

How Does Short-Term Study Abroad Impact Japanese EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate and Intercultural Communication Competence?

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Abstract

The aims of this study are to examine the impact short-term study abroad has had on a group of Japanese EFL (JEFL) university students' L2 English pragmatic competence and also to determine whether pre-departure instruction is beneficial to students endeavoring to study abroad (SA). In particular, this study focuses on gains in terms of willingness to communicate (WTC) and intercultural communication competence (ICC) in L2 English. The findings of this study point to the benefits of short-term study abroad (SA), particularly on the learners who received instruction prior to studying abroad.

Keywords: study abroad (SA), pragmatics, listenership, Japanese EFL context, willingness to communicate (WTC), intercultural communication competence (ICC)

Introduction

This study examines the effect of short-term study abroad on one aspect of Japanese EFL university students' pragmatic competence called *Listenership*, which is defined as the conversational skill-set that encompasses providing adequate feedback to one's interlocutor (McCarthy, 2002, 2003). Several studies have shown that the listenership of Japanese EFL speakers differs to that of proficient English speakers from other cultures in many respects (Cutrone, 2005, 2014; Maynard, 1990, 1997; White, 1989), and such differences can lead to miscommunication, negative perceptions and stereotyping across cultures (Blanche, 1987; Boxer, 1993; Cutrone, 2005, 2014; LoCastro, 1987). To be more specific, some of the issues with Japanese EFL backchannel behavior involved them backchannelling too frequently (especially while their interlocutor was speaking), lacking variability in the backchannels they send, and sending backchannels even when they did not understand or agree with what their interlocutor was saying. Although misunderstandings related to listenership can have dire consequences in intercultural

communication, this aspect of pragmatic competence remains largely neglected in EFL classes in Japan (Capper, 2000; Cutrone, 2016a). Various researchers, such as Tanaka and Ellis (2003), believe that study abroad (SA) might have an especially positive influence on learners' pragmatic competence. Thus, in an effort to inform foreign language pedagogy, the purpose of this study is to explore how short-term study abroad impacted learners' willingness to communicate and intercultural communication competence.

Degree of involvement in the conversations

The first area of analysis focuses on the degree of participants' involvement in the conversations. According to various researchers (MacIntyre et al., 1998; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1990), willingness to communicate (WTC) in L2 settings is seen as the tendency of an individual to initiate communication in the L2 when free to do so. In various studies examining intercultural communication with JEFs, proficient speakers of English cited the lack of JEF speaker proficiency and involvement as factors that detracted from their enjoyments in the conversation (Cutrone, 2005, 2014; Sato, 2008). The degree of involvement in the conversations is taken into account in three ways in this study: (1) WTC scores (using the widely used WTC scale designed by McCroskey, 1992, see Appendix A), (2) how much participants spoke and (3) the number of questions participants asked their interlocutors in the conversations. The higher the score/frequency in each category, the more involved the participant was thought to be in the conversation.

Intercultural communication competence

Spitzberg (2000) created a five-factor model encompassing intercultural communication competence. The first factor, *knowledge*, refers to 'the capacity to conceptualise and articulate variables, dimensions, and issues that need to be taken into account to explain or predict effective functioning in a particular situation' (Ruben, 1976: 336). Second, the term *skills* involves the repeatable and goal-oriented 'capacity to display behaviours that are defined as appropriate and functional by others' (Ruben, 1976: 336). The third factor, *motivation*, encompasses 'the set of feelings, intentions, needs, and drives associated with the anticipation of or actual engagement in intercultural communication' (Wiseman, 2002: 211). The final two components of this five-factor model, *effectiveness* and *appropriateness*, provide ICC with a notion of contextual dependence. *Effectiveness* can be defined as 'the accomplishment of valued goals or rewards relative

to costs and alternatives' (Spitzberg, 2000: 380), while *appropriateness* refers to the degree that 'valued rules, norms, and expectancies of the relationship are not violated significantly' (Spitzberg, 2000: 380).

Within this framework, in what Spitzberg (2000) calls the *expectancy* principle, it is clear to see that a great part of ICC is for the newcomer to fit into the expectancies of the target culture. Hence, relative to this study, the researcher attempts to measure how well the participants' listenership performances aligned with the expectations of members of the target language/culture where appropriateness and effectiveness are concerned. To examine this, this study will use Hecht's (1978) Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory (see Appendix B), which has been useful over the years in assessing interlocutors' listenership behavior, conversational satisfaction and perceptions across cultures.

