The Effects of Short-term Study Abroad Experiences on Willingness to Communicate in a L2

Adrian Leis
Miyagi University of Education

adrian@staff.miyakyo-u.ac.jp
adrianleis.weebly.com

@adrianleis
Adrian Leis
Today’s Menu

❖ Literature Review
  ❖ Study Abroad
  ❖ Willingness to Communicate

❖ This Study
  ❖ Research Questions
  ❖ Participants
  ❖ Materials & Procedure
  ❖ Results

❖ Conclusions

❖ Acknowledgements
Literature Review (Study Abroad)

(MEXT, 2013; Educational Tour Institute, 2012)

Number of Japanese students studying abroad
Literature Review (Study Abroad)

(MEXT, 2013; Educational Tour Institute, 2012)

Number of Japanese schools taking students abroad
Freed (1990) and Sasaki (2013) suggest that no significant change in students’ motivation will be seen unless students stay abroad for at least one university semester. Willingness to communicate is a characteristic especially necessary for Japanese students. Those with high WTC will have more successful experiences while studying abroad (Yashima, et al., 2004; Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide, 2008). Increasing students’ language learning motivation is possible after a short-term study abroad program, but only with support from teachers upon returning to their home country (Leis, 2013; 2014).
Literature Review (WTC)

- L1 WTC (McCrosky & Richmond, 1987; McCrosky, 1992)
  - How eager humans are to initiate conversation

- L2 WTC (e.g., MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002)
  - L2 WTC is more complex than L1 WTC (e.g., communicative competence, intergroup issues, social and political implications)
  - International Posture (Yashima, 2002)
Literature Review (WTC)
(Yashima, 2002. p. 61)
This Study (Research Questions)

1. Is a short study abroad program effective in increasing the motivation of students to study English?

2. Is a short study abroad program effective in decreasing the amount of anxiety students feel in their ability to communicate in English?

3. Does a short study abroad program have a positive effect on the international posture of participants?
This Study (Participants)

★ 80 → 75 (♀ 52  ♂ 23)

★ Junior high school 3rd year (9th year of schooling)
★ 16% (i.e., 12 students) had been abroad
★ 4% (i.e., 3 students) had been to an English speaking country
This Study (Materials & Procedure)

One week before departure

88-item Questionnaire (Yashima 2002)

Ten days in Sydney, Australia

- Compulsory
- Home stay
- English classes
- Cultural exchange

One week after returning home

88-item Questionnaire (Yashima 2002)
1. Is a short study abroad program effective in increasing the motivation of students to study English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>95%CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>α = .923</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>[3.67, 4.26]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>[3.78, 4.41]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLE</td>
<td>α = .867</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>[4.08, 4.61]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>[4.08, 4.66]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 75; MI: Motivational Intensity; DLE: Desire to Learn English; Max. = 7; Min. = 1.*
This Study (Results)

1. Is a short study abroad program effective in increasing the motivation of students to study English?

Like previous studies (Freed, 1990; Sasaki, 2011; Leis, 2013; 2014) ten days proved to be too short to see immediate significant changes in students’ L2 learning motivation.

Do students tend to overuse their mother tongue in school trips abroad? (Trentment, 2013)
This Study (Results)

2. Is a short study abroad program effective in decreasing the amount of anxiety students feel in their ability to communicate in English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>95%CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>$\alpha = .901$</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>63.59</td>
<td>[59.15, 68.03]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>55.57*</td>
<td>[50.86, 60.27]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>$\alpha = .915$</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>35.31</td>
<td>[31.60, 39.03]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>38.93</td>
<td>[34.40, 42.97]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 75; CA: Communication Anxiety in L2; PC: Perceived Communication Competence in English; Max. = 100; Min. = 0; * $F (1, 148) = 6.11$, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = .040$. 
2. Is a short study abroad program effective in decreasing the amount of anxiety students feel in their ability to communicate in English?

Students feel anxiety about making mistakes at school (Covington, 1992).

This study:
- Anxiety = 63.59
- Only 4% had been to an English speaking country

Although the short trip abroad was not long enough to see any significant increase in perceived communicative competence, it did bring about a decrease in anxiety.
3. Does a short study abroad program have a positive effect on the international posture of participants?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>95%CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IFO</td>
<td>α = .878</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>[4.12, 4.73]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>5.07*</td>
<td>[4.76, 5.37]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAT</td>
<td>α = .884</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>[3.87, 4.44]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>4.57**</td>
<td>[4.31, 4.84]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVA</td>
<td>α = .759</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>[3.93, 4.51]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>[4.16, 4.72]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 75; IFO: Intercultural Friendship Orientation; AAT: Intergroup Approach Avoidance Tendency; IVA: Interest in International/Vocation Activities; Max. = 7; Min. = 1; * F (1, 148) = 8.79, p = .004, η² = .056; ** F (1, 148) = 4.57, p = .034, η² = .030; Due to low reliability (α = .242) Interest in Foreign Affairs was not included in the data analysis.
3. Does a short study abroad program have a positive effect on the international posture of participants?

Participants’ feelings as members of the international society (i.e., international posture) significantly improved. This may have been due to communicative experiences with home stay families and cultural exchanges during the program.

Interest in international/vocational activities did not change. This may have been due to the young age of the participants. Older students may show more interest in foreign affairs.
Conclusions

International Posture and confidence in L2 seem to be a key both to promoting L2 learning and communication in the Japanese context. (Yashima, 2002. p. 63.)
Conclusions

- Like previous studies, it seems that ten days is not long enough abroad to see statistically significant changes in students’ L2 learning motivation.
- Ten days abroad was long enough to significantly lower students’ L2 communication anxiety, but not increase their confidence.
- Significant increases were observed in students’ feelings of being members of the international society, i.e., International Posture. These were, however, limited to friendship.

Study abroad programs less than one university semester can be beneficial for students. Therefore, institutions should incorporate more such programs into their curricula.
Acknowledgements

This project was supported in part by Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists B (N.o. 25770200).

The author would like to thank Tomoko Yashima for granting permission to use the questionnaire for this study.
References


Thank you for your time

adrian@staff.miyakyo-u.ac.jp
adrianleis.weebly.com
@adrianleis
Adrian Leis