

**“IF YOU WAIT, NOTHING WILL COME”: RETURNED JAPANESE STUDENT
SOJOURNERS’ SHIFTING IDENTITIES AND PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH**

by

Elisabeth Williams

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 2009

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
(Teaching English as a Second Language)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

April 2014

© Elisabeth Williams, 2014

Abstract

In Japan, discourses of globalization have come in chorus with an urgency in educational policy to raise personal and national English proficiency for individual and economic success (e.g. Kobayashi, 2011; Kubota 2013; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). Given that “study abroad” is often perceived as the ideal environment for both language acquisition and personal growth (Kinging, 2009), short-term sojourns abroad in English speaking countries are promoted aggressively in many Japanese contexts. While much research has been conducted regarding Japanese sojourners during their study abroad, the impacts of study abroad after returning to Japan have yet to be explored in depth. Drawing on Norton’s (2000) theoretical concepts of identity and investment, this study investigates how experiences abroad affected the current identities of Japanese university students who previously participated in short-term English-medium study abroad programs. Participants’ views on the importance of English in their lives since returning to Japan is also examined in relation to common discourses of linguistic instrumentalism. Data were collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews with six Japanese university students over three months. This study concludes that while participants were ascribed undesirable identities abroad, their abilities to exercise agency within their social worlds during their sojourns impacted their identities both abroad and in Japan. Among male participants, interviews display challenges to perceptions of personal desirability and masculinity while abroad. Furthermore, while participants who plan to use English in the future endorsed discourses of linguistic instrumentalism, a general lack of ownership over Japanese varieties of English was also observed in participant accounts. This study’s findings imply that sojourners’ shifting identities abroad have a lasting impact on how they view themselves in relation to their

social world once returning to Japan. It also illustrates how common discourses surrounding English education in Japan may contribute to delegitimizing Japanese varieties of English, and how English-medium programs abroad in non-Anglophone countries may increase ownership over personal varieties of English. Lastly, this study advocates that by study abroad programs offering debriefing sessions for returned sojourners, returnees may achieve a deeper understanding of the influences of their experiences.

Preface

This thesis is the original work of the author, Elisabeth Williams. Ethics approval was required for this research and approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) on June 25, 2013. The BREB number is H13-01464.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Preface.....	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	x
List of Abbreviations	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Dedication	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Preamble and Background	1
1.2 Statement of Purpose and Research Questions	3
1.3 Significance of Study	5
1.4 Researcher Positionality.....	7
1.5 Organization of Thesis.....	7
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Theoretical Concepts	9
2.2.1 Poststructuralist Approach to Identity and Investment.....	9
2.2.2 Investment and Identity.....	10
2.3 English Learning in Japan.....	12
2.4 Research on Study Abroad.....	16
2.5 Study Abroad and Japanese Students	20

2.5.1	Identity and Japanese Sojourners Abroad.....	21
2.5.2	Identity and Japanese Returned Sojourners	23
2.5.3	The Role of English After Study Abroad	24
2.6	Summary and Research Gaps	25
Chapter 3: Methodology.....		26
3.1	Introduction.....	26
3.2	Individual Qualitative Interviews	26
3.2.1	Constructionist Approach to Interviews	26
3.2.2	Interviewer Reflexivity	27
3.2.3	Translation Through a Constructionist Lens.....	28
3.3	Research Context	29
3.4	Participants and Recruitment	29
3.4.1	Recruitment Method	30
3.4.2	Summary of Participant Biographies	31
3.4.3	Su	31
3.4.4	Sae.....	32
3.4.5	Mo	33
3.4.6	Ki.....	33
3.4.7	Yo.....	34
3.4.8	Toshi	34
3.5	Data Collection	35
3.6	Data Analysis	35
3.6.1	Thematic Analysis	36

3.7	Trustworthiness	37
3.8	Limitations of Study	37
3.9	Summary	38
Chapter 4: Findings		40
4.1	Introduction	40
4.2	Themes in Relation to Research Question (1): How Were Participants' Identities Constructed and Renegotiated by Their Experiences During Their Study Abroad?	41
4.2.1	Articulating a National Identity in Comparison to "Americans"	41
4.2.2	Ascribed Identity As Linguistic Outsider Through University Interactions	45
4.2.3	Resisting the Linguistic Outsider Identity Through Identities of Participatory Community Member and Proficient Language User	48
4.2.4	Japanese Men As Undesirable Romantic Partners in Western Study Abroad Contexts 51	
4.3	Themes in Relation to Research Question (2): Upon Returning, How Do Participants View Changes in Their Identity? How Are the Changes Related to Their Experiences During and After Their Study Abroad?	55
4.3.1	A Heightened Sense of Personal Agency in One's Future	56
4.3.2	Perceived Increase in Capabilities Through English Abilities	58
4.3.3	Drawing Closer to a Japanese National Identity	61
4.4	Themes in Relation to Research Question (3): How Do Participants View the Role of English in Their Lives Since Returning to Japan?	65
4.4.1	English as Only One of Many Languages for Communication	65
4.4.2	Assumption of English as an International Language	68

4.4.3 A Lack of Ownership of Japanese Varieties of English	71
4.5 Summary	73
Chapter 5: Discussion	77
5.1 Introduction.....	77
5.2 Japanese Sojourners and Shifting Identities Abroad	77
5.2.1 Resistance Abroad	77
5.2.2 Community-Membership and Identity.....	79
5.2.3 The Gendered Experience of Japanese Males	81
5.3 Identities of Returned Japanese Sojourners	83
5.3.1 Resistance in Japan	83
5.3.2 Agency and Confidence in Japan.....	85
5.4 The Role of English in Participants' Lives	86
5.4.1 Communication and Linguistic Instrumentalism.....	86
5.4.2 Ownership of Japanese English	90
5.5 Summary	92
Chapter 6: Conclusion	95
6.1 Reflexivity and the White Anglophone in Japan	95
6.2 Implications for Educational Practice	96
6.3 Directions for Further Research.....	99
6.4 Concluding Remarks.....	100
References.....	101
Appendices.....	111
Appendix A: Interview Questions	111

Appendix B: Original Interview Transcripts	115
Appendix C: Forms Submitted to Participants	121

List of Tables

Table 3-1: Summary of Participant Biographies	31
Table 4-1: Conventions Used in Interview Transcriptions	40
Table 4-2: Abbreviations of Names of Individuals Involved in Interviews	40

List of Abbreviations

L2 = Second/additional language

MEXT = The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

OECD = Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

Acknowledgements

皆さんがいなければ、今の私はいません。心より感謝しております。

Firstly, thank you to my participants, who shared their stories and friendship with me.

A very special thank you to Dr. Ryuko Kubota for her continuous guidance and support on this project, and whose work inspired me to further my education and critically reexamine who I am as an educator. I also thank Dr. Kubota for introducing me to Dr. Emiko Yukawa, an energizing woman whose dedication to her students reminded me of the joy that being an educator can bring. Without these two women, my research in Japan would never have succeeded.

Both inside and outside of the classroom, Dr. Bonny Norton and Dr. Patsy Duff have inspired me with their humour and kindness. Their classes have forever changed the way I view “language” and consequently myself. I am lucky to have them on my thesis committee.

To all my LLED lovelies, our B-Line trips mean more to me than you will ever know. You are brilliant. My infinite thanks also goes out to my invaluable thesis support team, Ron Darvin, Liam Doherty, Tomoyo Okuda, Jordan Williams, Andrea Loewen, Jung Sun Song and Amy Moore.

I also wish to extend thanks to Jola Lekich and the staff at the UBC Global Lounge. The free coffee, snacks, and warm conversation motivated me throughout my entire degree. The lessons I learned through the Global Lounge could not have been acquired inside a classroom.

関西にいる友達、大好きなRits girls、夕奈、ゆみ、ゆき、ブン、エン、ひさよ、フェリクス、ミッチャン、キャット、ミーチェル、メリエルア、仲良くしてくれてありがとう。又会う日まで。

To the Schellenbergs, thank you for your encouragement, love and patience. My little sisters Jenni and Emmie, your kind hearts keep me grounded.

Lastly, I owe my deepest love and gratitude to my family, who has never failed to recognize that this journey was never “just a master’s degree” to me. Their continued support of my dreams made me who I am today. Adam, Mom, Dad, Jordan, Sean, Rhys, and DC, I love you.

To Adam and Niko.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Preamble and Background

じゃ、すごくもう会わない人もいっぱいいるだろうしカナダには、って思ったら一人一人と会って話す時間を大切にしようって必ずすごいと思ったから今は日本でもできていると思う、皆に、なんか自分会うの最後かもしれないし一期一会だと思って、こう人とも縁を大事に生活できるになってか、それが本当に良かったって思っている。

Well, besides if I think that there are probably a lot of people I won't meet again in Canada, so I try to treasure the times I meet and speak with each person, I thought it was really huge so even now in Japan I think I'm doing it, it may be like the last time that I meet people and I am able to live valuing these once in a lifetime encounters and connections. I think that it is really great.

This excerpt is taken from my first interview with Mo, a third-year Japanese university student who is enthusiastically explaining to me how her eight-month study abroad in Canada benefited her most. I have selected this interview excerpt to open this thesis because it represents in many ways the idealized image I held of study abroad throughout a large portion of my life; study abroad as a life changing event that incites participants to grow in ways they could not otherwise, with benefits carrying over into their lives once returning home. As a child growing up in a white Anglophone home in rural Western Canada, I always desired to spend a year of my post-secondary studies overseas in an unfamiliar and exciting place. Early in my undergraduate degree in 2005, my childhood dream came true as I was accepted as a scholarship student to a small university in Nagasaki. To my surprise, however, the first few months of my experience were nothing like I imagined. I battled extreme homesickness and a general discomfort and confusion in many of my attempts to communicate in Japanese. I also faced challenges in making friends with my Japanese classmates. However, as my time in Nagasaki continued, I

¹ Underlined words indicate emphasis. Transcription conventions are presented in Chapter 4.

resolved to improve my experience since my expectations for life abroad had been so high for so long.

Eventually, I developed close relationships with Japanese-speaking classmates my age (generally Japanese nationals and Korean international students) and I saw my Japanese language skill progress. I grew to love communicating in Japanese. During my last few weeks in Japan, I felt intense panic as soon as I was alone. I could not imagine life back in Canada without the friends and language that I had grown to identify with so strongly.

Interestingly, my experience was quite unique among the other North American international students in my program. All but me wanted to book their return tickets as soon as possible and made very few non-English speaking friends. Upon returning to Canada I changed my university major from English literature to Asian studies and transferred to a university with a well-known Japanese language program. To my knowledge, none of my North American classmates from Nagasaki continued their Japanese studies. Through continuously reflecting on our contrasting experiences, I became curious about why they were so different. I felt that not only my views of the world but also my view of myself had expanded through my time in Japan, while my North American peers seemed to become more drawn into their national identity.

Unfortunately not everyone shared my enthusiasm for my study abroad experience. Several friends quickly grew tired of my stories and my family was disappointed I wanted to return to Japan so quickly after arriving home. Some friends even teased me that I was a “white Japanese wannabe” or “Japanophile”. It was embarrassing and I soon felt awkward sharing about my sojourn. I did not want to *become* a Japanese national exactly and yet I identified with Japan *somehow*. It was a strange feeling that continued for several years.

Upon becoming an English language teacher in Vancouver, I had the privilege of teaching many young adults studying abroad, the majority of whom were from Japan. Given my experiences in Japan and Japanese language abilities, I often developed particularly close relationships with the Japanese students outside of class where many of them shared with me their struggles and successes throughout their study abroad. This was also during a time where as an educator I was developing an interest in critical and anti-essentialist approaches to education and thus I began to view these students' experience differently than I originally did my own study abroad experience. In the case of my time in Nagasaki, I saw my achievements and failures as largely due to my own actions, whereas through a more critical lens, I began to see the influence the social world has on a sojourner's experience. A large number of my students from Japan claimed to have experienced exceptional personal growth during their time in Canada but seemed uncertain about their return to Japan. While reflecting on my own struggles after study abroad, I was curious about how my students were perceived by their communities once they returned as well as how they perceived themselves. Furthermore, given the sense of urgency with which many of these students pursued English in my classes, I wondered how beneficial English would be in students' lives once returning to Japan. Therefore, as an English educator with connections to Japan, I decided to focus on the influence of study abroad on Japanese returned sojourner identity and perceptions of English for my Master's thesis research. A complex topic to be sure, but one that is close to my heart.

1.2 Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

In this study, I use Kinginger's (2009) definition of study abroad as "a temporary sojourn of pre-defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes" (p. 11) and view a "sojourner" as a non-degree seeking study abroad participant. This study utilizes qualitative interviews to

investigate how the experience of partaking in and returning from study abroad in English-medium university programs influences Japanese sojourners' identities. It further explores the status of English in their lives after returning.

Studying in a foreign country is often perceived as “a unique and once-in-a-lifetime initiative” (Schwieter & Kunert, 2012, p. 587) with opportunities for language acquisition, intercultural experiences and personal growth. Japan is no exception in this regard and is a leading participant in sending students overseas for study (Kinging, 2009). In recent years, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology (MEXT) has endeavoured to create initiatives and advocate funding to send more Japanese students abroad while receiving more international students to Japanese institutions. An example of this is the New Growth Strategy, which aims to bring 300,000 international students and workers to Japan in exchange for 300,000 Japanese students and workers going overseas by 2020 (MEXT, n.d.).

Many study abroad programs in Japan place a particular focus on English language education and provide opportunities for university students to participate in short-term study overseas (generally from half to a full academic year) (Kinging, 2009). MEXT (2013) notes that in 2010 the majority of Japanese study abroad participants were in predominantly English-speaking Western nations such as the United States, England, Australia and Canada. This focus on English in international education is often attributed to a pervasive discourse in government policies and educational programs that promote English skills as a major means of personal and professional development and the key to participation in a globalizing world (see Kobayashi, 2007; 2011; Kubota, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2013; Takahashi, 2013; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). This push for increased English language abilities in Japan has led to the aggressive promotion of international education among numerous Japanese universities.

Within this study, I utilized qualitative interviews to explore the assumptions and consequences of the push towards English and study abroad. Given the discussion of “internationalization” and “growth” through study abroad in both Japanese programs and much international education research, I was curious if sojourners transformed in the ways outlined in these discourses. A major driving force behind this study was also to connect participants’ experiences and perceptions articulated in interviews to the wider hierarchical structures and discourses surrounding the prominent place of English in Japan. Thus I explored the (often obscured) ideologies behind participants’ utterances and how they reflected wider social structures. I also attempted to locate myself within these structures as researcher and interviewer, and the consequences this may have had on the research process.

In this study, I pose the following three research questions to investigate the influences of study abroad and the return home on Japanese university students’ views of identity and English.

- (1) How were participants’ identities constructed and renegotiated by their experiences during their study abroad?
- (2) Upon returning, how do participants view changes in their identities? How are the changes related to their experiences during and after their study abroad?
- (3) How do participants view the role of English in their lives since returning to Japan?

1.3 Significance of Study

Considering the significant number of Japanese study abroad participants in English language programs, the experiences of Japanese sojourners have become a sizeable area of research in applied linguistics. This research has examined motivations for studying abroad (e.g. Asaoka & Yano, 2009; Kobayashi, 2007; 2011), membership within a host community (e.g. Churchill, 2009), and English language development (e.g. Churchill, 2009; Tanaka & Ellis,

2003). Identity construction during study abroad has also been explored (e.g. Ellwood, 2011; Takahashi, 2013). Furthermore, perhaps due to the significant number of Japanese women abroad (Kobayashi, 2002; Takahashi, 2013), a great amount of scholarly attention has been paid to the experiences of Japanese female sojourners (e.g., Burton, 2004; Kelsky, 1996; 2001; Takahashi, 2013). Despite the fact that these studies offer valuable insights into the lives of Japanese sojourners while abroad, very little of this research provides details of the sojourner experience once they have returned to Japan. Moreover, research that does address returnees generally focuses on Japanese students who have lived overseas for an extended amount of time, such as the children of expatriates or degree-seeking students (e.g. Ford, 2009; Kanno, 2003; Takahashi, 2013). Lastly, the experiences of Japanese male study abroad participants are clearly underrepresented in research. Through reviewing previous literature it is apparent that the effects of a short-term study abroad and return experienced by Japanese sojourners has yet to be explored in depth, particularly among males.

These gaps necessitate further research given that the impact of studying abroad does not likely cease once a sojourn ends and, reflecting on my own returnee experience, sojourners may struggle to negotiate and understand their identity once returning. Furthermore, neglecting the post-sojourn experiences of Japanese students may leave commonly accepted justifications of study abroad for English acquisition unchallenged. Thus through the use of in-depth qualitative interviews with both female and male returned sojourners, this study contributes to this area of inquiry by offering more knowledge about participants' shifting identities and perceptions of English in connection to their experiences as sojourners and returnees to Japan. Lastly, this study has potential to critically address some of the common discourses surrounding both the

importance of English and study abroad that are present in so many Japanese university students' lives.

1.4 Researcher Positionality

I have lived in Japan as a student, teacher and researcher, and speak Japanese as my second language. Yet this does not detract from my status as a white native English-speaking researcher—a position with potential for considerable influence in a country such as Japan where both racial and linguistic traits are connected to a variety of dominant discourses (e.g. Kubota, 2002; 2011b; Matsuda, 2011). I am regularly reminded of my white skin indexing the label of “native English speaker” due to the ease in which I can find teaching positions in Japan and the frequency that I am approached and spoken to in English by strangers or shop clerks despite my attempts in Japanese. As mentioned previously, this study attempts to examine the discourses and hegemonic structures surrounding the experiences of sojourners. Being a white Canadian Anglophone researcher, I believe that such discourses and structures are also present or even reproduced within the relationships with my participants. However, I realize that this awareness and even an effort to limit the effects of such structures in no way eliminates the power present among my participants and myself (Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006). I will revisit this complex issue again in later sections.

1.5 Organization of Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. Following the Introduction, in Chapter 2 I present an overview of the theoretical concepts and relevant literature in connection to this study's research questions. Chapter 3 explains in detail the methodology of this study, including a background on participants, research context, data collection and analysis. Next, in Chapter 4 I introduce my research findings through the themes drawn from participant interviews. In Chapter 5 I elaborate

on these findings in relation to this study's research questions and the theoretical concepts and previous literature introduced in Chapter 2. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes this thesis with a reflexive statement followed by this study's practical implications and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I review literature on the theoretical concepts of identity and investment as well as previous studies related to my three research questions. Then, I discuss the status of English in Japan to describe the research context, followed by a general overview of research on study abroad before focusing on study abroad in Japan. I then explore research concerning identity and perceptions of English in Japanese returnees, which will enable me to discern some gaps in research that this study hopes to fill.

2.2 Theoretical Concepts

2.2.1 Poststructuralist Approach to Identity and Investment

“Identity” has become a recurring theme within language education research in recent years, with many social scientists moving away from modernist approaches that view identity as inherently connected to biological traits such as sex or race (Block, 2007a; Ellwood, 2011; Miller & Kubota, 2013). Instead there has been a shift toward a poststructuralist approach, which “mov[es] beyond the search, associated with structuralism, for unchanging, universal law of human behavior and social phenomena to more nuanced, multileveled, and ultimately, complicated framings of the world around us” (Block, 2007a, p.864). Through a poststructuralist approach and drawing from the work of Bourdieu (1977) and Weedon (1987), Norton (2000) describes “identity” as “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how the relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands the possibilities for the future” (Norton, 2000, p.5). Norton’s (1995; 2000) seminal work investigating the identities of adult immigrant women in Canada revealed how the context of interactions, interlocutors and relations of power shaped the shifting identities of her participants.

This suggests that identities are multiple, dynamic and contradictory in connection to the social world (Norton, 2000). While these women were at times marginalized due to their immigrant status or language use, they also actively created counter-discourses to shift the power in their everyday interactions and attempted to claim desirable identities. Therefore, Norton (2000) demonstrates that identity is not only dynamic but also “a site of struggle” (p. 127) when the social world and human agency conflict with each other. Blommaert (2006) presents the conflicting nature of identity by categorizing it into “two dimensions”: “ascribed” identities (identities placed on us by others) and “inhabited” identities (identities we attempt to claim and enact) (p.174).

Since Norton’s (1995; 2000) innovative work, a variety of studies have addressed identity through a similar lens to view the dynamic nature of identity in different contexts. Examples of these studies include, Chinese immigrant teenagers in the United States (McKay & Wong, 1996), white western females learning Japanese in Japan (Siegal, 1996; Simon-Maeda, 2011), American university students in France (Kinger, 2004; 2008), bilingual expatriate children (Ford, 2009; Kanno, 2000; 2003), and whiteness and masculinity in Japan (Appleby, 2013a; 2013b).

2.2.2 Investment and Identity

To reexamine a language learner’s relationship to a target language and their desired identity, Norton (2000) proposed the notion of investment, which “signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (p.10). Norton (2000) states that the concept of investment extends beyond motivation or learning a language for instrumental purposes by adapting Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) notion of cultural capital, which “refer[s] to the knowledge,

credentials, and modes of thought that characterize different classes of groups” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). Therefore, investment demonstrates how a learner’s perception of a language is connected to acquiring the resources necessary to achieve desirable identities in the future (Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011). When social practices of a particular context and a learner’s hopes for the future do not match, these practices may be resisted (McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000). Consequently, investment is “in a state of flux” (Norton, 2000, p. 11) within a learner’s social world.

While Norton (2000) originally mainly applied the concept of investment in regards to speech, several studies have expanded on the concept of investment in different settings. Firstly, in a context similar to Norton’s (2000) work, Skilton-Sylvester (2002) examined how female Cambodian immigrants’ current and desired future identities influenced investment in their ESL classroom attendance in the United States. Next, through exploring the experiences of Chinese immigrant teenagers in the United States, McKay & Wong (1996) concluded that investment varies among the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening depending on how each skill benefits a student’s social and academic identity. Norton and Williams (2012) also viewed ways in which investment in educational technology created new present and future identities for students. Recently in the context of study abroad, Trentman (2013) applied the concept of investment to the experiences of American sojourners studying Arabic in Egypt and concluded that participants’ investment in the target language increased when they were able to join communities that encouraged their Arabic language use. Therefore, the original concept of investment has been expanded on to show the various ways in which future possibilities enable or limit an individual’s actions. This study uses Norton’s (2000) theoretical concept of

investment not only in regards to Japanese sojourners' views of English, but also to how their investment in their study abroad experiences connect to desirable future identities.