Research questions

Research Questions (RQs) 1 and 2 are formulated as follows:

RQ 1: What were the effects of short-term study abroad (SA) on the WTC and ICC of Japanese EFL university students (JEFLs) in this study?

RQ 2: What were the effects of pre-SA instruction on the listenership of JEFLs upon returning from SA?

The aims of this study are twofold: to help researchers gain a better understanding of how short-term SA affects various aspects of pragmatic competence, and to help administrators and/or instructors better prepare their students for success when they endeavour to SA.

Methodology

Participants

The study included 24 participants in total. 20 of the participants were first-year students (JEFLs) at a national university in southern Japan (16 females and 4 males).

The remaining four participants were native speakers of English (NESs), two (1 female and 1 male) of whom served as interlocutors in the intercultural dyadic conversations with the JEFs, and two (1 female and 1 male) of whom served to assess the JEFs' performances in the video-recorded conversations. All participants were given clear instructions regarding this study and their role in it.

Data collection methods

The data in this study were collected through observations and questionnaires. First, regarding the observation phase, the researcher video recorded intercultural dyadic conversations (conducted in English) between a JEF and a NES. These conversations took place in the researcher's office, and only the conversational participants were present at the time of recording. A total of 15 minutes of the conversation was recorded, of which the middle five was used as conversational data. Prompts were given at the start to help stimulate conversation, but participants were told they could speak freely about anything they like. The video-recorded conversations were then transcribed and analyzed for patterns relevant to the goals of this study.

Another method of data collection involved questionnaires. First, McCroskey's (1992) well-known WTC questionnaire was given to the JEFs. This probability-estimate scale consists of 20 items, eight of which are fillers and 12 of which scored as part of the scale (see Appendix A). The scores pertaining to the interpersonal communication subset were used as data in this study. A second type of questionnaire administered in this study was a modified version of Hecht's (1978) widely used Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory (see Appendix B). This questionnaire was given to two NES assessors, who were tasked with watching the recorded conversations and rating the efficacy of the conversational (and listenership) performances of the JEFs.

Procedures and time schedule of this study

As Table 1 shows, the 20 JEFs were each given pragmatic tests at three points in time: within five days of going abroad (Pre-test), within five days of returning to Japan (Post-test 1), and approximately one month later (i.e., Post-test 2, the delayed post-test). Each test was identical and involved participating in an intercultural conversation with a NES and completing a WTC questionnaire afterwards. Moreover, in relation to research question two which sought to determine the efficacy of preparatory instruction, half of the students set to study abroad (N = 10) were given explicit instruction on listenership

before they went abroad (while the other half were not). This involved two (2-hour) instructional sessions focusing on improving the JEFs' ICC and ability to participate actively in conversations in English. The following strategies were used: awareness raising activities designed to draw students' attention to various features of conversation, discussions on the implications and perceptions of cross-cultural communication styles, exposure to models of effective listenership in a myriad of situations in English, and, finally, practice opportunities with subsequent corrective feedback (Cutrone, 2010, 2014).

A full account of the pre-departure instruction is outlined in Cutrone's (2016b) earlier work; however, to provide some details about the instruction given, some specific examples are shared here. Awareness raising activities consisted of having students watch videos of intercultural conversations and discuss the backchannel behaviors therein; these videos showed both inappropriate backchannel behavior (such as nodding and saying *uhuh* and/or *yeah* when interlocutors did not understand, etc.) as well as backchannel behaviors that were deemed as more appropriate in English around the world. The instructor drew students' attention to various backchannel features such as frequency (how often one sends backchannels), variability (i.e., the different kinds of backchannels used), timing (where and when backchannels are sent during their interlocutor's speech), form and function (the verbal and non-verbal behaviors used as backchannels and how well they match the intentions of the listener producing them), etc. These sub-skills of backchannel behavior were then broken down and explicitly taught. The goal for Japanese learners is to generally have them backchannel less frequently (but at context-appropriate times), with more variability and more extended responses, and to employ backchannel forms that better match the intended function in English. Once students had an understanding of the different sub-skills involved, they were given opportunities to practice appropriate backchannel behavior (and receive corrective feedback).

