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TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE OF PLACE-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE
INSTRUCTION**

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PLACE, IDENTITY, AND LANGUAGE LEARNING: THE TRANSFORMATIVE
ROLE OF PLACE-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

by

Daniel Scott Harper

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: English

The University of Memphis

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Dedication

To my mother, Ginny, who was the first to read to me, who quizzed me on irregular verbs on long car trips, and who would have been so proud. And to my father, Steve, whose love of music filled our home and sparked a lifelong passion in me.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my chair and advisor, Lyn Wright. Dr. Wright came to the University of Memphis in the last year of my coursework. Her guidance gave me the confidence to believe that my voice has a place in applied linguistics. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee. I would not be the ESL teacher that I am without Dr. Teresa Dalle's role in my formative teaching years. Dr. Sage Graham Lambert has been a part of my academic life since I was 18. And, Dr. Katherine Lambert-Pennington, who has been a constant inspiration. Her passion for social progress through research and writing has shown me what being an academic can be.

In addition, I would like to recognize my colleagues in IEI. My director, Lisa Goins, has given me her trust and the freedom to pursue creativity in curriculum design. This project was made possible only through her support. To, Nina Clark, thank you for understanding my ups and downs over the past year. To the IEI faculty, thank you for everything you give to our students and program. And, especially, to Stacey Trimble Smith, Jason Gordon, and Chelsea Parker Mills, you helped craft the course into something truly unique. Due to your dedication and effort, the course and this dissertation became a reality.

I would not be in this position today without the persistence of Dr. Charles Hall. Dr. Hall brought me into the profession. He imagined a future for me that I had not. He has given me domestic and international opportunities. He has been a true mentor and friend.

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I am also thankful for the participants of this study. They opened themselves to my research. They made their classwork and social media posts available to me. It was their investment in our course and continued interest in Memphis that led me to investigate their experiences with place.

I must also recognize the joy that the Midtown Soccer Club OGs have brought me. On and off the soccer field, the OGs have given me brotherhood and a space to get away from this project when I needed it most.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the love and support that my family has given me. My wife, Ashley, has shown patience, understanding, and support over the past two years and did not complain once about my 5 a.m. alarm clock. My daughter, Flannery, has been an inspiration through her photography, artistic vision, musical talent, and sensitivity. And, my son, Gus, has been a constant source of humor and pride. I can't wait to see where his intellect and love of learning take him. Love to you all.

Abstract

This study examines the intersections of place and second language learning. Learner identity has been found to be an important construct in second language learning. In recent years, place and space have become central topics in the study of sociolinguistics and identity. One area of place and language that has not been studied in depth, however, is whether place plays a role in second language learning. This study begins to fill this gap by examining the second language learning experiences of thirteen Japanese study abroad students who were enrolled in an eight-week, content-based language course. The content of the course focused on the history and culture of the city in which the course was offered, Memphis, Tennessee. This study demonstrates that the students formed place attachments to the city, that these attachments led to identity shifts, and that the students' identity shifts affected their language behavior, identities, and future trajectories.

Thirteen Japanese university students between the ages of 18 and 19 took part in the study. Data collection included interviews with students taking the class in 2016 and course alumni from 2012 – 2015, their social media posts, class blog posts, classwork, and their photographs of Memphis served as the sources of data for this multi-modal study. The participant-provided photographs were also used as an interview elicitation tool.

Findings from this study contribute to an understanding of the complexities of place, identity, and language learning. Whereas prior work has pointed to the social capital that can be gained through investment in a second language, this study suggests that investment in place can also lead to gains in social capital. The study also shows that when language learners engage with the history and culture of a place such as Memphis, where racial violence has played such a significant role, that place factors into their future trajectories. Specifically, the participants

constructed good language learner and global citizen identities. These findings reveal the power of a place-based curriculum that offers language learners the experience of a fuller spectrum of place and thereby facilitates the difficult work involved in constructing and orienting identity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value. (Tuan, 1977, p. 6)

Every time language learners speak, read or write the target language, they are not only exchanging information with members of the target language community, they are also organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. (Norton, 2013, p. 4)

Did I forget to mention, forget to mention Memphis?
Home of Elvis and the ancient Greeks.
What do I smell? I smell home cooking.
It's only the river, it's only the river.
-David Byrne, Talking Heads, "Cities"

This study examines the intersections of place and second language learning. In recent years, place and space have become central topics in sociolinguistics. In these studies, researchers have looked at linguistic and semiotic landscapes (Blommaert, 2013; Scollon & Scollon, 2003), and chronotopic identities (Blommaert & De Fina, 2017), which borrows from Bakhtin's (1981) time-space concept for literary analysis. One area of place and language that has not been studied in depth, however, is whether place and place identities play a role in second language learning. Prior work in applied linguistics (AL) points to the importance of identity construction in second language (L2) learning (Norton, 2013). Other fields, including humanistic geography and psychology, have pointed to the important role that place attachment can play in identity formation (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2013). This study investigates such aspects of place, place attachment and place-identity, in relation to second language learners' identity transformations. It also considers how curriculum design that intentionally engages place can affect these language learner identities. In consideration of the foundational and recent studies that have been done on identity and language learning (Peirce, 1995; Norton & Darwin, 2015), this study attempts to bring together these lines of investigation and suggest

complementary theories and methods in an analysis of place and language learning. At a time when place has become fractured for so many immigrants and refugees, a study on place, identity, and language learning might lead to a better understanding of how language learners experience and make sense of new places as they come to terms with who they are and want to be in these new places.

In order to examine the intersections of place and language learning, this study investigates the views on place and language learning of thirteen Japanese English language learners in a mid-sized city in the southern United States, Memphis, Tennessee. Through interviews and the analysis of class journals/blogs, classwork, participant provided photography, and social media, this study provides empirical evidence that place plays a role in that language learner identity construction.

In her first publication, Bonny Norton called for “a comprehensive theory of social identity which integrates the language learner and the language learning context” (Peirce, 1995, p. 12). Since the publication of that paper, linguists have responded to the challenge, conducting research and writing hundreds of articles on the topic of identity and language learning. Gender, race, class, and immigration are some of the concepts that have been examined through the lens of identity and language learning. These studies have drawn us closer to a better understanding of ESL learner identity construction. This study aims to further this understanding by making the argument that the context of language learning, specifically the geo-cultural place of language learning, is missing from this discussion.

Significant to the discussion of identity and language learning has been the concept of identity construction, (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) where identity is continually being constructed in response to the social positions and power relations the speaker finds herself. If

we accept that English language learners adjust their identities or construct new identities to negotiate their new language contexts, I argue that we must take the geo-cultural place of language learning into consideration if we are to better understand identity construction.

Language learning is a process that continually requires reassessments and adjustments to language and behavior. The place of language learning will necessarily affect both the language and behaviors learners are exposed to and the language they are expected to produce. At the southern United States university where this study took place, the participants were exposed to *y'all* within days, if not hours, of their arrival. The participants' social media posts give ample evidence that *y'all* had become part of their language production by the end of their four-month stays. The ESL learners had no textbook where *y'all* was represented, yet this place-bound shortening of *you all*, became a part of their online presentation of self. This study asks the question – what role does place play in identity construction and language learning? It argues that identity and the place of language learning cannot be separated. In the same way that a language learner's cultural and geographical background influence the English she acquires, the place in which the English is acquired influences the identity of the learner.

In order to analyze place as it relates to identity, we must look at the ways in which place has been considered in linguistics and outside the theoretical boundaries of linguistics. This study borrows from humanistic geography (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Seamon, 2015), the study of humans and their interactions with the environment (Johnstone, 2011), and environmental psychology (Manzo, 2005), the study of individuals and interactions with their surroundings (Gifford, 2014), for its framework and terminology. Across these three fields, a sizable body of work exists on place, place attachment, and place-identity. Using these three concepts, place can be brought into the discourse on language learner identity.

Identity and Investment

Norton defines identity as “the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (2013, p. 4). This broad definition with its inclusion of temporal and spatial scales suggests that AL studies on identity have strived to understand how time and space shape language learner identity construction. The world is physical, environmental, populated by people who live within and shape it. In fact, the vast majority of SLA studies on identity have taken the approach that language and society are intimately bound and, therefore, that identity and society are intimately bound. The world is socially constructed, and so language learner identity is best understood through social theory. In an attempt to complement this social stance, this study considers how language learners interact with specific places and how these places inform their identities. Language is a social tool, but one that is shaped by the places we inhabit.

The interaction of language learner and place can also reframe the way investment has been viewed in language learner identity construction. Investment is a key concept in the way language learner identity has been described. Drawing on Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1991), studies in AL have examined the ways in which language learners become invested in their language learning knowing that the new language will give them access to forms of material and social capital that they did not have access to before (Darvin & Norton, 2015). In this sense, new languages serve as a form of cultural capital. The acquisition of this new cultural capital creates access point to other forms of capital – material and social. This study will show that language learners can also become invested in place. Whether they were drawn to a Memphis for specific

reasons or became invested through their language learning experiences in place, the data provided by the participants of this study shows that place shapes language learner investment.

Place, Place Attachment, and Place-Identity

Place gained the attention of social scientists in the 1970s (Tuan, 1974, 1977; Relph, 1976, 1985). What was something that had been taken-for-granted became the focus of studies that tried to define space and place while describing the way humans experience place. Tuan (1977) asserts that the meanings of space and place are mutually dependent. The spaces we move through become place when we ascribe meaning to them. Relph (1976) takes a phenomenological perspective, arguing that in order to understand place the routinely unnoticed interactions with place need to be described and analyzed. This study will examine how a specific place, Memphis, became important to ESL language learners and the curriculum that asked them to engage with the history and culture of Memphis. The way that the participants experienced place is informed by place attachment and place-identity.

Place attachment can be considered quite simply as the “bonding of people to places” (Altman & Low, 1992, p. 2). Therefore, the way and intensity with which individuals interact with place is tied to their emotional connections to place. Place attachment has played a key role in environmental psychology, (Lewicka, 2011) where much of the initial focus was on attachments to the home. More recently, researchers have examined how individuals become attached to places outside the home (Manzo, 2005). There have also been studies on topics such as forced serial migration (Fullilove, 2013), mobility (Gustafson, 2001, 2009, 2013), memory (Rishbeth & Powell, 2013), how natives and non-natives experience place attachment (Hernández et al., 2007), and an anthropological study on how storytelling brings together history, social norms, and wisdom to create a sense of place and reveal place attachment for the

Apache, a Native American people in the western United States (Basso, 1996). This study will examine how language learners, located in a specific geo-socio-cultural place, formed place attachments and how those place attachments affected their identities during and after their formal language instruction.

Key to how place attachments form is place-identity. Place-identity was first defined as “those dimensions of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relations to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals, and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment” (Proshansky, 1978, p. 155). The complex ways that individuals interact with place shape their attachment to and how they see themselves in relation to place. Recent studies on place-identity have examined immigrant placemaking, in which immigrants transform new communities to make them more symbolic of their old communities (Main & Sandoval, 2015), and dark tourism, tourism to locations that are infamous for the historical events that occurred there (White & Frew, 2013). Finally, it may be possible to see place-identity not only through how the individual interacts with place, but also how place-identity is influenced and constructed by an individual’s group and social identities (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004; Bernardo & Palma-Oliveira, 2012). Considering these topics, place, place attachment, and place-identity, this study hopes to demonstrate that language learners construct identity not only due to their position and positioning in society, but also through the meanings formed through the interactions they have with place.

Place-Based Curriculum and Methodology

This study focuses on ESL learners in an Intensive English Program (IEP) and shows how place became part of the participants’ good language learner and global citizen identities.

To examine the intersections of place attachment and language learning, the current study employs a qualitative approach to analyze multiple data types including interviews of English language learners, their social media references to place, reflective journal entries, and classwork that reflects their experience of language learning in place. During the first eight weeks, the students took traditional skills-based, leveled courses. During the second eight weeks, however, the students took a content-based course that focused on Memphis Music and the Civil Rights Movement and required the students to complete several place-based projects to satisfy the goals of the course. The participants, who provided their consent, were divided into two groups. The data from the first group (five participants) were collected while they were in Memphis. At the end of their study, these students were interviewed in a semi-structured format and asked about their experiences as English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in Memphis. The study took into consideration these students' classwork, journaling, and social media. The data from the second group (eight participants who had completed the Memphis Music and Civil Rights course) were collected in Tokyo but also reflectively looked at the participants social media and classwork from the time they had been in Memphis. These IEP alumni had been away from Memphis for one to four years, and their responses revealed the extent to which they continued to view themselves as English users whose English-speaking identities were still attached to Memphis and the effect the content-based, place-based course had on them. The interviews were coded twice. The first coding used Scannell and Gifford's (2010) framework for defining place attachment to establish that the participants had indeed formed place attachments to Memphis. The second coding looked from language that attributed to good language learners in the Memphis group and global citizenship in the second. Examination of the participants social media accounts complemented, and at times enhanced, the data that came out in our interviews.

Both sets of participants were asked to bring photographs they had taken while in Memphis to the interview.

One of the methodological techniques that was used during this project was photo elicitation. Photographs, especially participant provided photographs, generate questions, responses, and discussion that may not come about through standard interviewing methods. Photo elicitation (Harper, 2002; Auken, Frisvoll, & Stewart, 2012) has been used in the social sciences to stimulate discussion, to differentiate the information derived from qualitative interviews, to reduce power differences between researcher and participant, and to empower the participant's ability to direct the flow and content of the interview. As a study that examines the interaction that language learners have with place, photographs seemed to be a logical source of data, especially considering the ubiquity of mobile phone camera use and ease of distribution that photography has on social media.

By focusing on language learners' interactions with place, this study hopes to provide a fuller understanding of ESL learner identity construction. It may also lead toward a greater role for place in IEP curriculum design and class planning. Finally, this study may provide direction in future studies of mobility and language learning in situations where place itself becomes fragmented.

Context of the Study

This study took place in at a mid-sized, public university in Memphis, Tennessee, referred to as Memphis University (MU) from here on. MU houses an Intensive English Program (IEP), which typically has between 70 and 100 students. The program is skills-based with core classes in Reading and Writing, Grammar, and Listening and Speaking. Elective classes are offered as well. Full-time students take 23 hours of class per week during five, eight-week

session per year. The participants of the study were enrolled as full-time students in this program for the first eight weeks of their stay.

For the second eight-weeks, the participants took a full-time, content-based class on Memphis Music and the Civil Rights Movement. The course combined readings, films, and site visits to historically significant places in Memphis with English language instruction. The majority of assessments for the course were project based. This course will be described in detail below.

Why Japanese English Language Learners?

In the spring of 2011, representatives from a private Tokyo university (referred to as TU from this point on) approached the MU IEP and requested that it develop a special course for twelve of their students each spring. The reasoning behind was twofold. First, the School of the Liberal Arts at TU wanted to give to all their students the opportunity to study abroad and needed to drastically expand the study abroad programs available to them. Second, the Japanese spring semester typically begins in early April and continues through July. Our IEP did not offer classes during May and we proposed the Memphis Music and Civil Right Movement course to fill that gap. The relationship between MU and TU and the mutual recognition of the impact the place-based course has had linguistically, academically, individually, and socially on the TU study abroad students have permitted the continued offering of the course. The post-program feedback by students and teachers alike has resulted in its continued success.

Research Questions

This special content-based class, offered to twelve students from TU, began in the spring of 2012 and has continued each spring since then. As one of the instructors of the course, as a researcher in AL, and as an individual who has maintained contact with many of the alumni of

this course, I became aware that many of the participants seemed to form strong attachments, not only to their friends and teachers at MU, but also to Memphis itself. These attachments became apparent in their school work and their references to Memphis on social media both during and after their study in Memphis.

I eventually developed the follow research questions to guide this project:

- What role does place play in second language learners' identity construction?
- How does place attachment influence language learning identity transformation?
- How can place and place identities be used in English language teaching?

Conclusion

Identity theory has changed the way we understand the process of learning a second language, the attitudes and positions that language learners assume and are assigned, and the agency and resistance L2 learners employ. This study will consider the significant studies that have examined language and identity, as well as, recent trends that examine the complex intersections of identity, place, and language. Through the analysis of language learner interviews, social media posts, photographs, classwork, and blogs, it will consider the formation and persistence of place attachment and the role that place attachment plays in the participants' identity construction, specifically as good language learners and global citizens. It seeks to complement the body of work that has been done on language and identity through a qualitative, discursive, and multimodal analysis of the complex process of language learning the thirteen participants experienced both during their time of formal language study and after their return to Japan. And, it seeks for ways to understand the paradox of the local in a superdiverse (Blommaert, 2013) world.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Identity and agency are important to second language learning. The language we speak is deeply tied to who we see ourselves to be and who we are perceived to be by others. The agency language learners exercise to attain their linguistic and social goals is rooted in this constructed identity. The way linguists have come to understand identity has become more complex over the past twenty years. Agency is both used by language learners and given to them by those in more powerful positions. Those in power may grant certain individuals less agency than others in the classroom based on racial/gender/ethnic/linguistic status. These same individuals need to achieve agency in order to be seen as legitimate speakers, learners, or workers. Following Blommaert (2013), rather than shying away from analytical complexity, this study will embrace it and examine the layers of transformations that language learners go through as they struggle to align their identity with the new language they speak.

One layer of language learning, identity, and agency that this study will look at is place. This project makes the argument that place is a part of identity construction and language learning. Researchers in linguistics have explored the importance of place from discourse analytic perspectives (Pennycook, 2012), but very few detailed analyses of the impact of place on language learners exist. Current discursive approaches look at place as a social construction. Place is constructed through the way we describe it, the stories we tell about it, and institutions we build. Place is also bound within time, the chronotope, or “time space” . . . the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 84) of its construction (Blommaert & De Fina, 2017). This project seeks to understand how the place of language learning affects language learner identity construction through a qualitative analysis of thirteen study abroad students from Japan studying English in Memphis, Tennessee.

Place is also inseparable from individual identity. As the data of this study will show, the Japanese ESL learners formed place attachments to Memphis. The violent history of and continuing racial divisions in Memphis might have caused place aversions (i.e. a dislike for a place). Likewise, the dominant black and white racial divisions where “other” ethnicities might seem out of place (Lee & Rice, 2007) could lead to place aversions. In contrast, many of the participants formed place attachments to Memphis which caused them to reframe their understanding of race, and for a few, reassess their life goals.

In order to make the claim that place affects language learner identity, the linguistic lines of inquiry that detail identity need to be interwoven with linguistic and non-linguistic lines of inquiry that have examined place. Space and time have recently come into the discourse on language and identity (Blommaert & De Fina, 2017). Space and place also figured heavily in the fields of semiotic linguistics and linguistic landscapes. And while this study does not fall into either of these fields, it does borrow from its terminology and methodology. This study also borrows from fields that have looked extensively at place and the role it plays in human experience, humanistic geography and environmental psychology. Specifically, these fields provided conceptual definitions for place and the engagement with place, e.g. place-identity and place attachment, that serve as the principle ways that language learning, identity, and place are brought together in this study. In short, this study examines the way that Japanese students in a study abroad program in Memphis, TN formed place attachments that connected with their language learning, understanding of racial difference and racism, and their future career paths.

Language Learning and Identity

Identity has come to be seen as an inseparable aspect of language learning, as Bonnie Norton (2013) notes:

Every time language learners speak, read or write the target language, they are not only exchanging information with members of the target language community, they are also organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. As such, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation (Norton, 2013, p. 4)

Through this view of identity, the language learning process is also a process of relating the self to the social structures surrounding the language learner. Language is tied to how they understand who they are as individuals and as part of larger communities. This view of identity, however, limits language learner identity construction to the social factors that influence its construction. The participants of this study formed identities that were not only socially constructed, but also place constructed. Place both permits and constrains aspects of identity construction.

This study has been guided by the foundational studies that reframed the way language learners and language learning was viewed. Some twenty years ago Firth and Wagner (1997) challenged the view that second language learners are deficient and that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies need be more relevant to context of the study and aware of the “bio-social” nature of language acquisition through interaction (p. 296). In addition to the biological and social factors of second language learning, this study will consider how place contributes to “a more theoretically and methodologically balanced enterprise” (p. 286).

In one of the foundational studies on identity and language learning, Bonny Norton Pierce lamented the fact that “SLA [Second Language Acquisition] theorists have not developed a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context” (1995, p. 12). In effect, she was asking researchers to give more principled

consideration of context, or the social world external to the learner. In her attempt to develop this comprehensive theory, Norton drew on two social theorists, Bourdieu, and Weedon, to frame the “relationship between power, identity and language learning” (2013, p. 47). Speaking of class-based identities, Bourdieu (1977) argues that identity is tied to symbolic power and that language itself was a form of symbolic power. The value and strength of what a person says cannot be separated from the social position the speaker holds. Weedon (1987) argues that identity is linguistically constructed, that it is fluid, that changes are based on the context, and that its construction is often fraught with struggle. These theories provided the theoretical framework for Norton and the host of language learning researchers who would see identity as an indispensable component of the theory (e.g. Duff, 2002, 2012; Block, 2014; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

In her initial study, Norton Pierce (1995) used the diaries of four immigrant women in Canada to analyze how the women, as language learners, positioned themselves to create, react to, and at times resist occasions to speak. In doing so, she argued that the language learner must be seen as a complex individual who actively constructs her identity within the social contexts she interacts. Through investment into the second language, the language learner makes use of her agency to affect the social context and not only be affected by the social context. Rather than being only a passive receptacle of input, the language learner affects the language-learning context both passively and actively. This study takes the position that the place of second language learning also affects investment and agency, that place encourages or discourages learners to become invested in their language learning, and that place lends or detracts from second language learner agency.

The model of language learner investment developed by Darwin and Norton (2015)

provides the most current understanding of how identity, capital, and ideology interact. As their model shows (see Figure 2.1), investment is at the center of the concepts, identity, capital, and ideology. Through the analysis of the data collected for this study, the elements of this framework will be considered in relation to the effect that place has on them. The forms of capital (social, cultural, material, and symbolic) that are valued in Memphis differ from those evaluations in Tokyo. The participants also encountered religious, racial, and capitalistic ideologies in Memphis that they had to navigate. The participants came to Memphis in an effort to gain the symbolic capital that English represents. During the language learning process, they also had to maneuver within the forms of capital and unique ideologies of Memphis. As they came to terms with and acquired elements of these forces, the participants' identities also transformed. The ESL learners became invested in their ESL learning not only due to the quality of the IEP curriculum and teachers, but also due to their investment in Memphis itself.



Figure 2.1. Darwin and Norton's 2015 Model of Investment.

Since Norton's (1995) initial study, there has been a significant amount of work done around the issues of identity and language learning. Researchers have dealt with problems such as identity and language learning as they relate to gender and immigration (Fleming, 2015), academic discourse (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015), immigration (Cervatiuc, 2009), ideologies (Warriner, 2016), and social class (Block, 2015). Norton, herself has advanced the discourse through studies on identity and ownership of English (1997), good language learners with Toohy (2001), good language teaching (2010), and learner investment with Darwin (2015). Today, identity is considered an important aspect in English as a Second Language (ESL) studies and continues to impact institutional policy (Blommaert, 2006), curriculum design (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015), and research methodology (Block, 2010).

Two themes that emerged from the data were good language learners and global citizenship. As Norton and Toohey (2001) challenged the notion of best practices for second language (L2) learning as not only the learning strategies and personal characteristics of language learners, but also the extent to which their sociocultural actions are received in the learning community. The participants of this study demonstrated their good language learner identities through engagement with the content of the class and Memphis itself. The second theme, global citizenship, has been considered in the context of community-based service-learning (CBSL) (Perren & Wurr, 2015). CBSL curricula aim to help L2 learners develop their communicative and linguistic competencies while at the same time developing intercultural competencies. Advancement in these competencies can help these learners navigate and become more engaged in our diverse world through global citizenship (Lee, Curtis, & Curran, 2018). This study examines how place and the struggle for equal civil rights in the American south led the Japanese ESL learner-participants to construct global citizen identities.

A few studies have looked specifically at the identity of Japanese students in the ESL context. Kanno (2000) examined bilingual Japanese and English speakers after they returned to Japan from North America. While in Canada, the Japanese bilinguals saw using English as essential to being able to engage in the dominant culture. After returning to Japan, they found the opposite to be true. In both locations, the minority language marked them as different. In another study, Morita (2004) explored the academic socialization of four Japanese graduate students in a North American university. The six students faced challenges in being accepted as legitimate members of their academic communities and made class by class use of their agency to position themselves within the academic context. As a study that examines the ESL learning experiences of thirteen Japanese students, this study contributes to these lines of investigation in that it

provides an additional frame of reference. Whereas all of the studies above position identity within a social constructionist framework, this study attempts to examine how the place of language learning affects second language learning identity. The symbolic and material capital that second language learners gain through their language learning is affected by place. The investments they make in the new language are influenced by place. Similarly, the identities constructed while abroad and after returning to the home country are connected to place.