2.3 English Learning in Japan

English is regarded as the language of modernity and internationalization within many spheres in Japan. In 2011, MEXT required English to be taught as a “foreign language activity” one hour a week in the fifth and the sixth grade. English is then learned as a formal subject in junior and senior high school (Yukawa, 2014). However, it is not English that is officially required to be taught, but in fact “foreign languages”, of which English is only one option. Yet due to MEXT’s aggressive promotion of learning English as foreign language and the lack of other language programs available, English is regularly the only choice (Kubota, 2011b; Yukawa 2014).

The discourse of English as the preeminent international language is commonly presented as fact in Japan (Kubota, 2011c; Kubota, 2013; Liddicoat, 2007; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). An intensifying bureaucratic concern regarding Japan’s English abilities has come in chorus with increasing notions of globalization and a necessity to be an active member on the world stage (Kubota, 2011c; Kubota, 2013; Seargeant, 2011). This has been further strengthened with the decision to host the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics (Kubota, 2014). Fearing that Japan is lagging behind the rest of Asia in English education (Stewart, 2009; Yukawa, 2014), MEXT has implemented several policies that attempt to increase the communicative abilities of elementary and secondary school students. Some of the most notable initiatives have been the 2002 proposal to develop “a strategic plan to cultivate ‘Japanese with English Abilities’” (MEXT, 2002), and a new Course of Study (national curriculum) in 2008 that emphasizes a heavier focus on oral communication, English-only classroom instruction and

increased involvement of native-English speaking assistant language teachers (Stewart, 2009; Yukawa, 2014). These initiatives have also expanded to the post-secondary level through MEXT's "Global 30" Program that offers English-medium degree programs at some of Japan's top universities. These programs attract both international and domestic students alike and "aim to nurture internationally competitive individuals by creating an academic environment where international and Japanese students can learn from one another and build lasting international bonds that will propel them into the international scene" (Global30, 2014).

Recently English educational policy has intensified with MEXT's "English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization" which proposes that by the 2020 Summer Olympics, secondary school English classes will be taught entirely in English, secondary school English teachers will be tested on their English proficiency and English will become a formal subject (rather than a "foreign language activity") beginning in the fifth grade (Kodera & Kameda, 2013; MEXT, 2014). In 2013, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) also proposed making minimum TOEFL scores mandatory for graduation from senior high schools and public universities (Yoshida, 2013a; 2013b). The main goal, according to LDP lawmaker Toshiaki Edo, is to "achieve future economic growth" by "training human resources able to adapt to the global environment" (Yoshida, 2013, p. 2). Although this proposal was ultimately not adopted, together with the policies of MEXT, it illustrates a common bureaucratic discourse that Japan has fallen behind on English language teaching and lacks the necessary tools to participate in the globalized world (Stewart, 2009; Yukawa, 2014).

The continual political and educational push for increased English proficiency in Japan has been met with skepticism and resistance. Firstly, critics have observed the presence of the essentialist discourse of *Nihonjinron* in English educational policies in Japan (Kubota, 2002;

2011b; Liddicoat, 2007). *Nihonjinron*, which constructs Japan as a homogenous and unique nation while essentializing other cultures, often accompanies nationalist ideologies that promote the spread of Japanese views in the globalized world (Liddicoat, 2007; Sugimoto, 1997). Combining *Nihonjinron* with the ideology of English as “the sole desirable mode for international communication” (Liddicoat, 2007, p. 36) has resulted in English language as a tool less about international communication and more about transmitting the unique Japanese perspective to the rest of the world (Liddicoat, 2007).

It has also been suggested that very few contexts in Japan necessitate English use in everyday life, including both employment within Japan and in transnational business in East Asia (e.g. Kubota, 2011a; 2011c; 2013; 2014; Kobayashi, 2007; Matsuda, 2003; 2011; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). Furthermore, contact with monolingual English speakers is generally limited within Japan. For instance, in 2013 the top countries of origin of foreign residents in Japan were China, South Korea, Philippines, Brazil and the United States (The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication Statistics Bureau, n.d.). This is similar to the top countries of origins of foreign visitors to Japan in 2013, which were Korea, China, Taiwan, the United States and Hong Kong (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2013), suggesting many of these individuals do not rely solely on English for communication. Consequently, MEXT’s aggressive English policies have been accused of not only misrepresenting the reality of English in Japan, but also neglecting other foreign languages and cultures both within and outside of the country (Kubota, 2011b; Matsuda, 2003; 2011).

The concept of English as an international language implies that it is not only used but also “owned” by all individuals that use it, regardless of their linguistic or cultural backgrounds (McKay, 2002; Widdowson, 1994). Nevertheless, “native speakers” have generally held a

privileged position within this ideology as “ideal” speakers “because of the assumption that they inherently possess a superior command of the language” (Breckenridge & Erling, 2011, p. 81). The advantages that native English speakers hold in language education have been observed extensively in Japan, with a particular preference for Western varieties of “standard English”, such as mainstream American, British, or Canadian English (e.g. Kobayashi, 2011; Kubota, 2002, 2011; Matsuda, 2003; Yamada, 2010).

A commonly cited example of the preference for Western varieties of English is through the Japanese government initiative of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (JET), which hires native-speaking English Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) to teach in Japanese public schools. Statistics on the JET Programme’s website reveal that the most popular countries of recruitment are the United States, Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland (CLAIR, 2010). Teachers from Singapore, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago are also annually involved in the program, although their numbers are quite small. For example, in 2012 the JET Programme employed 65 English teachers from Jamaica and 59 from Singapore, in comparison to 2334 from the United States and 477 from Canada (CLAIR, 2010).

The hiring policies of the JET Programme both affirm the preference for Inner Circle English and strengthen the essentialized cultural notions attached to an English speaker’s origin and appearance (Kubota, 2002; 2011b; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Matsuda 2011). Thus, English may not only be seen as a Western language, but also as a “white” language. Kubota (2011a; 2011c) observed such prejudices in hiring policies were found outside of the JET Programme such as in English lessons for children and adult English conversation schools.

This lack of attention to other varieties of English not only imposes white Anglophone norms on Japanese learners of English but also produces prejudice against other varieties of

English (Kobayashi, 2011; Kubota, 1998; Matsuda, 2003; Yamada, 2010). In fact, several students who were interviewed by Matsuda (2003; 2011) believed the varieties of English used in non-Western countries to be improper, whereas Kobayashi (2011) observed the disappointment in Japanese sojourners in Singapore when encountering “Singlish” (as opposed to American English) or meeting their non-white English teachers. Many of Matsuda’s (2003) participants also expressed that the Japanese variety of English is illegitimate or “not cool” (p. 492). Miho, a cram school English instructor who was interviewed by Seargeant (2011), summarizes the sentiment of language ownership well:

The English language belongs to the countries where English is the first language, like the UK, the USA, and Australia. This is because English is the mother tongue for people in such countries. For me, it is just like the Japanese language seems to belong to Japanese people. (p. 210).

Here, the belief that a language “belongs” to a certain group of speakers suggests again traditional Anglophone nations are the true owners of English.

2.4 Research on Study Abroad

Large numbers of students depart from their home countries each year for educational experiences abroad with programs that vary in length, structure, and goals. Study abroad programs have not only been increasing around the world but also diversifying (Block, 2007b; Kinginger, 2009) and therefore the term “study abroad” now encompasses a variety of international educational opportunities, with diverse goals and participants.

In 2013, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stated that nearly 4.3 million university students studied internationally in 2011. Of these students, approximately 53% were from Asia, with China, India, and Korea being the top countries of student origin. Furthermore, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and

France received almost 50% of university study abroad students in 2011 (OECD, 2013). For students from North America, Europe and Japan, studying for a single semester or an academic year abroad at partner universities has become a popular option (Kinging, 2009; Schwieter & Kunert, 2012). Common goals for studying abroad include additional language development, travel and adventure or expanding one's knowledge of a foreign culture and country (Ellwood, 2011; Kinginger, 2008, 2009; Schwieter & Kunert, 2012).

Regardless of the type of program, study abroad is frequently presented by institutions and perceived by students as an opportunity for exceptional individual growth, resulting in more globally minded citizens (Ellwood, 2011; Kinginger, 2009; Schwieter & Kunert, 2012). To an extent, previous research has supported these assumptions. For example, "successful" sojourns have been suggested to help students decrease personal biases, develop a more global perspective, increase self-confidence and significantly improve language skills (e.g. Churchill, 2009; Ellwood, 2011; Kinginger, 2004; 2008; 2009; Schwieter & Kunert, 2012). In the context of Japan, Asaoka & Yano (2009) further state that through active participation in international education, an accumulation of internationally minded returnees will gradually contribute to an overall national shift concerning international relations both inside and outside of the country.

Although past research in the field of study abroad frequently viewed sojourners as autonomous subjects in charge of their own experiences, many studies now illustrate how study abroad participants exist within the confines of a socially constructed milieu. The new environments and interactions that students often find themselves in during study abroad can cause a variety of challenges. Kinginger (2013) notes that sojourners' "success depends both upon how the students are received in the contexts they frequent (e.g., classrooms, homestays) and upon how these same students choose to interpret the social, cultural, and linguistic practices

of their communities” (p. 341). This extends past language development, as seen in Kinginger’s (2008) presentation of the case of a young American woman studying in France named Beatrice. Beatrice began her sojourn while tensions were still high between the United States and France after 9/11 and regularly felt marginalized because of her nationality. Her gradual withdrawal from the French community around her both limited her language development and strengthened her national identity as an American. Dolby (2004), Ellwood (2011) and Takayama (2000) also perceived a more pronounced national identity “when students become ‘other’ and are thus compelled to interrogate their national location” (Dolby, 2004, p. 162). This increase in national identity among study abroad participants may cause them to possess less intercultural awareness upon their return than they did before their sojourn (Block, 2007b).

The experience of Alice (Kinging, 2004), another American woman studying abroad in France, contrasts with Beatrice’s sojourn. Alice distanced herself from her American peers in order to practice French and develop social networks in the local community. This eventually led to deep friendships and the development of a less ethnocentric identity (Kinging, 2004).

A sojourner’s gender has been observed as an influential factor in the study abroad experience, potentially limiting or providing opportunities for language development and community membership (Kinging, 2013; Polanyi, 1995). Churchill’s (2009) study with Hiro, a Japanese high school student on a short-term group sojourn in the United States, illustrated that as the only male, Hiro felt compelled to quickly develop independence and search for friendship groups outside of his female Japanese peers. Furthermore, after becoming close with male American schoolmates, Hiro was able to enact the important identity of cultural broker between his American friends and female Japanese classmates.

However, Polanyi’s (1995) research with American university students studying in

Russia revealed how gender roles in study abroad can limit one's experience. In comparison to their male counterparts, female sojourners in Polanyi's (1995) study were afforded fewer opportunities for language use and generally experienced higher discomfort due to frequent sexual harassment and marginalization from males within their host community. The complex intersections of race and gender in sojourners has also been discussed by Takahashi (2013), Takayama (2000) and Talburt and Stewart (1999), through exploring the unique (and often marginalizing) discourses attributed to participants' combinations of race and gender in a foreign setting.

One of the few studies that specifically focuses on the long-term effects of study abroad is that of Alred and Byram (2002), who interviewed British study abroad participants ten years after their return from an academic year of learning languages in European countries. Participants generally reported a lingering rise in self-confidence and intercultural communication skills that they attributed to their time abroad. This was due to their experiences of overcoming challenges in a foreign country and regularly interacting in another language. However, the authors also introduce the experience of "Sylvia", who had a very challenging time studying in France and continues to actively dislike the country. Alred and Byram (2002) conclude that even short-term study abroad programs have potential to significantly impact a sojourner's life.

While study abroad is often viewed as an ideal environment for language learning, research in the field has revealed that a sojourner's perception of and engagement with their host community significantly affects their study abroad outcomes. For example, being embraced by a community can lead to developing a more multicultural identity and improving one's language skills. In contrast, study abroad participants who have been marginalized or failed to connect

with a community abroad have been noted to withdraw, strengthen their national identities and have less opportunities to practice the target language.

2.5 Study Abroad and Japanese Students

Many Japanese sojourners' aspirations to utilize their study abroad experiences in their careers reflect discourses promoted through MEXT's English language initiatives. For example, Burton (2002), Kobayashi (2002), Takahashi, (2013), and Takayama (2000) found that their Japanese sojourner participants were hopeful that their English language skills and intercultural experiences would be beneficial to enter the job market once returning to Japan. Moreover, Takayama's (2000) interviews with Japanese male sojourners in Vancouver revealed a perceived pressure to "internationalize" themselves through English and study abroad to stay employable in the Japanese work force, which they viewed as becoming increasingly globalized.

A variety of studies have identified significant non-instrumental motivations for studying abroad, especially among Japanese women. Kelsky (1996; 2001) and Takahashi (2013) have explored a widespread interest in Western culture among Japanese women, often termed *あこがれ* (*akogare*), generally translated as "longing" or "desire". *Akogare* for Western pop culture such as films, music, and fashion were a powerful motivator for the decision to study English abroad for Japanese female interviewees in both Kelsky's (1996; 2001) and Takahashi's (2013) studies. These researchers argue that a main component of *akogare* is a lingering desire for romantic relationships with Western (generally white) men. Appleby (2013b) asserts, "Japanese women's agentive desire, underpinned by a newly found economic independence and propelled by glamorous media images of Western romance, has accorded Western masculinity a privileged place in the Japanese imaginary" (p. 2). Thus white, English speaking men may be seen as both potential lovers and English teachers (Takahashi, 2013).

Although research concerning Japanese male participants in study abroad is limited (Churchill, 2009; Matsubara-Jaret, 2008), studies that do involve Japanese male sojourners suggest *akogare* is not an exclusively female phenomenon. Both Ellwood (2011) and Takayama's (2000) interviews with Japanese males illustrated an *akogare* for essentialized Western pop culture witnessed in American media, such as dancing and loud house parties. The male participants in Koizumi (1996) and Takayama's (2000) studies also expressed a desire to have Canadian friends, which generally denoted white native English speakers. This further extended to an *akogare* for romantic encounters with white Canadian women in Takayama's (2000) interviews. Interviewees admitted this was largely due to their constant exposure to beautiful actresses and musicians imported from Western pop culture. Ellwood (2006)'s interviews with Katsuyuki, a gay Japanese sojourner at an Australian university, also revealed that his desire to date white men was a key reason for his sojourn.

2.5.1 Identity and Japanese Sojourners Abroad

Unsurprisingly, previous research on the identity of Japanese sojourners has produced varied results, given the diverse environments and interactions within a study abroad. A number of studies have suggested empowering influences on a sojourner's identity, such as overcoming challenges abroad as a path to increasing one's sense of maturity and independence (Asaoka & Yano, 2009; Ellwood, 2011). While findings such as this parallel the general results of study abroad, some conclusions are specific to Japanese sojourners. For example, like American or Canadian study abroad participants (e.g. Kinginger, 2009; Schwieter & Kunert, 2012), several of Takahashi's (2013) interviewees also projected pride in the development of their multilingual and multicultural identities. However, this was then placed in contrast with the perception of

Japan as a homogenous and monolingual state, making the participants feel their identities were somewhat unique amongst other Japanese who had not lived abroad.

Common perceptions of Japanese students held in Western educational contexts have also illustrated the impact new discourses may have on a Japanese sojourner's identity. For example, Ellwood's (2011) and Ellwood and Nakane's (2009) research in Australia and Matsubara-Jaret's (2008) work in the United States concluded that several of the Japanese students they interviewed felt their teachers and peers (both domestic students and other exchange students) positioned them as poor speakers in class. This resulted in frustration and embarrassment, and ultimately in many cases, silence in the classroom. Images of Japanese learners generally included a hesitation to speak, participate and think critically. Like Beatrice in Kinginger's (2008) study, one response to these sojourners' identity struggles was to establish a firmer sense of national identity and distance themselves from the host culture (Ellwood, 2011; Ellwood & Nakane, 2009; Takayama, 2000).

Takahashi (2013) and Takayama (2000) explore how *akogare* may not only inspire a sojourn but also influence a student's identity while abroad. For example, Takahashi (2013) found that many Japanese women she interviewed in Australia desired a white English-speaking boyfriend, but also felt equally desired by the men around them. Although still often positioned as shy, many women were romantically pursued by Australian men (including white men) and had the ability to choose with whom they would interact. However, Takayama's (2000) research with Japanese males in Vancouver painted a very different picture. Several men experienced insecurities regarding their physical appearance and believed that white women were not attracted to them due to the supposedly small physique of Japanese males and their non-mainstream fashion style. In this way, some men felt emasculated by Caucasian women despite

their limited interactions. This fear sometimes arose during encounters with white men as well due to the participants' worries of possessing a physically weak appearance and low English ability.

2.5.2 Identity and Japanese Returned Sojourners

As I previously mentioned, the experiences of returned Japanese sojourners have yet to be explored in depth. Asaoka and Yano's (2009) survey of past study abroad participants concluded that the most common outcome of the experience was a "deepened intercultural understanding" (p.182). While Asaoka and Yano (2009) did not elaborate on this conclusion, Takahashi's (2013) interviewees stated that their bilingual and multicultural identities came into conflict with their friends and family in Japan, many of whom had never lived abroad. In fact, some friendships were ultimately lost due to these conflicts. Participants claimed these groups could not accept or nurture their new multicultural identities, and attributed this to a lack of understanding from friends and family as a result of Japanese monolingualism and homogeneity. Similarly, Ford (2009) and Kanno (2003) investigated the identities of 帰国子女 (*kikokushijo*), or the children of expatriates, who lived overseas with their parents for extended periods of time. Both found that returnees struggled to find a socially acceptable balance between their two national identities. Some of these students even experienced bullying from peers and teachers due to jealousy of their English language skills and experiences abroad, and thus resisted sharing their multilingual and multicultural identities. Kanno (2003) concludes that despite their struggles, the participants in her study gradually developed the skills to negotiate their hybrid identities in different contexts and exercised agency in choosing which culture they identified with. Ford (2009), Kanno (2003) and Takahashi (2013) illustrate that both leaving and returning to Japan have potential to produce "sites of struggle" as individuals balance being members of

the “mainstream” while maintaining their unique experiences that shape how they view themselves and the world around them (Kanno, 2000; 2003).

2.5.3 The Role of English After Study Abroad

The development of English skills is a major motivation for many Japanese students who go abroad, not only for academic or professional reasons but also to develop intercultural skills and expand their social circles with English-speaking friends or romantic partners. Research is also limited in regards to the role of English in the lives of sojourners after their return. However, it has been suggested that their increased English proficiency is not as beneficial on the job market as the discourses promoted by the Japanese government suggest (Kobayashi, 2011). Koizumi (1999) contacted several female interviewees after their return to Japan and found that some were disappointed in their difficulty in obtaining jobs that require English proficiency. There was also a fear of losing regular access to English among several participants in Takahashi’s (2013) research. In Kubota’s (2011c) study investigating the actual significance of English in the workplace in Japan, the case of Daichi is introduced. Although older than the average study abroad participant, Daichi spent a year studying English in Australia to improve his prospects of working for a Japanese company that would allow him to use English and work overseas. However, he found that upon returning to Japan his TOEIC score and English abilities were not as valuable in obtaining work as he had expected. His eventual success in attaining a position overseas was attributed more to a variety of personal factors, such as his excellent communication skills, strong initiative and extroverted character.

English acquisition is often a strong motivation for Japanese students to study abroad. However, upon returning to Japan, it is questionable whether a returned sojourner’s English

abilities will be utilized in daily life, given that employment requiring English and interactions with monolingual English speakers are often scarce.

2.6 Summary and Research Gaps

In this chapter I presented an overview of relevant literature concerning the status of English in Japan, specifically focusing on the aggressive English education initiatives by MEXT and their connection to notions of globalization and English as an international language. The overview of study abroad research suggested that study abroad is an exceptionally effective context for language learning and personal growth when sojourners can establish meaningful memberships within communities abroad. I also reviewed study abroad in the context of Japan through focusing on previous research pertaining to this study's three research questions. This included the development of multilingual and multicultural identities since returning home and yet a lack of a necessity for English in returnees' everyday lives. An examination of the relevant literature revealed limited investigation of participants' experiences once returning to Japan after short-term study abroad. In addition, while Kanno (2003), Ford (2009) and Takahashi (2013) analyzed issues of returnee identity, participants in these studies all took part in sojourns significantly longer than participants in my study. Furthermore, with the exception of Ellwood (2006; 2011) and Takayama (2000), Japanese research participants were almost exclusively female. This literature review therefore illustrates underexplored areas: the experiences of returned sojourners in short-term programs and the experiences of Japanese males abroad. This study will illuminate these issues.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the methodology used in constructing and carrying out the research in this thesis. This includes the data collection method of qualitative interviews and the theoretical background supporting this method. Next I elaborate on the participant recruitment process and present brief biographies of each participant, followed by how data was collected and analyzed through thematic analysis. Lastly I examine the trustworthiness of the study as well as its limitations.

3.2 Individual Qualitative Interviews

This study utilizes individual qualitative interviews as the primary source of data collection. Considering that my goals for this study include exploring in-depth participant accounts, I felt that face-to-face interviews were the most appropriate method of data collection. However, I am also aware that qualitative interviews have been criticized for a variety of reasons. For example, Potter and Hepburn (2005) note that interviews are often the default choice of qualitative researchers, regardless of a study's research questions or aims. Several others have claimed qualitative interviews are often poorly theorized and inadequately presented in research, in particular when describing the influential role the interviewer has in interactions (e.g. Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Roulston, 2010; Talmy, 2010). This section includes the epistemological background of my research interviews in order to give a more comprehensive view of the interview process and analysis of data.

3.2.1 Constructionist Approach to Interviews

A constructionist approach to interviewing considers the interactional context of a research interview to be inextricably linked to the data produced within it (Roulston, 2010). In

other words, the content of the interview, the wider social discourses reflected in utterances, and the interactions inside the interview all influence the production of data (Talmy, 2010; Wooffitt & Widdicombe, 2006). Therefore, I viewed participant utterances not necessarily as authentic confessions of their experiences or feelings, but instead as situated accounts constructed with me as the interviewer (Roulston, 2010). In order to acknowledge the situated nature of this study's interviews, I attempt to briefly present the context behind each supportive excerpt presented in the Findings section. I was also concerned with my own influence on the interviews and interpretation of interviews, which I will now address.

