

## Short-Term Study Abroad: Developing Global Englishes Awareness

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### **ABSTRACT**

*English use in many short-term study abroad (STSA) contexts is often more fluid than in its common representation in language education. Based on such representation, students may develop perspectives towards effective language use as fixed on standard norms. Experiences of communication during STSA may help students form new perspectives towards English use, linked to Global Englishes (GE), which accounts for the fluidity of English use in global communication contexts. The formation of new perspectives may be evident in GE understandings, i.e., pluralistic over monolithic awareness of English, recognition of linguistic diversity among English users, acceptance of variability in English language use, and recognition of the role of English as lingua franca (ELF). This qualitative interview study investigated the development of GE awareness among 15 Japanese university students participating in different STSA. Semi-structured interviews were conducted pre-sojourn, post-sojourn, and six months later. A thematic analysis of the interviews revealed that while perspectives towards learning remained focused on standard norms, new GE awareness and practices emerged following social contact with other international students in linguistically and culturally diverse settings. The paper argues that the learning potential of multilingual and multicultural STSA experiences should be emphasised over “target” language focus on standard language norms.*

**KEYWORDS:** Short-term study abroad, Global Englishes, Global Englishes awareness, English as a lingua franca, International campuses

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A frequent aim of many short-term study abroad (STSA) programmes is to provide opportunities for English use in international contexts (Çiftçi & Karaman, 2018). In such contexts, English use is likely to be more dynamic than in its traditional representation as fixed on standard norms in English language teaching (ELT) practices, including in Japan (the setting for this research). These practices, based on native speakerist understandings (e.g., Fang & Ren, 2018), may not provide an appropriate foundation for fluid English use among diverse users in STSA communication contexts. Fluidity of English use and diversity among users is represented in Global Englishes (GE) research and practice, described as “an inclusive paradigm looking at the linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural diversity and fluidity of English use and English users in a globalized world” (Rose & Galloway, 2019, p. 4). It encompasses both diversity in English varieties in a World Englishes framing (Kachru, et al., 2006) and English as a lingua franca (ELF), i.e., “multilingual communication in which English is available as a contact language of choice, but is not necessarily chosen” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 73). GE also addresses issues around English as belonging to any user, and not as an exclusive property of “native” English speakers<sup>1</sup>.

Given that more intercultural communication in English involves users of non-Anglophone linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Baker, 2015), developing GE awareness, i.e., consciousness of GE-related issues and themes, is potentially important for STSA students in multilingual contexts of communication. This research paper investigates longitudinal changes in GE-related awareness among 15 Japanese university students participating in STSA in a range of international contexts. The research aims to provide insight around how and why such awareness can develop, or not develop, among individual students in different STSA contexts.

## 2. GLOBAL ENGLISHES AND SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD

GE represents diversity in Englishes, including a World Englishes focus on distinctive features of varieties of Englishes. It also recognises variability in English use in intercultural communication beyond basis or any standardised variety (Seidlhofer, 2011). Importantly, GE recognises ELF use, likely to be common in multilingual STSA communication (Mocanu & Llurda, 2020). Problematically for STSA students, there is often a “mismatch” between these realities of English use in international contexts and their experiences learning English in the classroom (Galloway & Rose, 2018, p. 3). This “mismatch” can be seen when established codified norms define standard English, alongside messages that individuals must conform to these norms (Seidlhofer, 2016). In such native speakerist educational practices, divergences from standard norms are often treated as errors to be fixed (Jenkins et al., 2011), rather than as individual language choices made in multilingual contexts (De Costa & Crowther, 2018).

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1 The research accepts that the “native” versus “non-native” distinction is simplistic, though also hard to avoid in research of this kind. Scare quotes are not used in-text, but these terms can be read as if they do. Here, uses of “non-native” and “native” refer to English language over other languages.

An emphasis on “correctness”, that is, what is perceived as acceptable in communication based on adherence to standard norms (Hynninen & Solin, 2017), may in turn influence individual GE awareness. On ELF perspectives, as one aspect of GE awareness, this influence may be particularly evident if ELF is considered as “incompetent” use among those “who have failed to learn the proper language” (Seidlhofer, 2016, p. 21). Students experiencing this kind of English learning may then become preoccupied with notions of “correctness” and “authenticity” on STSA, rather than recognition that they are English users in their own right (Boonsuk et al., 2021).

Assumptions about language use are reflected in STSA research and practices focusing on language knowledge and experience through interactions with individuals from destination countries in “target” language approaches (e.g., Cadd, 2012; Martinsen et al., 2010). These approaches are based on understandings that contact with target native language speakers is necessary for learning and that the amount of contact and interaction with such speakers is responsible for differences in student attainment (i.e., more contact with native language users results in more learning). Similarly, assumptions about ideal interactions for learning are widely seen in advertising material, including on websites attached to programmes in this research:

“The fastest way to learn English is to surround yourself with native speakers”.

“Real-life immersion requires students to improve their skills to be understood by locals”.

“While studying abroad, students communicate daily with locals and their colloquial, mumbled, or insanely fast (read, *real*) accents”.

While on some programmes students may engage extensively with local native speakers, if students do not develop relationships with local individuals, they may consider it a failure on their experiences (Çiftçi & Karaman, 2018). On other programmes, participants may, however, interact more with other international students (Kubota, 2016), or be more drawn to other international students than local individuals (Csizer & Kontra, 2012). Moreover, connections through socialisation with other international students may be more meaningful than connections with local individuals from destination settings (Mocanu & Llurda, 2020; Schartner, 2016), and such connections may also be based on more perceived communication equality (Çiftçi & Karaman, 2018).