A focus on place can also complement the work on imagined communities and language learning (Norton, 2001; Kanno & Norton, 2003). Researchers have examined how second language learners imagine the communities to which their new language will give them access. The term imagined communities (Anderson, 1991) was first used to describe how nationalism is created and spreads. Nationalism is a narrative that citizens must buy into in order for the nation to exist at its most basic level and to enact nationalistic policies of exclusion at a more intense level. Applied to linguistics, it can be used to describe how language learners imagine themselves becoming part of a target language community where they, the newcomers (language learners), join the old timers (expert language users). Imagined communities are not only created by language learners, but also by institutions (Kanno, 2003), where social stratification can limit the social positions that the institution image for their students. Elsewhere, the question has also been raised if there are social barriers to becoming part of a nationalized imagined language community (Meadows, 2010). Based on their interviews, all of the participants of this study imagined Memphis in some fashion before their arrival. They were not only imagining joining the social communities they would travel to, they had also imagined Memphis as a physical destination where their language desires could be met.

By suggesting imagined places, this study complements the work that has been done on the imagined communities of language learners. Imagined places have been described as the places that exist geographically but are constructed mentally through our exposure to the place through media and art (Alphen, 2005). This study asserts that place plays a role in ESL learner identity construction. When considering study abroad students, who have chosen not only to study English, but also to study English in a specific location, place figures into the entire timeframe of the identity constructed around the new language. When ESL learners express a desire to study abroad, they are also beginning to create an imagined place which includes imagined communities, individuals, and social structures with which they will engage. During the study abroad application and commitment process, the place of language study becomes part of the language learning process. For some of the participants in this study, Memphis as a destination was so significant that it was also the reason for the agency the participants used to reach their study abroad goals.

For ESL students and the participants of this study, living abroad does not hold the same intensity of displacement that it used to hold. In the past, study abroad students would promise to write once a week and wait for two weeks to a month to receive those letters. Today, these students can connect instantly with family and friends back home, thereby maintaining their attachments to home. Texting and social media have given study abroad students a transnational tie to their home countries. It is not uncommon to see ESL students in university programs messaging with friends and family back home between classes. The English immersive environment is filled with first language (L1) bubbles, where ESL learners enter L1 spaces for language support and to maintain ties to family and friends and then return to the classroom L2. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Line and other social media allow ESL students to exist in two

or more worlds simultaneously. De Fina and Perrino (2013) take this argument a step further saying that frequently these worlds do not remain separate, but have, in fact, become transnational:

In the past, dislocations often implied drastic separations from places and cultures of origin, nowadays the diffusion of new globalizing media has resulted in the ability of displaced populations to keep in touch with their home countries and with other, far away interlocutors, and in the possibility for those who are not physically displaced, to constitute and take part in virtual transnational communities (p. 510).

This quotation illustrates the complex interactions of language learner identity, community, and place found today. Today's transnational language learner is physically abroad, yet digitally connected to home, and quite possibly many other places. The language choices that the participants of this study made to construct their online presences attests to the transnational quality of study abroad today.

Blommaert (2016) sees the need to adjust the methodology of linguistic investigation when confronted with the pervasiveness and fluidity of mobility across the globe today. This adjustment is due to three aspects of mobility. One, mobility causes an *unpredictability* that standard methods of investigation cannot account for. Two, this unpredictability can only be investigated through "close ethnographic inspection". And three, as researchers, we must be "aware of our limitations" and use new "images, metaphors, and notions" to adequately describe language in a highly-mobilized world (Blommaert, 2016, p. 6-7). In response to these challenges, this study has complemented traditional, semi-structured interviews with the collection and analysis of social media posts that both express the participants' identities and their ability to communicate transnationally. As one of the participants' teachers and the principle designer of

the curriculum, I was not only interested in their acquisition of English, but also their learning of and empathy with the struggle for civil rights in the American South. One of the effects of mobility can clearly be seen in the way languages have come to interact and co-exist, and, due to this, researchers have suggested multiple terms to define this new interplay of languages including metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), polylingualism (Jørgensen, 2008), and translanguaging (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Canagarajah, 2011). What is clear from these terms is that language is no longer fixed in its place of origin.

Locating Place in Linguistics

It has been suggested that “sociolinguists have always been concerned with place” (Johnstone, 2011, p. 203). Within the subfields of linguistic variation and dialectology, it is true that neighborhoods, cities, and countries are central to the placing of these linguistics features. At the same time, it may seem paradoxical to suggest that place is significant in a world where nationality and language, which have been intensely tied to place for much of modern history, have become unfixed. What does it mean to have a sense of place if one’s location, language, and identity are transmigratory? And, how does a sense of place influence language and language learner identity? In order to address these issues, this study draws from fields outside of linguistics for terminology and concepts that assist in locating place in linguistics: humanistic geography and environmental psychology.

The terms space and place are often used interchangeably, which can cause confusion if, in fact, they refer to distinct concepts. Human geographer, Fu Tuan (1977), sees space as an abstraction, something that has surface area and volume, but we do not inhabit space. We inhabit places. The two concepts are mutually dependent: “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). Tuan also

differentiates the two through movement. Spaces are moved through. Places are where we come to rest. Spaces are more abstract. Places come to have meaning. We name places; we rarely name spaces. In this way, place becomes “a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 11). Simply put, place can be defined as “a meaningful location” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 7). Building on this definition, we can delineate three aspects of place: location, locale, and sense of place (Agnew, 1987). Location refers simply to where something is. Locale refers to the shape the place takes within the social structure it serves: a school, a museum, a dormitory. And, sense of place refers to the “subjective and emotional attachment people have to place” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 7). The ESL students in this study participated in a place-based course (see Chapter 3) that gave them the opportunities to learn English through an Intensive English Program (IEP) and a course that was intentionally designed to give them greater access to and understanding of the place where they were studying. If place is a way of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world, then language learners are always reacting to place as they construct their ESL identities. The ESL learner who comes to Memphis because she is interested in music is confronted with the significance of place as she stands in Elvis’ Graceland Jungle Room (See Figure 2.2). The struggle she is faced with is one of acceptance or rejection. She must decide how well this place and the history of this place align with the identity she wants, if she is aware of the decision at all. By bringing the discourse of place into the discourse of language learner identity, we can begin to argue that the experience of place is an important part of the work of language learner identity construction.



Figure 2.2. The jungle room at Elvis Presley’s Graceland. Photo by the author.

One of the effects of place that became apparent was that the participants formed place attachments to Memphis. Over the course of their four-month stay and particularly due to the place understanding they gained through the place-based course (described in Chapter 3), Memphis became a significant place for the participants. Environmental psychologists (Proshansky, 1978; Manzo, 2005; Lewicka, 2011) see place attachment as a principle concept to describe and understand the way individuals interact and feel about place. The topic of place has been discussed in many ways; however, Lewicka (2011) points out, “studies on people—place relationships seem to be stuck in definitional questions and attempts to fit together various place-related concepts, such as place attachment, place identity, rootedness, sense of place, place dependences or place satisfaction” (p. 208). In an effort to move beyond definition, this study

will examine how language learners form and maintain their place attachments. In the review, Lewicka makes use of a tripartite organizing framework developed by Scannell and Gifford (2010) (see Figure 2.3), who see place attachment as “a multidimensional concept with person, psychological process, and place dimensions” (p. 2).

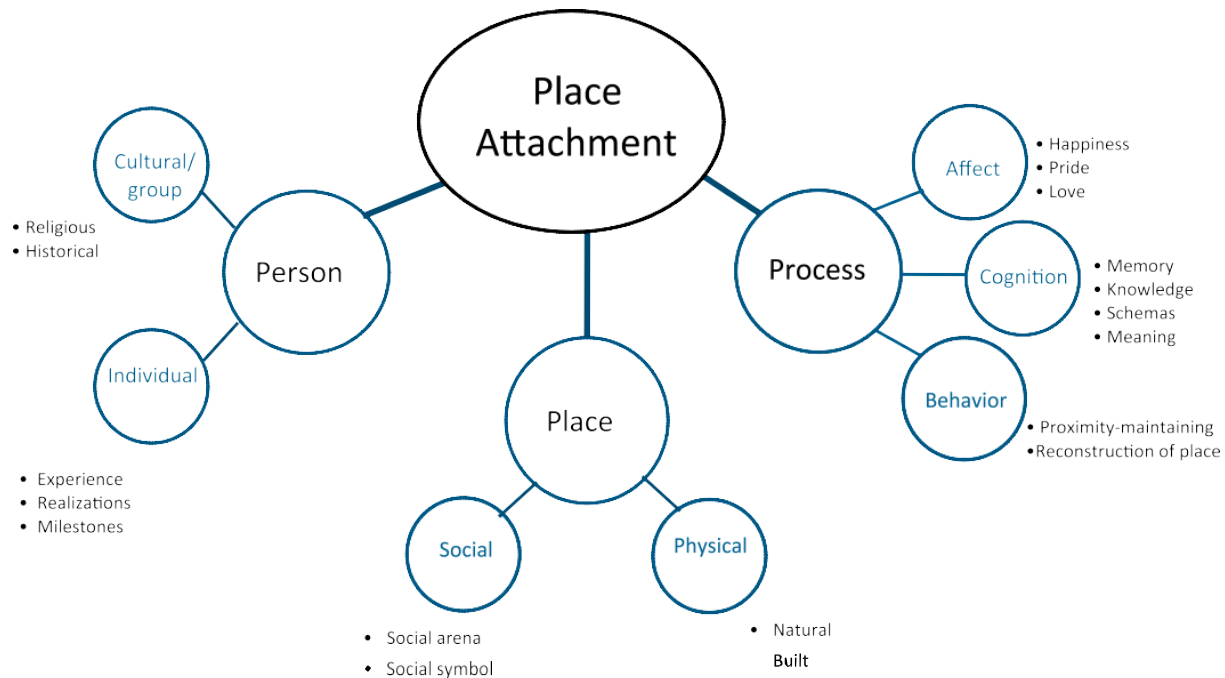


Figure 2.3. The tripartite model of place attachment, defining place attachment (2010).

As shown in the framework, person, place, and process can each be further examined through their sub-processes. This framework provided the schema I used to code the data from the interviews for this study. As this study examines the effect of place on language learner identities, the model of place attachment allowed me to focus on issues of place in my analysis, especially how the participants came to be emotionally connected to Memphis. And whereas many of the subcategories in the model above would look familiar in a linguistic study, the model does not directly consider the role language plays in place attachment.

As a study that focuses on ESL learners studying abroad, this study also addresses issues found in studies on place attachment. Psychological studies on place and place attachment have tended to focus on the home and positive experience with the home. Manzo (2005) challenges this assertion arguing that both residential and nonresidential places must be examined to better understand the senses of belonging and alienation we experience in them and, drawing on phenomenology (Seamon, 1979), that the two feelings can exist simultaneously. As this study examines the place attachments Japanese study abroad students formed through their language learning experiences, it may hold value for environmental psychologists who are interested in the emotional impact of place on individuals who are far from home and nation (Gustafson, 2013). Returning to the paradox mentioned at the beginning of this section, studies on place attachment have also looked at place and place attachment as lived dialectics (Seamon, 2013). Place attachment involves both movement and rest. As in Tuan's definition of place, spaces take on meaning when we come to rest. For the migrant language learners in this study, coming to rest, studying in Memphis, enabled them to give meaning to Memphis. Another dialectic that Seamon describes is that of inward and outward aspects of place. For the participants of this study, they had inward experiences in their dorms and classrooms, and outward experiences on campus and the historical and cultural visits we made. As we will see in the analysis section, the place attachments that the participants formed came about from the counterbalance of these internal and outward learning experiences.

A debate that has been contested in environmental psychology is whether newcomers or temporary visitors can form meaningful place attachments. This debate has relevance to this study in that the participants were in Memphis for only four months and then returned to their home country, Japan. Early researchers argued that duration was essential to a developed sense

of place or “ancestral” or “cultural” place attachments (Hay, 1998) and that journeys away from home only reinforce attachments to home (Porteous, 1976). More recent research has found the opposite. Visitors to recreational sites, seasonal residents, or short-term tourists developed emotional bonds to the places they visited, but that the bond to the place may exhibit different features than those to home or places of longer residence (Kaltenborn & Williams, 2002; Stedman, 2006). We can also ask if it is possible to become more attached to a place through the memories we have of it (Lewicka, 2013). Some of the participants had not been to Memphis for four years by the time of our interviews. What effect did nostalgia and memory have on their attachments to Memphis? Place attachment has also been viewed as a discursive practice, which views place attachment as “linguistically *constructed* as individuals, together, formulate the everyday meanings of person-in-place relationships (Di Masso, Dixon, & Durrheim, 2013). As this study will show, the participants demonstrated their attachments through discursive practices online, in classwork, and through our interviews. Through the collected data, the participants expressed a number of reasons why they were attracted to and/or became attached to Memphis. As a lived and learning experience, Memphis became a place where they made significant identities shifts. Memphis was “deemed important” because it “enabled them to sort out their thoughts and feelings, to work out their identity, to dream and to grow (Manzo, 2005). In other studies, places helped individuals become more self-aware due to the experiences that specific places allowed them to have (Gustafson, 2001). Sense of self can be understood as a gained, internal awareness of who one is as opposed to identity as an external performance. This study’s participants’ relationship to Memphis represented their evolving sense of self because they were not only learning English, but also becoming more self-aware through their language learning and place-based experiences. The language learning process in a place-based curriculum asks the

language learners to negotiate their identities within the context of the history and culture of place.

Through place attachments, the participants also developed place-identities. Proshansky (1978) claimed that earlier conceptualizations and models of self-identity showed “utter disregard for the influence of physical setting generally, and in particular for the places and spaces that provide the physical contexts for all of the social and cultural influences on the self” (p. 155). Moreover, Proshansky described self-identity as being “structured by various more specific *identities* [emphasis added] . . . such as sex, social class, ethnic background, occupations, religion, and still others” (p. 155). To this list he adds, “There must be a place-identity” (p. 155). Proshansky defines place-identity as:

Those dimensions of self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals, and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment (p. 155).

This study makes use of place-identity to complement and expand the way linguists have understood language learner identity. As we saw above, linguists have developed their understanding of language learner identity largely through social frameworks. Similar to Norton’s (1995) call for “a comprehensive theory of social identity” (p. 12) in sociolinguistics, Proshansky (1978) called for a shift of “the lens of analysis from the repeatedly studied social context to the often ignored physical context” (p. 150) in psychological studies. This study responds to Proshansky’s call by bringing the often ignored physical context of language learning into the theory of social identity.

Seamon (2013) offers a more recent definition of place-identity:

The process whereby people living in or otherwise associate with a place take up that place as a significant part of their world. One unself-consciously and self-consciously accepts and recognizes the place as integral to his or her personal and communal identity and self-worth. (p. 17)

For the participants of this study, Memphis did become a significant part of their world. Through their place experiences and the place-based ESL course, the participants began to see Memphis as an important aspect of who they were becoming.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can begin to assert that language learners form place-identities throughout the language learning process. Identity has been a central theme in applied linguistics and studies on language learners and learning. These studies have considered a wide-range of social factors (such as ethnolinguistic identity, gender, social class, and sexuality), but not until recently has place come to the forefront. Place is central to discourse analytic studies of linguistic landscapes and geosemiotics, but these subfields have not looked at language learning.

Considering the influence of place on language learner identity broadens our understanding of identity and language learning through a recognition of the complexity inherent in identity construction. As the next chapter will present, it can also be used as a pedagogical tool. A place-based curriculum can facilitate the construction of place-identity. When language learners have greater access to the place of their language instruction, they are more likely to become invested in that place.

There is a risk, however, in making this type of argument. The participants of this study did their study abroad in the United States. They formed place attachments to the city where their instruction took place and these place attachments influenced their identities and, in many cases,

the academic and career decisions they made once they returned to their home country. However, this study in no way makes the argument or attempts to argue that English language learners must study in the United States or any other L1 English country in order to become accomplished English language users. On the contrary, the imagined communities and places the participants had before their study abroad, the experiences they had during their study, and the investment they placed in their English language learning after returning to their home country suggest that language learning investment and progress occurs at unpredictable times and places.

This study has also drawn on literature outside of linguistics to bring place into the discourse on identity and language learning. Humanistic geography argues that space becomes place once we give it meaning (Seamon & Lundberg, 2017). If the place of language learning becomes meaningful, it begins to affect language learner identity. Through environmental psychology, the terms place-attachment and place-identity help us describe the process of making meaning of place and making place part of one's self. When place of language learning becomes the content of language learning, the work of language learning and the work of identity construction are built within one's understanding of place.

Chapter 3: Background and Study Context

Not too long ago and more specifically to this study, Japanese Americans were the target of hate speech, ridicule, and imprisonment in the U.S. as a result of the fighting in World War II (See Figure 3.1). The United States government forced Japanese Americans to relocate to internment camps from February 19, 1942 to March 20, 1946 (National Park Service). Most were located in the western United States, but two camps were located in southeast Arkansas, approximately 100 miles/160 kilometers south of Memphis along the Mississippi River (Rohwer Heritage Site). Jerome and Rohwer Relocation Centers imprisoned 8,497 and 8,475 Japanese Americans respectively including actor George Takei (George Takei). Anecdotally, I can say this history of Japanese imprisonment is largely unknown to the thirteen Japanese study abroad students who came to Memphis University (MU) to study English in its intensive English program (IEP). For many of my students, travelling to the United States represents an educational opportunity and goal. They come to Memphis aware of the war between Japan and the United States, but unaware of the historical racial intolerance and violence that is as much a part of the fabric of the United States as its innovation and culture.

Today, we live in a time of travel bans and public displays of hate towards those who look like Arab Muslims. There are parallels in the Japanese internment camps and in the calls for restricted entry to the United States from majority Muslim states. Mobility and civil rights are inseparable. English language learners coming to the United States face a wide range of acceptances and levels of tolerance. The racism against Japanese Americans in the 1940s echoes the threats against Muslim Americans we hear today (see Figure 3.2).

To live in Memphis is to live in the echoes of the history of the South. In light of the Black Lives Matter movement, the racial issues in the United States today are becoming just as

relevant and visible as they were in the 1960s. Rather than shying away from this issue, the participants of this study spent eight weeks studying the history of slavery, segregation, and racism in the United States as they relate to one of the most important cultural exports of the country, its music. Specifically, the students learned about Memphis Music and the Civil Rights Movement. Memphis refers to itself as Birthplace of Rock ‘n’ Roll, Home of the Blues. But, it is also where the Sanitation Workers Strike took place, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, and is home of the National Civil Rights Museum. These histories are inseparable.



Figure 3.1. “Maybe only alley cats, but Jeepers! a hell of a lot of ‘em!” . Anti-Japanese propaganda by Dr. Seuss (1942). Retrieved October 12, 2017, from <https://library.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/index.html#ark:bb0171467h>



Figure 3.2. Vandalism on a mosque in Nashville, TN. Phillips, S. (Feb. 11, 2010). Anti-Muslim Vandalism at Al-Farooq Mosque. Retrieved October 12, 2017, from <http://nashvillecitypaper.com/content/city-news/community-reaches-out-local-islamic-center-after-hate-crime>

Genesis of a Place-Based Course

This study came out of a content-based, IEP course that has been taught in the spring at MU since 2012. The Memphis Music and Civil Rights Movement class was created in response to an inquiry by Tokyo University (TU). Representatives from TU visited MU in 2011 with the purpose of establishing an annual student exchange. The MU IEP proposed a content-based, eight-week class for the exchange students. Previously, the IEP had twice offered an eight-week, 32-hour, elective class on Memphis Music. In 2009, it had also conducted a three-week academic orientation for incoming international students at another Memphis college in which Memphis Music served as the content for the course. During this course, it became apparent that complementing readings and discussion of Memphis Music with the Civil Rights Movement would add a level of complexity and historical significance to the course. As in its earlier forms,

the content-based class for TU is structured around the three major styles of music that came out of Memphis: the blues, rock and roll, and soul. The three times that I had taught the Memphis Music class previously was with advanced ESL learners and incoming first-year college students. When planning the course for the study abroad students from TU with my colleagues, we knew that they would be coming in at a high-beginning/low-intermediate level of English. Books such as *It Came from Memphis* (Gordon, 2001) and *Rising Tide* (Barry, 1998), which had been valuable materials on Memphis music and the history of the Mississippi River, were no longer appropriate because they were too advanced. We visited the children's room at the Memphis main library and the special collection room at the MU library. The materials seemed either too juvenile, too advanced, or archaic. In the end, we adapted most of our reading materials from websites (THIS IS AMERICA) and materials written for middle schoolers (Cricket Media) and made use of big budget films, such as *Walk the Line* (Keach, Konrad, & Mangold, 2005), and small budget documentaries, such as *The Long Walk to Freedom* (Morgan & Weidlinger, 2004), which shows how twelve individuals from very different backgrounds became involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

After a couple years of teaching the course and staying in touch with the course's alumni, it became apparent that the alumni's attachment to Memphis and the effect the course had on their academic and career choices was notable. The students continued to refer to Memphis on social media, a few came to visit Memphis, and with the increasing use of hashtags, #Memphis became an element in their online communications. Without real intent, the content-based course had become a place-based course.

The place-based curriculum described below came out of the theories, materials, and practices that have been established in Content-based language teaching (CBLT). In addition, it

reflected the necessity of a good needs analysis that has come out of the literature on ESP curriculum design (Flowerdew, 2013). As a course within an IEP, it had to meet the needs of two institutions, the students enrolled in the course, and instructors teaching it. And, based on student evaluations and post-program evaluation conducted by TU, it has done so. The selection of materials and the assignments prioritized the history and culture of Memphis. Through this prioritization, a place-based curriculum was developed that led the students to form place attachments to Memphis. These attachments affected the students' identities both during the course and after their return to Japan. A place-based curriculum, facilitates the capacity to root oneself in the place of language use, real or imagined, create greater language learning investment, and thereby facilitate L2 language identity construction.

The Memphis Music and the Civil Rights Movement Course

Having completed eight weeks of standard IEP classes, the TU students come into the Memphis Music and Civil Rights Movement course with a linguistic foundation that the course aims to enhance and challenge. At its inception, the main goal of the Memphis course was to develop a course that was unique to Memphis and that met the goals of TU. The representatives from TU, the director of the IEP at MU, and I also hoped that the content of the course, especially the Civil Rights Movement, would ask the Japanese study abroad students to engage with English and history in ways that they had never done so before. Reviews from TU, even after the first year, showed that this had happened. As we continued to teach the class, it became apparent, anecdotally, that the content, Memphis' history and culture, was also having a significant impact on the students during and after their study in Memphis. The perceived impact of the course, led to this study.

The Memphis Music and Civil Rights Movement course incorporates place through a place-based curriculum that makes use of local resources (See Table 1). The students demonstrate their understanding of the content through the production of a number of projects such as a rock and roll radio show, and a first-person narrative from the point of view of someone who had lived through segregation and the Civil Rights Movement (See Table 2). These projects culminate with a final Memphis Museum in which each student chooses a topic from the course and presents an exhibit at the museum. Guests from the IEP and MU are invited to the museum.

Table 3.1. List of Site Visits

Site	Description	Purpose
Chucalissa	The site of a Choctaw, Native American agricultural village and archeological museum.	To provide exposure to Native American history and culture and the impact of European colonization.
Mud Island Mississippi River Museum	A historical museum located on the Mississippi River that shows the history of the area and the significance of river trade and its effect on the local cultural and economy.	To provide exposure to Memphis as a river town – how location led to the founding of the city and its economic and cultural development.
Beale Street	An historical street located in downtown Memphis that served as a Jewish ghetto before becoming an African-American neighborhood. Today it is Memphis’s most famous entertainment zone.	To contrast the street as a neighborhood and mecca of African-American culture to the tourism and commercialism that dominates its existence today.
Sun Studio	The studio where music recording pioneer Sam Phillip first recorded Howlin’ Wolf, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Roy Orbison.	To demonstrate how race and music led to the development of rock and roll.

Table 3.1 (Continued)

Graceland	The gated estate that Elvis Presley bought for himself and his family in 1957.	To experience Memphis’ most popular tourist destination and gain a better understanding of the impact Elvis had on American culture.
Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas	The currently active public high school in Little Rock, Arkansas where nine African-American students fought for education equality.	To stand in the place and learn about where the fight to integrate the American public-school system withstood its most infamous challenge.
STAX Museum of American Soul Music	The recording studio in Memphis where artists such as Otis Redding, the Staple Singers, Booker T. & the M.G.’s, and Isaac Hayes first recorded.	To understand how gospel, blues, rhythm & blues, and country music led to the interracial development of soul music in Memphis.
The National Civil Rights Museum	A Smithsonian affiliated museum located where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated that exhibits the fight for equal rights in the mid-20th century.	To better understand the intensity of the fight for civil rights and the individuals who sacrificed so much in the struggle.
Rock n Soul Museum	A Smithsonian affiliated museum that demonstrates the lines of Black and White music and how they came together in Memphis.	To bring together the black and white histories of Memphis music and serve as a review of the history and culture of the class.