Table 1. Schedule of the study

Aspect of study	Time administered
Pre-SA Evaluations (observation and questionnaire)	4-7 days before study abroad
Group A receives Instruction on Listenership	2-3 days before study abroad
Groups A and B Study Abroad	Duration: 3.5 weeks of study abroad
Post-SA Evaluations (observation and questionnaire)	1-7 days after returning from study abroad
Delayed Post-SA Evaluations (observation and questionnaire)	4-5 weeks after returning from study abroad

In composing the two groups in this study, the researcher used an opportunistic sample in that he used participants that were readily available to him. The researcher had no control over which students were in each group, as the students themselves decided which of the short-term programs in Canada they wanted to go to. The researcher’s optimum scenario was met in that students of each group had similar English proficiency levels (Group A’s average score on TOEFL PBT was 503, while Group B’s was 499), and the study abroad experiences of Groups A and B were similar in the major categories below. As shown in Table 2, both programs took place over 3.5 weeks in central Canada and provided 24 hours of ESL classroom instruction per week, which focused on the development of the four major skills of language competence (i.e. Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking). In addition, both programs provided a range of extracurricular (EC) activities, which included educational field trips to historical and cultural landmarks, sightseeing trips, group shopping excursions, participating in and/or attending sporting events and parties with local and international students, etc. Lastly, JEFs in both programs lived with Canadian host families, which in many cases included other international students.

Table 2. The two groups used in this study

Group	Number in each group	Location	Length	Hours of study / week	Content of study	Make-up of class members	Accommodation settings
A	10	Central Canada	3.5 weeks	24	4 skills (+ ECs)	mixed nationalities	Homestay (with other students; partially mixed nationalities)
B	10	Central Canada	3.5 weeks	24	4 skills (+ ECs)	mixed nationalities	Homestay (with other students; partially mixed nationalities)

Results

Involvement and willingness to communicate

This sub-section will report on the degree of JEF involvement in the conversations and their willingness to communicate (WTC). Specifically, the sub-sections below will report on the JEFs’ WTC scores, how much participants spoke and the number of questions participants asked their interlocutors in the conversations.

Willingness to communicate scores

As shown in Table 3, the average WTC score for Group A rose from 47.2 in the Pre-test to 53.7 in Post-test 1 and 54.3 in Post-test 2. The average word count for Group A was 99.7 words during the Pre-test, 148.7 during Post-test 1, and 124 during Post-test 2. A paired-samples t-test showed the difference in means between the Pre-test and Post-test 1 to be statistically significant (at the .05 level). Regarding questions, members of Group A asked 2 questions in the Pre-test, 6 questions in Post-test 1, and 8 questions in Post-test 2. A paired-samples t-test showed the difference in means between the Pre-test and Post-test 2 to be statistically significant (at the .05 level).

Table 3. Group A's involvement in the conversation over time

N = 10	WTC		Words			Questions		
	\bar{X}	SD	Total	\bar{X}	SD	Total	\bar{X}	SD
Pre	47.2	25.36	997	99.7	17.8	2	.2	.42
Post 1	53.7	22.1	1487	148.7* (p=.043)	15.08	6	.6	.7
Post 2	54.3	21.39	1240	124	20.01	8	.8* (p=.024)	.63

(\bar{X} difference of Pre-test → Post-test 1, and Pre-test → Post-test 2 significant at p<.05 level =*; significant at p<.01 level =**)

As shown in Table 4, the average WTC score for Group B rose from 35.7 in the Pre-test to 54.2 in Post-test 1 and 55.1 in Post-test 2. Paired-samples t-tests revealed the difference in means between the Pre-test and Post-test 1 to be statistically significant (at the .01 level), as well from the Pre-test to Post-test 2 (at the .05 level). The average word count for Group B was 59.4 words during the Pre-test, 111.8 during Post-test 1, and 86 during Post-test 2. Paired-samples t-tests revealed the difference in means between the Pre-test and Post-test 1 to be statistically significant (at the .05 level), as well from the Pre-test to Post-test 2 (at the .05 level). With regards to questions, members of Group B asked 2 questions in the Pre-test, 2 questions in Post-test 1, and 1 question in Post-test 2.