Experiences in different locations have been seen to lead to different outcomes (Glaser, 2017), with STSA in Anglophone settings resulting in more focus on target norms following communication with local native users. However, it has also been reported that experiences in non-Anglophone settings can lead to more exposure to diversity in language use and more flexible communication experiences (Glaser, 2017). Irrespective of national setting, particular programme types, including research-based or language study STSA, can involve participants from a wide range of international backgrounds studying alongside one another and socialising together,

in class and informally. These programmes may also be slightly longer than other forms of STSA. For some students, this socialisation may also be meaningful in terms of ELF understanding over particular STSA linguistic contexts (Nogami, 2020), and communication with other international students may lead to new skills and perspectives for ELF use (Kimura, 2019).

Other popular programme types include cultural tours and field trips, which often involve study on tailored courses with classmates from home settings. Organised by home institutions and supported by teachers as chaperones, interactions may be limited with individuals from outside the group (e.g., Allen, 2010). Indeed, this form of STSA has been described as “inherently limiting” (Cubillos & Ilvento 2018, p. 260) in sheltering students by keeping groups intact on “island” programmes (Engle & Engle, 2003, p. 10). As a result, new GE awareness, in the extent that development takes place through interaction, may be limited.

### 3. RESEARCHING SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD

STSA programmes are popular for Japanese students, with 96,641 taking part in 2016 (JASSO, 2018). The majority of experiences were on programmes under one month, including trips of only three days if the trip provided intercultural learning, language study, or research-based experiences (McCrostie, 2017). In associated STSA research and practices, as mentioned, there are often views that overseas contexts of learning are “optimal” for language skills development based on opportunities for communication (Hernández & Alonso-Marks, 2018, p.167). This perspective is particularly seen in past research (including in Japan) which explores effects of overseas learning contexts on developments in relation to L2 learning, measured through proficiency assessments (Kinger, 2009). In a large-scale Japanese study, STSA experiences led to increases in English test scores (Kashima & Kato, 2020), and similar testing was used to measure the effects of STSA on proficiency in which gains versus non-STSA student control groups were reported (Kimura, 2006). It has also been found that STSA duration affects language development, with longer programmes leading to more development (Tanaka & Ellis 2003).

These studies make important contributions to STSA research but there are risks that overseas learning contexts become treated as uniform, with variation in both contextual factors and complex individual learning processes overlooked (Kinger, 2008). This variation raises a need for large-scale studies to be accompanied by systematic, process-focused research looking into both individual overseas learning experiences (e.g., Jackson, 2020; Kinger, 2009), and for research representation of contextual factors (e.g., programme type, duration, social contact, and destination) (Kang & Pacheco, 2021). Emergent GE understandings among individuals following particular STSA experiences is a currently understudied area of research, though potentially important, given the role of English in so much intercultural communication.

Language attitudes are relevant to the formation of GE awareness, which may influence how new perspectives are formed on STSA. Attitudes, which may be conceptualised as stable or as variable and emergent, can be inferred rather than

assessed from individuals involved in research (Ishikawa & Moran Panero, 2017). Such inference may occur from research interpretation of situationally formed interview responses; thus, interviewers themselves are factors given how attitudes may be expressed in interviewer-facilitated discussion (Ishikawa, 2020). In an investigation into attitudes towards English among Japanese university students, negative attitudes towards students' own English were reported alongside preferences towards native standard language use, rather than towards ELF (Ishikawa, 2017). These attitudes may be representative of students in other settings and may link to favourable attitudes among students towards standard norms if English experiences are primarily class-based (Mayumi & Hüttner, 2020).

In this paper, attitudes and perspectives linked to awareness are considered open to change following some subjective experience, such as using English during STSA or some form of GE-based educational experience. Changes following educational experiences have been seen among students on a GE-related course, in which attitudes shifted from preference for standard forms and pronunciation, towards World Englishes' awareness of diversity, and on to the recognition of the importance of "mutual intelligibility" in communication (Bayyurt & Altinmakas, 2012, p. 175). This trajectory reflects developments in applied linguistics research, from standard language ideologies, to World Englishes, towards ELF (broadly encapsulated in GE research). This trajectory of change may also be evident among students following particular STSA experiences. In terms of the development of GE awareness, it may be hypothesised that students initially focus on standard language following past educational experiences. Later, they may express knowledge of location-based differences (World Englishes), particularly pronunciation, if such differences are more easily recognised. Finally, there may be acceptance of fluidity in language use beyond fixed forms, ELF use, and self-perceptions as users of English.

A key aim of this research is to understand the extent that such changes can be identified (and if they occur) following individual experiences of STSA, exploring student reports to also understand how changes may link to contextual factors (and what these factors might be). Few studies have considered how experiences in STSA contexts of communication and learning may be linked to the development of GE perspectives. Moreover, few studies into shorter-term experiences have focused on multilingual contextual aspects, a central focus area in this paper. Any emerging insights may help support understanding of STSA experiences from a GE perspective and inform how students may be prepared for the linguistic diversity, which can be a key feature of many STSA learning and communication experiences.

## 4. THE STUDY

### 4.1 Research Question

In this qualitative interview and focus group study, the following research question was investigated:

How and why did GE awareness develop, or not develop, following short-term study

abroad experiences among Japanese university students?

In seeking answers, the research examined content in student data around GE themes, as well as descriptions of communication experiences and ELF use. In the focus on development, relevant items from student interviews were compared to identify where (and if) any changes occurred through the longitudinal research collection period, following individual experiences and reports of particular contextual factors on programmes. The research then sought to identify patterns which might reveal which factors led to more development, including differences in programme type, length, and extent of social contact. The research also accepted that development may be influenced by past STSA or intercultural experiences and individual learning practices before, during, and after sojourns.