Table 3.2. List of Class Projects

Project	Purpose
Mud Island Museum Slideshow	To develop vocabulary through a scavenger hunt of item at the museum and make a digital slideshow from the items.
Japanese Culture Demonstration	To demonstrate aspect of Japanese culture to middle school students, work on presentation skills with a topic the students are experts in.
Tombstone	To demonstrate knowledge of Memphis history through the creation of an imaginary Memphis citizen.
Beale Street: Then and Now	To demonstrate visually and textually the racial and economic transformation Beale Street has gone through.
Rock n Roll Radio Show	To gain oral confidence through the writing and recording of the introduction and conclusion of a blues or rock and roll song, which is then compiled into a radio show.

Table 3.2 (Continued)

First-Person Narrative	To empathize with and show understanding of the struggle for racial equality through the writing of an imagined first-person account of someone who lived through the Civil Rights Movement.
Race Interviews	To record, summarize, and reflect on race issues today in Memphis through interviewing a Memphian about race.
Memphis Museum	To produce a museum exhibit that shows an understanding of the topic each student most identified with from the course.

These site visits and projects go hand-in-hand. The tombstone project, for example, allowed the students to demonstrate their knowledge of early Memphis history through the creative planning and production of a tombstone. The tombstone had to incorporate some aspect of Memphis history while also resonating true as a believable story. Culminating in an oral presentation of the tombstone, it required the use of all language skills to complete the project.

Course Description. The following is a description of the place-based, Memphis Music and Civil Rights Movement course. The purpose of this description is to show how place served as the content for the course, as well as, to provide a reference for the analysis of the data in Chapter 5. The description is structured around the basic structure of the course: blues, rock and roll, and soul music.

The Blues. Memphis proudly describes itself as the Home of the Blues. What is a celebrated genre of music reveals the depths of historical misery in its name, the blues. As an academic topic, the blues is a musical genre that is the result of the Trans-Atlantic Ocean slave trade, where African and European musical traditions came together (Oliver, 1998). Within the framework of the place-based course, the blues as a music genre is the result of the early history of Memphis. Its Native American agricultural beginnings, its founding as a city built on slave labor, transportation, and trade, its role in the Civil War, the devastating effect of the yellow

fever epidemics, and the great migration north of African Americans from the rural south to the urban north all played a role in the history of Memphis and the history of the blues. So, using scenes of the middle passage from the film *Amistad* (Spielberg, 1997) to help the students visualize the violence of slavery goes hand-in-hand with the work song sung by black inmates at the beginning of *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou* (Coen & Coen, 2000). Having the students write their own blues song helps the students identify with the genre and emotions that caused the genre to emerge. This section of the class ends with a visit to Beale Street, where they interview people who work on Beale Street. The interviews are contrasted with the history of the street that the students have researched and put together in a comparative writing assignment that is posted on our class blog.

The topics of slavery, segregation, and racism run throughout the course. In this early part of the term, the students do an activity that helps them understand what it feels like to be live in a segregated society. For the activity on segregation, the students are instructed to find information around campus, but they are restricted in the paths and ways they can move about campus. One group, for example, cannot use stairs. Another group cannot use automatic doors. Once the students gather their information and return, they discuss how the restrictions made them feel. Following this discussion, the instructor shows the students examples of the ways African-Americans were restricted during Segregation. More broadly, this activity begins a term-long introspective look into segregation.

Rock and Roll. In addition to calling itself the Home of the Blues, Memphis also calls itself the Birthplace of Rock ‘n’ Roll. Looking at the Memphis musicians who established the blues (B.B. King and Howlin’ Wolf) and rock and roll (Elvis Presley and Carl Perkins), it would be easy to view these genres as racially divided as Memphis was at the time of their

development. This polarization hides the fact that B.B. King and Howlin' Wolf were first recorded by a blues loving white man, Sam Phillips, and that Elvis Presley and Carl Perkins grew up listening to and black gospel, work songs, and blues music. The color of the artist hides the fact that early rock and roll was built around young white men appropriating and transforming the blues into a new genre, rock and roll.

The course brings these racial histories together through its materials and projects. The films, *the Road to Memphis* (Scorsese, 2003) and *Walk the Line* (Keach et al., 2005), provide historical and cultural context for the time period, the 1940s and 50s, a period in Memphis and American history that saw the strengthening of the its economy and the resolve to keep whites and blacks separated economically. The students have a chance to demonstrate the Memphis music they most identify with through a student recorded radio show. The students select a blues or rock and roll song and then write an “intro” and “outro” for the song. These scripts are then recorded and placed around the songs they choose to create their own Memphis radio show. The show tries to capture the transformation that was going on in Memphis with the creation of the first all-black format radio station, WDIA, and the racially mixed radio show, “Red, Hot and Blue,” where disc jockey Dewey Phillips played the music he liked, regardless of the color of the artist.

Soul Music. The last segment of the class is built around soul music. Soul music is a genre that emerged out of the American south in the 1950s and 60s (Guralnick, 1999). The Memphis recording studio, STAX, played a major role in its formation. The studio itself represented the struggle for racial equality in that its owners, producers, and musicians were white and black. The emergence of soul music is complemented with the fight for equal rights. Trips to Little Rock Central High School and the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis

highlight the classwork that covers topics like the fight for equality in busing, voting, and education. This portion of the class culminates in a first-person narrative that is written from the point of view of someone who lived through this period of Memphis history. It is the best opportunity the students have to empathize with the individuals who suffered under and fought against Jim Crow laws.

The Memphis Museum. The students final project allows them to choose the topic of the place-based course to create a Memphis museum that other students in the IEP and the university at large can attend. Using a cardboard presentation board, the students design and construct a museum exhibit. The exhibit must include text, images, and audio or video (see Figure 3.3). The museum is only up for three hours, but by the end the students have presented the information more than twenty times.

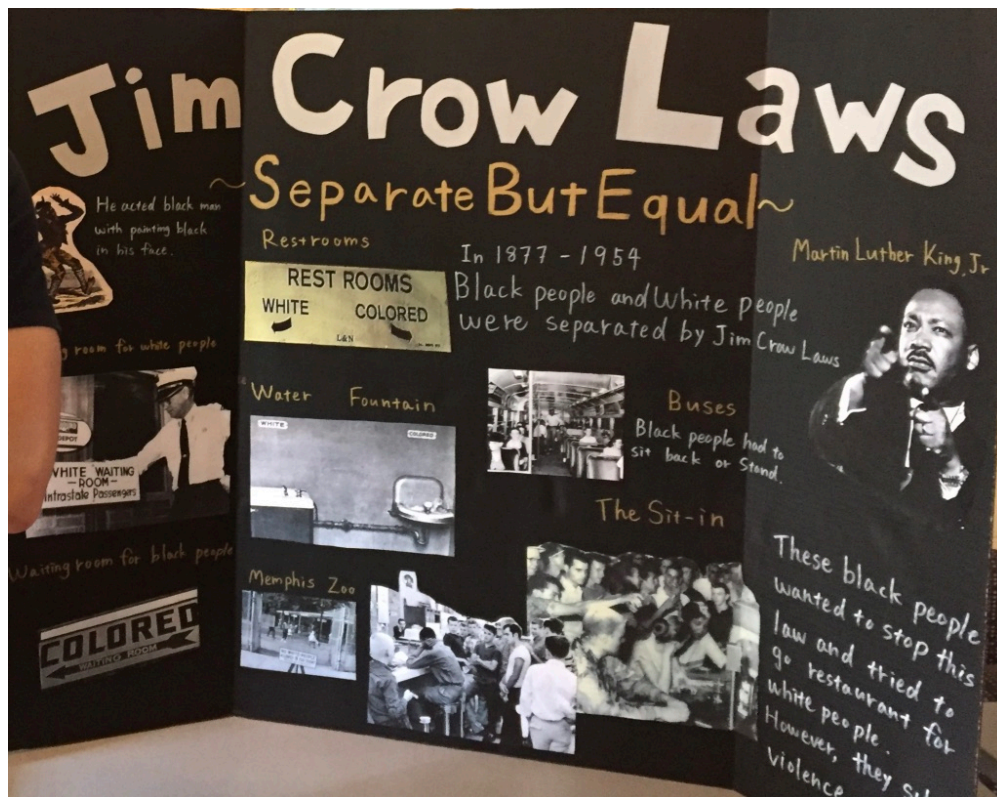


Figure 3.3. Student Memphis museum exhibit on Jim Crow laws. Photograph by author.

Summary of the Memphis Music and Civil Rights Movement Course. This course was designed to meet the needs of TU university, whose administrators wanted their students to be able to study abroad in at MU during the spring semester. Because the IEP at MU did not offer classes in May, it developed this course to fill this gap. TU students took the course for the sixth time in the spring and summer of 2017. The instructors of the course have continued to implement changes to the course based on student feedback and the instructors' perceived need for change due to interest and logistics. As a course that has only been taught to Japanese study abroad, university students, some of the adjustments in curriculum have been made specifically due to the challenges that Japanese ESL learners present. This course serves a model for place-based ESL curriculum and, as the data will show, caused the students to make identity shifts as they came to terms with the place-based content of the course.

Japanese Learners in English Language Contexts

Because this study examines the language learning experiences of thirteen Japanese students, it is informed by several studies that focus on common issues around Japanese high school and university students studying English in Japan and abroad. Kubota (1999) warns of how Japanese students have been essentialized, or treated as one monolithic group, in applied linguistics literature. The studies presented here, however, reveal empirical evidence of the Japanese English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) issues that are relevant to this study. First, the history of conflict and unity between the United States and Japan has led to an interest in American culture that can be seen commercially and culturally. Second, the educational system in Japan and the EFL classroom often impacts attitudes and behavior in the ESL classroom. Third, these Japanese tendencies often shift once the student enters an ESL classroom.

Since the end of World War II, the United States has had a significant effect on the Japanese economy and culture (Reid, 2013). One product of this has been a fascination with English, which can be seen in popular culture and in social practices (McVeigh, 2002). English is ubiquitous in Japanese signage and advertising, sometimes to an unintended, but highly comical effect (See Figure 3.1). Japanese fashion and music often make use of English as well (See Figure 3.2). We must also recognize that Japanese culture has in turn had a significant effect on the American economy and culture (Otmazgin, 2014). One of the reasons that Japanese students thrive at MU is that it houses the only Japanese language program in the mid-south region of the United States. When the students from TU arrive, they are often invited to go shopping, have lunch, and go to parties by the students at MU who are majoring in Japanese.



Figure 3.4. A sale sign in an Osaka department store. Source: Chen, A. (n.d.). Japanese Department Store May Want to Look Up the Word ‘Fucking’; Retrieved October 15, 2017, from <http://gawker.com/5874304/japanese-department-store-may-want-to-look-up-the-word-fucking>



Figure 3.5. Album cover for J-Pop star Kana Nishino. Source: JpopAsia. (n.d.). JpopAsia. Retrieved October 15, 2017, from <http://www.jpopasia.com/kananishino/album/21127/go-for-it/>

Since the late 1980s, there has been an attempt to increase English communicative competence in English in Japanese schools (Humphries, Burns, & Tanaka, 2015). The Japanese Education Ministry (MEXT) employs thousands of English teachers from overseas through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program (Kikuchi, 2009) and an educational policy in 2013 mandated that principal classes be taught in English (Tahira, 2012). However, change has been slow to come. The policy to teach core classes in English is the latest attempt to address the following issues in the Japanese EFL classroom. Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) have largely learned English using, were trained to use, and rely on *yakudoku*, “a form of teacher-led grammar translation” (Humphries & Burns, 2015, p. 1). Reasons for this include: (a) Japanese entrance exams focus on translating skills, vocabulary, and knowledge of grammar (Kikuchi, 2006); (b) strong cultural norms that make implementing reforms difficult (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004); (c) teachers’ insecurity in their own English language proficiency (Nishino & Watanabe,

2008) and that of the students they teach (Humphries, 2014); (d) anxiety that they will not be able to control the class (Humphries, 2014); (e) overly theoretical teacher training (Kizuka, 2006); (f) “government-mandated materials that rely heavily on low output, highly structured exercises” (Humphries, 2013).

Teachers who have attempted to employ Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) techniques in Japan often meet resistance from Japanese students. One study (Humphries & Stroupe, 2014) found that when asked to respond in English, Japanese often used Japanese, remained silent, replied after long pauses, replied using isolated English words, and/or with *katakana* pronunciation, the Japanese syllabary that is used for non-Japanese words and often does not have a one-to-one correspondence with standard English pronunciation. Studies have found several causes for this reluctance to communicate in English in the classroom. First, many of the factors listed above, *yakudoku* approach, high-stakes university entrance exams, state-mandated textbooks, and vocabulary memorization can cause students to not invest in their English studies (Kikuchi, 2009). Second, students may prefer these very methods because they are viewed as being more rigorous in preparation for university entrance exams (Sakui, 2004). Third, teachers of other subjects maintain the teacher-centered approach making communicative approach abnormal (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). Fourth, silence and reluctance to speak in English in the classroom may stem from social anxiety – a fear that one is being scrutinized by others and therefore, a fear of revealing one’s true self (King, 2013). And fifth, Japanese students may not understand the questions they are being asked, especially if they are open-ended questions (Harumi, 2011). The educational policies for EFL in Japan have had a significant impact on the language attitudes and behaviors that Japanese ESL students arrive with when they participant in study abroad language programs.

The EFL experiences of Japanese students have a clear effect on their study abroad ESL experiences. Japanese university students tend to continue to prefer the Japanese EFL teaching styles, but once they move into an ESL context, they adjust their expectations and preferences (Saito & Ebsworth, 2004). Japanese university students become more comfortable with greater classroom participation, closer proximity to their teachers, and student focused methodologies in the ESL context. Relating to English language skills, several studies have looked at how Japanese university students studying English abroad have improved in writing (Sasaki, 2011), reading (Nakanishi, 2014), listening (Matsumoto, 2010), and pragmatics (Taguchi, 2008). These studies reveal common issues that Japanese ESL learners often face and how Japanese language classroom behavior can be seen as problematic for ESL teachers. Conversely, it has been argued that teachers are insensitive to the needs of Japanese students (Morita, 2004). The studies on Japanese students who have studied abroad also reveal the impact that language study through study abroad can have linguistically and emotionally. This study will contribute to these studies in that its place-based focus enabled the participants, all Japanese ESL learners, to become invested in their ESL experience through the place-based content of the course.

These issues presented above were common in the participants of this study, but were by no means uniform. As Morita (2004) points out in her study of six Japanese graduate students studying in Canada, “Behind their reticence [to speak in class] were multiple, interrelated issues, including not only language related issues but also issues of culture, identity, curriculum, pedagogy, and power” (p. 596). Studies of single language/culture/nation groups offer general features of the ESL issues that group typically displays. But, we must be careful to expect the unexpected, recognize the individuals who do not follow the norm, and attempt to describe the complexity of reactions to the new learning context.

Chapter 4: Methods of Inquiry

This study relies on qualitative research methods for its approach, data collection, and data analysis. As a study that examines the role that place plays in ESL learner identity formation, a qualitative study seemed best suited to describe the learners' desires, investment, and reactions to the place of their English language study, Memphis. A qualitative approach allows for the collection of rich data where "the world [is] visible in a different way" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 4). The purpose of this study is not to measure quantitatively the progress the participants made during their Intensive English Program (IEP) studies, but to better understand how the participants reacted to the setting of the study (Patton, 2002) and the implications those reactions had on their identities and future trajectories. Qualitative data gathering and data analysis provided the best tools to compare, contrast, and draw generalizations from the sizable amount of data that was collected for the study.

This study takes a case study approach in which the context, a place-based ESL course in Memphis, Tennessee, serves as the unifying factor. When used effectively, qualitative case studies "have a high degree of completeness, depth of analysis, and readability" (Duff, 2008, p. 43). Case studies have been important in second language research to reveal investment and agency (Norton, 1995, Darwin & Norton, 2015) and participation (Morita, 2004). Following Fogle (2012), this case study attempts to present what *can* happen when ESL learners engage with the place of their learning and not what *does* happen necessarily. Qualitative inquiry through student interviews is particularly well suited to the study of identity because it has allowed the voices of ESL learners to be heard and analyzed (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). Student interviews have also revealed the use of student agency when it comes in conflict with the goals of the IEP (Fuentes, 2012). Qualitative research allows the power dynamic between the

researcher and the researched to be attenuated. Interviews with language learners are a process of the co-construction of meaning. The interviewer and the interviewee often work together to clarify the narratives and views, the content, of the interview (De Fina & King, 2011). In this study, the experiences and opinions of the participants were the focus of the data collection and analysis. The case study approach has also been used to examine how students at a Japanese university used a social space, a self-access learning center, to enable specific actions they associated with place (Murray, Fujishima, & Uzuka, 2014). As with these studies, the case study approach has allowed for the quantity and quality of the data collected for this study to be analyzed in depth.

Qualitative research has been successful in describing identity. To complement the linguistic data of this project, this study has also made use of photography as a data gathering tool. The photos that the participants took of Memphis acted as an interview elicitation tool and as evidence of their noticing, understanding, and attachment to place. Through analysis of interviews, journals, classwork, and photographs, this study will demonstrate moments of place attachment in the process of language learning and the persistence of place attachment after language study.

Sites and Participants/Context

In order to answer the related questions, “Do language learners form place attachments to the site of their language study?” and “Do place attachments persist after the period of language study?” data for this study was collected in two locations and with two sets of participants. The first location was a mid-sized research university in the southern United States that houses an Intensive English Program (IEP). The second site was Tokyo, Japan, where the participants studied before and after their study abroad program. By conducting interviews in both locations,

I was able to gather data from participants during and after their study abroad, which gave evidence for the formation and persistence of ESL learner place attachment.

Participants. The twelve Japanese students from Tokyo University (TU) that arrived in the spring of 2016 were asked to participate in this study. All agreed to participate and signed the informed consent. The students' classwork, especially the class journal, would provide evidence of the students' interaction and understanding of place. The students who seemed most engaged with their journaling and with the class itself were then asked to participate in 30-minuted interviews a few days before they returned to Japan.

The second set of participants, who had taken the place-based course between 2012 and 2015 and then returned to Japan, was selected because of their engagement with the class and availability for contact through social media. Many of the TU students became Facebook friends with me during their stay in Memphis. This social media connection provided a convenient method of contact. I made an initial request to fifteen alumni from the course. Eleven replied that they would like to participate. The other four did not respond. I planned a six-day research trip to Tokyo and scheduled an interview time for each participant. Interviews were held in a meeting room at TU or in a conference room at the Tokyo hotel where I was staying and informed consent was signed before the interviews began. One of the participants was not able to come to our interview because of her work schedule. One participant asked to be interviewed at the airport, her place of work. And, one participant was interviewed on a train, because it ended up being the most convenient time for her.

All the participants of this study were enrolled in the place-based ESL course that was designed for Tokyo University (TU). As study abroad students from TU, they spent four months in Memphis, Tennessee, at the university (MU) where the IEP is housed. Thirteen participants is

a large number for a case study. A participant pool of four to six participants has been recommended for dissertation work (Duff, 2014). Because of the place of the study, Memphis, served as the unifying factor of the case study and due to the fact that I was interested in the lasting impact of place on the participants, a larger number of participants were asked to take part in the study. Because this study presents so many participants, each participant is not presented with the same depth of analysis that is typically found in case studies. Instead, the place-based class serves as the object of the case study. Five of the participants were enrolled in the place-based course at the time they were interviewed, 2016. This also allowed for the collection of classwork from these groups. The other ten participants had completed the place-based course and returned to Japan. They represent all of the years the course had been taught up to that point, 2012 – 2015.

The first group of participants consisted of five Japanese study abroad students who were enrolled as full-time students in the IEP. Their study abroad program consisted of two parts: eight weeks of traditional skills-based English study followed by eight weeks of content-based English study. The students arrived in March 2016 and lived in university housing. They were all 19 years old at the time of their interviews and were in the second semester of their first year at university. In their initial placement testing, all twelve students scored as high beginners or low intermediate English speakers. Of these twelve, five were selected for interviews (see Table 4.1). These five were selected based on their interest in the content-based class and the strength of their oral skills.

The second group of participants was made up of ten Japanese students who had studied in the content-based class and then returned to Tokyo and their university. These students were asked to participate in the study because they represent all of the years the place-based course

had been taught. They were also selected because they had kept in touch with the researcher after their study abroad mostly through social media. Many of the participants were also selected due to their referencing of Memphis on social media after their return to Japan. Four of the participants had graduated and were working in Tokyo and one participant had graduated and was preparing to study internationally. The remaining six participants were still university students at the time of the interviews.

The IEP the participants studied in typically has 70 – 100 students. Full-time students in the program take 23 hours of English classes per week and the program’s classes are skills-based (Reading and Writing, Grammar, and Listening and Speaking) with an additional elective class. The place-based class that all the participants took was designed specifically at the request of their Tokyo university. The specifics of the content-based class were discussed in the Background section in Chapter 3.

Table 4.1. Demographic Information

Name	Age	Dates in Memphis
Tomohito	25	March 8 – June 30, 2012
Mitsuki N	25	March 8 – June 30, 2012
Maki	24	March 8 – June 30, 2012
Shino	25	March 8 – June 30, 2012
Ayami	24	March 14 – July 6, 2013
Haruna M	23	March 14 – July 2, 2014

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Kinji	21	March 13 – July 1, 2014
Kazumasa	22	March 13 – July 1, 2014
Aya	21	March 11 – July 2, 2015
Erika	20	March 11 – July 2, 2015
Mami	21	March 11 – July 2, 2015
Ryu	21	March 11 – July 2, 2015
Takashi	20	March 11 – July 2, 2015

The table above (Table 4.1) lists the Japanese participants of this study, their pseudonyms, their ages at the time of the writing, and when they studied in Memphis. As the table shows, five of the participants were interviewed at the completion of the place-based course and ten of the participants were interviewed in Tokyo in 2016. All of the participants had completed one semester at TU before coming to Memphis. All of the participants were either eighteen or nineteen when they came to Memphis.

Data Collection

This study has relied on qualitative methods of inquiry: interviews, journal/diary analysis, classwork, and participant taken photography. Interviews and journal/diary analysis have been found to be appropriate to examine the role identity plays in language learning (Norton, 2013). This study also makes use of the classwork that the participants produced for the place-based course (Bowen, 2009). Finally, in an effort to use data that shows the participants' interaction with and understanding of place, participant provided photographs have been used both to elicit information (Harper, 2002) and as a source of evidence (Byrne, Daykin, & Coad, 2016). Together, these forms of data help demonstrate that the participants made identity shifts in response to the place of their ESL learning and content of the IEP course.

Interviews. The interviews were semi-structured in which the prepared questions (See Appendix 1) were drawn from a study that examined place attachments outside of the home (Manzo, 2005). The questions were grouped under four categories. Background questions asked about English study and life before coming to Memphis. General place questions asked about places the participants liked and disliked in Memphis. Experience of place questions asked about the importance of specific places and how place experiences had affected opinions on Memphis and Japan. Past experience of place questions focused on memories of Memphis. As with

Manzo’s study, this line of questioning was designed to determine if the participants had, in fact, formed place attachments to Memphis.

Table 4.2. Interview Schedule

Name	Interviewed	Length of Interview
	In Memphis	in Minutes
Aya	June 29, 2016	27
Erika	June 29, 2016	28
Mami	June 29, 2016	30
Ryu	June 28, 2016	18
Takashi	June 29, 2016	27
	Total	2 hours and 10 minutes
	In Tokyo	
Maki	Oct. 11, 2016	52
Tomohito	Oct. 12, 2016	55
Haruna M	Oct. 13, 2016	49
Kinji	Oct. 13, 2016	36
Kazumasa	Oct. 13, 2016	32
Ayami	Oct. 14, 2016	40
Mitsuki N	Oct. 15, 2016	24
Shino	Oct. 15, 2016	22
	Total	5 hours and 10 minutes
	Total Interview Hours	7 hours and 20 minutes

Journals/Diaries. Student journals were not part of the Memphis Music and the Civil Rights Movement course curriculum when the course began in 2012, but blogging served as a significant medium for the students to reveal their reflections on the topics of the course. Some of the assignments were very open, such as “What was your favorite exhibit at the Mud Island Mississippi River Museum?” Other prompts asked specific questions, such as “What was your reaction to the scenes from the middle passage in *Amistad*?” We used blogger.com for the blogging platform, which allowed the students to post text, images, and video. The students who arrived in 2015 and 2016 were asked to keep a weekly journal on their blog. The students were

given the option to keep a physical pen and paper journal, an electronic journal kept on a laptop or mobile device, or an online journal/blog such as is available on blogger.com (See Appendix 2). This was an open-ended assignment, but it factored as a participation grade. The journals provided flexible spaces where the students could record their experiences in a variety of ways: written text, photo, video, and audio. I also gave them simple feedback on their posts such as “This looks really fun!” or “I’m so glad you got to do this!” I made copies of the journals that were handwritten and highlighted sections using the same three codes (before, during, after) that had been used for the interviews.