3.2.2 Interviewer Reflexivity

Within the constructionist approach to interviews, researcher "contamination" of data is not something to be avoided but is a natural consequence of interaction and therefore a valuable site for analysis (Roulston, 2010). As a result, this perspective necessitates a closer examination of the influence a researcher brings to her or his study. Peshkin (1988) uses the term "subjectivities" when calling on researchers to examine the influence of their own identities on their research and participants. He defines subjectivities as aspects of identity that "have the capacity to filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe and misconstrue what transpires from the onset of a research project to its culmination in a written statement" (p. 17). Within my study, of particular importance are the subjectivities that arise from my identity as a white Anglophone researcher in the context of Japan. As expressed in Chapter 2, this has the capacity of considerable influence with a variety of groups in Japan. Briggs (2002) and Lee and Simon-Maeda (2006) note the intense challenge of a researcher in a position of privilege completely separating herself or himself from this status, especially when a marginalized group is connected to the study. Simon-Maeda discovered that despite her stance as a critical feminist researcher

with intentions to assist her female colleagues of colour by sharing their stories, her whiteness situated her in a privileged position. Therefore, through exploring how data was co-constructed in interviews, I hope to raise my awareness of the impact of my subjectivities and the way I perform my identities as a researcher with participants. To illustrate my experiences within the interviews and the influences my subjectivities may have had, I present a reflexive analysis in Chapter 6.

3.2.3 Translation Through a Constructionist Lens

Within this study I employ a constructionist perspective regarding translation that examines the interactional nature of translation through descriptions of the context of data, such as translation procedure, inclusion of original transcripts in the appendices, and presentation of my background as researcher and translator (Temple & Young, 2004). Due to the participants' and my linguistic backgrounds, interviews (in person and over email) were conducted in a combination of Japanese and English, which necessitated translation for the analysis and presentation of data. While some interviews were simple to translate, others utilized large amounts of code-switching, which provided a challenge to translate cohesively. Nevertheless, much like the data that is co-constructed in an interview, a translation is a product of the interviewee, interviewer and the translator, suggesting there is no single perfect or neutral translation (Temple, 2005; Temple & Young, 2004). Furthermore, Li (2011) and Temple and Young (2004) caution that completely excluding participant's original utterances from transcripts may not only marginalize the source language and its speakers but also contribute to the neo-colonial discourse of English as a powerful and value-free language for intercultural communication. Because of this I was hesitant to present participant utterances solely in English. However, for the sake of space and ease of readers who are not familiar with Japanese, I initially

present all supportive transcripts in English. However, in order to preserve the code-switching nature of the interviews, the utterances that were originally in Japanese are presented in italics. Translations of transcripts were all approved or modified by the participant whose words were translated. The relevant original transcripts are included in the appendices and the reader is encouraged to view them.

3.3 Research Context

This study took place with participants at K Uni,² a well-known university with multiple campuses around Japan that proudly projects a goal of contributing to the shaping of global citizens in Japan. Participants all attended a modestly sized yet heavily populated campus in the Kansai region of Western Japan that specializes in humanities and social sciences. It is also famous for its study abroad program agreements with 110 partner universities around the world, having sent approximately 1500 students abroad in 2008.

For each interview, I asked participants to choose the most convenient and comfortable location for them personally. While many chose quiet places like vacant classrooms or their own apartments, on three occasions interviews were held in restaurants over meals. These led to relatively relaxed interviews and developing closer relationships with my participants but also occasional background noise and interjections from restaurant servers.

3.4 Participants and Recruitment

Participants consist of six K Uni students, three females and three males who self-identify as Japanese nationals with a first language of Japanese. All participants speak English with relative ease but identify Japanese as their dominant language. Participant ages ranged between

² All names are pseudonyms.

21 to 24 years old, five being undergraduates and one being a graduate student. All had studied abroad in their undergraduate programs for six to eight months in English-medium programs overseas. At the time of interviews, participants had been back in Japan from their study abroad from five months to two and a half years.

3.4.1 Recruitment Method

The snowball method was used to recruit participants through my personal connections at K Uni. Before arriving in Japan, I contacted a female friend who worked at a campus language centre that frequently interacted with returnees as well as a professor who was supervising numerous students who had studied abroad. Once arriving at K Uni I shared my research goals with a small group of female friends who then inquired on my behalf to their acquaintances that had studied abroad. I found it relatively quick and easy to find female participants and became quite close with all three of them, and we regularly spent time together outside of our interviews. At the time of data collection and analysis, all of these women were earnestly engaging in 就職活動 (*shuushoku katsudoo*), often termed “job-hunting” in English, a demanding process in which the majority of third-year Japanese undergraduate university students participate.

In contrast to this, I struggled considerably during the first two months to find male participants who were willing to commit to the entire research process. In the end, all three male participants were introduced to me through a professor at K Uni who acted either as their current supervisor or former teacher. Despite all of the male participants claiming to be eager to assist me with my research, I cannot help but suspect they felt at least slightly pressured to participate given that they were recruited by someone in a position of authority.

Upon being introduced, I gave potential participants the letter of initial contact to explain about myself, my study and the necessary research commitment. Once a participant expressed

interest I contacted them privately via email or social media with further details and the official letter of consent.

3.4.2 Summary of Participant Biographies

Table 3-1 gives a brief outline of participants' backgrounds. The arrangement of participant names reflects the order in which we met for our initial interviews.

Table 3-1: Summary of Participant Biographies

Name	Gender	Academic Year	Department and Major	Study Abroad Location	Time Abroad	Language Predominantly Used in Interviews
Su	Female	Third year undergraduate	Literature, International Program	Michigan, USA	2012 - 2013 (8 months)	Japanese
Sae	Female	Third year undergraduate	International Relations, International Collaborative Development	Bergen, Norway	2012 - 2013 (8 months)	English
Mo	Female	Third year undergraduate	Literature, International Program	British Columbia, Canada	2012 - 2013 (8 months)	Japanese
Ki	Male	Second year graduate	Language Education, English Language Teaching	Washington, USA	2010 - 2011 (6 months)	Japanese and English
Yo	Male	Fourth year undergraduate	Literature, International Program	California, USA	2011 - 2012 (7 months)	English
Toshi	Male	Fourth year undergraduate	Literature, International Program	Michigan, USA	2011 - 2012 (8 months)	Japanese and English

In order to give a clearer view of the diverse backgrounds of participants, I will provide brief biographies for each. These biographies were member checked with the participants in order to ensure their validity.

3.4.3 Su

Su is a third-year undergraduate student majoring in K Uni's International Program for Literature students. She was introduced to me by a dormmate that I lived with during my data

collection in K Uni. She studied abroad in Michigan in the United States for eight months and took mainstream English-medium classes in a variety of subjects. Su claims to have had an early interest in English since her father is an English teacher and she was exposed to Western music and film from a young age. In junior high school, Su participated in a memorable Australian homestay program that fueled her desire to go abroad again to an English speaking country. Although improving her English skills was a goal of her university sojourn, Su also strongly desired to become a more socially confident person in a language other than Japanese and in a context other than Japan.

3.4.4 Sae

Sae is also a third-year undergraduate student who was introduced to me by another dormmate. Sae is majoring in International Relations with a focus on development in Africa. She studied in English-medium mainstream classes in Bergen, Norway for eight months and is the only participant who studied in a country which is not predominantly English speaking. Similar to Su, Sae participated in a short homestay program in the United States as a junior high school student that encouraged her interest in international education and English. She felt that university would be her last chance to study abroad and was very eager to participate. Given her particular interest in social issues on the African continent, her study abroad advisor recommended European schools over North American ones, feeling they had stronger programs to offer in Sae's area of interests. Sae was disappointed to discover her TOEFL scores limited her options for the UK universities she was interested in, but speaking with a returned sojourner from Bergen inspired her to choose Norway as her study abroad destination. From the early age of five Sae has been an active member of the Labo Party, a volunteer organization that aims to assist children with communication skills and teamwork.

3.4.5 Mo

Mo is another third-year student at K Uni majoring in the International Program for Literature students. She spent eight months in British Columbia, Canada taking classes with an English language focus specifically for K Uni students as well as a variety of mainstream English-medium classes. As a child, Mo lived with her family for five years in New York but strongly asserts that she did not learn English due to attending a Japanese elementary school and remaining exclusively in that social circle. Besides her regular K Uni classes, Mo is currently working part-time and attending a special private school that trains students to become flight attendants or work as airport staff. Mo and I became close friends during her time in Canada and thus I personally approached her to be an interview participant. We met regularly both inside and outside of university during her eight-month stay in Canada and my stay in Japan.

3.4.6 Ki

Ki is a second year English language teaching graduate student at K Uni whose goal is to be a junior high school English teacher. Ki has gone abroad to North America several times since entering university. His first study, which was the main focus of our interviews, was a six-month study abroad that took place in Washington State, United States during the second year of his undergraduate degree. He took sheltered classes for K Uni students for approximately four months but later moved to ESL classes for the remainder of his stay to specifically focus on improving his English language proficiency. Ki later returned to California for an internship with a Japanese trade company and once again to British Columbia for a short-term program as a graduate student. At the time of writing this thesis, he was preparing to leave for a ten-month long study abroad program in Australia with the hope of further improving his English. Ki was introduced to me by a professor at K Uni who has worked closely with him during his graduate

studies.

3.4.7 Yo

Yo is a fourth year undergraduate student who had recently been hired as a high school English teacher. Much like Ki, he had extensive experience in short-term stints abroad, the first being during a high school summer vacation to visit a relative in California. He later participated in a high school trip to Ottawa and lastly spent seven months in California. Yo attended ESL classes at university for four months then moved to another city to attend a community college for three months in mainstream classes. Yo is the only participant who was not an exchange student directly through K Uni and organized his entire study abroad independently, which I believe reflects his determination and passion for English learning and international education. Yo was also introduced to me by a professor at K Uni who was currently supervising him.

3.4.8 Toshi

Toshi is also a fourth year undergraduate student in the International Program for Literature students. When we first met, he was completing his undergraduate thesis and hoping to become an English teacher. Toshi is the only participant whose study abroad was their sole extended stay overseas. He spent eight months in Michigan at the same university as Su but a year earlier. Toshi claims he wanted to study abroad not only for language development and to experience school in an international environment, but also to pursue his interest in jazz, which his host school offered. Another key reason he gave for studying abroad was his hope to learn more about Middle Eastern studies and how American classes and students would present problems concerning the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. He was also introduced to me by the same professor as the previous two male participants, given that she previously taught Toshi.

3.5 Data Collection

Research interviews officially took place three times with each participant from September 2013 to December 2013. This three-month data collection period was due to the busyness of participants' schedules. Interviews were semi-structured and roughly followed an interview guide (see Appendix A). The first interview focused on the participants' experiences before and during their study abroad and the second interview addressed their time since returning to Japan. However, participants were encouraged to share any experiences that they wished in connection to English, their study abroad and return to Japan. These interviews ranged from 35 minutes to an hour and a half, based on the participant's schedule or how much they wanted to share. I met with all participants a third time in order to conduct a member checking interview in which participants aided me in translation and we discussed my tentative analysis. Our third meeting also acted as a casual reflective period for both interviewee and interviewer where I asked any remaining follow-up questions. During this time I also asked participants their views on the personal benefits of the interview experience and if our meetings had impacted them in any way. Some portions of the final interview were conducted over email due to participants' busy schedules.

3.6 Data Analysis

Interviews were recorded on a personal recording device and first transcribed exactly as they were spoken shortly after the interviews took place. In an attempt to convey the environments that utterance were created in, word stress, laughs, pauses, and notable gestures were included in transcription to the best of my ability (Roulston, 2010), although this was sometimes a challenge due to translation. After data collection was complete I conducted a thematic analysis to examine the data. This will be described in detail in the following section.

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

This study uses thematic analysis to examine participant experiences as reflected in their interview accounts. Given that thematic analysis has the potential for essentializing participant experiences through overgeneralization of results and exclusion of the interviewer (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Talmy, 2010), I attempt to describe the interview contexts that generated utterances.

The process of thematic analysis utilized in this study follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) comprehensive outline including transcription, coding, thematic mapping, and analysis. After each interview was conducted I wrote my initial thoughts on potential connections to the research questions in my research journal, including parallels and similarities between participant accounts. After all interviews had been completed, I coded the transcripts for utterances that related to the research questions twice; first on the transcripts themselves and then on flash cards. When creating codes, I attempted to move past the surface level of interview data in order to look at latent themes, which aim to "identify or examine the *underlying* ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations - and ideologies - that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data [emphasis in original]" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 84).

The next step involved grouping the coded flashcards together in attempts to create the notable themes that were elicited through interviews. From initial themes I created several thematic maps for each research question to visually aid in analysis. After adapting the thematic maps to create themes that I felt were necessary for further analysis, I selected a variety of supporting transcript segments to translate into English. Finally I met with participants individually to receive their feedback on my translations and preliminary analysis. Several participants wished to have both their Japanese and English utterances refined slightly, and thus

some transcripts have been edited as participants wished for grammatical accuracy or to clarify their intended meaning. However, my Japanese and English utterances remain as they were spoken.

3.7 Trustworthiness

As previously mentioned, I am aware of the potential shortcomings and critiques of qualitative interviews and the necessity to clearly theorize and present the interview process. Therefore when constructing this study's theoretical framework and data collection method I was cautious that the two aligned not only with each other but with the research questions. Furthermore, from the beginning of my initial coding process I attempted to explore the ways in which my interactions with participants and own subjectivities may have influenced their utterances or actions. It is also my hope that by describing the context of transcript excerpts and including my own reflexive analysis that I will be able to present my findings with more validity.

The member checking interviews that I conducted with participants are another technique employed to increase the trustworthiness of this study and have a better understanding of my participants' experiences portrayed in our interviews (Roulston, 2010). Through collaborating on transcript translation together as well as sharing my preliminary analysis with participants I was able to learn more about their experiences given that this often prompted clarification or deeper explanation of certain key accounts that arose in interviews.

3.8 Limitations of Study

Like all research, this study has its limitations. The first is the restricted variety of the participant group. Despite an effort to recruit participants that represent a range of diversity in experience, the snowball recruitment resulted in a rather homogenous group given that many participants had similar educational backgrounds and studied in the United States. While this is

somewhat reflective of the most popular study abroad destination for Japanese sojourners (MEXT, 2013), I feel that more varied destinations may have provided a richer dataset for analysis.

Secondly, although this study is interested in participants' identities since their return to Japan, given the scope of this thesis I was not able to conduct a longitudinal study. Conducting follow-up interviews with participants in the future would surely add an interesting layer to the analysis, and illustrate if the influences of their study abroad experiences shift or wane over time.

Another limitation to this study is the fact that interviews were carried out in either the participants' or researcher's L2. Despite that the translation member checks assist with trustworthiness of the presentation of data, during the actual interviews occasional misunderstandings arose. There is also the concern that both the participants and I periodically could not fully express ourselves in our L2s.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter I have given a detailed account of the processes involved in constructing and carrying out the data collection and analysis of this study. This included examining the method of data collection of qualitative interviews and its theoretical background through a constructionist approach to interviewing and translation. I attempted to convey how examining a researcher's subjectivities and their role in the interview process are necessary for a more well-rounded analysis and presentation of data.

I also introduced the context of research at K Uni in addition to providing biographies for each participant to give basic background knowledge in order to facilitate deeper understanding of the context of utterances before the presentation of this thesis' findings and discussion.

Lastly I introduced the methods I have taken to improve trustworthiness of this study,

including assuring my epistemological approaches and data collection methods suitably correspond to each other and investigating the context in which utterances were produced. I also explained my process of member checking interviews concerning transcription, translation and my initial analysis. I then addressed the limitations of this study, which included the snowball recruitment method resulting in a limited range of participants as well as the inability to conduct a longitudinal study. Finally, I expressed my concern regarding the interviews being conducted in the second language of the interviewer or interviewee, which may have led to confusion and periodic disconnect between intended meaning and utterances from both parties. In the next chapter I will present this study's findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this section I introduce the relevant findings in connection to this study's three research questions. The results of the interviews are presented according to themes and described with interview excerpts. As mentioned in Chapter 3, interviews were conducted in both Japanese and English and have been translated into English. Utterances that were originally stated in Japanese are italicized in the transcripts. Furthermore, excerpts originally containing Japanese include a bolded number at the end of each excerpt to indicate the original transcript listed in Appendix B. Table 4-1 illustrates the symbols I used in transcribing the interviews and Table 4-2 contains the abbreviations of participant and researcher names.

Table 4-1: Conventions Used in Interview Transcriptions

@	Brief laugh
@@	Long laugh
(.)	Short pause
(2.0)	Two second pause
::	Elongated sound
<u>friends</u>	Emphasis
{friends}	Words spoken while laughing
°friends°	Words spoken in a whisper
[sarcastic tone]	Description of action

Table 4-2: Abbreviations of Names of Individuals Involved in Interviews

S	Su
M	Mo
Sa	Sae
K	Ki
Y	Yo
T	Toshi
E	Elisabeth (Researcher)

4.2 Themes in Relation to Research Question (1): How Were Participants' Identities Constructed and Renegotiated by Their Experiences During Their Study Abroad?

4.2.1 Articulating a National Identity in Comparison to “Americans”

My first research question asks how participants viewed themselves and felt they were viewed by those around them while abroad. For several participants who studied in the United States, this took the form of a heightened sense of a “Japanese” identity, articulated through interactions with and observations of a presumed “American” culture. This contrast between Japanese and Americans often constructed essentialized images of both groups. For Su and Toshi, this meant critiquing American practices and developing an increased sense of a national identity. Yo, however, identified with certain aspects of American communication that he found appealing and placed these in contrast with aspects of Japanese society he feels are unsatisfactory.

I asked each participant how she/he viewed Japan and herself/himself as a Japanese person while they were abroad. For Su, despite greatly enjoying her time in Michigan she was in the end confident that she was in fact “Japanese”.

Su: “I’m Japanese and Maybe This just Doesn’t Suit Me”

E: *Okay, well, the next question is also, ah, they’re just difficult questions. @ While you were studying abroad, how did you feel towards Japan or*

S: *Ah::|*

E: *being Japanese?*

S: *Well, hm:: (.) Of course (.) America is a really fun place but, there’s something. I thought a lot of things like “I really am Japanese”. So (.) Like I really I often thought like I’m glad to be Japanese.*

E: *Ah, for example? What kind of*

S: *For example, for example. (.) like (.) food or something.*

E: *@@*

S: *@@ Of course food right is so delicious in Japan and, hm:: like (.) Americans seem like too much crazy right.*

E: *Hm::*

S: *There are a lot of parties and the drinking is crazy. Right, the dancing is like pretty intense.*

E: @@ *Intense!*

S: @@ *When I went there, I often thought things like I'm Japanese and maybe this just doesn't suit me. (1)*

By “this”, Su means the “crazy” activities she encountered during parties at her host university. Su enjoyed attending these parties and making American friends but she often felt conscious of a difference between herself and the American students around her. These differences are attributed to the “too much crazy” of American culture, which she feels may be fun for Japanese people to observe but not to take part in. Su does not necessarily view this as negative but believes as a Japanese person it naturally does not suit her. During her email reflection, I asked Su if there were any other experience she wished to share and she answered:

I had been trying to adapt to American culture and try to be "American" (to make friends), but after all, I found it is good to be myself.

For Su, being herself meant embracing a Japanese identity over assimilating to the observed practices of American students around her.

As previously mentioned, Toshi studied at the same school as Su but a year earlier. Toshi claims to have enjoyed his time in Michigan but spent a significant portion of his first interview contrasting American and Japanese culture, with “Americans” in a largely negative light. In the following excerpt, Toshi is elaborating on his attempts to make friends in the United States, which was an original major goal of his study abroad.

Toshi: “Totally Different Than Japan”

T: *After that, of course the culture is different isn't it.*

E: Mm-hm.

T: *For example things like the view toward keeping a promise is totally different than in Japan.*

E: *Ah I see.*

T: *Yes yes. And things like being loose with time. @*
 E: *@@*
 T: *Yes. When you notice your roommate and he's eating your snacks or something. @*
 E: *Ug. @*
 T: *@@ But like I guess, while I think that's good.*
 E: *Oh::*
 T: *Meeting people like that in that one year was really big for me.*
 E: *Hm. Uh, although it was a different culture you think it was like still a good experience?*
 T: *It really was a good experience. Things like noticing your friend and seeing him eating your snacks doesn't happen in Japan. And to think of Japan, people are punctual. But then when I went to America everyone did that and everyone respects.*
 E: *Respect?*
 T: *Yes they are respecting. Those things. So I think that's why those things exist. (2)*

Toshi presents strong and generalizing images of the practices of Japanese and Americans, placing them in direct comparison with one another. He states that Americans “respect” the “American customs” he observed (such as being late, not keeping promises and so on) and therefore such practices continue and are seen as normal. His experiences with his American roommate, whom he speaks of often, may have influenced this essentialist perspective. In this excerpt, Toshi portrays Japanese as punctual and reliable and considerate of other people’s property, while Americans are the exact opposite. Throughout his interviews, Toshi often shared encounters with his roommate and other Americans around him that were tinged with annoyance and resentment. When I inquired about how he felt Japan or Japanese people were generally viewed in his host community, he described the Americans he met as completely ignorant of Japan.

I think their view is maybe just don't know who Japanese are, what Japanese looks like or what Japanese are like. Really. I think there's nothing but people who don't understand Japanese. Samurai or something like that. @ Like that. (3)

Perhaps through these negative experiences towards himself and his country, Toshi constructed an essentialized image of Americans that he in turn contrasted with his own heightened national

identity.

Yo's perception of American culture was very different from that of Toshi and Su. Although Yo also placed American and Japanese culture in direct comparison to each other, he states that he embraces the "open" communication style in the United States. In the following interview segment, Yo explains his fondness for the talkativeness of Americans after sharing a story about chatting with a woman in a grocery store line up in California.

Yo: "Cuz in Japan Nobody Cares"

Y: So yeah, I think it's also good culture cuz in Japan nobody cares about, you know the other people. So, I think it's kind of good culture. People are friendly warm, if my English is, if my English can work.

E: I see, so you feel if you can communicate well, it's easier to establish

Y: Yeah yeah.

E: A good relationship.

Y: Yeah it's also easy to make friends.

E: Mm-hm, absolutely. So you said in Japan, nobody cares about each other.

Y: Yeah.

E: What do you mean by that?

Y: Like uh, in recent years, in neighbourhood, some neighbours don't talk to their, you know people who are who are neighbours.

E: Ah I see.