#### 4.2 Research Setting and Participants

The research setting was a non-language major Japanese university, representative of other such non-language major university settings. First-year and second-year students took two 90-minute mandatory weekly English communication classes in a language learning centre staffed by seventeen teachers from the US, Britain, and Australia, and two Japanese teachers. Standard norms were significant in the curriculum, ELT resources, many teacher-developed materials, and assessment frameworks; however, ELF use could be observed in informal communication between teachers and students. To support English learning, the university was active in promoting STSA participation. In the academic year 2019/2020, 266 students took part in programmes in different international locations.

Fifteen STSA students in the academic year 2017/2018 were purposively sampled for this research. The students were, at the time of the research, current or former students in the English learning facility. The sampling approach was based on interest in representing different experiences of STSA among students in different academic years, with the key criterion to sample participants based on how they might contribute to the research. Differences among students included gender (8 female students, 7 male), age range (19-24), past international study experiences (5: Yes, 10: No), programme duration (7 days to 1 month), as well as different types of programme and destination in the university's STSA provision. Table 1 provides information about the fifteen students and their selected programmes (all names are pseudonyms). It also provides details of student involvement in the research collection.

**Table 1***Information about the participants and their programmes*

| Name     | Sex | Age | Study programme                                  | Time               | Faculty led? | Past STSA | No. of interviews | Focus group |
|----------|-----|-----|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Noriko   | F   | 21  | Research-based, Germany                          | 1 month            | N            | N         | 3                 | Y           |
| Mariko   | F   | 21  | Research-based, Germany                          | 1 month            | N            | Y         | 3                 | N           |
| Yuki     | M   | 19  | Cultural/study tour, Malaysia                    | 10 days            | Y            | N         | 3                 | Y           |
| Masa     | M   | 19  | Cultural/study tour, Malaysia                    | 10 days            | Y            | N         | 3                 | Y           |
| Sayaka   | F   | 21  | Language study, Poland                           | 3 weeks            | N            | N         | 2                 | N           |
| Mayu     | F   | 21  | Cultural tour, US                                | 10 days            | Y            | N         | 3                 | Y           |
| Ryota    | M   | 21  | Cultural tour, US                                | 10 days            | Y            | N         | 3                 | N           |
| Daichi   | M   | 21  | Cultural tour, US                                | 10 days            | N            | N         | 3                 | Y           |
| Miki     | F   | 24  | Research-based, Hong Kong                        | 1 month            | Y            | Y         | 3                 | N           |
| Kaori    | F   | 19  | Language study, US                               | 3 weeks            | N            | N         | 3                 | N           |
| Kiyoko   | F   | 21  | Cultural tour, Taiwan                            | 7 days             | Y            | Y         | 3                 | Y           |
| Minami   | F   | 21  | Cultural tour, Taiwan                            | 7 days             | Y            | Y         | 3                 | Y           |
| Kodai    | M   | 20  | Language study, UK                               | 3 weeks            | N            | N         | 3                 | Y           |
| Takeshi* | M   | 23  | Language study, Philippines<br>Cultural tour, US | 3 weeks<br>10 days | N<br>Y       | Y         | 3                 | Y           |
| Tomo*    | M   | 21  | Cultural tour, US<br>Language study, US          | 10 days<br>1 month | Y<br>N       | N         | 3                 | Y           |

\*Takeshi and Tomo took part in two student exchange programmes during the data collection.

Factors of relevance to this investigation would likely be based on individual differences among the students, as well as contextual differences in programme type, purpose, duration, and types of social contact. The research-based and language study programmes selected by these students took place on international campuses where students studied alongside other international students from various backgrounds. Students reported that their overseas objectives were to develop English communication skills and connect with others. In the case of the research-based programmes, students also conducted small-scale science-based research, with research support in English. On the faculty organised and chaperoned cultural and study tours, differentiating “study” experiences with tourism experiences was somewhat ambiguous; however, these programmes were labelled as “study abroad” programmes by the university and so were included in this study. Students on those programmes also reported objectives around English communication and international connections. The tour to Malaysia took place on a culturally diverse international campus with several social events organised

with other international students. On the US and Taiwan cultural tours, students had anticipated international connections with local students; however, students remained largely together in “island” groups with limited interaction outside the group and a rigidly scheduled programme.

#### 4.3 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups enabled an exploration of individual experiences and perspectives. Interviews lasted on average 30 minutes and were conducted by the researcher (also a teacher on site) at three points: shortly before sojourns; within a month of return; and 5-6 months later. Interview guides were used (Appendix A); however, the interviews were flexible in allowing the participants to talk about areas of individual importance relating to the research area (Silverman, 2014). Although participants had the option of responding in Japanese, some interviews were conducted (largely) in English based on student preference. The first interviews helped develop rapport, provided a foundation of the topic areas, and helped form early impressions of student perspectives to be compared with later responses. The second interview allowed more individualisation and focused on STSA experiences themselves. In the final interviews, follow-up questions were asked and unresolved or interesting emergent points were explored.

Two focus groups were conducted towards the end of the collection period to enable sharing of experiences and perspectives. These led to substantial comments as participants discussed the research area in new directions (Edley & Litoselliti, 2010). All students were invited; however, five were unable to attend. Following student requests, one took place in English, and the other in Japanese, and both lasted about one hour (see Appendix B for focus group questions). Student moderators facilitated the focus groups and the researcher was not present.

Translations, where needed, were arranged by the researcher followed by checks by a bilingual co-worker (Japanese L1) on how the translations matched the original texts. The use of English in some interviews may have been a methodological limitation as participants’ English proficiency may have limited the depth of their responses. However, transcripts/translations were shared with the interviewees at the end of the collection period with an invitation to contribute more thought on the research area, in English or Japanese, and any feedback could be included in the analysis. The longitudinal approach enabled an iterative relationship between collection and analysis, and the time engaged in the research supported the development of close research relationships between the researcher and participants. University-approved ethical procedures were observed in dealings with the students at all times.

