MONASH University

Study abroad in multilingual contexts:

The linguistic investment and development of Japanese adolescents in and beyond year-long exchange programs

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Contents

List of tables and figures

Abstract

This study examined the experiences of Japanese high school students who travelled abroad to destinations across Europe, North and South America with the not-for-profit organization AFS Intercultural Programs Japan between 2016 and 2017. Responding to the need for more research which adopts a holistic approach to study abroad (Coleman, 2013), I adopted an ecological perspective of language learning (van Lier, 2004) to examine their experiences and linguistic investment over time. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (2006) bioecological model of human development and The Douglas Fir Group's (2016) transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world, I sought to make visible the complex interrelations between the individual, context and linguistic development both abroad and in the year after returning.

Methodologically, the study used a multi-stranded, mixed-methods approach to investigating the participants' experiences and linguistic development during and after their year abroad. Questionnaire data obtained from 100 individual respondents was analysed using a variety of statistical techniques to establish an overarching picture of this group. Retrospective interviews were then conducted with 14 participants recruited from the questionnaire respondents approximately one month after returning to Japan, while 12 went on to complete follow-up interviews one year after returning. 11 of the initial 14 participants also provided access to Instagram accounts they had used during their time abroad. Narrative Analysis (Barkhuizen et al., 2013) was performed on this data to create chronological narratives for each case. Using these narratives and analysis of the questionnaire data, five cases were selected for intensive analysis. The remaining cases then were extensively analysed to determine the wider applicability of the findings that emerged from the data.

The study contributes to understandings of language learning abroad in several key ways. It examines the experiences of adolescent non-Anglophone background sojourners as they encounter English and other languages in multilingual settings. The results provide a detailed picture of how different members of the host family contributed to the participants' investment in the practices of the host community. Furthermore, certain peers appeared to be pivotal in providing support, access to wider social networks and socializing the participants into the practices of peer communities, while the geographical settings promoted or limited access to peer networks. Interaction with peers tended to be multimodal with digital communications emerging as an important part of their social life and facilitating the development of local teenage linguistic repertoires. Participants' linguistic

multi-competence (V. Cook, 2016) was shaped by the relationships they forged and their desire and ability to be recognised as participants in the communities they inhabited.

Findings from the year after participants had returned to Japan demonstrate the dynamism of their linguistic multi-competence and its relation to context and individual agency. In some cases, the pressures of high school and the lack of opportunities to interact negatively impacted their ability to maintain connections with those they regularly spent time with while abroad. In other cases, participants were able to relocate or renegotiate their circumstances in order to continue to engage with the languages they had encountered abroad. The data also shows how the strength of participants' affiliation with the host community in the month after returning did not necessarily predict the ongoing investment in associated linguistic competencies.

The ecological treatment of the participants' data reveals how linguistic development is emergent of the individual and context, highlighting the agency of both sojourners and others they encounter in creating conditions which promote language learning. Moreover, the results of this project highlight the complexity of this data and the need for interdisciplinary perspectives which can unpack the relationships which contributed to this development. The ongoing growth in the numbers and diversity of those travelling abroad to study and learn temporarily in new environments highlights the need for more depth and breadth in understanding what this mobility means for individuals and the communities they encounter and return to.

Declaration

This thesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Glossary of Japanese terms used

Below I have included a list of Japanese expression that I have used in this document more than once or are contextually important for understanding parts of the thesis. In other instances where I have included Japanese terms as part of the discussion, I have included relevant explanations and definitions in footnotes.

Romanised form	Japanese	Definition
gurōbaru jinzai	グローバル人材	Literally 'Global Human Capital'. A term coined by the Japanese ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to refer to an idealised elite group who can represent Japanese interests abroad through intercultural and linguistic (largely English) abilities, and international connections.
hāfu	ハーフ	From the English 'half'. Colloquial term used to describe someone with one Japanese parent. Widespread, but can be considered discriminatory due to the othering effect it has, i.e., someone is only half, not fully, Japanese.
jyuken	受験	Literally 'exam taking', this often refers to the periods of a student's life when studying for and taking exams takes up much of their time and energy. The related term *jyukensei* refers to a student undergoing this process.
jyuku	塾	Often translated as 'cram school', these private classrooms mainly focus on preparing students for high-stakes exams, such as university entrance exams and run after school hours and on weekends, often until late at night.
kikokushijyo	帰国子女	A child who has lived overseas, often due to their parent's placement in the overseas branch of a company or diplomatic mission. Sometimes called 'returnee' in English.
kōhai	後輩	One's junior in an organisation or institution. There are expectations that kohai will be deferential to *senpai*.
ryūgaku	留学	Literally 'study abroad'.
senpai	先輩	One's senior in an organisation or institution. Seen as possessing experience and knowledge that is transferred to *kōhai*.

Part I: Situating and designing the project

1 Locating the research

1.1. Overview

Individual, community, place, time. So much of what goes on during a sojourn abroad is tied up in these four ideas. On the surface, it appears relatively straightforward. As much of the promotional material for study abroad implies, an individual travels to a new place and through interacting with the communities they encounter, returns home changed for the better. Yet beneath this surface, as so much of the research has shown, lies a deeply complex and unpredictable tangle of individuals, each with their own histories, desires, intentions and agency, moving through an evolving and reacting social, material and symbolic world. It is complex because nothing is certain to happen; interactions are dynamic and unpredictable, shaped by the agency of individuals and the wider environment in which they take place.

Simultaneously exhilarating and perplexing, the contexts of study abroad have increasingly become the focus of research attention among those interested in language learning. This is reflected in the volume and quality of specialist publications emerging recently (De Costa et al., 2017; Hasegawa, 2019; Howard, 2019; Jackson & Oguro, 2017; R. Mitchell et al., 2017; Plews & Misfeldt, 2018; Sanz & Morales-Front, 2018) and the surge in general empirical articles which list study abroad as a theme (Lei & Liu, 2019).

This increased interest in study abroad is also occurring in at a time when rapid social change is being driven by processes of globalization and the proliferation of personal communications technology. People are choosing to travel further, more frequently and in greater numbers than ever before, bringing people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds together in "contact zones" (Pratt, 1991). At the same time, communications technology has become an integral part of social interaction, allowing us to interact with geographically remote others in real-time and asynchronously. These multimodal interactions can be one-on-one or with an audience which can number in the millions. The interactions of sojourners with host and home communities are no longer limited to chronological time or geographical space, while media and other linguistic resources have also been similarly liberated from these constraints.

These social changes have been accompanied by a fundamental shift in how the wider field of Applied Linguistics understands language. There is a growing recognition that the world is

decidedly more linguistically diverse, dynamic and heteroglossic than was previously accepted (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). Essentialist monolingual ideologies have been challenged and torn down as the forces described above have made apparent the multilingual nature of our lived reality. The deterritorialisation of some forms of language (Blommaert, 2010) and the emergence of English as *lingua franca* highlight the need to adopt multilingual approaches to study abroad research. The notion of multi-competence, developed by V. Cook (2016), is an invaluable metaphor for understanding what it is that individuals are developing when engaged in processes of language learning.

There is also a growing number of scholars who understand language learning and use as an emergent process that occurs through affordances (Gibson, 1977; van Lier, 2000) perceived by the individual in the social, material and symbolic environments they inhabit. This *ecological perspective* sees the individual as part of the contexts in which they are situated, influencing and being influenced by the environment through interaction. As a result, this view of language learning is interested not only how individuals develop their linguistic repertoires over time, but also "on the ecosystemic dynamics where agents pick up on the affordances and pressures of the environment, and where the environment in turn changes as a result" (Steffensen & Kramsch, 2017, p. 7). The potential of this perspective is something this project seeks to employ to investigate the complexity of language learning abroad

Research on language learning abroad has consistently turned up extensive variability in individual outcomes (see Isabelli-García et al., 2018), and so studies which engage with the complexity of language learning abroad have been vital in uncovering how this variability is a product of the interrelationships of individuals to their social environments. There is also a growing understanding of the need to better account for sojourners as people whose intentions, interactions, histories and lives extend far beyond the period they spend abroad. It is against this backdrop that this project is situated and from which it takes its cues for what research on the contexts of study abroad should aim to achieve.

1.2. **Aims of the project**

This project was conceived with the aim of contributing an in-depth and holistic investigation of study abroad in the spirit of seminal studies such as Benson et al. (2013), Jackson (2008), Kinginger (2008) and Murphy-Lejeune (2002). Primarily it sought to achieve this through the adoption of a participant-oriented, ecological approach that investigated participants' investment in the linguistic practices of the host community during

and after a sojourn abroad. The study examined a group of Japanese high school students who undertook yearlong 'international exchanges' through the non-profit organisation *AFS Intercultural Programs Japan* to destinations across Europe, North and South America.

Following Holliday (2016), the project is located within a postmodern qualitative paradigm which sees human reality as socially constructed and views the researcher as part of, rather than external to the phenomena being investigated. The research methods were therefore selected and developed in response to the way potential participants were made available to me and the way that results emerged during data collection and analysis. Initially, invitations to participate in a questionnaire were distributed to 293 students who had just returned from homestays that ran from mid-2016 to mid-2017 made available to me by AFS Intercultural Programs Japan. I received responses from 100 unique individuals of which 14 went on to participate in interviews. Of those interviewed, 12 completed a follow-up interview one year after they had returned and 11 granted me access to their social media accounts for data collection purposes. The variety and longitudinal nature of the data sources allowed me to reconstruct narratives of the interview informants' experiences and gauge their representativeness among the wider group of questionnaire respondents.

By examining a population not often covered in the study abroad literature this project contributes the much needed perspectives of Japanese adolescents a wider conversation on the nature of language learning abroad. Importantly, the participants' experiences as non-English background speakers represent an important contrast to those of Anglophone undergraduates that dominate the pages of qualitative literature. Also, by looking at the year after return, this project documents how study abroad can affect sojourner's ongoing developmental trajectories and relationship to language. Finally, by adopting an ecological approach this project grapples with the underlying complexity of language learning during and after study abroad, responding to calls for more studies to adopt holistic perspectives of study abroad (Coleman, 2013; Duff, 2019).

1.3. **Guiding questions**

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. How did participants' investment in the linguistic practices of the host community evolve during and after their time abroad?

2. What individual and contextual factors most significantly affected this investment?

These questions centre on Norton's (2000) participatory notion of *investment*; an agentive process of language learning in order to attain the symbolic resources an individual desires for themselves (see Ch. 3.4.3). Underpinning the questions however are the *bioecological model of human development* (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) and *The Douglas Fir Group's transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world* (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016).

The questions themselves are structured around Bronfenbrenner's *person-process-context-time* (PPCT) model for developmental research (detailed in Ch. 3.1). The PPCT model emphasises the ecological requirement to account for the individual (person), context and interactions between them (process) to understand how human development occurs over time. In this project, linguistic development is understood as occurring through the process of investment. Encapsulated in both of the frameworks referred to above and the notion of investment, is a dynamic contextually-situated view of the individual who is agentive in their own development.

In investigating the individual factors that affect investment, I am asking how participants' histories, identities, imagination, understandings and intentions affect the degree to which they engage with linguistic practices of the host community. This is done recognizing that "the developmental outcomes at one age become the person[sic] characteristics that influence the outcomes of development at a later age" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 635). In essence, as personal histories unfold and identities, understandings and competencies develop over time, so too do the intentions and imagination that drive investment.

By context in the guiding questions, in addition to the social, I am also interested in the material and symbolic worlds the participants inhabit, including the affordances offered by the geographies of host communities. The scope of this project is therefore far-reaching and so I attempted to focus on those factors that emerged as significant in the data I collected, whether through the weight participants placed on them or through later analysis. That is to say, that the findings are constrained by what the participants revealed in the questionnaires, interviews and on social media. In navigating the scope and complexity of this project, the notion of chronological time has been a guiding concept. This can be seen in the chronological interviews initially conducted with informants, the narrative analysis performed on data and in the structure of the chapters that present the case studies and discuss the findings.

1.4. **Thesis structure**

This thesis is broken into three parts, containing fifteen chapters in total. Part I, *Situating and designing the project*, includes the current chapter (Chapter 1) which positions the project within the related fields of Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Study Abroad. It introduces the aims of this project and lays out in broad strokes the way I sought to accomplish these aims. Chapter 2 presents an overview the literature which has led to the current juncture in language learning abroad research; A point where holistic examination of the interrelation between individual and context is acknowledged as essential for understanding language learning. Drawing on these understandings, I present the ecologically and socioculturally informed theoretical framework I have adopted for this project (Chapter 3). This framework then informed the various methods of data collection (questionnaire, interviews, social media) and analysis (statistical, thematic, narrative, intensive, cross-case) I adopted, which are discussed in Chapter 4. Throughout Part I, I have attempted, particularly in Chapter 4, to make clear how my own subjectivity has contributed to this project. This includes the choice of research setting and how data was collected, analysed and presented.

Part II, *Exploring the results,* then outlines the key findings from this project. Chapter 5 draws on questionnaire data in order to present an overview of the group who responded while contextualising the results in the wider findings of the project. Chapter 6 then looks at those who agreed to be interviewed, including the analysis I used to determine their representativeness of the larger group of questionnaire respondents from which they were drawn. Included in this chapter is the criteria I adopted for selecting five of these cases to intensively analyse and focus on in the following chapters. Chapters 7 to 11 then present chronological reconstructions of each of those five focal informants' narratives. Each case begins with their history and reasons for studying abroad, before tracing the events of their sojourn and the year after they returned to Japan. Each chapter concludes with a discussion of the key points from each case. Chapter 12 then presents five additional condensed cases drawn from the remaining interview informants, which provide key support for, and contrasts to the focal cases.

Part III, *discussing the findings,* brings together the results presented in Part II and discusses them more holistically in the context of the informants' year abroad (Chapter 13) and the year after returning (Chapter 14), marking out the broad patterns in the data as well as the individual differences. Chapter 15 concludes the thesis by examining the implications

of the findings and discussing the limitations and opportunities which emerged out of the project, with a particular eye to complex, holistic approaches to study abroad.

1.5. **A brief clarification**

Japan remains a more linguistically diverse nation than common understandings suggest. The establishment and spread of Standard Japanese (*hyōjungo*) as the higher status, normative language variety since the late 1800's (Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith, 2016) means that most sojourners are competent in this variety even while they may also use regional dialects. I come to this project with the understanding that most casual observers of language, including the participants of this project, don't distinguish between these varieties when talking about language and instead just see themselves as users of 'Japanese'. This is also true of English and other languages, which would have been encountered by participants in many local varieties, and *lingua franca* forms. While recognising that individual 'languages' are constructions (Makoni & Pennycook, 2005), for the purposes of this thesis, I refer to languages in the commonly understood way my participants spoke about them, while acknowledging that there is much diversity and blurriness behind these terms.

2 Towards a holistic view of language learning abroad: A review of the literature

This chapter reviews research that has been important in contributing to growing understandings of language learning abroad. Beginning with a brief summary of the early directions of the field, the review then turns to the role of the individual in study abroad research and the increasingly complex and holistic view of the individual. This is followed by a summary of research that has highlighted the role of social connections in language learning abroad. The chapter will then look at how conceptions of space and place have been explored in relation to language learning abroad before examining the importance of looking beyond the perspectives of Anglophone university students. Drawing this together in the final section, I make the case for a holistic approach to examining language learning during study abroad.

2.1. Accounting for the complexity of study abroad environments

Although travelling abroad to study and learn is not a new phenomenon, investigating the relationship a sojourn abroad has to language learning is relatively recent. The modern iteration of research which looks at the connection between study abroad and language learning finds its origins in the emergent field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) during the 1960's and 70's. Carroll's (1967) seminal large-scale study of US undergraduate language majors set the stage for much of the research which would follow as he identified spending time abroad as "one of the most potent variables" (p. 137) for improving language ability. Over the following decades, much of the research on study abroad and language learning sought to identify and measure outcomes in areas such as proficiency, fluency and reading comprehension (Kinginger, 2009). After several decades attempting to quantify the benefits, one of the conclusions seems to be that language learning outcomes are often contradictory and highly variable (Isabelli-García et al., 2018; Kinginger, 2009; Wang, 2010).

During the 1980s and 90s however, there were a limited number of studies which were already pointing to the complexity and variability of study abroad contexts. Schumann's (1980) autoethnographic study of learning Arabic in Tunisia and Persian in Iran for example, highlighted how contextual factors, such as the presence of co-nationals and cultural attitudes towards gender, could limit opportunities to interact in the target language. Although DeKeyser (1986) set out to compare language acquisition processes in "the foreign

language classroom" with those in "the native-speaking environment" (p. 10), the results highlighted the variation in individual outcomes and participants' approaches to learning while abroad. A focus on individual experiences in both Spence-Brown's (1993) study of Japanese high school students in Australia and Siegal's (1995) study of western women in Japan also illuminated the role that participants' and host communities' cultural expectations had on language learning. Emerging as part of what later came to be known as the social turn in SLA research (Block, 2003), these early studies touched on the complex relationships between sojourners, the sociocultural environment and language learning. These relationships have come to define much contemporary study abroad research and undercut views of study abroad as a singular, uniform context.

Several reviews have pointed to underlying assumptions which need to be addressed in order to better account for this variability, including the "undifferentiated view of [study abroad] as a 'context' of language learning" (Isabelli-García et al., 2018, p. 458) and the need for greater recognition of "individual variability" (Coleman, 2013, p. 26) in the way sojourners experience study abroad. Much innovation and progress in study abroad research has come from an orientation towards the "process" of study abroad which accounts for the "multidimentionality of the overseas context" (Wilkinson, 1998b, p. 34). Research over the past two decades has done much to unpack this multidimentionality, including a new wave of research which is taking up Coleman's (2013) call to account for 'whole people and whole lives' in study abroad research (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2017; Dawson, 2019; Iwasaki, 2018; Wolcott, 2013). Study abroad contexts are multiplex, dynamic and evolving. Studying language learning in these contexts must therefore account for how sojourners affect and are affected by this motility and how the experience fits within the broader picture of their lives.

2.2. The individual in study abroad

The shift towards more complex understandings of the individual in study abroad is part of what Benson (2019) has labelled the 'person-centred turn' in Applied Linguistics. Earlier attempts to account for the individual's role in language learning abroad generally focused on identifying discreet factors which affected outcomes, "such as attitude, motivation, or personality" (Kinginger, 2009, p. 31) in what can be seen as the search for study abroad's own version of 'The Good Language Learner' (Naiman, 1996). The 'social turn' and a shift from focussing on 'product' to 'process' has moved thinking away from sojourners "as theoretical bundles of variables" (Ushioda, 2011, p. 12) towards a more nuanced view as

people with histories, identities, imagination, emotions and intentions that extend far beyond the demarcated start and end points of a study abroad program. This view is exemplified in Kinginger's (2004) landmark study of Alice. Appearing not as an isolated learner acquiring linguistic knowledge systematically, Alice is a socially-situated individual whose linguistic identity is inexorably tied to her life story. Through Kinginger's holistic approach, Alice is revealed to us as a whole person, highlighting the interrelatedness of her linguistic development, identity, imagination and investment.

2.2.1. *Japanese identity*

An important and productive vein of study abroad research has used qualitative approaches to make visible the role of social identity in sojourners' experiences. A crucial example this appears in the complimentary studies of Brecht et al. (1995) and Polanyi (1995) on American undergraduates in Russia. Brecht et al. (1995) found clear, gender-based differences in the language gains of participants. The quantitative, outcomes-focused approach used meant that the underlying reasons for the result were left to speculation. Drawing on diaries written by participants in this program, Polanyi (1995) revealed how the women had to learn "to negotiate treacherous waters based on gender-related behaviour" and "how to get out of humiliating social encounters" (p.289) rather than engage in the friendly, academic interactions their male counterparts enjoyed. She argued that these participants' identities as (American) women meant they were subjected to behaviours that impaired their ability to engage in the processes of language learning.

Gender has emerged as one of the most salient identity categories in this regard (Kinginger, 2013) and cases of young American women encountering behaviour they found harassing are well documented (Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Rawlins, 2012; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Trentman, 2015; Twombly, 1995). As Kinginger (2015b) has pointed out though, contrasting accounts elsewhere in the qualitative literature (e.g., Patron, 2007) demonstrate how participants "interpret the performance of gender and of sexuality through their own norms" (p.10), underscoring the importance of continuing to conduct diverse and complex investigations of gendered study abroad experiences.

One body of research that has long been highlighted as an important contrast is the qualitative accounts of Japanese sojourners. There is now a substantial literature (Block, 2006; Durbidge, 2017; Ichimoto, 2004, 2007; Y. Kobayashi, 2007; Matsui, 1995; Piller & Takahashi, 2006; Skarin, 2001; Takahashi, 2012) which demonstrates how Japanese women find study abroad and English language learning in western contexts liberating. Until

recently, however, little had been said on the role of gender in the experiences of Japanese men. Morinaga Williams' (2019) case studies of four Japanese men who studied abroad in Canada, highlights how intersections of gender and ethnicity can affect opportunities for interaction with locals. In the study, all four participants described experiencing their gender as a limiting factor. The participants observed Japanese women being regularly approached and spoken to, often by local males, while they were ignored in the same settings. Morinaga Williams highlights the presence of discourses which ascribe Japanese heterosexual masculinity with notions of unattractiveness and introversion, positioning her participants at the bottom of a "hierarchy of desirability that is directly connected to opportunities to use English" (p. 64). Contrasted with the experiences of Japanese women, it shows the complex ways intersecting social categories can affect language learning in study abroad contexts.

Crossing geographical and sociocultural borders, latent aspects of identity can become salient and contested (Block, 2007), and so academic mobility often has the effect of destabilizing sojourners' cultural and national affiliations. Conventionally, this has been seen an important means of fostering greater intercultural understanding and awareness. However, as the political scientist Deutsch (1953) noted:

> Many emotionally, culturally, and politically sensitive individuals react to a sojourn abroad, i.e. away from their native region or culture, with a far stronger assertion of nationalism and of allegiance to their own language, culture, and people. (p. 185)

Outcomes where participants have reacted to the challenges of study abroad by adopting positions of enhanced national identity and superiority can be found throughout study abroad literature, particularly among Anglophone populations (e.g., Goldoni, 2013; Isabelli-García, 2006; Kinginger, 2008; K. Mitchell, 2015; Polanyi, 1995; Rawlins, 2012; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Twombly, 1995). Research has shown that these outcomes are often grounded in sojourners' own individual negotiation of difference (Kinginger, 2010), and their commitment to "active participation and engagement" in the host community as well as a "genuine investment in learning" (p. 217).

On the other hand, there are numerous cases of sojourners whose engagement and investment has allowed them to successfully grapple with the difference they encountered and emerge with a greater sense of interculturality (e.g., Alfurayh & Burns, 2019; Dolby, 2004; Iwasaki, 2018; Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2004, 2008; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, 2003; Plews, 2015; Wakana, 2018). In many of these studies, interculturality was concomitant with

a greater awareness of how national and ethnic identities were perceived by others. In particular, Anya's (2016) study of African American sojourners in Brazil underscores how linguistic and cultural learning is mediated through identity and how study abroad can emerge as a site where individuals renegotiate their relationship to ethnic and racial identities.

Being recognised as a 'foreigner' has also been identified as salient in study abroad contexts, most prominently by Kinginger (2013, 2015b). The social category of the stranger, an individual who exists within a community and yet is not seen as part of that community, encompasses this positioning and is more broadly applicable. First developed by the sociologist Simmel (1921), Murphy-Lejeune (2002) found it to be a relevant description of many European sojourners' experiences as they were initially "perceived and defined negatively as non-members afflicted by a socialisation deficit" (p. 103). This positioning appears in studies of western sojourners in China (Kinginger et al., 2016), Indonesia (Hassall, 2013) and Japan (H. M. Cook, 2006; Iino, 1996, 2006; Siegal, 1995), Japanese sojourners in Australia (Spence-Brown, 1993), the UK (Ayano, 2006) and US (Wakana, 2018) as well as Chinese students in the UK (Jackson, 2008). As the aforementioned cases demonstrate, positionings can limit opportunities for full participation and socialisation into the practices of the host community with ramifications for their language development. Crucially, the positioning of the stranger speaks to the notion of belonging.

> On arrival, the predominant feeling is frequently one of exclusion: exclusion from the language community, from communication situations, from media and public discourse, from social interactions, and above all exclusion from the feeling of belonging to a group whose cohesion is based on a past in which the newcomers have no part. (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p. 104)

Identity approaches underscore the importance of looking at individual experiences as they occur throughout study abroad. They also reveal the complex ways that identity positionings can affect sojourners' sense of belonging and their ability and desire to invest in the linguistic practices of the host community. The personal stake that sojourners have in their experience and the way it shapes how they present and reflexively understand themselves is better understood when we look beyond the identity of 'learner' and see the broader, more complex and intersecting ways they project themselves and are recognised by others.

2.2.2. *The individual and imagination*

Identity approaches have also underscored the role of imagination in incentivising individuals to study abroad and how they conceptualise the experience. Kinginger's (2004) study of Alice highlights the role that an imagined identity as a French speaker played in her journey, overcoming an itinerant and socioeconomically disadvantaged background and travelling to study in France. Bill's desire to study abroad in Kinginger (2008) was also driven by an imagined future, retiring to the French region of Provence. Wolcott's (2013) analysis of another American, Lola, indicates the role that an unrealised childhood with her absent French father played in her desire to study abroad in France and her understanding of that experience.

The way that study abroad is understood by sojourners can also be shaped by widely held beliefs about its benefits. Called the *study abroad imaginary* by Kubota (2016), she classifies the main threads as "(1) developing language skills, (2) fostering cultural understanding and intercultural competence, (3) enhancing personal growth and identity and (4) increasing career opportunities" (p. 349). These ideological structures (see Ch. 3.3) feed sojourners' imaginations of what the experience may hold, influencing decisions to study abroad as well as expectations in-situ. Kinginger (2008) for example, drew on Gore's (2005) identification of study abroad as a "Grand Tour" to highlight how several of her participants constructed their sojourn to France as a consumeristic activity, with ramifications for their language learning. Takahashi's (2012) study also highlighted how discourses at home led the Japanese women in her study to develop *akogare*[1] for English, western men and *ryūgaku* which motivated them to travel to Australia and shaped their experiences while abroad.

As the accounts above demonstrate, sojourners are often driven by motives that extend beyond language learning and as Wolcott (2013) has argued, these subjective reasons should not be seen as a distraction from "the real business of SLA" (p. 149). Instead, they are a fundamental aspect of the individual's lived reality that can contribute to their desire to invest in the linguistic practices of the host community. Study abroad research therefore needs to account for the individual motives and expectations of sojourners to truly understand the relationship they have with language while abroad.

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[1] A longing, yearning or aspiration towards something

2.2.3. *Individual agency in study abroad*

Consideration of the subjective reasons a sojourner has for studying abroad also invites reflection on the role that individual agency plays in their experiences abroad. An increased focus on the way social ecologies impact the language learning of individuals (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016) has renewed debate about the role of the individual in their own learning. Critics have argued these perspectives "cast learners as passive recipients of social influences" (Han, 2016, p. 737) and void them of agency. Benson (2019) however argues that the methodological preference for case studies in socially-focused Applied Linguistics research has instead highlighted the agency of the individual in the process of their own language learning. Overall the literature presents a complex picture of how individual agency is intertwined with the wider social contexts in shaping the language learning of the academically mobile.

Morita's (2004) study of six Japanese masters-level students during a full academic year in a Canadian university illustrates the ways her participants agentively sought to negotiate, resist and maintain the ways they were positioned in the classroom. One of the participants, Rie, found her competence limited her ability to participate in a particular class and sought to renegotiate the way classes were conducted by emailing her instructor. While her requests were rebuffed, she went on to alter the way she engaged with the material, again exerting her agency in response to the situation she found herself. Jackson (2008) too, in her study of Hong Kong Chinese in England highlighted how participants' agency was shaped by their responses and receptiveness to the immediate environment while abroad, with Nikki in particular, who through the support of her social networks renegotiated her relationship to English. Brown (2014), highlighted how Julie, a 50-year-old American studying Korean in Seoul, found herself constrained by the social conditions of her classroom and how she was positioned by other students. Exerting her agency, Julie was able to renegotiate her status and the conditions of the classroom to create conditions more favourable to her own language learning.

Kinginger (2008) on the other hand, showed how wider social discourses encountered before departing, such as consumerist notions of study abroad, shaped the desires of her participants and therefore the ways in which they exerted their agency, such as Ailis who opted to pursue the touristic over the academic while abroad. Finally, Durbidge (2017) found that Sana, a Japanese high school student who studied abroad in the US, developed a more agentive view of herself, imagining new possible futures after meeting other Japanese women with successful careers outside Japan while abroad. Given that part of what defines

individual agency is "people's ability to make choices" (Duff, 2013, p. 417), individuals need to be able to perceive those choices in order to enact their agency. The discourses and experiences an individual has encountered, and the frames of reference they bring with them, may therefore affect their ability to identify the possibility for alternative actions.

All together, these studies demonstrate that agency is an emergent process, mediated by current social contexts, what individuals desire for themselves and their cultural and social histories. As I see it, sojourners' agency is a function of their lived history and imagination as well as something that emerges moment to moment as a response to the contexts they traverse. Holistic views of the individual must therefore account not only for the wider social context, but also for participants' histories and imaginations in order to effectively account for the relationship between context and agency in language learning abroad.

2.2.4. *Study abroad as part of an individual's life*

Part of the appeal of researching linguistic development in study abroad is the way the physical movement of sojourners into and out of the host environment seems to create a bounded experience ripe for investigation. There is therefore a tendency to view the sojourn in an isolated manner that can obscure the histories and motives of participants (see Ch. 2.2.2) and neglect the longer-term effects a sojourn may have. Research which has covered the post-sojourn period has revealed how the experiences of study abroad resonate in the longer trajectories of participants' lives, the events and people encountered continuing to shape their ongoing relationships (Campbell, 2015), competencies (Alred & Byram, 2006), careers (Yokota et al., 2018) and learning (Lee & Kinginger, 2018). Despite this, the post-sojourn phase remains under-investigated when compared with pre-departure, in-sojourn and immediate outcomes after returning (Plews, 2016).

The totality of the qualitative research makes clear that study abroad is not a self-contained phenomenon. Both the sojourners and the communities who receive them have a history and a habitus and the effects of the time they spend together can continue to resonate well after the sojourn has ended. It may not even be their first or last encounter with each other. Increasing mobility means both sojourners and those they encounter abroad may have previous experiences tied to travel, migration or study abroad and further desires to go abroad. Communications technology (see Ch. 2.3.3) also means that connections can be established and maintained outside the bounds of the sojourn much more readily than in the past. Study abroad may therefore serve as a crystallising, *critical experience* (Benson et al., 2013) in the ongoing trajectory of an individual and their relationship with language; a

relationship that can begin before and extend well beyond an individual sojourn. Expanding the lens of investigation to account for the history and longer-term trajectory of sojourners as well as the complexity and diversity of the contexts from which they leave and return to can contribute to a more holistic and complete understanding of what study abroad means to individuals in particular, and language learning in general.

2.2.5. *A holistic view of the individual*

This section has presented an emerging view of sojourners as socially-situated individuals whose complex identities and personal desires are inevitably tied to their experience of language while abroad. Acknowledging sojourners' subjectivity also means acknowledging that language may not be their primary focus, even as it remains crucial to their unfolding participation or isolation in the host community. The sojourn is shaped by the way sojourners are received by the host community and their own ability to negotiate those positionings, with consequences for their language learning and sense of self. Moreover, study abroad needs to be seen not as an isolated experience, but as part of an individual's life and language learning, beginning prior to and extending beyond time spent abroad.

2.3. **Social contexts and language learning abroad**

2.3.1. *Social networks and language learning*

One of the more consistent findings of study abroad research has been the interrelation of social connection in the host community and language learning. The importance of looking at social networks in study abroad was highlighted in early work by Kurata (2004) and Isabelli-Garcia (2006). In her study of undergraduate Australian users of Japanese, Kurata (2004) found that by developing multiplex relations with locals and participating in different communities while abroad, participants were exposed to a greater variety of interactional opportunities which facilitated language learning. Isabelli-Garcia (2006), in her study of American undergraduates in Argentina, also highlighted the role of multiplex relations with locals in enriching interactional opportunities. Furthermore, Isabelli-Garcia illustrated the association between the range of sojourners' social networks and their investment in the linguistic practices of the host community. More recent studies have continued to affirm the importance of locals in sojourners' social networks for their linguistic development (e.g., Dewey et al., 2013; R. Mitchell et al., 2017; Shiri, 2015).