Y: So even those live in the same area but they don't they don't care about their neighbours or something like that. Also, when I went to the grocery store in Japan, nobody talk to me. So yeah. I think like Japan is kind of (.) like I don't know, American is more open. So sometimes ah, don't talk to me or something like that, I feel. But sometimes I feel kind of lonely.

E: Ah here hm::

Y: Yeah. Cuz the, the US maybe even you know strangers talk to me. So, you know, I don't need to feel lonely.

Similar to Su and Toshi, Yo constructs essentialized images of Americans in his account. Unlike the previous participants, however, Yo embraces aspects of American culture through identifying with the warm and open communication style he experienced during his study abroad. He then uses these traits to critique Japanese people, many of whom he perceives as cold

and closed-off from each other. Given Yo's convivial nature and love of talking, he happily aligns himself with an American communication style while distancing himself from what he views as unsatisfactory social practices in present-day Japan. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that the very nature of my questions regarding "being Japanese" abroad may have encouraged or strengthened such binary comparisons and essentialized notions in participant accounts.

4.2.2 Ascribed Identity As Linguistic Outsider Through University Interactions

When I inquired about how participants believed they were viewed by their classmates and instructors, all participants claimed to have at some point felt that they held at least somewhat of a minority or outsider status within their host university. However, while this often connected to their status of exchange student, Asian or Japanese, accounts conveying the most substantial impact revolved around how participants felt their language skills or speech were perceived in the host community. The identity of an individual with insufficient language abilities was especially apparent in university interactions and caused stress for Su, Mo and Toshi. When describing the identities participants were assigned versus identities they desired to articulate, I found Blommaert's (2006) terms of "ascribed" identities and "inhabited" identities beneficial.

Mo and Su both took part in mainstream classes that necessitated a substantial amount of group work and in-class discussion during their study abroad. Both at times struggled to participate and felt uneasy about how their classmates and instructors viewed them. In the following excerpt, I inquired how Mo felt she was perceived by her classmates in a geography class that she often spoke about. Given that she was sometimes preoccupied attempting to learn both the language and content of her classes, she regularly did not feel comfortable speaking in

class. Because of this, she worried her classmates saw her as “just an Asian girl who discuss a little”. I ask her to elaborate in the following excerpt.

Mo: “I’m a Japanese Girl Exchange Student Who Doesn’t Speak Much English”

E: So when they looked at you as if you were a quiet Asian woman who doesn’t give her opinion, *the reason was you’re Asian or female or both?*

M: *Probably because I’m Japanese. Because in class there were a lot of girls and everyone spoke often. I don’t really think it was because I’m female. Just I felt that it’s because I’m a Japanese girl exchange student who doesn’t speak much English. (4)*

Mo connects her exchange student status and being Japanese to her language skills, which she feels were generally lacking in comparison to her classmates. Throughout our interviews Mo did this several times, suggesting that the identity of short-term exchange student may be associated with images of language deficiency.

When I asked Su if she had any upsetting experiences during her classes abroad, she shared a similar situation where she could not make herself understood to her instructor during an in-class discussion. This led her to worrying that her classmates viewed her as strange.

Su: “Who Is This Person?”

S: *Or, of course my English isn’t very fluent so everyone there was like “hm?” @*

E: *Yeah yeah yeah.*

S: *It seemed like {who is this person?}*

E: *Ah I see::*

S: *I think the air became like that or something in that class. (5)*

Su imagines her classmates gossiping about her while she is struggling to make herself understood in class, placing her on the peripheries of classroom membership. Toshi’s accounts also contained some disheartening experiences in regards to interlocutors and his English language use. In the next segment, I ask Toshi if he recalls any negative experiences from his time in Michigan.

Toshi: “They Can’t Understand That I Can’t Understand”

T: *They weren’t that negative @@ but. Um (3.5) English right.*

E: Okay.

T: *I think that basically Americans think that everyone understands English. They just believe everyone in the world can speak English, even for Japanese. So they just speak English as I am native. So they speak a lot of slang and some weird pronunciations or maybe some f-word or stuff like that. So I couldn’t understand actually. But they can’t understand that I can’t understand.*

E: Mm-hm.

T: *Yes, so that happened. Um, what else can I say. In Japan we, what can I say, can I say we take care? We care, slow, well, sometimes Japanese try to speak Japanese slowly to foreigners because they have some difficulty in Japanese. But Americans, like, they don’t really. In Japan we read between the lines or something and understand. It’s okay! I’m not particularly blaming America for not having that culture at all but it is a country without that culture. It’s different from Japan. That was indeed hard. (6)*

According to Toshi, the lack of compassion he received towards his English illustrates American culture’s inability to “read between the lines” (空気を読む, *kuuki o yomu*) and a general lack of awareness of the unspoken needs of others. He claims to have had repeated encounters with his roommate’s friends that were also hurtful in regards to his accent and vocabulary choice. Believing that his needs were not being met and his efforts not respected, Toshi felt he was positioned as a linguistic outsider.

During our first interview, I asked Yo about being the only Japanese within his group of friends in America. He commented, “Yeah, but I don’t feel anything negative about being a minority. Cuz it’s kind of natural. When I’m in Japan, of course I’m majority.” For Mo, Su and Toshi, however, their ascribed identities as less-proficient English speakers caused varying degrees of anxiety. How these participants are able to actively resist these ascribed identities is discussed in the next section.

4.2.3 Resisting the Linguistic Outsider Identity Through Identities of Participatory Community Member and Proficient Language User

As illustrated in the former theme, three participants in particular felt their schoolmates or instructors viewed them as linguistic outsiders because of their English abilities. Although not all participants claimed to experience this marginalization, everyone was aware of this potential label on English language learners. Furthermore, all accounts except for Toshi's contained processes of actively resisting the ascribed identity of linguistic outsider. This was done through a variety of ways, such as continuous verbal participation in class, joining student groups inside and outside of the host university, and being selective of their friendships. These actions were in turn linked to participants' original goals for study abroad surrounding language development and establishing new friendship groups. In this way, participants strove to replace the linguistic outsider identity with inhabited identities of participatory community member and proficient language user.

The following excerpt is a continuation of Su's interview from the previous theme in which she imagined her classmates thinking, "Who is this person?" Su elaborates by explaining that she regularly used self-talk to encourage herself to participate verbally in class.

Su: "Okay, I Can Do It!"

S: *I think the air became like that or something in that class.*

E: Hm:: *When you had that feeling.*

S: *Yeah.*

E: *Um did it become harder to speak?*

S: M:: *Yes it did, so of course in class to express myself I really*

E: *Yeah.*

S: *always was brave.*

E: *Yeah!*

S: *Okay okay, I can do it! @*

E: *That's so good!*

S: *@ Yeah. I did that. (7)*

By continuously pushing herself to speak in class regardless of the perceptions from those around her, Su challenges the ascribed identity of “linguistic outsider” while pursuing her goal of improving her English. Mo as well strove to participate, although not necessary inside the classroom. She compensated for her difficulties speaking in front of her classes by joining a variety of clubs and students groups both on and off campus. When we met in British Columbia, I was always very impressed at the extensive amount of fun activities she was involved in. In place of verbal participation in her classes, Mo’s continuous efforts to make friends while improving her English through participation in various groups distanced her from the status of linguistic outsider.

The final way participants challenged the linguistic outsider identity was by choosing friends that aided in this resistance. Ki, Yo and Sae all sought out friendships outside of other Japanese students. This included other exchange students, international students or the domestic students of their host country. However, speaking English with these friends seemed to be an important prerequisite. Yo was by far the most adamant about this, and shares in the next segment his efforts to avoid other Japanese students while abroad.

Yo: “If My English Gets Better, Everything Doesn’t Matter”

Y: But uh:: I know I will be a minority in the US, so yeah. It’s I feel it’s very natural for me. And uh (.) my purpose of studying abroad is studying English. So if my English gets better, everything doesn't matter.

E: Doesn’t matter. So that’s your main main goal.

Y: Yeah.

E: Focusing on English.

Y: So I don’t want okay I didn’t want to talk with Japanese people in the US. Actually, California has a lot of Japanese people. Like in my school @ [scoff] I think it’s very stupid but like Japanese people like to make group. So in school, some like ten Japanese group of something try to be be involved. But it’s little it doesn’t it’s not big deal to speak Japanese with Japanese people.

E: Ye::ah oh you mean they tried to get you
 Y: Yes yes yeah.
 E: to join them?
 Y: Oh I said no or something like that. But sometimes I I need had to follow because some of them are kind of older than me.
 E: Oh no, your seniors.
 Y: Yeah.
 E: @@
 Y: So okay okay or something like that. But I met one friend who is from Tokyo. And he is same age as me. And also he really wanted to study English. So we promise not to use Japanese.
 E: So good.
 Y: So we usually communicate in English. Yeah. But yeah, like some Japanese feel like kind of “what are they doing” or something. Kind of like, you know. Like “they didn’t speak Japanese” or something like that.
 E: Hm:: How did you feel like, did that bother you?
 Y: Sometimes but just I ignored.
 E: Yeah.
 Y: Because I had saved money to study abroad, so if my English you know, didn’t get get better, why @ [sarcastic tone] my money is just waste.

Yo spoke with slight disdain towards several of the other Japanese students he studied with given since he saw them as wasting their time and money by not making an effort to find friends outside of their nationality or language. He actively separated himself from these students in terms of language and affiliation, even if it meant being viewed as strange in the eyes of his Japanese classmates. By speaking English as much as possible with other English users and dissociating himself from students who relied on the Japanese language, Yo strongly resisted the linguistic minority identity and positioned himself as an active English user in other friendship groups.

While all participants recognized the presence of the ascribed identity of linguistic outsider, all participants except for Toshi discussed with me their active approach to challenge this identity by pursuing their language goals and developing networks abroad. Through these actions they reflect inhibited identities of participatory community member and proficient

language user.

4.2.4 Japanese Men As Undesirable Romantic Partners in Western Study Abroad

Contexts

Considering that a major goal of this thesis was to learn more about the Japanese male study abroad experience through interviews, I specifically asked Ki, Yo and Toshi to share any experiences they felt were connected to being a Japanese male sojourner in North America. All three participants spoke about the images they believed the women they encountered abroad held regarding Japanese men, claiming these women viewed Japanese men as undesirable romantic partners. Each male participant described these women slightly differently. Ki first described them as “American” or “Canadian” women, but later stated “白人の女の人” (*hakujin no onnanohito*) or, “white women”. Yo used the term “American girl”. When I asked Yo to clarify, he responded, “women who live in Western countries. No matter their first language”, although he specified this did not include Asian women. Toshi used the term “欧米の女の人” (*oobei no onnanohito*), meaning Western (American or European) women. However, given that Toshi described his surroundings in Michigan as being populated by predominantly white and (to a lesser extent) black people, I assumed that he was speaking about women of this background.

Ki and Yo contrasted the undesirability of Japanese men abroad with the general success of their Japanese female counterparts, who seemed to be popular with the men they met abroad. These men abroad were described as “white men” living in Western countries by Ki and as non-Japanese men living in the United States by Yo. Participant accounts represented Japanese men as shy, unromantic, and physically smaller than men of other ethnic backgrounds, making them unattractive by Western standards. Mo and Su also supported these comments through sharing

the lack of romantic attention the Japanese men in their program received in comparison to the Japanese female sojourners.

While the romantic struggles of Japanese male sojourners were presented as somewhat humorous by all participants, it became the main topic of interviews between Ki and I. Ki is a handsome and socially-gifted man who (according to several people I met from his department) is quite popular with women. When I asked him about his popularity he answered modestly, “I know how to make people laugh in Japan”. Nevertheless during his time in Washington he claimed to have a challenge connecting with other students. In the next excerpt, Ki answers my question regarding specific thoughts to share on being a Japanese male studying abroad in the United States. With great enthusiasm he begins sharing about his experience of being 「モテへん」 (*motehen*), or “unpopular with women” in America.

Ki: “I’m No Good!”

K: @ But totally. I wonder. But I really had the image that white women like white men.
Yeah. That’s it. The friends I was with also.

E: Yeah.

K: Japanese women were spoken to by white men but white women never spoke to us and

E: Ah::

K: not just me but other guys were rarely spoken to.

E: Oh::

K: I feel that. Yes.

E: So how did you feel about that?

K: Ah, girls don’t like me! @

E: @@

K: I’m no good!

E: Why me? @@

K: That’s right, why::?! Yeah yeah yeah.

E: Were you searching at this time for a girlfriend?

K: Um:: Yes. Ah:: a little bit. Yes. I was a little bit wasn’t I. That’s right. I thought it was absolutely, absolutely impossible.

E: Oh. [breath out]

K: I thought it was absolutely impossible. °It is, isn’t it.° I feel that!

E: @@

K: Well, besides we’re small.

E: @ No:: not so small. @@
K: @@ Not so small. (8)

Given his previous success with women in Japan, moving to an environment where he worried he no longer held the same appeal caused uncertainty within Ki. Although he had hoped to date during his time in the United States, the lack of attention he and the other Japanese male students received from white women was a surprise and disappointment. He at first attributes this to an image of white women preferring white men as romantic partners. However, this is further complicated by the observation of the Japanese women around him being approached by white men, therefore suggesting that the status of being a Japanese female is more valuable than being a male in this context. He concludes that the general physical size of Japanese men, including his own height, is not desirable to white women. The amount and intensity at which we spoke about this topic led me to believe that Ki's perception of himself as an attractive man was significantly affected due to his lack of success with women in the United States.

Yo and Toshi also spoke of a lack of romantic interactions between Japanese men and white women while abroad. For both of them, Asian males in general were undesirable to white women, with a particular bias against Japanese men. In the following segment, Yo responds to me asking about his experience as a Japanese male sojourner in the United States by sharing about a disappointment at a club in California.

Yo: "Japanese girls Are Loved by a Lot of Foreigners"

Y: @ In my life, just once I went to club, I went to club. And I went to club in San Diego, uh I don't know why but, Japanese girl @ are loved by a lot of foreigners³, like American. But Japanese guy (.) @ are not. So sad. @@ Yeah. My friend who was in NY said the same things. @

³ Yo later clarified that he used "foreigners" to indicate non-Japanese people, particularly those who speak English.

E: Oh::
 Y: I don't know why but.
 E: Don't know why.
 Y: Maybe like American girl @ like doesn't like Asian @@ Asian.
 E: I see::
 Y: But.
 E: So it's not just Japanese men but you think maybe Asian men in general?
 Y: Yeah, especially like Chinese, Korean Japanese guy.

Toshi shares a similar perspective when I asked him the same question. Unlike Ki, he does not focus on perceptions of the physical characteristics of Japanese men but instead the cultural differences in communication and romantic expectations between Japan and the West. Overall, Japanese men are presented as reserved, quiet and unromantic. He begins by stating Asian men are not popular with white women, which I ask him to explain more.

Toshi: “They Don’t Know How European Americans Do”

E: *Ah, especially Japan?*
 T: *Especially Japanese.*
 E: (.) *Why?*
 T: [breaths in] I don't know maybe (.) they are too shy.
 E: Mm-hm.
 T: Like, they can't express their emotions so well. They just sometime we always sometimes always be silence or quiet. And they don't know how to take care of girls.
 E: Hm::
 T: They just don't know how. Like they just don't know how European Americans do. Just stuff like that. (9)

In his second interview, Ki supports Toshi's comment when he spoke of the general popularity of Western men due to their romantic gestures such as giving flowers or regularly saying “I love you”. He contrasted this with the dating practices of Japanese men, who, he claims, “don't say I love you at all”. In their accounts Ki and Toshi included themselves in the categories of “shy” Japanese men uncomfortable openly expressing affection. Therefore, they believed Western

women to see Western men, who are familiar with such romantic practices, as more suitable romantic partners.

Once Ki, Yo and Toshi went abroad to the United States they became more aware of the romantic expectations placed on heterosexual men in an American context. Their lack of participation in this area coupled with the general success of Japanese female sojourners with men met abroad led to some frustration in male participants. “White”, “Western”, or “American” women’s discrimination against Asian males, in addition to Japanese men’s physical attributes and discomfort with Western styles of communication and dating are presented as reasons for this challenge. Ki expressed the greatest disappointment in being “unpopular” with white women. Although once confident in his social interactions in Japan, he could not easily transfer this identity to his life abroad in the United States and even began to see himself as physically inferior.

4.3 Themes in Relation to Research Question (2): Upon Returning, How Do Participants View Changes in Their Identity? How Are the Changes Related to Their Experiences During and After Their Study Abroad?

Much like the goal of learning more about the Japanese male sojourner experience, exploring the effects on identity after returning to Japan was a significant component of this study. All participants found their study abroad to be full of meaningful and influential experiences, although it was sometimes a challenge to concretely describe how. Through our interviews and the participant reflections, I surmised three themes in regards to participants’ identities since their return. While many saw themselves as more active or confident individuals who balanced their time abroad with being “Japanese”, two participants drew closer to their Japanese nationality after their return.

4.3.1 A Heightened Sense of Personal Agency in One's Future

As previously mentioned in Theme 3, many participants continuously and actively pursued their goals while on their study abroad. While Sae, Yo and Toshi were proud of their accomplishments abroad, Su, Mo and Ki directly linked their self-assertion during their sojourn to their lives in Japan since returning.

In a previous excerpt Su described how she used self-talk to motivate and encourage herself to verbally participate in class despite her worries about her language abilities and abilities of her interlocutors to understand her. She was also very eager to create new social networks in the United States in a language other than her native tongue but was surprised to find how challenging it was to connect with her American classmates. Unlike in Japan where she was generally invited out by classmates, in Michigan it was necessary for Su to take initiative in approaching others to create relationships. She believes she uses this more assertive and self-driven approach to establish desired interactions in Japan as well.

Su: “If You Wait, Nothing Will Come”

E: While you were studying abroad, do you think you, your personality, your interests or your um your strengths changed?

S: *Like, of course, if you don't do anything, if you wait, nothing will come. So if there's something you want to do it must come from you. Before, when I was in Japan my friends invited me for dinner or asked me, “why don't you participate in this activity?” or , “why don't you participate in this event?” I couldn't hang out like this so I had to always do it on my own accord, my own accord, to always do things actively. I really became assertive. I became able to speak to people who I had even met for the first time.*

E: *That's nice isn't it.*

S: *So maybe through my study abroad, my English also improved but to say which improved more, things like that, assertiveness. That area improved more maybe. (10)*

Su's statement of “if you don't do anything, if you wait, nothing will come” represents well the approach she takes in her own life now in Japan, particularly apparent in her activeness

in job-hunting and her constant efforts to create new social networks. When I asked if she had changed through her study abroad, she described maintaining 自分で行動する力 (*jibun de koodoosuru chikara*), or the ability to be self-assertive, from her time in Canada.

Mo: “I Have to Take Action Myself”

M: *I thought so. I have to take action myself, I was assertive since I thought that nothing would change like, I think I started acting on my own initiative. For example when I thought that I wanted to speak more English, I went to the conversation cafe or something. More like, when I went to club activities or looked by myself for as many ways of improvement as I wanted. The ability to be active by myself or something.*

E: *Yeah.*

M: *I think, wow, it was really connected to study abroad. Can I say that’s ability? @@ (11)*

Lastly, Ki’s interviews demonstrate this theme as he speaks repeatedly about a need to constantly “take risks” to reach his goals while in Washington. During his study abroad Ki began to worry that his English abilities were not improving at the rate he previously expected and thus he began “taking risks” through meeting new people and using English as much as possible. Like Su and Mo, he believes he has continued enacting this assertiveness in Japan.

Ki: “I Learned If I Don’t Take Risks I Won’t Learn Anything”

K: *Ah, yeah, dramatically, not that dramatically but I think I changed a bit. I said it before but.*

E: *Yeah.*

K: *I tried to take risks to get something. Like I when I during study abroad, I learned if I don’t take risk I don’t I won’t learn anything. Like, but ah like when I, if I want to improve my English, I have to talk to people, right? In like, people who speak English. @ Right?*

E: *@ You do, don’t you.*

K: *Yes I do. That’s right. Though it was frightening. I was afraid of making a mistake and speaking English but I tried and push myself.*

E: *Mm-hm::*

K: *Yes. And then coming after returning I also (.) yeah like (.) like in order to achieve something.*

E: *Yeah.*

K: *Yeah yeah yeah, I must take risks. (12)*

Similar to Su and Mo, Ki states, “I learned if I don’t take risk I won’t learn anything”, again highlighting a new approach to personal agency from experiences and challenges abroad. These three participants’ use of personal action in reaching their goals during their study abroad prompted them to view themselves as more assertive. Once returning to Japan, their self-perceptions as active, social, and forthright individuals with a more concrete role in their futures continued.

4.3.2 Perceived Increase in Capabilities Through English Abilities

Several participants also linked their increase in English proficiency with a boost in self-confidence. Yo and Ki spoke at length about this, likely given that their confidence in English is directly connected to their confidence in their future job performance as English teachers. They further stated that they now feel more at ease using English with tourists and foreign residents that they encounter in Japan. Sae’s experience differs, however, given that her confidence is not necessarily linked to her fluency but her ability to interact with and understand a variety of Englishes.

Since he is such a friendly and confident man, it was hard for me to imagine Yo ever being shy when speaking. Nevertheless, he stated he was shyer before his studying abroad. In the following segment, I ask Yo how he feels when he speaks English since returning.

Yo: “Oh You Are Cool”

E: How do you feel when you use English now?

Y: I got a confidence.

E: Mm-hm::

Y: Cuz, yeah @@ cuz many of my friends says oh you are cool.

E: @@ That’s awesome.

Y: I’m so satisfied @@

E: Yeah yeah yeah yeah. @@ Awesome. Your Japanese friends?

Y: Oh yeah @

E: Do you speak like um:: because something else you said was, your friend from Tokyo.
 Y: Oh yeah.
 E: You and him made an effort to speak English. Some people listening to you, some Japanese other exchange students listening to you they would maybe be like wha::t? When you use English now, how do you feel people view you?
 Y: They're looking at me. @@
 E: Yeah yeah yeah.
 Y: Yeah but (.) I think yeah speaking English is is you know my advantage.
 E: Mm-hm.
 Y: Yeah. It's okay.

Yo projects a self-image of not only a capable and confident English user, but also the notion of English as “cool” as supported by his friends’ comments. However, the act of Yo being stared at for his English use paints another picture: the oddity of a Japanese national using English in Japan. While this will be addressed in detail in a later section, Yo clearly feels the advantages of English outweigh the awkwardness.

Ki also says his confidence has increased through improving his English abilities abroad, as exemplified by the next segment illustrating his enjoyment and increase in self-image from helping non-Japanese speaking tourists in English.

