が急騰し、その結果、留学もぐっと身近になったのです。

その後しばらく、留学層の増加傾向が続きます。1991 年のパブリックの終焉までは右肩上がりで学層層が増え、「どこへ行っても日本人がいる」と言われました。この時代には「OL 留学」も大流行。会社を辞めずに休みを利用していく 1～2 週間の「ブチ留学」で、英語＋フラワーアレンジメントなど、本場のカルチャーを学んだりする「英語プラス α」に多くの方が参加しました。また、思い切って会社を辞めて、人生を変えることを希望する方もたくさんいました。海外生活をしてみたい、という憧れだけで留学する人も多く、ワーキングホリデーに行くのも気軽に帰国後の就職の心配がなかったことも、後押しされていたと思います。

パブリック終焉後も、しばらく留学層は増え続けましたが、学生の資金源である親の確保が厳しくなりはじめ、増加率は少しずつ鈍り始めました。文部科学省の統計でも日本の留学生数は 2004 年を最高値に下がり始めます。社会人や海外まで行くモチベーションを持つ人が少なくなりました。しかし、そんな中で逆に留学しようと志す人は、強い意志を持ち、きっぱりと前を向いて留学したい、と言葉切りていたのも印象に残ります。

日本経済の低迷やドル高といった近直 10 年の変化はどうですか？

「気分」だけで留学する人は徐々に少なくなってしまい締め。特に 2008 年のリーマンショック以降は、さらにガクンと減少します。しかし、今度は世界が変わり始めました。社会は次第にグローバル化し、企業も多国籍化、国内企業の売上比率も海外が多くを占めるようになってきました。今はどのような仕事をしていても、外国語ができたほうが多くのチャンスが広がります。海外の人と交渉できる人材を、企業が必要としてきました。そういった環境の変化を受け、国も体制を整え、文部科学省は 2020 年に向けた留学生倍増計画「トピタテ！留学 Japan」を打ち出します。そして、ついに日本の留学生数は 2014 年に底を打ち、現在は上昇に向かっている始まっています。

そんな中、近年の動向としてあげられるのは、大学在学中の認定・休学留学をする層の増加です。そして低年齢層を中心とした留学年齢層の広がりです。認定留学、ご存じかもしれませんが、各大学が提携する大学への留学です。単位が認定されるため、卒業は遅れることはありません。休学留学は、日本の大学を休学し、自分の望む学校に留学します。こちらは、卒業が遅れるのが通常ですが、語学学校を通じてインターナーシップをしたり、大学のエクステンションでビジネスを学ぶなど、さまざまなことが体験できます。どちらも半年から 1 年近く行く方が多数を占めます。
低年齢層とは、高校生の留学の広がりです。高校生の場合は、距離を基準にした夏休みを利用してサマースクールに行ったり、高校生向けの語学学校に通うのが定着してきている方法です。交流を主眼としており、語学学習＋アクティビティもふんだんにプログラムに盛り込まれています。もちろん、より多くの学びを求めて海外の高校に留学する層もありますし、卒業を目指す人もいます。高校生の中には驚くほどの志が高く、自分が親を誇っていると断言する子もたくさんいます。
また子育てがひと段落し、憧れだった留学の夢を叶えるシニア層も、少しずつですが増加してきました。

『留学ジャーナル』以外の貴社の出版物についても、その特性を教えていただけますか？

『留学白書』は、毎年春に発表する、帰国留学ジャーナルによる留学生の動向調査です。前身として1988年より『留学Report』というものがあり、『留学白書』という名前に変更されたのは1991年です。当社が直接アンケートをとった結果を中心とし、他各国における留学生の動向調査もまとめています。渡航先、留学した理由、不安……など、ベーシックに調査するものに加え、その年ならではの質問項目を加えることもあります。数値で留学動向を読み解けるので、興味のある方には面白いのではないでしょうか。たとえば、最初アメリカを考えていても、短期留学でも学生ビザの取得しなければならないのならカナダに変更する、という事は毎年一定数でています。またここ最近では、社会的環境の変化により、昔よりも留学を将来に生かしたいと考える真剣層が増えています。
（※日本人はアメリカで1週間に18時間以上の授業を履修する場合、たとえ1週間の留学でも学生ビザを取得することが必要となる）

