

英語学習者の肯定的情意が与える言語接触量への影響 —量的調査から—

The Impact of English Language Learners' Positive Affects on Language Contact: Quantitative Results

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ABSTRACT

本論文は、第二言語接触量と肯定的な情意、および言語習熟度の相関に関する調査結果を報告するものである。調査参加者は、英語学習を主目的として留学に参加した日本人の英語学習者である。研究結果は、コミュニケーションへの積極性や言語スキルの自己評価といった肯定的な情意、及び言語習熟度が、三か月間の留学後に伸長を示したこと、加えて、言語接触量を左右した変数は、言語習熟度ではなく、肯定的な情意であったことを明らかにした。

This study presents findings from quantitative analysis on the association of second language contact, positive affect, and language proficiency. The research participants were Japanese learners of English in the study abroad context. Results showed that learners developed positive affects, such as willingness to communicate and self-perceived language skills and language proficiency after three months of studying abroad. Moreover, the amount of language contact was associated with positive affect, but it was not associated with language proficiency.

1. Introduction

1.1 Willingness to Communicate

For second language (henceforth L2) communication, learner attitudes and affects such as L2 self-perceived skills and L2 willingness to communicate play important roles (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998).

In relation to willingness to communicate in the study abroad (henceforth SA) context, Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) report that the learners who scored higher on a willingness to communicate measure before departure spent more time communicating with their host families, suggesting that learners' willingness to communicate was crucial in their ability to interact with native speakers. One interesting aspect is that Yashima et al. (2004) report that willingness to communicate did not have any correlation with L2 proficiency. However, willingness to communicate correlated with the learners' self-perceived L2 skills, and how the learners perceived their ability to communicate in the intercultural context. In a later study, Yashima (2009) suggests that intercultural experience increased the number of things the learner wished to communicate to the world.

1.2 Language Contact and Language Gain in a SA Context

In the present study, *language contact* refers to the exposure to language in general, and has sub-categories, such as speaking contact, listening contact, and reading contact.

While-abroad language contact is an aspect claimed to be effective for L2 language gain (e.g., DeKeyser, 1991; Freed, 1995; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). There is an assumption that authentic language contact experience afforded by SA may play an essential role in the development of L2 proficiency (Goodwin & Natch, 1988). In terms of language contact opportunities, Brecht and

Robinson (1995) state that “indeed, the contribution of study abroad to significant language gains is commonly believed to derive from the number of opportunities program participants have to engage in first-hand language practice on ‘the street,’ in restaurants, in shops, in the homes of native speaker friends and acquaintances as well as a variety of other out-of-class environments in which learners find themselves while living in-country” (p. 317).

Other characteristics of the SA environment claimed to be beneficial for linguistic progress include: 1) the number of hours spent in the native-speaking environment, which provides, 2) enormous amounts of language input, as well as a large amount of speaking contact, 3) the requirement to get a number of things done in L2, and 4) being able to communicate with multiple native speakers, which is not possible in the typical language classroom (DeKeyser, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Moreover, learners are exposed to language contact in combination with structure-based instruction in the classroom, and meaning-based interactions out of class (Freed, 1995; Long, 1991; Spada, 1986). This combination is another characteristic of SA environment noted as effective for language gain. Spada (1986), for instance, reports that learners who received the most structure-based instruction in the classroom while-abroad, benefited the most from informal out-of-class contact while-abroad.

1.3 Research Aims

Three research hypothesis were generated for the present study: 1) Willingness to communicate, self-perceived English, and English proficiency will develop after studying abroad for three months. 2) The amount of language contact while-abroad will have a relationship to linguistic progress measured by English proficiency tests at post-return. 3) The amount of language contact while-abroad will have a relationship to positive affects such as willingness to communicate and self-perceived English.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Participants in this study were 25 Japanese learners from a private university in Tokyo, between the ages of 19 to 20. They participated in a 15-week SA program at a private university in British Columbia, Canada, as one cohort. According to their English placement results at the time of their entry into the university, they were at an intermediate level of English. In Canada, participants took two intensive English language courses; an English language course (15 hours per week for 15 weeks), and a content-based course in tourism (10 hours per week for 15 weeks). Each participant stayed with a homestay family for 15 weeks near the host university.

2.2 Data Collection Procedure

The present study was longitudinal, with data collected at three separate times. Pre-departure data were collected around five weeks before departure. The reason was that participants had a one-month summer break prior to departure, and the only time available for data collection was five weeks before departure. While-abroad data were collected around six weeks into the SA period. Post-return data were collected around six weeks after they came back from SA. The post-return data collection had a similar timing constraint. The participants went into winter break for one month after they returned, and the post-return data were collected after the winter break.

2.3 Measurements

To measure willingness to communicate, some of the question items developed by Yashima, et al. (2004) based on the willingness to communicate model (MacIntyre et al., 1998) were used. For the present study, the questionnaire with eight items (see Appendix A) was administered twice; at pre-

departure and post-return.

To measure self-perceived English, four question items were used, asking about 1) listening skills, 2) speaking skills, 3) reading skills, and 4) writing skills. The questionnaire (see Appendix B) was administered twice; at pre-departure and post-return.