Ki: “It Became My Confidence”

K: Like I had one uh experience that I couldn't help the tourist before I go abroad to American before I went to America. So I felt if I if I could use (.) ah English fluently, I could help them.
 E: Mm-hm::
 K: So I was like I didn't like myself not helping.
 E: Ah::
 K: But I can help right now right?
 E: Yeah yeah yeah.
 K: So hm it became my confidence and *like I become happy right*.
 E: *Yeah yeah yeah*.
 K: I'm glad to help them. (13)

Sae's study abroad experience is somewhat unique among the other participants given

that she was the only sojourner in a predominantly non-English speaking country. At the beginning of her study abroad Sae struggled significantly to communicate with the numerous English varieties present in her dorm and university program in Norway. She felt that the English she was encountering was nothing like “native speaker English”, which is what she had studied (and was attempting to emulate) in Japan. However, after becoming familiar with her dormmates and classmates as well as their English varieties, she saw her interactions with numerous Englishes as one of the largest benefits from her study abroad. In the following excerpt Sae elaborates on some struggles she had when interacting with her dormmates from Italy.

Sae: “They Try to Speak English, Their English”

Sa: And probably in addition to that uh their, it’s for the first time it’s difficult to communicate even in English, like they have a strong accent and probably for them I have a strong accent.

E: Yeah.

Sa: So even in English it’s not easy to understand.

E: Yeah hm. How do you feel now about other varieties of English cuz you got to experience so many different people.

Sa: @@

E: Speaking English from different countries and.

Sa: It was really good things to uh good things that I could I could listen many kinds of many various of English I think.

E: Mm-hm.

Sa: Uh, yeah. (3.0) I think it’s okay just they try to speak English @ so.

E: Yeah yeah yeah.

Sa: Like Japanese try to speak English like native.

E: Mm-hm.

Sa: But actually they didn’t. They try to speak English, their English. So there was a huge difference, so it was very hard to understand what they want to say, but actually to work in the future if I work to the global society, I have to listen many various of English so.

E: Mm-hm.

Sa: If I go to the native English speaking country, I couldn’t get (.) probably I couldn’t get such kind of ability to

E: Mm-hm.:

Sa: listening to many English. So it was very good things for me.

Sae states that if she went to a predominantly English speaking country as she originally hoped, she would not have been able to gain exposure to such a variety of Englishes. In our first interview Sae shared that interacting with predominantly non-native English speakers in her dorm and classes helped her feel less self-conscious about speaking English. She claimed,

I don't need to hesitate to speak English so (.) After I realized I after I realized that I can (.) kind of I feel very comfortable.

Therefore witnessing those around her using “their English” coupled with the lack of a native English speaker environment in Norway prompted Sae to let go of some inhibitions she may have held regarding her own English abilities. By overcoming these linguistic challenges, Sae improved her communicative abilities overall and contributed to her preparation for future work in “a global society”.

Ki and Yo's increased abilities to use English in Japan will not only benefit their future careers as English teachers and help them feel more capable or cool. Moreover, Sae views herself as able to participate in a variety of English speaking contexts and grew to embrace her own variety of English. For these three participants overall, improving their English skills contributed to them identifying as more capable and confident individuals since returning.

4.3.3 Drawing Closer to a Japanese National Identity

Su, Mo, Sae and Yo all expressed a fondness for their experiences overseas and feel they grew in ways that benefited their lives in Japan. Ki and Toshi, however, seemed to draw closer to a Japanese identity that prized Japan as the ideal place for them. During interviews, all participants except for Ki and Toshi spoke repeatedly about the strong friendship groups they had developed during their study abroad. These groups included friends from a variety of backgrounds, both from their host university and in the wider community. In contrast, Ki and

Toshi's accounts contain challenges when trying to establish such communities during their sojourns. This lack of legitimate membership within a community in the United States may have led Ki and Toshi develop stronger national identities during and after their sojourns.

As mentioned previously, Ki strove to avoid the other Japanese students during the majority of his study abroad. Instead, he spent much of his time with a group of American students who were very interested in Japan and Japanese culture. However, when I asked him who his best friends were in Washington he answered that he did not have any. Although he was able to "speak English a lot" with these American friends he admits this group was not ideal. He states:

To be honest, I thought I care about my English too much. So even if I had friend, I have friends from Washington. And uh, I like them, but they're not @ hm:: *What can I say? Those people were friends that I thought would increase my English proficiency when I was with them.* (14)

In this case Ki admits that he sacrificed the comfort of genuine friendship for more chances to improve his language proficiency. Although Ki's American friends liked him, this did not amount to meaningful relationships given that Ki's was primarily invested in gaining access to these friends' language skills. In his second interview, when I inquired about returning to Japan, Ki told me he was extremely eager to leave the United States. He recalls fondly that his actual best friends greeted him at the airport in Japan and he claims the transition back into life in Japan "was so easy" and "I felt no stressful things". Overall, his time in the United States strengthened a preference for Japan. When I asked him to share more about this during his reflection interview (which unfortunately was only partially recorded), Ki said that lacking a deeper connection with his Washington community contributed to his continuous longing to be back in Japan. For Ki, Japan was a place where he felt not only comfortable but was also a

member of a community that he valued and was valued by.

Finding a genuine friendship group was not easy for Toshi either. Firstly, his roommate and roommates' friends teased Toshi about his English, causing resentment and discomfort. Although Toshi found some classes interesting and was on friendly terms with his classmates, he states, "I was always feeling as a minority" within his host university. Another major challenge Toshi faced was the collapse of a relationship with a fellow Japanese exchange student who was also a potential girlfriend, after which he claims to have suffered rejection from many of the other Japanese exchange students at his host university. In his second interview, he spoke at length about spending time alone in contemplation during his study abroad since he felt his actions isolated him from his former friends. While he was very depressed during this time, Toshi claims to value this experience since it led him to be more observant and contemplative.

Toshi: "I Just Felt Speaking up Too Much Doesn't Solve Any Problems"

T: So I want to listen to other people to understand as much as possible. So I don't, I speak less now.

E: Yeah.

T: Some people just become like speak more, after studying abroad. Because they know they can speak up. And no one cares about it. I mean no one blame, especially in the United States somewhere.

E: Yeah.

T: But just in my case (.) I just felt speaking up too much doesn't solve any problems.

During these struggles in the United States, Toshi connects his pensiveness and lack of "speaking up" to "Bushido", or "the way of the warrior", a traditional ideology often associated with samurai. He claims to continuously identifying with Bushido since returning. I asked him to explain more in his second interview.

T: Uh:: first I don't talk too much.

E: Yeah.

T: But m yeah I speak a lot in English. @

E: Oh I see.

T: It's just like uh how I am in English but usually I don't usually I try to listen to other people, not mentioning my opinion so much. Cuz what I wanna do is just accepting other people.

E: Mm-hm::

T: It could be respecting, respect on other people. So, uh:: sometimes Bushido says it is important to be silent.

E: Yeah yeah.

T: Cuz, if you talk too much, it just cause some like uh, confusing in mind.

E: Hm::

T: So I don't know, maybe there is so many points but.

E: Yeah yeah.

T: I think that one of my Bushido points.

However, it seems that this approach to communication is causing problems within the student support organization Toshi is a member of at K Uni. Toshi explained he was experiencing problems since the other members felt he was not verbally contributing enough in group discussions.

T: Cuz yeah especially the organization that I'm in. They are kind of against to me because all members are studying abroad in the United States or somewhere which means they knew it's a good to speak up.

E: Oh:: °I see.°

T: Yeah. It's so hard to understand each other because the difference the difference is completely opposite.

Like his time in the United States, since returning home Toshi believes that he is still experiencing rejection due to his "Japaneseness". He juxtaposes his Bushido approach to communication with the assertive approaches that the other members use, which he attributes to their study abroad in Western countries. Therefore although the society members are all Japanese nationals, Toshi inhabits an identity that he feels is still the most Japanese.

Through Ki and Toshi's lack of participation in communities where they were valued and in turn valued those around them, these two participants drew closer to their national identities as

Japanese while distancing themselves from their host cultures even after their return to Japan. The other four participants, although they never rejected being Japanese, were able to find balance and comfort between their host cultures and national identities due to their legitimate membership within communities abroad.

4.4 Themes in Relation to Research Question (3): How Do Participants View the Role of English in Their Lives Since Returning to Japan?

Before leaving for their study abroad, each participant had hoped to improve their English to some extent, although this degree varied heavily depending on the participant. For example, in an email follow-up, Sae said, “I didn't want to go study abroad only for learning English, I wanted to learn not only English also international relations and to have many experiences”. This is an interesting comparison to Yo’s previous statement of, “if my English gets better, everything doesn’t matter”. Since returning, the place that English holds in participants’ lives also differs. While some participants see English as less crucial to their futures, some hold it as a global language necessary not only for personal success but also for Japan’s general success on the world stage.

4.4.1 English as Only One of Many Languages for Communication

Su, Sae and Toshi all saw English as having somewhat of an ambiguous place in their future. Given their efforts to learn English, Su and Sae both desired to use English in their careers but do not feel it would be possible, or that such a position is even necessary to have a satisfying career. Instead, both women see English as an enjoyable tool for communication. When I asked Sae in a follow-up email to clarify why she continued to pursue English, she responded,

I like speaking English a lot, communicating with English a lot so that I want to keep studying English! I think this is the most biggest motivation of studying English now. Regarding to working, I think I don't stick to a job which require me to high English ability. But in such a global society, having English skill might be great for many situation. Probably if I have English skill, I can get more opportunities than people who don't have it. Like meeting new people, and making new network or whatever.

Sae also shared that she was hoping to learn German as well since she made several German friends while studying in Norway. Similarly, Su now feels herself drawn to other languages based on friendships. She uses the example of Chinese, which she studied before going to Michigan for mainly instrumental purposes.

Su: “Because I Have Friends from Other Countries I Want to Speak the Language”

E: *Yeah, what do you think? About other languages.*

S: *Well you know, like, other countries, well of course Chinese. I've been studying it since my first year.*

E: Oh::

S: *Just a little bit though right? Because I didn't use it at all during my study abroad but I think I'd like to study English and Chinese together. At first I thought it would be useful for entering society if I could speak Chinese but now my motivation is um, Chinese friends?*

E: Hm.

S: *I want to speak to them or something.*

E: °Ah I see.°

S: *Yeah yeah. I also made a lot of Korean friends this summer vacation so now I want to study Korean. @*

E: Ah I see.

S: *So because I have friends from other countries I want to speak the language. (15)*

Since returning Su and Sae see English's main purpose in their lives as a tool for communication and both express interest in learning other languages based on their relationships with friends met abroad. Therefore, despite still hoping to use English in the future and enjoying using it in communication, it is not the only language worthy of study.

Toshi presented a complex view towards English during his accounts. Firstly, while he claimed he was studying to become an English teacher he also stated that he did not see a clear

use for English in his future other than possibly communicating with monolingual English speakers. He shared that he was previously nervous to use English in public in Japan because he thought it was “something special” but he now sees English as “just a language” for communication.

Toshi: “It’s Just a Language”

T: Not on campus but maybe somewhere in the city. Maybe if I speak English (.) I could be something special (.) for them. I didn’t want to stand out.
E: I see.
T: But now (3.0) I don’t care.
E: So before you were worried.
T: Yeah.
E: But since coming back.
T: Yeah.
E: You don’t care about that.
T: Yeah I don’t care. Cuz maybe I was believing (.) I was even believing like uh it was special for me to speak English.
E: Yeah.
T: But now it’s not so special.
E: Mm-hm.
T: Cuz it’s just a language yeah.
E: Yeah yeah.
T: So I don’t care. Uh, because I knew it’s just a language to communicate with other people.

Since returning to Japan, Toshi does not use English much in his daily life and feels that its biggest benefit to him in the future will be communication with individuals who only speak English. In his first interview, he also shared an ambiguous belief that somehow English will provide more chances for meeting new people and finding chances in the future. When I asked him what kind of chances, he answered,

Meeting new people, *right*. So. If I had a more connection with people, I would have more chance to do something new, or they just offer me more project or some. I dunno maybe, literally it’s just a chance. But it could be just chances. *I wonder. I wonder what’s different. I don’t know though.* (16)

English is still presented as having some importance by these three participants. Yet, English is regarded as mainly for communication with English speakers who do not speak Japanese and it is certainly not seen as the only valuable or desirable language to learn. Furthermore, these three participants attach vague future benefits to English surrounding making new friends and possible work-related connections.

4.4.2 Assumption of English as an International Language

In contrast to the previous three participants, Yo, Ki and Mo all place a great importance on learning English. This is certainly influenced by their future careers requiring English, the most obvious being for Ki and Yo who plan to be English teachers. Mo, as a future airport staff also believes that English is necessary for both attaining and thriving in a position in an international airport. Therefore, these three participants connect a confidence in their English abilities to confidence in their own work performance. For Yo and Ki, this extends past personal success, however. Both men state that increasing the proficiency of English overall in Japan is necessary in a world they perceive as increasingly international. Within their accounts they describe English as closely tied to tourism and success in globalization, as well as an increased reputation on the world stage. In the following excerpt, Yo expresses his belief that English should be utilized as a medium to communicate with the non-Japanese speaking world, both inside and outside of Japan. This was prompted by me sharing my experience of not being able to read the Chinese characters of an unfamiliar station name while travelling in Tokyo.

Yo: “Speaking English Just Has Positive Effect. No Bad Side.”

Y: Yeah people don't speak @ English in Japan. So::

E: But you speak English @

Y: Yeah so, I think as a teacher, I want to force to a lot of students to speak English with who speak English who communicate with the foreigners more like aggressively and forcibly.

E: Hm::
 Y: We have Olympic, so.
 E: Yeah.
 Y: We have to host a English speaking students. English speakers.
 E: So raise the proficiency of English.
 Y: Yeah Yeah.
 E: Yeah. Why do you think it's so important for Japan to speak English?
 Y: Because @ Uh (.) like, uh:: the world is getting in globalization.
 E: Mm-hm.
 Y: Globalized. So I think more and more foreigners will come to Japan in our future.
 E: Hm::
 Y: And even evening like, even like Japanese people work in a Japanese company, they have to make business, maybe they will have to make business with foreigners or something like that. So uh, there is no bad point when if they speaking English. Speaking English just has positive effects. No bad side. So.
 E: Hm::
 Y: Yeah if people speak English, their world will be will be:: will be wider and something like that.

Yo believes strongly that the general level of English proficiency across Japan is not satisfactory for successful participation in a globalized world. He also sees the language of “globalization” as being English. Yo seemed slightly taken back when I asked why Japanese people should speak English, and his matter-of-fact reply regarding English’s connection to communicating with the rest of the world illustrate the assumption of English as the language for international communication. In our second interview, I asked to Yo elaborated on this point and he replied,

So if we can speak English, like not only native speakers but also EFL speakers and ESL speakers can communicate each other.

For Yo, English is not only a world language but also a value-free medium through which all members of a globalized society can communicate. Shortly after this I asked Yo if he felt that “English has too much power in the world”. He replied that studying English will not affect Japanese culture or a Japanese person’s sense of self and in fact, “if we speak English we can share our insides more and more with foreigners too”.

Ki as well spoke in detail about Japan's need to strengthen its English abilities as a nation. He believes English is necessary in order to share the Japanese perspectives with the rest of the world.

Ki: "We Need to Have Strong Own Opinion"

K: *And* as developed country people, we need to uh:: we need to have English skill or information or knowledge, to tell them about Japanese culture or Japanese things. (2.0) Hm? (.) Hm?

E: Hm?

K: Ah, I thought we had less abilities to inform or talk.

E: I see.

K: We don't have own opinion or something. Japanese people don't own have opinions, just agree. Agree.

E: Agree.

K: Agree.

E: Mm-hm.

K: With other's opinions. So we need to have strong own opinion I thought.

E: Mm-hm::

K: As developed country's people or something right.

E: To be more aggressive in sharing about Japanese perspective or

K: That's right.

E: (Country)

K: *Because we're* just listening. (17)

Ki stated multiple times in his interviews that he was surprised at how hard the American and Canadian university students studied while he was in North America. He laments that Japanese university students do not work hard in school and that they are not able to share their opinions well, unlike students from other "developed countries" like the United States and Canada. During our reflection interview I asked Ki to clarify what he wanted Japan to share with the world. This interview was only partially recorded but my field notes (December 28, 2013) reflect that Ki believes Japan should articulate its opinions and perspectives in English internationally in order to "get feedback from the world" and develop more diverse views.

Without English as the lingua franca for communication with other nations, Ki worries Japan will remain secluded and somewhat close-minded.

4.4.3 A Lack of Ownership of Japanese Varieties of English

Each participant connected globalization and English at least once in her or his accounts. As the previous theme illustrated, Ki and Yo in particular see English as necessary for Japan's success in a globalized world and both feel that English education should be increased for this purpose. Despite English being presented as a global language for all to use, participant accounts also suggested that English does not yet "belong" to Japan. In other words, for many participants there is still a lack of ownership regarding English. This is conveyed when Ki, Toshi and Yo claim they feel others judge them when they use English in public. Ki and I spoke at length about this during his second interview.

Ki: "To a Japanese I Feel Very Shy"

E: I see I see I see thank you. So when you do use English now, how do you how do you feel when you speak in English?

K: Ah (.) ah:: to the native speaker of English, uh just a little bit a feel shy or I feel shy to speak English. But to Japanese students I feel very I feel very shy to speak English.

E: Uh huh.

K: *I wonder why.*

E: °*I wonder why.*°

K: @ *I wonder why I don't know why* but m:: *right*. To a native speaker I don't feel, yeah. (18)

Later I asked Ki how he felt speaking with the native English speaking international students at K Uni, and he answered that if another Japanese (who has a familiarity with English) is present, he still prefers to use Japanese due to shyness. Here, he uses me as an example.

K: So even you if you are in study room and uh (.) uh:: Japanese students are there.

E: Oh yeah.

K: Or other any other, if any other guys are there.

E: Yeah yeah yeah.

K: I:: maybe I talk to you in Japanese.

E: Hm Japanese.

K: Yeah yeah yeah. I think so. I'm shy. So um. I'm afraid of making a mistake of grammar or pronunciation.

Despite Ki having studied abroad and possessing excellent English fluency, he still feels awkward speaking English in front of Japanese people. Previously, Ki stated his confidence increased due to his English abilities but this may be specifically connected to interacting with non-Japanese. Furthermore, the act of Ki feeling the need to go abroad again to Australia to further improve his English also reflects his lack of ownership of his own variety of English, given that he currently possesses more than sufficient language abilities for teaching.

Yo is not only comfortable but relishes the chance to use English in Japan, even if he sometimes feels he is being criticized by other Japanese people him. Nevertheless, a story regarding his flight home to Japan demonstrates a disconnect between an Asian face and the English language. Yo explained that he was so accustomed to speaking English that he spoke English to an older Japanese man sitting beside him on the airplane from San Francisco to Japan. In the following excerpt I asked Yo to elaborate.

Yo: “My Looking Is Totally Asian”

Y: No, I don't know what like (.) huh I tried, yeah the guy, the old guy was sitting next to me on the flight.

E: @ Yeah yeah.

Y: Maybe I tried to say, how was your trip to San Francisco, blah blah blah?

E: Yeah @@

Y: “Ah, uh?” [acting as surprised “old guy” on plane] @

E: @

Y: Cuz you know, my looking is totally Asian, so @

E: Yeah yeah yeah yeah @

Y: I don't know I @

E: Definitely, but there are some people who don't speak I mean maybe they are Asian but maybe they don't speak maybe they only speak English.

Y: Yeah yeah yeah.

E: Or, they, so.

Y: @@

E: Who knows.

Y: Yeah I cannot forget his face then. @@

Yo believes he shocked the Japanese man beside him on the plane by initiating a conversation in English, causing Yo to then switch to Japanese. He attributes this man's apparent shock to the oddity of someone who looks "totally Asian" speaking English to another Asian, especially when they are both Japanese.

Toshi as well connected being "Japanese" to poor English abilities when explaining being teased by some of his roommates' friends.

So I, well, I'm Japanese and I can't pronounce English, can I? Not really. Not well. Like a real native, and even if I pronounce in an intelligible way, my pronunciation is completely different than a so-called native. (19)

Toshi directly connects his nationality with having deviant pronunciation. Therefore, despite Ki's and Yo's feeling of a need for English in Japan, and Toshi's view of English as "just a language", the ideology of English as a Western language still lingers within their accounts.

Sae's embrace of her own variety of English provides an interesting comparison to these other participants' experiences. Studying in Norway and speaking English with almost exclusively non-native English speakers was both her greatest challenge and accomplishment. Through gaining comfort with a large variety of Englishes as well as her own, Sae has strengthened her personal ownership of English while decreasing her view of English as a Western language.

4.5 Summary

In this section I have presented the themes constructed in the participant accounts related to this study's three research questions. Excerpts from the interview transcripts were used to

represent these themes. Each participant brings a different life history and study abroad experience and thus it is natural that not every theme applies to each participant. Furthermore, the interview contexts and interactions within them varied, affecting the data produced as well.

Accounts illustrated that during their time abroad, several participants articulated an essentialized Japanese identity in comparison to what they perceived as “American”. Japanese were presented as generally quiet, thoughtful and less assertive than Americans. Toshi even saw Americans as inconsiderate or oblivious to the needs of others. Yo, however, felt that the assertive communication style of Americans is superior to what he observes in Japan as unfriendly. All participants were conscious of a “linguistic outsider” ascribed identity that was prescribed to English language learners or exchange students, and several participants actively opposed this identity through continuously pursuing their goals of developing friendships and their language proficiency. This took forms of regularly participating in in-class discussions, actively joining student clubs and events outside of lectures, and selecting friendship groups that created distance from the linguistic outsider identity.

The gendered experiences of the Japanese male sojourners were also discussed in depth. Overall, all three men, along with Mo and Su believe that Japanese males are not desirable romantic partners for Western (generally white) women, given that Japanese men are short and less expressive and thus not “cool” by Western standards. This is placed in contrast to the Japanese female sojourners who were commonly romantically pursued by the men they encountered abroad. For Ki especially, this caused him to doubt his masculinity and attractiveness to the opposite sex.