Table 4.3. Journals Collected/Journal Entries

Name	# of Entries	Type	Dates
Haruna Y.	13	Class blog	March 16, 2015 – June 23, 2015
Kazumasa	15	Class blog	March 15, 2015 – June 22, 2015
Kinji	7	Class blog	March 18, 2015 – June 13, 2015
	76	Personal journal handwritten	March 13, 2015 – June 18, 2015
Aya	11	Class blog	May 12, 2016 – July 2, 2016
Erika	9	Class blog	May 11, 2016 – June 22, 2016
	23	Personal blog	March 14, 2016 – July 2, 2016
Mami	9	Class blog	May 5, 2016 – June 22, 2016
Ryu	8	Class blog	May 11, 2016 – June 24, 2016
Takashi	9	Class blog	May 10, 2016 – June 28, 2016

This data proved to be invaluable as I triangulated data sources. By using more than one source of data, this study attempts “to gain the broadest and deepest possible view of the issue from difference perspectives” (Hood, 2009, p. 81). The topics that came up in our interviews were often reflected in their journals posts. As a study that looks at the intersections of place, identity, and language learning, the journal posts provided insight to the places and experiences that the students were having outside of class. For some of the participants, Kazumasa is a good example, the journal entries revealed a more significant place experience than the interviews or classwork did. What began as a class assignment resulted in a source of data for this study. The

journals provided a space for the students to reflect on the history and cultural issues the course covered and, thereby, revealed much of the identity work that was going on in relations to the content of the class and the place experiences that the students were having.

Classwork. As was described in Chapter 3, much of the classwork that the participants did for the Memphis Music and Civil Rights Movement was in the form of projects. In all of the projects, the students were given a fair amount of autonomy to choose the topics they wanted to investigate more deeply. As sources of data, the topics they chose also revealed the topics that they most identified with. The quality of the classwork also helped me choose which participants I would invite to participate in the study. Especially for the five participants from 2016, the quality of their work and their engagement with the course were the most salient reasons for the inclusion in the study. Some of the classwork may have also caused the participants to have stronger reactions to place. For example, the comparison of Beale Street as a neighborhood in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, to the tourist destination today forced the participants to reflect on the changes that places go through over time. Similarly, many of the participants mentioned that going to Little Rock Central High School was the most significant experience for them. The classwork, a reflection on the exhibits at the visitors' center there, allowed the students to reflect upon and put into words what that experience meant to them. The follow up assignment on bullying in Japan allowed them to relate their place experiences in Memphis and Little Rock to the social struggles found in Japan. The classwork also served to triangulate the data of this study. Because the students were always able to choose the content for each project within the broader content of that portion of the curriculum, the choices pointed to the topics with which the participants had most identified.

Table 4.4. List and Description of Classwork Collected

Classwork Collected	Description
Mud Island River Museum Slideshow	A photo scavenger hunt to build historical vocabulary
Early Memphis History Slideshow	A slideshow to accompany a two-three minute presentation on a student chosen topic from the first two weeks of the course
Tombstones	Student drawn tombstones for a fictional historical Memphis of the 19th century
Little Rock Central High School Reflection	A written reflection on a display at the Visitors Center at Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site
Student Made Radio Show	Student selected song accompanied by an audio recording of the student introducing and concluding the song
Civil Rights First-Person Narrative	A story written from the point of view of an individual who lived during the period of intense segregation in the southern United States
Memphis Museum Board	A display board showing information about the topic the student chose to research and present in the culminating project

Photography as Qualitative Data. This qualitative study aims to examine the role place plays in the construction of identity in language learners. As a methodological tool, photographs, both taken by the students and the researcher, served as interview prompts to elicit responses (Harper, 2002). Harper provides an overview of how photo elicitation has been used in the social sciences and makes the argument that it expands the possibilities of qualitative research. By combining visual and verbal prompts more of the brain's capacity to respond is activated. Photographs also just make common sense to use in a study on place. All of the participants arrived with cameras in their smartphones. All of the participants used photography to document their study abroad experiences. For this reason, it makes sense to use participant-driven photo-

elicitation as a research tool (Auken, Frisvoll, and Stewart, 2010). With the use of participant provided photographs, the power of the interview shifts more toward the participant, who gains control of the subject matter of the interview. As a study on the intersections of place, identity, and language learning, student-taken photos reveal much about the process of place understanding and place attachment formation. For the students who had been away from Memphis for a few years, the photographs serve as memory “anchors” (Loeffler, 2005). Through the selection of the photographs the participants wanted to share with me, they were also recalling their experiences and emotions in Memphis. Photography has been used in studies of linguistic landscapes and in geosemiotics. Photo elicitation has the potential to broaden the types of responses participants give as well as ground the evidence as an empirical data source.

Table 4.5. Photographs posted during stay in Memphis, about Memphis after return and number of photographs collected (to Dec. 1, 2017)

Name	# of photos on FB while in Memphis	# of photos on FB referencing Memphis since return	# of photos on Instagram while in Memphis	# of photos on Instagram referencing Memphis since return
In Memphis 2012				
Tomohito	0	6 banner	0	0
Mitsuki Y.	1427	11	31	0
Maki	866	15	0	3
Shino	404	84	0	3
In Memphis 2013				
Ayami	71	0	3	0
In Memphis 2014				
Haruna M.	238	85	57	12 profile note
In Memphis 2015				
Kinji	16	2 banner	27	6
Kazumasa	135	23 banner, profile pic.	81	22 profile note
In Memphis 2016				
Aya	1047	9 banner	46	6 profile note
Erika	866	25	199	15
Mami	536	6 profile pic.	42	5
Ryu	15	0 banner	0	0
Takashi	5	6	1	0

banner – banner shows Memphis
 profile pic – profile photo references Memphis
 profile not – profile description references Memphis

Data Collection of the Memphis-Based Students

I collected the first set of data in Memphis in the spring of 2016 and employed face-to-face interviews. The interviews were about 30 minutes in length and took place in my office at the university. The participants had come to my office several times before the interview. It was

in the same building as our classroom. When we would go off campus, they would often store their backpacks in my office while we were gone. It was also a space large enough, private enough, and quiet enough to conduct the interview comfortably.

This group's use of social media also became very important to the project. During the four-months the students were in Memphis, I scanned their use of social media to document their place experiences. I took screen shots of posts that were published on Facebook and Instagram. This was not part of my initial study design. As I was beginning to look at the participants' journals and classwork, it became clear that the identities they were constructing on social media were equally influenced by place. Because of this, I had to request permission to use their social media posts through a second informed consent process. According to Blommaert (2013), sociolinguists should carry digital cameras with them, not only notebooks and audio equipment, to capture "linguistic landscapes" (p. 1). In the hands of ESL learners, the camera is also a linguistic tool revealing what they notice, what they find beautiful, what they find strange; in other words, the photos they take reveal their ongoing curation/gathering of images and form a repository of memories that are part of the process of the learners' understanding of place. Some of these posts also became points of elicitation (Auken, et al., 2010). Some of the images that I had saved from their social media posts were the images that they provided for our interviews that took place in the last week of their study in Memphis. These posts were later analyzed to complement the information gained during the interviews.

Data Collection of the Japan-Based Alumni

In October 2016, I traveled to Tokyo to collect the second set of data. In the data produced in Tokyo, the first method employed face-to-face interviews, which also used photo elicitation. Before traveling, I had contacted sixteen former IEI students who had participated in

the Memphis class. These sixteen students were selected because they had kept in touch with me after their study in Memphis. Ten agreed to participate in the study and I set up a schedule to complete the interviews during my six-day stay. I wanted to give the participants flexibility in choosing their interview times, knowing that many of them would have to travel up to an hour and a half to get to campus. The Tokyo university offered me a meeting room at the university and six of the interviews took place there. All but one of the interviews on campus were with participants who were still enrolled at the Tokyo university. The one who had graduated was in the process of moving to Europe to continue her studies. The five other interviews took place in locations convenient to the participants. Two took place in a meeting room at the hotel where I was staying. One took place at an airport coffee shop, and one took place on a Tokyo train. I used data from eight of the ten participants interviewed in Japan. While the data of the two excluded participants were interesting, it fell outside of the analytical themes of this project.

The same semi-structured interview questions that had been used during the interview in Memphis (Appendix 1) were also used in Tokyo, but I scheduled more time for each interview to allow for “catching up” time. Some of the participants had not used English recently, so more time was also needed for them to respond and clarify their responses. The interviews in Tokyo were also less structured because the participants had had so many life experiences since we had last seen each other. With the exception of one participant, Haruna M., who brought printed photographs, all of the participants provided photographs on their phones.

The second method of data collection from the alumni was employed over several months during 2016 and 2017 and entailed collecting social media posts about Memphis. I made daily efforts to screenshot and save posts the participants made related to Memphis from Japan. These posts often included photos from their time in Memphis, but also included references or

hashtags of Memphis (#Memphis) or hashtags related to their lives in Memphis (#BBQ, #Tigers, #UofM), as well as hashtags that revealed the feelings that prompted the post (#wannagoback). The two sources of visual data, the participant provided photographs and the social media posts that I collected, allowed me to complement the information gained through the interviews with empirical evidence that was both meaningful to the participants and relevant to their place experiences and place-identities.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using the InqScrib transcription software and then coded using NVivo into the major sub-categories of the model for place attachment developed by Scannell and Gifford (2010) (See Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2). The interviews were then coded a second time using thematic coding. Using the simple codes before, during, and after Memphis, led to the conceptual categories that also served as the organization of the data analysis: drawn to place, place-based language learning experiences, and representations of place-identity. After a few months of working with this data, two generalized themes came out of the data: good language learners (Norton and Toohey, 2001) and global citizenship (Brookings, 2017). These two themes served as the primary foci of the two analysis chapters (five and six).

One of the prominent topics in social scientific investigations of place is place attachment (Manzo, 2003, 2005). Recent studies have considered place attachments outside of the home (Scannell and Gifford, 2010) and identified means for identifying place attachment. Drawing from these studies, the framework of place attachment developed by Scannell and Gifford served to identify and code participant place attachments to Memphis. This framework is particularly useful in qualitative studies in that it allows for a wide-range of topics to be discussed in the interviews through a semi-structured interview process. Likewise, the framework can be used to

code social media posts. The framework is also not language dependent. It can be used to identify place attachment in the photos provided by the participants.

The tripartite model of place attachment relates person, place, and process to the individual's attachment to a given place. Similar to the way semiotic landscapes or linguistic landscapes can be seen as multi-layered and complex, place attachment is a multi-layers and complex process. Each of the three factors leading to place attachment can be further subdivided. Scannell and Gifford use the term dimensions.

The person who forms a place attachment can be viewed as an individual or as part of a group. Place attachments can form at the individual level or at the group level. At the individual level, the data analysis looked at moments in which the participants had significant experiences, made realizations, and/or reached significant milestones. The group level was significant for this study in that the participants were from the same university, were in the same age group, took classes together, and lived in close proximity in campus housing. The shared experience took on a symbolic meaning in many ways (Low, 1992). In some cases, the shared university/campus experience lead to a reinforcement of Japanese culture and values. At other times, the shared experience led to greater understanding of the unique aspects of Memphis culture, especially how the historical events of Memphis and the south have led to the current cultural confrontations and creations.

The second factor/dimension is place. This most basic and seemingly obvious factor of place attachment can be viewed as creating both physical and social attachments (Hidalgo and Hernández, 2001). The data analysis looked for connections to the physical aspects of Memphis as well as the places that facilitated social activities and the formation of group identity. Again, as a university experience, the participants spent significant amounts of time in their dorm rooms

and the rooms of their friends, in classrooms and in cafeterias. For the content-based class, they visited historically and culturally significant places in Memphis. Each of these places served as a potential place attachment site.

The third factor/dimension describes the process of interaction of person and place. This aspect has received the most attention in psychological research. In the data analysis, a significant amount of the participant responses dealt with the psychological process of place attachment. Participants often mentioned the way a place made them feel (affect), or something they learned at a place or about a place (cognition), or the type of behavior they had at a place (behavior). For the participants interviewed after their study, the processes of affect and cognition provided a wealth of data.

As mentioned above, the interviews were coded twice, once for place attachment and then again thematically. The themes that came out of the data were drawn to place, place-based language learning experiences, and representations of place-identity. These themes were not planned in the semi-structured interview questions, but make sense considering questions like “Was Memphis your first choice [as a study abroad destination]?” for drawn to place. The participants described their place-based language learning experiences through questions such as “Are there any places in Memphis that are important to you? Why did this place become important to you?” or “Has your opinion of Japan changed since you studied in Memphis?” The photographs that formed the basis of the representations of place-identity were by their content and supported by the interviews. In the case of Shino, the interview responses that contrasted the amount of physical space individuals and social groups have in Memphis and Japan pointed me to the photographs she had taken of wide-open spaces in Memphis. Other visual content in the photographs showed the participants interaction with place. One example of this would be the

recurring images of participant photos with the MU mascot, a tiger. These images acted as an announcement of place-belonging as if saying “this is my campus too.”

The subsequent themes, good language learners and global citizenship, came out after a few months of working with the data. The data of the Memphis group revealed how the ESL learners, especially in their classwork and interviews, constructed good language learner identities. As a place-based course, the data often showed engagement with the content of the course as a way of being a good language learner. Global citizenship came out as a theme in the data from the Tokyo participants. The decisions they made and the behaviors they enacted once they returned to Japan can easily be described as characteristic of global citizen. On the most basic level, several of the participants in this group described how they became more inclusive in the social interaction after studying about slavery and segregation in the southern United States.

Role of Interviewer/Researcher, Relationship to Interviewees

My role as interviewer/researcher was complicated in that the participants also saw me as their teacher. Japanese university students tend to be more compliant than American university students (Fukushima, Sharp, & Kobayashi, 2009). This may have led some of the participants to more readily agree to participate and offer responses that they thought of as more agreeable to me. The teacher-student relationship was stronger with the students who were interviewed in Memphis due to the fact that I was acting as an interviewer at the same time that I was their ESL teacher. With the alumni who were interviewed in Tokyo, my relationship could be seen more as mentor and/or friend. I first visited Tokyo in December 2014. On my first night in the city, eleven of the twelve alumni from the first group to take the place-based course in 2012 asked to meet me for dinner at an izakaya, a traditional Japanese restaurant/bar. Overall, as a teacher, mentor, and older person, the participants could have felt pressured to respond positively to my

questions. I tried to remain as neutral as possible in the interviews, but due to the participants' level of English and my zero level of Japanese, we often had to co-construct meanings linguistically and as narratives (De Fina, 2009).

Even with these co-constructed meanings, the issue of reflexivity is important to consider. Reflexivity can be viewed as “the process of continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher’s positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome” (Berger, 2015, p. 220). Villenas (1996) as a Chicana ethnographer problematizes the position of colonizer that many researchers take and views the act of qualitative research as “a fluid space of crossing borders and, as such, a contradictory one of collusion and oppositionality, complicity, and subversion” (p. 729). The Japanese participants of this study entered my space, one that is domestic, professional, cultural, and historical. Physically and intellectually, the participants were in a sub-ordinate space. The five participants interviewed in Memphis were still in my space at the time of the interview. This crossing of borders had to be taken into account during the interviews and when analyzing the data. I attempted to restrain myself from directing the interviews towards the outcome I was looking for. For the eight participants interviewed in Tokyo, I crossed into their space, university and city. The power relation between the participants and Tokyo may have shifted some towards them, but as their former teacher and elder, I remained in a position of power. The data from social media was helpful in dispersing my influence. None of the data taken from social media was posted for my benefit. I may have been present at the time that some of the photographs were taken, but the posts were not directed by me. As mentioned above, participant-drive photo elicitation also shifted some of the power relation towards the participants.

Conclusion

This study on the intersection of place, identity, and language learning has used qualitative research methods which have resulted in a case study that is discursive and multi-modal. As a case study, it is quite large with thirteen participants. The context of the study, Memphis, served as the unifying factor of the case study. Through interviews, journal/diaries, classwork, participant-provided photography, and social media postings, this study has looked to triangulate these sources of data to show that the participants formed place attachments to Memphis and that these attachments and experiences in Memphis led to identity shifts. As will be analyzed in the following chapter, the participants' interaction with place within a place-based ESL course led to identity shifts, the formations of new place-identities, and, at times, unpredictable life trajectories.

Chapter 5: Good Language Learners Find Their Place

Following Lave and Wenger (1991), Norton and Toohey (2001) argue that entering a community is an essential part of being a good language learner in that successful language learners are ones who have access to English-speaking language communities. These communities of practice permit language learners to engage in the linguistic practices that are socially acceptable in the contexts in which the community organizes. A number of studies have examined how language learners have used their agency to enter specific communities of practice. In the case of four Japanese students (Morita, 2004), a graduate school classroom was the context for the community of practice. In the case of Eva (Norton, 1995, 2013), a fast-food restaurant was the context. For Eva, it was outside the work context, but with her coworkers, that she was recognized as a potential member of the work community.

The Japanese college students in this study had left one community of practice, their Tokyo University (TU), and were placed into a new community of practice, their study abroad cohort. They had some agency over this placement in that during the application process to study abroad, they were able to rank their preferences for place of study. For many of the participants, Memphis was their first choice, but not all. The cohort was largely selected by the study abroad office at TU, and the participants had to find their place in this new community. This process principally began at Narita Airport in Japan in that the meetings they had before coming to Memphis were with all of the other study abroad students from the school's Liberal Arts College.

This chapter will focus on five of the participants who came to Memphis in 2016. Rather than examining how the students entered and affected their community of practice, as earlier studies have done, this section will look at how the students engaged with the content of the class, with Memphis more broadly, and how Memphis became a part of their constructed

identities. From this perspective, it can be argued that entering a community of practice is also a process of developing a sense of place socially and physically.

Aya – “My dream-came-true place”

Linguistically, Aya came to Memphis as a good language learner. In her cohort she arrived with the strongest English language skills and was placed in the low intermediate level of the IEP. The eleven other members of her cohort were placed in the high beginning level. Memphis was not Aya’s first choice as a study abroad destination. When she learned that she would be coming to Memphis, her third choice for her study abroad destination, she cried. As a big baseball fan, Aya imagined herself in San Francisco, where she could watch her favorite Major League Baseball team, the Giants, play. However, by the time we had our interview, at the end of her four-month study abroad, Memphis had become such a part of her identity that she dreaded returning to Japan.

Aya’s unease at coming to Memphis also followed her into the first ESL classes in the IEP. The IEP classes demanded a form of student participation that Aya had never experienced in Japan. The communicative student participation that was essential to doing well in the IEP was quite different from the typical methodologies used to teach English in Japan (described in Chapter 3). When she was in Japan, Aya described herself as someone who always stayed at home and rarely talked to people outside the home. In her journal, Aya revealed the conflict the need to speak in class caused in her. In the following excerpt, she talks about how the repertoire she used in Japan in order to be a good language learner would not be successful in Memphis:

Excerpt 5.1. Aya Class Journal – March 21, 2016

Classes started from today. I’m only one Japanese almost of my classes. On the contrary I’m only one Asian student in my class. Other people speaks Spanish and Alabic [sic]. They speaks in their language so I was lonely and worried about I can be friends with them. When first class began, other classmate outspoken. I overwhelmed at the situation.

I couldn't speak. In a break my teacher came to me and she said "Are you okay?" First I tried to holding back crying but I couldn't. I'm really worried about my class. However I'll do my best in this class. Therefore, I want to be growing up when I'll come back to Japan.

Aya reported feeling overwhelmed by her outspoken classmates. She was able, however, to interpret, even in her first week of class, that the struggle to do well in the class would also be transformative personally in terms of maturity. As Aya's data will show, what she described as a journey of "growing up" included complex interactions with place that would continue to influence her educational decisions after her return to Japan.

By the end of Aya's study in Memphis, she sees herself as a good language learner. Aya's final journal entry in her journal serves as a bookend to her first. Four months later, she reflects on the initial worries she had about her ability to perform in her IEP classes:

Excerpt 5.2. Aya Class Journal – July 2, 2016

Everyday I was worried about my class. I don't have no friends, a lot of homework and speaking English. Then I became emotional, I cried during class. It was uneasily and mortification. I felt so sad but I think, the situation made me more stronger. I tried harder that I could be better. As a result, my [writing] score has increased by before and I felt my homework getting easier than before. The end of the semester, my mortification was gone. I made many friends who were only American and I could have full and enriching time. If I didn't try hard at the time, probably I couldn't get the result like that.

What is interesting in this final journal entry is that Aya equates being a good language learner through her academic scores and her social network. In this case, her social network was not the Spanish and Arabic speakers in her IEP classes, but the American social network she had found outside of class. Aya revealed that by overcoming the struggles that she had initially gone through in her English classes enabled her to gain a sense of strength and that effort played a critical role in her ability to succeed linguistically and socially.

The confidence that Aya gained in her English became connected with Memphis itself. The place experiences that Aya had were significant because they either fulfilled a desire she had or gave her a sense of home. As a sports fan, going to an NBA game and seeing the Memphis Grizzlies play seemed to take the place of the disappointment she suffered by not going to San Francisco. She said, “My dream was watching, to watch NBA games, so the place was my dream-came-true place.” The sports arena, where the team plays, was also the one place she most wanted to visit again. As a place that gave her a sense of home, she said, “My most favorite place is Botanical Garden, because I like nature. My home town was, has a lot of nature, so it’s similar.” The place experiences seemed to outweigh the initial disappointment that Aya had before coming to Memphis.

Aya was drawn to places that she knew were famous and this external place evaluation made these places more significant to her. Aya mentioned that she liked Beale Street, the focal point of tourism in downtown Memphis. When asked why she said, “Beale Street is very famous place, so good.” Aya’s evaluation of Beale Street seems to come more from the social evaluation that others had of it than its historical significance, which she learned about in the place-based class. Another famous place and tourist destination in Memphis carried a different weight for Aya, however. Graceland, Elvis Presley’s home, was important to Aya because she “could know about [Elvis], so it’s very important place.” In both cases, through the place experiences Aya had in Memphis, Memphis became a good place for her.

During her four months in Memphis, Aya had gone through identity shifts that were in conflict with the identity she knew she would have to perform after her return to Japan. When I asked her what she thought about going back to Japan, she replied, “I don’t want to go back to Japan.” Aya’s response to me was echoed on Facebook in which she said, “I don’t remember,

how many times did I say ‘I don't wanna go back to Japan’. 😂lol I always think about it....”

Aya’s Memphis-constructed identity was in conflict with the social expectations, the identity expected of her in Japan. Aya said, “I can be relaxed here. More relaxed here. But, in Japan, I can't because many people see me, so we I have to more polite and fashion for example.” Aya understood that people in Japan would “see” her Memphis-constructed identity and that it would be valued negatively in Japan.

Aya summed up her place-based language learning experience on Facebook the day after her return to Japan:

Excerpt 5.3: Aya Facebook Post – July 4, 2016

Needless to say, I strongly feel studying abroad made me grown up. It gave me the opportunities to think about my future, I haven't decided clearly about the future, but I think widens my point of view and I have more option. Also, this 4 months is definitely one of unforgettable and fulfilling moments in my life. To study in U.S. has been my dream for a long time so I was really glad that I could made this come true;-; I actually went to there, it was often different from my imagination. In a nutshell, that was an even more wonderful thing than I had imagined!! I thought 4 months were not enough!!!! Because I have a lot of regret in this study abroad...

But I do not regret that I came to Memphis!!!! I'll keep studying English!! Also, I 'll go back to Memphis!!

Thank you my friends

Thank you teachers

Thank you for the great time

Thank you Memphis

Thank you for experiences

Thank you for everything

I love y'all

I love teacher

I love Memphis

As a good language learner, Aya had to adapt to the communicative language ESL classroom in at MU. Aya saw this shift as part of the maturity she gained during her study abroad and that this maturity included a wider view of her future. Aya’s journal entry clearly expresses the intensity

of her place identification with Memphis. In contrast to the isolation she felt, linguistically and socially, in the first days of her ESL classes, Aya had developed a clear sense of belonging by the end of her stay. Aya realized that the Memphis she had imagined in Japan was not the city she had come to know through her learning experiences. The city that she cried over coming to became a place worth thanking by the end of her stay. Linguistically, this attachment is demonstrated by the use of the local form “y’all” in the above excerpt and identification with Memphis spurred Aya to become even more invested in her English language studies. At the time of this writing, Aya is working on the thesis required for her degree in TU. And, whereas Aya did not refer much to the content of the place-based course in her social media or in our interview, the subject of her thesis is affirmative action in education in the United States.

Mami – “My American life is so big world”

If being a good language learner was an internal struggle for Aya, Mami became a good language learner by engaging with the content of the course. That she would engage with Memphis as much as she did is more surprising in that she had no strong opinion about the location of her ESL study abroad experience. With the goal of becoming a Japanese Foreign Language (JFL) teacher in the United States one day, Mami only desired to study in the United States as a way to achieve that goal. Mami also thought of her life as boring in Japan even though she was a university student and worked a part-time job at Tokyo Disneyland. Mami’s place-based language learning experience in Memphis caused her to rescale how she saw her life. Where her life was “common” in Japan, a life in a “small world,” her life in Memphis had exposed her to a life in a “big world” – a life that she saw as better.