#### 4.4 Analysis Procedures

Following transcription, a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted using NVivo 11, with themes constructed from interpretations of patterns and commonalities in the data set. Interpreting underlying meanings in interviews towards this construction of themes was the main objective of the analysis process. Initially, distinct concepts from student interviews were sought by breaking down transcript

content into individual items for analysis next to pre-determined categories (Miles et al., 2014). These initial codes focused on preferences towards English use and characterisations of English use. As the analysis progressed, these categories were expanded and refined to ensure they reflected these students’ data following researcher interpretations. Sample transcripts, early researcher interpretations and thematic connections, and the developing thematic framework were written up in three research reports during the collection period (i.e., following each collection point). These reports were shared with a researcher, conceptually aware of GE themes, based outside the educational context. This process offered an outsider perspective on managing the analytical procedures. A final thematic framework developed from this process (see Table 2). A code book is provided in Appendix C with information on how these final codes were delimited from one another. Finally, the research acknowledges subjectivity in the analytical process and outcomes since the researcher’s focus and research interest inevitably influenced the analysis.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Data Overview

Following an overview of the thematic framework, individual codes are briefly discussed with student excerpts (numbered for later reference in the discussion) alongside qualitative interpretations. Understandings are discussed in relation to pre-departure and two broad types of STSA programme identified from the data: (i) “island” group and “target” language/culture approaches; (ii) linguistic and culturally diverse experiences. Later, there is a more detailed focus on the longitudinal development of four students.

Five codes were related to GE awareness in Table 2 at three points in the data collection: pre-STSA interview; post-STSA interview 1; post-STSA interview 2 and focus group-FG (combined since they took place at a similar time and not all students participated in the focus group). The numbers represent coded items across interview accounts at points in the collection period.

**Table 2**  
*Coding relating to GE awareness*

|   |                                                         | Point 1            | Point 2               | Point 3               |    |       |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----|-------|
|   |                                                         | Pre-STSA interview | Post-STSA interview 1 | Post-STSA interview 2 | FG | Total |
| 1 | Preference for “standard” English                       | 13                 | 6                     | 4                     | 3  | 26    |
| 2 | English use defined by standard normative “correctness” | 7                  | 4                     | 3                     | 1  | 15    |
| 3 | Beyond association with native English users            | 8                  | 11                    | 8                     | 3  | 30    |
| 4 | Awareness of diversity in English language use          | 7                  | 7                     | 12                    | 3  | 29    |
| 5 | Understanding of ELF                                    | 7                  | 7                     | 10                    | 3  | 27    |

In the first point of the collect cycle there was a preference for standard English for communication and to guide learning in 13 references. Although this preference was maintained post-STSA by some students, it became less apparent later in the collection. Changes in perspectives were interpreted towards communication as necessarily defined by standard norms to fewer descriptions of communication in English as based on standard normative correctness, which also represented perspectives that communication could be more effective following normative flexibility. Among eight students there were new post-STSA references to *Beyond association with native English users*. There was new awareness of diversity in English use particularly in reference to World Englishes “varieties” which were primarily understood around pronunciation differences, increasing from seven to 15 references between points one and three. Regarding ELF, some basic understanding was evident pre-STSA in seven references, but there were more references later in the collection period (13). These later references also suggested emerging self-perceptions as English users among students, not only as learners.

## 5.2 Pre-STSA Perspectives towards English Language Use

Preference for, and positivity towards, standard norms was evident in the accounts, either implicitly or explicitly. These standard norms were influential on perspectives towards acceptable use of English in the pre-STSA period, particularly around pronunciation, illustrated by Kaori and Noriko:

### 1 (point 1)

Kaori: Native speaker correct pronounce.

### 2 (point 1)

Noriko: Of course native speaker English speaker is better because pronunciation is the most important thing.

It was unclear why students only equated perceived native user pronunciation with “correctness”, though it may be surmised as based the influence of standard norms in ELT experiences. These normative preferences were expressed towards standard native English as the guide for learning throughout the data set. *Excerpts 1* and *2* were also linked to *English use defined by “correctness”* in the pre-STSA period in perspectives that communication should be based on standard norms. While there was openness for communication with any individual in international contexts, a perceived need to defer to standard norms for effective communication was evident in the data, expressed by Mariko when talking about her learning goal:

### 3 (point 1)

Mariko: I'd like to talk with a lot of countries people, so I'd like to acquire the native speaking English.

Standard norm adherence was considered necessary for effective communication in the pre-STSA interviews, indicating limited awareness of the potential of ELF in

intercultural communication. However, there was some awareness around location-based differences between British and American varieties, again in terms of pronunciation. While there was no extensive indication of awareness of diversity beyond US and British “standard” varieties, it reflected a basic understanding of varieties in World Englishes, as one part of GE, as Kaori remarked:

#### **4 (point 1)**

Kaori: British English so difficult to listen ... I learn American English at junior high school and high school.

In the majority of the accounts, authenticity in English use tended to be associated solely with native English users. The data implied that only these Anglophone standard varieties were perceived as legitimate, with other uses grouped together under a “non-native” label, illustrated by Kiyoko:

#### **5 (point 1)**

Kiyoko: Chinese and Korean I met in Japan to show the way to local places ... they are not native so I couldn't communicate well with them.

Despite perspectives that only standard norms are necessary for effective communication, dismissal of non-native uses, and a lack of awareness of fluidity in English use, the pre-departure interviews implied at least some awareness of differences in English, linked to a basic understanding of World Englishes.