Several of the approaches that participants used to resist the linguistic minority identity are also attributed to changes they feel since returning to Japan. Su, Mo and Ki expressed an

increased awareness in their own role in reaching their goals for the future. This is attributed to the lingering necessity they felt abroad to constantly independently pursue their goals. As future English teachers, Yo and Ki articulated an increase in capabilities and confidence (and coolness in Yo's case) through their improved English fluency. Sae too was more confident in herself due to a familiarity with a variety of Englishes as well as a recognition of her own variety of English as legitimate.

The importance of mutually valued community membership was present in interviews, which I connected to Ki and Toshi drawing closer to a Japanese identity. Despite Ki's increase in confidence and risk-taking, he overall did not see his American friendship group as "best friends" and continuously longed to return to Japan. Toshi, who was hurt by his American roommate and the roommate's friends and experienced rejection from other Japanese exchange students, began enacting an essentialized Bushido identity that he has continued enacting since returning. Due to the lack of participation in sincere friendship groups while abroad, Ki and Toshi both drew closer to a Japanese identity after returning to Japan as well.

English was also viewed in diverse ways by participants since returning. Although improving their English was a goal of study abroad, Su, Sae and Toshi now portray English as one of many tools for communication with non-Japanese speakers. Mo hopes to continue her English for a future career, but Yo and Ki believe that English is essential for Japan's successful participation in a modern world. Interestingly, despite the discourse of English's pivotal role in a globalized Japan, Yo, Toshi and Ki's accounts also illustrate a lack of legitimacy towards the Japanese variety of English, suggesting English is still viewed as a Western language. Sae's experience in Norway and her comfort with her own variety of English are placed in opposition to this.

In the next chapter I will discuss the significance of these findings in relation to previous research outcomes.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore how this study's findings address the research questions and previous research discussed in the Chapter 2. Norton's (2000) approach viewing identity as "multiple, contradictory, and a site of struggle" (p. 128) that is "changing across time and space" (p. 11) is utilized in analysis. Furthermore, Norton's (2000) concept of investment is applied to not only participants' relationships to English but also other aspects of their study abroad experience that connect to their social identities. Next, the role of English in participants' lives is discussed in light of some dominant discourses on English and globalization in the context of Japan.

5.2 Japanese Sojourners and Shifting Identities Abroad

5.2.1 Resistance Abroad

Within many Western educational settings, verbal participation is associated with not only language proficiency and cultural assimilation but also intelligence (Ellwood & Nakane, 2009; McKay & Wong, 1996). A number of studies have suggested common essentialized images of Asian learners (held by both educators in Western contexts and Asian students themselves) that do not fit the common Western ideal of participatory classroom interaction. These include traits such as a reluctance to speak, passive learning style and a lack of critical thinking and individuality (Ellwood, 2011; Ellwood & Nakane, 2009; Harumi, 2010). Similarly, participants in this study were subject to the discourses and dominant practices of their host institutions that valued verbal classroom contribution, resulting in participants being positioned as odd or as having deficient language abilities. This notion is seen in Su and Mo's worries of being judged as strange or inferior by their classmates and Toshi's experience of being teased for

his English by his roommate. Kubota (2009) notes the common “elitist assumption” (p.614) in many Western universities that expects international students to already possess fluent language skills before entering. Although participants in this study were exchange students as opposed to degree-seeking international students, taking mainstream classes at their host institutions suggests that they were likely exposed to the same expectations.

As sojourners’ identities are positioned in new ways during their study abroad, they may search for stability through a variety of means (Ellwood, 2011). One method of attempting stability is through the resistance of unwanted ascribed identities (McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000). In this study, all participants but Toshi resisted the marginalized identity of linguistic outsider and instead enacted the identities of participatory community member and proficient English speaker. Norton (2000) describes this active resistance as human agency, claiming an individual “is conceived of as both subject of and subject to relations of power within a particular site, community and society” (p. 127). In other words, while participants were affected by disempowering discourses surrounding their status as Asian learner or exchange student, most established counter-discourses through enacting their desired identities in their daily lives. In this way, participants’ efforts to construct counter-discourses at their host institutions illustrate that claiming one’s identity can be “a site of struggle” (Norton, 2000, p. 127).

For Su, Sae, Mo, Ki and Yo, their investment in improving their English and making new friends created a strong enough desire to construct counter-discourses that challenged this ascribed outsider identity. These five participants all eventually established friendship groups during their sojourn in which they were valued members, which consequently increased their investment in their study abroad experiences. Nevertheless, one wonders why Toshi’s accounts

did not display the same resistance and why Ki still longed to return to Japan despite his valued position in a “non-Japanese” friendship group. These questions will be examined in the following section.

5.2.2 Community-Membership and Identity

Despite a possibility for human agency, a sojourner’s experience is not completely based on her or his own efforts (Ellwood, 2011). How an individual is perceived and engaged by their interlocutors in their host community can greatly affect her or his experience (Churchill, 2009; Kinginger, 2004; 2009). Toshi’s accounts are an example of this, especially in comparison to Su who had a very different sojourn than him despite being at the same host school just a year later. For Toshi, his struggles within his host community appear to have affected not only his inhabited identity but also his lack of resistance to being the “linguistic outsider”.

Toshi came to the United States with hopes of intercultural experiences and friendships but eventually developed a rather negative and essentialized view of the United States. He also described an inhabited identity based on Bushido that values practices such as quiet observation and limited emotional expression while avoiding “speaking up”. Although Toshi had significant contact with American students such as his roommate and classmates, he “was always feeling a minority” and believed very few (if any) Americans understood Japan. His emotional distance from Americans illustrates that physical proximity to a host culture during a sojourn does not guarantee community membership or meaningful interaction (Trentman, 2013). In addition, Toshi experienced rejection from his Japanese friends and therefore claims to have spent a significant amount of time alone in reflection. His experiences of being hurt by both “host community” (his roommate and his roommates friends) and “home” (his potential girlfriend and fellow exchange students from Japan) caused frustration, loneliness and depression that no other

participant mentioned. Without a community or a firm sense of belonging in Michigan, Toshi's overall investment in his sojourn was affected and thus also his ability (or desire) to resist the unwanted identity of linguistic outsider that other participants actively opposed. Instead, he strengthened his essentialized view of Americans while articulating an opposing identity of a quiet and pensive man rooted in Bushido.

Ellwood (2011) brings another layer to experiences like Toshi's, as seen in the story of Noboru, a Japanese male participant in her study at an Australian university. Noboru experienced the devastating break up of a long-distance girlfriend during his studying abroad, which consumed the majority of his thoughts and distracted him from the rest of his life in Australia. Ellwood concludes, "[Noboru's] continued growth and movement in the exchange process was effectively blocked by this negative affect" (p. 971). Not surprisingly, distressing experiences such as Noboru's and Toshi's have potential to limit one's ability to invest in the study abroad experience and resist unwanted ascribed identities. In this way, it is apparent that coupling a distressing experience with a lack of community membership affected Toshi's inhabited identity as well as his resistance to ascribed identities.

Ki's experience regarding his study abroad community was also unique among the other participants. Throughout his sojourn he continually viewed Japan as superior to the United States and increasing strengthened his national identity. However, he spoke of an American friendship group whom had a particular interest in Japanese language and culture and seemed quite found of Ki. Norton (2000) and Trentman (2013) note that having skills of value such as this are influential in newcomers attaining community membership. Nevertheless while Ki was embraced by this group, he did not feel he connected on a deep level with them and never truly felt comfortable. Ki's experience reflects that being embraced by a community during a sojourn

is not enough to inspire investment in the host community, but that it must be a relationship of mutual value. For Ki, who admits to selecting these friends based on their English language background as opposed to their personalities or mutual interests, his powerful investment in improving his English proficiency eventually resulted in him emotionally separating from his host community and longing to return to Japan to the friends he genuinely connected with. While reflecting on the experiences of Ki and Toshi, this study supports the findings of previous studies such as Churchill (2009), Kinginger (2004) and Trentman (2013) that suggest a valued place within a host community positively influences a sojourner's identity development. This study also proposes that a sojourner equally valuing these community members is important to strengthening their investment in the study abroad experience. Furthermore, Ki and Toshi's increased national identity during challenging experiences abroad also reflects the findings of Dolby (2004), Kinginger (2008) and Takayama's (2000) research.

5.2.3 The Gendered Experience of Japanese Males

Each student that goes abroad brings with them unique identities and expectations of how they will be viewed by others (Ellwood, 2011), and this of course includes aspects of gender. Plentiful research has demonstrated that the study abroad experience is gendered in ways that may significantly contribute to positive or negative experiences for sojourners. For example, Polanyi's (1995) research with Americans female sojourners in Russia who had limited opportunities to speak due to "gender-related problems" (p.289), and Churchill's (2009) case study of Japanese high school student Hiro, whose gender allowed him to separate from his female peers and connect with members of his host school and use English (see Chapter 2). In contrast, Takayama's (2000) interviews with young Japanese men studying English in Vancouver illustrated participants felt fewer opportunities to develop friendships with

“Canadians” and use English than their fellow Japanese female sojourners, largely due to the perceptions of Japanese men as “uncool” in Western countries.

The accounts of participants in this study parallel many of Takayama’s (2000) interviews. Ki, Yo, and Toshi may have desired relationships with English-speaking women in order to establish legitimacy within their host communities as proficient language users and participatory members, and yet felt their nationality prevented them from achieving these identities. In comparison to “other” men abroad (who were described by male participants as “white”, “American”, “non-Japanese” or “European American”), Japanese men were commonly described as small, uncharismatic, poor communicators and unromantic. Such images are not only present in previous research but also the media. For example, through interviews and personal anecdotes, Kelsky (1996; 2001) and Simon-Maeda (2011) observed similar discourses both in Japan and the United States that positioned Japanese men as romantically and physically inferior to Western (generally white or black) men. The findings of Wong, Tran, Owen, Collins and Higgins (2012), suggest that such images are extended to Asian males in general. Wong et al. (2012) interviewed 159 Asian-American male college students and discovered recurring experiences of stereotypes such as “interpersonal deficits”, “unflattering physical attributes”, and “sexual/romantic inadequacies” (p. 80). A quick search online reveals several North American blogs discussing the unflattering images in connection to Asian males. There is even an LA-based company aimed at helping men of Asian descent act more like an “alpha male” and “attract women of all races and ethnicities” for a sizeable fee (ABCs of Attraction, n.d.).

While these discourses also exist in Japan (Kelsky, 1996; 2001, Simon-Maeda, 2011), coming to the United States and experiencing them firsthand may have caused Ki, Yo and Toshi uncertainty regarding their perceptions of personal masculinity and desirability. This is further

complicated by the male participants' observations of the overall popularity of Japanese females, which suggests that the combined identities of "Japanese" and "male" are a disadvantage in the context of study abroad in Western countries. Much like the participants in Takayama (2000) and Polanyi's (1995) research, Yo, Ki and Toshi perceived the values and characteristics attributed to their gendered identities shift when coming to the United States. Furthermore, Ki's comment of it being "absolutely, absolutely impossible" to date white women reflects how unequal distributions of power in the social world may restrict an individual's access to desired communities (Norton, 2000). In fact, these marginalizing discourses concerning Japanese men seemed so strong that even the "risk-taker" Ki and the talkative and friendly Yo did not attempt to approach white women or "American girls" on their sojourn. For Ki, this ascribed identity of "unpopular" Japanese man in the American dating world likely further contributed to his lack of investment in his host community and strengthening of his national identity.

It is also interesting to note that while dating and desirability was apparent in the male participant accounts, this study did not reveal strong notions of *akogare*, or a "longing" for Western Anglophone (commonly white) men or culture among the female participants (c.f. Kelsky, 1996; 2001; and Takahashi, 2013). In contrast, the male participants in this study identified aspects of *akogare*, much like Ellwood's (2006, 2011) and Takayama's (2000) interviewees, affirming that *akogare* is not a strictly female phenomenon.

5.3 Identities of Returned Japanese Sojourners

5.3.1 Resistance in Japan

As previously mentioned, experiences of Japanese returnees from short-term study abroad programs have been underexplored, especially in regards to notions of identity.

Nevertheless, by looking at the results of Japanese returnees who have lived abroad for greater lengths of time, some contrasts can be made with this present study.

Previous outcomes of research regarding long-term Japanese sojourners (e.g. Ford, 2009; Kanno, 2003; Takahashi, 2013) suggests that the returnees may experience conflict when balancing their multilingual and multicultural identities articulated abroad with reintegrating into life in Japan. This may even include being marginalized for some returnees. The identities articulated in the interview accounts of this study differ from those of the long-term sojourners, suggesting that a sojourn's duration has a significant impact on its outcomes. In this study, participants did not express struggles such as being bullied due to jealousy or a difficulty sharing their experiences with others. In fact, all participants but Toshi claimed to have a relatively easy time readjusting to life in Japan. Although Toshi was eager to return to Japan, he claims to currently be “a minority” in his student support organization at K Uni. This may be due to his inhabited Bushido identity facing opposition from his fellow members since the organization requires regular verbal participation and collaboration. It is interesting that this essentialized identity is marginalized in the context of Japan where Toshi originally believed it would be valued. In spite of this disappointment, Toshi practices resistance by his strategic use of *Nihonjinron* to construct and justify his inhabited identity. Through refusing to increase his verbal contributions, Toshi uses his silence as resistance to the social practices of his student organization at K Uni (Norton, 2000). He also utilizes discourses of *Nihonjinron* when resisting his fellow members' attempts to position his identity as deficient, claiming that it is their sojourns in Western countries that caused the other members to develop such assertive speaking styles. Therefore despite being a “minority” in his student organization, Toshi establishes counter-discourses that position him as being the most Japanese.

5.3.2 Agency and Confidence in Japan

Sojourners who overcome challenges abroad due to their own efforts may experience increased empowerment or confidence through the thrill of achieving success in a foreign environment. Asaoka and Yano (2009) view this notion as linked to the development of a sojourner's maturity. This sense of achievement and excitement from accomplishments abroad is also present in Ellwood's (2011) interviews with Ursula, a German exchange student at an Australian university. Ursula's successes during her sojourn prompted the realization of her own personal growth, causing her to claim, "now I can do anything, it's – there are no limits" (p. 974). By testing and overcoming her own limitations, Ursula perceived herself as a more capable individual who was able to actively pursue her desires during her sojourn. This consequently deepened her investment in her study abroad experience. Su, Mo, Ki, Yo and Sae all experienced a similar increase in self-confidence through the successes of their own persistence and efforts abroad. Through resisting unwanted identities and continually pursuing their goals abroad, these participants feel they not only improved their English but also established valuable friendships and had a variety of once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Enacting active or "risk-taking" identities in Japan are perceived as benefiting participants' movement toward their future goals, particularly in the spheres of social networks and employment. It is also important to note that participants' self-confidence and assertiveness does not appear to have experienced opposition either from their communities abroad or in Japan.

The shifting identities of Su, Mo, Sae, Yo and Ki also conflict with the homogenous and unchanging discourses of "Japaneseness" within the *Nihonjinron*. Furthermore, Su, Mo and Ki's self-assertive approach and Yo's love of the "talkative" American communication style show a diverse range of identities that do not conform to an essentialized image of Japanese. Participants

in this study did not reject their nationalities, however, but instead enact identities they feel are beneficial to meeting the needs in their daily lives.

5.4 The Role of English in Participants' Lives

5.4.1 Communication and Linguistic Instrumentalism

Ideologies surrounding the transnational use of English, such as English as a Lingua Franca or English as an International Language, have become common topic in many academic, educational and political circles around the world (Kubota, 2009; McKay, 2002). In Japan as well, English is promoted as the main language of communication in international business and with non-Japanese both inside and outside of Japan. A particularly strong link has been made between English proficiency and an individual's ability to compete in the job market in addition to the nation's overall success in a globalized world. Kubota (2011a) summarizes this sentiment well through the concept of linguistic instrumentalism, or the notion of the necessity of English for success in one's career and economic stability. Therefore, investing in English may be seen as a valuable resource for both a future career and aiding Japan in achieving international success. Such discourses are present in the policies and proposals by MEXT discussed in Chapter 2 and are consequently influential in study abroad programs in Japan. However, as Seargeant (2011) comments, despite prominent discourses in Japan, English is regarded and utilized differently depending on the context and individual. This diversity described by Seargeant is also reflective of how participants in this study currently view English in their lives upon returning to Japan.

For Su, Sae and Toshi, English is a language for future friendships and social networks. However, it is by no means the only language they see as beneficial to translingual communication but instead is to be utilized when no other common tongue is present. For Su and

Sae, using their English skills seemed unlikely to help them find a job and even more unlikely to be used regularly at work. To an extent this reflects the findings of Kobayashi (2007) whose adult female interviewees studying English in Canada did not believe their increase in English proficiency would benefit their future careers. Su and Sae were nevertheless, very interested in maintaining and utilizing their English for social purposes and vague potential career opportunities. For these participants, the irrelevance of English for their future career suggests that their investment in English moves beyond linguistic instrumentalism towards communicative purposes.

Toshi's conflicting statements in regards to his views on English require some further discussion. In his interview accounts he expressed his desire to become an English teacher and yet also clearly stated a lack of use and need for English since returning to Japan. This is somewhat surprising, especially when compared to the accounts of his fellow future educators, Yo and Ki. Due to Toshi's experiences during his sojourn and his marginalization surrounding his English pronunciation and usage, it is possible that Toshi is not currently invested in his English learning while still being invested in finding a career. In addition, Toshi has yet to find a teaching position while many students in his program have already been hired. Perhaps this uncertainty and disappointment have also contributed to this conflicting view towards English.

Conversely, Mo, Ki and Yo all envision English as integral to their future careers. For Mo this is due to her desire to work in a major international airport in Japan, and thus English holds an instrumental importance for her. Many discourses present in MEXT policies concerning the individual and national benefit of learning English are apparent in the accounts of Ki and Yo. Both men state that the overall English proficiency of Japan is necessary for successful participation in business and communication with non-Japanese both inside and outside of Japan.

This is visible in their comments about increasing tourism, international business and sharing Japanese perspectives globally through English. For these men, English is a language of internationalization and is seen as a neutral means through which all speakers, regardless of linguistic or cultural backgrounds, can communicate. Interestingly, Yo and Ki's comments of sharing the Japanese "insides" or perspectives with non-Japanese also reflect discourses of the *Nihonjinron* that portray English as a way to spread the unique ideologies and perspectives of Japan with "foreigners" (Kubota, 1998; Liddicoat, 2007; Sugimoto, 1999).

Of course, Yo and Ki's background in English language education and their career choice should be considered when examining their accounts. As future English educators, it is understandable that they would feel a strong positive connection to English. Furthermore, while Yo and Ki may place English in a privileged position, their views extend past linguistic instrumentalism given that they desire to aid their future students in developing more transnational perspectives and friendships. While such views are indeed well-intentioned, an uncritical acceptance of the ideology of English as a value-free medium for global communication fails to recognize the detrimental effects that the stark prioritization of English has within Japan and beyond. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are two contradictory assumptions at play regarding English in Japan: The promotion of English as an international language and English as the language of Western Anglophones (Kubota, 2011b; Matsuda, 2011; Seargeant, 2011). First, the assumption of English as an international language will be addressed.

Investment in learning English as an international language may be in order to gain the resources necessary to participate in international business or communicate with individuals outside of Japan. Although learning English as an additional language has the potential to benefit students in a variety of ways, an overemphasis on English education has been noted to neglect

other languages and cultures in foreign language education (Kubota, 1998; 2009; 2011a, 2011c). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the numbers of foreign residents and visitors in Japan from predominantly Anglophone countries are much smaller than those from East Asia. Therefore, viewing English as the only language for translingual communication hinders the goals of internationalization by devaluing and denying access to other foreign languages and cultures, not to mention the variety of languages and cultures already present in Japan (Kubota, 2009; 2011b). Despite the perception of the necessity of English for communication with non-Japanese that arose in Yo and Ki's interviews, Kubota (1998) notes that it is not necessary to or even beneficial to use English with all non-Japanese in Japan. Moreover, assumptions of everyone's ability to participate in the English as an international language settings fails to acknowledge that English may only be available to those with the economic means to pursue it. In this way, the acquisition of English may also be associated with growing social inequalities (McKay, 2002; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011).

While Su, Sae, Toshi and even Mo did not see English as essential in their daily lives, Yo and Ki articulated a growing need for English proficiency within Japan. Such assumptions of the necessity of English in everyday life in Japan have been challenged, implying a separation between the discourses of linguistic instrumentalism and actual language needs and use in Japan (Kubota, 2011a; 2011c; 2013; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). Kubota (2013) extends this challenge transnationally through her research concerning the language use of Japanese employees based in China. She concluded that employees predominantly used Mandarin and Japanese as opposed to English in their workplace. As a result, translinguistic and transnational communication should not be viewed as merely consisting of one dominant language (English), but a unique combination of languages necessary for "border-crossing" (Kubota, 2013, p. 16)

communication. Perhaps Su and Sae's growing interest in other languages for establishing social networks is a reflection of this realization.

5.4.2 Ownership of Japanese English

The second assumptions surrounding the conflicting images of English in Japan is that the English language “belongs” to white Anglophones. All three male participants questioned the legitimacy of the Japanese variety of English. In other words, these participant accounts reflected, “although English is *used* all over the world, it does not *belong* to the world [italics in original]” (Matsuda, 2003; p. 494).

Regardless of his beliefs about the role of English in Japan and his strong investment in improving his English skills, Ki articulated his lack of ownership over English when avoiding English use in front of other Japanese speakers (who have a familiarity with English). Not only did he feel it was unnatural to use English in these contexts, but making “mistakes” in front of other Japanese may have also threatened his desired identity as a competent English teacher in Japan (Norton, 2000). In fact, Ki is so concerned about his English proficiency that he is willing to study abroad again, since he views English fluency as impossible to acquire in Japan. Interestingly, even though Ki is a fluent English speaker, not to mention that he successfully wrote and presented his graduating thesis in English, he still describes his English proficiency and future career in English education as 矛盾 (*mujun*), or “a contradiction”.

The privileging of the “native speaker” in English education in Japan in combination with teaching “standard” varieties of English further contributes to the lack of English ownership among Japanese. Through biased hiring practices favouring native English speaking teachers particularly from white Anglophone backgrounds (Kubota, 2011a; 2011c), and the heavy promotion of mainstream English varieties in Japanese English textbooks (Yamada, 2010;

Yamanaka, 2006), white, Anglophone norms are still very much attached to notions of “English” in Japan. This of course conflicts with the view of English as a value-free medium for communication if an international language is indeed, as suggested by Widdowson (1994), something that “no nation can have custody over” (p. 385). Furthermore, all participants except Sae studied in Western, predominantly English-speaking countries. In such contexts they were likely not only constantly surrounded by but also subject to a native-speaker standard of English, which potentially contributed to the delegitimizing of their own variety of English.