To measure English language proficiency, the Computerized Assessment System of English Communication (henceforth CASEC) by the Japan Institute of Educational Measurement (2009) was used. CASEC is a computer adaptive test (CAT) and measures 1) knowledge of vocabulary, 2) knowledge of phrasal expression, 3) listening ability (understanding of main idea), and 4) listening ability (dictation). The test was administered twice; at pre-departure and post-return.

To understand participants' language contact at while-abroad, the language contact profile was used. The language contact profile consists of two sets of questionnaires developed by Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, and Halter (2004). They are a pretest version of the language contact profile, and a posttest version of the language contact profile. The aims of these questionnaires are to gather research participants' information, regarding demographics, language learning history, language contact with native speakers, and use of language outside of the classrooms. For the present study, the posttest version of the language contact profile (see Appendix C) was administered at while-abroad.

2.4 Data Screening Prior to Analysis

Prior to main data analysis, when missing values were found, the values were estimated using the *mean substitution* method (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). That is, prior to the main statistical analysis, the missing values were replaced with the mean score of the responses for that item.

In the present study, the learners' scores were converted into *z-scores* to identify univariate outliers

(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In the present study, cases with z-scores in excess of 1.96 ($p < .05$, two-tailed) were considered outliers. To reduce the impact of outliers, the outlier values were changed by employing the next highest score plus one option. The *next highest score plus one* option refers to changing the outlier value to one unit above the next highest non-outlier value in the data set (Field, 2009).

In the present study, the score distributions were checked by looking at the values of skewness and kurtosis. In order for the data to be analyzed using parametric data analysis, it was ensured that the data met the assumptions of normal distribution and homogeneity of variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The reliability of the research instruments was measured using Cronbach's alpha. A coefficient in excess of .70 is acceptable for educational research (Kline, 1999). Therefore, for the research instruments that were used in the present study, a *Cronbach alpha* of .70 or more was considered to be satisfactory.

3. Results

3.1 Outcomes

3.1.1 Willingness to communicate

The willingness to communicate questionnaire scores obtained at pre-departure and post-return were screened prior to the main analysis as described in *Data Screening Prior to Analysis* section. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for the willingness to communicate questionnaires were satisfactory (pre-departure: $\alpha = .83$, and post-return: $\alpha = .81$).

To examine the willingness to communicate outcome results, the scores obtained at pre-departure and post-return were submitted to a *paired samples t-test*. The paired samples t-test result showed that on average, learners had significantly higher willingness to communicate after they had studied abroad ($M = 31.73$, $SE = 1.03$) than before ($M = 28.60$, $SE = 1.36$),

$t(24) = -2.253$, $p < .05$, $r = .42$. The effect size is described by r . When interpreting the effect size of a coefficient, the greater the effect size, the stronger the relationship. More specifically, a coefficient of around .10 is considered a small effect, around .30 a medium effect, and around .50 a large effect (Cohen, 1988). The result indicates that learners developed their willingness to communicate after studying abroad.

3.1.2 Self-perceived English

The questionnaire scores for self-perceived English skills obtained at pre-departure and post-return were screened before the main analysis as described in *Data Screening Prior to Analysis* section. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for self-perceived English questionnaires were calculated (pre-departure: $\alpha = .55$, post-return: $\alpha = .35$). The reliability of self-perceived English questionnaires was low. However, values below .70 could be expected with psychological constructs because of the diversity of the constructs being measured (Kline, 1999).

To examine the outcome results for self-perceived English, the scores obtained at pre-departure and post-return were submitted to a paired samples t-test. The paired samples t-test result showed that on average, learners had significantly higher levels of self-perceived English after they had studied abroad ($M = 10.32$, $SE = .215$) than before ($M = 8.48$, $SE = .29$), $t(24) = -7.37$, $p < .001$, $r = .83$. The result indicates that learners developed self-perceived English after studying abroad.

3.1.3 English proficiency

For English proficiency, CASEC scores obtained at pre-departure and post-return were used. Prior to the main analysis, the data were screened as described in *Data Screening Prior to Analysis* section. The reliability of CASEC test scores have been found to be in a .96 to .98 range (Hayashi,

Nogami, Maeda & Ikeda, 2004).

To examine the English proficiency outcome results, the scores obtained at pre-departure and post-return were submitted to a paired samples t-test. The paired samples t-test result showed that on average, learners had significantly higher scores on the CASEC test after they had studied abroad ($M = 600.84$, $SE = 13.44$) than before ($M = 543.72$, $SE = 17.40$, $t(24) = -4.19$, $p < .001$, $r = .65$). The result indicated that learners made gains in their English proficiency after studying abroad.

3.2 Relationship Between While-Abroad Language Contact and Post English Proficiency

From the language contact profile questionnaire (Freed et al., 2004), items related to while-abroad language contact were used: while-abroad total language contact, while-abroad speaking contact, and while-abroad listening/reading/writing contact. Before conducting the analysis, the three sets of data were screened as described in *Data Screening Prior to Analysis* section. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for while-abroad language contact questionnaires were satisfactory (total language contact: $\alpha = .87$, speaking contact: $\alpha = .74$, listening/reading/writing contact: $\alpha = .80$).