Obtaining membership of local networks often presents a hurdle, since limited knowledge of local linguistic and cultural practices can limit sojourners ability to build social connections

(Kurata, 2007). Coleman (2015) advanced the view that sojourners initially socialise with co-nationals, before adding other non-locals and finally locals to their social networks. The literature in general tends to support this, as numerous studies have reported on the challenges of developing local social networks (Dewey et al., 2013; Goldoni, 2013; Jackson, 2008; Wilkinson, 1998b), while co-nationals (Ayano, 2006; Mikal et al., 2015; Sauer & Ellis, 2019; Tanaka, 2007; Twombly, 1995) or other international students (Coleman, 2015; R. Mitchell et al., 2017) are often more accessible sources of social connection.

In their study of American undergraduates travelling to Morocco and Jordan, Dewey, et al. (2013) showed that the intensity of individual relationships with locals was a key factor in the sojourners' linguistic development. Importantly, Dewey et al. also found that English facilitated the sojourners' access to Arab-speaking networks and greater opportunities to use Arabic. Conversely, an investigation of a study abroad program in Japan by Hasegawa (2019) showed English use by international students both fostered closer connections with other 'outsiders' and limited connections with local Japanese students. These studies demonstrate the dynamic ways multilingual settings can affect opportunities for interaction and language learning. Importantly, Hasegawa highlights the agency of both sojourners and locals in the formation and maintenance of social networks while noting that opportunities for social interaction arise from those same networks. While research has been productive in revealing the holistic effects of social networks on language learning, there remains a need to look qualitatively at how they form and develop during time abroad (Dewey et al., 2013; R. Mitchell et al., 2017; Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015).

One important function of social networks is that they are vital sources of support, particularly in times of personal difficulty (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Since sojourners often arrive in unfamiliar settings with very limited networks, the presence of co-nationals can be critical to their mental wellbeing. Mikal and Grace (2012) in their study of internet use by American undergraduates abroad found that accessing networks from home online alleviated stress during the initial adjustment period. Zappa-Hollman and Duff (2015) also found that locally-based co-national peer networks were important in negotiating challenging aspects of Mexican students' academic experience at a Canadian university. However, as Mikal, Yang, and Lewis (2015) found in a study of Chinese students studying abroad in the US, a reliance on co-nationals for support led to a loss of interest in engaging with locals. Accordingly, the presence of co-nationals, either online or in the host

community, can be a vital source of support but can also lessen the need or desire to engage with locals.

Conversely, the attitude of the host community towards the sojourner may also determine who they have the opportunity to build connections with. As the Japanese students attending a British university in Ayano's (2006) study reported, contact with local peers was often limited to those who sought to practice their Japanese and interactions felt transactional. Albert's encounters with casual racism in Spain, reported by Goldoni (2017), even as he interacted with locals, served to alienate him and reduce his desire to further invest in the practices of the host community.

While sojourners' investment in the linguistic practices of the host community may be intrinsically linked to the social networks they form while abroad, they are a function of both individual and the contexts they find themselves. Given sojourners limited local knowledge, opportunities to develop social connections are often tied to those motivated to interact with them, which may be limited to other co-nationals or non-locals in a similar circumstance. This highlights the importance of settings that provide sojourners with opportunities to interact with locals on terms that may be less transactional and more amicable to forming meaningful connections.

2.3.2. *The social setting of the homestay*

The homestay is one of the most studied social contexts of study abroad (Kinginger, 2009). As a place where frequent, recurring opportunities to interact in local languages are often available, it can be highly conducive to forming meaningful connections with members of the host community. Despite this, the social complexities of the homestay reflect those found throughout study abroad more generally, meaning participant experiences can be highly variable.

This variability was made clear in Kinginger's (2008) investigation of Americans studying abroad in France, which underscored how homestay environments could enrich or impoverish the language learning experience. Beatrice for example, initially had a positive relationship with her host family, particularly her host sisters, providing ample opportunities for interaction in French. Over time though, it was punctuated by periods of political disagreement and Beatrice became upset by, and resistant to, being positioned as a deficit French user by her host sisters. In Liza's case, she had a positive relationship with her host mother, but found opportunities for interaction in French curtailed when another American student with more limited French competence began living in the same home. Bill was the

centre of his host family's attention and through them had access to a variety of social and interactional opportunities and improving his French competence. Ailis on the other hand, found herself functioning as a boarder in her host mother's home and with few opportunities for learning and interaction.

Similar themes appear in Tanaka's (2007) examination of Japanese sojourners attending private English schools in New Zealand. Some participants described how support and opportunities for interaction offered by their hosts created a greater desire to invest in language learning. Many students however found the homestay did not offer the opportunities for interaction they had believed it would, with Tanaka identifying both participant and host-related factors contributing to this. On the participant side, limited initial language proficiency restricted their ability to comprehend and engage with their hosts. This was compounded by a reluctance to initiate interaction and a reluctance to interrupt or impose upon the flow of family life. Several participants also reported that they were treated more like boarders and, like Ailis in Kinginger (2008), interactions were limited to greetings and brief exchanges during meals. Research has suggested that the relationships between hosts and sojourners may be more likely to take on traditional parent-child roles when sojourners are at high school age, and this will be addressed in Chapter 2.5.2.

One important point these studies highlight is the limited power that sojourners feel they have to shape the social environment of their homestay, arriving as strangers in a community which already functions around predefined norms and schedules. In many senses, the degree to which the sojourner is accommodated and included is determined by the family. Note, I am not suggesting that the sojourners themselves have no agency or responsibility in the relationship. As Kinginger and Lee (2019) have highlighted, the homestay can be a key site of struggle for power and belonging, as well as "an ongoing, joint endeavour of finding a comfortable footing between hierarchy and closeness." (p.40). What the research does suggest though is that the balance of power very much resides with the host family and it is the sojourner who must often choose when to resist and when to conform.

As some of the above cases show, if the host family is actively interested and engaged in supporting the sojourner and the sojourner is receptive to learning from and investing in the practices of the host family, then opportunities for linguistic development may reveal themselves. Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart's (2002) study of host families in Spain and Mexico revealed that although there were often tensions between the host families and sojourners, the *señoras* were key in providing ongoing linguistic, cultural and psychological

support. The Spanish host families in Shively (2015) often teased the participants about their language use including misunderstandings violations of sociopragmatic norms. While this actively positioned the participants as novices, it also represented engagement with the sojourners' linguistic development.

Overall, current research on the homestay underlines its importance as a setting for interaction, linguistic development and affective support. This is contingent on a reciprocal willingness to engage and, particularly in the sojourners case, being amenable to the norms and linguistic practices of the host family.

2.3.3. *Digital communications technology and language learning and use*

The now ubiquitous presence of mobile communications technology makes it a vital aspect of the social contexts of study abroad. According to a report by the Japanese Government, 94.8% of Japanese high school students owned or used a smartphone in 2016, up from 3.8% in 2010, while they spent an average of 207.3 min per day online (Cabinet Office, 2017). There is now an urgent need to account for this use during study abroad, since much of the holistic qualitative study abroad research (Benson et al., 2013; Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2008; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Patron, 2007) was conducted before the advent of the smartphone, or addresses the use of technology only briefly (Hasegawa, 2019; R. Mitchell et al., 2017).

Conventionally, technology has been seen as being in tension with the immersive aims of study abroad (Durbidge, 2019). Earlier studies tended to emphasise the role of technology in disrupting participant engagement with the host community (e.g., Coleman & Chafer, 2010; Engle & Engle, 2012; Kinginger, 2010). However, as technology has become both more versatile and entrenched into the daily practice of so many people, its use in study abroad needs to be viewed holistically within the ecology of sojourners' experiences.

A body of work is emerging which looks at sojourners' technology use and the relationship with language use and learning. An innovative examination of social media use by Back (2013) revealed how respondents used Facebook to engage with the L2, with one respondent doing more than 50% of her communication in L2 while abroad. Seibert Hanson and Dracos (2016) measured technology use in both L1 and L2 in a 6-12 week program and found that respondents who reported positive outcomes had also used technology in L2 at a comparable rate to L1. Perhaps the best attempt so far to quantify the role of technology in language learning abroad is an investigation by Martínez-Arbelaiz, Areizaga, and Camps (2017). They illustrate how language use connected with the platform used, with L1 use concentrated on

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technologies such as Skype, while L2 use increased in text and media-based communication technologies such as WhatsApp and Facebook. The varieties of language used may therefore vary depending on the mode of online communication and the platform used, both as a function of the user's audience on each platform and the type of linguistic competencies they possess. Crucially, asynchronous platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook allow users time to decode messages and plan responses not available in VoIP. The multimodal nature of these platforms also means they are less dependent upon linguistic competencies for meaning making.

Technology is now part of the fabric of human social life. Its ubiquity means that the communities sojourners travel to may be "as digitally engaged as the students themselves" (Godwin-Jones, 2016, p. 2). Engagement with and participation in the host community often includes an online dimension. Mobile communications technology also provides affordances for engaging with and learning language, such as dictionaries, memorisation apps and media which are more accessible to sojourners while abroad. How, and to what extent this affects participant experiences and language learning needs to be explored to give us a better understanding of study abroad as it currently stands.

2.4. **Space and place as a feature of study abroad contexts**

A part of study abroad contexts that has received limited research attention is the impact that the material and geographical environment has on sojourners' experiences of study abroad. The recent release of several monographs and edited volumes emphasising the social and linguistic construction of space (Chik et al., 2018; Murray & Lamb, 2017; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015) represents a growing realisation of its importance to language learning and use. Links between the social and the physical environment are inevitable since "the organisation, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience." (Soja, 1989, p. 80). It is through language and interaction that space is transformed into place (Tuan, 1991) and that place becomes interwoven with emotion (White & Bown, 2017). The social construction of place is therefore a critical part of context and has implications for the learning and development trajectories of individuals. While still nascent, the relevance of place to study abroad has emerged as a theme in a limited number of publications (Carter, 2017; Hasegawa, 2019; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; White & Bown, 2017). This research shares an affinity with other work on informal language learning which has emphasised how the

affordances for learning an individual perceives is inherently tied to their relationship to place (Menezes, 2011).

Murphy-Lejeune's (2002) ethnographic exploration of Erasmus students' mobility experiences holds perhaps the most accomplished exploration of the role of space and place in study abroad. In her book, she argues that the first step in the process of coming to belong to a community is the adaptation to the physical surroundings of a sojourner's new location. She also highlights how geographical territory induces certain human relationships. The different ways people experience space and the types of human connection they prefer mean that certain geographical settings may suit different sojourners and affect the way they interact with others. Murphy-Lejeune also demonstrates how the social fabric of a place is sustained by the spacial fabric and therefore if we wish to fully understand the social contexts that sojourners enter, we must note the way this is related to the spaces they find themselves.

Hasegawa's (2019) study of sojourners at Japanese universities is also a vital contribution in this area. He explored how the location of their accommodation and its distance to the host institution affected the formation of their social networks. Significantly he found in one program that "The physical settings of the program, such as the location of the classroom, building, the people flow of the campus, the lounge spaces, and so forth…are all contributing to the confinement and compartment of the people to be included in and excluded from the [participant's] network" (p. 62). Kinginger (2008) also highlighted the role of geographic location in the case of Ailis, who was prevented in participating in the extracurricular activities of her peers by the need to get the last bus to her homestay early each evening.

When crossing borders, sojourners arrive without geographical frames of reference or knowledge of the socially-constructed places that exist within their new environment. From a materialist perspective, the geography and physical affordances of a space impact the opportunities for interaction sojourners can perceive and access. The availability of transportation, internet connectivity and community space all have implications for a sojourner's ability to build diverse social networks in the host community. Furthermore, social, cultural and institutional factors may limit participants' access to these affordances based on their age and gender, with implications for adolescent sojourners. While participants in study abroad are often viewed as being 'mobile', emphasising their ability to move across transnational spaces, the material realities of more localised spaces may have the opposite effect. Study abroad research has yet to fully explore the relationship between

space and language learning and the move towards holistic perspectives offers an opportunity to realise this.

2.5. **Looking beyond Anglophone undergraduates abroad**

One of the limitations of study abroad research stressed by a number of researchers over the years (e.g., Block, 2007; Coleman, 2013; Durbidge, 2017; Kinginger, 2013; Yang, 2016), has been an ongoing focus on largely Anglophone and almost exclusively university-aged populations. As discussed in Chapter 2.2.1, studies that account for intersections of social categories underrepresented in the literature can uncover new insights into how context affects language learning abroad. The following sections examine dimensions of the study abroad context that can help broaden our understanding; the role of English as *a lingua franca* and the way Japanese sojourners encounter it, as well as the underrepresented high school sojourner.

2.5.1. *English as a lingua franca and the Japanese sojourner*

The symbolic and communicative value of English is altering the opportunities that sojourners have for language learning in study abroad contexts. Several decades ago, Schumann (1980) noting an increase in the prevalence of English in Tehran, remarked on the difficulties she had negotiating the use of Farsi, even in situations where it would have enabled more efficient communication. As the prevalence of English has grown over the following decades, its presence in linguistic ecologies the world over now means it is a feature of many study abroad contexts. While this poses issues for proficient English users wishing to use other local languages (e.g., R. Mitchell et al., 2017; Mori & Sanuth, 2018), it also creates new opportunities for those with non-English speaking backgrounds. Since many sojourners now encounter English alongside local systems of communication, these environments become potential sites of English language learning (Kalocsai, 2013; Llanes et al., 2016). It also means that these sojourners' often need to negotiate multiple language varieties in a given social context, with consequences for their investment in language learning and social networks.

The sojourner's relationship to English is therefore an increasingly significant factor to consider across the diverse contexts of study abroad. The case of Japanese populations is particularly interesting given the complex relationship with English that is engendered through the Japanese education system and society more broadly. Compulsory foreign language education policy in Japan is agnostic about which languages should be taught.

Despite this, English is the predominant form of foreign language instruction. This is observable in the results from the National Center for University Entrance Examinations (2019), with 99.79% of high school students electing to take the foreign language component of their university entrance exams in English in 2019.

Despite this and decades of compulsory second language education primarily focused on English, most Japanese students graduate tertiary education with very limited to no communicative competence in a language other than Japanese (Y. Kobayashi, 2018). In a large scale survey of over 6,000 junior and senior high school students in Japan conducted by the educational corporation Benesse (2014), 46.4% of high school students did not view themselves using English in the future. In the same survey over 80% of high school respondents wanted to achieve high scores on English tests, thought it would help them get into a better university or be recruited, and associated speaking English with being 'cool'. These results highlight the role that English competence can play in the imagination of many Japanese students; having high symbolic and material value while simultaneously being personally unobtainable.

The tension between Japanese sojourners' communicative abilities and the perceived value of English competence often manifests in study abroad contexts. Nogami's (2013) study of Japanese users of English with international experience, including study abroad, highlighted the prevalence of *native-speakerism* in their understandings of linguistic competence. This meant that the participants often encountered differences in their interlocutor's English competence as a power imbalance that "induced negative emotions such as anxiety, insecurity, lack of confidence, and inferiority" (p. 97). The prevalence of language-related anxiety among Japanese undergraduate sojourners was observed by Tajima and Cookson (2011) before and during homestays in Canada. Interviews revealed that issues such as shyness, lack of confidence, low proficiency and a fear of making mistakes were contributing to this and consequently limited language use and engagement in the homestay.

One point of interest when considering the relationship of Japanese sojourners to English appears in Durbidge's (2017) study of the short-term study abroad experiences of Japanese high school students in the UK and US. In the study, almost all participants ascribed difficulties communicating to a Japanese identity. This raises a question; Are those who communicate well in English perceived as less Japanese? The experience of Wakana (2018) seems to suggest this is a possibility. In the introduction to her doctoral dissertation she relates an incident where, due to her proficiency in English, she felt treated as an outsider by

other Japanese in the UK explaining, "English proficiency itself could not be a barrier in communicating for us, because we could easily speak in Japanese" (p. xiii).

Taken together, these findings suggest that English communication during study abroad is a highly fraught experience for Japanese sojourners, involving issues of power, identity and competence that are experienced as anxiety, apprehension and insecurity. Becoming more proficient may incidentally also generate tension due to a link with cultural identity. These factors mean that Japanese sojourners can experience the environments of study abroad very differently to those who come from Anglophone backgrounds. The reality is that many of the settings sojourners travel to are multilingual and English is now often part of this language ecology. It is therefore imperative that the experiences of non-English background speakers be included in conversations of study abroad as they diverge from those in the dominant Anglophone population.

2.5.2. Adolescents: An underrepresented study abroad population

As a researched phenomenon, study abroad has from the outset, largely been about the experiences of those in tertiary education. While never explicitly positioned as such, recent surveys of study abroad literature (Isabelli-García et al., 2018; Marijuan & Sanz, 2018) underscore the dominance of undergraduate perspectives. While this reflects the numbers of undergraduates travelling abroad and the availability of this population for research, it leaves a deficit in our understanding of the role that age and life stage may play.

Current conceptions of language learning abroad are therefore overwhelmingly, and perhaps implicitly, informed by the experiences of those in the first few years of higher education. Circumstances that define the social lives of undergraduate students not found in other populations, such as those in secondary education or post-doctoral programs, are potentially going unacknowledged. With calls to develop more a multifaceted, understanding of individuals studying abroad (Coleman, 2013) there is a need to also account for the sociological, legal and psychological differences that may impact upon learning and development at different life stages.

Research on the experiences of high school-aged sojourners has highlighted a number of factors that differentiate their experiences from those of undergraduates. One of these is the context of high school itself, which often places the sojourner in a more structured, close-knit environment than what is often experienced in higher education, often without other co-nationals. Questions of identity are often more salient during the years of adolescence and of

critical significance to teenagers' psychosocial development (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Being embedded in a high school classroom brings with it both opportunities and risks as adolescent sojourners' social identity becomes subject to existing social and power structures, within a community of individuals grappling with similar questions of identity. Unfamiliar environments may limit sojourners' desire to take risks, including engaging in interactions, as they lack an understanding of the social contours of the environment and where they stand in relation to others.

As the experiences described in Spenader's (2011) account of American adolescents at a Swedish high school demonstrate, sojourners' ability to negotiate these environments can have significant consequences for their language learning and sense of belonging. One participant, Faith, was able to use her initial proficiency in Swedish to participate in the social and academic life of her classmates from early on. The case of Elsa also highlights the importance of assertiveness and intentionality in negotiating opportunities to participate in activities with her classmates. On the other hand, Max's experience demonstrates how individual and contextual factors can lead to alienation in the high school environment. Max's account is also notable for his statement that locals' proficiency in English precluded his need to learn Swedish and the way that he felt more connected to the immigrants at his school as fellow outsiders. In Churchill's (2006) study of Japanese high school students on three-week exchange programs in four host schools in the US, he illustrated how the institutional reception of the students affected the ways they were initially positioned in the classes they entered; from being seen as regular members of the school to being considered an interruption to normal teaching practices. When students were positioned by teachers as legitimate participants within the classroom, they were better able to build networks with peers outside of those spaces. On the other hand, practices which marginalised or removed the students from the classroom disrupted their ability to form peer networks with local students. Together, the studies highlight how institutional factors and individuals' negotiation of interactions with peers contribute to the variability of how high school contexts are experienced.

As Chapter 2.3.2 underscored, the host family can be a crucial site for interaction with local members of the host community. This appears to be of particular significance for adolescent sojourners, as the relationship adolescents have with their host family has been shown to contribute to their ability to form relationships outside of the home. In a study by Yashima et al. (2004) of 57 Japanese high school students on year-long sojourns to the US, participants who had positive, communicative relationships with their host family also appeared to

experience less difficulties making friends outside of the host family. Grieve's (2015) investigation of German adolescents in Australia also highlighted a link between the relationships participants formed at school and their experience in the home settings. A key finding of her study was that "[w]ithout a positive relationship with the host family, the abilities of the student to socialize with other adolescents were restricted" (p. 654). Other studies of Japanese high school students' study abroad experiences in the US have highlighted the importance of the host family in providing social support (Yashima & Tanaka, 2001) and creating opportunities for interaction (Iwami, 2001). The support and sense of belonging may be crucial to the development of competencies needed to navigate the more fraught environments of high school. Nevertheless, these results point towards the crucial role homestays may play in the ability of adolescent sojourners to establish connections with their peers elsewhere.

Another important aspect of adolescent homestays is that they can be qualitatively different experiences to those of undergraduates. In studies of those in higher education, participants have reported that homestays limit their independence (Juveland, 2011; R. Mitchell et al., 2017; Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004), or that the arrangement was more transactional than personal (Kinginger, 2008; Tanaka, 2007; Wilkinson, 1998a). Kinginger's (2015a) review of high school study abroad research indicates that adolescents may be more accepting of limitations placed on them by host families while also being more likely to be accepted as members of that family. The retrospective reflections of participants who studied abroad in China as high school students documented by Tan and Kinginger (2013) also indicate a greater willingness to accommodate new cultural experiences in adolescents.

The receptiveness of high school-aged sojourners to new experiences is also a point raised by Duerden et al. (2018) in their examination of the experiences of 15-17 year old Americans during a three-week program in Cambodia. They found that among adolescent participants, "the familial and parental frameworks of home life extended into the lens with which they interpreted much of their study abroad experience" (p. 26). Experiences in the host family were also significant in influencing the way some high school students interpreted their own place in Japanese society after returning in Durbidge's (2017) study, with Mari in particular re-evaluating the possibilities for her life as young woman.

What all of this suggests is that the defining social structure of adolescents' lives tends to be that of the family. Unlike many of their older peers, adolescents lack the legal and financial independence to renegotiate their living arrangements if problems arise. On the other hand,

host parents acting *in loco parentis* may open the door to relationships, opportunities and support not found in other arrangements. At a stage of life when questions of identity are so prominent, host family settings may act as a stable environment, providing support essential for building connections elsewhere.

2.6. **Approaching study abroad holistically**

While there still exists a tendency to view study abroad as a singular 'immersive' context (e.g., Gass, 2017), there has also been a push to "recognize the heterogeneity of the study abroad environment" (Coleman, 2013, p. 26). This need has become particularly acute given the recent "explosion of new SA programs that differ considerably in terms of length, goals, and features" (Marijuan & Sanz, 2018, p. 2).

In order to understand an individual's (lack of) language learning, a broader view of what is going on during study abroad is needed. By acknowledging the multitude of conflicting individual and ecological factors that contribute to the experience and placing greater emphasis upon how the individuals involved are impacted, a deeper, more human picture of study abroad is revealed. Coleman (2013) succinctly describes the current mood:

> As study abroad research moves from a simplistic and inadequate model of causality and controllable (in)dependent variables – which has unsurprisingly produced contradictory findings – to a recognition that each variable interacts with every other variable, both singly and in combination, to create individual trajectories in which both person and context are in constant interaction and flux, we need to focus on individuals and their trajectories, identifying patterns but not adopting a determinist perspective. (p. 29)

In SLA generally, there is an understanding now that investigating the learning of additional languages also requires an understanding of "the linguistic and nonlinguistic forces that create and shape both the processes and the outcomes" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 19). Furthermore, that learning needs to be viewed within the context of a "language learning career" (Benson, 2011) rather than an isolated incident in an individual's life.

As the current review has shown, language learning abroad is a diverse, highly complex and multifaceted phenomenon. It is influenced not only by the attributes of the individual themselves, but their personal biography and imagination, as well as the nature of communities they enter, the relationships they form and the environments they inhabit socially, geographically and digitally. Ushioda's (2009) oft-quoted passage on the person-in-context relational view of motivation is also relevant here and bears repeating.

> I mean a focus on real persons, rather than on learners as theoretical abstractions; a focus on the agency of the individual person as a thinking, feeling human being, with an identity, a personality, a unique history and background, a person with goals, motives and intentions; a focus on the interaction between this self-reflective intentional agent, and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves, and is inherently part of. (p. 220)

It is therefore critical that if we wish to understand the role that academic mobility plays in language learning, and conversely the role that language learning plays in the experience of mobility, then we must adopt a framework that accounts for the interactions, agency and developmental trajectories of individuals over time and through the physical and social spaces abroad. In order to meet this challenge, study abroad contexts need to be viewed as dynamic ecologies with the complexity and interrelatedness made the topic of investigation. Over the following chapter, I lay out the theoretical approach I have adopted in order to do this.

3 A socio-ecological framework for investigating sojourners' language learning and development

3.1. Introduction

As Chapter 2.6 illustrated, there is now a need to approach the processes of linguistic development in study abroad from a holistic perspective; one that recognises and makes the complexity and interrelatedness of individuals and their environments part of the investigation. I believe that the ecological view of language learning as described by van Lier (2008) provides a coherent and humanistic metaphor upon which to build this holistic framework. This project therefore adopts an ecological view of language learning, seeing individuals as situated within larger social, symbolic and material systems.

The framework presented here integrates a number of complimentary concepts and models to inform the project design and analysis and seeks to account for the following:

1. Learning is an agentive "process of becoming part of a greater whole" (Sfard, 1998, p. 6), which in the case of study abroad often, but not always, means the host community. By investing in and appropriating the semiotic practices of a community, an individual obtains the means for membership and participation.

2. Context is complex, multilayered, multimodal, and can be conceived at multiple timescales. While the complexity of the social aspects of context has been well documented, this project also recognises that the material aspects of context can also play a role.

3. This project is occurring at a specific point in time, where rapid developments in communications technology, greater human movement and the spread of English all contribute to how mobility and language learning are experienced and understood.

In attempting to understand how sojourners' developmental trajectories evolve over time and across borders, I have assembled a theoretical and conceptual framework that integrates current understandings of language learning with an ecological model of human development. These two pillars are supported by several key concepts that underpin the theoretical stance of this project.

3.2. **The bioecological model of human development**

The *bioecological model of human development*, pioneered by Bronfenbrenner (1995, 1999) and refined by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) provides a robust framework for examining the developmental trajectories of individuals while accounting for the effects of their environment. It consists of four dynamically interrelated components, *process, person, context* and *time* that inform the methodological design of this project.

Central to the model is the process through which human development takes place. Using the Vygotskian-influenced notion of *proximal process*, Bronfenbrenner (1995) sees development occurring when an individual engages in regular, reoccurring and successively more complex interactions with people, objects and symbols they encounter. The dialogic and reciprocal nature of developmentally effective processes is emphasised by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006), particularly, but not limited to, those which occur through interpersonal interaction. Conceptually, the notion of proximal processes as the means of development aligns with the shift in study abroad research towards more process-focused design.

In the model, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) adopt a biopsychological conception of *person*. While such an approach can be criticised for its depersonalisation of people into a series of subpersonal parts (see Ushioda, 2009, p. 216), the underlying view is that the form, power, content and direction of developmental process are partially a function of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The bioecological model takes into account the role that contexts play in promoting or impeding interaction, aligning with Bandura's (2001) view that individuals "are agents of experiences rather than simply undergoers of experiences" (p. 4). The individual initiates, sustains, prevents or impedes proximal processes from taking place, playing an active role in the direction of their own development.

The most well-developed and oft-used component of Bronfenbrenner's (1999) bioecological model is the nested ecosystems metaphor for *context*. While their conceptualisation has undergone multiple revisions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and adaptions (see Ch. 3.4) the overriding idea is that the environments in which development occurs are conceptualised as having multiple scales. Individual development occurs at the level of individual interaction but is also influenced by the variegated social structures that surround it, including the communities, institutions and cultural zeitgeists of the time.

Person, process and context are interrelated parts of the whole system and are all subject to change over *time*, which also occurs at multiple scales. Within this project, developmental processes are viewed at the level of individual interactions to determine such things as the content, direction and form that they are taking. At a longer time scale, the regularity and effect of these processes and the extent to which they are maintained, discontinued and evolve are noted. At a further remove, the project accounts for the influence of wider societal changes and the effect this has on individuals' development trajectories. Furthermore, this project understands the notion of development as both dynamic and diachronic, following Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (2006) assertion that the term does not imply "change for the better or of continuity in the characteristics of the same person over time" (p. 796).

In order to achieve a holistic understanding of what is taking place the research design takes all four components into consideration. As alluded to above, adopting the *process-person-context-time* (PPCT) model as a framework is well suited to constructing the type of research needed on study abroad. It allows for a focus on process and for holistic, dynamically interrelated conceptions of individual and environments across time.

3.3. The Douglas Fir Group's Transdisciplinary Framework

While the PPCT framework guides this project's methodological design and analysis, it conceptualises development broadly. This project is primarily (although not exclusively) concerned with the types of development associated with language. *The Douglas Fir Group's transdisciplinary framework for SLA in a multilingual world* (hereafter referred to as the DFG Framework) is built upon many of the understandings that have emerged from socioculturally-informed research on language learning and teaching over the past few decades. It therefore provides a solid foundation for this project's understanding of language learning and development.

The DFG framework acknowledges that our world is predominately a multilingual one and that views of language learning should account for this. Critically too, it recognises that "today's multilingualism is enmeshed in globalization, technologization, and mobility" (p. 19), and that these forces of modernity have pronounced effects on how multilingualism and language learning are perceived and experienced. Primary among these is the way that advancement in technology has transformed the scope and means of communication, emphasising the multimodality of language learning and use. Conceptually, too, it recognises

that learning is conjointly a cognitive, social and emotional process, situated in the time and space in which it occurs.
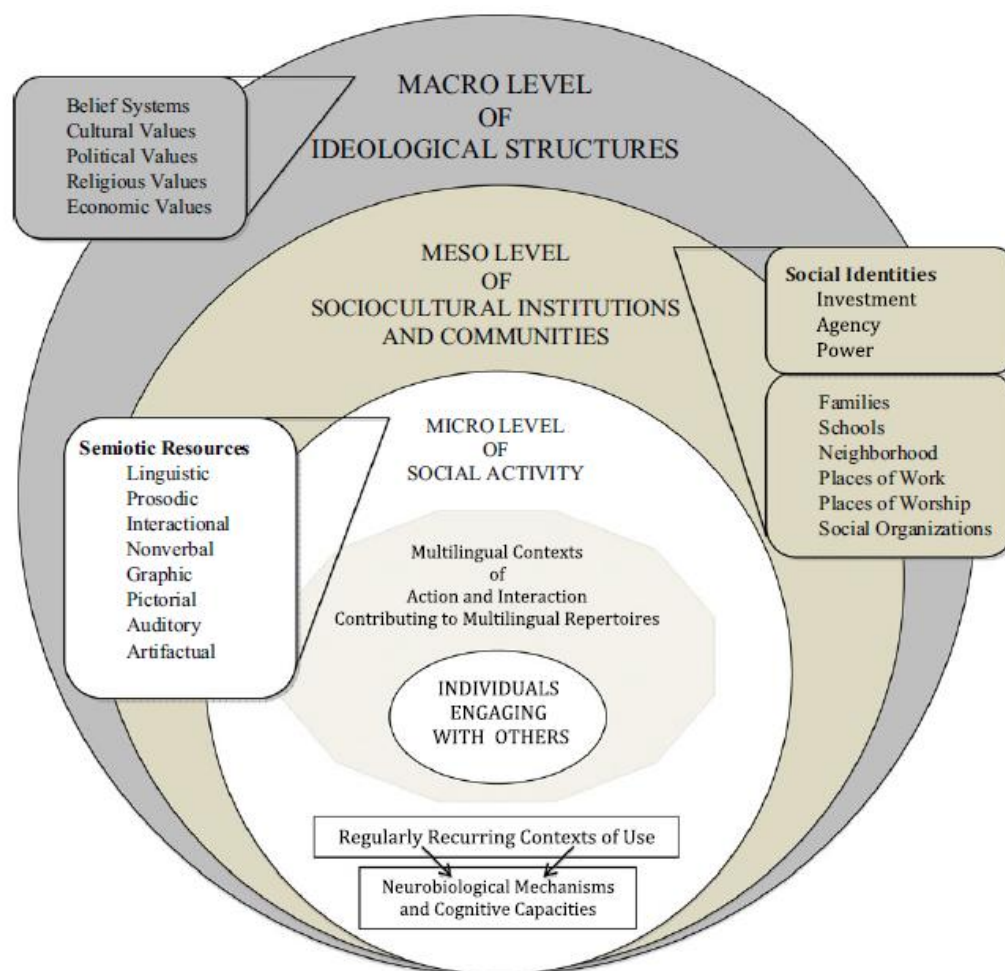
Figure 1. The multifaceted nature of language learning and teaching. Reprinted from "A Transdisciplinary Framework for SLA in a Multilingual World", by The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, *The Modern Language Journal*, *100*(S1), p. 25. Copyright [2020] by John Wiley and Sons. Reprinted with permission.