Widdowson (1994) notes that a truly international language adapts itself in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation to meet the local communicative needs of a community. He claims this is not conducive to the concept of “standard English”, which contains the customary varieties taught in Japanese schools. Strict observations of linguistic “standards” reflect issues of power and social identity given that those who do not (or cannot) conform to these norms are often considered “outsiders, nonmembers of the community” (Widdowson, 1994, p. 381). Therefore participants’ awareness of their own “non-standard” variety of English may have preemptively situated them as “linguistic outsiders” before their sojourn. This was only exacerbated by their study abroad experiences, such as their encounters with perceptions of Asian learners or feeling pressured by the native speaker standard. Consequently, while some participants felt a higher self-confidence through improved English abilities, this does not necessarily equal an increase in ownership over a Japanese variety (or personal variety) of English. Matsuda (2003) argues that until Japanese English is recognized as a legitimate variety within Japan, English users will “remain in an oppressed, peripheral position of international communication in English that is reinforced by the traditional, monolithic view of English” (p. 484).

As previously mentioned, Sae's comfort with her own variety of English stood out to me during our interviews as somewhat unique. She was the only participant who studied in a country where native English speakers were a minority. Although she arrived with a "native speaker standard" in mind, constantly interacting with domestic and exchange students speaking "their English" influenced her comfort with and pride in her own English use. Through these interactions and the absence of the native speaker standard in her study abroad context, Sae increased her ownership of her own variety of English. Sae's accounts reflect Widdowson's (1994) claim that "real proficiency is when you are able to take possession of the language, turn it to your advantage and make it real for you" (p. 384). Her experience also contrasts that of Kobayashi's (2011) findings, in which several Japanese returnees who studied in Singapore maintained a desire to learn "Standard English".

Nevertheless, Lin, Wang, Akamatsu and Riazi (2002) offer a word of caution towards language ownership in relation to the continuing privilege afforded to Western varieties of English. "Ownership" may not be stable as English users experience that "the feeling of having to prove oneself (and one's competence in English) is a recurrent one, and the struggle is one that continues" (p.104). Even so, Sae's experience is an excellent example of the great potential study abroad programs outside of the traditional English language locations such as Canada, the United States or the UK have to offer.

5.5 Summary

Study abroad commonly involves entering a new environment with a variety of unfamiliar discourses pertaining to the social world, some of which may relate to aspects of a sojourner's identity. When such discourses do not align with a sojourner's own beliefs, their sense of self may be destabilized (Ellwood, 2011; Kinginger, 2013). Sojourners are compelled

daily to negotiate the relations of power containing these discourses (Norton, 2000). While participants in this study were positioned in undesirable ways by their host communities, many participants illustrated the impact of human agency by shifting the surrounding relations of power through inhabiting identities that created counter-discourses against essentialized notions of “Asian learners”, or “Japanese exchange student” (Norton, 2000). At the same time, participant accounts also conveyed the importance of valued community membership for increasing a sojourner’s investment in the study abroad experience (Kinging, 2008; Trentman, 2013), and subsequently the ability to resist unwanted identities.

Participants generally saw the identities they inhabited abroad as beneficial to their future goals, and therefore continued enacting them in their daily lives in Japan. Through their investment in their study abroad, which resulted in the a new sense of self-assertion and self-confidence for Su, Sae, Mo, Ki and Yo, their new assertive identities were valuable resources to expanding their social networks and entering the job market (Norton, 2000). Likewise for Toshi, maintaining his Bushido identity was an essential component of his national identity. These identities, enacted in Japan and yet influenced by time abroad, support the conclusions of Alred and Byram (2002). The authors state that there is a potential for a lasting impact from even short-term study abroad, due to the “demanding and consuming nature” of the sojourn that enables participants to use their experiences as a “powerful reference point” from which to view the past, present and future (p. 351).

The bureaucratic discourses of linguistic instrumentalism are clearly influential in Japan, as apparent in certain participants’ beliefs about English being key to Japan’s economic success and communication with non-Japanese. However, other participants’ aspirations to learn languages outside of English suggest a desire and need among Japanese youth that challenges the

limiting foreign language policies of MEXT. Moreover, participant accounts further challenge these policies by illustrating how a lack of ownership over the Japanese variety of English is influenced by the promotion of an essentialized native speaker standard, which is apparent in much of MEXT's educational policies.

In the concluding chapter I will reflect on the interview process and discuss how my role within the interviews may have affected the findings. I will also discuss this study's implications and suggestions for future research. Lastly, I will present some brief concluding remarks.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Reflexivity and the White Anglophone in Japan

Similar to Simon-Maeda's critical reflection on researchers' racialized identities (Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006), from the beginning of my study, I was concerned about what was indexed by my multiple subjectivities as a white, Anglophone female researcher among my participants. I held particular concerns towards my status as a white native-English speaker and worried this would decrease participant's comfort, especially the three male participants who aspired to be English teachers. However, I soon realized that a researcher's identities are not exempt from change or conflict throughout the research process (Norton & Early, 2011). Depending on the participant and interview context, these identities intersected in different ways. Through reviewing the interview transcripts and audio, I reflected on how I presented myself during the research process.

Firstly, despite my concerns of my privileged native English speaker status, in the context of Japan and throughout several of the interviews I was the "non-native" speaker. Therefore, during interviews where Japanese was predominantly used, I occasionally felt my identity of researcher become that of "learner", as my participants took the role of "teacher" or "expert" and explained unfamiliar vocabulary to me. Furthermore, I often shared my own language learning struggles during study abroad in response to participants sharing about their linguistic experiences abroad. By presenting myself as a fellow language learner in interviews, I attempted to encourage participants' confidence in their own language use and reduce possible anxieties surrounding my native English-speaker status, ultimately resulting in more comfortable interview setting.

Reflection also illuminated potential ways in which my subjectivities constructed the data produced in interviews. For example, participants' negative responses about life abroad may have been limited when they perceived me as aligned with particular experiences or subjectivities. For instance, Mo, who studied in Canada, insisted she had no negative experiences outside of her geography class struggles. If I were not a Canadian, perhaps Mo might have felt more comfortable speaking about challenges abroad. My status as a white North American female in regards the topic of the Japanese male experience likely had a similar influence. All three males shared their experiences with me at length about perceptions of Japanese men abroad, yet Ki and Yo often seemed slightly hesitant. For example, Ki repeatedly began his comments about white women by raising his hands and stating, 「ほんまにステレオタイプやけど」 (*honmani sutereotaipu yakedo*), or “this is just my stereotype, but...”. When topics such as “Canadians” or “white women” arose in interviews, I regularly (and perhaps unconsciously) attempted to limit personal connections to the topics by assuming an identity of a neutral listener, thus encouraging my participants to speak freely. However, the transcripts suggest that participants continued to situate me in connection with these subjectivities at least to some degree. By reflecting on my subjectivities and actions in the research process, I am reminded not only of my own role within the construction of data but also that a researcher's identity is not free from conflict (Norton & Early, 2011).

6.2 Implications for Educational Practice

Several conclusions from this study can offer implications for English language education and study abroad programs. Firstly, during the reflection interviews each participant expressed an increased awareness of how their study abroad affected their view of themselves now. Through the prompted reflection of the research interviews participants began to

understand their study abroad experiences more deeply. In our last meeting, I asked each participant if they perceived any benefits to being interviewed about their study abroad. Sae's response illustrates the importance of a designated time and space to share and reflect on one's experiences for future use.

- Sa: Uh the such great experiences like study abroad must be connect to my future like (.) kind of I must uh:: develop my experiences to my future. So but then firstly we have to do uh the review my review our experiences to connect to develop my future. So but since I'm too lazy. @@
- E: {You're not lazy}
- Sa: It's difficult to review or review or reconstruct my experiences by myself.
- E: Mm-hm::
- Sa: But I could do so through the interviews. So probably I can (.)
- E: Yeah.
- Sa: Develop something in my future.

Ki shared Sae's sentiment when he expressed that he was able to realize how deeply his study abroad experience changed him through being interviewed.

- K: Ah:: I (2.5) We aware that (.) I was totally (.) changed. I was I changed myself totally after the after the studying abroad. I realized that through the interview like.
- E: Really?
- K: Yeah. Like how I (.) I didn't so I didn't think about so much about how did I change.
- E: Hm.
- K: But through this interview I realized that I understood I (4.0) I considered and I thought the (.) by taking the risks during the studying abroad and after I go back to Japan I come back to Japan I kept taking risks and tried to communicate with (.) the people who I don't know or.
- E: Mm-hm.
- K: So (.) hm:: (2.0) the (3.0) what how studying abroad affect my (.) life (.) I considered that though the interview.

All other participants shared similar statements about the benefits of the interview process in realizing changes prompted by their sojourn. K Uni, despite its sizeable and well-known study abroad programs, offers little support and opportunities for returned sojourner reflection. This unfortunately is not uncommon in university study abroad programs (Shaheen,

2004). Block (2007b) and Lo (2006) suggest that positive acknowledgement of the study abroad experience allows returnee's personal growth and new identities to be cultivated and utilized in their home context. Therefore although sharing with friends and family is helpful, I assert that a designated time and place to debrief with another individual is beneficial to returned sojourners' awareness and satisfaction in their own development and shifting identities. This could be done through not only interviews like the ones conducted in this study, but also storytelling activities or advising future study abroad participants (Lo, 2006). Such activities may help returned sojourners feel as though they have a meaningful place within their institution (Shook & Keup, 2012). Moreover, given that several participant accounts contained essentializing discourses towards their host countries and Japan, a place for reflection may also help participants critically examine some of the assumptions they hold in relation to their study abroad experiences.

Another implication from this study revolves around the ownership of English in the context of Japan. As Sae's experience suggests, there is great potential in exposure to and interaction with a variety of Englishes outside of the "standard" varieties (Kubota, 1998; Matsuda, 2003). Therefore, using activities, classroom materials, and increasing interaction with a range of individuals with different English varieties (such as guest speakers) in English classrooms could be beneficial. Furthermore, increasing the promotion of exchange partnerships with university English programs outside of the traditional Anglophone study abroad locations may have significant benefits to not only English proficiency but also feelings of confidence and ownership over one's unique variety of English. During my time in Japan, I observed an existence of such programs in countries such as Norway, Malaysia and the Philippines, and yet MEXT (2013) statistics show that traditional English learning destinations (like the United States, England and Australia) are still the most common for English study. Increasing

opportunities for experiences like Sae's could subsequently combat the necessity of the native English speaker standard and lead to a rise in comfort regarding one's own English variety.

6.3 Directions for Further Research

Research on Japanese sojourner experiences in study abroad tends to focus on English programs in traditional Anglophone countries. However, few studies have examined the experiences of participants like Sae, who have studied in English-medium programs in non-Anglophone contexts. Such research is likely to inspire interesting new perspectives regarding Japanese sojourner identities and how they perceive English in their lives.

Research concerning sojourners from Japan who do not fit the limiting definition of "Japanese" by the *Nihonjinron* has also been neglected. There is room for further exploration of the experiences of immigrants or international students in degree programs who study abroad through their Japanese universities. Such students' diverse multilingual and multicultural identities during and after their sojourn are also valuable to the fields of language education, identity and study abroad.

Finally, the gendered experiences of Japanese male sojourners warrant further research. While studies have been conducted surrounding perceptions of Asian American males (e.g. Leong & Schneller, 1997; Wong et al., 2012), and Japanese women (e.g. Kelsky, 1996; 2001; Takahashi, 2013) besides Takayama's (2000) master's thesis I struggled to find other in-depth research concerning Japanese men abroad. This is reflective of Appleby's (2013a) observation of a tendency of studies investigating a combination of race and gender to focus on females. By further examining the shifting gendered experiences of these men, the contextual essentializing discourses and structures of power in their study abroad can also be explored.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

The aim of this thesis was to learn more about the influential effects of the study abroad experiences of Japanese sojourners; I was personally curious if study abroad for my participants was the “life-changing” experience that it is often promoted to be. Through my interactions with participants, it became clear to me that their sojourns did affect them in ways that deeply impacted how they see the world around them and their place in it. Inhabiting these identities in the present moves participants toward the future of who they want to be or who they feel they ought to be. Whether these identities are as a skilled and confident language teacher, a pensive listener, or someone who cherishes once-in-a-lifetime encounters, I believe all connect to their time abroad.

Participants’ perceptions of English were also placed in connection to their futures. Unlike the prominent perception promoted by MEXT in Japan, English does not appear to be essential to everyone’s future careers, much less their daily life. However, participants who saw a direct link to English in their future careers also supported the powerful discourses regarding globalization and linguistic instrumentalism.

I feel extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn about my participants’ study abroad experiences. However, what struck me the most was everyone’s increased awareness of the impact their sojourns had on them. Through this realization participants more fully understood the significance of their accomplishments and the depth of their short yet meaningful relationships developed abroad. In the excerpt below from a recent online conversation, Sae conveys the joy a deep understanding of one’s study abroad can bring:

When I think Bergen, I always say 「帰りたい」 (*kaeritai*, or “I want to go home”). For me, there is another home and for you, Kansai is another home. I think it's really happy, because people normally have only one home but we have two.

References

- ABCs of Attraction. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.abcssofartraction.com
- Appleby, R. (2013a). Desire in translation: White masculinity in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47, 122 – 147.
- Appleby, R. (2013b). Singleness, marriage and the construction of heterosexual masculinities: Australian men teaching English in Japan. *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 10, 1 – 21.
- Asaoka, T., & Yano, J. (2009). The contribution of “study abroad” programs to Japanese internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 13, 174 – 188.
- Atkinson, P., & Silverman, D. (1997). Kundera’s immortality: The interview society and the invention of the self. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3, 304 – 325.
- Block, D. (2007a). The rise of identity in SLA research, post Firth and Wagner. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91, 836 – 878.
- Block, D. (2007b). *Second language identities*. London: Continuum.
- Blommaert, J. (2006). How legitimate is my voice? A rejoinder. *Target*, 18, 163 – 176.
- Breckenridge, Y., & Erling, E.J. (2011). The native speaker and the politics of globalization in Japan. In P. Seargeant (Ed.), *English in Japan in an era of globalization* (pp. 80 – 100). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Briggs, B. L. (2002). Interviewing, power/knowledge, and social inequality. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 911 – 922). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.

- Burton, S. K. (2004). Interviews with female Japanese study abroad students in England. *NUCB Journal of Language, Culture and Communication*, 6, 1-11.
- Churchill, E. (2009). Gender and language learning at home and abroad. *JALT Journal*, 31, 141 – 158.
- CLAIR. (2010). JET Programme participant numbers. Retrieved from <http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/introduction/statistics.html>
- Dolby, N. (2004). Encountering the American self: Study abroad and national identity. *Comparative Education Review*, 48, 150 – 173.
- Ellwood, C. (2006). On coming out and coming undone. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 5, 67 – 84.
- Ellwood, C. (2011). Undoing the knots: Identity transformations in a study abroad programme. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 43, 960-978.
- Ellwood C., & Nakane, I. (2009). Privileging speech in EAP and mainstream university classrooms: A critical evaluation of participation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 4, 203-230.
- Ford, K. (2009). Critical incidents in the experiences of Japanese returnees. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 9, 63 – 75.
- Global30. (2014). Global 30. Retrieved from <http://www.uni.international.mext.go.jp/global30/>
- Harumi, S. (2011). Classroom silences: Voices from Japanese EFL learners. *ELT Journal*, 65, 260 – 269.
- Japan National Tourism Organization (2013). *Foreign visitors to Japan by nationality and month for 2013 – Total* [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/ttp/sta/PDF/E2013.pdf>

- Kanno, Y. (2000). Bilingualism and identity: The stories of Japanese returnees. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 3, 1 – 18.
- Kanno, Y. (2003). *Negotiating bilingual and bicultural identities: Japanese returnees betwixt two worlds*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kelsky, K. (1996). Gender politics of women's internationalism in Japan. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 10, 29 – 50.
- Kelsky, K. (2001). *Women on the verge: Japanese women, Western dreams*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kinginger, C. (2004). Alice doesn't live here anymore: Foreign language learning and identity reconstruction. In A. Pavlenko & A. Blackledge (Eds.), *Negotiation in multilingual contexts* (pp. 219 – 242). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Kinginger, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. *Modern Language Journal*, 92, 1 – 123.
- Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.
- Kinginger, C. (2013). Identity and language learning in study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46, 339 – 358.
- Kobayashi, Y. (2002). The role of gender in foreign language learning attitudes: Japanese female students' attitudes towards English learning. *Gender and Education*, 14, 181 – 197.
- Kobayashi, Y. (2007). Japanese working women and English study abroad. *World Englishes*, 26, 62 – 71.
- Kobayashi, Y. (2011). Expanding-circle students learning 'standard English' in outer-circle Asia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 32, 235 – 248.

- Kodera, A. & Kameda, M. (2013, December 13). English education to get serious. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/12/13/national/english-education-set-to-get-serious/#.Ux14W-ddVbw>
- Koizumi, K. (1999). *Why Japanese women learn English in Vancouver*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of British Columbia, British Columbia. Retrieved from https://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/9170/ubc_1999-0270.pdf?sequence=1
- Kubota, R. (1998). Ideologies of English in Japan. *World Englishes*, 17, 295 – 306.
- Kubota, R. (2002). The impact of globalization on language teaching in Japan. In D. Block and D. Cameron (Eds.), *Globalization and language teaching* (pp.13-28). London, UK: Routledge.
- Kubota, R. (2009). Internationalization of Universities: Paradoxes and responsibilities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93, 612 – 616.
- Kubota, R. (2011a). Learning a foreign language as leisure and consumption: Enjoyment, desire, and the business of eikaiwa. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 14, 473 – 488.
- Kubota, R. (2011b). The politics of school curriculum and assessment in Japan. In Y. Zhao (Ed.), *Handbook of Asian education: A cultural perspective* (pp. 214 -230). New York: Routledge.
- Kubota, R. (2011c). Questioning linguistic instrumentalism: English, neoliberalism, and language tests in Japan. *Linguistics and Education*, 22, 248 – 260.
- Kubota, R. (2013). ‘Language is only tool’: Japanese expatriates working in China and implications for language teaching. *Multilingual Education*, 3, 1 – 20.

- Kubota, R. (2014, January 17). Orinpikku to eigokyoiku: Hanguroobaru teki kaikaku [The Olympics and English language education: Anti-global reforms]. *Shuukan kinyoobi* [The Friday Weekly], 975, 63.
- Kubota, R. & Lin, A. (2009). Race, culture and identities in second language education: Introduction to research and practice. In R. Kubota & A. Lin (Eds.), *Race, culture and identities in second language education: Exploring critically engaged practice* (pp. 1 – 23). New York: Routledge.
- Lee, E., & Simon-Maeda, A. (2006). Racialized research identities in ESL/EFL research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40, 573 – 594.
- Leong, F.T.L., & Schneller, G. (1997). White Americans' attitudes towards Asian Americans in social situations: An empirical examination of potential stereotypes, bias and prejudice. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 25, 68 – 78.
- Li, Y. (2011). Translating interviews, translating lives: Ethical considerations in cross-language narrative inquiry. *TESL Canada Journal*, 28, 16 – 30.
- Liddicoat, A.J. (2007). Internationalizing Japan: *Nihonjinron* and the intercultural in Japanese language-in-education policy. *Journal of Multilingual Discourses*, 2, 32 – 46.
- Lin, A., Wang, W., Akamatsu, N., & Riazi, A. M. (2002/2011). Appropriating English, expanding identities, and re-visioning the field: From TESOL to teaching English for globalized communication (TEGCOM). In L. Wei (Ed.), *The Routledge Applied Linguistic Reader* (pp. 96 –112). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lo, S. (2006). Defining the peer advisor in the U.S. study abroad context. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10, 173 – 184.

- Matsubara-Jaret, C. (2008). *Transformation of identity of four female Japanese international students* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Nevada, Nevada. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/pqdtft/docview/304380140/previewPDF/9146E4C2D9674D38PQ/1?accountid=14656>
- Matsuda, A. (2003). The ownership of English in Japanese secondary schools. *World Englishes*, 22, 483 – 496.
- Matsuda, A. (2011). Not everyone can be a star: Students' and teacher's beliefs about English teaching in Japan. In P. Seargeant (Ed.), *English in Japan in the era of globalization* (pp. 38–59). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- McKay, S.A. (2002). *Teaching English as an international language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McKay, S.A., & Wong, S.C. (1996). Multiple discourses, multiple identities: Investment and agency in second-language learning among Chinese adolescent immigrant students. *Harvard Education Review*, 66, 577 – 608.
- MEXT, (2002). *Efforts by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpac200201/hpac200201_2_015.html
- MEXT, (2013). *Nihonjin no kaigai ryuugaku jyookyoo* [The state of Japanese studying abroad] [Data file]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/25/02/___icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/02/08/1330698_01.pdf

- MEXT, (2014). *English education reform plan corresponding to globalization* [Data file].
Retrieved from
http://www.mext.go.jp/english/topics/___icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/01/23/1343591_1.pdf
- MEXT, (n.d.). *Promoting two-way student exchange*. Retrieved from
<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/highered/1303572.htm>
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication Statistics Bureau, (2011). *Zairyuu gaikokujin tookei, getsuji, 2013 nen 6 gatsu* [Statistics of foreign residents, monthly, June 2013]. Retrieved from <http://www.e-stat.go.jp/SG1/estat/List.do?lid=000001116310>
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Harlow, England: Longman/Pearson Education.
- Norton, B. & Early, M. (2011). Researcher identity, narrative inquiry, and language teaching research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45, 415 – 439.
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2011). Identity, language learning and social change. *Language Teaching*, 44, 412 – 446.
- Norton, B., & Williams, C. (2012). Digital identities, student investments and eGranary as a placed resource. *Language and Education*, 26, 315 – 329.
- OECD. (2013). How is international student mobility holding up? *Education in Focus*, 14, 1 – 4.
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity – One's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17, 17 – 21.
- Polanyi, L. (1995). Language learning and living abroad: Stories from the field. In B.F. Freed (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 271-291). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 271-291.