### **5.3 Contexts of STSA**

Two broad types of STSA experiences were identified in the research: (1) faculty-led STSA involving limited social contact; and (2), more social contact on culturally and linguistically diverse international campuses. In this first category, perspectives towards English use as necessarily based on standard normative “correctness” were evident in later interviews, as expressed by Mayu:

#### **6 (point 2)**

Mayu: I want to talk to native speaker because if I talked to not native speaker I may improve my English skill as not correct English.

Post-STSA, among students in the first category there was, however, interest in engaging with World Englishes variety-based differences as a means to develop English language skills, illustrated by Daichi:

#### **7 (point 2)**

Daichi: I need to hear more about many country's English so I will improve my listening.

However, standard norms remained influential on perspectives. In the following excerpt,

Minami talked about communication with students in Taiwan. She perceived their uses as “correct” based on more English study, though struggled with pronunciation differences:

### **8 (point 2)**

Minami: I spoke to Taiwan students ... sometimes it’s a little hard to understand what they say but they study from young times so speak correct English.

Minami was also, post-STSA, self-critical towards her own English use, a perspective evident across the accounts.

In the second category, students characterised their STSA in terms of cultural and linguistic diversity. Kodai, who had not been overseas before, visited London on a three-week language study programme and studied on a campus alongside other international students. Pre-STSA, Kodai reported interest in engaging with different types of pronunciation in a World Englishes understanding:

### **9 (point 1)**

Kodai: I can talk to another country student. The pronunciation is different.

Despite reports of positive communication experiences during STSA, Kodai was self-critical in reported communication challenges for not knowing particular words. He accepted differences and a fluidity in English use among other international students but criticised his own use.

### **10 (point 2)**

Kodai: I am not good at speaking English but my class friends talked to me a lot ... they are good at English ... I wanted to say to my friends but I didn't know what words.

STSA in this grouping included language study programmes, like Kodai’s, and also research-based programmes. These experiences were characterised by the diversity among other students and more opportunities for socialisation. There did not appear to be differences according to these data between STSA in Anglophone and non-Anglophone settings. Sayaka reported that social contact with other international students on her programme in Poland led to some changes in her approach to communication using English.

### **11 (point 2)**

Sayaka: In my class there were many Germany and Poland students. I couldn't speak English fluently but they and I couldn't understand each other's native language so I tried just listen to their English. Their English was not perfect but we could change our talk and communicate.

Sayaka reported adapting English use for effective communication, prioritising fluency in communication and accepting fluidity in language use. Her line that “we could change

our talk and communicate” also implied acceptance in engagement in ELF. While more social contact was reported among students on the longer programmes, some new GE awareness was also implied by students on the shorter Malaysia programme (Masa & Yuki), which involved time on a university campus and social activities with other international students. Among student experiences in such diverse international contexts, eight students reported post-STSA confidence developing from increased awareness of flexibility in English language use, as Masa demonstrated:

### **12 (point 3, translation)**

Masa: I could learn they can still understand my badly pronounced English so it made me want to go overseas even more.

Masa spent ten days on a campus where he interacted with other international students using English. Although he was also self-critical towards his own pronunciation, using English in a culturally diverse settings contributed to ELF aspects of GE awareness, even if the experience was relatively short.

There were also expressions of views towards English use beyond association with native users as well as negativity towards standard uses in communication with native speakers. Reflecting on STSA at an international campus in Philippines, Takeshi talked about social contact experiences using English with non-native English users and expressed the view that in communication with other international students there was less “pressure” to adhere to standard norms, implying a shift from such norms as the learning goal:

### **13 (point 1)**

Takeshi: When I speak with native English speaker I feel a little pressure to speak very well. But when I talk with non-native speaker, I feel more relaxed because English is not native language for them and it's same to me ... and their English is not perfect, me too, so I feel relaxed.

Thus, there were reports in the data set of students disconnecting from standard norms which appeared to lead to more confidence in using English in effective communication, a potentially important STSA outcome. It implied a shift from self-perspectives as learners towards self-perspectives as users. However, the data implied that, despite a willingness to adapt communication practices, attitudes towards standard language endured in a tendency to self-criticise their own English use.

## **5.4 Focusing on Individual Development**

These types of STSA are relevant to a focus on developments among four students: Ryota, Tomo, Miki, and Yuki. These students were selected to represent different programme types, lengths, and destinations in the university’s STSA provision. For context, there is first a brief overview of each STSA experience, constructed from data. Excerpts are then presented with a discussion sequentially from the three data collection points.

#### 5.4.1 Ryota

Ryota took part in a ten-day US cultural tour alongside 26 Japanese students from the home university. Ryota, like other students from this trip, tended to be critical towards these types of programmes for offering limited opportunities to communicate with individuals outside the group. He had not been abroad before and was excited to meet local students at a US university. Pre-STSA, Ryota was active in the self-access centre, regularly chatting with teachers about a range of subjects.

#### 14 (point 1)

Ryota: I want to practise speaking English very well. I want to talk with foreigner people more so I will get any information in world ... At high school I studied only tests for university exam, only writing listening. I didn't practise speaking English. I can't speak English ... Japanese people are shy to make mistakes.

Before STSA, Ryota reported past language learning experiences as focused on university entrance tests and a lack of opportunities to practise speaking English (an experience evident in all other accounts). While he was motivated to use English with individuals during his sojourn, he also reported “shyness” about making mistakes (as he perceived mistakes) in English communication, and he implied adherence to standard norms and preference for native uses.

#### 15 (point 2)

Ryota: We didn't have much time to talk to people there ... Sometimes I didn't understand conversation with American people. It's very fast for me so I didn't understand but I pretend to understand all conversation but I could understand only words. Their pronunciation is different to our English ... I didn't study about English and talk with English teacher harder so I regret.

Post-STSA, reflecting standard native ideology. Ryota described communication experiences on his programme negatively based on limited social contact with local students. He also observed problems understanding English he encountered, apparently pretending to understand to avoid embarrassment. He observed native uses as fast, and took responsibility for not understanding what his partners said. He appeared to view native English users in the singular versus a singular representation of non-native users, as well as a need to impersonate native users for communicative effectiveness.