貴社の『留学ジャーナル』は、他社の留学関係の出版物とどんな点で編集を異にしていらっしゃいますか？

近年、日本で留学に関する出版物は、単行本か、1〜2年に1度発行するムックがほとんどです。『留学ジャーナル』には本誌と別冊がありますが、本誌に限っていれば、3ヶ月ごとに発行する定期刊行物であることが最も大きな特徴です。
したがって多くの出版物は大きくなくなりのテーマであることが多いのですが、『留学ジャーナル』ではもっと巧みに特集テーマを決められます。「なりたい自分になる留学」「留学プランニング」「留学する国の選び方ガイド」など、その時々で留学する人の心情にできるだけ満たす内容を作ることができるのです。また雑誌である以上見た目も大切で、堅苦しい内容をいかに楽しく見せるかにも配慮しています。「留学」という真面目なイメージ以上に、我々の雑誌はカラフルで、イラストも満載です。

あなたは、留学を考えている学生にどんなアドバイスをしますか？

まずはどんなに短期でもいいので、一度は海外留学をしてみてください、ということですね。新鮮に情報が溢れ、必要な知識には事欠きません。しかし、頭で考えるのと実際に体験するのでは、感じ方がまったく異なります。
留学を考える人に、なぜそう思ったのか聞くと、留学した先で何かが変わることへの期待感、海外の方とコミュニケーションをとるようになった、などを理由にあげる方が多くいらっしゃいます。背景にある心のドラマはそれぞれだと思いますが、留学の志す方は、そのように何かを変えたいものの

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だと思います。英語が話せるようになりたい、もっと知識を増やしたい、国際性を養いたい、積極的になりたい、今の環境で慣習に疑問があるので違った場所で暮らしてみたい……。海外に行くことはあえてアウェイの状態に自分を追い込むことではありますが、最初は苦労があっても、それを乗り越えると、期待通り必ずや視野が大きく広がる体験ができるでしょう。
留学は、そのきっかけをくれると同時に、チャンスがあればそれを掴もうとする勇気もれます。いま何かを変えたいと思うなら、ぜひまたわずに世界に飛び立ってください。

最後に、多くの日本人は、留学経験を持つ芸能人に興味を持ちます。芸能人は流行の仕掛け人です。私は、トークショーのホスト役を務める黒柳徹子が1971年にニューヨーク市のメアリーTarcaiスタジオで演技を勉強した事を思い出します。海外留学経験のある有名な芸能人は、他にもいらっしゃいますか。

たくさんいらっしゃいます。どなたを挙げたいのか迷うほどですが、タレントで、留学ジャーナルの表紙にもなっていた関根麻里さんはエマーソン大学を首席で卒業しています。歌手の宇多田ヒカルは退学されましたが、飛び級でロンドン大学に入学したのは有名なエピソードです。松田翔太さんはイギリスに留学。仕事の合間に公表せずに密かに留学している方も、実は大勢いらっしゃいます。

参考文献
留学ジャーナル（2016年）【留学白書】 東京：留学ジャーナル

記事募集
求む記事内容：インタビュー、意見、授業アイデア、
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http://jalt-sa.org/guide.htm
Akiko Mohri has been editor-in-chief of the Ryugaku Journal since 2009. Prior to that, she was a magazine editor for the Asahi Shimbun (now Asahi Shimbun Publishing). With a background in editing publications for hotels and restaurants, she then served as a PR consultant, joining the Ryugaku Journal in 2002. This interview was conducted in Japanese via email in May and June 2016. It was translated by the interviewer, and that translation was checked by four bilingual individuals.

Could you briefly explain something about the historical background of the "Ryugaku Journal"?

The magazine was launched in 1983. The parent company, known as the ICS International Exchange Center (KK), was launched in 1971. Its initial focus was on study abroad consultation. We created the magazine to provide information and advice about study abroad to those interested in overseas studies. It was hard going at first, and employees had to consult with bookstores directly to persuade them to carry our publication. The first edition had a small-size binding at a time when one American dollar was worth more than three hundred yen. In that issue, we introduced 168 American and British universities and graduate schools. We feel proud of our achievements promoting foreign language study abroad programs throughout Japan.

How has your target audience changed since the publication was first launched?