- Potter, J., & Hepburn, A. (2005). Qualitative interviews in psychology: problems and possibilities. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2, 281 – 307.
- Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice*. London, UK: Sage.
- Seargeant, P. (2011). The symbolic meaning of visual English in the social landscape of Japan. In P. Seargeant (Ed.), *English in Japan in the era of globalization* (pp. 187–204). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Shaheen, S. (2004). *The effects of pre-departure preparation on student intercultural development during study abroad programs*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Ohio State University, Ohio. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/docview/305140458/previewPDF?accountid=14656>
- Shook, J.L., & Keup, J.R. (2012). The benefits of peer programs: An overview from literature. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 157, 5 – 16.
- Siegal, M. (1995). Individual differences and study abroad: Women learning Japanese in Japan. In Freed, B. (Ed.), *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Simon-Maeda, A. (2011). *Being and becoming a speaker of Japanese: An autoethnographic account*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Skilton-Sylvester, E. (2002). Should I stay or should I go? Investigating Cambodian women's participation and investment in adult ESL programs. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53, 9 – 26.

- Stewart, T. (2009). Will the new English curriculum for 2013 work? *The Language Teacher*, 33, 9 – 13.
- Sugimoto, Y. (1999). Making sense of *Nihonjinron*. *Thesis Eleven*, 57, 81 – 96.
- Talburt, S., & Stewart, M. A. (1999). What's the subject of study abroad?: Race, gender, and "living culture". *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 163 – 175.
- Talmy, S. (2010). Qualitative interviews in applied linguistics: From research instrument to social practice. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 128 – 148.
- Takahashi, K. (2013). *Language learning, gender and desire: Japanese women on the move*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Takayama, K. (2000). *Study abroad as contested space of global and local discourses: Japanese male students' study abroad experiences in Vancouver*. (Unpublished master's thesis). The University of British Columbia, British Columbia. Retrieved from https://circle-ubc-ca.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/10980/ubc_2000-0591.pdf?sequence=1
- Tanaka, K., & Ellis, R. (2003). Study-abroad language proficiency, and learner beliefs about language learning. *JALT Journal*, 25, 63 – 85.
- Temple, B. (2005). Nice and tidy: Translation and representation. *Sociological Research Online*, 10, 1 – 10.
- Temple, B., & Young, A. (2004). Qualitative research translation dilemmas. *Qualitative Research*, 4, 161 – 178.
- Trentman, E. (2013). Imagined communities and language learning during study abroad: Arabic learners in Egypt. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46, 545 – 564.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1994). The ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 377 – 389.

- Wooffitt, R., & Widdicombe, S. (2006). Interaction in interviews. In P. Drew, G. Raymond & D. Weinbergs (Eds.), *Talk in interaction in social research methods* (pp. 28 – 49). London: Sage.
- Wong, Y.J., Owen, J., Tran, K.K., Collins, D.L., & Higgins, C.E. (2012). Asian American male college students' perceptions of people's stereotypes about Asian American men. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 13, 75 – 88.
- Yamada, M. (2010). Awareness of racial and ethnic diversity in Japanese junior high schools' English language textbooks. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 8, 289 – 312.
- Yamanaka, N. (2006). An evaluation of English textbooks in Japan from the viewpoint of nations in the inner, outer, and expanding circle. *JALT Journal*, 28, 57 – 76.
- Yamagami, M., & Tollefson J. W. (2011). Elite discourses of globalization in Japan: The role of English. In P. Seargeant (Ed.), *English in Japan in the era of globalization* (pp. 15–37). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Yoshida, R. (2013, April 5). To communicate in English, TOEFL is vital: LDP panel. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/04/05/national/to-communicate-in-english-toefl-is-vital-ldp-panel/#.UWU93CtET4g>
- Yoshida, R. (2013, April, 8). LDP panel binds TOEFL to degrees. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/04/08/national/ldp-panel-binds-toefl-to-degrees/#.UWUjaStET4i>
- Yukawa, E. (2014). What's happening with elementary school English? Custom course materials 2014 compiled materials for communication subject area (pp. 41 – 70). Kyoto, Japan: Ritsumeikan University.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview 1: Before and During Study Abroad インタビュー 1 : 留学の前、間

The Purpose and Use of English

英語の目標、機能

1. Why did you decide to study abroad?
留学するのを決めたのはなぜですか。
2. Why did you decide to study English over other languages?
他の言語ではなく、英語を勉強しようと決めた理由はなんでしたか。
3. How did you predict English would help you in the future?
英語はどのように将来役立つと予想しましたか。
4. Please share your experience of communicating and studying in English in your daily life before studying abroad.
留学中、日常生活で、どんなことを英語で話し合ったり、勉強したりしましたか？具体的な体験をシェアしていただけませんか？
5. Do you feel you were able to use English well? Why or why not?
うまく英語を使えたと思いますか。なぜそう思いますか？／思いませんか？

Concepts of Identity

アイデンティティの概念

6. Before you studied abroad, how would you have described yourself?
留学する前、「自分」はどんな人間だと思いましたか？
7. Did you hope studying abroad would change you or your personality in any way?
留学することによって、アイデンティティや自分の性格が変わることを予想していましたか？

8. Please tell me about a favourite memory from your studying abroad.
留学生活においてよかった思い出を一つシェアしていただけますか？
9. Please tell me about a challenging experience from your studying abroad.
留学生活において苦労したことを一つシェアしていただけますか？
10. How do you think the students at your host school perceived you? Why?
あなたは、受け入れ先の大学の学生たちに、どのように見られたと思いますか？
なぜですか？
11. How do you think the teachers at your host school perceived you? Why?
あなたは、ホストの大学の先生たちに、どのように見られたと思いますか？なぜ
ですか？
12. While studying abroad, how did you feel about “Japan” and “being Japanese”?
留学中、日本のことや日本人であることに対してどのような気持ちを抱きました
か？
13. While studying abroad, do you think that your personality or identity changed at all? If so,
how?
留学中、自分の性格やアイデンティティが変わったと思いますか？もしそうなら、
どのように変わったと思いますか？どんなきっかけがありましたか？
14. Do you recall any memorable experiences with unfamiliar customs or cultures? Were you
surprised by things that you didn’t know?
カナダの習慣や文化について、知らなくてびっくりしたことなど、印象に残って
いることはありますか？
15. As a Japanese male, do you have any particular experiences you would like to share?
日本人男性として、あなたはシェアするという特別な経験がありますか？

Interview 2: After Study Abroad インタビュー 2 : 留学の後

<h3>The Purpose and Use of English</h3>

英語の目標、機能

1. How often do you use English now? Where do you use it?
今英語はどのくらいの頻度で使いますか？どのような場面で使いますか？
2. How do you think you will use English in the future?
将来、どのように英語を使うと思いますか？
3. How do you feel when you use English?
英語を使うとき、どう感じますか？

4. Do you think you will study another language? Why or why not?
違う言語を勉強しようと思いますか？なぜそう思いますか？／思いませんか？
5. Have your new English abilities benefited you in any way?
新しい英語の能力によって、何か利益を得ましたか？

Concepts of Identity

アイデンティティの概念

6. How would you describe yourself now?
今「自分」はどんな人間だと思いますか？
7. Do you think your personality or identity have changed since returning? If so, how have you changed?
留学する前とした後で自分の性格やアイデンティティが変わったと思いますか？
その場合、どのように変わりましたか？
8. Since returning, how do you think your friends perceive you?
留学から帰って来て、あなたは友達からどのように見られていると思いますか？
9. Since returning, how do you think your family perceives you?
留学から帰って来て、あなたは家族からどのように見られていると思いますか？
10. Please tell me about a positive experience you have had since returning.
日本へ帰ってからあなたに起った良い体験をシェアしていただけますか？
11. Please tell me about a challenging experience since returning.
日本へ帰って以来困惑したことや壁に当たった体験をシェアしていただきませんか？
12. Since returning home, how do you view Japan and being Japanese?
留学から帰って来て、日本のことや自分が「日本人である」ことに対してどう思いますか？
13. If you were to study abroad at the same school again, what would you change?
もし同じ学校でもう一度留学するとしたら、何を変えたいと思いますか？

Interview 3: Follow-up and Reflection インタビュー 3 : フォローアップと反省

Follow-up

フォローアップ

These questions vary depending on the previous interview data.
前のインタビューのデータによって質問は変わります。

Reflection

反省

1. Are there any other experiences or thoughts you would like to share with me?
他にシェアしたい体験や考えはありますか？
2. After our interviews, what did you learn about yourself?
私たちのインタビューの後、自分について何が分かってきましたか？
3. Do you think there are any benefits to being interviewed about your study abroad?
留学のインタビューをされるのことはあなたにとって利益があると思いますか？
4. Do you want to change your mind about anything you have shared with me?
解答してくださった内容の中で、変更したい点はありますか？
5. Do you have any questions for me about my research?
私の研究について、質問はありますか？
6. Do you have any questions about anything else?
他のことについて、質問はありますか？

Appendix B: Original Interview Transcripts

(1)

E: はい、じゃ、次の質問も、あ、難しい質問ばかりですけど。@ 留学中、日本のことや日本である、日本人である事に対して、どのように

S: あ：：

E: 考えましたか？

S: ええと、hm：：(.) やっぱり(.) アメリカはすごく楽しい所だけど、なんかね。私はやっぱり日本人だなんて思うとかすごいあって。だから(.) そんなになんか日本人でよかったなとか思うのが多かった。

E: あ、例えば？どんな

S: 例えば、例えば(.) こう(.) ご飯とかね。

E: @@

S: @@@ ご飯がやっぱり日本食がねこうおいしく感じたし。M::なんか(.) too much crazy みたい。アメリカ人だね。

E: Hm::

S: パーティーとかもよくあるし、酒もすごいし。ね、こうダンスもなんか結構激しい。

E: =@@ 激しい！

S: =@@ 行くと、「あ、私は(.) なんかも日本人だったからこういうのはちょっと向いてないのかもしれないな」ってとか、(.) 結構あった。

(2)

T: 後やっぱりもう文化が違うじゃないですか。

E: Mm-hm.

T: 例えば約束を守るっていうことのも考え方も全然日本人と違うかったりとか。

E: あ、なるほど。

T: そうそう。とか、時間にlooseだったりとか。@

E: @@

T: そう。ルームメイトが気づいたら自分のお菓子を食べちゃったりとか。@

E: Ug. @

T: @@ でもなんかもう、それもいいのかなと思いながら、

E: は::

T: そういう人との出会いがすごい、僕は一年と大きかったです。

E: Hm. あの、異文化があったけどなんかまだいい経験だと思った。

T: 本当にいい経験でした。日本だとだから友達が気づいたらお菓子食べられているってこと起きないんで、とか、そうですし、時間は皆守りますし、日本に言えば。そういうだから、ででもそれで、アメリカに行ったときは、皆がそれをして、皆それを尊重

E: 尊重？

T: そう、respect しているんです。それを。だから成立するんだなと思って。

(3)

Their view is maybe just don't know who Japanese are, what Japanese looks like or what Japanese are like だと思います、本当に。分からない人しかいないと思います。サムライとか。@そういう。

(4)

E: So when they looked at you as if you were a quiet Asian woman who doesn't give her opinion, 理由は、アジア人か、女性か、両方？

M: 多分、日本人っていうのが。クラスにいっぱい女いたけど、皆よくしゃべっていたから。女性って言う点であまり考えてない。ただこう留学生で英語があまりしゃべれない日本人の女の子って感じ。

(5)

S: とか、後はやっぱり私の英語があまりこう fluent じゃないから、こうそこで皆こう「hm？」っていうふうに@

E: うんうんうん。

S: [だれ、この人] みたいな

E: あそう：：

S: 感じの空気になったりとかはそれは授業あったかな。

(6)

T: そんなにネガティブ@@ではないですけど。あの (3.5) 英語ですよ。

E: Hmm.

T: だから、基本的にアメリカな人って誰でも英語が分かるって思っているなと思っていて何ですよ。They just believe everyone in the world can speak English, even for Japanese. So they just speak English as I am native. So they speak a lot of slang and some weird pronunciations or maybe some f-word or stuff like that. So I couldn't understand actually. But they can't understand that I can't understand.

E: Mm-hm.

H: そう、だから、そういうのがあって。Um, もう何って言うんだろう。日本は、そういうのを何って言うだろうな、take care するというか。ケアして、ゆっく、ま sometimes Japanese try to speak Japanese slowly to foreigners because they have some difficulty in Japanese. なんですけど、アメリカ人は なんか、あまりそういう、え、日本、の空気読むとか分かります。そう、そういう文化本当にない国なん、いい！別にせめてるせめてるじゃなくて、そういうない国だな、日本と違って。それがやっぱりつらかったです。

(7)

S: 感じの空気になったりとかはそれは授業あったかな。

E: M:: この感じしたら

S: うん。

E: あのもっと話しくくなったの？
S: M:: そうだねだから、やっぱり授業で発言するのは結構
E: うん。
S: いつも勇気を持って
E: うん！
S: Okay okay, I can do it @
E: That's so good!
S: @うん。やってた。

(8)

K: @ でも全然、何やろう。でも白人の女性は白人の男性を好きなイメージがめっちゃ
(.)あったかな？うん。そう。(.) 一緒にいた友達も。
E: うん。
K: 白人の男性からは、日本人の女性、声かけれたんだけど、白人の女性が声をかけら
れたことないし。
E: は::
K: 俺だけじゃなくて他のやつもめったにいなかった。
E: hm::
K: 気がする。そう。
E: So how did you feel about that?
K: あ、モテへんねや@
E: @@
K: あかんって思っで。
E: 何で私？
K: そうそうそう何でえ。
E: Were you searching at this time for a girlfriend?
K: Um::: そう [breaths in] ah::: a little bit そう a little bit だね。そうそうそう絶対も、絶対無
理だと思いましたね。
E: Oh [breaths out]
K: 絶対無理や思いました。°そうやね° そんな感じがします！
E: @@
K: まあ、もちっちゃいあるし。
E: @ No::: not so small @@
K: @@ Not so small

(9)

E: 特に日本人？
H: 特に日本人。
E: (.) どうして？
H: [breaths in] I don't know maybe (.) they are too shy.
E: Mm-hm.

H: Like, they can't express their emotions so well. They just sometime we always sometimes always be silence or quiet. And they don't know how to take care of girls.

E: Hm::

H: They just don't know how. Like they just don't know how European Americans do. Just stuff like that.

(10)

S: (.) なんか、やっぱり何もしないで、待っていたら、何も(.)来ないんですよ。だから何かしたいことだったら自分から行かないと。前、日本にいた時は友達にご飯行こう誘ってくれたりとか、こういう活動があって参加しない？とかイベント参加しない？向こうではそれがなかったから、自分から自分からって、もういつもこう(.)そういうこうアクティブに(.)なるっていうか、すごい積極的になったし。はじめの人でもしゃべるようになりました。

E: (.)いいですね。

S: だからもしかしたら留学で、Englishものびたけど、どっちかといったら、その、積極的な(.)こととか(.)そういう方がのびたかな。

(11)

M: 思った。その自分から行動しなきゃ、何にも変わらないって思ったから積極的にこう(.) 自分から動けるようになったかなと思う。その例えば英語をもっと話したいなって思ったら、conversation caféに行くとか。もっとこうクラブの活動に行くとかいくらでもやり方はあるからそういうに自分で探して、自分で行動する力とか。

E: Hm.

M: わあすごくついたと思う、留学。それ能力っていうかな。@@

(12)

K: あ、うん、その劇的に、そのdramaticallyとれなくて、でもちょっと変わったかな。そのさき言ったけど

E: うん。

K: I tried to take risks to get something. Like I when I during study abroad, I learned if I don't take risk I don't I won't learn anything. Like, but ah like when I, if I want to improve my English, I have to talk to people, right? In like, people who speak English. @ Right?

E: @そうだね。

K: そうだね。そうそうそう。怖かったけど。I was afraid of making a mistake and speaking English, but I tried and push myself.

E: Mm-hm::

K: そう。それで、帰国後も(.)うん何か(.)何かを成し遂げるachieveするためには。

E: うん。

K: そうそうそうtake riskをしないあかんと。

(13)

K: Like I had one uh experience that I couldn't help the tourist before I go abroad to American before I went to America. So I felt if I if I could use (.) ah English fluently, I could help them.

E: mh hm

K: So I was like I didn't like myself not helping

E: Ah::

K: But I can help right now right?

E: Hm hm yeah

K: So hm it became my confidence and なんか嬉しくなるよね。

E: うんうんうん。

K: I'm glad to help them.

(14)

To be honest, I thought I care about my English too much. So even if I had friend, I have friends from Washington. And uh, I like them, but they're not @ hm:: 何と言うだろう、その人といったら英語力上がると思って、いた友達？

(15)

E: そう、どう思う？他の言語について。

S: うんとね、何か、その国にの、私はま、もちろん中国語は、最初一年生の時から勉強して。

E: hm::

S: ちょっとだけね？留学の間全然勉強してなかったから、そう英語と一緒に中国語も勉強し:: たいなと思ったんだけど。最初は、ま中国語しゃべったら、こう、社会に出て便利だろうなと思ったんだけど、今は今のmotivationは、あの、中国人の友達？

E: Hm.

S: と話したいとか。

E: °あ、なるほど°

S: そうそう。夏休みに韓国人の友達がいっぱいできてっていうから韓国語勉強したいってなって@

E: なるほど。

S: だから他の国の友達がいるとその国の言葉話したくなる。

(16)

Meeting new peopleですね。だから (.) If I had a more connection with people, I would have more chance to do something new, or they just offer me more project or some. I dunno maybe, literally it's just a chance. But it could be just chances. 何だろう。何が違う何だろう。分からないですけど。

(17)

K: やし As developed country people, we need to uh:: we need to have English skill or information or knowledge, to tell them about Japanese culture or Japanese things. (2.0)Hm? (.)

Hm?

E: Hm?

K: Ah, I thought we had less abilities to inform or talk

E: I see

K: とか we don't have own opinions. Japanese people don't own have opinions, just agree.

Agree.

E: Agree.

K: Agree.

E: Mm-hm

K: with other's opinions. So we need to have strong own opinion I thought.

E: Mm-hm::

K: As developed country's people とかね。

E: to be more aggressive in sharing about Japanese perspective or

K: そうそうそう

E: (country)

K: just listening だったから。

(18)

E: I see I see I see thank you. So when you do use English now, how do you how do you feel when you speak in English?

K: Ah (.) ah:: to the native speaker of English, uh just a little bit a feel shy or I feel shy to speak English. But to Japanese students I feel very I feel very shy to speak English.

E: Uh-huh.

K: なんてやろう。

E: °なんてやろう°

K: @ なんてやろう I don't know why but m:: だね to native speaker of English I don't feel うん。

(19)

だから、僕、まあ、日本人なんで、発音できないじゃないですか。なかなか。うまく。本当にネイティブみたいに、分かるように発音できてもnative みたいかっと言われたら全然違いますし。

Appendix C: Forms Submitted to Participants

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Department of Educational Studies

Mailing address:

2125 Main Mall

Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: 604-822-5374

Fax: 604-822-4244

<http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca>

September , 2013

Dear ,

My name is Elisabeth Williams and I am a graduate student at the University of British Columbia. My interests focus on the experiences of Japanese students who have studied abroad. I am writing this letter to request your participation in my current study by sharing your thoughts and experiences. The main goals of this study are to learn more about the views of English of past Japanese study abroad participants, in addition to their perceptions of their identity since returning to Japan. Your views as a previous study abroad participant would be very helpful to this study.

I would like to interview you three times from September to November this year. Interviews will take approximately 45 minutes. You are invited to choose an interview time and location on your university campus that is convenient for you. Your identity and all of the information you share will be kept anonymous.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me by email by **September 12th, 2013**. I would like to introduce myself and discuss the study further with you.

Thank you for your time and assistance. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Elisabeth Williams'.

Elisabeth Williams

MA Program, The University of British Columbia

Email: xxxx@xxxx.com

Phone: (x-)xxx-xxx-xxxx (Canada)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Department of Educational Studies

Mailing address:

2125 Main Mall

Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: 604-822-5374

Fax: 604-822-4244

<http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca>

Consent Form for Interviews

Research Project Title: Investigating the Experiences of Returned Japanese Sojourners in a University: Perceptions of English and (re)Negotiation of Identity

Research Team

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ryuko Kubota, Professor
Department of Language and Literacy Education
Faculty of Education, UBC
Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx
Email: xxxx@xxxx.ca

Co-Investigator: Elisabeth Williams
MA Candidate
Program of Teaching English as a Second Language
Department of Language and Literacy Education
Faculty of Education, UBC
Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx
Email: xxxx@xxxx.com

Purpose of Study

This study is being conducted as part of a degree requirement for a Master's thesis. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences and views of Japanese students who have studied abroad in English speaking countries. Specifically, it will examine if and how returned students feel their identities have changed since returning to Japan. It will also look at how Japanese students view the purpose of English in their lives. We are inviting past study abroad participants like you to help us in this study.

Procedure

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed 3 times throughout the semester. Interviews will be approximately 30 – 45 minutes long and you can choose a public place on your university campus that suits you for the interview. During the interview we will ask you about your experiences abroad and in Japan. In addition, we also invite you to give us feedback on our analysis of the interview either face-to-face or via email.

Study Results

The results of this study will be published in a master's thesis and may also be included in articles in journals or at conference presentations. If you are interested in seeing the results of the study please contact us and we will gladly send the research results to you.

Potential Risk

We do not believe there are parts of this study that will be harmful to you. However, you are not required to answer any interview questions that are too personal or uncomfortable for you. You may also stop the interviews at any time necessary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you may allow us to use your interview data in the study, or you can ask us to not use the data. If you ask us not to use the data, we will destroy all audio recordings and transcripts conducted with you.

Potential Benefits of the Study

By participating in this study, you can help us learn more about study abroad students' experiences both overseas and when returning home. This may help improve study abroad programs in the future, and also give more information to other students planning to go abroad.

Confidentiality

Your name and university will be given fictional names to keep your identity anonymous throughout the entire research process. All interview data and participant information will be stored on a password-protected computer and password-protected folders on a hard drive. This equipment will be in a locked room that only the research team has access to.

Contact information about the study

If you would like to participate in this study, please sign this form and contact Elisabeth Williams by **September 15th, 2013**. Elisabeth can be reached at xxxx@xxx.com. Please feel free to contact Elisabeth in English or Japanese if you have a question about this study.

Contacts for Complaints or Concerns

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at: xxx-xxx-xxxx or if long distance e-mail xxxx@xxxx.ca or call toll free: x-xxx-xxx-xxxx .

Consent

I have read the consent form above. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary. If I decide to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time. If I withdraw, I do not need to give a reason and there will be absolutely no negative impact on me.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study and **have your interview audiotaped.**

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Participant signing above