#### 16 (point 3)

Ryota: I want to increase time to communicate with local people because first day and second day I was a little shy and embarrassed to communicate with local people. So I think it was a little waste of time because I had the chance to communicate with foreign people in real life but I couldn't do it.

Post-STSA, Ryota reported regret about not studying more before his trip, taking personal responsibility for perceived communication challenges, and not appearing to consider the responsibility of others involved in communication to adapt language use for effective communication. In this way, his views towards English language use appeared reinforced rather than changed by this experience. In the final interview, Ryota expanded on the regret by talking about how he wished he had more time to communicate with local people and that he had been less “shy” to use English. As opportunities to communicate with others were limited, there were fewer opportunities which might lead to changes in GE-related perspectives.

#### 5.4.2 Tomo

Tomo took part in the same ten-day US cultural tour as Ryota. He had previous experience using English in international contexts while travelling in Italy. Later in the collection period, Tomo took part in another programme in the US, selecting a four-week programme based on the likelihood that there would be few other Japanese students there and that he would, therefore, have more opportunities to use English. Pre-STSA, Tomo was active in the university self-access centre practising English communication with teachers.

#### 17 (point 1)

Tomo: I want to have a good pronunciation like the American native people because I think the frequently pronunciation is more cool and I think if I can speak good pronunciation I can listen words.

In the first interview, Tomo reported a preference for American standard English pronunciation; indeed, his account appeared to focus on pronunciation over other aspects of language use.

#### 18 (point 2)

Tomo: We didn't have much time to talk ... I want to talk with native speaker but their English is very fast so I couldn't understand. So I want to talk to non-native speaker.

On return from his US cultural tour, Tomo reported a frustrating experience based on limited social contact while on this programme and challenges communicating with native English speaker target partners in organised exchange events. He expressed more interest in communication with non-native users based on this perceived negative experience on the belief that communication could be more effective.

#### 19 (point 3)

Tomo: In the USA there are many students who come from the other countries so the most important and interesting thing is the difference of the pronunciation of English. Before USA I think the English is just one

language, so that is written in textbooks and I can practice and I can see the textbook of the pronunciation. For example in English that I learnt Japan we say (unclear) ... but Spanish say (unclear) so I feel that pronunciation is not just one.

Following his later STSA experiences communicating with other non-native international students, Tomo expressed new awareness and acceptance of differences encountered in English use based on a longer experience and more extensive social contact with international students. From this experience, a pluralistic understanding of Englishes emerged, in contrast with earlier focus on standard norms, as he compared representations of English in textbooks with real communication experiences in international contexts. He criticised textbook representations as not preparing him for real communication experiences characterised by normative fluidity. Longitudinal changes highlighted the potential influence of short-term STSA on GE understanding based on opportunities to use English with diverse partners. Tomo highlighted pronunciation as key in any ELF understanding, implying that pronunciation differences may be more easily noticed, and then accepted, than differences in other aspects of language use (it was unclear if these were treated in terms of right and wrong).

#### 5.4.3 Miki

Miki spent one month on a research-based programme in a linguistically and culturally diverse study environment in Hong Kong. There, she stayed in a student dormitory alongside other international students with whom she reported using English in study and social situations. Previously, Miki had completed a language-based STSA course in the US where she studied in classes alongside only Japanese students from the home institution. Before her sojourn, Miki regularly utilised a speaking practice centre in the language centre's self-access facility.

#### 20 (point 1)

Miki: I like speaking with many people but sometimes I worry about my English skill to communicate with foreign country people because sometimes I wonder if my English makes someone irritate or angry because my English is not perfect. So sometimes I worried about that.

Before her exchange, Miki was self-critical towards her own use of English and concerned that it may cause "irritation" among others if communication problems occurred. She talked about English in terms of "perfect", comparing her own perceived skills in English with those of others, implying communication using standard norms as her learning goal.

#### 21 (point 2)

Miki: In Hong Kong I had a many chance and I often tried to speak to many people in English ... I think that I could I got the confidence to speak English and I think that if I speak English they can understand so it was

very happy for me.

Concerns about using English during STSA gave way to increased confidence using English and less preoccupation with “irritating” others. She reported varied communication experiences and social contact in the linguistically and culturally diverse social context on her programme. The length of her programme (one month) may also be a factor in any developments since it afforded more social contact than the cultural tours represented in this research.

## **22 (point 3)**

Miki: Hong Kong people also used to learned English in the school so they are not mother language so I think it is more easy to understand compared to American people. When I talk with Hong Kong students sometimes they couldn't understand my English word so I have to change the word ... and change how I say words so I am understand by them.

In the later interview, Miki described using features of ELF, i.e., adapting by rephrasing her language use to achieve communication goals, implying that she prioritised comprehensibility over strict norm-adherence. In the final interview, Miki also reported a preference for communication with other international students based on her perception that communication could be more effective. In her description, she implied more confidence by shifting from a standard normative understanding of communication toward more fluid uses. Miki appeared to develop a self-perspective as an English user; though her reference to “mother language” implied a continued view towards language use in terms of “correctness”. While she accepted ELF use in communication with other non-native users, perspectives towards native speaker norms remained present and implied a perspective that these were necessary for communication with native users.

### **5.4.4 Yuki**

Yuki took part in a ten-day cultural and study tour to Malaysia alongside seven other students and a teacher chaperone from the home institution. The programme involved time on a culturally and linguistically diverse international university campus where he interacted socially with international students. Unlike group “island” tours, he spent most of the ten days with other international students. He had not been abroad before and he described his past English communication experiences as limited. Yuki did not report any independent study pre-STSA.