As a future teacher, it is no surprise that Mami had strong views about the objectives of her study abroad. In our interview, she said, “To enjoy or to fun is important, I know, but to

study is more important.” This attitude was revealed in the high academic quality of her coursework. The following is from Mami’s class journal:

Excerpt 5.4: Mami Class Blog – May 20, 2016

Week1 Reflective Writing

I watched the "Amistad" yesterday. I could know the real history from this movie. I was really shocked. Amistad is a really sad story. The most impressionable scene was that Africans (They were naked!) were crowded into a small, dirty and dark room in Amistad. They were crying, screaming and in despair. I can't forget this scene...so I wanted to close my eyes. But I thought that we must know the dark part of history when I watched the movie. And we must all think about this sad story each of us. Why did white people do this? What did Africans do then? How did slavery stop in 1865? Who helped the slaves? I think everyone have a right of freedom. So nobody is somebody's property. Today, there is still racial discrimination in the world. I didn't know well why sometimes the black people are discriminated against. But, now, I understand the reason. If I was slave, I couldn't stand this treatment. That I was lower than an animal. I can't believe it, but I have become interested in the real history of America.

Mami’s journal entry effectively communicates the intensity of her reaction to the scenes of the film we watched and the questions the film caused her to have. So, why did this moment of understanding about the unjust racial history of the United States cause Mami to “become interested in the real history of America?” There seems to be a contradiction that can be found in many of the participants’ reactions to the violent history of the slave trade in the United States. When exposed to a less filtered version of the past, the participants gained appreciation for the experience. The rawness of the content of the place-based curriculum helped them become more engaged with the content of the course.

In the sixth week of the program, we travelled to Little Rock, Arkansas to visit Little Rock Central High School, the location of the most widely televised and reported school integration in the United States. The visit included a tour of the high school, which was led by a United States National Parks Ranger, because the high school is a National Historic Site, and the

Visitor Center, located catty-corner from the high school. The Visitor Center is a small museum that chronicles the sequence of events leading up to the integration of the high school, as well as other significant moments in the fight for educational equality in the United States.

The students were asked to look through the Visitor Center and respond in their journals to the following prompt: “What display affected you the most and why?” Mami’s entry included the photo below (see Figure 5.1):



Figure 5.1. Mami’s photo from the Little Rock Central High School Visitor Center. Posted on class blog June 14, 2016.

Excerpt 5.5: Mami Class Blog – June 14, 2016

Central High School Visitor Center-What display affected you the most?

The picture that left biggest impression is this picture. My first impression about this picture is that it is colorful and nice but the students seemed to be sad. Before I saw the picture my guess was they felt so happy because they could come to a school which had good equipment at last. But nobody smiled in this picture. Two students had a mask. This mask had two meanings. That is they had to hide what they really felt and to behave in front of white people. Black people tried to compromise with white people. On the other hand white people reacted against the attitudes of black people. The students who had a hope were heckled and suffered violence by white people. I think they lost their hope

and wanted to cry. When I think about them I feel a strong pain in my chest. They were child. What a sad story this is! But they could put up with bullying everyday and didn't give up to learn. I'm proud of theirs strong brave and theirs family who supported them.

Mami displayed her good learner identity through a nuanced reading of the painting that depicts the Little Rock Nine, the first black students to attend the high school. Her class journal entry reveals a detailed understanding of the external and internal conflicts that the Little Rock Nine had gone through. It also reveals the effort that Mami had put into understanding and responding to the painting. As it relates to her post above, we can see again that Mami takes a historical event that caused her “pain” and finds a way to discover her own “pride” in the actions of the historical actors. Mami was able to see herself in the bravery of the Little Rock Nine and the community around them. Mami’s insightful response to the prompt also helps us understand how knowledge of the historical events most cities try to hide from outsiders can become the very thing that helps a place become real to the outsider. Mami’s response to the racial history of the United States reveals the power of a place-based curriculum that offers language learners the experience of a fuller spectrum of place and thereby facilitates the difficult work involved in constructing or orienting their identities. For Mami, the quality of her academic work was tied to the empathy she had for the Little Rock Nine. Her pride in the families who struggled for equality revealed not only her understanding of the historical significance of Little Rock Central High School, but also her good language learner identity in relation to it.

For Aya, her initial experience of being out-of-place both linguistically and spatially eventually enabled her to become stronger. This stronger self was also attached to Memphis and had therefore become part of Aya’s place-identity. Aya did not want to leave Memphis due to strength of her place-identity. For Mami, struggling with the racial historical content of the

course enabled her to expand her world-view, a view that felt larger and more connected to humanity.

Ryu – “I had fun because there are a lot of information that I didn’t know”

Ryu was similar to Aya in that he resisted the communicative language classroom. But unlike Aya, he never adjusted to it. Instead, Ryu immersed himself in the history, as well as the musical, content of the course. Ryu was very thoughtful in all of our interaction inside and outside of the classroom. At each of the museums we visited, Ryu was always the last one to come through, which was his way of being a good language learner. Ryu revealed the value he placed on learning in our interview:

Excerpt 5.6: Ryu Interview – June 28, 2016

- 25 D: So, can you tell me about some of the places you have been to in Memphis?
26 R: Ok. I like?
27 D: Yeah, sure.
28 R: Mmm, my favorite museum is STAX Museum. I was, I didn't know about the soul music, so I had fun because there are a lot of information that I didn't know.
29 D: You felt like you were learning?
30 R: Yes.
.....
47 D: When you go back to Japan, are there places you will tell your friends about?
48 R: Ah ok, Civil Rights Movement. Ah. Civil Rights Movement Museum.
49 D: Why do you think that's important?
50 R: Oh, in the past I, I didn't have an opportunity to think about segregation so Civil Rights Museum affects to me so strong.
51 D: Can you maybe explain a little bit more about how it affected you?
52 R: Yeah, in Japan we have same race, but American people has black and white. Yeah, so I can't, I can't feel the segregation in Japan, so it's good opportunity.

At the STAX Museum of American Soul Music, Ryu was able to get “a lot of information” about something that he had not known about before his study abroad. As a musician, he identified with this new form of music, which was “fun” for him. Visiting the Civil Rights Museum was another learning opportunity. Ryu viewed each topic in the course as a new opportunity. Some of

the other participants also described the course content on racism as strong. Ryu saw this strong academic engagement as a positive. Again, he felt that he was learning something new. When asked if there were places that he would like to visit again, Ryu replied, “I want to visit all place in the class. I want to go again because it was in the class, so I didn't have enough time.” From Ryu’s response, it is clear that the goal of his study abroad, and his strategy for being a good language learner, was to learn as much as he could.

For Ryu, being a good language learner meant learning, not performing. The place-based language learning experience aligned with Ryu’s desire to learn, even if the time constraints of the class structure frustrated him. Ryu’s engagement with the content of the course was most visible in his final project, the Memphis museum (see Chapter 3). For the project, Ryu chose the Memphis sanitation workers’ strike as his topic (see Figure 5.2). To date, he is the only student out of the 76 students who have taken the course to choose this topic. The place-based content of the course provided Ryu with an opportunity to invest in a historical topic that was outside the learning experiences he had had in Japan.

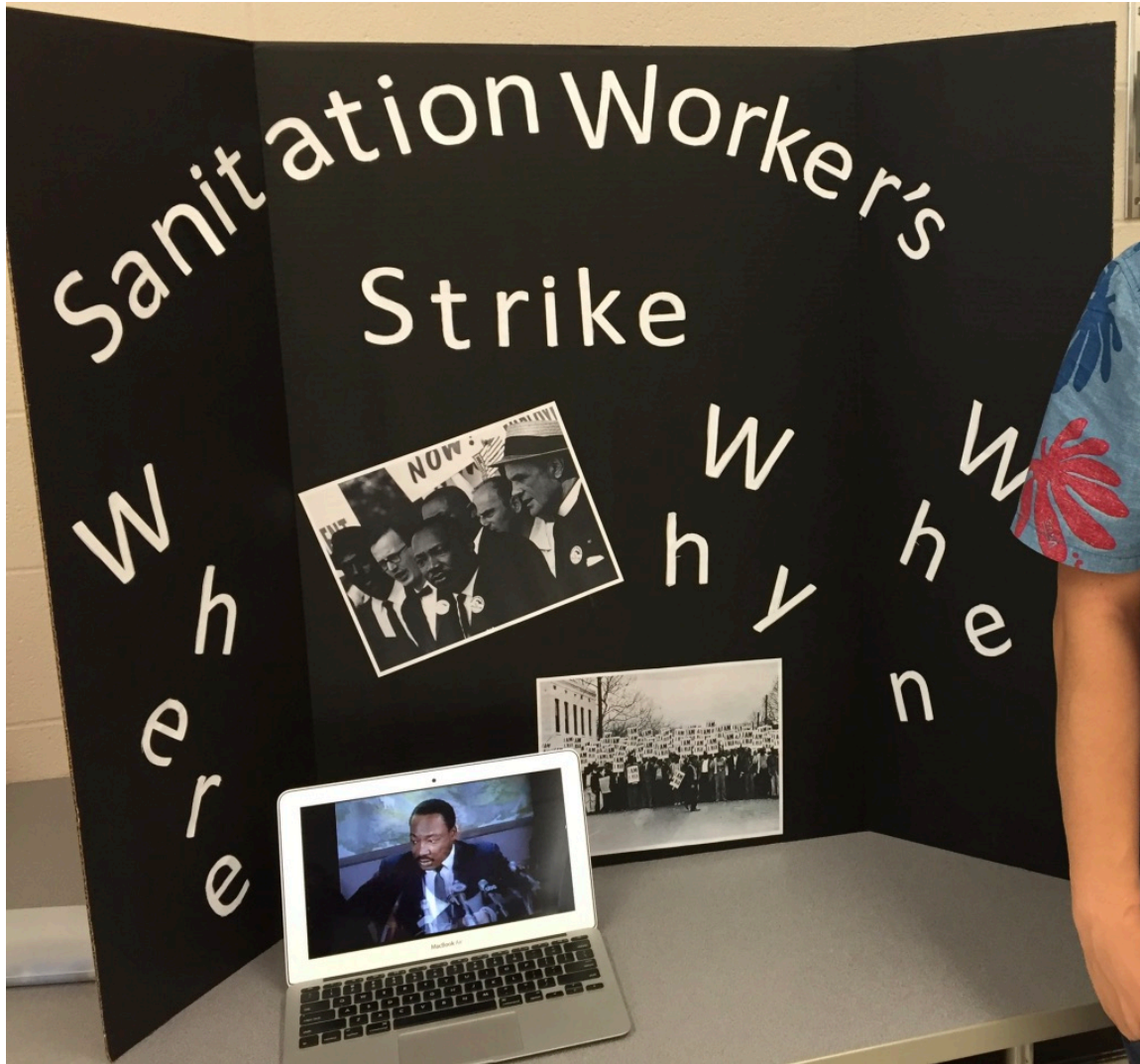


Figure 5.2. – Ryu’s museum board on the Memphis sanitation workers’ strike. Photo by the author.

As a student who was resistant to speaking in class, it is ironic that Ryu designed a museum board that would require him to speak at length. Most of the other boards contained additional text, which would facilitate the presentation of the topic. Through this absence of written text, Ryu was able to demonstrate his investment in the topic and that by not relying on written text, the visitors to the museum had to rely on his depth of learning and his oral presentation skills to understand the historical significance of the strike to the history of Memphis.

The participants of this study entered a community of practice that asked them to engage with the history and culture of Memphis. The sense of place that these ESL students gained through the place-based content and experiences led to good language learner identity transformations. These transformations took into account that being a good language learner also meant demonstrating an understanding of place. This section focused on how the content of the course affected each participant individually. The next section will focus on group identity and how ESL learner identity can be expressed through social media.

Erika – “I want everyone be good friends”

Sociolinguistic studies that draw on how language learners enter a community of practice largely focus on how the learners, as outsiders, negotiate their entry into the mainstream community (e.g. Morita, 2004). With a study abroad cohort as this study, the community was established by their university. Their place in the community was a given, but they still had to be accepted by the group. It has been argued that “place identity may lead to processes of perception of in-group homogeneity, and inter-group differentiation. [And that,] there are multiple identities based on a person’s membership of different places. These identities become salient in different contexts” (Bernardo & Palma, 2012, p. 37). One of the members of the group, Erika, often saw herself through the group. Her most meaningful photos from Memphis were the ones in which her study abroad community was cohesive and acting as a whole. In our interview, Erika revealed that she valued these group photos because they illustrated the group identity she desired.

When asked about the most important pictures she took, she mentioned two. The first was of the whole group.

Excerpt 5.7: Erika Interview – June 28, 2016

- 80 Are there any pictures that you think would help me understand the important places or things that were meaningful to you here in Memphis?
- 81 First time.
- 82 The first picture [at airport]. How did you feel that day?
- 83 It's from this day everything is start so when we in Japan so we are so good friends so but especially [one male student] and girls not get along. So, we had some problems, so yeah, we had some problems [same male student] and other girls, but I want, I want everyone be good friends everyone, so yeah, I don't know what to say. Mmmm.

An early definition of social identity viewed it as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). Erika saw the group identity she desired in the first group picture they took together. Even though this picture was taken the first time they were together as a cohort (the other meetings had been with other study abroad students), Erika imagined them to be “so good friends.” Once the cohort arrived in Memphis and “some problems” began to arise, Erika wished for that conflict free moment when they had all just formed as a group. This wish demonstrates the intensity of Erika’s group identity.

The second picture that Erika referred to was one that she had not taken yet saying, “Other important picture we will get tomorrow. So, we will meet many American friends tomorrow, so I will get most important picture tomorrow.” Again, the strength of Erika’s imagination projects meaning onto a photograph that will show her within a group of people. This time the photo will include “many American friends,” but the depth of those friendships is invisible. It is interesting to note that Erika’s in-group had come to include American friends. During her four months in Memphis, her group identity had expanded to include the non-Japanese friends she had made

In contrast to the quality of Mami's classwork and the visible interest Ryu took in our class excursions, it would be easy for a teacher or researcher to evaluate Erika as an average language learner, assume that her study abroad was an average experience, and that she had not really engaged with the content of the course nor Memphis itself because of the quality of her work. Erika's online identity, however, revealed a more engaged ESL learner. Erika brought a semi-professional digital camera with her to Memphis. On all of our off-campus visits, she actively took pictures and separated from the group to capture the images she wanted. As a photography enthusiast, Erika's online postings of her photography constructed an online identity that was more engaged with the landscape of Memphis and many of the content places of the place-based ESL course than the other data sources would suggest.

Scanning Erika's Facebook and Instagram photographs, a large part of Erika's online identity is consumer-based. She frequently posts photos of the clothes she has bought, Starbucks coffee drinks, and her ever changing fingernail polish designs. Part of Erika's online identity is expressed through the brands of products that she buys. In contrast to this consumerist identity, Erika has also constructed an online identity as a photography enthusiast (See Figure 5.3). In this image posted on Instagram, Erika had carefully positioned herself in the center of the train tracks, in the center of the frame with the trees, power lines, and clouds framing the sun flare effect. With the accompanying caption, "There are only one month left," Erika had artistically declared her place attachment to Memphis by likening it to a setting sun still well above the horizon as she stood on the tracks of her journey.



Figure 5.3: Erika's post one month before leaving Memphis. Posted on Instagram May 31, 2016.

The next image (See Figure 5.4) reveals Erika's investment in the place-based course and has multiple readings. One reading reveals how Erika used this image to add to her online identity as photographer. The image is very complex. It is a black and white Instagram post that documented Erika's board for her final course project, a student constructed Memphis museum, on the Freedom Riders. The image consists of five layers. From out to in there is (1) the posting of the image on Instagram, where some manipulation with color or size may have taken place. There is (2) the digital photo taken either with her smartphone or semi-professional camera. Moving in, there is (3) the Polaroid image of her board. There is (4) the YouTube video that Erika used to complement the last level (5) the museum board itself with several images. Reading the image as representation of identity as a student of the place-based ESL course, Erika

also documented the topic she most identified with in the class, the Freedom Riders of 1961, who fought for equality in public transportation.

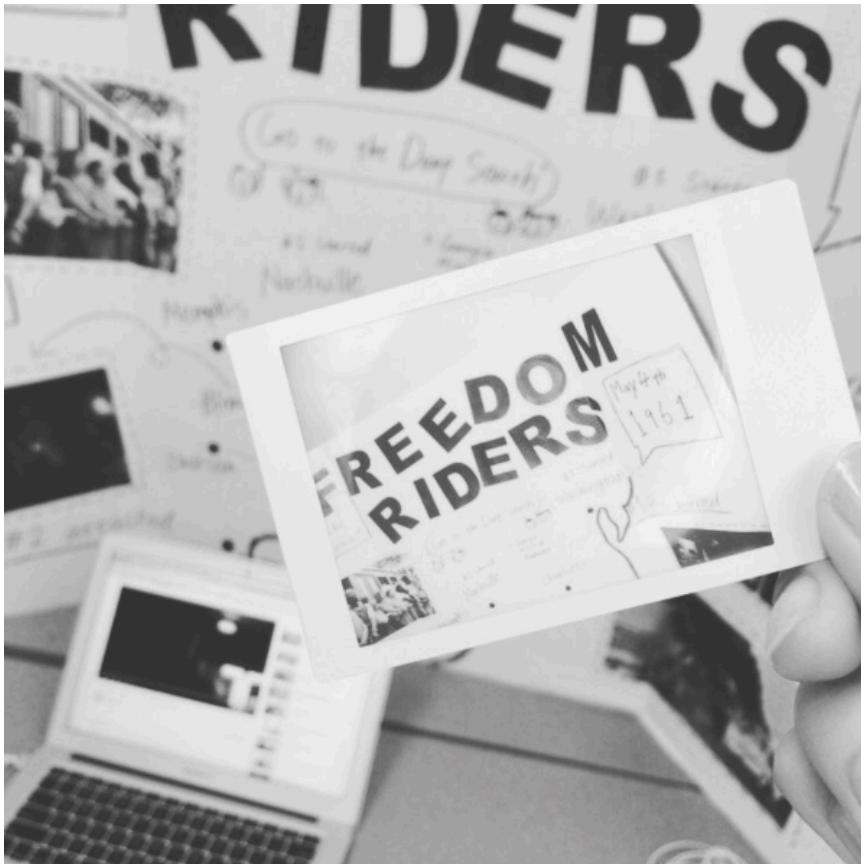


Figure 5.4: Erika's museum board. Posted on Instagram June 30, 2016

Erika used photography on social media to construct an identity that was more engaged with the content of the course than our interview and her coursework revealed. The places that were important to Erika in Memphis were all stores and restaurants. The most memorable experience for her in the United States was her trip to Disneyland in Los Angeles. It was through photography and the ability to express herself through photograph that Erika was most able to demonstrate her investment in and identification with the course. This online identity would have been invisible to me if she had excluded me from her online community. Likewise, without our interview, I would have been unaware of the value she placed on the cohesiveness of her cohort.

Erika felt best about her group identity when her communities of practice were unified and pleasant.

Good Language Learner to Memphis Musician

It is only natural for language learners to want to do well. This desire takes on even more significance in the study abroad context where the target language is often unavoidable. The participants of this study all made financial, temporal, and emotional investments in their study abroad experience. Being a good language learner in an IEP in the United States is not the same as it is in Japan (include reference from Background section). The IEP in Memphis encouraged communicative participation in the classroom in both the traditional skills-based classes and in the place-based course. Each of the participants presented here reacted to that challenge differently. In contrast to previous studies on identity and language learning, this study reveals how place played a role in the language learners' learning experiences, as well as, how place factors into the good-learner identities that the participants constructed while in Memphis.

The following section provides a transition from how place and a place-based ESL curriculum affects good language learner identity to a participant who used his good language learner identity to access the identity he desired most – a musician.

Takashi – “Now, I don't have to be afraid because I have played in Memphis”

Takashi had to be a good language learner in Japan in order to be accepted into the study abroad program. Takashi was drawn specifically to Memphis because of his love of music, especially the blues. As a budding guitarist, Takashi had imagined himself in Memphis due to his knowledge of the significance of Memphis in the history of American music and his identification with the musicians that had performed there. Takashi had to overcome many challenges to get to Memphis. He did not go to school for two years during middle school

because of bullying. Takashi's first year of university was also difficult because he was not able to make friends. In Memphis, however, Takashi was able to overcome some of these barriers to construct an identity that was actively social and that made use of the social capital that his guitar playing represented. Memphis is a place that emphasizes its musical heritage and caters to musicians. Takashi's social capital grew in this new, music-centered context, but his musical talent and knowledge had different currencies within his cohort and with the MU students he met on campus. Takashi entered the place-based ESL course with a background knowledge of the content of the class from the reading he had done in Japanese. Drawn to Memphis because it aligned with his interest in music, Takashi was able to construct an identity that enabled him to overcome his social difficulties, become socially engaged, and image a future in which, as a musician, he was a powerful actor.

In order to construct an identity as musician, Takashi had to take a risk of being heard in the first place. Through playing his guitar in his dorm room, Takashi met other students living in the dorm. After hearing him play, one of the students told his stepmother about Takashi. The stepmother was associated with a Memphis restaurant, which led to Takashi's auditioning and then playing solo guitar at the restaurant every Wednesday evening and occasionally on Saturdays. To fully appreciate this success story, Takashi's backstory must be taken into account.

The identity that Takashi sought in Memphis must be understood in reference to the identities he carried to Memphis. Two identities – musician and victim – played a part in his desire to come to Memphis, the anxieties and struggles he faced in his first weeks in Memphis, and his ability to overcome the social isolation he had experienced in Japan. The cohort that Takashi arrived with, a total of 12 students from TU, served as his first challenge. A few days after his arrival, Takashi came to my office seeking help. He complained that the other male

students in the cohort were excluding him from their activities. The significance of Takashi's anxiety was did not become clear to me until our interview at the end of his four months in Memphis. Speaking about his life in Japan, he said:

Excerpt 5.8: Takashi Interview – June 29, 2016

- 1 D: So, what was your life like in Japan before you came to Memphis?
- 2 T: Specific in college, I was alone most of time so I didn't try to make a friend and but I studied hard to come here to come here so I was a good student but I didn't have a lot of friends. I didn't enjoy the college life.
- 3 D: Do you think college life will be different when you go back?
- 4 T: Yes, I think so because I became more confidence because I made a lot of friends in Memphis. Yes. I will try to make friend and I will try to enjoy my life in college.

Being a good student or good learner has been found to afford English language learners opportunities in the classroom and possibly in other contexts (Harklau, 2000). As Takashi states above in line 2, being a good student played a part in his escape from the social isolation he felt in Japan and afforded him important opportunities such as participating the study abroad. However, when Takashi arrived in Memphis, he saw his isolation playing out again within his cohort. Unlike the four Japanese graduate students in Morita's (2004) study, Takashi struggled to be seen as a legitimate member by his Japanese peers. Even in Memphis, he was not free from the social issues he had dealt with in Japan. It is clear, however, in the excerpt above that Takashi had gone through a transformation. In line 4, he notes that he had found a community ("a lot of friends") that was absent in Japan and had gained the confidence to find a new community in Japan upon his return ("I will try to make friend and...enjoy my life"). But, to describe Takashi's journey as being one from isolation to community hides the dramatic journey (from isolation to inclusion and from self-doubt to self-confidence) he had undertaken. The following exchange revealed why Takashi's exclusion for the other Japanese male students was so distressing.

Excerpt 5.9: Takashi Interview – June 29, 2016

- 5 D: How old were you when you started studying English?
6 T: Starting to learn English, I was when I was a middle school but I didn't go to middle school for two years. I didn't go for two years so actually I started to learn English when I was high school student so mostly or so.
7 D: And, you don't have to tell me if you don't want to but why didn't you go to middle school?
8 T: I can, because of overcome overcame already. So, there I was pure more than now. I believe my friends will want was going to ruin promise or relationships talking behind someone bad things. So, technically we were close very, very close and we were hang out a lot of time but they were talking bad things about myself when I didn't know this. And, I got hurt, hurt I was so depressing and also I was in a field and track club and I broke my bone and I couldn't do anything in the club, so I was just watching other member of club doing practicing to harder so I that made me very nervous and when I was very confused and depressed and I didn't want don't want to go to school anymore.
9 D: Did you study at home or was it you just lost two years?
10 T: Yes but, yes just lost.

Takashi never described himself as a victim, but from this exchange it is easy to label him as one. The confusion and depression that Takashi endured after his social and physical trauma led to two lost years in his education. That fact that he was able to make up that lost educational time, enter university, and do well enough to be accepted into a study abroad program reveals Takashi's resilience.

The identity that Takashi sought in Memphis was that of a musician. This identity would allow Takashi to escape from this identity as victim. Due to his love of blues and rock and roll, Takashi had formed a strong attachment to Memphis as an imagined place before coming to Memphis. Takashi's emotional response to going to Beale Street for the first time reveals the intensity of the place attachment Takashi had formed to Memphis. In his class journal, Takashi wrote:

Excerpt 5.10: Takashi Journal Entry – June 28, 2016

Before I came here, I really wanted to go to Beale street because I love the blues and I knew Beale street was famous for the blues. When I went to Beale street for the first time, I cried because I was so happy to be there.