Table 4. Group B's involvement in the conversation over time

N = 10	WTC		Words			Questions		
	\bar{X}	SD	Total	\bar{X}	SD	Total	\bar{X}	SD
Pre	35.7	21.5	594	59.4	43.08	2	.2	.42
Post 1	54.2** (p=.006)	31.52	1118	111.8 (p=.035)	*57.7	2	.2	.63
Post 2	55.1* (p=.012)	29.48	860	86* (p=.019)	35.65	1	.1	.32

(\bar{X} difference of Pre-test → Post-test 1, and Pre-test → Post-test 2 significant at p<.05 level =*; significant at p<.01 level =**)

Figure 1 illustrates the differences in mean WTC scores between Groups A and B. Both groups increased their WTC scores over time; however, Group B appeared to make greater strides in this area over time. While both groups ended up having similar WTC scores at Post-test 2, Group A started out much higher than Group B.

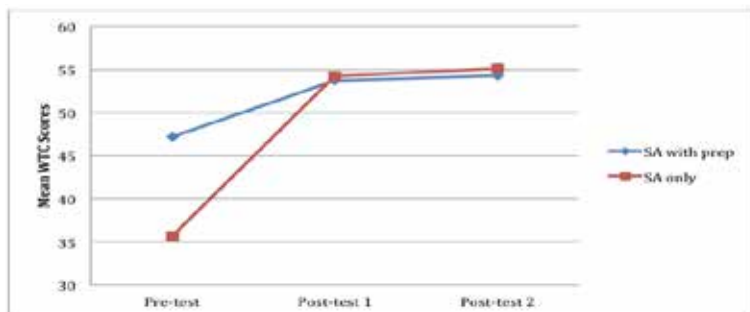


Figure 1. Comparing WTC scores between the two groups over time

Degree of involvement in the conversations

As Figure 2 demonstrates, the two groups followed a similar path in terms of word output over time. The general trend for both groups was to speak much more frequently in Post-test 1 compared to the Pre-test and then, in Post-test 2, revert to a level closer to their original Pre-test level. Group A's average word output was higher at each of the three tests (by 403 at the Pre-test, by 369 at Post-test 1, and by 380 at Post-test 2).

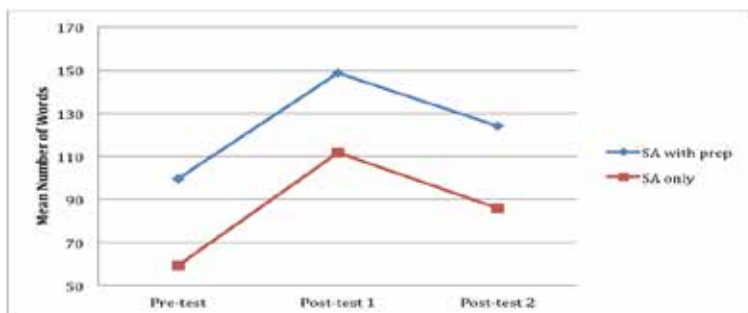


Figure 2. Comparing word output between the two groups over time

As Figure 3 illustrates, the path that each group followed in terms of the number of questions posed was quite different; Group A greatly improved over time, whereas Group B actually regressed a bit. Group A showed the greatest initial increase in questions from the Pre-test to Post-test 1 (+4), as well as a sustained increase from the Pre-test to Post-test 2 (+6). In comparison, Group B produced the same number of questions from the Pre-test to Post-test 1 (i.e., 2), and ultimately a slight decrease overall from the Pre-test to Post-test 2 (-1).

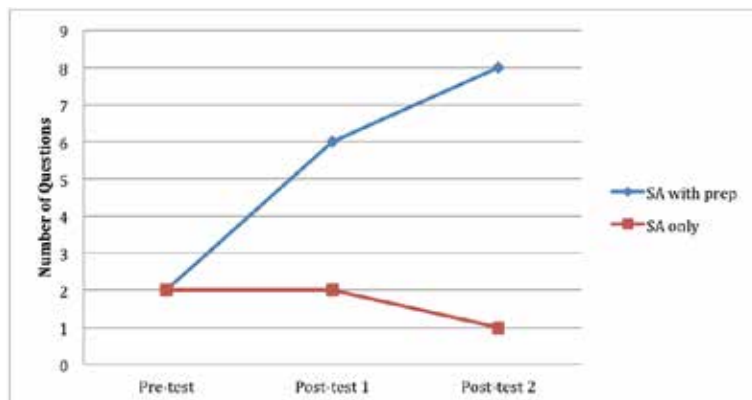


Figure 3. Comparing the number of questions between the three groups over time

Intercultural communication competence

This sub-section reports the NES assessors' perceptions of the two groups' conversational performances at the three points of measurement in this study: the Pre-test, Post-test 1, and Post-test 2. Tables 5 and 6 show the mean scores regarding the NES observers' ratings according to the 17 Likert-scaled items on the conversational satisfaction questionnaire. For clarity, items in the questionnaire have been divided into

two groups distinguished by the positive and negative connotations associated with each rating. For example, in the items in Group 1 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13 and 16), a *low* score would indicate a desirable effect, whereas for the items in Group 2 (8, 9, 12, 14, 15 and 17), a *high* score would convey a desirable effect. Analysing these two groups separately makes it possible to compare the sum totals of average responses to items in each group over time and between participant groups in this study.