## **23 (point 1, translation)**

Yuki: One day I found a foreign person needing some help but I didn't know what to say and couldn't do anything. Also I went to a welcome party but I couldn't find a word to say and remained standing quietly. I felt bad.

Yuki was apprehensive about going to Malaysia. Pre-STSA, he described frustration at his English skills in communication experiences taking place in Japan, which he

characterised by feeling bad about his ability to communicate.

#### **24 (point 2, translation)**

Yuki: Each person had their own speaking style so sometimes I couldn't catch what they were saying. So I tried to speak in a way that would be easier for me to say and express what I wanted to say rather than sticking to the perfectionist style ... I could communicate but it wasn't good English.

Following his STSA experience, Yuki expressed awareness that divergence from traditional norms could be acceptable, observing the maintenance of a “perfectionist style” as a potential hindrance to effective communication. He also recognised differences in “speaking style” among other students on the international campus. Yuki's willingness to adapt his communication practices to achieve a communication goal rather than focus on standard normative correctness was interpreted as part of the trajectory from standard language towards ELF perspectives and use.

#### **25 (point 3, translation)**

Yuki: They don't necessarily have to be native speakers. If you are interested in people you're talking to that wouldn't be a problem.

In his final interview, Yuki reported no preference for particular types of communication partners or particular ways of using English. His preference was for communication experiences using English with any individual, irrespective of the ways English may be used. While his programme was shorter than some others at just ten days, interpretations suggest that time spent abroad on short programmes may not be the only critical factor in developing GE understanding. In Yuki's case, GE understandings emerged from independent social contact with other non-native English-speaking international students.

### **6. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

In sum, pre-STSA, most students associated English use with conventional notions of correctness and there were perspectives of authenticity solely in standard norms (1<sup>2</sup>, 2). Such perspectives may easily be formed by conventional ELT practices described by these students (14), in which associations of monolithic correctness and reference to normative authenticity risk becoming reinforced (Jenkins et al., 2011). Indeed, concerns around a need to apply traditional normative understandings in their communication experiences abroad appeared to be informed by experiences in ELT, as most of these students' experiences using English were class-based (Mayumi & Hüttner, 2020). However, there were research interpretations of some pre-STSA awareness of location-based differences in English, reflecting basic understandings of World Englishes and a plurality of Englishes. In the pre-STSA period, therefore, student perspectives reflected conventional ELT practices and focus on standard norms, with some basic understanding

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2 Numbers in parentheses indicate excerpt number in the findings.

of World Englishes, though awareness of the fluidity of English used in communication and ELF positions were unclear.

On STSA programmes themselves, a distinction was interpreted in terms of communication experiences in two categories: (i) some faculty-led STSA offering few opportunities for social contact outside the “island” group (Engle & Engle, 2003), in programme organisation which may be considered inherently limiting (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2018); and (ii), experiences on culturally and linguistically diverse international campuses. The limited socialisation on programmes in this first category also appeared to limit the extent that students could communicate with local native users, who were the target language partners (6, 16, 18) among these students, an aspect considered a failure by students on these sojourns, evident in related research (Çiftçi & Karaman, 2018). Students on these programmes continued to associate “target” learning with native users and showed limited movement away from standard language understandings. As such, new GE awareness may not be easily supported in such conditions. The research argues that assumptions in target language approaches in STSA research and practices that learning is best following contact and interaction with native speakers (e.g., Cadd, 2012; Martinsen et al., 2010), and reflected in student perspectives (3, 5, 6), overlook important developmental opportunities from communication with non-native English users, particularly with other international students.

On STSA experiences characterised by linguistic and cultural diversity among other international students, communication experiences were substantial and there was more independence for socialisation, an important indicator for GE development (11, 19, 21) in this research. For those students, as in related research and research perspectives (Kubota, 2016; Mocanu & Llurda, 2020; Schartner, 2016), interactions with international students were more available than interactions with native users locally, and there were few reports in the data set of communication with local individuals. In addition, communication with other students appeared to be meaningful. Some students also reported perceived communication parity with other international students in STSA settings, which was interpreted as based on acceptance of normative flexibility in communication not involving native users (13, 22), reflecting related research (Çiftçi & Karaman, 2018). Whilst time spent abroad was also factor, development may also be significant on shorter programmes on international campuses where students had opportunities to engage extensively with other international students, indicated by GE development on the cultural tour to Malaysia.

Changes in perspectives towards the English language and use among these students was interpreted from descriptions of English use and indications of new understandings contrasting with perceptions of sole authenticity in the correctness of standard normative models (Hynninen & Solin, 2017), to a focus on comprehensibility via creative and individual language choices (11, 13, 22, 24) (De Costa & Crowther, 2018). Focusing on individual developments, Tomo, Miki, and Yuki showed a willingness to disconnect from traditionally conceived norms and engage in ELF to support effective communication. However, the relationship between these students and ELF perspectives was complex: on one hand, there were descriptions of flexible and creative English use in apparently successful and meaningful communication; on

the other, there was some interpreted self-criticism for perceived incorrect uses (12, 22, 24). Therefore, ELF appeared to be perceived as acceptable in communication with other non-native users, though in communication with native speakers' standard norms may continue to be considered necessary. This research interpretation is also linked to perspectives that communication breakdowns may be considered the fault of non-native users, rather than a failure to adapt language use for effective negotiation of meaning by a partner in communication.

These changes reflect how attitudes, which may be formed during ELT experiences, can be questioned and changed following particular experiences (Mayumi & Hüttner, 2020), like social contact with other international students in multilingual and multicultural STSA settings. Based on more social contact in ELF situations on such STSA, there is learning potential around GE, particularly in a shift in focus on standard norms, contrasting with target language understandings in other STSA experiences. Among students, perspectives appeared to shift from standard norms in pre-STSA period (14, 20) towards variety-based awareness, reflecting World Englishes (9, 19) towards ELF use and acceptance (11, 22, 24). Such findings are also evident in changes in GE-related perspectives in thematically related educational interventions (e.g., Bayyurt & Altinmakas, 2012).