The framework identifies several constructs as crucial to pursuing an understanding of developmental processes, of which community, identity and agency are relevant within this project and align well with the bioecological model. Furthermore, the DFG framework draws direct inspiration from Bronfenbrenner's work, using the nested ecosystems model as the basis for their diagrammatic representation shown in Figure 1. The DFG framework and PPCT framework are therefore complementary parts of this project's framework, together

conceptualising the processes of language learning and development that participants experience in the transnational settings of study abroad.

The DFG framework identifies ten themes crucial to understanding language learning and development, of which five hold direct relevance for this project. These five are discussed below.

Theme 1: Language Competencies Are Complex, Dynamic, and Holistic

This theme, complemented by V. Cook's (2016) notion of *multi-competence* (see Ch. 3.5), acknowledges that the developmental trajectories of individuals are "mediated by the opportunities and struggles of their multilingual lifeworlds" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 26). This means that the competencies which each individual develops are predicated upon the environments they inhabit, emphasising the interrelatedness of context and learning. I find that this aligns with Dufva's (2012) view that "Instead of learning a language in its (supposed) entirety, each learner develops individual competencies that vary across purposes, modalities, and situation and that are, by definition, always partial" (p. 5).

Furthermore, this theme highlights how varying semiotic resources are both appropriated and deployed in response to the situations individuals find themselves, both communicatively and for the "purposes of identity performance, play, and styling" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 26). This theme is of particular relevance to those crossing borders as they encounter new ways of creating meaning and must negotiate which of these will allow them to enact their needs and desires.

Theme 2: Language Learning is Semiotic Learning

When a sojourner learns language while abroad, they are not only learning the lexis and syntax of a system of communication, they are also learning holistic ways of 'being'. The ecological approach of this project recognises that language is "part of larger meaning-making resources that include the body, cultural historical artifacts, the physical surroundings in short, all the affordances that the physical, social, and symbolic worlds have to offer" (van Lier, 2008, p. 599). Developing competence in the linguistic practices of a community may also require sojourners to learn new or different ways of turn-taking, gestures and other non-verbal or paralinguistic ways of expressing themselves. This also applies to the semiotically-rich affordances of online platforms, including images, video and emoji, that sojourners may also use to interact with those in the host community or elsewhere. Meaning-making is multimodal (Kress, 2009). While this project does not

attempt to account for the full spectrum of what is learned abroad, it recognises that when interaction occurs, sojourners are developing and deploying semiotic repertoires of which their language competencies are part.

Theme 3: Language Learning Is Situated and Attentionally and Socially Gated

Community and social relations are central to the language learning needs of many individuals, particularly those on study abroad who must re-establish themselves in the unfamiliar linguistic and cultural settings of the host community. It is in these localised settings that language learning can occur and the form it takes is a function of that setting and the positioning of individuals. Echoing the defining characteristics of the *proximal process*, the DFG framework (2016) sees this learning as occurring "through L2 learners' repeated experiences in regularly occurring and recurring contexts of use, often characterized by interpersonal (oral, signed, or written) interaction with other social actors" (p. 27). These recurring contexts of use can exist anywhere that interaction can occur and, in the contexts of study abroad include host families, classrooms, extra-curricular activities, informal social encounters as well as online spaces. It is therefore necessary to pay attention to how regular, repeated opportunities for learning are identified and how these opportunities are shaped by the contexts in which they occur.

Theme 7: Language Learning Is Identity Work

The connection between language learning and identity has been extensively explored in the study abroad literature (See Ch. 2.2.1), as questions of identity are commonly brought to the fore when entering new social environments. More thoroughly discussed below in Chapter 3.8, this theme highlights the way that engaging with language learning also entails identity work. In addition, the desire of the individual to join the communities they encounter is instrumental in determining the types of linguistic practices they seek to invest in and the language learning affordances they perceive and engage with.

Theme 8: Agency and Transformative Power Are Means and Goals for Language Learning

Interwoven with the idea of accessing new identities through language learning is the realisation that these identities may represent improved standing, choice and power for the individual. As Kramsch (2009) notes,

> Seduced by the foreign sounds, rhythms, and meanings, and by the 'coolness' of the language
> as it is spoken by native speakers, many adolescent learners strive to enter new, exotic worlds,

where they can be or at least pretend to be someone else, where they too can become 'cool' and inhabit their bodies in more powerful ways. (p.16)

Language learning can also afford the individual greater agency to reposition themselves in relation to their community, inhabiting an identity and roles that better align with their desired state, such as being seen as a member of the host family or a valued friend instead of exchange student. There is thus an interrelatedness between agency and processes of language development, since it is through an individual's own agency that they are able to transform how they are positioned, which in turn may empower them to exercise greater control and influence on their immediate surrounds. This also has ramifications for sojourner's return experiences, since changes in their identity and sense of agency may transform their ways of being in home communities.

3.4. **Key concepts**

3.4.1. *Multi-competence*

As the previous section indicated, the competencies that individuals develop and use as part of their social lives are shaped by the norms and needs of the communicative contexts they inhabit or wish to participate in. V. Cook's (2016) work in this area, conceptualised through the notion of multi-competence, is instructive when considering what it is that participants are developing while studying abroad. Defined as "the overall system of a mind or a community that uses more than one language" (V. Cook, 2016, p. 2), the notion of multi-competence emphasises that being able to fully participate in a community requires competence in a variety of areas, including but not limited to, syntax, lexicon, sociopragmatics and text types. Furthermore, it allows that these competencies exist across multiple languages, decoupled from monolingual 'native speaker' norms. It also understands these competencies as dynamically interactive parts of a whole system that can exist both in the mind of individual users and across the communities they are part of.

Multi-competence is not a fixed state with defined targets in the way that monolingual native speaker norms are usually viewed. As V. Cook (2016) explains:

> The continuum is not static but dynamic, moving constantly as the influence of particular languages waxes and wanes, variously through attrition and transfer between some or all of the languages in multi-competence, and through activation of language mode in speech. But the direction of movement may be in either direction; an L2 user's multi-competence may separate the languages more over time or integrate them more. (p. 9)

This descriptive approach to the language system of the user aligns with view of development as "stability and change" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 796) in the individual, outlined in Chapter 3.2. It also means that rather than looking at individuals learning and using languages as heading towards a common independent target of competence, we instead view them as "unique users of multiple languages" (V. Cook, 2016, p. 12) and ask what that looks like for the individual.

This view also problematizes the term 'language learner' when applied to contexts where individuals use language, rather than simply study it. V. Cook (2016) argues that this categorisation regards the competence of the individual as somehow incomplete and "confirms their subordinate status as learners for the rest of their days" (p. 4). Instead, in contexts where individuals are using language to achieve things, they should be considered 'language users', even if their competence in the given system is limited when compared to others. This fits into a broader picture, described in Chapter 2.2, of moving beyond the view sojourners as 'learners' and recognising them as actively negotiating the contexts they find themselves through language.

Multi-competence is particularly relevant for this project as many of the participants found themselves in situations where they were interacting in and developing competence with multiple linguistic systems simultaneously, spanning social settings and modes of communication. It accounts for the complexity and fluidity of what was happening with language as the participants sought to understand, interact and participate in the communities they encountered and after returning to Japan. Part of what this project is interested in is how the participants' multi-competence evolved during and after their year abroad in response to the linguistic investments they made.

3.4.2. *Community and participation*

Community has long been critical to sociocultural perspectives of language learning. In this project the notion of community emerges in two interrelated ways; community as a series of social relationships between individuals and as *imagined community* (Anderson, 2006).

The former notion of community is most commonly conceptualised using the Communities of Practice construct developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). However, its weakness in accounting for inequalities and relations of power (Jackson, 2008) and the influence of social connections outside the community (Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015) limit its application in this project. Regardless, it is worth noting that the complementary concept of

legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), through which newcomers become members of a community aligns with the notion of proximal process as a form of *participation*.

Imagined community, on the other hand, is not necessarily a function of an individual's current social networks. Anderson (2006) argued that any community that extends beyond connections between individuals was in essence, imagined, since the majority of members will never meet or know each other, yet conceive of themselves as belonging to that community. An important factor that affords them membership is language, since it is through language that these communities can become socially-constructed realities. Membership is a function of an individual's ability to perform identities that are recognised by other members as belonging. Imagined communities are therefore sites of identity negotiation (see Ch. 3.4.4) and when membership is connected with linguistic competencies, it can drive an individual's *investment* in the languages of that community (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

Underlying these conceptions of community, as a site of identity negotiation and investment, is the requirement of participation. Participation, it has been noted, is aligned with learning (Sfard, 1998) and it is this metaphor of learning as participation which informs the project's view of what Bronfenbrenner's proximal processes represent. As Lantolf, Thorne and Poehner (2015) observe,

> Developmental processes take place through participation in cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings such as family life, peer group interaction, and institutional contexts like schooling, organized social activities, and workplaces…the most important forms of human cognitive activity develop through interaction within social and material environments. (p. 207)

The ubiquity of mobile communications technology also means that it is now possible for participation to occur remotely and at higher frequencies, since community is no longer dependent on physical proximity of members to each other. As Code (2013) notes, "Social media enables identity expression, exploration, and experimentation where individuals are continuously embedded within and among networks of social relations and interactions" (p. 47). Consequently, this project recognises the multimodality of participation and the importance of social media to the notion of community today, particularly among young people.

In summary, development occurs during regular, repeated and increasingly complex participation in the practices of a given community. Moreover, participation is an active, multimodal process that is a function of an individuals' agency. It should also be noted here that these processes are not inevitable or universal, but subject to the various interacting features of the environment including distributions of resources and power, and the individuals themselves.

3.4.3. Identity

As Chapter 2.2 underscored, identity-based approaches have proven to be fruitful in uncovering sociocultural insights into language learning abroad. Underpinning these approaches have been poststructuralist understandings of identity which see it as multiple, contested and variable across time and space (Norton, 2000). Despite this, the prevalence of the concept both in research and popular discourse means that the term 'identity' is amorphous and used at different times to denote different things.

The multifaceted model of identity developed by Benson et al. (2013) highlights the complexity of the term and provides clearer boundaries for analysing and discussing the various aspects of identity.

Table 1. Facets of identity. Adapted from *Second language identity in narratives of study abroad* (p. 19), by Benson et al., 2013, Palgrave Macmillan. Copyright 2020 by Springer Nature Limited. Adapted with permission.

Facet 1	Embodied identity	The self as a mobile point of perception located in a particular body
Facet 2	Reflexive identity	The self's view of the self, incorporating self-concept and attributes and capacities
Facet 3	Projected identity	The self as it is semiotically represented to others in interaction
Facet 4	Recognised identity	The self as it is preconceived and recognised by others in the course of interaction
Facet 5	Imagined identity	The self's view of its future possibilities
Facet 6	Identity categories and resources	The self as it is represented (by self or others) using established social categories and semiotic resources

Acknowledging the complexity of what is meant by 'identity' and the interconnected nature of these facets, also allows us to better identify how identity is constructed by the (intrinsic) desires and imagination of the individual, and within the (extrinsic) forces and resources of the social and material environment. As Chapter 2.2 acknowledged, identity has emerged as a key concept in study abroad research precisely because it places participants in environments where questions of identity have an impact on their desire and opportunities to interact and learn. As a result, identifying the facets of identity which are exposed to destabilisation and (re)negotiation is critical to understanding sojourners' developmental trajectories.

Poststructuralist views also recognise "identity options as constructed, validated, and offered through discourses available to individuals at a particular point in time and place" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 14). Discourses are the semiotic manifestations of the macro-level of ideological structures found in Figure 1. They structure the way we view the world and determine what is important, valued and accepted and are the means through which relations of power are both enforced and resisted (see Weedon, 1996, p. 40). Understanding discourse is critical to understanding why a given individual may choose to adopt (or refuse) a particular subject position at a given time or attempt (or refuse) to invest in academic mobility and subsequent language learning. While discourses can restrict the potential of an individual by limiting the subject positions available to them in a given time and space, they can also act as resources for imagined identities. Kramsch (2009) has shown how stereotypical images of a language and its speakers, such as coolness or sexiness, "fulfil an important emotional function" (p. 13) and inform individuals' desire to be associated with that community.

A common source of tension experienced in new environments relates to an individual's positioning, a process where they are discursively constructed by others (recognised identity) and they seek to construct themselves (projected identity) (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Agency plays a crucial role in positioning, since an individual selects and performs the subject positions they desire for themselves (imagined identity) which can come into conflict with the way they are positioned by others. In these instances, the individuals' agency is critical as they strive to resolve the tension that ensues through a process of negotiation, contesting the way they are positioned through language or other signs or through changes to their own reflexive self-understanding. Consequently, the ability of sojourners to perform, contest and negotiate identities in a new social environment is a direct function of their

multi-competence. The inability to have projected identities recognised and valued can have consequences for how individuals see themselves (reflexive identity).

Threats to an individual's reflexive identity and the inability to have projected identities recognised can endanger what Giddens (1990) calls *ontological security,* "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action" (p. 92). Motivated by a fundamental need for identity security (Ting-Toomey, 2005), individuals will seek ways to resolve the anxiety that comes with these threats. A process of investment in and development of competence in the practices of a community are one means of resolution as the individual may seek a greater ability to negotiate their positioning. Other responses may include avoidance and self-isolation, increased ethnocentrism or a desire to return to communities and spaces where ontological security previously existed. Critically, how an individual seeks to resolve identity related anxiety is driven by a host of factors including the social and material environment, the resources available and the individual's knowledge, competencies and personal characteristics.

Bringing the discussion back to how identity is understood in the framework of this project, I adopt an ecological perspective, seeing it as "emerging in the interplay between local interaction and large-scale sociocultural and natural dynamics" (Steffensen & Kramsch, 2017, p. 9). It is therefore important to view identity across multiple timescales as various aspects become salient or contested in response to the interactional and social situations that sojourners' find themselves.

3.4.4. *Investment*

The relationship between identity and an individual's commitment over time to the development of multi-competence has been encapsulated in Norton Peirce's (1995) highly influential notion of *investment*. Underpinning the notion of investment is the idea that when individuals engage in the processes of learning, they do so under the assumption that it will provide them with additional symbolic and material resources. As Chapter 3.4.2 illustrated, learning occurs through participation in the practices of a community and so investment is an active process which "accentuates the role of human agency and identity in engaging with the task at hand" (Kramsch, 2013, p. 195). It is through *desire* for symbolic resources valued in the communities they wish to join that individuals "are compelled to act and exercise their agency" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 46). Investment is historically and socially constructed moment by moment, and the ability of the individual to invest in

practices and relationships in a given community is tied to the wider social ecology they inhabit and the resources they have access to. Within the PPCT framework, investment can be understood as positive engagement with proximal processes by actively pursuing the regular, ongoing and progressively more complex interaction required for development.

As highlighted in Chapter 3.4.3, study abroad places sojourners into unfamiliar contexts where they need to negotiate their positionality. Investment in the practices and multi-competence of host communities is crucial to their ability to do this and achieve the roles they desire in these communities. The nature of study abroad also means that the value of symbolic resources that sojourners possess can vary as they cross borders and enter new social environments. Indexed by the ideological discourses in that environment (Blommaert, 2010), a sojourner may find competencies or social identities valued differently while abroad. For example, the perception that Japanese men in Canada were granted less interactional opportunities as a result of those identities in Morinaga Williams' (2019) study, or that being perceived as a heritage user subjected some sojourners to negative attitudes not faced by others as highlighted by Shively (2016). As Darvin and Norton (2015) explain, "occupying new spaces involves not only acquiring new material and symbolic resources, but also using the capital that learners already possess as affordances and transforming this capital into something that is regarded as valuable in new contexts" (p. 45). Sojourners' desire and ability to invest can be constrained or stimulated by such factors and therefore this project attempts to identify intersections between context, the individual and their investment and how these change over time, including after the return to Japan.

3.4.5. *Social networks and support*

Chapter 2.3.1 highlighted the importance of an individual's social connections to their investment in and attitude towards language learning in host communities. These connections, conceptualised as a network in social network theory (Milroy, 1987) are significant to sojourners not only in the number and type of interactions available to them, but for the other crucial ways they can offer support to sojourners. Before addressing the idea of support, I wish to describe the understanding of social network used in this project.

This project follows Zappa-Hollman and Duff (2015) in their understanding of social connections as a function of the investment made by those involved. Not all connections are equal in the benefits they provide, but all are subject to change over time. These connections may include communities, but can also extend to individuals which fall outside of those groups as Zappa-Hollman and Duff (2015) note.

Drawing from the typology of Garton, Haythornthwaite and Wellman (1997), individual connections can be characterised by a number of features. Most important for this project are: the resource or type of information which is being transferred (*content*); the symmetry of the relation and the extent to which each party is committed to or initiates contact (*direction*); and the frequency of contact and the ascribed value of what is being transferred (*strength*). From a multilingual perspective, variations in the language varieties through which content is transferred also form an important consideration. Direction is key in understanding questions of power, agency and strategy in the development of social networks, while the notion of strength is critical for both establishing the degree to which the connection provides interpersonal interaction "in regularly occurring and recurring contexts of use" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 27), critical for language learning.

The strength of a connection also has ramifications for the extent to which it can function as a support resource when the individual encounters stressful situations. Drawing on the work of psychologists Cohen and Willis (1985), these resources can be classified in four ways. *Affective support* (also described as esteem support) is provided when the individual can confide in and be comforted by another. *Informational support* comes in the form of advice that helps the individual to understand and manage their situation. *Embedded support* (also described as social companionship or belongingness) emphasises the positive feeling associated with having a clear, recognised role when in the company of others. Finally, *instrumental support* involves supplying resources and services to aid an individual.

3.5. **Summary**

This project uses both the bioecological model of human development and the DFG framework to inform its methodological and analytical approach to understanding the experiences and developmental trajectories of academically mobile adolescents. In summary, it recognizes that learning and development happen through an agentive process of regular, repeated participation in a community and investment in their practices. This development is an interrelated function of the individual and context over time and involves them engaging with affordances offered by both the social, material and symbolic resources of their environment.

Furthermore, this participation has implications for the individual's identity and the way they are positioned by the communities they wish to join, particularly for those crossing borders, since they must negotiate unfamiliar social and material contexts while developing

new linguistic competencies. It is the investment in this community's semiotic practices which then allow sojourners to project and have recognized the identities they envision for themselves. Essentially, this project seeks to understand the complex interplay between the sojourners and their social and material environments as well as the connection between their participation and investment, while highlighting the importance of agency and community to their linguistic development.

4 **Methodology**

The following chapter covers the practical and theoretical aspects of collecting and analysing the data for this project. Beginning with the influences that guided the methodological approach I adopted, it describes the research setting and how data was obtained. I spend some time discussing the procedures I used to obtain the data, particularly the interviews since they represented the principal source for responding to the research questions. The chapter then looks at the analysis conducted in roughly chronological order, highlighting the iterative, responsive and cumulative manner that it was conducted.

4.1. **Influences guiding methodology**

Underpinning the methodological design of this project were two guiding influences. One of these is the theoretical and conceptual framework, detailed in Chapter 3. The other was circumstance, which both presented the opportunity to investigate a unique study abroad population and conditioned the types of data that could be collected.

Underpinning the project design is the *person-process-context-time* (PPCT) framework initially developed by Bronfenbrenner (1995). While literature that outlined and developed this framework focused on quantitative experiments (see Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), it readily applies to other approaches. Accordingly, the methodological design of this project sought to respond to the guiding questions by examining *people* studying abroad, the *processes* of investment and development, and *contexts* they encountered over various scales of *time*. This allowed the project to investigate the language learning and investment of participants ecologically, accounting for the multilingual contexts which they inhabited.

The methodological design was also informed by the opportunities made available through my personal life experience. Much of the impetus for this project came from my time spent working as a homeroom teacher in a private Japanese high school, including experience working with inbound, outbound and returned students from study abroad programs as well as *kikokushijyo* (see Glossary). During this time, I developed contacts with a Non-Government Organisation, AFS Intercultural Programs Japan (detailed in Ch. 4.2), while mentoring several students who came to the school through the organisation.

Initially, I planned to investigate the experiences of a group of AFS exchange students who began their year abroad in 2017 using an orthodox pre-, in- and post-sojourn data collection design. However, due to issues of privacy, access was instead granted to the cohort who had been abroad since 2016, just after their return, in mid-2017. This condition meant that the methodological approach required restructuring to capitalise on the types of data available. This, as Holliday (2016) elegantly explains, is an integral part of socially-focused research.

> The choice of social setting is determined very much by opportunity, by what the researcher is able to gain access to. It is too simplistic to say that this is a constraint. As qualitative research proceeds, it becomes clear that finding what one can, where one can, is part of the condition for qualitative research." (p.88)

Developing an ecological approach that fit within the scope of the opportunities and limitations available to me as a researcher, while addressing the guiding questions of this project was critical to the structure of the research design. What follows is a detailed explanation of the setting, instruments and procedures used to collect and analyse the data of this project. Throughout this explanation, I have also attempted to make visible both the practical limitations and underlying subjective approach that informed my choices along the way.

4.2. Research setting: AFS Intercultural Programs Japan

The Non-Government Organisation *AFS Intercultural Programs* is one of the largest facilitators of study abroad programs for secondary school-aged participants internationally (AFS Intercultural Programs, 2018). While AFS runs programs of varying nature, the standard and most popular program involves the placement of participants with host families for around 10 to 11 months, generally aligning with the school year in the destination country. This program is limited to 'high school students', but it should be noted that the way this is defined it determined by the AFS organisation in each country. During their stay, participants may attend semi-regular events with other AFS exchange students in their area, however most of their time is spent embedded in a host family and attending a local school as a regular student. Primarily, the objective of the program is to foster intercultural communication between participants and the receiving communities, although the nature of the program means that language often emerges as a critical part of that experience.

The Japan-based partner, *AFS Intercultural Programs Japan*, through which the participants in this study were recruited, sends participants to around 60 counties. The

highest number of these are in the United States, reflecting the origins of AFS. Participants were recruited from the whole of Japan and were required to pass through a selection process, including a written exam, to be accepted. During the selection process, applicants were required to nominate up to five destination countries they wished to be considered for, however the options available depended on how close to the deadline they applied. The only language requirement is limited English competence for those wishing to travel to US and European destinations, measured through external tests such as Eiken[2] or TOEIC.

If selected, participants were notified around a year in advance. Contact with the host family was generally established through email several months prior to departure, however informants indicated this was often limited to exchanges of greetings and requests for information about the host community. Prior to departure, participants attend a briefing session. While informational, it also allows participants from the same area of Japan to meet each other as well as AFS *senpai* who give advice based on their own experiences. While abroad, participants were encouraged to limit their contact with home and attempt to immerse themselves in life in the host community. Upon returning, participants attend a debriefing session with the same cohort as their briefing session. It was during these debriefing sessions that respondents for this study were recruited.

4.3. Overview of data collection strategies

One of the challenges of this project was retrospective nature through which data would be collected. Three separate data collection strategies were adopted with the aim of developing a broad, diverse and 'thick' body of data for analysis; a questionnaire, interviews and social media data. Triangulation of the sources would also improve the validity and reliability of results obtained (Heigham & Croker, 2009).

The overall group from which this project recruited participants consisted of 293 Japanese high school students who had completed homestays abroad from mid-2016 to mid-2017. This recruitment pool was large enough to allow quantitative methods to be implemented and avoid the "problems of scale" (Kinginger, 2017, p. 133) that many investigations of language learning abroad suffer from. Potential respondents were initially invited to

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[2] The Eiken Test in Practical English Proficiency is criterion-reference test of English administered by the Eiken Foundation of Japan. It consists of seven levels which candidates either pass or fail. The highest level, Grade 1, is considered equivalent to C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Eiken Foundation of Japan, 2020).

complete an online questionnaire on their experiences through explanatory statements and invitations, distributed by AFS representatives, at three debriefing sessions. The first two were held simultaneously in August 2017 in both Osaka and Nagoya. The third session was held in September 2017 in Tokyo. Those invited received two follow-up email reminders, forwarded through AFS, directly after their debriefing session and at the end of September 2017.

The questionnaire received 105 responses by early October 2017, of which 5 were identified to be duplicate submissions, resulting in 100 unique responses. The quantitative data collected through this questionnaire provided essential methodological triangulation (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009) and insights on the representativeness of the qualitative accounts collected later (see below). Further details on the design of the questionnaire are provided in Chapter 4.4 and analysis is described in Chapter 4.7. On completion of the questionnaire, respondents were offered the opportunity to receive further information on the interview section of the study.

There were 38 respondents who indicated an interest in being interviewed for the project and received an explanatory statement and consent form (available in Appendix B), which also required the consent of a parent or guardian if the participant was under the age of 18. Two separate interviews were planned with these respondents, spaced approximately 10 months apart to provide longitudinal data triangulation and insights on informants' development a year after studying abroad. Of the 16 participants who returned consent forms, 14 completed an initial interview session. The remaining two failed to respond to follow-up emails. Of those who completed the initial interview round, 12 completed the second round, with one participant declining due to personal circumstances and another failing to respond to multiple email follow-ups. Details of all informants can be found in Chapter 6.1. Further details on the design and implementation of the interviews is covered in Chapter 4.5.

The qualitative data collected from the interview informants was supplemented with in-sojourn social-media data where possible. This data, created by the informants before being invited to this project provided a naturalistic source to contrast with the researcher-provoked data (Silverman, 2014) produced in interviews. Further details on the collection of this data can be found in Chapter 4.6.

4.4. Data collection procedures: Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed with two overriding purposes in mind. Firstly, as a tool for capturing quantitative data on the larger group of respondents. Secondly, it served as a point of recruitment for the qualitative section of the project. The design of the questionnaire was informed by a report on internet use by youth from the Cabinet Office of the Japanese Government (2017), a report on mobility among high school students from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, also known as MEXT (2017), the wider language learning abroad literature and my own experience as a high school teacher in Japan. The diversity of destinations and linguistic environments among potential respondents posed challenges to the types of detail that could be sought, such as the school environment or the types of social media used. Furthermore, the demands of Japanese high school life meant that the questionnaire needed to be concise to improve the rate of completion. It also needed to be somewhat satisfying to complete, since it served as the recruitment mechanism for the interview section of data collection. It was with these conditions in mind that the questionnaire consisted mainly of questions that used 5-point Likert scales or required respondents to select from multiple options with space to add extra responses.

The questionnaire was written in Japanese, piloted, revised and received ethical approval before being administered. A copy of the original and an English translation can be found in Appendix C. Questionnaire data was collected with the primary aim of determining the overall demographics of the cohort as well as identifying general trends in the motivations, experiences and outcomes of respondents. The results were also used to draw inferences about the representativeness of the interview informants, identify and validate trends in the qualitative data and inform more generalised conclusions about the cohort. Consequently, several statistical analysis techniques were adopted to explore and test the data (see Ch. 4.5).

One of the limitations of the questionnaire was that while it provided scope for multilingualism in the home setting, it only sought information on the primary language used while abroad. While this was done for reasons of streamlining the design of the questionnaire, in hindsight capturing data on the multilingual nature of the settings respondents travelled to would have been insightful.

4.5.   **Data collection procedures: Interviews**

4.5.1.   Approach

The interviews themselves were considered the principal tool for investigating the nature of participants' study abroad experiences, language learning and their engagement with the environments they found themselves. Access to the *subject reality* (Pavlenko, 2007) provided by qualitative interviews has been instrumental in producing insights in such landmark studies as Twombly (1995), Knight and Schmidt-Rinehart (2002), Isabelli-García (2006), Jackson (2008), Kinginger (2008) and Benson et al. (2013) and so the project is located in this tradition.

The interview methods used in this study reflect a *postmodern* understanding of qualitative research (Holliday, 2016). In particular, the roles of the participant and the researcher are viewed critically (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Gubrium & Holstein, 2003; Pavlenko, 2007), and each is seen as subjectively contributing to the process. From this understanding, an interview is "a product of the interaction between interviewer and interviewee" (Block, 2000, p. 759); an *account* grounded in the time and place of the interview, rather than an objective record of reality. It is this account that reveals how the respondent's perception of their environment and experiences contributed to their investment over time. My use of the term 'account' throughout this thesis reflects this understanding.

While acknowledging that the informants are not "passive vessels of answers" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003, p. 70) and that what is produced in interviews is "presentational" of the respondents (Block, 2000, p. 758), I also recognize that it is only through the willingness and cooperation of individuals that we are able to gain insights into many of the processes and factors which impact upon their development. For that reason, I have also been highly conscious the asymmetrical distribution of power that occurs in an interview, particularly the interviewer's ability to control the topic, direction and interpretation of the dialogue (Kvale, 2008). To this effect, I adopted question design that limited excessive influence on responses, such as leading questions (Seidman, 2006). I also adopted a practice of paraphrasing participants after they had completed a complex explanation, particularly if they had narrated an event as an illustration. I did this to make the in-situ interpretive and analytical work I was doing visible to participants and provide an opportunity for them to critique my understandings and clarify their explanations.

Another point I was cognizant of was how aspects of my identity as the interviewer emerged and were made apparent to the participants both in communication before and during the

interview process; adult, Anglo-Australian, male, researcher, English-speaker, Japanese-speaker, former high school teacher in Japan. These subject positions presented both opportunities and challenges during the interview process. Following Holliday (2016), I acknowledged my subjectivity would become part of the data and attempted to draw upon it to "disturb the surface of the culture [I am] investigating…to dig deeper and reveal the hidden and the counter" (p. 18). This I attempted by providing prompts, responses and follow-ups informed by my own experiences crossing national and cultural borders and working in Japanese secondary education, presenting myself to the informants as someone who has both existed outside of, and within Japanese cultural systems, in much the same way as they had while abroad. By adopting this position, I was also asking them to relate to me as a fellow sojourner and someone who would be able to empathise with their experiences.

Informed by my practice as a professional high school teacher in Japan and previous research experience, another consideration influencing my interview design was the potential reluctance of participants to express their own opinions or ideas. I brought with me an understanding that senior figures are often seen as arbiters of knowledge within Japanese social and educational institutions, as well as recognising overarching cultural tendencies towards avoiding mistakes and embarrassment. As Yoneyama (1999) pointed out in her monograph on the culture of Japanese high school, "to say nothing is a survival skill" (p. 86). Therefore, I was aware that respondents may be reluctant to produce spontaneous, unrehearsed descriptions of their own experiences.

I sought to address, and even embrace, these ideas in the design of the interviews, both to empower the respondents to present their experiences in their own words, and to address the questions of this project. To this effect I adopted Kvale's (2008) stance of the "interviewer-traveller" (p. 19) in this round of interviews. By conceptualising the interview process as a journey, a view also promoted by Richards (2009) and Rabionet (2011), my role was less about extracting knowledge from the respondent and more about reconstructing and better understanding their experience. I communicated this view to the participants before each interview, explaining how I wished to explore their journey chronologically. The resonance of framing interviews about study abroad experiences as journeys in and of themselves also could not be overlooked as a factor in increasing respondents' participation, recall and agency.

4.5.2. Procedures

Putting these ideas into practice, I asked informants in the first-round interviews to reconstruct the trajectories of their experiences (see Seidman, 2006, p. 80). This was achieved by asking them to relate when they first heard about study abroad and then tracing their journey through applying for, participating in and returning from the AFS program. These reconstructions and explorations were prompted by a series of chronological experience, behaviour and feeling questions (see Patton, 2002, pp. 348–351) and the interview guide I used can be found in Appendix D. Several participants also drew on a small number of images they prepared from their time abroad during their interview to help illustrate and inform their accounts, particularly as a means to talk about the relationships they formed.

Drawing on the suggestions of Saldaña (2012), I wrote *analytic memos* which contained my feelings, impressions and reflections upon the conclusion of each interview. These memos focused on the 'flow' of the interview and the extent to which I felt the subjective process had contributed to the content recorded, my initial impressions of what the informant had indicated as important and a brief summary of the narrative I felt had emerged. These memos were used in the later stages of analysis described below.