Table 5 demonstrates that the NES assessors' perceptions of Group A improved for most of the 17 items in the conversational questionnaire, and the level of improvement was, in most cases, maintained through to the delayed Post-test. The Wilcoxon signed

Table 5. NES assessors' conversational satisfaction ratings of Group A over time

Items on the Questionnaire Rating Scale: 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree)	N = 10		Pre		Post 1		Post 2	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Group 1 items:								
1. The JEFLLet his/her partner know that the partner was communicating effectively.	3.7	1.06	2.2**	.79	2.7**	1.16		
2. The JEFLL showed his/her partner that they understood what their partner said.	3.6	1.35	2.5**	.85	2.6**	.84		
3. The JEFLL showed that they were listening attentively to what their partner said.	3.9	1.2	2.4**	.7	2.8**	.92		
4. The JEFLL expressed a lot of interest in what their partner had to say.	4.2	1.4	2.7**	.82	3**	.82		
5. The conversation went smoothly.	4	1.23	3**	.82	3*	.94		
6. The JEFLL encouraged partner to continue talking.	3.7	1.34	3.3	.95	3.1	.88		
7. The feelings that the JEFLL expressed by means of listening feedback during the conversation seemed <i>authentic</i> (...).	4.3	1.34	3.3	1.42	3.4	1.08		
10. The JEFLL was polite.	2.8	.79	2.2	.63	2.4	.52		
11. The JEFLL appeared warm and friendly.	2.8	.92	2*	.67	.88	3.1		
13. The JEFLL appeared interested and concerned.	3.1	.99	2.5*	.53	3.5	1.35		
16. When the JEFLL did not understand, they were able to clearly convey this to their conversational partner with their listening feedback.	4.2	1.14	2.8**	.92	3.5	1.08		
Group 2 items:								
8. The JEFLL seemed impatient.	6.6	.52	6.7	.48	6.9	.32		
9. The JEFLL seemed cold and unfriendly.	6	1.7	6.6	1.27	6.7	.95		
12. The JEFLL was impolite.	6.8	.42	6.8	.42	6.9	.32		
14. The JEFLL interrupted their partner at times.	6	.82	6.1	.57	5.8	1.14		
15. The JEFLL seemed to want to avoid speaking.	4.1	1.73	4.8	1.55	4.4	1.35		
17. The JEFLL's listening behavior seemed inadequate in some ways.	3.5	1.58	4.2	1.32	3.4	1.17		

(\bar{X} difference of Pre-test → Post-test 1, and Pre-test → Post-test 2 significant at p<.05 level =*; significant at p<.01 level =**)

rank test showed the observed differences in means between the ratings on the Pre-test and Post-test 1 were statistically significant for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 13 and 16. Many of these improved perceptions were sustained through to the delayed Post-test, as items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were also found to have statistically significant differences from the Pre-test to Post-test 2.

Table 6 shows that the NES observers' ratings for many of the 17 items on the questionnaire improved for Group B as well, and many of these improved ratings were sustained through to the delayed Post-test. The Wilcoxon signed rank test found the