Takashi's imagining of Memphis was also an imagining of himself in Memphis. good Thus the "imagined place" and imagined community opens a door for Takashi's imagined self in that place. Through his study of the guitar, Memphis music history and Beale Street had become an important to him. Takashi's backstory is important because it gives insight to why Takashi would have formed such a strong attachment to Memphis. Coming to Memphis was not only the fulfillment of a wish to visit Memphis, but a struggle with his past. Takashi's imagining of place is intertwined with his imagined self. These layers of complexity intensify when the layer of language learning is examined as well.

Like the adult ESL learners in King's 2000 study, the participants of this study underwent a transformative shift in perspective. Perspective transformation refers to a process of learning that causes the learner to develop a new framework of meaning (Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Three themes arose from the data in King's study, language learning, culture, and personal change. One participant in King's study described a transformative shift in "My attitude, my personality, my behavior, my language, the way I act" (King, 2000, p. 5). Takashi is an exemplary example of the transformative potential of language learning. In his case, it is also clear that place was a catalyst for his transformation. Whereas previous studies have examined how investment in language learning can lead to gains in social capital (e.g. Darvin & Norton, 2016), Takashi demonstrated how social capital varies from place to place. As a musician, Takashi's guitar playing was not valued in Japan. But in the rich musical environment of Memphis, his playing was valued and lead to a transformation in his self-confidence.

Takashi was able to earn social capital and be seen as a musician by his Memphis peers through his performance as a guitarist. Here performance takes on both its musical meaning and its linguistic meaning. In order to be seen as a guitarist, Takashi had to perform on his guitar. However, he also had to perform sociolinguistically with his peers (Bauman, 2000). In our interview, Takashi mentioned that the main coffee shop on campus was an important place for him saying, “Last semester there were a lot of student took Japanese class, and I was talking with them and practicing English, and they helped me to improve my English skills, so I have many memories with it.” Through his enlarged MU student social network, Takashi was able to perform in English and could be valued for that as well as his guitar playing.

Ironically, as Takashi became more engaged socially with his MU friends, his good language learner identity in the place-based course became less important to him. He frequently turned his work in late and began to participate less in class. Unlike the students in Harklau’s study (2000), who were label as bad students because they were ESL learners, Takashi lost his good student label by choice. He no longer needed the good student label to get what he desired.

Takashi was not very active on social media, but he did post a video of a speech he gave to his Memphis friends at the airport just before boarding his plane to Japan. Reading the three-minute speech to his friends from his cellphone, Takashi had to stop several times to compose himself. Of his English, Takashi said, “My English skills are still not enough so, but it’s getting better thanks to you guys.” In effect, Takashi saw his non-academic community as the place where his English skills developed the most.

Even with the history of social difficulties that Takashi brought with him to Memphis, he found his place. Looking back at Takashi’s narrative of the bullying he endured in middle school, the fact that he could tell the story because he had already “overcome” the trauma reveals

the transformative power of his experience. At the time of the interview, Takashi was not only socially confident, but he had developed a sense of place and belonging that he knew he would carry with him back to Japan. At the end of the interview, we had this exchange:

Excerpt 5.11: Takashi Interview – June 29, 2016

109 Are there any pictures that you think you'll share with your family and friends back in Tokyo?

110 T: Yes, I will share. And I want to talk about that to my friend and parents. A lot of people as much as possible.

111 D: Do you think they'll understand? Do you think they'll understand your experience?

112 T: My friends? I will make them.

The power of the confidence that resided in his Memphis-constructed identity allowed him to imagine not only the ability to make friends, but also having enough social capital to “make them” understand him on his own terms.

Takashi began the interview saying that he had not enjoyed college life and that he did not have many friends. He was drawn to Memphis because of his love of playing guitar and blues music. Through his experiences in Memphis, Takashi had constructed a self-possessed place-identity that was resilient enough to believe that he could return to Japan and make friends. In his journal, Takashi summarized his experience in Memphis saying, “Now, I don't have to be afraid because I have played in ‘Memphis’.” Takashi had taken control of his ESL learning experience and made it an experience that allowed him to construct the person, the Memphis blues guitarist, he had imagined.

Takashi's experiences in Memphis provide a clear case of how place plays a role in language learner identity. Takashi played the role of “good student” to get to Memphis. Once in Memphis, he struggled to be seen as a legitimate member of his Japanese cohort, but then found a community that not only accepted him, but also helped him overcome his social isolation and

lack of self-confidence. Takashi's investment in Memphis played a major role in the confident, socially active student he would become. Ironically, the "good student" behaviors that enabled him to Memphis were put aside once he began to find his community in Memphis.

Conclusion

Communities of practice are not isolated social bubbles. They exist within the social and physical structures that place allow. The five ESL learners presented in this chapter came to Memphis as a nascent community of practice. Through the students' engagement with the content of the place-based ESL, other ESL learners, UM students, and Memphis, these ESL learners gained a wider world view. Aya was able to meet the linguistic challenge of participating in her communicative, skills-based classes. Her gained linguistic confidence was accompanied by the broader social network she established in Memphis. MU students became part of this network and by the end of her stay, Aya felt a true sense of gratitude towards her friends, classmates, teachers, and Memphis itself. Aya described her transformation as one that gave her a wider view point of view. Aya's assessment is one that also describes the transformations of the other participants in this chapter.

The historical and cultural issues that were part of the place-based ESL course curriculum (slavery, segregation, and the struggle for equal civil rights) became part of the participants world-view. Mami and Ryu demonstrated their expanded world-view through their engagement with the content of the course. Mami's blog assignments were insightful and personal. Ryu demonstrated his engagement through his investment in the museums we visited and his knowledge of the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike. Both of these students were able to show their broader world-view through good language learner behaviors that took into account the importance of place.

Without access to her social media, Erika's engagement with Memphis would have been much more difficult to see. Erika's photography revealed an attachment to Memphis and the content of the course that her classwork did not. Even though much of Erika's online identity was built around consumerism, her postings about Memphis expanded her online identity to one that included her appreciation for Memphis and the identity she found in her group. The group photos she posted represented her ideal, integrated community of practice.

In terms of social transformation, Takashi's was the most substantial. Considering his lost years in middle school and his sense of isolation before coming to Memphis, Takashi was able to transform construct an identity as musician in Memphis that helped him overcome his identity as victim. Takashi was able to realize an identity that was inspired by the music of Memphis.

Collectively, these participants demonstrated the transformative role place-based language instruction. When the content of an ESL class allows the learners to gain a greater sense of place, the identities that incorporate the new language reflect that sense of place. Place and language are inseparable. Good place-based language curriculum design, whether in an EFL context or a context where local varieties of English and place-related issues are the focus, will help good language learners find their place.

Chapter 6: Local ESL Learners to Global Citizens

The previous chapter examined how the participants, positioning themselves as good language learners, formed place attachments to Memphis through their place-based ESL learning experiences in Memphis. These attachments in turn play a transformative role in the identities they constructed while in Memphis. Their good language learner identities became identities that reflected the content and social values of the course. Whereas the data for the previous chapter was collected in Memphis and examined the role that place played on the participants identities in situ, this chapter will examine the lasting affect the place-based ESL course had on the constructed identities of alums of the place-based course after their return to Japan.

The seven participants presented in this chapter were interviewed one to four years after their study abroad experiences in Memphis. As such, these alums were either in the final two years of their undergraduate university experience, newly in the Tokyo workforce, or, in the case of one participant, in graduate school. Without exception, these participants saw their experiences in Memphis as an important time in their lives. What they revealed in our interviews and in their social media posts is that the place-based ESL course continued to influence their constructed identities. The way that identity is constructed on social media can be thought of as showing and not telling (Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin, 2008). Social media users show their friends and followers who they are through the images and comments they make, which are often of the places and people they associate with rather than explicit descriptions of themselves. Specifically, the online identities the participants constructed reflected aspects of the content of the course, what they had internalized about the history of slavery and the fight for equal rights in the Civil Rights Movement, in a way that these participants could be described as global citizens.

Kazumasa – “Memphis created me”

As a good language learner in Japan, Kazumasa was able to qualify for the TU study abroad program in Memphis. Learning English, however, was secondary to Kazumasa’s primary goal. He was drawn to Memphis because of basketball and had imagined himself as an NBA journalist for the growing NBA audience in Japan. Being a good language learner was a means to that end. What he found in Memphis was a much larger experience than he had imagined. Kazumasa’s experiences with ESL learning, race, history, and culture in Memphis led him to construct a transformed identity, especially on social media, that reflected the complex place experiences he had.

On campus, Kazumasa quickly learned that the basketball court was an equally valid place to learn English as the classroom. In addition, the place-based ESL course gave him a historical context for the racial issues he encountered on campus, at the gym, and at the Memphis Grizzlies (the Memphis NBA team) basketball games. As Kazumasa struggled with the brutality of the historical context of Memphis, his sense of self, his sense of race, and the significance of history all factored into the experiences he sought out and created for himself. Upon his return to Japan, the identity Kazumasa had constructed in Memphis, especially on social media, led to the realization of his imagined identity; he was able to publish in a Japanese NBA magazine.

From his first week in Memphis, Kazumasa began going to the recreation center on campus to play in pick-up basketball games. During his first week in Memphis, he posted this on Instagram (See Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1 – Kazumasa’s Instagram Post – March 22, 2015:

Translation: Basketball is great culture in the US. I can make new friends everyday through basketball!! It was first time for me to join the pick-up game, but it was super fun! Just practicing speaking English when I'm free! It's a wonderful environment!!! It's not him, but I have a first friend of the same age ha ha. I will make my own place — ! #more#active

Kazumasa began this post in English, but then switched into Japanese. This single post reveals how Kazumasa was coming to terms with place, language, and identity. It also reveals aspects of his agency, emotion, and imagination. Kazumasa sought out the recreation center on his own. To enter a pick-up game, he must use his English and believe that he is good enough to play. Posted after playing, Kazumasa seemed to be filled with emotion as it was a “super fun” experience in a “wonderful environment.” Because of this positive experience playing basketball while using

English, Kazumasa was able to imagine himself as part of this environment. These multi-layered processes were all in play as Kazumasa conveyed the identity transformation he was going through.

Kazumasa's switch from English to Japanese encompasses two audiences: his followers in Japan and his potential English-speaking audience in Memphis. Kazumasa is also drawing on the English skills he had at the time. This post, early in his time in Memphis, shows that English will become part of his identity transformation. This post is also a good example of translanguaging on social media (Dovchin, 2015). In an additive approach to language acquisition, translanguaging adds to a speaker's language repertoire (Garcia & Wei, 2013; Williams, 2002). Kazumasa added the English that he could to the beginning and end of his post.

At a time when he was indirectly comparing basketball culture in Japan and basketball culture in the U.S, he was also discovering what it meant and felt like to be a basketball player in Memphis, which he projects onto the United States. In this first week of living in Memphis, Memphis life is U.S. life. He is also experiencing a sense of liberation. "Free" can be interpreted as free from English class, because he references "speaking English," but it is also a "fun," "wonderful environment" in which he felt secure practicing basketball and English. With the text, Kazumasa posted a picture of himself with a basketball acquaintance, whom he did not identify, but who appears to be an African-American, MU student. As a sport played mostly by African-Americans at the professional level in the United States, Kazumasa could be borrowing the blackness of the friend pictured in the post to add legitimacy to it.

Kazumasa's final remark and hashtags emphatically expressed his desires in that moment. This statement also shows that he was not only in a process of finding, but also one of becoming. At some level, he understood that becoming part of a new environment is not a

passive process. The experience he had playing basketball in the gym caused him to reflect on the process he was going through in learning English and finding his place in Memphis. In saying, “I will make my own place,” Kazumasa simultaneously understood that he was in a new place and that he had not established himself socially. As was discussed in Chapter 2, “place” can refer to physical locations, as well as, social positions. The “place” that Kazumasa referred to is both social and physical, a place where he would have social capital and a sense of place-belonging. Through the hashtags, “#more#active,” it is clear that Kazumasa understood the investment required to achieve this goal. He had to push himself into the places and social situations that would afford the identity transformation he was seeking.

Kazumasa actively constructed his online identity during his stay in Memphis. As an aspiring sports journalist, he knew that having a large social media following would be essential to achieving his goal.



Figure 6.2 – Kazumasa wearing the “growl towels” he got at previous Grizzlies games. Photograph by the author.

Figure 5.2 shows a picture of Kazumasa that I took before a Grizzlies' playoff game. As part of the place-based ESL course, we had visited the Mud Island Mississippi River Museum. Earlier in the day, Kazumasa had only been wearing the Grizzlies t-shirt that can be seen in the image. At the end of our class visit to the museum, Kazumasa emerged from the restroom wearing the assortment of towels, scarfs, the hat, and sunglasses. What may look to be a costume to an outsider was a declaration of loyalty for Kazumasa. In the image, Kazumasa stands in front of the Mississippi River, his arms held wide. Just as his arms span the Mississippi River, so does the bridge behind him as it joins Tennessee and Arkansas. Kazumasa's confident gesture can be read as a statement of belonging, as if he were saying, "This city is mine." During our interview, this was the first photograph Kazumasa referred to. Of it he said, "this picture told everybody I love Memphis Grizzlies, so it's best picture, one of the best picture during stay in Memphis." From this response, it is clear that Kazumasa understood the power of photography on social media in that the photograph told his social media followers who he was. Kazumasa came to Memphis because of his love of NBA basketball, what he found through posting this image on social media was that he could construct his identity on social media. During our interview, I asked Kazumasa about his strongest memories in Memphis. He replied:

Excerpt 5.1: Kazumasa Interview – October 13, 2016

- 49 K: Ah, strongest memory. The Grizzlies is special for me cause if I didn't go to Memphis, I'm not here. Like, how can I say.
- 50 D: Not here meaning like who you are?
- 51 K: Yeah, yeah.
- 52 D: You'd be a different person?
- 53 K: Yeah, yeah.
- 54 D: So, not here . . .
- 55 K: Memphis created me.
- 56 D: Wow. That's a strong statement.
- 57 K: Like if I didn't go to Memphis, now I can't write about Grizzlies on the magazine, so everybody know through the Twitter, I had some great experiences

in Memphis. So, I can write about NBA on the official magazine, so Grizzlies is strongest memory.

58 D: So, did people in Japan discover you through Twitter?

59 K: Yeah, yeah.

With over forty-eight thousand tweets, almost two thousand followers, and almost four thousand images posted, Kazumasa has an active presence on Twitter. When Kazumasa said, “I’m not here” in our interview, he was referring to his identity on social media. Physically he was in front of me, but Kazumasa understood that his Twitter identity was something that became possible through his experiences in Memphis and his active construction of that identity. He also imagined an alternate reality in which he had not gone to Memphis, one in which Memphis would be missing from his place-identity. In this imagined, Memphis-less, identity, Kazumasa lacks the social capital that gave him access to an NBA readership.

As one of Kazumasa’s teachers examining Kazumasa’s classwork and class blog, it would be easy to assume that his study abroad experiences had been good, but nothing special. These two sources of data often came across as shallow as they were filled with stock answers that echoed what his instructors had told him. A look into Kazumasa’s personal blogging and social media presence show a much different, more engaged ESL learner who used English to connect with a number of experiences that Memphis afforded him. Similar to other studies that have examined how online platforms provide spaces for identity construction (Lam, 2000), Kazumasa took advantage of the different tools that his blog, Facebook, and Instagram afforded him to tailor his online identity to different audiences (Chen, 2013). The identity that Kazumasa was constructing for himself online also aligned with the identity he had presented to his classmates and teachers (Simpson, 2013). Kazumasa’s personal blog and social media posts reveal an ESL student who sought out diverse experiences not only at NBA games, but also on campus, at the gym, at the homes of his Memphis friends, and with Memphis itself.

Kazumasa's place-based experiences helped him identify with African-American culture. One of his roommates, who was African-American, invited Kazumasa to his home and together they ate soul food, traditional African-American food from the southern United States. Before the meal, his roommate's sister braided Kazumasa's hair into cornrows, an African-American hairstyle. Kazumasa's posting of these events came under the title, "American week." For Kazumasa, African-American culture was American culture and Kazumasa's place-based experiences in and outside of the classroom had come to represent all of American culture. Kazumasa revealed the strength of his identification with African-American culture during our interview, a year and a half after his stay in Memphis. Going through his photographs, Kazumasa showed me a picture he had taken at the National Civil Rights Museum and he told me that it had been important to him to learn about "black history." When I asked him why, he said:

Excerpt 5.2: Kazumasa Interview – October 13, 2016

139 I think big deal, big problem United States. I saw some news in TV, on the TV. White man sh-, gun, shooting black man, so I can't understand why they do it. But, so I want, I want they to, they have to know about this history.

.....

141 My first friend is black man, so it's not problem for me cause I, I don't think, I don't think I don't feel 'bout, I don't feel the wall of between white man black man, so I can't understand why they shooting my friends.

As a student of the place-based course, Kazumasa had come to believe that you can change the way humans treat one another through a knowledge of history. The "White man" shooting the "Black man" was beyond understanding because Kazumasa's first friend in Memphis had been black. Kazumasa's identification with black American culture and his empathy for his black American friends were so strong that the black men he had seen being shot on television were not only victims of racial violence, but individuals that Kazumasa saw as friends.

Through his investment in basketball and Memphis, Kazumasa constructed his online identity as an NBA expert with intimate knowledge of the Memphis Grizzlies. Through his investment in the place-based content of the class, Kazumasa constructed an identity that empathized with the historical and contemporary victims of racial violence in the United States. Kazumasa was drawn to Memphis because of basketball. He had imagined a future for himself in NBA journalism and Memphis would afford him access to the basketball culture that he wanted to become a part of. Place allowed Kazumasa to reach this goal. He attended twelve NBA games in Memphis, he interacted with passionate fans, and he played basketball in the MU gym. This investment in basketball also led to experiences that Kazumasa had not imagined. Due to his investment in the Grizzlies, he was able to get a press pass that gave him access to the courtside warm up, the game from the press box, and the locker room post-game interviews. He made friends with current professional basketball players and has been published twice in a Japanese NBA magazine.

Memphis persists in Kazumasa's online identity. He has successfully constructed an online identity as an NBA expert and a Memphis Grizzlies fan. The place-based course also persists in his online identity. He posted this picture (see Figure 5.3) on Martin Luther King Day, a holiday not observed in Japan, a year and half after he left Memphis. Kazumasa's identification with Memphis and his desire to align his online identity within the context of Memphis history has endured as well. For Kazumasa's 553 followers on Instagram, Memphis is a part of who he is.



Figure 6.3: Kazumasa’s political statement. Posted on Instagram on Martin Luther King Day, January 17, 2017.

Kazumasa carried his memories and knowledge of Martin Luther King, of historical and contemporary discrimination, of Memphis back to Japan. The local, place-based ESL experience has become part of the identity Kazumasa chooses to project in Japan. In doing so, he and his classmates frequently present themselves as global citizens, which I will discuss in detail in the next section.

Local Content, Global Citizens

The name of the course the participants of this study took was Memphis Music and the Civil Rights Movement. As such, the focus of the class was on the local culture and history of the location of the class, Memphis, Tennessee. As we have seen, the place-based course

encouraged the students to confront the violent racial history of Memphis, as well as, the compelling music that came out of this struggle. As the language learners of the study grappled with the content of the class, they also formed place attachments to Memphis. This intersection of language and a deeper understanding of the history and culture of Memphis led to the place attachments and identity shifts that the students carried with them back to Japan. In Japan, they were faced with an additional struggle – how to maintain the meaningful elements of identity that they had adopted in Memphis in a Japanese context. For some of the participants, they did this through behaviors common to global citizenship.

The term global citizenship is not one that is easy to define. An early definition that refers to political action similar to the protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, Washington in 1999 describes global citizenship as:

These networks of transnational activity conceived both as a project and as a preliminary reality are producing a new orientation towards political identity and community, what cumulatively can be described as global civil society. These developments include the rudimentary institutional construction of arenas and allegiance -- what many persons are really identifying with-- as no longer bounded by or centred upon the formal relationship that an individual has to his or her own territorial society as embodied in the form of a state. Traditional citizenship is being challenged and remoulded by the important activism associated with this trans-national political and social evolution. (Falk, 1994, p. 138)

Falk saw global citizens as those actively engaged in confronting political, economic, and social norms. Today, global citizenship has become a much larger concept and the participants of this

study easily fall under the within the parameters of what it means to be and act as a global citizen.

Global institutions, such as UNESCO (2015), have established topics and learning objectives for Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and a working group made up of members of the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the U.N. Secretary General's Education First Initiative Youth Advocacy Group (GEFI-YAG) has developed tools for measuring the effectiveness of GCED (Brookings, 2017). This working group identified eight competencies for global citizenship:

1. Empathy
2. Critical thinking/problem solving
3. Ability to communicate and collaborate with others
4. Conflict resolution
5. Sense and security of identity
6. Shared universal values (human rights, peace, justice, etc.)
7. Respect for diversity/intercultural understanding
8. Recognition of global issues—interconnectedness (environmental, social, economic, etc.)

(Brookings, 2017, p. 5)

The place-based course examined in this study did not consider these competencies in its development, but in hindsight, it is easy to see that the participants developed them though the course.

This section will examine how the place-based ESL course in Memphis influenced the participants beliefs and behaviors. Mostly through participants' interviews and supporting social media evidence, this section will demonstrate how the participants constructed identities as global citizens during and after their study in Memphis. These identity transformations were performed in a number of ways and reflect the competences above. As ESL learners, language

learning and exposure to local topics induced the participants to construct identities that incorporated the competencies for global citizenship.

Haruna M. – “But about history and music, only Memphis”

Whereas, Kazumasa and Takashi were drawn to Memphis for non-linguistic reasons, Haruna M. was drawn to Memphis because the study abroad program at MU offered the type of English language learning experience that she sought. Memphis was also appealing to Haruna M. because of her love of music and dance, especially hip-hop dance. It was her academic awareness that the ESL program in Memphis was place-based, however, that caused her to be most drawn to Memphis. In response to the content of the place-based course, Haruna constructed a place-based identity that was invested in seeking out diversity and enabled her to thrive professionally after her return to Japan. Haruna’s investment in the ESL place-based course and her experiences in Memphis led to the construction of a place-identity that continued to influence her socially and professionally.

When asked about why she chose to study English in Memphis, Haruna M said, “I want to study English, but I want to I want study English about things, because English can, English we can study in Japan everywhere, but about history and music only Memphis.” Haruna M. was looking for an ESL learning experience that was different from what was available to her in Japan. Even before her arrival in Memphis, Haruna had developed an investment in the content of the class in that it was a unique experience and therefore worth investment.

While in Memphis, Haruna M. began to adopt the more inclusive behaviors that she would continue in Japan. These behaviors were also motivated by her desire to learn English. While showing me her pictures of Memphis in Tokyo, she pointed out of group photo showing an international student group. Of the picture, she said, “My group always, always go somewhere

and go somewhere always people that the guys get together, but I want to study English, then I want to by myself, so I got to [international study group].” Haruna’s entry into the international student group began with the desire to improve her English, but what she found caused her to become more aware of politics and history. Comparing her social groups, she said:

Excerpt 5.3: Haruna Interview – October 13, 2016

171 Hmm, mmm, so, so many Japanese student, Japanese student doesn't interested in like a [looks up word] ah, political movement, because we don't we don't like study history and but in America, America has, has deeply history even the student, ah, president action, student vote or have strong mind. When I, I saw, so I wonder why, why people in America everyone join to, join, join the president action, but the Japanese not.

While in Memphis, Haruna M. was beginning to think more critically about political and historical issues in the United States and to question the lack of interest or involvement, as she perceived it, in these matters in Japan.

The content of the place-based course added to Haruna’s awareness of shared human values and had a profound effect on her identity transformation. When she returned to Japan, she sought out diversity and continued to learn about the history of the United States. During our interview, I asked Haruna about how living in Memphis had affected her:

Excerpt 5.4: Haruna Interview – October 13, 2016

160 D: When you came back to Japan, did you feel different about Japan?
161 HM: Ah! Mmm, mmm, so after I come back to Japan, my motivation is so high and I want to talk with many people who another country or so Japanese student also, because we studied about, about like a segregation.
162 D: Mm hmm.
163 HM: We learned about segregation, so I want to know and share or so I don't want to, to have communication only with the good friend. I want to have communication with the new person.

Although I had asked about how Haruna M. felt about Japan, she described her personal transformation instead. For Haruna M., learning about the history of segregation in the southern United States became a catalyst for a change in her language behavior. She was no longer content living a social life in which the only interactions she had were those that made her comfortable. She actively sought out “new” people as if it were her call to “desegregate” TU, a place where it is easy to settle into academic and social circles.