In the second round of interviews, conducted around 12 months after the participants had returned from abroad, a more open-ended interview strategy was adopted as the aim was to explore the longer-term effects and perceptions of respondents' study abroad experiences. An interview guide (also available in Appendix D) was developed by drawing on the insights and themes gained through analysis that had been conducted up to that point. Since the focus was placed on participants' current perceptions and feelings, interviews were more free-form, with participants responding to a series of open-ended questions as long as they wished without interruption. Once the participant indicated that they had no more to say, the next topic was introduced. When all topics were exhausted, I then asked a series of follow-up and clarification questions which had arisen during the interview and from the participants' previous interview and social media posts. The content of social media posts was also sometimes raised by the informants, since they had granted me access after the first-round interview. Analytic memos were also taken at the conclusion of these interviews.

The language that interviews are conducted in has been problematized by scholars such as Fontana and Frey (2000), since "many researchers collect stories in one language only, the one most convenient for analysis, without thinking through the implications of this choice"

(Pavlenko, 2007, p. 172). This can be problematic given the deep connection between language and identity (Block, 2007). From my first exchanges with the participants, I used Japanese to communicate. When it came to interviews, I greeted them in Japanese and outlined the format of the interview before offering informants the choice of continuing in English or Japanese with the option of switching between them at any time they saw fit. I felt giving participants this choice would allow them more power and agency in deciding how the interview took place, including the ability to negotiate hurdles related to proficiency and providing opportunities for informants to explore topics from multiple perspectives and linguistic identities. In practice, of the 14 initial interviews conducted, 10 elected to use Japanese. Once informants selected a language, they rarely alternated except for instances of reported speech or for reasons of proficiency before returning to their language of choice, even when I acknowledged the switch by responding using that language. Details of this use for relevant informants are included in the case studies detailed in Chapters 7 to 11.

A logistical difficulty this study faced was performing interviews with respondents from differing geographical areas of Japan, each with busy schedules that included exam preparation and extracurricular activities. In order to overcome this, VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) software, shown to be a viable alternative to face-to-face interviewing (see Iacono et al., 2016), was selected as the best solution in terms of flexibility and efficiency for both the interviewer and respondents. Specifically, the software used, called Zoom, allowed participants to connect directly via any device using a unique link. Given the age of the respondents (16-18), the absence of face-to-face contact also served to reduce possible concerns by guardians about speaking with the researcher and allowed interviews to be held at otherwise unviable times and locations, such as in the respondent's home in the evening. Moreover, the informants were uniformly familiar with VoIP technology and required no or very limited assistance connecting. From a methodological perspective, video communication software also offered the opportunity to record the interactions unobtrusively through software rather than through the visible artefact of a recording device needed in face-to-face contexts. While there were occasional delays and interruptions that affected the flow of the interview, they were relatively uncommon across more than 40 hours of interviews.

4.6. **Data collection procedures: Social-media data**

At the conclusion of each initial interview, participants were asked if they were willing to share access to their social media. 10 of the 14 participants agreed to allow me to view their accounts. All of the participants had used Instagram while abroad and seven of them had started the accounts they shared just prior to going on study abroad or after they had recently arrived. Three of the participants also allowed access to Facebook, however, their activity there was limited and accordingly in the interviews several of the participants had commented on Facebook's limited use among their peers.

As Miller et al. (2016) have noted, each social media platform is part of a larger media ecosystem, and not only does the use of a platform generally represent only part of an individual's interactions online but it also represents a choice which has social consequences. The decision of participants to use Instagram was a socially-mediated choice in much the same way that choosing to use a particular linguistic system in a multilingual setting can be. Notably, many of the participants reported using other platforms such as Messenger, WhatsApp and Snapchat, but the ephemeral nature of some the content (Snapchat) and issues of privacy meant that largely this data was not available for analysis. Instagram on the other hand, contained semi-public postings of the participants that had been curated for their audience and were therefore more accessible and less ethically problematic as a subject of investigation. For these reasons, issues of consistency and time resourcing, this data collection was largely restricted to Instagram posts.

Data was collected by saving a local copy of the posts by date and the associated images, directly after each interview session once access had been granted. This data was obtained through a browser extension for Chrome called 'Downloader for Instagram' which saved the participants' images and associated comments in date and time labelled .jpg and .json files respectively. The extracted data therefore represented snapshots of their profiles at the time access was granted and analysis therefore did not account for changes made to informants' profiles after those dates. The data from these files were added to a spreadsheet to create a timeline of images and comments that could be used during analysis.

As Dressler and Dressler's (2019) point out, the collection and use of social media data for research brings with it many ethical questions that need to be answered. One of the most urgent from my perspective was the possibility that the nature of this data would allow anything reproduced in this thesis to be located online and reveal the identities of the informants. For that reason, I have decided not to replicate any data found online in this

thesis and instead refer to it indirectly. The issues surrounding the use of this type of data have important implications for study abroad research and therefore require more engagement moving forward.

4.7. **Questionnaire analysis**

Initially, questionnaire data was imported into the software program SPSS. The data was modified to remove duplicate responses and strings were cleaned to ensure consistency, for example, all destination countries were converted into Japanese characters and the names of destination cities and states placed into their own field. Multistring variable responses were separated using the char.index function and numeric responses were converted from Japanese 'full-width' characters to 'half-width'.

Analysis occurred in three main stages. First, descriptive statistics for each of the 19 main questions were generated and the frequency of responses was graphed as a means of gaining a broad overview of the demographics of the cohort, as well as general patterns surrounding their motivations, experiences and outcomes. This initial round of analysis informed the majority of the discussion in Chapter 5.

The second stage of analysis adopted more sophisticated statistical methods to explore relationships in the data. Initially, this involved looking at the responses to two multi-item questions in the data: reasons for respondents' decision to study abroad and the effects participants experienced from study abroad. In order to reduce the complexity of the responses and identify possible underlying constructs, an *exploratory factor analysis* was performed with the results presented in Chapters 5.2.2 and 5.6. Each respondent received a *factor score* for these components that indicates how they rated the items in relation to other respondents, with a score of zero representing the mean of all responses. These scores were then used as the variables for a *hierarchical cluster analysis* (Norušis, 2009), completed separately for questions on motivations and outcomes. The results of this analysis indicate how similar the interview participants' responses in these sections were to other members of the cohort and were used to gauge the representativeness of interview informants.

One aspect of study abroad contexts this study sought to account for was how technology featured in participants' experiences. Preliminary analysis of the analytic memos composed during first-round interviews indicated that technology use was a prominent part of the informants' experiences. As Chapter 2.3.3 indicated, an ongoing theme in language learning abroad literature has been the tension between technology use and engagement with the host

community. The final stage of this analysis therefore involved testing several exploratory hypotheses on the relationship between experiencing difficulties during study abroad and increased use of technology in L1. Accounting for the non-parametric shape of the responses and following Pallant (2016), a series of Mann-Whitney *U* tests were used to test these hypotheses. The area of difficulty was set as the independent variable, while the responses to the technology usage questions represented the dependent variable in the test. Since the distribution of responses when separated by the independent variable was dissimilar, the test was understood as representing a comparison of the mean ranks across groups rather than medians (see Laerd Statistics, 2018 for further explanation). Two items from the questionnaire were excluded from this analysis. The first was [customs and/or food], since the ambiguity of the wording allowed for broad interpretations and limited its usefulness in analysis. The second was [the price of things], since the connections to language and technology use were unclear.

In their study of motivation, technology use and language learning abroad, Hanson and Dracos (2016) noted that one of the participants "began the program at a higher competence level relative to many of the other participants, which may have allowed her greater facility with technology in the L2" (p. 79). In order to confirm whether L2 competence prior to travelling abroad influenced technology usage habits during study abroad, separate results were compiled based on pre-departure L2 competence responses. In a separate section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to estimate their competence across four modalities; speaking, listening, reading and writing, on a five-point Likert scale with "1" representing no competence and "5" representing competence close to a native speaker. The mean of these four modalities was calculated for each respondent and allowed them to be placed into two groups. Each of these groups was then also subjected to a separate series of Mann-Whitney U tests. The results these tests are described in Chapter 5.5.2.

4.8. **Qualitative analysis**

4.8.1. Qualitative coding and analysis

The analysis workflow of interview data collected in this project was informed by Silverman's (2014) complementary notions of *intensive analysis* and *extensive analysis*. He explains that this involves producing "a detailed analysis of a very limited amount of data" to develop an initial understanding which is then "tested by looking at relevant features of your whole data set" (p. 114). Based on the results and criteria detailed in Chapter 6.2, a subset of five focal informants was selected for intensive analysis from the 14 who had been interviewed.

Working with this subset allowed qualitative analysis to begin much earlier and helped to guide interpretation of the statistical analysis discussed in Chapter 5.

When selecting a method for transcribing the interviews, various forms of machine transcription were considered. However, due to privacy concerns and an inability of these systems at the time (2017-2018) to adequately handle interaction data, language variation and speech from second-language users, all interviews were transcribed manually. The process produced a number of insights that were added to each informants' analytic memos. The transcriptions were entered into the qualitative analysis software platform Nvivo and coded using both researcher- and participant-centric approaches.

Given that previous research has shown thematic analysis to be effective in providing key insights into this type of qualitative data (e.g., Jackson, 2008), I elected for a broader, "macro-level" (Pavlenko, 2007) thematic analysis. Initially, each speaker's data was auto-coded to their name so that response volume of informants and the researcher could be compared and used to reflect on my own interview practice. This was followed by a round of *descriptive coding* (see Saldaña, 2012, pp. 70–73) to ascertain the topics covered in each interview. This process drew on my own knowledge of both Japanese high school culture and the broader field of study abroad research, representing a highly subjective and researcher-centric understanding of the data. The following round of coding was conducing using *in vivo* methods (see Saldaña, 2012, pp. 74–77) to contrast and balance the researcher-created codes generated previously. In vivo coding is a means to "prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (Saldaña, 2012, p. 74) and involves reading through the transcript and highlighting terms and expressions used by the participants that appear salient, whether through repetition or appearing to emphasise something important to the participant. These highlighted segments were then compiled and contrasted with the previous coding to look for similarities and contrasts.

Additionally, my analytical memos had indicated that particular relationships (e.g., host mother, host sister, friends in Japan) had been emphasised by the informants. Using a method of *attribute coding* (Saldaña, 2012, pp. 55–57), they therefore received their own sets of codes to allow them to be cross-tabulated with emergent themes later in the analysis. I also continued to add my thoughts to analytic memos throughout the process, allowing me to reflect on the ongoing analysis and the role of my subjectivity.

In order to "systematize the ideas, concepts, and categories" (Benaquisto, 2008, p. 85) from this process, codes were grouped under broader meta-codes paying particular attention to the emergence of patterns such as frequency, co-occurrence and relationships between different codes (Boyatzis, 1998). In addition, the codes from the descriptive and in-vivo methods were contrasted with each other and checked against the guiding questions and the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning the project. In order to provide a check on my own subjective interpretation of the data and provide additional insights, a fellow PhD researcher, also researching study abroad, was also asked to code a small subset of this data. The results were compared, discussed and reflected upon by both of the researchers. My thesis supervisors also provided input on the process of coding, analysis and their thoughts on several extracts from the interviews.

The meta-codes which emerged came directly from terms informants used or topics they spoke directly about (closeness, struggling/confusion, alone/isolation, identity, relationships, unexpected changes, language use, language learning, communication, freedom and choice) as well as overarching ideas I identified in the codes, informed by theory and literature (acculturation, technology-mediated communication and learning, multilingualism, transformation, imagination, independence, critical experiences, geography, ideological discourses, transience and social network development). Drawing on the PPCT framework, meta-codes which directly connected with individual developmental processes (e.g., language learning, identity, social network development) and context (e.g., geography, relationships, discourses) were grouped together. Other more abstract ideas were grouped together under the mete-code of 'themes' (e.g., loss, belonging/closeness, struggling/confusion). Matrix coding was then used to identify potential relationships between these themes, process and context codes. For example, there were significantly more intersections between 'isolation/alone' and 'geography' than 'friends in Japan'. These intersections served as foci for the narrative analysis described in Chapter 4.8.3.

At points during the analysis, the current set of meta-codes also became the focus of Silverman's (2014) *extensive analysis*. This involved reviewing the remaining sets of qualitative data, including relistening to the interviews and reviewing analytic memos for evidence that would either support or contradict salient intersections and highly populated codes from the focal cases. Relevant sections of this data were then selectively transcribed, analysed and used to update the ongoing narrative analysis accordingly.

4.8.2. *Instagram data*

Once the coding of the first-round interviews was complete, attention was directed toward the data extracted from Instagram. This data presented a challenge since methods for analysing social media data in the context of study abroad are nascent, particularly for multimodal social media platforms. As a result, I developed my own approach, informed by similar studies, emerging social theory and my own experience as a user of social media. For the purposes of this project, I divided each Instagram post into three components of analysis; image content, caption and comments. Image content was often a single image, but sometimes included multiple images or video. The caption was the initial typed content the informant included with the image content, including emoji or hyperlinks. Comments refers to any typed content that came after the caption by either the informant or their audience. Altogether, the sequence of posts by each informant was considered a stream that presented a curated, multimodal narrative of their experience abroad.

The image content of informants' posts was considered an indicator of what sojourners considered significant and analysed for how they sought to present these experiences to their audience. To do this I drew from the image criticism of Urry (2011) who pointed out that the way we view the world, *gaze,* is socioculturally framed, informed by factors such as gender, cultural background and education and so "gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world" (Urry, 2011, p. 14). To present an example, a piece of public art could be viewed as an eyesore, part of the streetscape or an object of cultural interest by different people at the same moment. This way of seeing the world therefore extends to the types of images we decide to take, since every image results from a process of selection: in the content which is placed in and excluded from the frame and in the images that are ultimately shared with an audience. The act of creating and uploading an image to social media is therefore concomitantly performative and representative of a certain view of the world. It was therefore important to analyse not only what the images were of, but what they were intended to semiotically communicate to the participant's audience. Where possible, I also sought to notice what was not present in the images posted and what that absence signified.

The content of the caption connected with each image helped to inform the way the participants wished the image to be interpreted while also showing how they sought to position themselves to their audience. Social media often serves as a place for linguistic play and function is valued over observing standards of writing (Riley, 2013). Informants'

captions often comprised of a single phrase, a string of emoji or multiple hashtags. They were the place that language was most clearly authored for indexical over interactional purposes. As such, it provided an important resource for observing and the way that young people "deploy their semiotic resources by choosing across their languages and/or varieties and registers in response to local demands of social action" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 26). This data was therefore important for determining the extent to which the participant sought particular identities for themselves through Instagram, linguistic or otherwise.

Examining the frequency and content of comments in each post, as well as those who appeared in the image content, clues could be obtained about the nature of their social networks, albeit only those who appeared on Instagram. Given that the importance of social networks to an individual's linguistic development (see Ch. 2.3.1) information on the extent to which an individual's networks continued in online spaces provided valuable context to their own accounts. It also provided insights into the linguistic repertoires of both the informants and the audience who sought to engage with them.

The chronological way that participants used Instagram, as a kind of visual diary, served to both confirm the accounts they gave of their own experiences and to inform the process of narrative analysis described in the next section. Kasich (2013) calls this the *curated self,* "a digital self-presentation created through an ongoing curatorial process of organizing media elements…to create a distinct digital embodiment of self that was both separate from and a continuation of a user's physical self presentation" (p. ii). Over time, successive posting created a visual timeline of their experiences that was at once a narrative of their journey and a presentation of specific identities.

Given the richness and multimodality of the data collected, I decided to adopt an approach which viewed the components of each post individually and together as a *total semiotic fact* (Blommaert, 2015) and attempted to identify connections to the account they had communicated in their interviews. Since the majority of the posts were made before the informants had joined the project, they were a source of 'found' naturalistic data and important in also verifying the content and sequence of informants' accounts.

4.8.3. *Narrative analysis*

One of the issues with the analysis conducted through coding the informants' interviews was that themes and meta-codes emerged quite holistically when in fact many of them were not experienced by the informants consistently over time. Instead, different themes, processes and elements of context emerged as salient at different points in their journey. Noting that

the chronological component of the data was being obscured by this process, I adopted Narrative Analysis (Barkhuizen et al., 2013) as a means of making the chronology of participants' experiences more visible. Defined as a process of "lending narrative coherence to nonnarrative data in order to bring out or highlight meanings in relation to the research issue in focus" (Benson, 2014, p. 163), data from all sources associated with a single participant were combined and arranged in the rough chronological order they were experienced to create a multimodal narrative (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). This allowed connections between an informant's interviews, questionnaire responses and Instagram stream (if available) to be made. It also highlighted how developmental processes, interacting with aspects of context, had occurred over different scales of time. While there were no major deviations between the interview-based accounts and the Instagram data, some events and relationships that were not discussed in the interview appeared in informants' streams, and others were made clearer by this content. This further solidified the process of intensive analysis, since assembling each of these chronological narratives was a time-consuming, iterative process drawing from multiple sources and modes of data.

Complementing the analysis at different scales of time, from individual interactions to developments across the reported time period, was Barkhuizen's (2017) *short story analysis*. Referencing The Douglas Fir Group's (2016) multi-scale model of social context (see Ch. 3.3) Barkhuizen (2017) outlines the process of analysing vignettes of cohesive narrative that include a temporal element and reflection or evaluation, which he calls *short stories*. When these *short stories* appeared in the data and narrated a significant experience or key theme in informants trajectories, they were analysed at "scales of context" (Barkhuizen, 2017, p. 102) to identify the intersecting elements which contributed to the experience and developmental outcomes. During this process, I also returned to the themes and meta-codes and I continued to refine both the codes and narratives accordingly.

4.8.4. *Second round interview data and analysis*

Once the second round of interviews were completed, the data was added to the concurrent processes of thematic and narrative analysis. This resulted in the introduction of the themes *loss* and *freedom/choice* to the overall schema while extending the narratives for each of the focal participants. In order to re-evaluate and clarify the overarching themes after the integration of the additional data I adopted a technique where the various emergent themes and meta-codes were arranged into random triads, which were then scrutinised for connections and commonalities. The technique was repeated until I ceased to identify new

connections and the results were then consolidated. This process allowed me to identify connections that I had not initially considered, helping to inform my understanding of the informants' transnational experiences as multifaceted projects of self-realisation, mediated by key relationships as discussed in Part II.

The final overall picture emerging from the analysis was one of deep individual and contextual complexity. However, throughout each of their stories the thread of belonging and the importance it held for these young people was woven throughout, emerging as they exercised their own initiative and creativity in the development of multi-competence and navigated the environments of their host communities and the lives they returned to in Japan.

4.9. **Summary**

Overall, the methodology adopted for this project reflected both the desire to examine the experiences of the participants from a socio-ecological perspective and the conditions of the research context. Using a mixed-methods approach, the data collected gave insights into both the experiences of the informants abroad and in the year after returning and the wider cohort from which they were drawn. Analysing the data was an iterative, integrated and cumulative process that combined statistical analysis with qualitative coding and narrative analysis. Vitally, part of my qualitative approach relied on intensively examining five focal cases before extending the analysis to the remaining cases. Part II, which follows, details the results of this process, beginning with the results of the questionnaire analysis (Ch. 5), before providing an overview of the interview informants and how the focal cases were selected (Ch. 6). This is followed by an examination of the five focal cases in detail (Ch. 7-11) and key findings from five additional cases (Ch. 12)

Part II:

Exploring the results

5 Exploring and contextualising the questionnaire results

Analysis of responses to the questionnaire (available in Appendix C) using the procedures described in Chapter 4.7 are presented in this chapter. The analysis provides a broad overview of the larger group of adolescent Japanese sojourners who studied abroad with AFS from mid-2016 to 2017. The questionnaire received responses from 100 unique individuals, representing approximately 34% of the 293 total who participated in the Japan-outbound program during that period.

The following sections roughly follow the structure of the questionnaire and provide an overview of the group's demographics and language backgrounds. The following sections examine respondents' influences and reasons for studying abroad, difficulties and valuable experiences from their time abroad, discretional technology use while abroad, and the changes they perceived in themselves upon returning. Throughout this analysis, I also use the results of nationwide surveys on high school mobility from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to contrast the respondents to this project with the wider Japanese high school population. Given that the number of respondents was precisely 100, percentage values of responses are equivalent to the number of responses. For ease of reading, I have generally used percentage values when presenting results, however, in some cases I have used the *n* when this provided more clarity.

5.1. Demographics and language backgrounds of respondents

Looking at the gender of the respondents, 68% identified as female while 32% responded male. While the Japanese government does not report on the gender of high school study abroad participants, this result is similar to the 62% female and 38% male distribution found in university age study abroad participants (JASSO, 2018) and reflects trends found elsewhere (e.g., Twombly et al., 2012).

Respondents to the questionnaire came from across Japan giving a nationwide sample, with the greatest concentrations in the populous Kanto (59%), Chūbu (18%) and Kansai (10%) regions. The remainder came from Kyushu (5%), Chūgoku (4%), Hokkaido (2%) and Tohoku (1%). A more detailed breakdown of respondents by prefecture is available in *Table 13* in Appendix E.

At departure, respondents were distributed across the three levels of high school in Japan, with 32% in the first year (15-16 years old), 52% in the second year (16-17 years old) and 16% in the third year (17-18 years old). The limited numbers of third-year students are unsurprising, given the final year of high school is considered critical for preparing for University entrance exams (*jyuken*). Studying abroad during this time would also mean returning to high school after classmates had already graduated. Participation in the first year required an application to be submitted to AFS while the participant was still in middle school preparing to enter high school, also accounting for the smaller distribution compared to the second year.

The linguistic history sojourners bring with them is an important consideration in understanding their experiences of language abroad. All respondents reported Japanese as their main language of daily interaction pre-departure. Five respondents also reported using English and one reported using Chinese. This is reflective of the group's middle-class background. Moving to questions of formal language study, all but one respondent (n = 99) reporting studying English at school, while other language options received limited responses; three respondents studied Chinese, three French, two Spanish and one each for Portuguese, Russian, German and Korean. These results confirm the monolithic status of English in second language education in Japan despite the ongoing failure to develop widespread competence in students (see Y. Kobayashi, 2018 and Ch. 2.5.1).

5.2. Influences and reasons for study abroad

5.2.1. Key influences and motivations

Two separate multi-item questions sought to establish the broad influences and reasons that underpinned the respondents' decisions to study abroad.

The first was designed to ascertain the potential influence others had on respondents' decision by asking them to rate the encouragement or opposition they received from six different individuals or groups on a 5-point Likert scale. A rating of 1 corresponded to strong opposition, a 3 corresponded to neutrality while a 5 corresponded to strong encouragement. Ratings of 1 or 2 were very limited across the cohort, probably reflecting the self-selection bias of those who faced opposition not applying in the first place. Totalling the responses of 4 or 5 demonstrated that mothers were viewed as encouraging for a majority (65%) of respondents. Teachers were the second most frequent source (43%) followed by friends (38%) and then fathers (36%). This result highlights the more central supporting role that

mothers played in many of the respondents' decisions and perhaps reflects typical family structures in Japan.

The second question required respondents to rate 10 different reasons for studying abroad on a 5-point Likert scale with space to include additional reasons not covered. One of the sources considered when developing these questions was a biannual survey of Japanese high school students' international academic conducted by MEXT. In the most recent MEXT survey (MEXT, 2019), data on reasons for studying abroad was collected from three randomly selected classes in each high school across Japan. In total 526,325 responses were collected of which 36.8% (n = 193,688 approx.) indicated they wanted to study abroad. This subset of the total students was then asked to select the reasons they wanted to study abroad from a list. While the number, wording and design of the questions varies between the MEXT study and my own, the many overlapping themes provide an opportunity for comparison between the reasons for studying abroad among participants in this study and Japanese high school students more generally.

In order to perform a rough comparison, I ranked each item from the questionnaire in this study by its mean Likert rating across all responses. Drawing data from the MEXT (2019) survey, I determined the rank for each item based on the percentage of respondents who selected it. The comparison of these ranks in displayed in

Table 2.

The first key difference is the relative status of improving language ability in the two studies. For Japanese high school students generally, this was the most often selected reason for wanting to study abroad, perhaps connected to the preference for English-speaking destinations among this population more generally. On the other hand, while improving language ability remained important for the respondents in this project, it was overshadowed by other items connected to their personal development. Questions on challenging oneself and thinking about one's future ranked highly in the current project but were less popular among the broader high school population. The low rank of reasons connected to university entrance exams and future employment opportunities in both studies probably reflects wider perceptions that studying abroad may actually interfere with these activities (Shimmi, 2011) and that international experience is not essential for finding employment in Japan (Y. Kobayashi, 2018). Taken together these results suggest that those who participated in the AFS exchange program differed from the wider high school study abroad population in crucial ways. Notably, they appeared to be more focused on the

potential of study abroad to effect change on their personal development and future plans, but less on its potential for linguistic development.

Table 2. Comparison of reasons for studying abroad

Reasons for deciding to study abroad	Rank in this project (Likert Mean)	Rank in MEXT (2019) (% selected by respondents)
Broadening my horizons and values	1 (4.61)	N/A
Challenging myself in a new environment	2 (4.43)	5* (38.3%)
Making friends with foreigners	3 (4.28)	2 (51.9%)
Having time to think about my future	4 (4.17)	7 (14.7%)
Improving my language ability	5 (3.86)	1 (71.0%)
Having an interest in the destination	6 (3.64)	4 (40.2%)
Wanting to live apart from family/school	7 (3.36)	N/A
Developing an interest after hearing from friends and family	8 (3.36)	N/A
Giving me an advantage in university entry exams and looking for work	9 (2.76)	8 (12.7%)
Being encouraged to go by family or teachers	10 (2.18)	N/A
Wanting to experience foreign culture, sport, history or natural surrounds	N/A	3 (49.1%)
Having an interest in studying or working internationally	N/A	6 (23.7%)

* This question in the MEXT survey translates to "I want to challenge myself with something new"

5.2.2. *Underlying reasons for studying abroad*

To better understand the relationship among overall responses to this question, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (Grant & Fabrigar, 2007) was performed on the results. Exploratory Factor Analysis attempts to identify patterns in the way that questions are answered by respondents, which suggest broader underlying 'components' which account for the response patterns. Considering the differences between respondents' reasons for studying abroad and those of the wider Japanese high school population, I thought that this type of analysis could clarify these differences.

After removing the item [having an interest in the destination] due to strong cross-loading and its inherent ambiguity, three components with an eigenvalue of 1 or above emerged which accounted for 58.45% of the variance in responses to the items analysed. The results had a KMO of .749, the closeness to 1 indicating their usefulness. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity returned a value of .001, with values of less than .05 considered significant. The pattern matrix from this analysis is displayed in Table 3. Looking at the items that load onto each of

the components and general ideas about what motivates individuals to participant in study abroad programs, I interpret these components to correspond to ideas of (1) self-actualization, (2) instrumental gains and (3) self-discovery.

Table 3. Pattern Matrix[a] of factor loadings for participant motivations

	Component		
	Self-actualization	Instrumental gains	Self-discovery
	1	2	3
(i) Broadening my horizons	.799		
(ii) Challenging myself in a new environment	.767		
(iii) Making friends with non-Japanese	.697		
(iv) Being encouraged to go by family or teachers	-.417	.782	
(v) Giving me an advantage in university entrance exams and looking for work		.773	
(vi) Improving my language ability	.301	.499	
(vii) Hearing about the study abroad experiences of my family or friends			.790
(viii) Wanting to live apart from family/school			.673
(ix) Having time to think about my future	.358		.534

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

In the case of (1) *self-actualisation*, travelling to new environments and developing new social networks are all about exploring new and different ways of being and speak to the transformation potential of the study abroad experience. The fact that improving one's language ability also loads onto this 'self-actualisation' component demonstrates that it was perceived as part of this process by the respondents. This component effectively speaks to items (1) and (3) in Kubota's (2016) study abroad imaginary described in Chapter 2.2.2. The inverse loading of the item [encouragement from family and friends], further demonstrates the intrinsic nature of this component. Given the high overall means of the items that make up

this component (available in Table 2), it can be considered the most prevalent underlying reason for respondents' desire to study abroad.

On the other hand, (2) *instrumental gains* maps to more extrinsic factors and represents the idea of study abroad as a vehicle to improve the individual's chances of securing a more desirable future; (4) in Kubota's (2016) study abroad imaginary. The strong loading of the item [Being encouraged to go by family or teachers] suggests that this instrumental perspective of study abroad can be transmitted through authority figures. Following the low overall means of the main two items that made up this component, it can be considered the least prevalent underlying reason for respondents' desire to study abroad.

The final component is a little more opaque, however it does appear to speak to the tensions present in the lives of adolescents as they negotiate their role in the world (Erikson & Erikson, 1998) and begin to take responsibility for their own ongoing life trajectory. Reflecting on these results together with data from the interviews, what respondents heard from friends or family members about study abroad may have led them to see it as a critical life experience, as Benson et al. (2013) describe. As I understand this component, it is connected to respondents' desire to find out who they are and where they belong and therefore define it as *self-discovery*.

5.2.3. *Study abroad as a transformative experience*

Looking at the results above, the cohort overwhelmingly viewed study abroad as a site for self-actualization and to a lesser degree, self-discovery, highlighting the complexity of their subjective reasons for studying abroad. The voluntary decision to leave one's family and friends for a year to live in a new environment with total strangers while still at high school requires a certain courage and willingness to be challenged.

The desirability of encountering the unknown possibilities of study abroad fits Aspinall's (2013) profile of the Japanese sojourner as someone who is more independent, critical, less risk-adverse and sees themselves as outside the mainstream. More generally, Murphy Lejeune (2002) has argued that those opting to study abroad tend to be those willing to "experiment with precariousness" (p. 52) arising from a family history and previous experiences with mobility. She also sees attributes of curiosity, interest in the 'other' and an appetite for social novelty as contributing factors.

Intimately connected is also the view of study abroad as an opportunity to experiment with new possible ways of being. If, as Kramsch (2009) argues, language learning offers

adolescents "a new mode of expression that enables them to escape from the confines of their own grammar and culture" (p. 14), then how much more does the physical act of relocating to a new social and linguistic environment to live with strangers offer? Drawing both on the results above and the qualitative cases described later, it appears that study abroad offered respondents a chance to leave behind the tensions and expectations of their roles at home and school to explore questions about who they are and who they could become. Less risk-adverse and more willing to encounter difference, the respondents anticipated being transformed by the experience, even as language learning remains a background consideration.

5.3. **Destinations and language use**

As stated in Chapter 4.2, AFS originated in the US and many of the places available to participants are found there. It was therefore the top destination for respondents in this study with 38% spending their year abroad in the US. As *Figure 2* below shows, nine European nations and Russia were the next most frequent destinations and accounted for 49% of all respondents. This distribution somewhat reflects broader trends in both government statistics (MEXT, 2019) and smaller quantitative studies (Asaoka & Yano, 2009).

One key difference is that for the wider high school population represented in the MEXT (2019) survey, 'Anglosphere' destinations made up the top four most popular long-term destinations (1st = US, 2nd = Canada, 3rd = New Zealand, 4th = Australia) and accounted for 81% of all long-term departures in 2016. As A. Kobayashi (2018) points out, for Japanese high school students wishing to study abroad, in addition to four main NPOs offering study abroad programs (AFS, YFU, EIL & BIEE) there are programs offered by many commercial enterprises. These include regular travel companies and over 20 specialised study abroad agencies which largely focus on the Anglosphere nations of the US, England, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. This focus reflects the demand identified in the MEXT study and illustrates the options available for those students wishing to learn in 'English-speaking' environments.