## 7. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

On research, measuring proficiency development by some standard normative test may show some gains in language development (e.g., Kashima & Kato, 2020; Kimura, 2006; Tanaka & Ellis 2003); however, as STSA experiences are often short and not focused on language development, but opportunities to use English abroad, focusing research on other positive outcomes in small-scale process-focused research is important (Kinginger, 2008). In larger-scale studies focusing on language-development, there are also risks that GE developments are overlooked or viewed negatively in tests which may reinforce standard normative understandings. While the organisation of programmes in this research into two broad groups is simplistic, comparing target language approaches and culturally and linguistically diverse aspects of STSA is a helpful characterisation of experiences. Research should look at other areas where experiences in linguistically and culturally diverse STSA settings may contribute to diverse learning outcomes rather than target language learning through interactions with native users. In terms of development in GE awareness, research and practice may also be informed by the scale from standard language understandings, to World Englishes perspectives, and on to ELF awareness and practices. This scale may be relevant to understanding trajectories of developments in GE awareness following STSA or other educational experience.

Such contextual aspects of some STSA experiences should also be incorporated within STSA practices and stressed to students that they represent meaningful learning opportunities. Pre-STSA, students should not be focused uniquely on interactions with local native users. To support awareness, it would be useful to expose students to GE themes around World Englishes and ELF, challenging standard language understandings, in pre-departure training. Such training could address limited pre-sojourn GE awareness,

particularly among those with language perspectives formed in traditional ELT classrooms. It may help students to develop knowledge of GE as a foundation for STSA development of GE-related skills, i.e., ELF practices in communication on programmes themselves. It is also helpful to include in pre-STSA training discussions on diversity in English, and characterisations of effective communication, to be compared in post-STSA feedback sessions. Such comparisons may then help students reflect and identify new perspectives.

## 8. CONCLUSION

In this STSA research, evidence-based assertions have been made that following sojourn experiences in particular STSA conditions (i.e., linguistically and culturally diverse international campuses), there were shifts in perspectives towards English use from focus on standard norms towards understandings of location-based differences, particularly around pronunciation, and on to ELF use. The research suggests that development of GE awareness may be seen to follow this route from standard language understandings to World Englishes perspectives to ELF positions. However, using ELF in practice was accompanied by self-criticism towards students' language use and maintained perspectives towards the "correctness" of standard norms. GE awareness from STSA is, nonetheless, a potentially meaningful learning outcome. STSA practices should emphasise the learning potential of STSA experiences in linguistically and culturally diverse settings over a focus on target language learning through interactions with native users.

Interpretations in this research are, however, built on subjective data interpretations of subjective representations of STSA experiences. In addition, individual perspectives shared in the interviews were partly influenced by the researcher's role, and the students may have had other perspectives unexpressed during the interviews. The research is also limited by the comparison along the same criteria of relatively few STSA experiences. As such, links between STSA and GE need further exploration in more case-driven qualitative research, perhaps incorporating real-time communication examples. Examining individual student STSA experiences in other contexts may help formulate other research outcomes as well as help contribute further educational implications to GE awareness linked to STSA.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interview guides**

#### **Interview 1 (pre-STSA)**

- What are your main reasons for studying English?
- How was your experience learning English in high school?
- What are your experiences of learning English at university?
- How do you think your past language study will help you while you are away?
- What experiences do you have using English outside the classroom?
- What experiences of intercultural communication in English have you had?
- What is your best experience using English?
- What is your worst experience using English?

#### **Interview 2 (post-STSA)**

- What experiences of intercultural communication in English did you have on study abroad?
- Did you have any communication successes?
- Did you have any communication breakdowns?
- What was your best experience using English?
- What was your worst experience using English?
- Did you socialise with people of other countries? What did you learn from those you spoke to?
- What did you learn about English?
- What advice would you give to future study abroad students to prepare for using English?
- What impact do you think study abroad has had on your attitude to English learning?

#### **Interview 3 (5/6 months later)**

- What do you think is most important for successful communication in English?
- Do you feel your intercultural communication skills improved? If so, how?
- What have you learnt about English?
- What have you learnt about other speakers of English?
- Who do you prefer to speak with, native English speakers or non-native speakers?
- What impact do you think study abroad has had on your attitude to English language learning?
- What kind of independent learning do you do now?

## **APPENDIX B**

### Focus group questions

- What are your experiences of learning English in Japan?
- What are your experiences of using English in Japan?
- How were your experiences of using English while you were abroad?
- Consider an intercultural experience you had while you were on SA. Describe your feelings during the experience.
- Who do you prefer to talk to, native speakers or non-native speakers in English?

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Code book**

#### **Preference for “standard” English**

Indicating a preference for “standard” English norms in learning or in communication.

#### **English use is defined by standard normative “correctness”**

Explicitly associating English use with standard normative “correctness”, with limited awareness demonstrated of diversity in English use, or understandings of what might constitute “correctness”.

#### **Beyond association with native users**

Indication of awareness of English use beyond the sole association with native English users. Students may indicate awareness of normative flexibility and may also challenge notions of native users as sole owners through awareness of diversities among users.

#### **Awareness of diversity in English language use**

Displaying awareness of diversity in English use, particularly in terms of awareness of different accents. Such awareness may be more aligned with a World Englishes understanding than GE.

#### **Understanding of ELF**

When students, either explicitly or implied, report on their understandings of ELF use or describe their own experiences of ELF use. Understandings of ELF may be emergent during STSA.