This theme of school integration was directly tied to the content of the place-based curriculum, which included the integration of schools in the United States during the Civil Rights Movement and a trip to Central Little Rock High School. Whereas some students returned to Tokyo with a resolve to improve their English, Haruna M. seems to have returned to Tokyo with the resolve to be more inclusive in her social interactions. Haruna M’s social and academic experience in Memphis became intertwined into a code of social ethics that she constructed for herself. Haruaka M. brought photos with her from the class trip to Little Rock Central High School, which is famous for being the first major high school in the southern United States to be forced to integrate. Here is the exchange we had about these photographs:

Excerpt 5.5: Haruna Interview – October 13, 2016

- 86 D: So, why did you bring these pictures from Little Rock?
87 HM: Mmm, so all things I learn and heard, so, so, too shocking for me.
88 D: Mm hmm.
89 HM: Then I can't forget. Then so after I go there, I decided to, to my topic for the museum.
90 D: Did you do the Little Rock Nine? [See Figure 5.4]
91 HM: Yeah, yeah.
92 D: Do you ever talk about this now in Japan?
93 HM: Ah, I don't talk to others, but so when I study about history of America I, I know about this topic, this topic and Martin Luther King and, ah, slavery and so I keep learning.

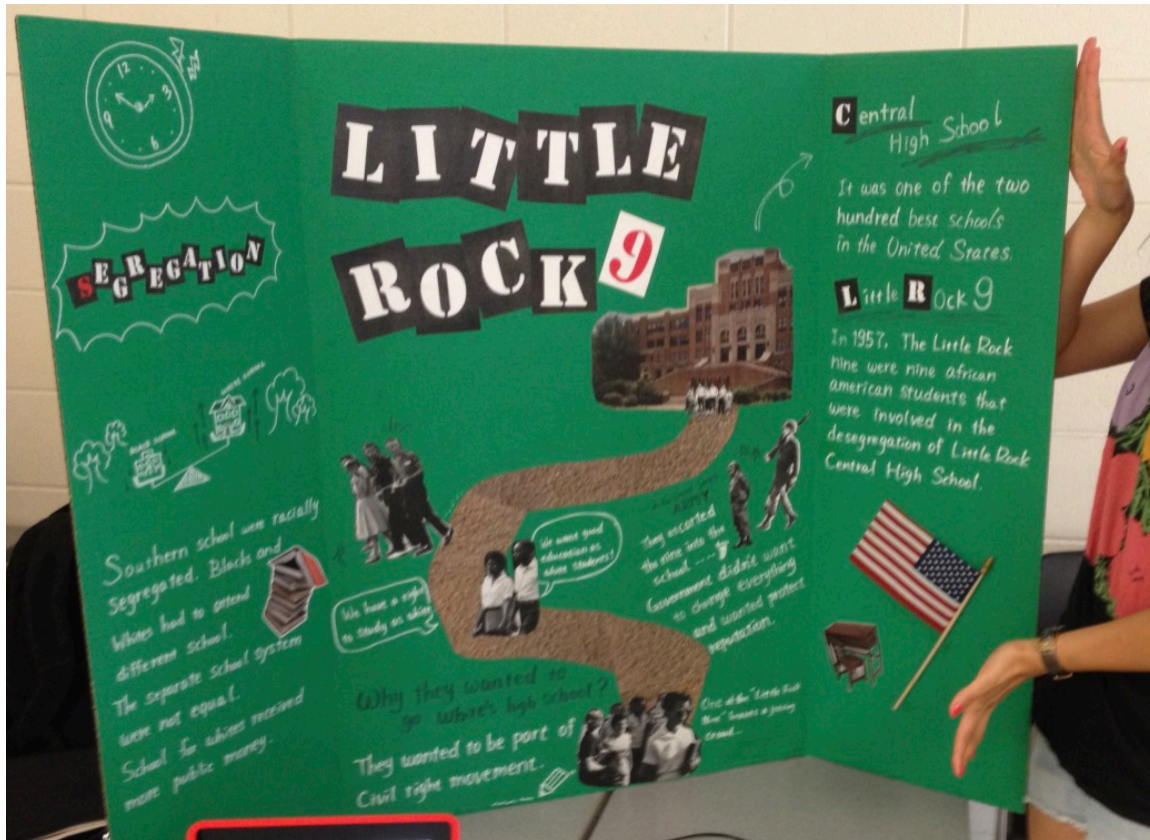


Figure 6.4. Haruna M's museum project board on the Little Rock 9. Photo by the author.

Throughout the interview, Haruna M. created a narrative that linked her desire to study in the place-based program with its focus on history, the content of the course, which exposed her to the “shocking” racial history of the United States, and the effects those experiences had on her academic and professional decisions and behavior. From Haruna M's response, we can see that the content of the place-based course was not just a passive interest but became something that she actively sought more knowledge about by taking additional American history classes, reflecting on the significance of that history, and seeking additional ways to understand racism.

It would be easy to think that the racial history of Memphis and the southern United States would have caused Haruna M. to develop a place aversion to Memphis. The opposite seems to have happened. Haruna M's place attachment to Memphis is quite strong as the following exchange reveals:

Excerpt 5.6: Haruna Interview – October 13, 2016

86 D: What do you tell [people in Japan] about Memphis?

87 HM: So, like when we planning to go trip somewhere then so everyone say New York or Los Angeles, but I tell them I want to go Memphis, but they, they didn't know where is Memphis and I explain about my, my life in Memphis then, then when I talking with people who love music, then I talk the Memphis music and at class I learning about American history then teacher question, I could answer then, teacher why you know, and I say I have studied at Memphis and I visit many places.

Haruna M's response reveals the scope of her place attachment to Memphis. From persuading others to visit Memphis to speaking about Memphis's music and history, Haruna M's place attachment to Memphis consistently arises in her social interactions where her identity is deeply tied to her place-based learning experiences in Memphis. In the interview, Haruna also referred to the effect segregation and racism had on her professional life. As a representative for an energy drink company, Haruna M. had to travel around Japan, even as a university student, and engage with people who attended these events from Japan and abroad. Haruna understood that her investment in the content of the class, especially segregation, enabled her to see the need to be inclusive in all aspects of her life and that this made her better at her job.

After her return to Japan, Haruna M. was motivated to be more socially inclusive. The history of segregation in the southern United States acted as catalyst for Haruna M's desire to make her social world more diverse. Haruna M. also understood how this openness made her better at her job, a job in which she has to engage with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Haruna M. constructed a strong place-identity in Memphis. Its strength compelled her to be more inclusive in her academic life at TU and continued to influence her social and professional behavior and aspirations.

Kinji – “Foreigner is, ah, human”

Whereas Haruna M. was drawn to Memphis for the unique educational opportunity Memphis offered her, Kinji was drawn to Memphis because he had imagined himself in a landscape that was less urban than Tokyo. Kinji had also populated that landscape with what he called foreigners and imagined an identity for himself that was drawn from American popular culture. Kinji’s place-based ESL learning experience in Memphis led him to reflect on race and construct an online identity rooted in Memphis through the posting of observations, photographs, and videos. These postings also demonstrated his gained respect for diversity and intercultural understanding. Kinji arrived in Memphis with a guitar in hand and bought a skateboard during his first week. For Takashi, the guitar represented a connection to the musical history of Memphis. For Kinji, the guitar and skateboard would figure prominently into the identity he would construct during the next four months and continue to be part of his online identity. Kinji positioned himself outside of the stereotypical Japanese student in many ways. He asked specific and direct questions. He was not afraid to express his opinion. He had a loud laugh. And, he frequently acted in a way that demonstrated that his personal goals were more important than the interdependence most Japanese students enjoy (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000). He wrote in his journal on his second day in Memphis, March 14, “I’m Annoying to Japanese student. They are like a dumpling. I wanna fard out from member of 12.” It is unclear what Kinji meant specifically my “fard out,” but it is clear that he saw himself outside of the group of twelve students who had arrived as a cohort only two days earlier. Over the semester, Kinji did not distance himself from the other twelve in the classroom, but he definitely preferred to spend his free time alone or with other MU students.

Kinji's desire to distance himself from the other Japanese students aligns with his reasons for studying ESL in Memphis. Kinji became interested in study abroad and in English due to an encounter he had with an exchange student from the United States during his first semester at TU:

Excerpt 5.7. Kinji Interview – October 13, 2016

- 1 D: So, tell me when did you start studying English?
2 K: Ah, basically Japanese starts from junior high school, but I, in class, but I don't, I didn't have interest on to English so that score was terrible. And, I moved to Tokyo for the college, for the university, [TU], and when I was a freshman in the soccer class, I met a first friend foreigner. You know he was study abroad student from U.S.
3 D: Where was he from? Do you remember?
4 K: Um, California, I think.
5 D: Ok. So, you met him did that change your . . .
6 K: Yeah.
7 D: Attitude or your opinion . . .
8 K: Yeah.
9 D: About English?
10 K: English and foreigner.
11 D: Oh, really!?
12 K: Yeah.
13 D: What did you think before?
14 K: Ah, I mean I uh, I'm Japanese so I, I'm, I'm caring about people and I caring to friends and he was very gentle and I realized foreigner is, foreigner is, ah, human [laughs].
15 D: So, he became like a real person.
16 K: Uh [affirmative]
17 D: Interesting. So, is that when you decided to do study abroad?
18 K: Yeah. I wanted to know about foreigner and outside of Japan.
19 D: So, was Memphis your first choice?
20 K: Yeah.
21 D: Why did you choose Memphis?
22 K: Music.
23 D: Really!?
24 K: Yeah. And, it's not huge city like little bit countryside. Yeah, I like countryside.

From this exchange, we can see that Kinji's investment in study abroad began with a meaningful encounter with a study abroad student studying at TU from the United States. This encounter changed the way Kinji saw foreigners. In his words, this exchange student became "human". This transformational shift in the way Kinji perceived others caused an identity shift in Kinji. He began to see himself as a different person who needed to travel outside of Japan. The place he chose to travel to aligned with other aspects of his identity interests, music, and the type of landscape he imagined himself living in.

From Kinji's journal, it is clear that Memphis was becoming a place of adventure. A Facebook entry from April 30, 2015 reads, "I want to explore more Memphis!!! I like river. Especially, Mississippi river!!! Yeahhh, I want to dive to the wide river out of curiosity. Thank you good time everyone~" Kinji began to explore the landscape that he had imagined and as he made these explorations, the landscaped changed. His skateboard became an essential tool for his explorations. He bought his first skateboard only a week into his stay and began learning how to use it. On April 16, 2015, a month after his arrival, Kinji made this post on Facebook:

計画性って言葉! 計算。算数。スケートボードでダウンタウンまでのかかる時間は「1時間22分40秒」や! らくしょう! らくしょう!

Do you know intentionally? I know haha!!! Till Memphis downtown "1 hour 22 min 40 sec" by skate board!!!! Yeah good!!! Easy easy!!!!

See Translation

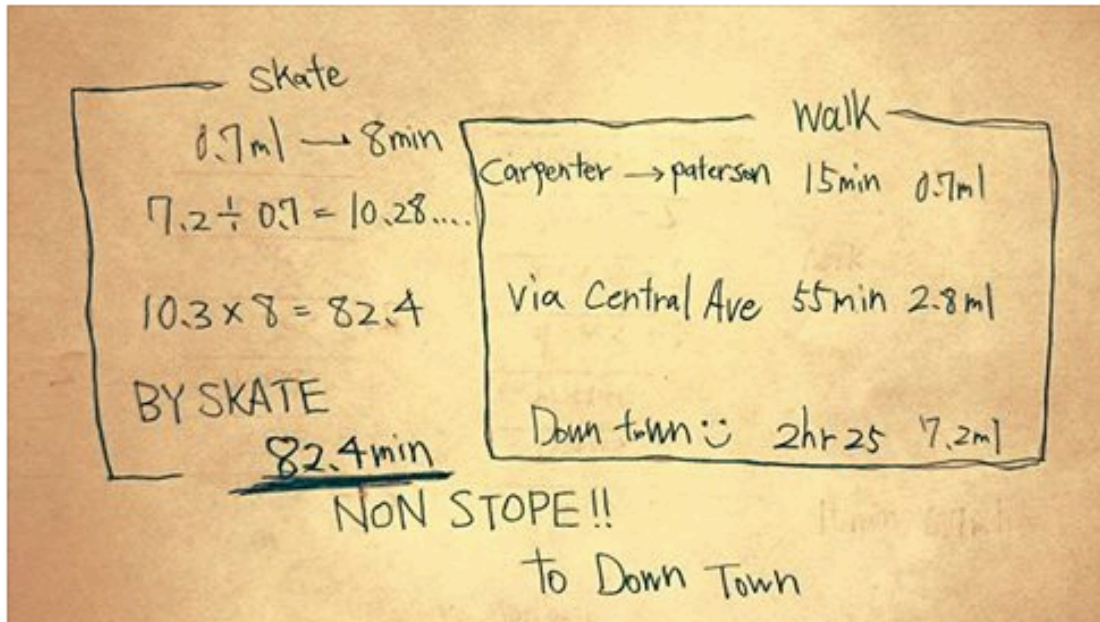


Figure 6.5. Kinji's calculations of the distance from his dorm to downtown Memphis and the length of time each would take. Posted on Facebook on April 16, 2015.

The Japanese translates, "It's a plan! Calculate. Math. It's about 1 hours, 22 minutes and 40 seconds to downtown. Come on! Come on!" As an adventurer, Kinji needed to move through the landscape. His skateboard became the tool that would allow him to explore Memphis more efficiently.

As Kinji explored Memphis, he began to have off campus experiences about which he frequently posted on social media. In mid-April, Kinji skated to the main skate park in Memphis. Kinji posted two pictures of this experience on Facebook. The first shows Kinji with two African-American skaters. The second is of the skate park itself. [See Figure 5.6]



Figure 6.6. Kinji’s photo of the largest skate park in Memphis. Posted on Facebook on April 17, 2015.

Of the experience, Kinji wrote with the post, “They don’t have hard territory in skate park!!! Wow. I am newcomer and not native speaker right? Thanks anyway. I like it!! Nice Memphis!! Little far the park, 25min by skate. But I want to visit many times!!!” From this post, we can that Kinji sees himself as an outsider both spatially and linguistically. As a skateboarder Kinji described himself as a newcomer, who in some skateboarding circles would have no territorial rights, “hard territory,” to skate in the skate park. As an ESL learner, Kinji also understands how he could have been kept on the margins of the park instead of being allowed into the space territorially and linguistically. For Kinji, the distance and effort became worth the experience.

Later in his stay, he was mugged one evening as he was leaving this skate park. Kinji had kept this encounter a secret from his teachers in the IEP. During our interview, Kinji told me about the mugging and the effect it had on his understanding of race and his expanding definition of humanity. I was asking Kinji about his strongest memories in Memphis and Kinji told me that through his experiences with “black people” that he had learned that “there is good person and

really bad person.” When I asked him what he meant by this, he told me of the encounter he had had with a group of African-Americans in which “they took my phone and after that hit me.” Due to Kinji’s raised awareness of humanity, he was able to separate this event from all encounters he had had with African-Americans in Memphis. In contrast to the group that had mugged him, Kinji described his African-American roommate:

Excerpt 5.8. Kinji Interview – October 13, 2016

- 107 K: My roommate was really aggressive. He, if I alone in the Carpenter in my room, he knocked to my door like ask me, he asked me, "Do you want to hang out tonight?"
- 108 D: So, aggressive in a good way.
- 109 K: Yeah, good way.
- 110 D: Oh, ok. So, so he was, he was, he included you.
- 111 K: Yeah.

Because of his exploration of Memphis, Kinji was able to have a range of place experiences. These experiences complemented the content that he was learning about in the place-based course. Kinji’s journal from the second week of the class, where segregation, the blues, and the Great Migration is covered, is filled with entries that reveal how Kinji was struggling to understand race relations in the southern United States, as the following excerpts reveal:

Excerpt 5.9. Kinji Journal Entries – June 17 through June 25

5-17 Day 67

Why different Africa-America’s English. Why they called friends “Nigger” each other? The don’t wanna looked an uncle tom? Anyway, I guess that they blend in white to black in Memphis.

5-19 Day 69

The realizing is brand new things. KKK, Red neck, slaying somebody, their education level.

5-20 Day 70

This class gave me what is new views. I searched about internment camps. But we couldn’t find well some info on Internet. It was in Japanese. IN English gave new world.

5-25 Day 75

In Memphis, white have money more than black. I learned history of river town.

These excerpts show the preoccupation Kinji had with race over the eight days the excerpts cover. Throughout the journal, Kinji makes additional observations about race and history, but not with the same intensity.

Kinji came to Memphis seeking an adventure that would allow him to interact with new people, “foreigners,” and a new landscape. Kinji’s investment in this venture led him to places and realizations that contributed to his identity as a global citizen. The foreigners that he wished to learn about became a spectrum of races, classes, and historical events through the place experiences that Kinji created for himself and the content of the place-based ESL class. It would be easy to assume that learning of the racial violence of the United States and being a victim of a crime in Memphis would have caused Kinji to form a place aversion to Memphis. In fact, Kinji’s place attachment to Memphis grew. In his final month in Memphis, Kinji posted movies that demonstrated this attachment. One movie shows scenes from the MU campus, which is accompanied by Bob Marley’s song, “One Love.” Kinji also posted a video of himself singing a song he had written about Memphis entitled, “I’m Gonna Miss You Memphis.”

Maki – “We don’t have that chance in Japan”

Maki came to Memphis because she had the dream of becoming a flight attendant, a very competitive job in Japan. Our interview took place in the Narita International Airport, the busiest airport in Japan, just after my arrival. Working as a counter agent at the time, Maki was able to see how content of the place-based ESL course helped her do her job more effectively. The professional identity that Maki used in Japan was one that was informed contentment of the place-based class, especially her understanding of the struggle for Civil Rights in the southern United States. This understanding caused Maki to have more empathy for her non-Japanese

customers, which in turn increased her ability to communicate with them while giving her a greater sense of her own identity as a global citizen and, from her perspective, had helped her treat her customers equally regardless of race.

At the time of our interview, Maki saw her experience in Memphis as intimately tied to her career. On the long flight from the United States to Japan, I had begun to question the value of hosting ESL learners in Memphis only to expose them to the city's violent past. When I asked Maki about this, she responded:

Excerpt 5.10. Maki Interview – October 11, 2016

93 M: No. No. No. Um, because I don't study recently, so I used the dictionary to look up the word. I think just study English and grammar, listening, reading that's we can do that in Japan as well so that was great, I think cause, mmm, we don't get that opportunity to learn about Memphis, like even it's a bad thing, like history, we don't have that chance in Japan.

Maki had prepared for our interview by reviewing some of the vocabulary that she expected me to ask her about, the vocabulary that she recalled as important from the place-based ESL course. Maki's response that learning about the violent racial history of Memphis did not cause her to form place aversions to Memphis helped me believe that the line of questioning that I had written for the ten interviews that I would conduct in Tokyo was not ill-formed. As I'm sure most qualitative researchers can sympathize, I had doubts as to the validity of the thesis I was hoping to defend. Maki's response and the earnestness of her response helped ease my doubts. Her response also echoed what other alumni would say in their interviews that the only study abroad program available to her where they could study history was the program in Memphis. As our interview continued, Maki quickly brought up the effect the content of the place-based class had had on her daily interactions at work. As a counter agent in Japan's busiest airport, Maki had to

interact with a wide array of domestic and international customers. Here, Maki describes the impact the racial content of the course had on her professionalism:

Excerpt 5.11. Maki Interview – October 11, 2016

96 D: Do you think learning about the, the difficult history, learning about music, do you think that affected you or changed you in any way?

97 M: I think so, 'cause learning about slavery or discrimination, we kind of knew that, but we didn't know, mmm, like the we didn't know the fact. My brain! So, that helps me, because I learned, learned about that so now I can be, I can talk to like black people not to be rude. You know. I have a chance to talk to them at my work like we have some customers. So, but, I don't, I don't do them like special things, but everyone is same, right? So, I like learned that kind of thing so I can be like equally.

Maki's blunt claim that she knew how not to be rude to black customers would not sound strange to most people who grew up in Japan. The diversity that is found in most western cities in the Western Hemisphere is not found in Japan. In Maki's words, "At my hometown, we don't see like that much foreigners like some, some people not from Japan. So, but now, I feel like natural and I can talk to them naturally." Through the place-based language learning experiences Maki had in Memphis, she was able to develop a greater awareness of how Japanese typically react to non-Japanese, to feel herself no matter with whom she interacted at work, and adjust her professional behavior to one that, in her opinion, is perceived as natural. Maki also referred to the training she had received by her company on the issue of equality. She felt that this training was easier for her than her co-trainees because she learned about the history of racism, discrimination, and segregation in the place-based class.

As a side point, Maki's "My brain!" exclamation was in reference to the linguistic challenge she was facing due to the fact that she had not recently used English as intensely as the interview required her to do. At the time of this writing, Maki has just completed a four-week

training to be a flight attendant for a Japanese airline and has begun to work in the profession she had dreamed of.

Mitsuki N. – “I didn't have dream like I want to be something”

Mitsuki N.'s place-based ESL learning experience completely shaped her career path. Before studying in Memphis, she had no clear career path. The content of the course, specifically the Atlantic slave trade, helped her see the greater universal values that all humans share and to individually take action in response. Before Mitsuki N. returned to Japan, she had decided to change her major to NGO management. Our interview was one of the shorter interviews that I did in Tokyo. Mitsuki N. seemed fairly nervous about speaking in English with me. She frequently used Japanese expressions during the interview and said that she felt that her English was at its “worst.”

The following selections from our interview demonstrate the extent to which Mitsuki N. understood how the content of the course was directly tied to the global citizen identity she constructed for herself. About her decision to attend TU she said, “So, I was thinking, I was thinking my future about the work or many, many things. I didn't have dream like I want to be something.” Mitsuki N. made it clear that some of the identity choices she was searching for, a college major and career path, were answered during her time in Memphis. When I asked her about her strongest memories of the course, she replied:

Excerpt 5.12: Mitsuki N. Interview – October 15, 2016

89 MN: Strongest, mmm, studying about the people, like the black people, [Japanese expression].

90 D: The slavery?

91 MN: Ah, yes.

92 D: Or the segregation.

93 MN: Slavery.

94 D: Slavery. Ok, do you remember what part was strong?

95 MN: Um, I was, when I studied that, I was very, I feel very sad, so that's why before come back to Japan, I choose the, I choose the text, I choose in the NGO, studying NGO in [TU].

Mitsuki N. came to Memphis searching for a career path. What she revealed during our interview was that the content of the place-based ESL course, the content around slavery in the southern United States, had caused her to construct her professional identity in response to the social issues she had been exposed to in the course. Studying about inequality in the United States also pushed Mitsuki N. to invest in another study abroad program, a three-week, NGO focused program in the Philippines through TU where she could study and assist low income Filipinos who were trying to improve their economic conditions through eco-business.

Even though Mitsuki N. did not feel confident in her speaking skills in English at the time of our interview, she communicated quite a bit about the identity shifts she went through before, during, and after her time in Memphis. Of her sense of self after she returned from Memphis, she said, “after back from Memphis, I wanted to talk to somebody like foreigners more than, more than before, because little bit, because I got confidence like in talk to in English.” As a recurring theme in the interviews, the content of racial divisions in the United States caused the participants to reframe their day-to-day social engagement with others in Japan.

Ayami – “I really want to feel the local, local culture”

Ayami’s place-based experiences followed a clear arc before, during, and after her time in Memphis. Ayami had a type of city in mind before her study abroad. She did not want to study English in a place that had many tourists, because these were the types of places that she could go to for vacation. Studying in Memphis caused Ayami to reframe the way she saw the English language and the way she saw Japan. These re-framings also pushed her toward another study abroad experience, this time in the EU, because she felt confident enough to immerse herself in

business program that was taught in English. Due to the recognition of global issues that she gained through the place-based course, Ayami felt an interconnectedness with others and the security in her English-speaking identity to pursue study abroad again.

After being indifferent to studying English in high school, Ayami's decision to study abroad made her "really eager to learn English finally." When asked why she chose Memphis, she said:

Excerpt 5.13: Ayami Interview – October 14, 2016

20 I didn't want to go the big city, because just I can go anytime for trip, right. And there are many foreigners, tourists, in the big city all over the world, of course. So, just one purpose I really want to go country, kind of countryside, because it's more, I can feel local culture and I didn't want to see many foreigners or, ah, how to say, tourists. It's a bit boring for me, but I really want to feel the local, local culture.

From this response, we can see that Ayami had imagined the kind of city she wanted to travel to and study English in. Ayami grew up in Tokyo, a megacity with a population of ten million people. Compared to Tokyo, a city like Memphis, with a population of 650,000, could feel like the countryside, and she described it as "the kind of city that [she] expected."

The place-based ESL experience caused Ayami to see Japan differently. When she returned to Japan, she became more "grateful" and she realized "little by little" that her new perspective allowed her to notice aspects of Japanese culture that she had never questioned before:

Excerpt 5.14: Ayami Interview – October 14, 2016

77 When I was in America, I also could notice there are different sides of view to the Japan. And how to say? You know what I mean? To know another culture means also knowing my own culture, so at that time most longest time for me to stay abroad, not like short time trip, so yeah, I could notice what my country seems like, not perfectly, but I started to notice about and after came back I could notice

“oh that's why” . . . it was like culture shock even though my own country a little bit.