In this study however, Anglophone destinations were mainly limited to the US and more than half of the cohort travelled to non-Anglophone destinations. While this reflects the priorities and structure of AFS, it also underscores the different priorities that this group had in relation to wider Japanese high school populations. As Chapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 above as

well as the later qualitative cases confirm, language learning was often not a major factor in their decision to study abroad with AFS. As a result, the diverse locations the respondents travelled to for reasons of self-actualisation and self-discovery provided a broad spectrum of linguistic contexts from which to understand the role that language played in their experiences.
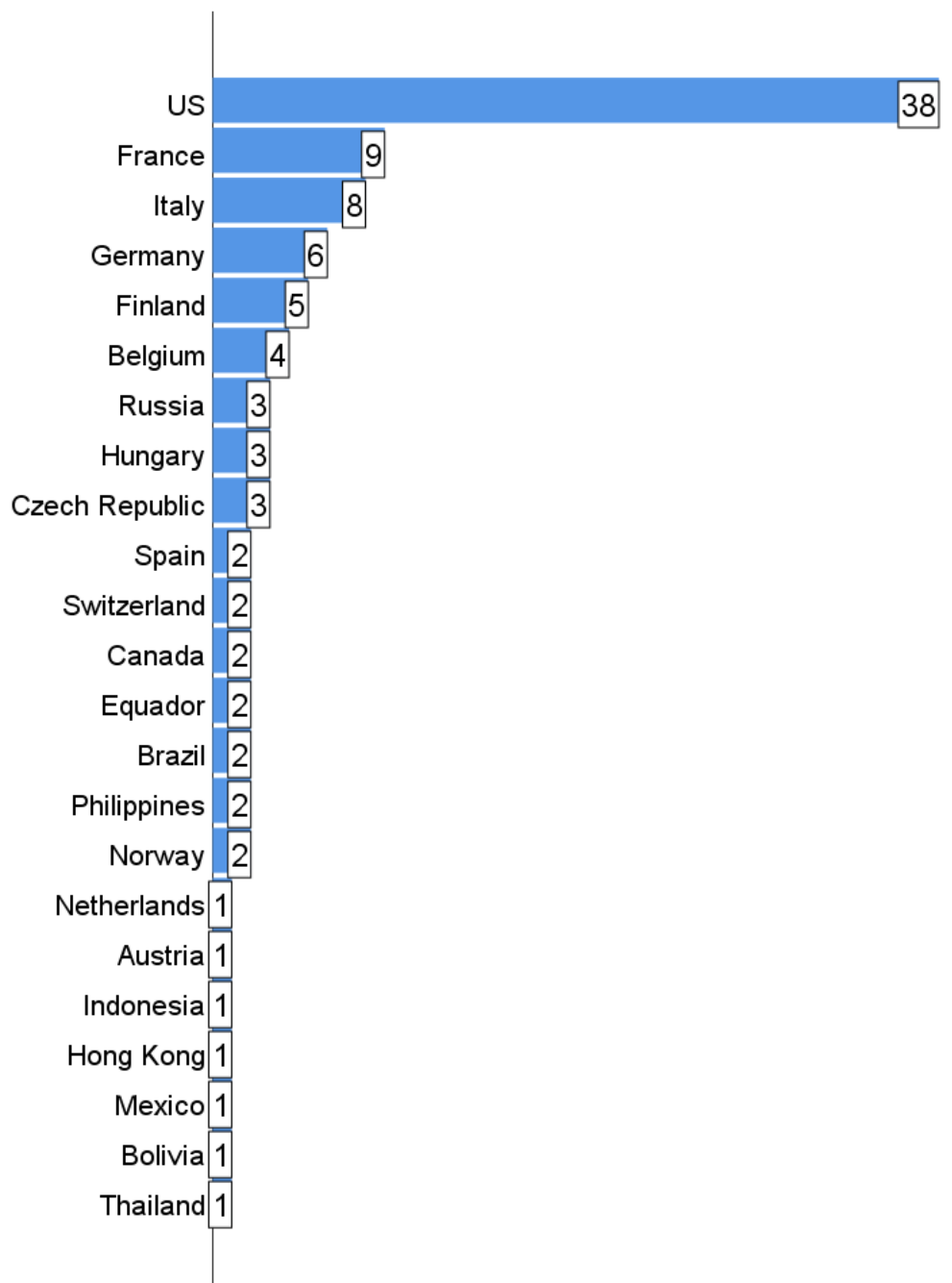
Figure 2. Respondent destination frequencies (N = 100)

As Chapter 4.4 indicated, one limitation of the questionnaire was to only capture data on the primary language used by participants while abroad. In retrospect, a more sophisticated questionnaire design that better accounted for the multilingual settings they encountered would have been preferred. Despite this, the data does provide some insights into the linguistic diversity encountered by respondents abroad and is displayed in *Table 4*. English was used as the primary language while abroad for 48% of respondents, included those who travelled to Finland, The Philippines, The Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Norway, Germany and Hungary. This reflects other research which has emphasised the presence of English as *lingua franca* in study abroad settings (e.g., Dervin, 2013; Kalocsai, 2013; R. Mitchell et al., 2017). French was the second most used primary language (n=10), including respondents who travelled to Francophone communities in France, Canada and Belgium, while the number of German users (n = 9) included those who travelled to Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Spanish was also used across multiple destinations including Spain (n = 2), Ecuador (n = 2), Mexico (n = 1) and Bolivia (n = 1).

Respondents answered questions on their perceived competency with the primary language they used across the four modalities of speaking, listening, reading and writing before and after their year abroad. A comparison of these responses is performed in Chapter 5.6. When calculating the mean scores of respondents across the modalities I noticed that respondents appeared to fall into two rough groups[3]. The first group, comprising of over half of the respondents (57%), had a mean of 2 or greater (M > 2). This group comprised of respondents who used English (n = 43), French (n = 3), German (n = 3), Italian (n = 2) as well as a single user each of Dutch, Spanish, Czech, Finnish and Russian. The remainder (43%) who rated themselves as having no or very little competence (M < 2) included users of French (n = 7), Italian (n = 6), German (n = 6), Spanish (n=5), English (n = 5), Dutch (n = 3), Russian (n = 2), Hungarian (n = 2), Portuguese (n= 2), as well as one user each of Finnish, Indonesian, Thai and Czech. As indicated in Chapter 4.7, there are indications that initial competence may affect how sojourners approach online social interaction abroad and these groups served as a basis for the analysis described in Chapter 5.5.3.

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[3] Frequency distributions of these means can be seen Figure 7 in Appendix E

Table 4. Primary language used while abroad by destination

Destination	English	French	German	Italian	Spanish	Dutch	Russian	Czech	Hungarian	Finnish	Portuguese	Indonesian	Thai	Not stated
Totals	48	10	9	8	6	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	3
US	38													
France		8												1
Italy				8										
Germany			6											
Finland	2									2				1
Belgium		1				3								
Russia							3							
Hungary	1								2					
Czech Republic	1							2						
Spain					2									
Switzerland*	(1)		1 (1)											
Canada	1	1												
Ecuador					2									
Brazil											2			
Philippines	2													
Norway	1													1
Netherlands						1								
Austria			1											
Indonesia												1		
Hong Kong	1													
Mexico					1									
Bolivia					1									
Thailand													1	

* One respondent who travelled to Switzerland indicated that both English and German were their primary languages while abroad

5.4. **Difficulties and most valuable experiences while abroad**

The next section of the questionnaire asked respondents to select up to three difficulties or things that had not met their expectations while abroad, as well as the experiences they identified as most valuable.[4]

Viewing the results in light of both the qualitative findings of this project and representative issues from the broader research literature, several significant points emerge. Firstly, the most common difficulty faced by the respondents while abroad was communication (40%). Of these 40 cases, around half (n = 22) came from the group which reported little or no initial competence in the language of their host society (see Ch. 5.2) and used a LOTE as the primary language abroad. Perhaps more interestingly, the remainder (18%) came from the group who reported some initial competence with 6 reporting some competence with a LOTE (one each from Italy, Czech Republic, Norway, Germany, Finland and France) and 12 with English (ten from the US and one each from Hungary and the Philippines).

This result is not unexpected, as Japanese sojourners often report issues of anxiety around communication, as explored in Chapter 2.5.1. The case studies featured later in this document show that these issues tended to be most prevalent during the first several months abroad and to some extent were exacerbated by a belief that language learning would happen by osmosis (see Ch. 13.3.1 for discussion of this issue). The existence of this belief among informants may also explain the number of respondents who identified lack of improvement in the L2 as an issue (16%). This result speaks to the notion that communication is about more than linguistic competence, exemplified in Narumi's struggles detailed in Chapter 8.

Difficulties in personal relationships also emerged as an important issue. Not only did it receive the second highest proportion of responses (30%) but it was also the only difficulty which had a statistically significant relationship to gender. Using a Pearson Chi-square test for association (Norušis, 2009), responding female was strongly related to selecting personal relationships as a difficulty faced while abroad (X^2 [1, N = 100] = 4.631, p = 0.031)[5]. Drawing on the interview data, this issue primarily emerged in the homestay environment (see Ch. 13.3.2 for discussion of this issue) and while it has not been identified as a gendered issue

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[4] The total frequency distributions of these responses can be seen in *Figure 8* and *Figure 9* in Appendix E.

[5] The results of all these tests can be viewed in Table 14 with the crosstabs of the statistically significant result in Table 15 in Appendix E.

previously, examples of personal friction between female participants and host sisters do appear elsewhere in the qualitative literature (e.g., Grieve, 2015; Kinginger, 2008).

Another significant issue was local surrounds (29%), including the convenience, safety and quality of entertainment options. The case studies were also instructive in this regard, as several informants (Takumi, Ch. 10; Misa, Ch. 11) explained how the remoteness of their host families' home and reliance on them for transportation limited the opportunities for interaction. Within the qualitative data, issues around opportunities for interaction and isolation also emerged in connection to two other items in this question, discrimination (14%) and difficulty making friends (13%). While the complexities around these issues will be explored in more detail in the case studies below and discussed in Chapter 15.4, their existence across a proportion of the total cases highlights the importance of adopting ecological perspective which account for both the sociocultural and geographical aspects of the environment.

Looking at the most valuable experiences during study abroad, human relationships emerge as central, with a majority of respondents indicating that making friends with non-Japanese (65%) and spending time with their host family (65%) were most valued. Taken with the overall difficulties faced, this demonstrates the significance of an individual's informal networks to their overall experience of study abroad and ties to questions of participation and investment (see Ch. 2.3.1). On this point, a Pearson Chi-square test also revealed that responding male was predictive of finding participation in sporting and club activities a valuable part of the study abroad experience ($X2$ [1, N = 100] = 5.148, p = 0.023) [6] which also emerged in the qualitative data and is discussed in Chapter 13.4.1.

5.5. **Discretional technology use while abroad**

5.5.1. *Overall patterns of usage*

As Chapter 2.3.3 underscored, mobile communications technology is now a feature of study abroad contexts and offers sojourners a range of interactional and language learning affordances. The questionnaire aimed to collect data on the broad trends of discretional

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[6] The results of all these tests can be viewed in Table 16, with crosstabs of the statistically significant result in Table *17* in Appendix E.

usage to explore how it may be influenced by other factors, such as prior competence and difficulties faced.

The questionnaire asked students to estimate their daily discretional use of technology in both Japanese (L1) and the primary language they used abroad (L2) for a number of purposes on a five-point scale. The purposes were as follows: Social Media, VOIP (e.g., Skype, Facetime), Entertainment (e.g., YouTube, music, news), Games, Area Information (e.g., maps, timetables, reviews of shops), Recording Experiences (e.g., video, photos, journaling) and Translation & Dictionaries. Two items relating to the use of technology for assignments and homework included in the questionnaire were omitted from analysis since they were determined not to fall under discretional use.

In order to better visualise the results and compare usage between L1 and L2, all responses of 30 minutes or more were combined and graphed together. Figure 3 shows the percentage of all respondents who reported using technology for each purpose for 30 minutes or more each day.[7] A detailed examination of the data showed that every respondent indicated some level of L2 use, while six respondents, five who travelled to America and one to Finland, reported no L1 technology use.
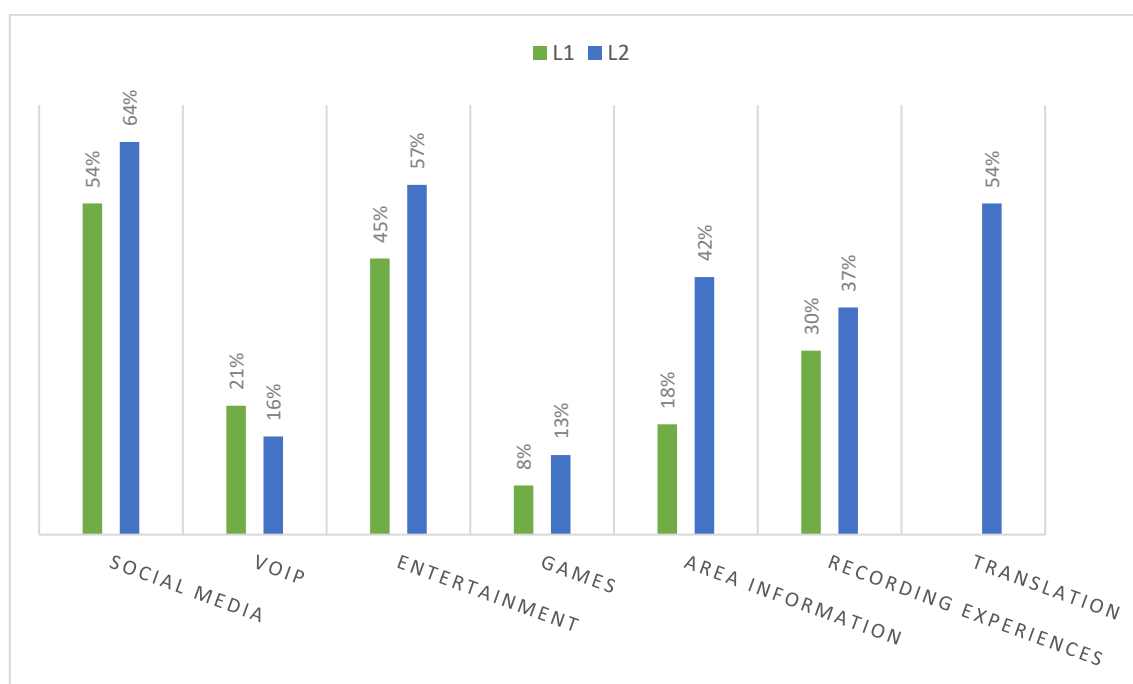
Figure 3. Discretional technology use of 30 minutes or more per day among all respondents

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[7] Breakdowns of this usage by groups based on initial competence described in Section 5.2.4 can be viewed in *Figure 10* and *Figure 11* in Appendix E.

Social media emerged as the most common use of technology with 64% of respondents using it for more than 30 minutes a day in L2 and 54% in L1. Only 6% of respondents reported not using social media in L2, reflecting the ubiquity of this mode of communication during the respondents' sojourns. While the nature of this usage is explored in more detail across the qualitative data and discussed in Chapter 15.3, one of the key findings to emerge was that participation in local peer networks was often facilitated through social media, reflecting the high volume of L2 engagement found in the questionnaire. The high level of Japanese (L1) usage is also indicative of how respondents remained connected to social networks from home. In a connected finding, VoIP usage was the only medium where usage in L1 was reported higher than L2. While research by Martínez-Arbelaiz, Areizaga, and Camps (2017) found that VOIP software to be the primarily means to contact home, in the account of Misa (Ch. 11) the synchronous nature of VOIP facilitated conversations with a Japanese friend also on study abroad.

5.5.2. *Technology use and language learning*

Looking at possible connections with language learning, a standard multiple regression analysis (Norušis, 2009) did not reveal any direct correlations between any specific use of technology and respondents' reported changes in competence. On the other hand, the case studies suggest that the high level of Entertainment use in L2 is linked to language learning strategies. This included watching YouTubers, which offered a way to access realistic instances of language used by young people, including "slang" and pronunciation vital for participation in peer networks (see Nikko, Ch. 7.3; Narumi, Ch. 8.5; Manabu, Ch. 9.3). The strategic use of translation and dictionary functions also emerged in the interview data, mainly in school and classroom settings where the content was typically beyond the competence of the participants (see Manabu, Ch. 9.3; Nagisa, Ch. 12.4). Combined with the detail offered in the interview data, the questionnaire results suggest that technology played a role in facilitating participation and investment in the linguistic practices of the host community

This contributes to the view that technology is part of a wider ecology of language learning affordances, and that the learning itself emerges as individuals "perceive these affordances, participate in ecosocial practices, and adapt to a nonnative language" (Steffensen & Kramsch, 2017, p. 5). Mobile communications technology is now part of the social and material contexts of study abroad and rather than transforming them, simply adds to the

affordances available to sojourners seeking to invest in the linguistic practices they encounter.

5.5.3. Links between difficulties faced and technology use

A recurring theme in qualitative literature that has looked at technology use by sojourners is disengagement from the host community, often connected to difficulties sojourners faced abroad such as homesickness (Durbidge, 2019). With that understanding, one of the aims of the questionnaire was to explore whether, and to what extent, difficulties faced would affect technology use during the sojourn and, indirectly, respondents' desire to engage with the host community. While exploring these connections in the results using the methods described in Chapter 4.4, I found that initial competence also appeared to affect how respondents used technology in response to difficulties faced.

Beginning with broad trends across the cohort, the most important of these was that facing difficulties in personal relationships predicted higher use of social media ($p = 0.036$) and VOIP use ($p = 0.049$) in L1.[8] The probability of this relationship existing was substantially higher when the respondent reported low or no initial proficiency in L2 ($p = 0.002$ for both social media and VOIP). Misa's account (Ch. 11) in particular is instructive in this respect since it demonstrates the individual and contextual factors behind her difficulties in personal relationships and how she used technology in response.

Another important finding was how the respondents used technology differently when faced with the same difficulty based on initial L2 competence. This is exemplified by those respondents who indicated difficulty with local surrounds.[9] Those respondents with no or limited initial competence were more likely to use technology to access information on the local area in L2 ($p = .041$). On the other hand, those who reported some initial L2 competence were more likely to use social networks ($p = .015$). While the qualitative data revealed little about this finding, the interpretation that makes sense in the context of the interview informants' accounts is those with limited proficiency had a more difficult time building social networks initially and therefore may have been more reliant on searching online to find out about their local area. Those able to build more diverse networks that are

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[8] Details of the Mann-U tests performed to obtain these results are available in *Table 18* in Appendix E.

[9] Details of the Mann-U tests performed to obtain these results are available in *Table 19* in Appendix E.

more diverse earlier in their stays may have been more likely get information through their social networks when encountering problems related to the local area.

Turning to the point made in Chapter 5.5.2, the usage of technology by the respondents and its connection to the difficulties they encountered points to its facilitative and mediating role during the sojourn. While an L1/L2-based examination is problematic from a multilingual perspective, the dichotomy would have been familiar to respondents. It also provides a simple abstraction for beginning to understand how language learning and use relate to technology during study abroad. Taken with the case studies, the results suggest that technology may play a role in supporting sojourners while abroad, indirectly affecting their opportunities to engage and interact with those in the host community.

5.6. **Perceptions of language learning and personal development post-return**

As pointed out in Chapter 5.2, for the majority of the respondents' other concerns took priority over language learning when making a decision to study abroad. Despite this and as the qualitative cases later demonstrate, language did emerge as a matter of concern very early in the sojourn (see discussion in Ch. 13.2.1). Given this study's interest in participants' investment in the linguistic practices of their host communities, it is interesting to observe how respondents viewed changes in their linguistic competence as a result of their year abroad. Responses to questions of proficiency across the four modalities both prior to (Y-axis) and after studying abroad (X-axis) have been graphed in Figure 4, with each dot representing a single respondent. The blue dots represent respondents who indicated English was the primary language they used abroad while the red dots represent those who indicated it was a LOTE.
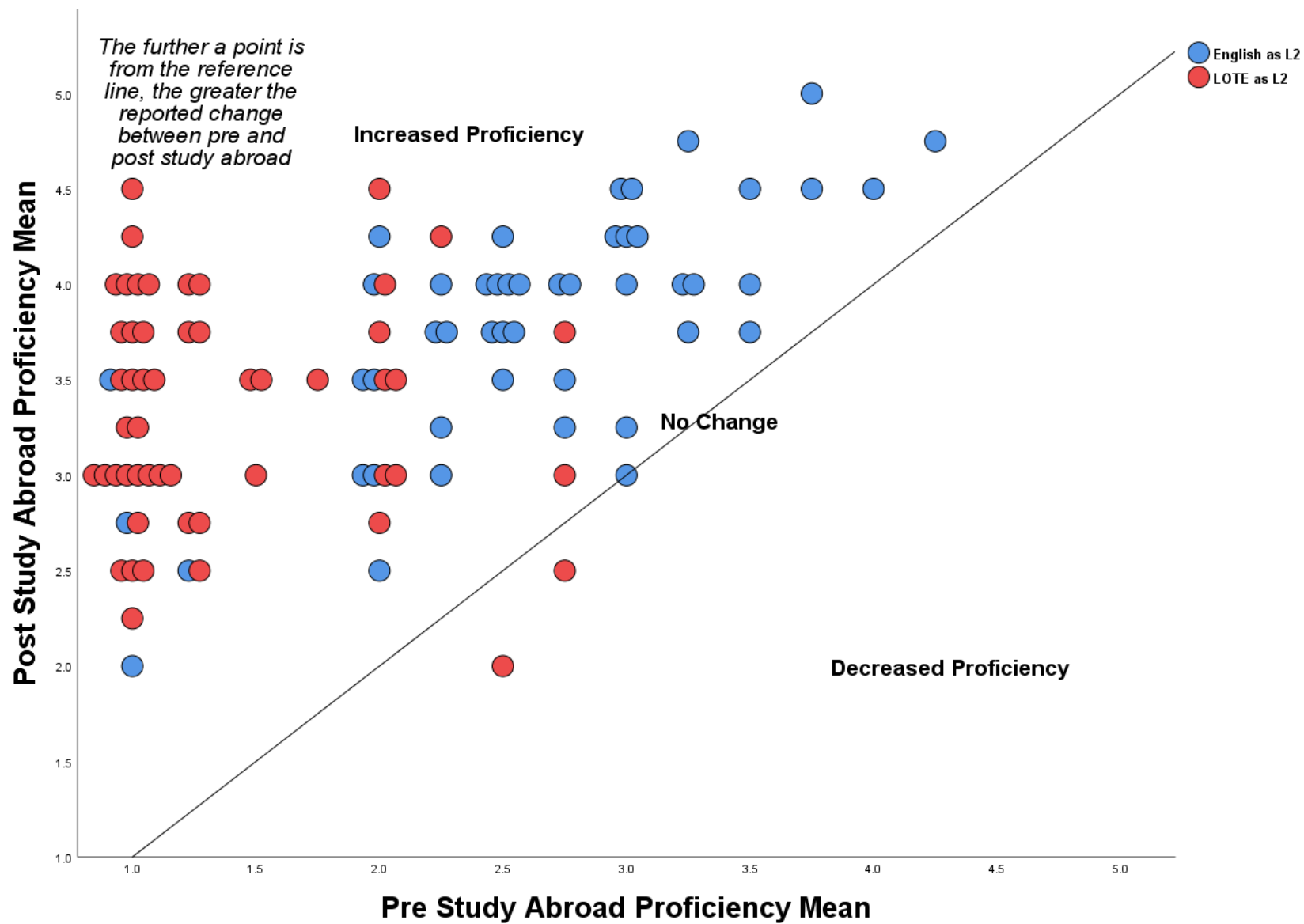
Figure 4. Means of reported competence by L2: pre vs. post study abroad. Reference line shows level for no reported change.

Overall, the data shows that there were perceptions of improved competence in all but three respondents, with the larger changes appearing among those who used a LOTE. Taken as a whole, the mean change in the English L2 group was 1.15 points out of 5, while for the LOTE L2 group it was 1.96 out of 5. One explanation is those who were exposed to languages they had not previously encountered (LOTE) experienced a more significant change in their proficiency than those who spent their time in contexts where English was predominant. Given that most respondents reported studying English formally, it is probable that changes in English competence would have been less readily perceivable as it may have come in the form of applying what had been previously learned to informal communicative situations. Given the limitations of the data, inferences cannot be made about the role that multilingual settings may have had on perceived changes in competence. One the other hand, the qualitative cases do indicate that Japanese sojourners travelling to multilingual contexts sometimes perceived them as less threatening than those where they were required to use English (see discussion in Ch. 13.2.1).

Moving to changes respondents perceived in themselves, the notion of personal transformation once again emerges. Responses on perceived changes were collected through a 19 item Likert scale question. Of these, 12 items received a mean rating of 4 or more, indicating a strong sense of change across the whole group. These items are summarised in *Table 5*. Unsurprisingly, the outcomes with the highest mean scores reflect the top reasons for studying abroad earlier in the questionnaire (see Ch. 5.2.1).

Table 5. Mean rating of all statements on respondent outcomes

Statement	Mean rating
I broadened my horizons	4.62
I made friends with non-Japanese	4.56
I became more mentally resilient	4.48
I gained understanding in other cultures	4.40
I became more independent	4.37
I can now state my opinions more clearly	4.32
My language ability improved	4.27
I became more flexible in my thinking	4.24
I became more interested in social problems	4.23
I became more confident	4.14
I value my friends and family in Japan more	4.11
I became more interested in Japanese culture	4.03
I became more creative	3.86
I became more logical	3.73
My plans for the future became clearer	3.69
I feel more 'Japanese'	3.35
I found it hard to (re)adapt to Japanese customs and life	2.76
I feel less 'Japanese'	2.65
My ways of thinking no longer match those of my family or friends	2.61

Taking these results a step further, an exploratory factor analysis was performed in SPSS using all 19 items. Initial analysis revealed 5 components with an eigenvalue of 1 or greater, however component 5 contained only three factor loadings, including two cross-loading factors. Therefore, the analysis was performed again with 4 factors extracted which accounted for 59.7% of the variance in responses to the items analysed. The results had a KMO of .768, the closeness to 1 indicating their usefulness. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity returned a value of .001, with values of less than .05 considered significant. The pattern matrix is displayed in Table 6. Looking at the items that load onto each of the components and general ideas about what motivates individuals to participant in study abroad programs, I interpret these components to correspond to ideas of (1) transformation, (2) decreased affiliation with Japanese identity, (3) increased affiliation with Japanese identity and (4) limited change.

Table 6. Pattern Matrix[a] of factor loadings for participant outcomes

	Component			
	Transformation	Decreased affiliation with Japanese identity	Increased affiliation with Japanese identity	Limited change
	1	2	3	4
(i) I broadened my horizons	.803			
(ii) I gained understanding in other cultures	.781			
(iii) I became more mentally resilient	.748			
(iv) I became more independent	.680	-.429		
(v) I became more flexible in my thinking	.638			
(vi) I made friends with non-Japanese	.475			
(vii) My language ability improved	.430			
(viii) I found it hard to (re)adapt to Japanese customs		.855		
(ix) My ways of thinking no longer match those of my family and friends		.854		
(x) I feel less 'Japanese'		.655	-.357	
(xi) I feel more 'Japanese'			.865	
(xii) I value my friends and family in Japan more			.699	
(xiii) I became more interested in Japanese culture			.619	-.416
(xiv) I became more interested in social problems			.458	-.374
(xv) I have a clear idea about what I want to do in the future				-.847
(xvi) I became more logical				-.810
(xvii) I became more creative				-.540
(xviii) I became more confident				-.526
(xix) I can now state my opinions more clearly				-.426

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.[a]

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Looking at (1) *transformation*, the five items with the highest factor scores, (i) [I broadened my horizons], (ii) [I gained understanding in other cultures], (iii) [I became more mentally resilient], (iv) [I became more independent] and (v) [I became more flexible in my thinking], indicate changes to the respondents'

frames of reference. The remaining two items, (vi) [I made friends with non-Japanese] and (vii) [My language ability improved], illustrate how the other more cognitive changes were interrelated to the social dimension of respondents' study abroad experiences. As Chapter 2.3.1 pointed out, research has illustrated the association between social connections in the host community and improved linguistic competence. The inclusion of these social factors in this component attests to the link between linguistic and social development and experiencing a change in one's frames of reference, as seen in the connections made between language learning and intercultural competence found in other studies (Jackson, 2008; Plews, 2015). Component 1, with its linguistic, social and cognitive aspects, will therefore be read as a feeling of transformation in the context of this project. This component also contained seven of eight items with the highest mean scores, indicating its prevalence among the respondents.

The next two components represent decreased (Component 2) and increased (Component 3) affiliation with a Japanese identity respectively. In the context of the qualitative results, Component 2 is noteworthy, since many of the informants reported that time abroad increased their sense of being Japanese and feeling an affiliation for their host community (although not necessarily the culture or nation itself). As described in Chapter 4.7, each respondent received a factor score for these components that indicates how they rated the items in relation to other respondents, with a score of zero representing the mean of all responses. Unsurprisingly, scores on Components 2 and 3 were inversely related across the cohort, with strong ratings in Component 3 relatively limited. The general tendency across the cohort was therefore to feel a stronger affiliation to Japan, including cultural aspects and their own social connections. It is well understood that issues of identity come into play when identity "loses the social *anchors* that made it look 'natural', pre-determined and non-negotiable" (Bauman, 2004, p. 24). In this case, it appears that for many of the respondents the result of this process was to attach a greater value to those things which connected with Japanese identities.

Finally, Component 4 consists entirely of negative loadings. This indicates a negative relationship with the underlying items. In other words, a sub-group of the cohort consistently rated the seven items which loaded onto component 4 in Table 6 below the mean of all respondents, indicating they did not feel they experienced as much of a change in these areas. Looking across the results of the 14 respondents who rated 1.0 or higher for this component (which contains the interview informant Misa, Ch. 11), they were all generally rated below or close to the mean for the self-actualization component also. This suggests that overall, this group of respondents did not perceive strong changes in themselves upon returning. However, there were few similarities in any of their other responses including their school year, changes in linguistic competence, difficulties faced or reasons

for studying abroad. As I understand this result, there are a variety of underlying complexities not neatly captured through the questionnaire which may have contributed to perceptions of limited change. This could include preconceived ideas of how much the year abroad would change them as found in Takumi's case (Ch. 10), difficulty forming meaningful relationships with locals as occurred in Misa's case (Ch. 11) or it simply being one of a series of mobility experiences as Ruka indicated (Ch. 12.2).

5.7. **Questionnaire respondents: profile and themes**

From the results above, a broad picture of the cohort emerges. From a demographic perspective, the cohort reflected the gender makeup found more widely in study abroad research and overwhelmingly the respondents came from the urbanised areas of Japan, particularly the Kanto region. Respondents largely travelled to the US or Western Europe, with smaller numbers travelling to destinations outside these areas.

One defining feature of this group is how they diverge from the wider population of Japanese high school students in their reasons for studying abroad. While language learning has consistently been identified as the main reason high school students want to study abroad in government surveys (MEXT, 2015, 2017, 2019), it was rated below other options such as [challenging myself in a new environment], [making friends with foreigners] and [having time to think about my future] by respondents in this project. Representing a subset of all high school students who go abroad, those who applied to and were selected by AFS appear to take a personally-inflected view of study that emphasised self-actualisation, self-discovery over more instrumental concerns. Linguistic development appears to be simply part of this larger project of self-actualisation.

The respondents as a whole perceived the year abroad as contributing to increased proficiency in the languages they used while abroad and this appears to have been, in some instances, supported and facilitated by communications technology. The results also indicate that technology was not only perceived as an affordance for language learning but also supported their sojourn in other ways, such as obtaining information on the local area, which indirectly provided opportunities for language learning.

Analysis suggests that the year abroad was widely experienced as a transformative experience and in many cases increased respondents' affiliation with Japanese identities. However, there was small subset of the questionnaire respondents (12%) who reported limited change across all measures (M <= 3.25) including the focal participant Misa (Ch. 11). Some of the factors which may have

contributed to this include issues tied to communication, personal relationships and the area where they spent their time abroad.

Overall, the results of the questionnaire highlight how that the respondents' reasons for studying abroad, their experiences abroad and outcomes reported were intertwined. They emphasise the importance of holistic, ecological perspectives of study abroad which views investment in language as an emergent process of participation and interaction and past of a wider experience driven by social needs and personal intentions. In the case studies which follow, I will unpack these themes further, highlighting both the specificity and broader trends which emerged from the interview informants' experiences abroad and their relationship to language.

6 Introduction to focal case studies

The following chapter serves as an introduction to the case studies which feature in Chapters 7 to 12. Opening the chapter, Table 7 provides an overview of the 14 interview informants. What follows is a description of the process I used to determine the interview informants' representativeness within the larger cohort who responded to the questionnaire. The chapter then turns to the process used to select cases for intensive analysis and outlines the cases that were included in this document.