Table 6. NES assessors' conversational satisfaction ratings of Group B over time

Items on the Questionnaire Rating Scale: 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree)	N = 10		Pre		Post 1		Post 2	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Group 1 items:								
1. The JEFLL let his/her partner know that the partner was communicating effectively.	4.2	1.23	3.5*	1.08	3.7	1.42		
2. The JEFLL showed his/her partner that they understood what their partner said.	4.2	1.32	3.3*	.68	3.5*	1.35		
3. The JEFLL showed that they were listening attentively to what their partner said.	3.1	.88	3.3	.68	3.6	1.08		
4. The JEFLL expressed a lot of interest in what their partner had to say.	3.5	1.08	3.4	.7	3.4	1.08		
5. The conversation went smoothly.	5	.82	3.7**	.48	3.9*	1.2		
6. The JEFLL encouraged partner to continue talking.	3.1	.74	3.8*	.63	4.2*	1.32		
7. The feelings that the JEFLL expressed by means of listening feedback during the conversation seemed <i>authentic</i> (...).	4.5	.97	3.6	.7	3.9	.58		
10. The JEFLL was polite.	2.7	.95	2.4	.84	2.7	1.48		
11. The JEFLL appeared warm and friendly.	3.5	.53	2.9	.88	3.2	1.32		
13. The JEFLL appeared interested and concerned.	3.3	.68	2.8	1.03	3.6	1.17		
16. When the JEFLL did not understand, they were able to clearly convey this to their conversational partner with their listening feedback.	5.3	1.06	4.5*	.97	4**	.82		
Group 2 items:								
8. The JEFLL seemed impatient.	6.9	.32	6.5*	.53	6.6	1.27		
9. The JEFLL seemed cold and unfriendly.	6.8	.42	6.5	.71	6.6	.97		
12. The JEFLL was impolite.	7	0	6.8	4.2	7	1.89		
14. The JEFLL interrupted their partner at times.	5.6	1.08	6.3	1.25	6	1.7		
15. The JEFLL seemed to want to avoid speaking.	2.6	1.27	3.3	1.16	3.6	1.51		
17. The JEFLL's listening behavior seemed inadequate in some ways.	3.6	1.96	2.9	.99	3	.94		

(\bar{X} difference of Pre-test → Post-test 1, and Pre-test → Post-test 2 significant at p<.05 level =*; significant at p<.01 level =**)

differences between the Pre-test and Post-test 1 ratings were statistically significant for items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 16. Regarding the differences between the Pre-test and Post-test 2 ratings, items 2, 5, 6 and 16 were statistically significant.

Presenting the NES ratings for Groups A and B collectively, Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the differences between the two groups regarding Group 1 and Group 2 items respectively. As shown in Figure 4, both groups showed improvement concerning Group 1 items over time in this study; however, the gains made by Group A were far greater, as their scores improved from the Pre-test to Post-tests 1 and 2 by 11.4 and 9.42 respectively. In comparison, the ratings for Group B improved from the Pre-test to Post-tests 1 and 2 by 5.2 and 2.7 respectively.

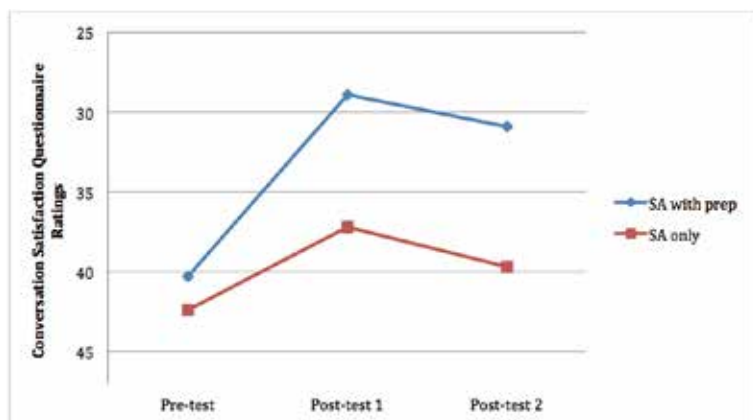


Figure 4. NES assessors' perceptions between two groups: Group 1 items

As shown in Figure 5, the path each group followed concerning Group 2 items was different, as Group A exhibited gains while Group B did not. The NES observers' ratings for Group A improved from the Pre-test to Post-tests 1 and 2 by 2.2 and 1.1 respectively. In contrast, the ratings for Group B remained fairly stable, showing a slight decrease of .2 from the Pre-test to Post-test 1 and then a slight increase from the Pre-test to Post-test 2 of .3.