Ayami's place-based language learning experience in Memphis caused her, in time, to reflect on Japanese culture and to have deeper insight and realize, without the terminology, that she had suffered from reverse culture shock (Gaw, 2000), where returning to one's home country feels strange because the experiences abroad have changed the traveler and the way she perceives her home country.

The greatest effect of Ayami's experience in Memphis was the desire it created to study abroad again. Ayami entered another study abroad program two years after her return to Japan. The program was an EU-Japan sponsored program, which eased the financial burden of entering it. Ayami saw a clear connection between her experience in Memphis and her willingness to study in the EU:

Excerpt 5.15: Ayami Interview – October 14, 2016

100 But, absolutely, the experience from Memphis, because is connected now. Really. Because I had that experience, it's why I could try something new like study something by using English, because when I study in Memphis, I could finally understand grammar, English grammar, finally I could understand. Seriously. It's really connected my, after my career, it affect well, so really yeah, I really say thank you. You and Memphis.

It is interesting to note that for Ayami successful English use is tied specifically to knowledge of grammar. Even though Ayami understood the limitations of her English education in Japan and that, for her, interacting in English was a better method for learning English, she still carried the grammar-heavy focus that her Japanese English language classes had been built around. It is also interesting to note that through the place-based language learning experience that Memphis had become personified as something she could thank directly. The place-identity that Ayami had

constructed in Memphis was an identity that saw itself capable of travelling more and making use of English in other educational contexts.

The arc of Ayami's place-based language learning experiences led to paths that she had not imagined. The contrast of the place she imagined with the reality of the English and place experiences there caused a shift in how she saw her native Japan and her future. The linguistic confidence she gained in Memphis led her to seek out new places and educational experiences using English as a global citizen.

Tomohito – “I felt Japan is interesting when I got home”

Tomohito demonstrated his identification with the place-based ESL content through his focused attention on the material itself. In the cohort, Tomohito positioned himself as a scholar whose first interest was the knowledge he could gain. Tomohito is the only participant to go on to graduate school so far. He was drawn to Memphis because as a guitarist, he was interested in the history of rock and roll and the blues (see Figure 5.7). When we visited museums, Tomohito was always the last student to come out. He would take his time, looking at and reading the information for each exhibit. Tomohito was drawn to Memphis because of his interest in music, but it was his experience in Memphis and the contrasts he made between English and Japanese language and culture that stood out in the data. During his time in Memphis, Tomohito had thought critically about these cultural and historical differences and through this gained respect for them.



Figure 6.7: Tomohito’s picture of himself with a wax-figure Elvis. Posted on Facebook January 13, 2014.

Tomohito’s experience in Memphis caused him to see Japan differently. When describing the United States, Tomohito said that he enjoyed certain aspects of American culture such as taking a shower rather than a bath and the wearing of shoes inside a house. To him, these customs seemed more “rational.” He also felt that Americans enjoy more “freedom,” whereas, Japanese must endure “a lot of regulation.” But Tomohito’s experience in the place-based class also caused him to see Japan more “objectively” as the following exchange shows:

Excerpt 5.16. Tomohito Interview – October 12, 2016

- 113 D: When you came back to Memphis from Japan, um, did you feel different about yourself or did you feel different about Japan?

- 114 T: Yes, so I feel, I felt different about Japan. So, um, I felt Japan is interesting when I got home.
.....
- 134 T: Ah, ok. So, I wented to Kyoto and watched a temple. So, I felt different, different, different feeling. I, I wanted to learn about Japan more other just a one country, not my country, just a one country. I could see Japan so not like.
- 135 D: Oh, so more objectively.
- 136 T: Objectively, yes! Objectively.
- 137 D: Ok. That's nice. So, it sounds to me that you had to leave in order to see Japan differently.
- 138 T: Yeah. Yes.

This ability to see Japan more objectively after his return is another example of Tomohito's scholarly like approach to life. In the same way that Tomohito paced himself through our site visits in Memphis, Tomohito took control of the "content" he wanted to learn about in Japan, so much so, that he worked as a bilingual tour guide at a popular temple near Tokyo.

Before Tomohito came to Memphis, he said that he only "wanted to be able to talk to a lot of people of all over the world." He saw English as a means for communicating globally. According to Tomohito, his experiences in Memphis made him "more friendly" and that he felt like he could express his opinions more directly when speaking in English. In addition to the sociolinguistic effect studying in Memphis had on him, Tomohito developed a broader, more objective sense of the world, which has led him to graduate school in psychology. At the end of our interview, I asked Tomohito if he had any questions for me, as I had the other participants. Tomohito, in the direct manner that he felt comfortable with, said, "I want to know about, about your research." As I described this project, Tomohito summed up what he had understood it to be: "So a lot of people is not, um, has lot of countries now. I'm not just Japanese. I'm the man of, in the world. Just a man with the world." Tomohito revealed the sense of interconnectedness that he had come to understand through the place-based course, his experiences in Memphis, and his reflections on their significance in the four years since his return to Japan.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I will present one last participant to demonstrate how engaging with the content of the place-based course on the Civil Rights Movement led to the construction of a global citizen identity. Shino's global citizen identity took into account the place-identity she formed in Memphis. Shino used social media to establish her place-identity. Facebook was just becoming popular in Japan in 2012, so many of the students that year opened their Facebook accounts only after arriving in Memphis. Looking through her profile, she had only posted 30 photographs on Facebook before her arrival. The album that she created in Memphis, called "Special Life in Memphis," has over 400 images in it.

During our interview, four years after her study abroad, Shino spoke of the places that were memorable to her in Memphis. The first place she mentioned was the National Civil Rights Museum.

Excerpt 5.17: Shino Interview – October 15, 2016

67 I studied the history of the North America in Japan, but it's a different from the Japanese, not different, but feel is different when I studied history in Japan and I studied in the U.S. When I studied and I saw some pictures and I heard some stories, oh, it's happened in the real. So is very strongest for me. Why the reason? Mmm, I met some, mmm [Japanese expression], the southern people, like skin is black. It's my first time to met them, so I not have negative image them, but I, still now, and I studied the history of the Memphis and the music then it has really lot of memory histories and it really bad news and bad things. Then, I saw the Memphis, the real museum or something, and I, it's a really impact or it's really strong, strong images, so I think it's the strongest.

Shino's response sums up nicely the effect the content of the course had on the participants of this study. The history of the struggle for equal rights was something to read about, but not to experience. Shino expressed the impact language learning in the place of significant historical events can have. She stated that she knew of the events but that she could not "feel" them. There

seems to be an affective factor, possibly the same factor that lead to the participants' place attachments, where the history became "real." It is this sense of reality layered with the sense of place, the "impact" that these realizations had, that led to the global citizen identities the participants carried with them to Japan. At the time of our interviews, one to four years after their study in Memphis, the participants had continued to modify their Memphis informed global citizen identities as they came into play with their Japanese identities.

The eight participants in this chapter came to Memphis for specific reasons. They all made the choice to leave Japan to study ESL abroad. In the one to four years since their return, Memphis had continued to influence these individuals' performed identities. For some, such as Haruna M., the content of the class was their primary draw to Memphis. These students understood that the IEP program offered to them was unlike any other they could take, and in some way, the content of the class aligned with their interests and desires. For others, such as Kasumasa, they wanted to come to Memphis because the city itself offered something other ESL study abroad programs could not. Collectively, studying English through the content of Memphis Music and the Civil Rights Movement played a transformative role in the identities that these participants constructed while in Memphis and the identities that they performed back in Japan.

The global citizen identities described in this chapter took into account the content of the place-based course, one that foregrounded the struggle for equal rights as it played out in Memphis and the surrounding region, played a transformative role in the identities these ESL learners would perform. In many ways, the characteristics of these identities are those used to describe global citizens. The participants of this study adopted and performed elements of the competencies of global citizenship as listed by the Center for Universal Education at Brookings (2017).

As the principal designer of the course, this alignment with the competencies, while not intentional, was a necessary outcome of the place-based curriculum. I wanted the students to empathize with the individuals whose human rights were systematically denied in the American South. The projects of the course asked the students to think critically, to solve problems, and to collaborate with others through communication in English. Through the content of the course and the project tasks, the participants went through identity shifts that took in a greater sense of shared universal values and respect for diversity. Over time, as the interviews and social media profiles of the participants showed, the local struggle for equality in Memphis became interconnected with more global issues. These global citizens returned to Japan with the desire to be more inclusive in their social interactions (such as Haruna M. and Tomohito), more engaged with social justice (such as Mitsuki N.), and more secure in their sense of self.

Chapter 7: Implications and Conclusion

Pedagogy frequently follows theory. At times, theory follows pedagogy. This study came out of a pedagogical approach that prioritized place. In the first few years of the Memphis Music and the Civil Rights Movement course, I began to notice that the students of the course returned to Japan changed and suspected that the course and Memphis had played a part in this change. My initial research to better understand these transformations led me to the work on identity and language learning that Norton (2013) and others had done. This line of research argues that language learners use their agency to gain the social capital that the new language will provide. It also views language learning as a process of identity construction, which is often described as a site of struggle. As I engaged with the literature, I kept asking myself, “What role does place play in language learner identity construction?” I felt this was a gap in the literature. A large part of this gap came from the theoretical stance that Norton had taken. Rooted in sociological theory, Weedon (1987) and Bourdieu (1977), Norton’s work, and the work of others that would follow its theoretical foundation, had developed a lens that was effective in describing the social factors and processes involved in language learner investment, use of agency, and socialization into English speaking social environments, but a lens that did not allow for the role that place plays. In order to consider the effect that place has on language learner identity, this study had to use a different lens and alternative methodologies.

Theoretical Implications

This study comes at a time when there has been a recent turn towards time and space in linguistic theory and analysis. Spatial repertoires (Canagarajah, 2017) examines how translanguaging is practiced, which shift the focus away from traditional closed structures and theorizes that communication is an assemblage of linguistic, non-linguistical, and contextual

elements. It has also recently been argued that the use of chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981), the unity of time and space in human social actions, in linguistic analyses of identities “enables us to avoid an analytical separation of behavior and context” (Blommaert & De Fina, 2017, p. 7). Looking at linguistic behavior brings to light how “specific timespace configurations enable, allow and sanction specific modes of behavior as positive, desired or compulsory” (p. 5). This study contributes to this turn toward space with a firm focus on place to understand better how language learners interact with place, give meaning to place, and make place part of their identity. For the participants of this study, their interactions with place occurred before, during, and after their study abroad in Memphis.

I have argued that place affects language learner identity. At its most basic level, the distinction between space and place (Tuan, 1977) was needed to establish what the ESL learner subjects were reacting to. To make this distinction, Tuan argued that spaces are moved through, whereas, places are where we come to rest. Space is abstract and place concrete. Place is where space takes on meaning. The language learners in this study came to Memphis as an imagined place. They had to travel across wide spaces, the Pacific Ocean and most of the continental United States for Memphis to become a real, meaningful place.

Early identity studies looked at how learners were invested in language learning and their achievement of agency (Norton Pierce, 1995; McKay & Wong, 1996). This study contributes to this investigation in that it asks do language learners form place-identities and does a strong place-identity increase ESL learner investment. Five of the participants constructed good learner identities where that were informed by the content of the course, Memphis. The eight returnees demonstrated global citizen identities in response to part of the content of the course, the struggle for civil rights in Memphis. This study suggests that language-learning investment may happen

through a place-based ESL curriculum, but at least one of the participants, Takashi, formal language learning became less of a focus the longer he stayed in Memphis. Others reported that when then returned to Japan, they were highly invested to learn and interact more in English. Some of the participants' investment in the place experience overshadowed their investment in language learning. Many of the participants mentioned that when they returned to Japan that they sought out international students on the TU campus. This seeking out to help the international students in Japan mirrored the participants own development of a greater sense of place and revealed the sense of place the imagined for the newcomers in Japan.

Some of the participants had formed attachments to Memphis as an imagined place. Some of the participants had no strong impulse to go to Memphis, while others strongly wished to go to other places and were initially upset with having to go to Memphis. Each of the participants, however, clearly formed place attachments to Memphis. These place attachments facilitated the place-identities that the participants formed. What this study has not attempted, however, is to argue that strong place attachments and place-identities lead to linguistic gains. There is an opportunity to investigate how place attachment affects language learning. The participants in this study were affected by the place-based content course in relation to their desire and ability to interact with individuals, both in the US and in Japan, from different ethnic and racial backgrounds, as well as the career and educational paths they chose after returning home. The 15 students of this study noted that what they had learned through the place-based class in Memphis had helped them to see other opportunities, identities, and careers for themselves.

This study is not asocial. It recognizes that the participants had meaningful social interactions during their study abroad. What it does is reframe the discourse on language learner

identity to encompass place. Through their developed sense of place, the participants constructed place-identities. Those place-identities helped them negotiate their language learning and socialization as language learners, students at MU, and inhabitants of Memphis.

Methodological Implications

This study made use of photography as a source of data and as a data collection tool. As a study that focused on place, photography was an obvious source of data. When people travel, they take photos. Compounded with the ubiquitous use of smartphones to capture place experiences and to construct online identity, it was logical to complement the interviews, and classwork of the participants with photography. Photography has been used integrally in studies on linguistic landscapes (Lou, 2007, 2014; Blommaert, 2013) and geosemiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Lou, 2007), where photographs of neighborhoods and signs have shown how language is used visually, especially in superdiverse contexts. Memphis has been the subject of one such study (Garvin, 2010), which examined how participants responded to transnational signage in the greater Memphis area. What this study contributes is the use of photography to complement studies on language learner identity.

Participants were asked to bring the photographs of their experiences in Memphis that were most meaningful to them to their interviews. Photo elicitation (Harper, 2002) alone can be used to facilitate the interviews. When participants produce the photography, it adds layers to the interview process. Participant-driven-photo-elicitation (PDPE) (Auken et al., 2010) allows the subject to take control of the topic of the interview, where “the subject becomes the teacher” (Harper, 1992, p. 12). With ESL learners, it may help them express something important that would not be linguistically possible in the L2 as Erika demonstrated. With the photo between the researcher and the participant, the two work together to make meaning of it. Photographs can

also help participants feel more comfortable in the interview. As these benefits apply to this study, other than helping the participants describe their place experiences in Memphis, the participants were able to express the place experiences that were most meaningful to them. And whereas many of the photographs were of occasions with friend and classmates, others were of historically significant places, places that had become important to the participants because they had identified with the place through the historical event(s) that took place there.

Another set of photographs was collected from the participants' classwork, class blogs, and social media postings. Methodologically, these photographs provided a much richer description of the participants' experiences with the place and the place-based ESL curriculum than the interviews could have alone. As a study on language learner identity, the photographs from the classwork and class blogs revealed the topics of the place-based course that the participants identified with the most. Likewise, their personal postings on social media revealed the place-identities they were constructing for themselves online. In the case of Kazumasa and Erika, their online identities showed a much more intense place identification than their interviews did. The triangulation of data often revealed aspects of the participants' language learning experiences that would have been hard to notice through only one source of data.

This study also showed how many of the participants used social media to document their language learning, social, and place experiences in Memphis. Considering the hyper use of social media to engage with friends and potential friends, the online construction of identity presents a valuable source of data in contemporary identity research. Participant photography, which is often accompanied by text, provides researchers a rich source of data that is produced outside of the formal structure of interviews and observations. For this study, photographs and their use on

social media as a methodological tool proved invaluable as a way to understand better the place experiences of the participants and their construction of place-identity.

Pedagogical Implications

The ESL place-based curriculum allowed the participants to engage with Memphis. This, in turn, had a transformative effect on their constructed identities. For IEP curriculum designers, this study should provide evidence that place-based curricula have the potential to provide a powerful means for ESL learners to engage with place of their ESL instruction. Literacy (Norton & Williams, 2012; Clark, 2013) and educational (Smith, 2002; Resor, 2010; McInernery, Smyth & Down, 2011) studies have shown that place-based education can make instruction more meaningful as it brings local content and materials into the curriculum. As a place of significance for the history of American music and the Civil Rights Movement, Memphis provided no shortage of material for a place-based ESL curriculum. Curriculum designers in less urban or historically significant places should not shy away from incorporating place-based aspects into their ESL curriculum. For international ESL learners, every place is new. Every place has a unique history and culture. As this study has shown, ESL educators should not be afraid to expose the historical blemishes of one's community. A prominent theme in the interviews was that the participants felt it was important to learn about the "real" history of the United States, the aspects that are easy to gloss over in a textbook. Being in the place where African-Americans fought against oppression and inequity and being in a ESL course that prioritized that history became cultural anchors to the identities they were constructing. Every place has rituals, customs, costumes, and/or foods that represent it. Every place has a history and culture that is promoted by its chamber of commerce. Every place also has a history of the oppressed. By

helping ESL learners find the celebrated and the notorious aspects of place, ESL educators are also helping them find the identities they are working to construct.

A place-based curriculum is not a one-size-fits-all matter. The place-based ESL program in Memphis runs for eight weeks because it fits within our overall curriculum and the quantity of content that Memphis provides. Other programs in other places may want to consider one or two-week programs or incorporating place into an existing curriculum as a project or elective class.

The place-based course that this study was based on took place within a traditional, skills-based IEP. Initially, the students from TU took eight weeks of skills-based instruction and then eight weeks of place-based instruction. Since the end of the data collection for this study, we have moved to a more counterbalanced approach (Lyster, 2008). In this approach, content and skills are stressed in equal class time and class work for eight weeks. This restructuring has allowed the students from TU to engage with the place-based content while remaining integrated with the larger IEP student population and culture. Regardless, incorporating place-based content into ESL curriculum must be intentional and assist both the students and institution in meeting their goals.

Potential for Future Studies

The implications of this study raise a number of questions that could lead to further studies. This study focused on participants who had demonstrated interest in Memphis during and after their study abroad experiences. In addition, all of the participants maintained contact with the researcher through social media. A significant study group that is missing from this study is the learners who had place aversions to Memphis. Over the six years that the course has been taught, there have been some students who showed little interest in the content of the class and seemed, quite honestly, to be happy to go home. A student in 2016 wrote on his course

evaluation that he was “happy that he had come to Memphis, but realized that America wasn’t for him.” These voices are missing from this study; and therefore, would make for a good follow-up study.

There are hundreds of IEPs across the United States and globally. With intensive language programs across the globe, there is the potential to see how other places and other languages factor into the place-identities of language learners. Within the United States, there are a number of variables that could be investigated. Variables that could be studied include: program intensity, the number of class hours per day; the length of program – if the participants in this study had only been in Memphis for one week, would they have seen their place experiences in a different, diminished manner?; the effect that an urban or rural setting has on place-identity – a number of studies on place attachment focus on national and state parks (e.g. Halpenny, 2010); population – how do language learners engage with places that are less inhabited, where silence is part of the place experience?

A shift in focus from ESL to EFL also has the potential for investigation. A number of studies on place projects already exist (e.g. Apple & Kikuchi, 2007). Future study could consider whether EFL learners develop place-attachments or form imagined place-identities when place is fore-fronted in EFL instruction. Similarly, in an EFL class, do places associated with English use need to be the focus of place-based language content? Does L2 instruction that focuses one’s hometown affect place-identity or place attachment?

The participants of this study were privileged enough to choose to study English abroad. With the intensity of human migration in the world today, place-based curricula have the potential to help refugees and immigrants develop a sense of place even when confronting racial and ethnic struggles as newcomers. With forced migration and migration to safety, migrants find

themselves in new places confronting new languages. These individuals suffer from a fractured sense of place. If place becomes the content for L2 learning, does it ease the transition by helping them construct new identities that are more connected to the new places they find themselves?

The participants of this study all arrived in Memphis at the age of 18, 19, or 20. In Japan and the United States, this is an age where transition from home to university to career is commonplace. Would language learners in different age groups have similar place-experiences? Would older language learners demonstrate more resistance to shifting their place-identities? Would place-based content be as meaningful to younger learners who have not had many life experiences?

This has also been a transdisciplinary study. It has incorporated theory from Environmental Psychology, Humanistic Geography, Phenomenology, Literature, and Sociology. This study has suggested how place can complement the literature on identity in Linguistics. Future studies on place and language learning have the potential to complement the literature of the fields listed above as well as other disciplines that most focused on place, such as Architecture and Urban Studies.

Conclusion

This is a study rooted in place. The participants, the content of their language study, the data that was collected, and the researcher himself can all be placed in Memphis. This study has attempted to show how place figures into the research on identity and language learning. It used foundational and recent studies on the topics of identity and language learning to question why place had figured so infrequently into that discourse. As a qualitative study, it collected data from participant interviews and journals/blogging, as well as, participant classwork, participant provided photographs, and social media posting about the place of the study. The place-based

course in which the participants studied was designed as a content-based language course but made place the center of its content and by doing so asked its students to engage in a more meaningful way with the history and culture of Memphis. The analysis of the data showed that place became part of the good language learner and global citizen identities the participants constructed. Some of the participants had been drawn to Memphis for specific reasons. For others, the place-based language learning experiences they had in Memphis were significant. And yet for others, Memphis figured into the place-identities they constructed for themselves on social media. Together, these analyses show that through their place-based ESL learning and lived experiences that Memphis figured into the participants' identities as ESL learners.

Place provides researchers and educators with an opportunity to make use of history and culture to help learners have a better sense of where they are as they come to terms with who they are in the context of language learning. The place-based ESL course presented in this study was designed to show how the music of Memphis came out of the racial history of the region. In as much as the students enjoyed the music, they also struggled with the violent racial history that produced it. Each of the students came to understand the content of the course on their own terms. Haruna M. and Mitsuki N. returned to Japan more motivated to interact with non-Japanese. Participants that had been homebodies in Japan, Aya and Takashi, became more outgoing and confident during their study in Memphis. Kinji discovered that studying English abroad was also an opportunity to explore a new landscape. Maiko saw that learning about the racial inequalities in the United States helped her interact with her customers equally. The thirteen participants in this study formed place attachments to Memphis. These attachments led to transformative identities that caused them to see themselves and their futures differently.

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Appendix 1: Student Interview Guide

This list includes the topics and potential questions to be used in the student interviews. Appropriate follow-up questions may arise to help participants clarify or expand upon their responses.

Background

1. What was your life like in Japan before you came to study in IEI (Intensive English for Internationals)?
2. Where and for how long have you studied English?
3. Why did you want to study English in Memphis?

General Place Questions

1. Tell me about some places you have been to in Memphis.
2. What did you like about this place?
3. Are there places you dislike in Memphis?
4. What do you not like about this place?

Experience of Place

1. Are there places from your time in Memphis that are important to you?
2. Why did this place become important to you?
3. Are there any places that you would like to visit again? Why?
4. Are there any places that you would avoid? Why?
5. Has your opinion of Japan changed since you studied in Memphis?

Past experiences of Place

1. Are there particular places that evoke strong memories for you?
2. What is your first memory of Memphis?
3. What is your strongest memory of Memphis?

Appendix 2: Journal Assignment

Memphis-Obirin Journal

Please keep a journal and write in it twice a week. Use this journal to reflect on your time and experiences in Memphis. What you put in your journal is your choice.

Your journal can be physical



Your journal can be a blog



Your journal can be mobile



Appendix 3: IRB Approval

PI NAME: Daniel Harper

CO-PI:

PROJECT TITLE: Place, Identity, and Language Learning

FACULTY ADVISOR NAME (if applicable): Lyn Wright Fogle

IRB ID: #4246

APPROVAL DATE: 6/17/2016

EXPIRATION DATE: 6/17/2017

LEVEL OF REVIEW: Expedited

Please Note: Modifications do not extend the expiration of the original approval

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

- 1. If this IRB approval has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.**
- 2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be completed and sent to the board.**
- 3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval, whether the approved protocol was reviewed at the Exempt, Expedited or Full Board level.**
- 4. Exempt approval are considered to have no expiration date and no further review is necessary unless the protocol needs modification.**

Approval of this project is given with the following special obligations:

Thank you,

James P. Whelan, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board Chair

The University of Memphis.

Note: Review outcomes will be communicated to the email address on file. This email should be considered an official communication from the UM IRB.

Appendix 4: IRB Renewal

PI: Daniel Harper
Co-Investigator:
Advisor and/or Co-PI:
Department: Intensive English for Internat
Study Title: Place, Identity, and Language Learning
IRB ID: 4246
Submission Type: Renewal
Level of Review: Expedited

IRB Meeting Date:
Decision: Approved
Approval Date: May 12, 2017
Expiration Date: May 12, 2018

Research Notes:
Findings:

The IRB has reviewed the renewal request.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

- 1. If this IRB approval has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.**
- 2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be completed and sent to the board.**
- 3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval, whether the approved protocol was reviewed at the Exempt, Expedited or Full Board level.**
- 4. Exempt approval are considered to have no expiration date and no further review is necessary unless the protocol needs modification.**

Appendix 5: IRB Modification

PI Name: Daniel Harper
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI:
Submission Type: Modification
Title: Place, Identity, and Language Learning
IRB ID : #4246
Level of Review:

Approval: Nov 3, 2017

Expiration: *

The modification is approved.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. This IRB approval for modification has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.
2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be submitted.
3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval.

**Modifications do not extend the expiration of the original approval*