In fact, our main target audience has not changed much: the bulk of our readers are in the 18-to-24 age range. They are either university students, or adults who have quit their jobs to sharpen their long-term employment prospects through overseas study. It is no exaggeration to say that the best time for study abroad is when at university, as it is relatively easy to take extended chunks of time off. However, more and more mid-career professionals are deciding to quit their jobs after a few years to hone their career skills.

As I will soon explain, in recent years we have also witnessed a broader age range among study abroad participants. Nowadays both high school students and senior citizens are becoming more interested in overseas study, and we are attempting to fulfill their aspirations.

What are some of the common misconceptions that journal readers have about study abroad?

Many people seem to have rather narrowly fixed notions about study abroad. For example, I am often asked, "What is the most popular study abroad destination?" However, answers vary widely depending upon participant goals. We need to overcome rigidly stereotypical images of what constitutes study abroad. There are many different ways of studying abroad, and patterns continually change. This is something I want more study abroad applicants to know.

Some people do not even know that one- or two-week study abroad programs even exist. Knowing about such short-term study options widens participant options.
In some countries, a distinction is often made between “study abroad,” “overseas internships,” and “volunteering abroad.” How about in Japan? Is this distinction significant in Japanese contexts? Does the Ryugaku Journal try to provide information about all sorts of overseas activities?

Volunteering overseas should be distinguished from overseas internships. Overseas internships are essentially working for free for a company to garner experience for future employment. High standards of linguistic proficiency are usually called for, and this represents a hurdle for most Japanese people. Volunteering overseas is also gratis, but humanitarian support is the main objective, and the standards for volunteer work vary widely. Such programs often have an experiential learning framework in which "hands on" participation is a primary goal. Each of these types of programs has varied objectives and outcomes. Moreover, in terms of job-hunting within Japan, they are rated somewhat differently.

Our magazine uses the word "ryūgaku" [study abroad] in a broad, generic sense that encompasses overseas studies at academic institutions, working holiday sojourns, foreign internships, as well as international volunteering. We focus on all aspects of what Japanese term "ryūgaku" and provide detailed information how various types of overseas programs differ, as well as detailed information about each type of program.

In recent decades, what trends have you noticed among Japanese going overseas?

One turning point in history was the 1985 Plaza Accord, in which the G5 finance ministers agreed to depreciate the Japanese yen and German mark against the U.S. dollar at the NY Plaza Hotel. From the next day onwards, the Japanese yen soared and for a time it became much easier for Japanese people to study abroad.

Until Japan’s asset price bubble burst in 1991, study abroad boomed and many Japanese people ventured all over the world. The so-called "OL ryūgaku" phenomenon, in which female office workers took overseas study courses, became popular. Another trend was "petit ryūgaku," in which mid-career professionals took a week or two off to "acquire culture" by learning English or flower arrangement and so on. The catch phrase "Eigo purasu arufa," literally "English + α" was evocative of this trend.

Some people also made bold, life-changing decisions to quit their jobs and study abroad. Many wanted to be able to boast that they had experienced life overseas directly, or enjoy a light-hearted working holiday abroad. With Japan's low unemployment rate, people of the time were confident of finding work upon their return to Japan.

After the burst of the bubble economy in the early 1990's, for a period of time the number of Japanese studying abroad continued to grow. According to the statistics by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry (MEXT), the number of Japanese students studying abroad peaked in 2004. However, money became tighter for most Japanese parents, who tended to fund most study abroad expenses. Mid-career professionals today tend to be more reluctant in their attitude toward study abroad. Fewer of them are deciding to go overseas. However, it is striking how some persons have a steadfast determination to study abroad, surmounting the difficulties they encounter.

How has Japan’s floundering economy and strong US dollar impacted study abroad over the past ten years?

It would seem that fewer and fewer students in Japan are in the mood to study abroad, particularly since the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy of 2008 and its ensuing financial fallout,
However, some significant trends have emerged since then. Society is becoming increasingly globalized, companies are becoming multinational, and many domestic companies are moving overseas. Moreover, much of the revenue being generated by Japanese companies is now derived from markets outside of Japan. The need for persons with multilingual and multicultural skills seems ever more acute. In response to this need, the Japanese MEXT ministry announced the “Tobitate! Study abroad JAPAN” campaign, which has the goal of doubling the number of Japanese students studying abroad by 2020.

Another trend in recent years has been for students to take an extended break from college to study overseas. We also see a greater diversity in terms of age ranges of those studying abroad: more and more young people are opting to do this.