6.1. Representativeness of the interview informants

One aim of the questionnaire was to collect data that could help to determine the representativeness of the informants within the broader cohort. While I make no claims of generalizability, the process described below provides the basis for determining their representativeness.

Self-actualisation emerged a strong underlying component which influenced respondents' decision to study abroad. Informants' scores on this component, obtained while performing the exploratory factor analysis described in Chapter 5.2.2, have been graphed in Figure 5, with .00 representing the mean score of the cohort. The results demonstrate that those who were interviewed tended to score higher for this component than a theoretically average respondent (overall scores ranged from 1.23 to -2.73). This suggests that they represented a subset of the larger group with stronger perceptions of study abroad as a site for self-actualisation.

Name	Gender	School year at departure	School year on return	Experience travelling abroad	Experience living abroad	Destination country	Months in-country	Languages formally studied	Languages spoken abroad (in order of usage)
Takumi	M	1	2	Guam, Korea	(none)	US	10	English	English
Raiken †	M	2	3	Canada, Indonesia	(none)	Finland	10	English	Finnish, English
Ruka †	M	2	2	China, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, England, France	Hong Kong until age 13	Italy	11	English	Italian, English, Cantonese, Mandarin
Nagisa †	F	1	2	Brazil, USA, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Korea	(none)	Brazil	11	English, Portuguese	Portuguese, English
Megumi †	F	2	2	Guam, Korea, Hong Kong	(none)	Germany	10	English	German
Misa	F	1	2	Singapore, France, Italy, Northern Europe	(none)	US	10.5	English, Spanish	English
Karin †*	F	1	N/A	Canada, USA	(none)	US	10	English	English
Manabu †	M	2	3	(none)	(none)	Canada	10.5	English	French, English
Iori *	M	2	N/A	USA, France, Thailand, Canada	(none)	France	10	English, French	French, English
Narumi †	F	2	3	USA, Canada	(none)	US	10.5	English ‡	English
Kina †	F	2	3	Philippines, USA, Singapore, Indonesia	(none)	US	10.5	English	English
Nikko †	F	2	3	England, France	2-week exchange in England	Hungary	11.5	English	English, Hungarian
Nanae †	F	1	2	USA, Canada	(none)	US	11	English	English
Kumiko †	F	2	3	USA, Australia, Korea	(none)	France	10	English	French, English

Table 7. Interview informants   † *provided Instagram data*   * *did not complete a second interview*   ‡ *Narumi indicated that English was also a language used at home*

Name	Pre-SA mean competence (Max = 5)	Post-SA mean competence (Max = 5)	Mean competence change	Main difficulties faced	Most valuable experiences
Takumi	2.75	4.00	1.25	Having limited chances to talk with others, The sojourn went as expected (own response)	Spending time with my host family, School life and studying, Experiencing a different culture
Raiken †	2.00	2.50	0.50	Not improving my language ability	Spending time with my host family, Making friends with foreigners,
Ruka †	2.00	3.00	1.00	Communication, Having limited chances to talk with others, Not improving my language ability very much	Spending time with my host family, Making friends with foreigners ,Tourism
Nagisa †	1.25	4.00	2.75	The location I stayed, Discrimination, Hearing Japanese culture being essentialised (own response)	Spending time with my host family, School life and studying, The location I stayed
Megumi †	1.00	3.00	2.00	Communication, Customs & food	Spending time with my host family, Experiencing a different culture, Playing sports or other group activities
Misa	3.00	3.25	0.25	Relationships with others, Difficulty making friends, Not improving my language ability very much	Experiencing a different culture, Playing sports or other group activities
Karin †*	2.00	4.25	2.25	Customs & food, The location I stayed	Spending time with my host family, School life and studying, Experiencing a different culture
Manabu †	1.00	3.00	2.00	Communication, The cost of things	Spending time with my host family, Making friends with foreigners ,Experiencing a different culture
Iori *	1.00	3.00	2.00	Communication, Discrimination	Spending time with my host family, Making friends with foreigners, The location I stayed
Narumi †	2.75	3.50	0.75	Homesickness	Spending time with my host family, School life and studying, Experiencing a different culture
Kina †	2.00	3.50	1.50	Customs & food, The location I stayed, Having limited chances to talk with others	School life and studying, Experiencing a different culture, Living away from my family in Japan
Nikko †	2.00	3.50	1.55	Communication, Relationships with others	School life and studying, Making friends with foreigners, Living away from my family in Japan
Nanae †	2.50	4.25	1.75	Communication, Relationships with others	Making friends with foreigners ,Experiencing a different culture, The location I stayed
Kumiko †	1.00	3.50	2.50	Relationships with others, The location I stayed, Discrimination	Making friends with foreigners, Experiencing a different culture, The location I stayed

Table 7. Interview informants (cont.)   *† provided Instagram data   * did not complete a second interview*
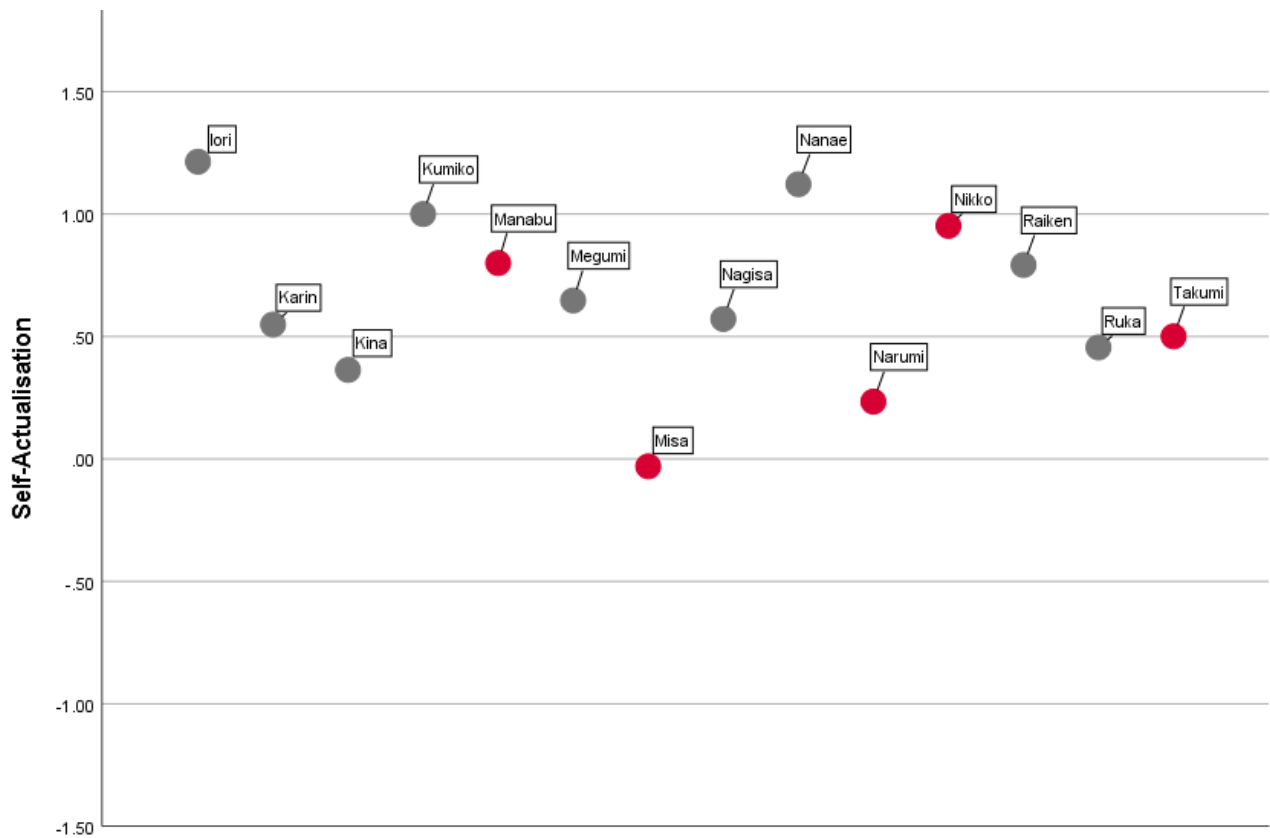
Figure 5. Self-actualisation score across interview informants (focal cases shown in red)

Looking overall at the most significant difficulties the informants reported facing while abroad, the distribution of responses tracked quite closely with the trends of the wider cohort (see Table 8), while the proficiency scores for both primary users of English and LOTE were approximately the same pre- and post-sojourn (see Table 9).

Table 8. Difficulties faced abroad. Interview informants vs. overall cohort

	Prevalence	
Difficulty	Informants	Overall
communication	42.9%	40%
personal relationships	35.7%	30%
local surrounds	28.6%	29%
lack of improvement in the L2	21.4%	16%
discrimination	21.4%	14%
difficulty making friends	7.1%	13%
lack of opportunities to speak	21.4%	11%

Table 9. Language proficiency means. Interview informants vs. overall cohort

	Pre-SA proficiency mean		Post-SA proficiency mean	
Primary language	Informants	Overall	Informants	Overall
English	2.38	2.63	3.59	3.78
LOTE	1.21	1.38	3.25	3.34

Given the emergence of transformation as an underlying component in respondents' outcomes, it serves as a good measure for determining the representativeness of the interview informants. Informants' component scores obtained while performing the exploratory factor analysis described in Chapter 5.6 have been graphed in Figure 6, with 0 representing the mean score of the cohort. Once again, the results demonstrate that those who were interviewed tended to score higher for this component than a theoretically average respondent (overall scores ranged from 1.19 to -2.80), which again suggests that they represented a subset of the larger group with stronger perceptions of transformation upon return. The key outlier though is clearly Misa (-1.43) which is a key argument for her inclusion as a focal case study (see Ch. 6.2 below). Takumi (0.13), Nagisa (0.14) and Raiken (-0.24) all sit close to the mean and therefore represent more moderate outcomes.
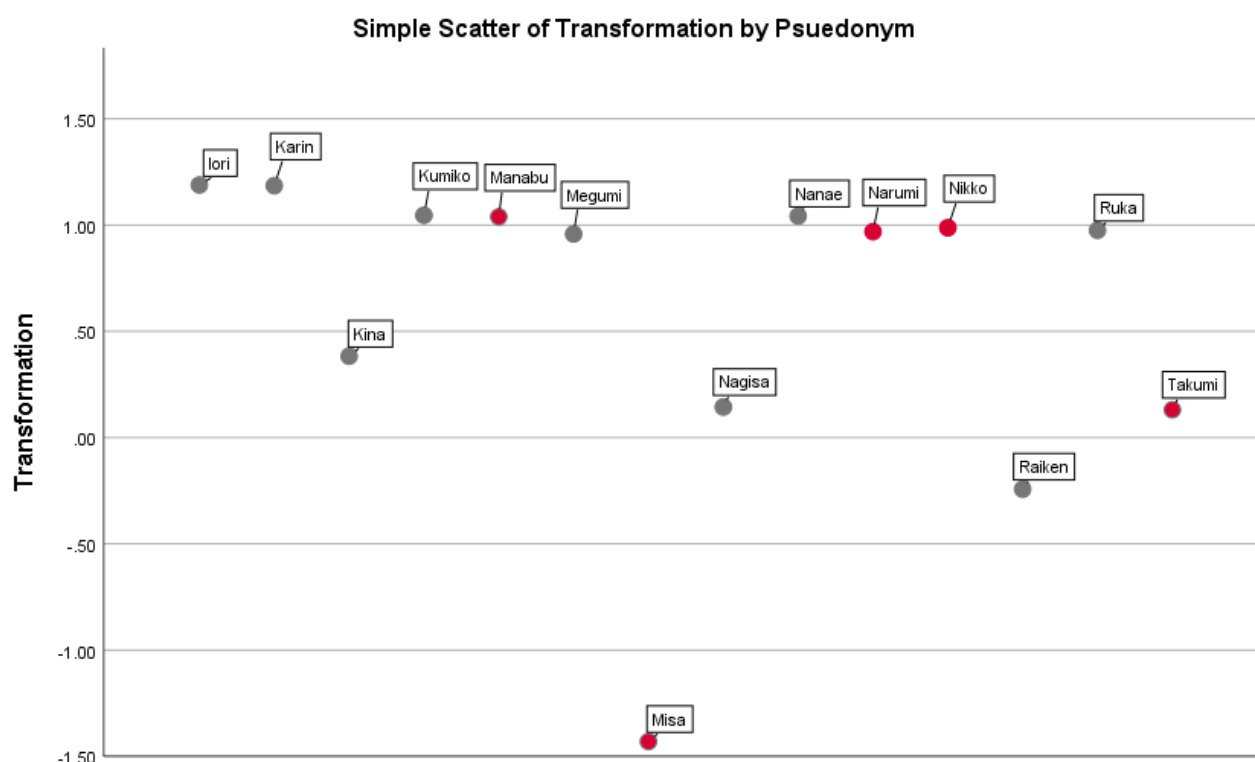
Figure 6. Transformation scores across interview informants (focal cases shown in red)

Building on respondent reasons for studying abroad and changes experienced, a further method for determining interview informants' representativeness was adopted. Hierarchical cluster analysis, a machine learning technique used to build groups of similar cases (Norušis, 2009, p. 361), was performed using all component scores generated from the factor analysis described in Chapters 5.2.2 and 5.6. The resulting groups can be viewed in Table 10 and 11 respectively.

Table 10. Motivation clusters

Cluster #	Interview informants (+other respondents)
1	**Narumi;** Ruka; **Nikko;** Kina (+7)
2	**Misa;** Kumiko (+8)
3	Nagisa; **Manabu;** Nanae; Karin; Raiken; Megumi; **Takumi** (+20)
4	(11)
5	(4)
6	(2)
7	(9)
8	Iori (+9)
9-14	(15)

Names represent the cluster that interview participant appeared in. Bolded, red names indicate the eventual focal participants. Numbers represent respondents who did not participate in the interview section of the project.

For the question on the motivations to study abroad, the largest distance between cases using squared eulicidian distance was 32.394. Within the groups that participated in the interview, the largest distance was 6.937. This meant that the majority of respondents were relatively homogenous in their responses to this question. Cutting at 14 clusters (rescaled distance = 5), all but Iori fell into three clusters which accounted for 49% of the of the questionnaire respondents[10]. This follows the analysis above that suggests that those who scored lower on the self-actualisation component were not represented in interviews. For the questions relating to perceived changes due to study abroad, the results of the analysis were much more broadly distributed. Cutting at 15 clusters (rescaled distance = 5), interview respondents come from five of those clusters that account for 77% of the respondents[11].

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[10] Dendrogram available as *Figure 12* in Appendix E
[11] Dendrogram available as Figure 13 in Appendix E

Table 11. Outcomes clusters

Cluster #	Interview informants (+other respondents)
1	**Narumi; Nikko;** Nagisa; Raiken (+14)
2	Kina; Karin; Megumi; Iori; Ruka; Nanae (+18)
3	(8)
4	(2)
5	Kumiko; **Manabu;** (12)
6	(2)
7	(10)
8	(7)
9	**Misa;** (+ 7)
10	(1)
11	(1)
12	**Takumi;** (+1)
13-15	(4)

Names represent the cluster that interview participant appeared in. Bolded, red names indicate the eventual focal participants. Numbers represent respondents who did not participate in the interview section of the project.

Taken together, these results suggest that while the interview informants are relatively representative on some measures, the sample is overtly skewed towards those who had strong self-actualising motivations for going abroad. While this is not problematic in itself, it does mean that the overall findings of this study speak to a certain type of sojourner, particularly given the overall cohorts divergence from the broader Japanese high school population in terms of reasons for studying abroad (see Ch. 5.2.1).

6.2. **Selecting case studies for analysis**

Since this project adopted a methodology of intensive analysis (see Ch. 4.8), a subset of the interview informants were selected for intensive analysis based on three criteria: (1) representative of a key segment of the overall cohort as determined by the analysis described in Chapter 6.1 (2) a high level of engagement in the data-collection process (3) representative of different genders and backgrounds (4) representative of different linguistic and geographic settings during the sojourn. The five informants' narratives selected in response to these criteria are presented as case studies in the following chapters. In the extensive analysis phase, salient themes and features that emerged from these cases were tested against the remaining cases. Chapter 12 contains limited selections

from an additional five cases that help to support or provide clear contrasts to the experiences highlighted in the main case studies.

6.2.1.   Cases selected for intensive analysis

Nikko (Ch. 7): Nikko was both representative of significant clusters for motivations (cluster #1) and outcomes (cluster #1) and was one of the most engaged informants in the data collection process. She contributed almost four hours of interview data, offered access to her Instagram and Facebook accounts and provided unprovoked follow-up emails to her interview, resulting in a rich data set for analysis. Her sojourn took place in a metropolitan area of Hungary, encountering both English and Hungarian across several communities during her sojourn.

Narumi (Ch. 8): Based on the above analysis, Narumi's case appears similar to Nikko and she appears in the same clusters for motivations (cluster #1) and outcomes (cluster #1) in very close proximity to Nikko (rescaled distance = 2). Narumi was also very engaged with the data collection process contributing over three and a half hours of interview data and providing access to her Instagram account. Narumi's background growing up in a multiethnic, multilingual home with her American father and Japanese mother, and her status as a heritage English speaker was a strong factor in her inclusion. Her sojourn took place in a suburban area of the Midwestern US and she primarily used English while abroad.

Manabu (Ch. 9): Manabu appears in cluster #3 for motivations and #5 for outcomes and willingly provided over three and a half hours of interview data and access to his Instagram account. Manabu's account was also selected for the perspective it provided of a young man navigating a unique multilingual setting, sojourning in a metropolitan centre in the Canadian province of Québec where he used French and English.

Takumi (Ch. 10): Takumi's case was selected for intensive analysis as his outcome cluster (#12) was the most distant from other informants. He was also one of the only four males who completed both interviews rounds and was unique in living in a rural area during study abroad. Like the other focal cases, Takumi was also highly engaged with the data collection process, although he indicated that he could not provide any social media from his time abroad.

Misa (Ch. 11): As Figure 5 demonstrated, Misa reported significantly less change than the rest of the informants and the cohort in general. This and her inclusion in an outcome cluster otherwise unrepresented (#9) were the main basis for selection as a focal case. Misa sojourned in a suburban area of the US Midwest and used mainly English and Japanese while abroad. When asked if she was

willing to allow access to social media for the project, she provided me with copies of text messages she had exchanged with her host sister prior to leaving Japan.

Iori's appearance in a unique motivations cluster (#8) suggests he would also be a possible candidate for intensive analysis. However, there were several considerations that led me to exclude his case. During his first-round interview, he provided limited detail in his answers to several questions and was evasive when I sought detail in follow-up questions. He also declined to provide access to social media accounts he indicated using while abroad. Due to personal reasons, he also did not participate in a follow-up interview which limited the scope of his case.

6.2.2. *Supplementary cases*

Megumi (Ch. 12.1): Megumi's case was included primarily for her experiences of racism in Germany and the contrast she experienced after a change in host schools several months into her sojourn.

Ruka (Ch. 12.2): Ruka's sojourn to Italy was included because his background living in Hong Kong until age 13 gave him a different perspective on the sojourn to many of his peers. His narrative also highlights issues sojourners can face returning to high school in Japan.

Raiken (Ch. 12.3): Raiken's experience in Finland provides further perspectives on the way sojourners can navigate multilingual settings of study abroad. Important were the way he developed his social networks and the facilitating role technology played.

Nagisa (Ch. 12.4): Nagisa was one of the most engaged informants in the data collection experience but was excluded from intensive analysis due to constraints of time, scope and space. Her sojourn to Brazil echoes many of the themes found across the informants' cases, particularly the role of the host family, the multilingual nature of her experience, and the use of technology while abroad.

Kumiko (Ch. 12.5): Kumiko's case has been included primarily for her post-sojourn experience which demonstrates the difficulties sojourners can face acculturating after returning and how they may struggle to maintain the competencies they developed while abroad.

6.3. **The structure and presentation of case studies**

In opening each of the focal cases presented in Chapters 7 to 11, I give a brief overview of its significance, and where relevant, aspects of my interaction with the informants that provide context for, or contributed to, the analysis. The first main section then provides background, highlighting relevant parts of the informants' personal histories and tracing the emergence and development of their desire to study abroad. The time they spent abroad is then divided into three broad sections;

early, mid and late stages, which span roughly three to four months each. This is a device I have used to organise the presentation of their year abroad, however in retelling their experiences many participants pointed to specific time periods (the three-month mark in particular) which roughly align with this structure. This is followed by a single section which addresses the year after returning. Each chapter then concludes with a discussion of the significant findings which arise from the case, highlighting the similarities and contrasts with other cases in this project and the literature more generally.

Drawing on the underlying principle of the PPCT framework, in each case I have attempted to highlight how informants' interactions with the contexts they inhabit affected the unfolding processes of investment prior to, during and after the sojourn. This approach illustrates the complex ways in which the social and material world can influence sojourners' experiences, and the role that their individual agency plays in responding to, navigating and shaping the contexts they encounter. Moreover, these cases reveal the situated nature of the informants' linguistic investment and development, evolving in response not only to their need and desire for linguistic competence, but also the social realities of the contexts they return to after their year abroad.

In reporting the narratives of informant experiences below, I acknowledge that what exists is a partial and interpretive recreation of their stories as communicated to me. I have attempted wherever possible, to make the co-constructed nature of the interview possible by including my questions and responses, however for reasons of space and readability this was not always possible. Readability was also a consideration when deciding the way that extracts would be presented, and they have therefore been formatted for clarity rather than to maintain the cadence of informants' utterances. This meant removing disfluencies such as stutters, false starts and repetitions not connected to emphasis. On the other hand, I have tried to preserve informants' voices where possible and have not modified unusual syntax where I felt meaning was clear. The English translations which appear after Japanese extracts are all my own and omit hesitation devices which appear in the originals. A transcription guide is included in Appendix A.

7 Nikko: Self-actualisation in Hungary

As one of the most engaged informants in this project, Nikko's rich account of her sojourn to Hungary and the subsequent year transitioning from high school to university presents a compelling case to begin with. It contains many of the salient themes that emerge throughout other informants' accounts and provides an illustration of how linguistic investment occurs in multilingual study abroad settings. Throughout the interview process, Nikko primarily used English and was thoughtful and detailed in her responses. Her first-round interview was completed over two consecutive weekends and extracts from these sessions are therefore labelled interview 1.1 and 1.2 respectively. Additionally, Nikko's account demonstrates how imagined identities that lead individuals to study abroad can be shaped and subverted by the experience.

Essentially, Nikko's narrative is one of childhood imaginations that led her on a journey to become an internationally-mobile multilingual. The social relationships and competencies she developed in Hungary, particularly within a community of exchange students on similar trajectories, were influential in the emergence of this identity. The freedom Nikko enjoyed as an exchange student in a large European city contrasted sharply with the sense of restriction she experienced when returning to high school in Japan. Influenced by her experiences abroad, Nikko enrolled at a university that allowed her to continue to pursue a life that aligned with the multilingual, internationally-minded Japanese identity she was developing.

7.1. Background

Nikko's study abroad journey began in a way that many journeys do, rooted in imagination and possibilities of a world beyond the present reality. For Nikko, that reality was life as the only female child in her family and a second-year high school student in the Greater Tokyo region. Nikko already possessed limited international mobility experience, previously participating in a two-week study abroad program to England and travelling England and France as a tourist. Nikko's first-round interview session was conducted over two consecutive Sunday mornings on Skype, while her second-round session was a single hour-long interview using Zoom. Nikko was keen to share her experiences in interviews and provided lengthy, detailed responses to prompts and questions.

Around the age of 15, Nikko decided to go on a long-term exchange, researching different organisations through the internet. An important part of her desire to go abroad was a childhood fantasy she had of becoming French. This had arisen from magazines and TV she had consumed and the images they contained of Paris; a city full of beautiful buildings, culture and food. Moreover, it

was the people who most strongly caught her imagination. Nikko described being struck by the beauty of French people and it became something she desired, since having a French face "would be so unique and special and so different face from Japanese people." (Nikko, interview 1.1) Over time, this imagined identity evolved to align with the opportunities available to her.

Nikko: I was just like OK, I can't be that because I was born here and I'm Japanese, so I can't do that and if I got married foreigner, then I can have half baby between Japan and some country. That was my thought then. Ok, then I started to be interested in another countries, and I really wanted to live in another country or see another culture or just people there, so then I was started to think to be an exchange student. (Nikko, interview 1.1)

Nikko's desire to study abroad was therefore partially underpinned by the notion that living abroad could differentiate her from her peers; studying abroad would make her exceptional. This idea also emerged in the accounts of Manabu (Ch. 9) and Takumi (Ch. 10), suggesting that it was a part of a more widely circulating imagination of study abroad. In some ways it represents an alternative to the wider expectations of conformity in high school indicated by Sana in Durbidge (2017) and more generally expressed by Yoneyama (1999) in her monograph on the culture of Japanese high school.

One of the reasons that Nikko had decided to apply to AFS rather than other similar organisations, such as YFU or EIL, was the opportunities it offered in Europe. While Nikko was unable to obtain a place in the French exchange program, she did receive her final preference of Hungary. Through images she found online of local architecture and food, Nikko described falling in love with the country before departing. On the questionnaire, Nikko had also indicated that moving away from her family was a 'very important' reason for wanting to study abroad. During the interview, she explained that in part, this was related to being a teenager and wanting more independence. Nikko felt that she was seen as a "little girl" by her family and wanted to use the opportunity of studying abroad as a means to claim a more independent role for herself. One important point to note is that of the reasons Nikko had for electing to study abroad, language was not one of them, aligning with broader results from the questionnaire (see Ch. 5.2.1). Essentially, Nikko understood study abroad as a means to actualise an imagined identity of which language did not appear to be a significant part.

7.2. **Early stages**

Nikko was placed with a host family in a large city in Hungary, where she stayed for the duration of her time abroad. While Nikko reported having limited proficiency in English and none in Hungarian before departing, both languages became integral to her experience. This was made clear almost

immediately as she encountered difficulties communicating with other exchange students she met at the airport. The significance of English was amplified at the orientation session in her host city.

Nikko: When I had orientation, people were speaking in English so fluently and volunteers were as well and […] I was feeling a little bit far from the others because the others were speaking in English, or Spanish even, with the people from another countries. […] I was like, oh that's good but I'm afraid to talk to them because of my English skill. So at the beginning I was really stressed out because of my language skills. (Nikko, interview 1.1)

In what emerged as a theme throughout the data, the informants' first interactions with exchange student peers elicited feelings of anxiety as they experienced a gap between perceptions of their own competence and that of their peers. For many of the informants this elicited feelings of social distance and, in some cases, isolation, illustrating how the presence of English as a *lingua franca* generated feelings of deficiency and reflecting the literature discussed in Chapter 2.5.1.

Following the two-day orientation session, Nikko moved in with her host mother and sister where the linguistic situation was more dynamic. Nikko's host mother used only Hungarian. With no initial competence, Nikko had to rely on her host sister acting as a *language broker* (Morales & Hanson, 2005), providing instrumental support through interpretation, in order to communicate with her host mother. Nikko's host sister was competent in English and also had some knowledge of Japanese which meant that their initial communication was negotiated through the combined sum of their linguistic competencies. Nikko's host sister also provided crucial informational support during the first few months, acting as Nikko's guide and main social relationship at school.

Three months into her stay however, Nikko's host sister left on a one-month exchange to Japan. This meant Nikko was required to communicate with her host mother without the support of her host sister. Presented with what could have been an alienating experience, given the lack of overlap in Nikko and her host mother's linguistic repertoires, Nikko adopted a strategy that allowed her to develop both her competence in Hungarian and the relationship with her host mother.

Nikko: I was thinking like, how can I be good with her then, because I was at home only with her and I didn't want to have that time […] like silent with her. So I was thinking like, how I can make it better […] I thought maybe I can write, I could write diaries in Hungarian and she could check it out and also it's good for studying for me. I started to write really, like 5 sentences at the beginning then, but it became one page at the end of my exchange year. (Nikko, interview 1.1)

The action of checking these diary entries led into conversations on the topics that Nikko had written on; activities, food, weather, school life. Communication happened in these moments not only through the affordances offered by Nikko's written entries, but also the affordances offered by non-linguistic modes of meaning-making such as body language and images found online.

The daily, reoccurring nature of these interactions was critical to developing Nikko's Hungarian competence and highlights some aspects of the key support role that host mothers played throughout the informants' accounts of their time abroad. The first of these is the way that Nikko's host mother made herself available to Nikko on a daily basis, providing the regularity and frequency of interaction required for the proximal processes of development to take place. The second is the way that she actively engaged with Nikko, providing feedback on her diary entries and helping to shape conversations around them, effectively functioning as a Vygotskyian knowledgeable other (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Thirdly, by interacting with Nikko and engaging with her learning, Nikko's host mother was implicitly demonstrating the value she placed on the relationship. This and the clear, recognised roles they shared provided embedded support to Nikko, creating a relationship that had clear, recognised roles and provided stability in her home away from home.

While recounting her time abroad, Nikko reported prioritising the relationship with host mother during the initial few months. Nikko's classmates could communicate in English, and since her interaction with them remained limited at this time, she made learning Hungarian her main concern. Hungarian became part of the shared interactional repertoire of the host family as the micro contexts of interaction continued to be negotiated around the evolving competencies of its members.

After several months, the stability offered by the relationship with her host mother meant that Nikko felt comfortable looking beyond the host family to develop her social networks. The way that Nikko was able to develop connections with her classmates provides a key contrast to the strategy she had used with her host mother.

Nikko: My classmates send me messages sometimes even [if] we are talking at school, but at the beginning I wasn't really close to my classmates, but they sent me like WhatsApp, then we were talking. (Nikko, interview 1.1)

In what may have been a natural and relatively simple action of inviting Nikko to connect with them on the messaging service WhatsApp, this gesture was significant in facilitating her participation in the community of the classroom. The asynchronous nature of instant messaging means users, such as Nikko, have time to decode and plan messages, supporting their ability to participate. The fact that co-present conversations may have also occurred simultaneously, as Nikko indicates, may also have supported comprehension as topics and ideas communicated rapidly and ephemerally in speech may also have been available in messages. The multimodal nature of this interaction would have supported Nikko's ability to comprehend, participate and added to her sense of inclusion. Belonging to and building connections in this community was therefore a multimodal process, although one which adopted different modes to that of the relationship she had to her host mother.

The importance of the networks she was building with her classmates became obvious around this time as, like several other informants, (Narumi, Ch. 8; Misa, Ch. 11; Nagisa, Ch. 12.4), the relationship with her host sister became strained and a source of stress.

Nikko: So my host sister help me a lot in the beginning because I didn't know anything. And she told me about the city or school life and everything then. But she had to learn a lot for the exam at school […] so she didn't have enough time to talk to me or she was just stressed out because she had to, I don't know, like, care about me. And I was kind of depressed, because I could see that she was so tired […] didn't really seem to like to talk to me. (Nikko, interview 1.2)

In what would prove to be a decisive part of her time abroad, Nikko looked to her new peer networks for affective support rather than the existing social networks she had from Japan. Bringing the issue she was facing to her classmates created an opportunity for interaction with Kristel, a female exchange student from Estonia. During the first few months, there had been limited contact between them and Nikko described being apprehensive approaching her since Kristel "didn't look like the friendly person". When Nikko sought advice from her classmates on the issue with her sister, Kristel's words resonated with her and provided the impetus for their friendship. Until this point, the peer that Nikko had spent most time with had been her host sister, however this interaction was the beginning of a significant relationship that helped to realign and diversify Nikko's social networks.

Nikko: So [Kristel] told me I shouldn't care about that much and I should live my life. […] from that time I tried to talk to [Kristel] and she did say really good thing to me. Then I got to know she's a really good person […] so I decided to take a distance with my host sister and I started to spend more time with Kristel at school. (Nikko, interview 1.2)

While Nikko never indicated that their shared status as exchange students was an important factor in this initial encounter, the events which unfolded as a result of their friendship indicate that the shared identity and lived experiences were uniting factors as the relationship developed. The affective support that Kristel offered at this critical moment also highlights the role that specific individuals can play in shaping the trajectories of sojourners, particularly when their social networks may be highly limited.