To examine the relationship between the learners' while-abroad language contact and their post-return CASEC results, the scores were submitted to the *Pearson correlation coefficients analysis*. As shown in Table 1, there were not found to be any significant

relations between learners' while-abroad language contact and their post-return CASEC scores. The result indicates that language activities while-abroad vary, and there may not be simple patterns and associations correlating to the post-return test performance.

3.3 The Relationship Between Language Contact and Attitudes such as Willingness to Communicate and Self-Perceived English

The Pearson correlation coefficients results showed a positive relationship between while-abroad language contact and non-linguistic variables, as shown in Table 2. Most importantly, pre-departure self-perceived English level was significantly related to while-abroad total language contact, $r = .43$, $p < .05$, and while-abroad listening/reading/writing contact, $r = .51$, $p < .01$. Moreover, a significant relationship was also recorded between pre-departure self-perceived English and post-return willingness to communicate, $r = .42$, $p < .05$. Moreover, post-return willingness to communicate was significantly correlated to while-abroad speaking contact, $r = .41$, $p < .05$.

The correlation results indicate the value of self-perceived English level at pre-departure, leading to more language contact, and to higher willingness to communicate.

4. Discussion

The first hypothesis focused on the outcomes of

Table 1

Correlation of While-Abroad Language Contact and Post English Proficiency (n=25)

| | Abroad Total Language Contact | Abroad Speaking | Abroad L/R/W |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Post English Proficiency | .10 | -.10 | .16 |
| Abroad Total Language Contact | - | .91** | .93** |
| Abroad Speaking | | - | .76** |
| Abroad L/R/W | | | - |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2

Correlation of Language Contact and Attitudes (n=25)

| | Pre Willingness | Pre Self-Lang. | Post Willingness | Post Self-English |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Abroad Total Language Contact | .24 | .43* | .37 | .07 |
| Abroad Speaking | .26 | .28 | .41* | .01 |
| Abroad L/R/W | .16 | .51* | .37 | .10 |
| Pre Willingness | – | .34 | .35 | .05 |
| Pre Self-English | | – | .48* | .54** |
| Post Willingness | | | – | .43* |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SA. Leaving the classroom environment and placing themselves in an authentic communication environment developed willingness to communicate and self-perceived English, as well as English proficiency.

The second hypothesis focused on the associations between while-abroad language contact and linguistic progress measured by English proficiency tests at post-return. Contrary to the assumption, the results showed none of the three sub-categories of while-abroad language contact (i.e., while-abroad total language contact, while-abroad speaking contact, and while-abroad listening/reading/writing contact) to be significantly related to the post-return proficiency scores. The result indicates the complexity of language activities while-abroad, and hints that there may not be a simple relationship with post-return proficiency.

This finding partially supports the claim noted previously by Freed (1990), as Freed does not find any connection between the amount of out of class contact in general and measurable linguistic progress during SA. In search of an explanation, Freed speculates that, for the purpose of linguistic gain, it is not the amount but rather the type of contact which matters. Freed claims that lower proficiency learners benefit more from social/oral interaction (e.g., speaking with native speakers). Higher proficiency learners, on the other hand,

profit more from a variety of media, which provide lengthy interaction with extended reading and listening discourse (e.g., newspapers articles, television shows).

Hypothesis three was related to the associations between while-abroad language contact and non-linguistic variables at pre-departure and post-return. The results showed that willingness to communicate and self-perceived English had significant relationships to language contact. First, pre-departure self-perceived English was significantly related to while-abroad total language contact and while-abroad listening/reading/writing contact. In addition, while-abroad language contact was significantly related to post-return willingness to communicate.

5. Conclusion and Future Research

This study found that in general, learners developed their willingness to communicate, self-perceived L2 levels, and English proficiency after studying abroad for three months. In addition, the study confirmed that higher levels of pre-departure self-perceived English had an impact on the amount of language contact abroad.

A second important area of inquiry concerns the role of while-abroad language contact for proficiency gain. The present study did not find any significant relationship between any of the three aspects of

language contact and language proficiency at post-return. The roles of input and interaction are assumed to be beneficial to language gain (e.g., Hatch, 1978; Krashen 1982; Long, 1983, 1991, 1996; Spada, 1986; Pica, 1994; Schmidt, 1995). However, there have been mixed reports on the relationship between the amount of language contact and proficiency during SA (e.g., Carroll, 1967; Freed, 1990). As Collentine (2011) points out, the root of this problem is that “there has been no attempt independently to document in a fully quantified manner the types of input and interaction that learners have abroad” (p. 226). Researchers have examined three major settings in which learners are believed to have communicative language contact while abroad (Kinginger, 2008): 1) educational institutions and classrooms, 2) places of residence, such as homestay, 3) service encounters and other informal contact. There is a need for a more thorough description and documentation of the language that learners are exposed to in these naturalistic settings.

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