As you are no doubt aware, to obtain academic credits for studying abroad, it is necessary to enroll in a program at an authorized partner university. The process of credit authorization does not usually involve a delay in terms of the projected graduation date if students enroll in such programs. Some students take a leave of absence from their universities in Japan to attend a school they desire. Although their graduation dates are typically delayed, they can experience a variety of things through university extension courses such as overseas business internships. In such cases, the program time span is usually from six months to one year.

Younger study abroad participants tend to be high school students. Many of them attend short-term language school programs during their summer vacations. Such programs often feature international exchanges with a focus on language learning and engaging activities. Of course, some high school students studying abroad are also aiming to obtain graduation diplomas. High school students tend to be surprisingly motivated, with parents often encouraging them to pursue studies overseas.

Also, we are gradually seeing more and more older adults who have finished their child-rearing duties and are seeking to fulfill their long-term dreams of studying abroad.

**Although most of our readers are familiar with the Ryugaku Journal, many do not know about other publications by your company. Could you describe these?**

Since 1991 we’ve published a "Study Abroad White Paper," which is an annual summary of study abroad trends in Japan based on our in-house surveys. Its roots go back to 1988 with our annual "Study Abroad Report," which became upgraded to a more extensive publication that outlines travel destinations and avowed reasons for study abroad. We also investigate various issues from year to year, such as study abroad anxieties or worries. This provides a detailed statistical profile of study abroad trends, which may interest those who are keen on study abroad.

For example many (if not most people) come to us with the United States as their first choice travel destination. However, they often end up choosing Canada as their final destination. The reason for this is because student visas are required for even short term stays in the USA, but not in Canada.

We are always analyzing new study abroad trends. One trend is that more Japanese are seeking to use their study abroad experiences to fulfill their future career aspirations.

**Could you briefly mention how the Ryugaku Journal differs from other publications in Japanese about study abroad?**

Recently in Japan books and other publications about study abroad tend to come out every year or so. Our publication is unique in that it hits the shelves regularly every three months. Many such publications tend to lump together many study abroad related themes in a broad manner, but our magazine seeks to offer a more fine-grained focus on study abroad. We
seek to address themes such as study abroad planning, choosing study abroad destinations, and fostering a transformative study abroad experience for the benefit of those thinking of venturing overseas. Moreover, since this is after all a magazine, glitz is important and we try to avoid "stiff" content and maintain a light-hearted tone. We attempt to depict study abroad in a colourful way with many illustrations rather than as a stodgy, serious affair.

**What advice would you give to students who are thinking of studying abroad?**

First, I encourage all persons to study abroad, even if for only a short period. Now lots of information about most travel abroad destinations can be downloaded from the internet, so sojourners seldom lack factual details about their target destinations. However, knowing factoids about a place and experiencing it directly are often quite different.

When reflecting on study abroad and listening to the reasons that people undertake overseas journeys, it seems as if many people are expecting to somehow change who they are, to become capable of communicating with foreigners, as well as many other goals. Study abroad involves a thirst for inner transformation, and this frequently entails a certain amount of emotional drama. A yearn to become more proficient at English, to obtain more knowledge, to cultivate "international awareness," to become more assertive, to question prior values in fresh environments are but some of the aspirations many study abroad participants carry. In the process of studying abroad people often have to confront adverse circumstances with a lot of cultural and language barriers, and overcoming these is necessary for success. However, dealing with such affairs can be a greatly broadening experience. Study abroad can give us the opportunity to engage with new vistas and the courage to do new things. If you want to engage in inner transformation, by all means travel around the world.

**Finally, many Japanese people are interested in knowing about celebrities who have studied abroad. In some ways, celebrities are trendsetters. I remember that the talk show host Tetsuko Kuroyanagi studied acting at Mary Tarcai’s studio in New York City in 1971. Can you mention any other famous Japanese celebrities whose lives have changed as a result of study abroad?**

There are so many examples that I’m unsure of whom to mention. Actress and television announcer Mari Sekine was the valedictorian of her class at Emerson College in Massachusetts. Hikaru Utada, a singer, obtained an early entry to Colombia University, but dropped out midway and actor Shota Matsuda studied in England. There are a number of others who have studied overseas privately and have been able to connect their experience to current successes in the entertainment industry.

**Works Cited**