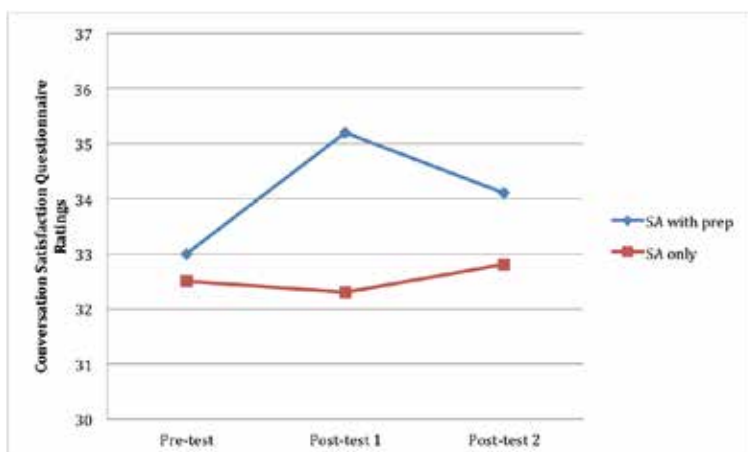


Figure 5. NES assessors' perceptions between two groups: Group 2 items

Conclusion: Summary and Implications

In summarising the findings of this study, RQs 1 and 2 are revisited and answered in succession below.

RQ 1: What were the effects of short-term study abroad (SA) on the WTC and ICC of Japanese EFL university students (JEFLs) in this study?

The data clearly showed that after studying abroad, the JEFLs, irrespective of group, improved in most of the areas examined in this study. Specifically, as the WTC scores and word output in the observed conversations showed, the JEFLs, on average, were much more confident and willing to communicate after their SA experience. Correspondingly, as evidenced by their ratings on the ICC questionnaire, the NES assessors noticed the JEFLs' heightened confidence and improved ability to converse in English. The general trend was for both groups to show the greatest improvement from the Pre-test to Post-test 1 (i.e., right after they had returned to Japan) and then to partly regress at the time of the delayed post-test, Post-test 2 (i.e., 4-5 weeks after returning from study abroad). It was not surprising that students' backchannel behavior was observed to have changed the most right after they had returned from studying abroad. It was clear that the study abroad experience affected their conversational behavior. Similarly, it was expected that since students had not been using English regularly for

over a month, some regression would be evident at the time of the delayed post-test. In other words, once they were back home in Japan, it was apparent that students began to forget some of the backchannel behaviors they had previously exhibited.

RQ 2: What were the effects of pre-SA instruction on the listenership of the JEFs upon returning from SA?

While both groups showed marked improvements after studying abroad, it was clear to see that the group that received pre-SA instruction on listenership behavior (Group A) generally outperformed the group that did not (Group B). The gains made by Group A were greater and more sustained at the time of delayed post-test. Further, there were two areas in which Group A improved but Group B did not: (1) the number of questions posed in the conversations, and (2) the NES assessors' perceptions concerning the Group 2 items in Hecht's (1978) conversational satisfaction questionnaire. On average, members of Group B, in fact, asked fewer questions after studying abroad, and the miniscule gain showed in the NES assessors' perceptions for Group 2 items was thought to be largely negligible.

Somewhat surprising however was the fact while both groups increased their WTC scores over time, the increases of Group B significantly outpaced those of Group A. This may be explained by the fact that since Group B started at a much lower place where WTC scores were concerned (11.5 average score difference), a greater improvement may have been inevitable. Ultimately, both groups finished with similar scores of 55.1 and 54.3 respectively. Further, unlike many of the other categories, WTC scores do not reflect actual performance and conversational output. Rather, WTC scores demonstrate the participants' willingness to communicate and are thought to encompass other affective variables such as confidence, motivation, language anxiety, etc. It seems to make sense then that the study abroad experience by itself would increase students' WTC, as students will have seen for themselves firsthand that they need to communicate in order to survive while they are abroad.

Lastly, concerning ICC, the overall ratings for Group A improved considerably over time, while the ratings for Group B showed only slight increases. In other words, the NES assessors noticed the improved confidence and performances of Group A much more than they did that of Group B. This was not surprising, as the positive perceptions the NES assessors had towards Group A were reflective of Group A's actual

conversational output and performances. The improved performances of Group A, the group that received explicit pre-SA instruction, would seem to support Schmidt's (1993) Noticing Hypothesis, which states that *noticing* is necessary for input to become intake, i.e., necessary for L2 learning. This is consistent with what Cutrone (2016a) found in his study that compared explicit and implicit instructional methods on 30 JEFs' listenership behavior over the course of 16 weeks in the university classroom context. While both explicit and implicit methods had a positive effect, the students that received explicit instruction on listenership behavior generally outpaced the group that received implicit instruction.