One factor which strengthened their connection was their shared experience of the linguistic environment of the classroom; local students used English as a *lingua franca* to communicate with exchange students, while conversations with each other and most lessons were conducted in Hungarian. Since Nikko and Kristel had both arrived without prior knowledge of Hungarian, their ability to comprehend and participate in the formal aspects of class was highly limited and they "usually didn't have anything to do" (Nikko, interview 1.2). Instead, they would spend this time together studying Hungarian or chatting in their shared second language of English. They also took

Hungarian lessons together once a week at a local teacher's house and began spending more time together informally, going to the movies, shopping or sleeping over at each other's houses.

It was partly due to this relationship that Nikko felt that she underwent major changes in the way that she communicated and interacted with others. Until Nikko met Kristel, she said that she had been highly conscious of the way other people perceived her and adopted sociopragmatic strategies intended to avoid conflict in interactions. For example, complimenting interlocutors and avoiding criticism. Nikko recalled one episode in particular where Kristel called attention to this strategy.

Nikko: [Kristel] told me like, [Nikko], do you really say what you really think? Then I was like, ye-yeah… ((@)) Then like, I was thinking like, oh my god, she got to know me or she just realised, how maybe like, my compliments, what I was saying to her, it was kinda like the same thing […] but I was really happy that she got me then and I wanted to show, my like everything of me to her because I trusted her. (Nikko, interview 1.2)

By contrasting the sociopragmatic strategy of not saying "what you really think" with wanting "to show […] everything" Nikko illustrates the transformation she experienced, both in how she understood the relationship with Kristel and, importantly for this project, the way she understood her own role in interaction. Regular and ongoing interaction with Kristel reshaped what Nikko saw as important in interactions and contributed to what she saw as one of the most significant outcomes from her time abroad. The proximal process that occurred as part of these ongoing interactions and the affective and embedded support the relationship offered was a critical influence on Nikko's developmental trajectory.

7.3. **Mid stages**

Nikko was one of 10 exchange students at her high school, and although she did spend time with many of them during breaks at school, she struggled to participate in the way that others did. One event which Nikko recalled triggering feelings of disappointment was a conversation between two other exchange students, an American and a Mexican girl, who were "really good at English". Trying to listen to the conversation, Nikko realised there was so much that she could not understand, leading her to the realisation that her ability was far below where it needed to be. These feelings of inadequacy arrived around the same time as the winter made itself felt, resulting in lower temperatures and limited hours of light.

Levi: How was that [time] for you?

Nikko: It was kind of middle exchange year, and it was winter, and it's really cold, so the weather also made me sad and depressed, and this time my language blank just came, so like double punch, and I was like "ooh". Then, I think during the winter, I think I had only one time, I really missed my country, people, food. I think because of the weather, because of my worry things, then I was

> feeling if I could speak in Japanese I could express my feeling, everything […] I was just depressed. (Nikko, interview 1.2)

Despite these feelings, Nikko had already made the decision to limit contact with her networks in Japan. She had found that Skyping with her family had only made her miss them more and preferred to maintain contact with her friends through images on Instagram.

One of the strategies that helped Nikko to navigate this period and develop her English competence was a daily habit of watching a number of YouTubers. Nikko explained that she had chosen this content over other possibilities because it reflected actual communication and allowed her to learn things like slang or pronunciation. The quotidian nature of the content, the demographic of the producers and the regularity with which it was produced made it ideal for Nikko to appropriate the linguistic resources needed to interact with peers in her community.

Levi: So you were studying English through YouTube, who did you use that English with?

Nikko: [...] When I was at school I could understand more than before. For example, like when my friends were talking and then they were [using] slangs, I didn't know that [meaning] before, but after I started to watch videos, then I […] heard that from the videos, [the] same thing what they were saying. So yeah, like the conversation when I was at school and also on [social media]. (Nikko, interview 1.1)

Due to the diverse backgrounds of many of the exchange students at Nikko's school and the limits of their overlapping linguistic competencies, interaction had generally remained superficial and brief. After school returned from the winter vacation changes in the habits of the exchange students and their developing English competencies created opportunities for recurring interaction to take place in ways that were increasingly complex, creating an environment for ongoing linguistic development.

In the school was a seating area where exchange students often gathered briefly during breaks between classes. After the winter holiday however, many exchange students began skipping classes taught in Hungarian and gathering in this seating area to chat or watch Netflix together.

Nikko: I think it's from wintertime and we got more time together, then we were speaking more and everybody's English skill got improved. So we could have more conversations. Then we were making fun of each other, or just sometime have a deep conversations so like from that time our relationship got so much stronger than before then we were more closer than before. (Nikko, interview 1.1)

Essentially this space became a place that the exchange students in Nikko's school, including Kristel, formed a community around their shared experiences and struggles that came with that role. The increase in opportunities to interact in the shared language of English allowed them to concomitantly develop their competence and the strength of their connections.

This community grew beyond the school as the members drew on social connections they had formed through the organisations they had come to Hungary with, including members from neighbouring cities. As members of the various communities encountered each other through various social events, they mutually increased the range of their own social networks. Importantly, the ability of these exchange students to organise and engage in this type of social activity was a product of their geographical proximity and the mobility provided by public transport. While Nikko noted the development of her English competence through her participation in this community, there was also evidence that this community's shared linguistic repertoire reflected the diversity of its members and the surrounding linguistic context. Nikko described how the exchange students would intersperse their English with swear words from Hungarian as a sign of informality, solidarity and knowledge of youth culture in Hungary, while interactions on Nikko's Instagram with other exchange students contained elements of English, Hungarian, Portuguese and Mandarin.

As mentioned earlier, an important part of Nikko's relationship with Kristel was their shared experience of learning Hungarian. This aspect of their relationship afforded them the opportunity to begin negotiating identities as users of Hungarian in the classroom together. While English had been the language of communication with their classmates, around this time they began initiating exchanges and responding to their classmates in Hungarian. While these interactions were very limited at first, their classmates were supportive and encouraging. This in turn led Nikko to attempt more complex interactions and position herself as a competent member of this community, particularly through the use of "slang in Hungarian" (Nikko, interview 1.1). Critically too, the ability to interact in Hungarian was tied to Nikko's sense of belonging since she felt that "when I'm speaking in Hungarian, I can get more closer to them." (Nikko, interview 1.1)

7.4. **Late stages**

Around January, a girl from Argentina, Martina, arrived in Nikko's city. Martina had a way of interacting with others that Nikko found to be initially confronting; she would say "mean things" to other people, although in a playful way. Nikko soon began to warm to Martina though and understand this teasing as "how she express her love to other people" (Nikko, interview 1.2). Interacting with Martina allowed Nikko to begin experimenting with this form of play in her own interactions. Nikko soon felt she could interact more freely, since she did not have to care about offending Martina.

Levi: Can you remember exactly one joke, one time you really felt a connection with her?

Nikko: OK... For example, when we went on a trip to Italy, we went to the museum, then there was one object of woman and man. Then they were like hugging and kissing […] Then I told her that "it's you on Friday night!" She was laughing, "That's me!" We were always like that.

Levi: @@ And how did you feel that you could make that joke with her?

Nikko: If she laughs, then I'm laughing too. So it's so much fun. […].

Levi: Is this the first person that you could talk like this with that you remember?

Nikko: I think so. (Nikko, interview 1.2)

Nikko explained that when she began the year abroad, she was a "person who always overthinks" (Nikko, interview 1.2) her relationships with others. Through this community of exchange students, in particular the relationships with Kristel and Martina, Nikko learned to express solidarity in new ways. Nikko's understanding of how she could and should communicate with others was transformed from one which prioritised avoiding conflict to one which emphasised authenticity and sociability. As Nikko saw it, one of the benefits of studying abroad during high school was that she had not "established […] strong *kachikan* (values)" (Nikko, interview 1.2) and so they could be transformed by the experience. Essentially, the proximal process of interacting with those in her peer networks had led to development not only in Nikko's interactional and intercultural competence but also what she valued in friendships and communication.

In the later months of Nikko's time abroad an encounter with a local led to relationship that held romantic possibilities. While out with friends one evening she was approached by a local boy who expressed an interest in Japanese culture. After a brief initial interaction, they connected on Facebook and ongoing interactions were facilitated through the Messenger app. The following weekend they met again at an event she attended with friends and it was at this event she "got to know him, [and] he told me that he liked me. Then I also started to kinda like him" (Nikko, interview 1.2). Again, as with the friends in her class, the connection she had made with a local had been facilitated by communications technology. With communications technology now a ubiquitous part of social life, particularly among young people, conducting social relations multimodally across multiple online platforms has become the norm. In fact, there appear to be expectations that relationships will be conducted in this way and not having access to online modes of communication can limit sojourners' opportunities to participate (as seen in Nagisa's account in Ch. 12.4).

Despite the mutual attraction, the relationship never became serious, since:

Nikko: He told me that he knew that I had to leave soon. If we got together […] then we can't be together like longer, like just few months […] so we just decided to be a good friends (Nikko, interview 1.2)

Nikko regretted that they had not met earlier in her stay since, "if it was at the beginning then it could [have been] something" (Nikko, interview 1.2). This sense of ephemerality, which played a role in limiting a potential romance, is a phenomenon that many of the informants reported as a force which influenced the decisions they made while abroad. Murphy-Lejeune (2002) has highlighted how sojourners can be "infinitely sensitive to the richness of a fleeting temporality" (p. 18), and in Nikko's account we see the effects of this sensation in the way the relationship was constrained.

This was also evident when Nikko went to the airport to see Kristel off. She described being at the departure gate, saying goodbye to Kristel and feeling like her experience was ending. Then "when my turn came, when I was leaving Hungary, I could not get that feeling." This demonstrates that, at least in Nikko's case, the relationships developed with other exchange students appeared to be as, if not more important than those with locals. As Coleman (2015), R. Mitchell et al. (2017) and others have argued, connections with other 'non-locals' are often easier to come by then those with locals. Nikko's case demonstrates that these relationships be just as crucial as relationships with locals, both in terms of the support they offer and opportunities for interaction and developing linguistic competence. The emphasis on *lingua francs* such as English in these communities can be seen as a boon by those coming from non-English speaking backgrounds such as Nikko and accentuates how these contexts may be experienced differently to those from Anglophone backgrounds.

7.5. **Post-sojourn**

Nikko returned to Japan in the final year of high school, several months before she would take entrance exams for university. This divided the year after Nikko returned into separate phases, with exams functioning as a point of demarcation. In some senses, her view of returning to high school evolved in the 10 months between each of her interview sessions, highlighting the instability of sojourners' understandings of their experiences.

One of the more immediate changes that Nikko reported in her first-round interviews tied to how she approached interaction and relationships as indicated in Chapter 7.4.

Nikko: I became the person who can say my opinion more and who can listen to others, so I think now I'm having more deep relationships with Japanese people […] Now I'm really close to [one girl], but before my exchange year I didn't talk to her that much. But after I just came back here, then I started to talk to her and I could tell my feeling and I could listen to her opinions […] I think my style to have relationships changed and it's working in a good way. (Nikko, initial interview 1.2)

These changes in her communicative style are evidence of development in her multi-competence, as Nikko describes taking pragmatic strategies learned while using English and applying them to interactions conducted in Japanese. In a sense, what Nikko is describing is a holistic change in the

way she communicates, which has had the effect of reconfiguring the way she interacts with others and the nature of those connections.

Nikko also highlighted the role context had on the parts of her identity that felt more salient at this time, explaining that when she arrived back in Japan her appearance and behaviour marked her as different, indicating on the questionnaire that she felt 'less Japanese'. However, after spending the months between returning and the interview interacting with other Japanese people, she now identified as "really Japanese" (Nikko, interview 1.2). Despite this statement, Nikko also described how she had changed her appearance, cutting her hair shorter and dying it dark brown, as well as becoming more willing than her peers to ask questions during class.

During her second-round interview a year after returning, Nikko had developed a negative understanding of her final months in high school. Her description of that period was characterised by a sense of restricted freedom and choice, both to the way Nikko spent her time and the way she presented herself. Being an exchange student had meant that many of the responsibilities that come with being a regular student, such as sitting exams and attending classes in Hungarian were done at her discretion. Returning to high school in Japan had brought with it expectations and pressure to perform academically, particularly in university entrance exams. Nikko framed the difference around the issue of choice.

Nikko: When I was in Hungary I was kind of like, having freedom to choose whatever I want to do, and […] when I was in Japanese high school […] I kind of didn't really have any choice but I have to like, study or be in the class, and having high school life. (Nikko, interview 2)

One of the more overt ways that Nikko found her sense of freedom curtailed was through criticism of changes in her outward appearance by her teacher. Students hair is a common area for enforcing conformity in Japanese high schools (Yoneyama, 1999), and the changes she had made to her hair became such an issue that she dyed it black, which led to further criticism for being unnaturally black. This notion of conformity emerged throughout Nikko's account of returning to high school. One telling moment came when Nikko described how her friends had defended her in the face of criticism from her teacher.

Nikko: The funny thing is that my friends were telling the teacher that […] [Nikko] went to Hungary so she's not really Japanese anymore so please, @ forgive her, or something like that. (Nikko, interview 2)

While the statements of Nikko's friends appear on the surface to be a light-hearted defence, their illocutionary force resides in an ideological belief that sees notions of 'Japaneseness' as being in tension with having lived outside of Japan. While this ideology is discussed in more detail in

Chapter 13.2, it is worth noting that this phenomenon has historically been associated with *kikokushijyo* (Goodman, 2012).

The notion that having studied abroad marked Nikko as somehow different among her peers was also evident in the way she now found herself asked to perform.

Nikko: I was kind of like, shy to speak in English ((@)) to others because they were thinking that my English got improved or something. […] for example, a lot of friends asked me like, speak in English or like, say something in English, and I was like, no I don't really want to. Like, why do I have to? You're Japanese ((@)) we can talk in Japanese. (Nikko, interview 2)

Combined with Ruka's account of being treated like an animal on display upon returning to his school (Ch. 12.2), this vignette reveals another side of the discourse of study abroad as a transformational experience; those who have gone abroad may be repositioned as less Japanese by those who remained. Awareness of this discourse may be behind Nikko's resistance to performing her English competence for her friends, particularly in light of the instances of othering discussed above. As Nikko indicates, she felt her other linguistic competencies were irrelevant to the interaction at hand highlighting her awareness of the link between linguistic performance and identity positioning.

From a linguistic development standpoint, like many of the other informants, Nikko found the high school context unconducive to maintaining the competencies she had gained abroad and instead had to focus on preparing for university entrance exams. While the limited opportunities to use Hungarian are to be expected, Nikko also found her English competence unsupported as she spent her English classes just "listen[ing] to the teacher about English grammar and […] to the tape as a listening skill" (Nikko, interview 2) while there were no opportunities for interaction.

The conclusion of university entrance exams signified the end of the restrictions she had endured and a chance to resume life as the changed person she had become. This was made more so, by a two week visit from Kristel right after exams had concluded. Reconnecting with the most significant individual from her time abroad felt to Nikko like a return to reality, since it "didn't feel like anything special. Just like it was […] back in Hungary again" (Nikko, interview 2). This opportunity allowed Nikko and Kristel to reconnect with the community from their time abroad, obtaining virtual co-presence through Skype. Perhaps the most significant part of this reunion was that it allowed Nikko to perform the identity she had developed during her year in Hungary, a free-spirited, internationally connected multilingual, in the space of Japan, something she had been unable and unwilling to do at high school.

It was therefore significant when Nikko explained that she had chosen to attend a Japanese university almost a thousand kilometres from her hometown which was known for its high enrolments of international students. To some extent, this choice allowed Nikko to recreate some of the conditions that she had known in Hungary, living independently in a highly international and multilingual community of her peers. Nikko was placed in advanced English classes, which afforded her opportunities both to use the language and to begin building translingual English-Japanese social networks that included both domestic and international students. Nikko reported however that her opportunities to use or practice Hungarian outside of messaging her old classmates on social media were non-existent.

The next time that she encountered spoken Hungarian, was during a return trip taken during her first summer vacation at university. Returning just a week before her second-round interview, she recounted her shock at the changes in her competency.

Nikko: I was in the airport in Finland, and then that time I first listened Hungarian for the first time after one year. […] but like I don't really understand anything. Oh my God, my Hungarian got so bad, I was thinking like that. And then I was even scared to say something in Hungarian, even though I knew that [the airline staff] were Hungarian, I spoke to them in English. […] but when I met with my host family again, and like, I just, like, I had to speak in Hungarian, so I spoke in Hungarian. But they understood me. My pronunciation is not really good and also my vocabulary is not enough. But they understood me and also like, I could understand what they were saying. […] like my Hungarian is still somehow okay @ and also when I met with my classmates, and I was speaking in, I think mostly in Hungarian. […] it was quite difficult to have like, a lot of conversation in Hungarian, I can only have like, few conversation, like short conversation. But like longer deep conversation, I find it so difficult. (Nikko, interview 2)

This extract highlights the tension that language users in multilingual environments can experience when they perceive that interaction requires them to make a linguistic choice, one which may cause them to weight up the social risk of using a variety they are less confident with, as Nikko described above. On the other hand, when forced to use Hungarian by her interlocutors Nikko experienced a renewal in her perceived ability with the language. For languages which remain tied to specific places and communities, such as Hungarian, it would appear that attrition is inevitable when sojourners physically leave. While communications technology may provide a means to maintain contact with other users of the language (Campbell, 2015), the experiences of the informants in this study, including Nikko, indicate that physical proximity in many ways drives the frequency of online interactions. In a sense too, the presence of English as a *lingua franca* also limited the ongoing opportunities Nikko had to use Hungarian, since online communication with her international friends was inevitably in English.

Reflecting on her current situation Nikko saw the importance of her English and Hungarian competencies further diverging.

Levi: So, for your future, do you see yourself mainly just using English then? Hungarian is not that important for your future? or do you want to have both?

Nikko: Um, for the future, I'm not thinking to, like, for example, to like live in Hungary, or get a job in Hungary, so I don't think that Hungarian's gonna be so useful. Like, more like, I feel like English is really important, so like I want to improve it more. But I want to visit Hungry like, continuously. So like still my Hungarian is important when it comes to talk to friends and family ((hmm)), so I don't want to lose my Hungarian, like knowledge. (Nikko, interview 2)

Critically, this extract highlights the impermanence of the competencies Nikko had developed abroad and the effects of returning to an environment where the opportunities to use Hungarian were not readily available. This underscores the importance of engaging with the longer trajectories of sojourners' language use as underscored in Chapter 2.2.4, since linguistic development does not end at the conclusion of the sojourn. While sojourners may maintain an affective connection to the language and the people of the host community, Nikko's case demonstrates that the social and communicative realities of their lives may lead them to adopt different priorities.

Nikko was negotiating a more complex position for herself which encompassed both her affiliation with Japan and a growing sense of being internationally mobile and connected. This positioning was further enhanced by the obligation she felt to speak as a representative of Japan with the international students she encountered at her university.

Nikko: Since I'm Japanese I have kind of like, responsibility […] like when it comes to interact with other people from other countries, knowing about my country, correctly is so important. […] I hope that it makes them to become like Japanese lover or something like that. (Nikko, interview 2)

Nikko saw the possibilities for her future existing outside of Japan. Specifically, she envisioned herself as a development consultant, introducing Japanese technology to communities outside of Japan. Notably, this imagined future allowed Nikko to reconcile the internationally-mobile and multilingual facets of her reflexive identity with her renewed sense of being Japanese.

7.6.   **Discussion**

Reflecting on the narrative that emerges from Nikko's data, to live in Hungary for a year was to align herself with the romantic images she had of Europe, prove her ability to be independent and actualise new ways of being in the world. What also occurred was something she had not directly envisioned; a transformation in the way she communicated and what she valued in relationships.

Nikko's account is also valuable for her experiences as a non-English background speaker navigating a multilingual setting where English was present.

Nikko's investment in Hungarian and English was inherently tied to the social connections she determined to be important. Language was a symbolic resource that enabled her to strengthen those connections and achieve membership in the communities she inhabited. One of the interesting aspects of Nikko's experience was the need to negotiate multiple linguistic systems during her time abroad. Her investment in the linguistic practices of the various communities she inhabited evolved with the relationships and communities she prioritised at different stages in her sojourn.

While the first languages Nikko encounters upon arriving in Hungary were the *lingue franche* of English and Spanish, it was Hungarian that she decided to prioritise for the first few months. This highlights the importance she placed on the relationship with her host mother. Even while she was investing in Hungarian at home, Nikko used English to communicate with the other communities she inhabited. This included the Hungarian-speakers in her classroom and other exchange students, some who came from English-speaking backgrounds and others for who it was a *lingua franca*. It was only after Nikko felt comfortable in the communicative relationship with her host mother that she sought to focus on registers of English and then Hungarian that would allow her to participate more fully in peer communities. This follows the literature discussed in Chapter 2.5.2 that for adolescents, stable relationships within the host family are often a prerequisite for investing in relationships outside the home.

While English was initially the language of interaction she used with her classmates, a desire to strengthen those ties led her, with Kristel, to begin negotiating the use of Hungarian. This is significant since English was entirely functional from a communicative standpoint and required less effort on Nikko's behalf. Nikko's investment in the communicative practices of her peers, facilitated through modes of co-present and online interaction, therefore speaks to her desire to participate in ways that were more intimate and the symbolic value she perceived in using Hungarian. What is also noticeable in Nikko's account is that gaining access to opportunities for interaction with locals was not only a process of negotiation, but also granted through invitation. This appears in the way that classmates connected with her on WhatsApp and how she was approached by a local boy while out with friends. While difficult to discern from Nikko's own subjective account, it may be that wider discourses made her identity as a female Japanese exchange student valued which provided opportunities for interaction.

While the notion of community played an important role in driving Nikko's investment, several individuals emerged as particularly instrumental. The first of these was her host mother, who Nikko

spent the greatest amount of time communicating with in Hungarian. The availability and engagement of the host mother in Nikko's language learning not only shaped her linguistic development but also provided embedded support through the mother-child roles they played. The significance of this relationship becomes clearer when viewed through one of Nikko's motivations for studying abroad: to demonstrate her independence to her family in Japan. The stability and reciprocal nature of this relationship provided Nikko with a platform from which she could develop connections outside of the host family. The relationship Nikko developed with Kristel, and to a lesser extent, Martina, also emerged as instrumental in reshaping the way she thought about communicating with others. Through her interaction with them, Nikko questioned the norms of her own communication style, primarily her tendency to avoid causing discomfort and offence in others. Instead, she began placing a higher value on authenticity and individualisation in both her relationships and her own projected identity.

While social interaction was critical to Nikko's development, her account was also notable for the variety of strategies she adopted to increase her ability to participate in the social contexts of home and school. The first among these was Nikko's use of a diary written in Hungarian to mediate not only her written competence but facilitate conversation with her host mother, which was then supported by other aids such as online images. Nikko also reported that participation on social media and messaging apps as well as watching Youtubers allowed her to learn the "slang" of her peers. Effectively Nikko's use of technology was instrumental in her project to appropriate the voices (Wertsch, 1991) of the communities she wished to participate in. Nikko's account also highlights how the selection of language learning affordances is strategically tied to the individual's goals and social contexts.

While never explicitly acknowledged by Nikko, the location of her stay in a large European city emerges as critical in providing many of the opportunities she was able to capitalise on during her year abroad. Chief among these was the local mobility and independence she experienced as evidenced in her accounts and the many images posted to Instagram that appear to show her in urban locations or at restaurants and bars with friends, often after sundown. Being in a large city meant that a large international exchange student population was present and as research has shown, these communities can be easier for sojourners to develop social connections in (see Ch. 2.3.1). This mobility appeared to be a feature of her exchange student network, and contrasts with the informants who travelled to the United States and were highly reliant on others for transportation (Narumi, Ch. 8; Takumi, Ch. 10; Misa, Ch. 11). The physical space that she found herself therefore provided greater opportunities for interaction that were essential to the development of her multi-competence and identity.

Studying abroad also appeared to begin a process of expanding her identity to account for the international connections and multilingualism she had developed. While she reported feeling less affiliated with a Japanese identity immediately upon returning from abroad, over the year which followed her return Nikko was developing a more multifaceted view of herself as internationally-connected, Japanese and multilingual. Part of this was an ongoing connection to the people and places where she had spent her time abroad, returning to Hungary within a year of leaving. However, the new connections she was forming at university were also influential. Nikko felt that preserving her competence in Hungarian was important for maintaining this connection, yet the opportunities to continue to engage with the language were limited and overshadowed by the opportunities to use English in the new communities she was involved in at university.

Nikko's account is noteworthy for the way she negotiated the multilingual environments of her study abroad and how development on her multi-competence and values was intrinsically tied to recurring interactions with a small number of key individuals. Nikko's account also highlights how her developmental trajectory was mediated by strategic investments in language at different stages of her stay; prioritising communication with her host mother before switching to the language of her peers. Finally, it underscores the effect that the returning context can have on sojourners ongoing desire to invest in the competencies they have developed while abroad.

8 Narumi: Identity reconstruction in the US Midwest

Narumi's account represents a unique and important perspective in the context of this project. As someone who grew up in Japan in a multilingual and multiethnic household, experiencing marginalisation at school as a result, Narumi's personal history was distinct from the other informants. Her account also provides insight into the experiences of a heritage speaker of English travelling to an English-speaking destination. Having noted this, the broader strokes of Narumi's story, including her investment in the linguistic practices of the host community, follow those of many other informants in this project, particularly Nikko (Ch. 7). Incidentally, even though Narumi and Nikko appeared not to know each other personally, in the period after returning to Japan they both elected to study at the same university.

Narumi, like Nikko, predominately used English in her interviews, although we did use Japanese more often to clarify the meaning of certain lexical items. In the interviews, Narumi sometimes struggled to find words in either English or Japanese to explain her experiences and the complexity of the identity issues she continued to grapple with. One point of note is that Narumi referred to herself as "bicultural" in English, and *hāfu* (see Glossary) in Japanese. While a detailed discussion of these terms is beyond the scope of this project, it is worth noting that 'bicultural' emphasises an affiliation with two cultures simultaneously, while *hāfu* implies that the individual is not fully Japanese. While Narumi's usage may have been a function of the frequency that she had encountered terms to describe her situation in each language, it does also suggest the types of ideologies of race and ethnicity she encountered through each language.

8.1. Background

Narumi's multiethnic background, growing up in Japan with a Japanese mother and an American father, was a central defining feature of her existence. Ideologies of racial and ethnic homogeneity in Japan can mean those identified as *hāfu* often face marginalization and discrimination (McEntee-Atalianis & Shaitan, 2017). Narumi's phenotypic appearance visibly distinguished her as having a non-Japanese parent and therefore made it more likely to experience marginalisation. Despite this, throughout Narumi's early childhood and up to end of elementary school she felt "fully Japanese" (Narumi, interview 1) and never considered herself different from her peers. Upon entering junior high school, that perception was significantly challenged.

Levi: Can you tell me a little bit more about your bicultural self, or growing up in a bicultural home?

Narumi: I was really different from other students in middle school and [… there was] kind of discrimination, in a good way and in a bad way, […] I always felt alone and I thought I will never fit in Japan. […] as I grew up I found a lot of differences and I think differently to others and my [Japanese] pronunciation is different from others and that kind of difference really isolated me from others. (Narumi, interview 1)

The ambivalence Narumi began to experience around her Japanese identity was an interrelated process of the marginalisation she faced from others, including marked differences in her pronunciation and appearance as well as her own inability to identify with her peers. Behind the differences Narumi began to perceive was the influence of her American father and the role he played in her understanding of what it meant to be Japanese.

Narumi's father had spent a lot of time at home and was a constant presence during her childhood, even when she played with her friends outside of the house. Narumi recalled that her father had struggled to establish a business in Japan and feeling excluded from wider society, came to resent it. Due to the time they spent together, Narumi was socialised into his worldview.

Narumi   He always talked about how he feel about Japanese and […] ninety-nine percent was bad things about Japanese and I grew up in that situation, so of course I will have a lot of bias towards them (Narumi, interview 1).

This was evident throughout the interview as Narumi adopted a critical perspective on Japanese culture, arguing, for example, that "American's have dreams and Japanese don't" because Japanese have a narrow view of their role in life while also acknowledging that this viewpoint was mostly "influenced by my father" (Narumi, interview 1). While the psychological impacts were difficult for Narumi to describe in the interview, something she said she was still working through, she described feeling "really alone" having "lost my identity" and "not sure I was alive or something" (Narumi, interview 1). This highlights one of the most important aspects of Narumi's study abroad experience; her struggle to reconstruct a coherent identity for herself.

Levi: So is [what your father said to you] something that you were processing while you were on study abroad? Something you were thinking about a lot?

Narumi: No. As I grew up I thought about this and what is wrong and he really confused me and my mum and him didn't agree. […] So I think that's why I didn't have my identity and know what to do and I was really afraid of making them mad, so I didn't have my life. (Narumi, interview 1)

Highlighting the complexity of the relationship she had to her father, Narumi saw a lot of parallels between her father's experience of life in Japan and her own; stating "he felt alone too, so he always wanted to go back to America and have a life, a family there, but yeah he came here. [...] I had a really tough time too, [at] school [...] I have it even now [...] (Narumi, interview 1). Narumi explained that "I just wanted to go America because my father wanted to go America" and watching

the Disney Channel reinforced this notion since through the programs she found "that it's where I'm supposed to be" (Narumi, interview 1). Narumi imagined that high school life in the US would be like 'High School Musical', a world away from the daily struggle she faced in Japan.

Narumi's experiences had also made her critical of the Japanese educational system, particularly its emphasis on memorisation. She explained how she had been accepted to the AFS program on the strength of her application essay. In the essay she had described wanting to learn about the American education system so she could reform the Japanese education model to be more focused on developing student's openness. In order to make that change "I said I want to be teacher and first [...] I have to be student in America and learn how they teach" (Narumi, interview 1).

8.2. **Early stages**

Arriving in the Midwest region of the US to live with her host parents and host sister for a year, one of the first difficulties Narumi encountered was that her American-sounding accent created unmet expectations about her proficiency.

Levi   How did it feel for you to suddenly be speaking English with the family?

Narumi   It was really difficult and the thing is, I can pronounce well but […] it's so difficult growing up as a bilingual child. […] my pronunciation was better than other foreign exchange students, so they thought I could speak English really well, so they just [kept] talking really fast, you know? [...] at the end they kinda get disappointed that I cannot speak English well and cannot say funny things. (Narumi, interview 1).

The gap Narumi experienced between the expectations of others and her own competence became a point of anxiety since, "I expected that people will treat me as uneducated or unable to talk when I don't talk [...] they didn't say that to me [directly] but I often thought I might be making them confused because I'm not saying it" (Narumi, interview 1). Shively (2016) has pointed out in her review of heritage speakers in study abroad that when their "language or behavior does not conform to local expectations, their deviations may be...indexed as unintelligent, uneducated, or lower class." (p. 275), and an awareness of that risk may have contributed to Narumi's anxiety.

Narumi's apprehension around communication in the host community also emerged as she encountered unfamiliar sociopragmatic practices. This was exemplified in her encounters with the high-frequency greeting, "How was your day?"

Narumi   well, what does that question mean? […] I didn't understand the question because I don't know what they want to know about me and […] what would benefit them […] I couldn't answer that question because that connects back to like, the family thing. I was not sure I was living and I didn't know how to answer the question. I thought, I'm not really living life, what I want. I think I didn't have myself, what is me. (Narumi, interview 1)

Narumi's personal history, entangled as it was with language and identity, meant that the anxieties this question raised were not only caused by inexperience with culturally specific norms of interaction, but the insecurities she was experiencing. This affective reaction to the question demonstrates one way in which "language is not separate from the rest of the mind" (V. Cook, 2016, p. 3) and a sojourner's personal history can be deeply entwined with how they encounter language abroad. Furthermore, the state this brought her to is perhaps best described as a lack of *ontological security* (Giddens, 1990), having lost her frames of reference and coming to question her own existence.

Despite these difficulties, Narumi was buoyed by the social networks she had developed in her school very soon after her arrival.

Levi   Did you make friends quite quickly when you went to school?