In addition to the theoretical implication presented above, a few practical implications can be derived from the findings of this study. First, the findings of this study help shed light on what students gain when they study abroad. As several researchers have noted previously (Cutrone & Datzman, 2015; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003), short-term study abroad does not seem to yield better results than stay-at-home classroom instruction where grammar, listening and reading are concerned. Rather, as the results of this study have shown, the benefits of short-term study abroad may be more evident in terms of conversational output and pragmatic competence. Further, the results of this study have shown that short-term study abroad can serve as an important motivational tool in that it shows students why they need English and, thus, may inspire them to study more and/or attempt longer sojourns abroad in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

WTC Questionnaire

DIRECTIONS: Below are twenty situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate in English. Presume that the person in each situation does not speak Japanese but can speak English. Also, presume you have *completely free choice*. Indicate the percentage of times you would choose *to communicate* in each type of situation. Indicate in the space at the left what percent of the time you would choose to communicate.

0 = never, 100 = always

- _____ 1. *Talk with a service station attendant.
- _____ 2. *Talk with a physician.
- _____ 3. Present a talk to a group of strangers.
- _____ 4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.
- _____ 5. *Talk with a salesperson in a store.
- _____ 6. Talk in a large meeting of friends.
- _____ 7. *Talk with a police officer.
- _____ 8. Talk in a small group of strangers.
- _____ 9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.
- _____ 10. *Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.
- _____ 11. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.
- _____ 12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.
- _____ 13. *Talk with a secretary.
- _____ 14. Present a talk to a group of friends.
- _____ 15. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.
- _____ 16. *Talk with a garbage collector.
- _____ 17. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.
- _____ 18. *Talk with a spouse (or girl/boy friend).
- _____ 19. Talk in a small group of friends.
- _____ 20. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

N.B. JEFs were provided with Japanese explanations. Further, the asterisk (*) marking the filler items above, as well as the scoring table below, were not included on the questionnaires the JEFs completed.

SCORING: The WTC permits computation of one total score and seven subscores. The subscores relate to willingness to communicate in each of four common communication contexts and with three types of audiences. To compute your scores, merely add your scores for each item and divide by the number indicated below.

<i>Subscore Desired</i>	<i>Scoring Formula</i>
Group discussion	Add scores for items 8, 15, and 19; then divide by 3.
Meetings	Add scores for items 6, 11, and 17; then divide by 3.
Interpersonal conversations	Add scores for items 4, 9, and 12; then divide by 3.
Public speaking	Add scores for items 3, 14, and 20; then divide by 3.
Stranger	Add scores for items 3, 8, 12, and 17; then divide by 4.
Acquaintance	Add scores for items 4, 11, 15, and 20; then divide by 4.
Friend	Add scores for items 6, 9, 14, and 19; then divide by 4.

To compute the total WTC scores, add the subscores for stranger, acquaintance, and friend. Then divide by 3.

Appendix B

Date: _____ Name: _____ Key: 1 = Yes 7 = No

Please score the sentences below based on how often you thought they generally occurred in the conversation. Based on the key shown above, circle the number that best corresponds to your opinion.

1. The Japanese person let his/her partner know that the partner was communicating effectively.
.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. The Japanese person showed his/her partner that they understood what their partner said.
.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. The Japanese person showed that they were listening attentively to what their partner said.
.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. The Japanese participant expressed a lot of interest in what their partner had to say.
.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. The conversation went smoothly.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. The Japanese encouraged his/her partner to continue talking.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. The feelings that the Japanese person expressed by means of listening feedback during the conversation seemed *authentic* (i.e., they conveyed what they were truly feeling and not just agreeing and/or pretending to understand for the sake of harmony and/or to keep the conversation going smoothly).....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. The Japanese person seemed impatient.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. The Japanese person seemed cold and unfriendly.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. The Japanese person was polite.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. The Japanese person appeared warm and friendly.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. The Japanese person was impolite.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. The Japanese person appeared interested and concerned.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. The Japanese person interrupted their partner at times.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. The Japanese person seemed to want to avoid speaking.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. When the Japanese person did not understand something, they were able to clearly convey this to their conversational partner with their listening feedback.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. The Japanese person's listening behavior seemed inadequate in some ways.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
If you answered "yes" (i.e., 1, 2 or 3) to question 17, please explain how and/or why you think their listening behavior seemed inadequate.

18. Any other comments and/or observations regarding the Japanese participant's behavior in the conversation.