Narumi   Yeah, actually, a friend talked to me and since then we were best friends […] she first talked to me when it was my second day in school and I was wandering around the lunch café. She just asked me, "Do you want to eat with us?" […] and I didn't have friends so of course I said yes […] it started really well because other exchange students were pretty struggling making friends. (Narumi, interview 1)

Notably, this moment occurred spontaneously as a member of the host community appeared to recognise Narumi being alone. Similar to Nikko's (Ch. 7) experience, it accentuates the way that specific individuals can alter the trajectories of sojourners, particularly in the initial months when their social networks are virtually non-existent.

Paradoxically though, being able to build social networks at school generated friction with her host sister who became defensive of her own social networks.

Levi   What do you mean she got jealous of you?

Narumi   I don't know, maybe she thought her friend will, I don't know, come to me and just, I don't know, maybe she thought her friends relationship will go wrong […] because I am kinda, I'm the new person and because [that] changes things […] I mean [what she was] jealous about me was I have more friends. I started Instagram when I went there [and] like 2 months later I had more [followers] than her and she got jealous about that. (Narumi, interview 1)

Like other female informants in this study (Nikko, Ch. 7; Misa, Ch. 11), tension with her host sister became a central feature of her home life. Narumi also identified their modes of communication contributing to the tension, reporting that her host sister spoke "really fast and every time she talks [my] host Mum will say slow down [...] and it kinda prevent us from talking deep conversation and it was kind of sad" (Narumi, interview 1). Narumi's host mother here also appears to play a vital mediating role, attempting to negotiate a more accommodating communicative environment for

Narumi. This underscores the importance host mothers often played in supporting and validating the informants' role in the host family, particularly when their arrival generated the type of discontent found here and in other accounts.

A post to Narumi's Instagram account made around four months into her stay was also revealing of how the complex relationship she had with her Japanese heritage was being renegotiated through experiences in the host community. Accompanying a photo of some origami on a table was a caption where Narumi described presenting to fellow students on Japanese culture. In that caption she wrote that the event had taught her more about Japanese culture and about its current popularity and interestingness. This encounter with the symbolic value others placed on Japanese culture stood in contrast to her socialised conceptions and pointed towards a revaluation of her relationship to a Japanese cultural identity.

8.3. **Mid stages**

In the fifth month of her stay, Narumi posted about missing the sun and warmth of summer twice on Instagram. Like Nikko (Ch. 7), Narumi drew parallels between the weather and the feelings she experienced as her anxiety and the communication difficulties she faced came to a head.

Levi You said you've changed a lot since you started study abroad, can you tell me what are some of the most important things that changed you?

Narumi I went to [area in the US Midwest] […] and the winter gets cloudy, and the year I went was there were no snow, just clouds and raining […] so it was really dark and it was easy to get depressed […] and the first time in my life I experienced depression and anxiety. My host family found a therapist and yeah, I was a mess […] I knew I needed to get over [anxiety caused by my family] someday, so that was my time and my therapist heard a lot of things, and eventually I ended up forgiving my father because he was the person who confused me and influenced me a lot. (Narumi, interview 1)

On some level, the discussions Narumi had with her therapist may have been instrumental in allowing her to tell her story to me, working through difficult issues that she still had some trouble describing during the interview. More importantly from this extract though, the host family again emerged as a stabilising force in her life, recognising the difficulties she was facing and providing instrumental support through a therapist.

At the same time as she began to work through the issues in her past, Narumi began to engage with opportunities available at her high school. This appeared to have a significant impact on both her reflexive identity and renegotiation of how she was seen by others.

Levi You said that you were [seen as] becoming trilingual because you were studying Spanish as well. Was that just [your host sister's] opinion or did other people say a similar thing to you?

Narumi   So in my school where I went, they are really smart and the district where I went […] they're really rich and I was not really used to that kind of environment. So, first trimester I was treated as equal, but after winter through spring, [that] was my peak. I found out that I could sing opera and I joined a musical and I did tennis and yeah, I got really good score on opera contest so my friends […] kind of thought of me as really different kind of person. (Narumi, interview 1)

Posting on Instagram about her experiences singing opera at the district championships and performing in a production of Grease, Narumi commented about the growth she was experiencing. While most of the commenters on her posts were friends from her host school, the renegotiation of her projected identity was evident as she explicitly stated that she was looking forward to the reactions of her friends in Japan. Importantly, the environment of Narumi's high school provided a space for her to renegotiate her relationship to her ethnicity. Narumi saw herself as part of an Asian minority at her school and drew on their example for inspiration, since "a lot of Asians were girls and they were really confident about living in America and others didn't think of them as like Chinese or Asian" (Narumi, interview 1).

Like other participants (Nikko, Ch. 7; Manabu, Ch. 9), the changes Narumi was undergoing were reflected in her appearance. Describing herself as someone who "wore glasses and was not cool", and "a nerd" (Narumi, interview 1) when she arrived in the US, her new peer networks were instrumental in helping her to appropriate the fashion affiliated with her peer community.

Levi   Did you change your clothing style as well?

Narumi   Yeah, a lot […] my friends took me to a mall and because my fashion sense was not really good, they wanted to change me […] and from the day we shopped, yeah, I tried to look nice and get people my first impression good. (Narumi, interview 1)

Simultaneously, Narumi was also consciously working on appropriating the linguistic and cultural repertoires needed to develop her identity as an American high school student. Participation in peer networks both through co-present interactions and online through Instagram, Snapchat and direct messaging exposed her to varieties of American teenage culture and communicative norms. In particular, she felt it was important "to catch up with all the slang and spend time with my friends to know all the common things that teenagers said" (Narumi, interview 1). Even as Narumi began to feel more authentically American, she would often encounter situations that would highlight her lack of cultural knowledge and the contested nature of her identity. One of these situations had led to her reading a book on the Woodstock music festival after returning to Japan.

Levi   What prompted you to choose the book on Woodstock?

Narumi   When I studied abroad, I took US history […] and the teacher […] told us a story that related to Woodstock and […] there was a question "What is Woodstock for you?" and then I could only think about Woodstock from Snoopy. So, I answered a yellow bird and I was ashamed at that moment and I didn't know Woodstock so I wanted to learn more (Narumi, interview 2).

Despite this, Narumi now saw these instances as opportunities to develop her knowledge and understanding, rather than retreat into the negativity that had characterised much of her past and early time abroad.

Narumi found that the relationship with her host sister had also begun to evolve over this time, since her host sister had also dealt with anxiety. Much of this change was brought about through affective and informational support that Narumi's host sister was able to offer on mental and physical self-care. As Narumi recalled "She always said 'Do things that you love' and yeah this also described me since I didn't have anything that I loved before I found myself" (Narumi, interview 1). The change that occurred in their relationship was reflected in a post on Instagram during Narumi's eighth month abroad when she posted a series of images of them together, tagged for National Siblings Day.

8.4. **Late stages**

A self-described significant point in Narumi's time abroad occurred when she attended the Indianapolis 500, about a month before completing her time abroad in the US.

Levi   So what did it feel for you to be part of that event?

Narumi   I was [undecided about] who I should cheer for and [behind me] there were a couple, one who is against Takuma[12] and one who is pro-Takuma […] and yeah I was listening to them and at the moment when Takuma won, I felt, I was like "Yes!" But they were really arguing, so I was in the middle […] My host family they were cheering and they thought it was really cool for him to win the race since I was there too, and it didn't really matter whether I was Japanese or he was Japanese because it depends on the racer, how he is. But I still felt something related to him between me and him because our nationality is same (Narumi, interview 2).

Recounting the event later on Instagram, she described the emotional impact the day had on her and the happiness she felt for Takuma Sato, America and Japan.

In many ways, this event seemed to be emblematic of Narumi's struggle to reconstruct her own identity from the strands of a past that she was only now beginning to make sense of; developing a claim to her American heritage while also simultaneously finding pride in her Japanese heritage. The role her host family played in the process emerges as critical in resolving the tension, being excited for a Japanese to have won the race while Narumi was there with them, seeing her not as *hāfu*, but simultaneously as Japanese and a member of their American family. Critically these realisations were intertwined with the emotion and scale of the event. Experiencing, as she wrote on

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[12] Takuma Sato, a Japanese race driver.

Instagram, three hundred thousand people silent during the opening prayer contributed to the power and sense of being part of something larger than herself. It was at this point that Narumi's personal connection with American cultural events became clearer, since they traced back to a past in which her father had played a significant role. Attending the Indy 500 allowed her to affectively connect the sense of belonging she had felt in the past with her father with her present experience.

Narumi   It was like a festival and when I was little I often went to *beigun kichi* (the American military base) with my dad, and mostly I went there on 4th of July, on Independence Day, so I knew what an American festival would be like and at that moment [during the Indy 500] it suddenly remembered me when I went there. I felt home, you know. Yeah, I loved it. (Narumi, interview 1)

In the closing months of her time abroad Narumi felt that she had found herself and reported feeling alive again. Crucially, Narumi described reaching a point where she felt that she could value herself.

Levi   Tell me about the last 3 months for you then, was it a different experience?

Narumi   I was a senior in high school, so you know, graduation and the final exam and everything is like last thing […] and we went to trip for Florida too, so I was really excited for that too […] I felt really alive through these three months and I didn't have anything I wanted to do because I just found another person in my side […] my exchange year changed me a lot because I was not teenager before I got to America and this means that I didn't live for myself and I didn't spend time something good for myself. I didn't have a relaxing time or think about my body and didn't have any life values and didn't love myself so yeah it started to change but I had to love myself. (Narumi, interview 1)

8.5.   **Post-sojourn**

Similar to many of the other informants who reported self-actualising outcomes (Nikko, Ch. 7; Manabu, Ch. 9) she felt her manner of interaction had changed after returning, which also affected the way that others saw her. They treated her as smarter, however she was conscious that since returning part of her was overconfident and looked down on those who had stayed in Japan. Narumi felt she had begun to develop a new identity as someone who did not belong to America or Japan, a "multicultural person and I don't want to belong to any place and I want to be the bridge connecting other culture and countries" (Narumi, interview 1). Narumi described being a lot more optimistic about her life directly after study abroad and saw her personal history not as a limitation but as something "unique and special" that had made her stronger. Making the decision to study abroad had represented the beginning of a process of self-empowerment, since "I didn't have my life till then. I'm like 4 years old right now" (Narumi, interview 1).

Like many of the focal informants (Nikko, Ch. 7; Manabu, Ch. 9, Takumi, Ch. 10), Narumi expressed an intense dislike of the Japanese high school environment she returned to. She described how the pressure to study for university entrance exams had made her more unfriendly and limited her

ability to perform the identity she had developed in the US. In a sense, she had returned to a place where she did not feel she belonged.

Levi   So you kinda you feel like when you were in America there was a positive side of you, but that's kind of gone away a little bit with the pressure of *jyuken*?

Narumi   Yeah, yeah. I'd rather say I missed the person that was in America, not [the person I was] one year ago. (Narumi, interview 1)

Experiencing these feelings and failing the application process to her university of choice, Narumi began the highly unusual step of planning to take a gap-year before starting university. She was dissuaded of this by her grandfather and after consulting with her high school teacher, applied and was accepted to a university located almost a thousand kilometres from her hometown renowned for its international student population. This university, incidentally the same as the one to which Nikko had been accepted, felt like the right fit for Narumi, since "I cannot be Japanese, I have to be more American or European" (Narumi, interview 2).

Due to her linguistic and intercultural competence, Narumi soon developed many international friendships at this university and like Nikko, found herself positioned as an expert on Japanese culture. This conflicted with Narumi's own reflexive identity, in which her affiliation to Japanese culture remained highly contested. Another noticeable change was the effect that the time she had spent interacting with others both abroad and at university had on her multi-competence. This became particularly salient when she returned to her hometown during university summer vacation and interactions with her Japanese family provoked feelings of alienation. She described how her habitus of communication, such as her use of sarcasm, did not align with that of her host family.

Levi   How does that make you feel, when you come home and you do these things and people don't really get it?

Narumi   I'm changing at the same time so I cannot expect [my family] to be on the same page […] most of the time I wish I was in my host family's house so that I can like feel I'm [on the same page]. […] most of the time I don't think I belong to any place except University. Yeah, I wish I was in US. (Narumi, interview 2)

Narumi felt that the environment she had experienced in the US "fit her better" (Narumi, interview 2). She also felt her university was "not Japan" (Narumi, interview 2), since she could be around many non-Japanese and use English most of the time. It was a place she felt she belonged.

Since returning from study abroad, Narumi had frequent contact with her host mother and spoke to her host sister "almost every day" (Narumi, interview 2) through Instagram. Despite this, she had found it much harder to maintain contact with the other friends she had made there since they were entering university in the US and their experiences seemed different to that of Narumi: "We're not

on the same page anymore" (Narumi, interview 2). She would post pictures of her year abroad on social media to show them she missed them "and they leave comments, but I really cannot respond" (Narumi, interview 2). Despite the ability of social media to facilitate ongoing communication with the friends she made abroad, the differences in the experiences they were now undergoing made it difficult for her to respond to them without feeling fake.

Narumi also explained how her university environment provided opportunities to make social connections with and participate in "deep conversations" (Narumi, interview 2) with international students. She supplemented this with watching videos on YouTube such as the Youtuber Bilingirl Chikka, TED talks, Buzzfeed and cooking videos. Narumi also pointed out that the diverse population and focus on language at her university meant that she had opportunities to interact in Spanish and was hoping to get into Spanish language classes in the following semester despite it being "one of the highest popular classes in my university" (Narumi, interview 2).

Narumi described two goals moving forward from this point. The first was to explore the possibilities of a romantic relationship she had begun with a student from South Asia; "he teaches me a lot of things and I teach him a lot of things [...] my huge dream is to go on a huge trip with him and see the world together" (Narumi, interview 2). The second tied to her initial motivation for studying abroad; her dislike of the Japanese educational system. She was currently interested in developing alternatives to the Japanese model of education that focused on encouraging students to develop themselves. Narumi saw this as the first step to changing the issues she saw in Japanese society.

Narumi: Eventually I want to make a society which try to evolve and having innovation. I think it's pointless to just preserve culture. [It's] really beautiful but it's pointless if we can not evolve and I think we shouldn't be afraid of the change. Yeah, it's my big thing what I'm gonna do" (Narumi, interview 2).

8.6. **Discussion**

Narumi's account is significant in the way her personal history interacted with her experiences in the host community and her investment in English as part of her identity. The stakes for her success in this sense appear to be no less than her ontological security (Giddens, 1990) with ramifications for her reflexive identity and mental health. On the other hand, Narumi's account has many parallels to those in the other focal cases in that she emerged from her year abroad with a more complex, international understanding of herself. While admitting a dislike of many parts of Japanese culture, she had also begun to see an attraction in affiliation with a Japanese identity that emerged from interactions with those abroad and with international students at her university.

Looking at how Narumi's understanding of self evolved over time, Pavelnko's (1998) stages of self-translation serve as useful framework for understanding how this occurred through her experience of study abroad. The stages (listed in Table 12) were proposed by Pavlenko as a way to understand language learning in migration experiences. While there are many differences between the experiences of the multilingual writers Pavlenko analysed and Narumi's time abroad, the parallels in the process of identity loss and reconstruction warrant comparison.

Table 12. Stages of self-translation. Adapted from "Second language learning by adults: Testimonies of bilingual writers" by A. Pavlenko, 1998, *Issues in Applied Linguistics, 9*(1), pp. 11-12.

Stage of loss
Loss of one's linguistic identity
Loss of all subjectivities
Loss of frame of reference
Loss of the inner voice
First language attrition
Stage of (re)construction
Appropriation of others' voices
Emergence of one's own new voice
Translation therapy: reconstruction of one's past
Continuous growth into new positions and subjectivities

As described above, Narumi's years in Junior high school were characterised by a disaffiliation with what had been until then an unquestioned view of herself as Japanese, including a *loss in her linguistic identity*. While she lost her sense of being Japanese, Narumi's only connection to the US was through her father which meant that this destabilisation led to *a loss of all subjectivities* to the point where Narumi did not feel that she was alive. Arriving in the US resulted in further *loss to her frames of reference* as she lacked the sociopragmatic competence to understand interactions such as 'How was your day?' despite her American heritage. In effect, these stages form part of what Pavlenko calls the *stage of loss*, which began for Narumi during junior high school, highlighting the complexity of her background in the Japanese context.

The crisis which Narumi experienced several months into her time abroad which led to her receiving professional help marked a turning point in her journey and the beginning of the *phase of recovery and (re)construction*. Like Nikko (Ch. 7), the *appropriation of other's voices* became a critical

aspect of Narumi's linguistic development and identity reconstruction as she focused on learning the language of teenagers. This reconstruction also took place as Narumi began to find her *own new voice* through successful participation in activities such as Opera and the school musical, which allowed her to access subject positions that had not been possible before. Narumi's ongoing therapy and the support she found in her host family, emblemised by her experience during the Indy 500 allowed her to begin the process of *reconstructing her past* and taking greater pride and ownership of the disparate aspects of her identity.

It was clear during the second-round interview that Narumi had entered the final stage of *growth into new positions and subjectivities* as her experiences abroad and during her time at university had triggered a re-evaluation of her relationship to the Japanese and American aspects of her identity. Importantly she sought to establish herself as someone who was able to move between the social and cultural worlds of Japan and America without fully identifying with either. In essence, study abroad had been a catalyst for the transformation of Narumi from a position where she felt she had no identity to one where through her own agency she was constructing new positions for herself.

How Narumi's investment evolved during and after study abroad was intimately tied to the phase of recovery and reconstruction described above. While Narumi began study abroad with a greater knowledge of English than many of the other informants, she quickly found that she lacked the sociopragmatic competence to participate successfully in interactions with locals. Narumi also found her pronunciation initially problematic as it caused her to be positioned as a native English speaker, an expectation that she could not live up to. Despite anxiety around these issues, through the kindness of a local, Narumi was able to quickly build peer social networks, and this brought with it a need and opportunity to attain the linguistic markers of an American teenage identity. Strategically, Narumi's approach to this was very similar to that of the other informants, participating in multimodal communication that involved the use of online messaging and consuming media in English, including watching Youtubers, and interacting with friends. Narumi also found a lack of cultural knowledge to be a barrier to performing an authentic American teenage identity, exemplified in her misunderstanding of what the word 'Woodstock' represented. For Narumi to be able to perform the identity she aspired to and was often positioned into as a result of her pronunciation, she needed to obtain not only the linguistic competence of her peers, but also the cultural and sociopragmatic knowledge associated with that identity. Her journey underscores the immense task a sojourner can face to move from the position of stranger to participant and the importance of significant individuals in facilitating this.

One other point of note is that Narumi's time abroad in the US not only allowed her to develop her English-based competencies but also led her to encounter Spanish. While her development was limited while abroad and had almost no ramifications communicatively, the fact that she viewed studying Spanish as an important part of her developing identity is significant and speaks to the symbolic value that multilingualism carried for both her and her peers.

Upon returning to Japan, like other informants, Narumi found that the competencies she had developed while abroad contributed very little to her university entrance exams and the opportunities to exercise it were virtually non-existent. Once she entered university however, Narumi's multilingualism became an asset and she was able to connect with and support the international students in her dorm from very early on. Narumi also described translanguaging (Li Wei, 2018) at her university, including the Spanish she had accumulated while abroad and continued to develop through language classes. The ongoing development of Narumi's linguistic competencies after returning was therefore highly dependent on the environment and the affordances for both interaction and instructed learning which complemented her multi-competence.

Turning to the factors which most significantly affected Narumi's investment, several overarching themes stand out as significant. First, having experienced marginalisation and isolation linked to language and ethnicity throughout her teenage years, belonging was an essential part of Narumi's experience, particularly travelling to a country she was so intimately connected to. Narumi's history as a heritage English speaker initially proved to be a source of anxiety in the host community, since her pronunciation meant she was positioned as more competent than she was and then failed to meet those expectations. Shively (2016) has noted how "HL learners may be held to monolingual norms" (p.268) in context of study abroad and this was a source of anxiety for Narumi during the initial months and contributed to a sense of otherness. Indeed, this sensation is tied to the highly context-dependent and often contradictory positionings that multiethnic Japanese face throughout their life, viewed as both linguistic experts and novices, often simultaneously (Greer, 2005). Having been marginalised in Japan for the way she used Japanese, Narumi would have been sensitive to the way others perceived her use of English.

Despite these struggles around language, Narumi was approached by a local student in the first few days after arriving in her new school and soon developed peer networks which were essential for her sense of belonging and providing support and interaction necessary for Narumi's linguistic and cultural development. Like Nikko, Narumi experienced tension in the relationship with her host sister early into her stay. After beginning therapy however, her host sister's own experiences dealing

with anxiety meant that she became a key source of affective and informational support for Narumi. This shared experience strengthened their relationship to the point that she became the person from study abroad Narumi contacted most a year after returning. This and the affective and instrumental support offered by Narumi's host family as she struggled with the issues caused by her past again highlights how central the host family were to creating stability from which she could invest in the practices of her peers.

The other theme which stands out in Narumi's account is the way that her experiences of being both Japanese and Asian while in the US redefined her relationship to an aspect of her background that until that point had been a source of confusion and shame. This appears in the post she made on Instagram about teaching Japanese culture to her American peers and in the way that she saw the Chinese-American students as models for her own evolving sense of self. Narumi's experience at the Indy 500, powered as it was by her heightened affective state, allowed her to consolidate much of the identity work she had done over the past year. This work continued as she started university and found herself again positioned as an expert on Japanese culture by the international students in her social networks.

Broadly speaking, Narumi's experience bears many similarities to those of other focal informants, Nikko in particular. What is significant is how critical studying abroad was to the project of her identity. Investing in the linguistic practices of the host community was not only about participation and belonging but was also an instrumental part of constructing a new identity that made sense in the context of her personal history. While in Nikko's case study abroad was also about realising experiences romanticised through the media she consumed, Narumi's year abroad was also about reconciling an essential part of her personal history that continued to cause mental anguish. There are also echoes of Narumi's account in Wolcott's (2013) exploration of Lola's mythical experience of France, and how study abroad was effectively a vehicle for exploring a personal connection to cultural and linguistic place that had until then only been imagined through a father. Narumi's account diverges though in that through her participation in the community she inhabited, both at school and in the host family, she was able to make a personal claim to her American heritage in a way that reconciled the complex emotions connected to her upbringing.

9 Manabu: Multilingual identity in Francophone Canada

Manabu's account of studying abroad in the predominately French-speaking Canadian province of Québec contributes valuable perspectives to many of the key themes that run through other informants' accounts. Manabu's strategic approach to investing in the linguistic practices of communities that alternatively emphasised French and English proficiency provides key insights into how sojourners negotiate questions of linguistic competence in multilingual settings. Wider attitudes towards outsiders, including migrants, also appeared to influence Manabu's experience and affected the way he was initially received by peers. Furthermore, the way Manabu exercised his individual agency both abroad and after returning in order to develop and maintain an emergent multilingual identity highlights the importance of looking at the complex interrelated nature of the individual and context in language learning abroad. Manabu's interviews were conducted entirely in Japanese.

9.1. **Background**

Manabu was a second-year high school student from the Chubu region of Japan. Manabu was unique among the focal informants in that he had chosen to attend a five-year college of technology[13] focused on engineering rather than the traditional three-year high school. Manabu had made this decision because it provided a less demanding path into higher education and an opportunity to study abroad without the need to repeat a year of high school. Prior to his year abroad, he lived in a dormitory near his school and so had already experienced independence from his family before studying abroad.

Manabu recalled first hearing about study abroad from a friend of his older brother and being attracted by the idea. The symbolic value he attributed to the experience was indicated in his characterisation of participating in study abroad as かっこいい "cool" (Manabu, interview 1). Another attraction was the unknown possibilities implied by the idea of studying abroad; that encounters and experiences overseas would result in expanded thinking and broadened horizons. Important too was Manabu's admission that 「僕があんまり人と同じというのはいやだったんで」"I didn't really like being the same as other people" (Manabu, interview 1). This indicates that he saw study abroad as a way to differentiate himself from his peers, a theme he would come back to after

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[13] *kōkōsenmon gakkō* (高校専門学校) in Japanese,

returning from study abroad. On the other hand, Manabu indicated that language learning was not part of his decision.

Manabu: 僕の留学の目的自体が言語ではなかったなので、ただカナダの文化とかが知れるなら、それはすごいでもいいかなってと思って (Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: The reason I had for going abroad wasn't language. I just wanted to know more about Canadian culture. If that was all it was then that would've been great.

For this reason, he placed English-speaking Canada as his first choice and French-speaking Canada as his second choice when selecting his destination, since it was the notion of living in Canada that attracted him. Like Nikko (Ch. 7), Manabu's motivations to study abroad speak to the questionnaire results (Ch. 5.2.1) which highlighted that the group as a whole were less motivated by ideas of linguistic development than the wider Japanese high school population.

9.2. **Early stages**

By Manabu's own account, one of the most formative events of his time abroad was also one of the first. Attending the AFS in-country orientation session shortly after arriving in Canada, he immediately began to grapple with issues raised by his limited linguistic competence.

Manabu: オリエテーションしてる、がいきなり英語で始まって、で、僕だけ理解しなくて。で、他の子は皆「は〜ん」って感じ理解して、で、ディスカッションとか始めちゃうんですよ。で、僕だけもう［…］「こいつ何やってんだ」みたいな、なんか全然分からなかった、［…］なんかそれが悔しくて。 (Manabu, interview 2)

Manabu: Doing the orientation, it suddenly started in English and I was the only one who couldn't understand [what was being said], while the other exchange students were going like, "Uh-huh", understanding. Then we started discussions. I was the only one […] who was like "what is this guy doing?" I couldn't understand a single thing […] That was frustrating.

While finding himself seemingly the only exchange student struggling was a shock, this was compounded by the reaction of others towards him and the disconnect he experienced with his own self-image.

Manabu: 自分，日本だと、絶対、周りに友達がいる人間なんですよね。（うん）絶対、誰かと一緒に、ワイワイ楽しくし、何でもしている人だったのに、［…］AFS の、コミュニティとか行くと、日本人、「あの日本人しゃべれんから、いや」みたいな、「ちょっとあっち行って」みたいな、そういうのもあって、それできついじゃないですか？（うん）今までは、何なら自分はその、友達と一緒にいる中の中心人物だったかかもしれないのに、除外されてしまった、そんな経験が初めてあって、でもそれが辛いことなんですけど (Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: If this had been Japan, I would totally be the type of person who is surrounded by friends. ((mm)) I was the type of person who would be with someone, having a great time, doing everything. But when I was with the AFS community, it was like "That Japanese can't speak. I don't like him" and "Just go over

there [away from us]" and things like that. That's hurtful, right? ((mm)) Until that point, whenever I wanted, maybe you could say I was the center of attention in a group of friends. Despite that, I was excluded [in the AFS community]. That was the first time I had ever experienced something like that, it was hard.

Not only experiencing a loss in his ability to project and have his reflexive identity recognised, Manabu's sense of being excluded added to his sense of helplessness in this new linguistic environment. The experience of finding one's ability to participate and actively negotiate one's identity in social interaction diminished was shared among most of the informants during their initial months abroad (Takumi, Ch. 10 was a notable exception). However, as Manabu indicated, this would later contribute to his desire to learn language, particularly French as described in Chapter 9.3.

The sequence of posts on Manabu's Instagram also speak to his limited social network during the first several months of study abroad. Manabu generally posted two to three images a month. In the month before leaving for Canada, he posted two images, both of himself surrounded by friends. For the next several months the images he posted were almost all of himself or cultural items such as tinned *escargots* and hockey jerseys. From these first posts, he began captioning his posts in French exhibiting a desire to be perceived as a user of French, which along with the images appeared curated to showcase markers of his sojourner identity to his Japanese networks outside of Canada. This is exemplified in posts such as an image of himself dressed up in academic regalia for the graduation album with the caption "I like #school" in French. While he never suggested on Instagram that he was experiencing difficulties engaging with others, the sharp contrast between these images and focus on his social networks that appeared in later months (see Ch. 8.4) indicates that he lacked the opportunities to create these types of images at this time.

While Manabu struggled to form peer networks over the first few months, he was able to rapidly adjust to life with his host family. His Japanese-speaking host sister was instrumental in facilitating this since she could interpret between Manabu and the rest of the host family, similar to the role that Nikko's (Ch. 7) host sister had also played.

Manabu: 最初のなんか、何も伝わらないという、「…」普通のことに関する「…」そういうことのストレスはなかったのだから、最初はすごい、助けていただいたので、スムーズにスタートが切れたのかなと思います。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: At first, not being able to communicate […] about regular stuff […] I didn't have any of that stress because [my host sister] really helped me with that from the beginning. I think I probably had a smooth start.

The embedded support of this arrangement and its ongoing stability were contributing factors to his decision to begin seeking to engage with a local amateur ice hockey team early in his stay. A prior

skill with in-line skating meant that he was able to pick up the sport quickly and participate in a new French-speaking community despite his lack of linguistic proficiency.

The micro level interactions which occur over the dinner tables of host families have long been recognised as an important site for language and cultural learning (e.g., H. M. Cook, 2006; Iino, 1996; Kinginger & Carnine, 2019; Kinginger & Lee, 2019) and this was the main context that Manabu attempted to learn French during the early stages of his time abroad.

Manabu: ご飯中は家族同士がみんなしゃべるので、でその会話についていくの最初はなかなか、難しいじゃないですか？早いし（うん）方言もあるし（うん）あと、だからご飯中ずっと耳を澄まして、どういう会話してんのかをずっと聴きながら食べて、でごはんが終わって、ゆっくりしてきたら、ママと喋って (Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: During dinner [host] family members would be talking to each other, and keeping up with those conversations is pretty hard, right? It's fast ((mm)), there is dialect too ((mm)). So throughout the meal I would listen closely, while eating I would be listening and trying to work out what the what the conversation was about. Then when dinner was finished, when things had calmed down, I would speak to [my host] Mum.

While the content of these conversations appeared quotidian, Manabu often found his attempts to comprehend frustrated by the sociopragmatic complexity of the interactions. Again, as in so many other cases, it was the availability of Manabu's host mother in the evenings and her willingness to recognise, accommodate and support Manabu as a user of French that proved to be crucial to his development. Their interactions included discussions on the linguistic and the cultural, in particular the differences and similarities between French, English and Japanese, which also allowed Manabu to draw on and demonstrate his own knowledge and experience. The reciprocity of these interactions, characteristic of developmentally effective proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), would have been vital to Manabu's developing competence. It also indicated that his participation was valued and contributed to his sense of membership within the family.

The relationship between Manabu and his host mother was also a key source of affective support. This was exemplified in an interaction Manabu recalled in which he related to his host mother his struggles to learn French while others in his AFS cohort from European backgrounds seemed to be picking up the language effortlessly. His host mother helped him to understand how the differences stemmed from the closeness of the languages rather than his own failings and encouraged him not to compare himself with others but to develop at his own pace.

While Manabu's participation in home life remained relatively stable throughout his time abroad, school life was a site of greater struggle and negotiation. Manabu recalled that his first month at school had been one of not understanding and not knowing what he should be doing. On the other

hand, the demographic of the school population was favourable to his status of newly-arrived stranger and novice user of English and French. Manabu explained that contrary to his expectations, French-Canadians made up less than half of the student body and a large proportion of the students were of other backgrounds, including migrants from Asia, South America and Francophone African countries. As a result, he never felt explicitly positioned as an exchange student at the school and was soon invited to spend lunches with a group of English-speaking migrants.

Manabu: 僕は、フランス語喋れないって分かってたんで。だから最初、そういう子達は、そっちから僕に興味を持って、英語で話しかけてくれたんでそういうグループになりました。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: They knew I couldn't speak French. So at first, those students showed interest in me and spoke to me in English, and so I became part of that group.

It is significant that Manabu found himself positioned linguistically rather than ethnically or otherwise, particularly when compared with the racial and ethnic positionings found elsewhere in the data (e.g., Nikko in Ch. 7.4; Megumi in Ch. 12.1 and Nagisa in Ch. 12.4). While classes occurred completely in French, social life at the school was linguistically diverse, with English, French and Arabic dialects all being spoken, often in the same conversations. This multilingual diversity was part of the fabric of not only the school, but the wider community he found himself in and impacted upon the identity he began to envision for himself.

9.3. **Mid stages**

One of the most significant things which affected Manabu's development trajectory was a decision to become more intentional and strategic in his language learning. Manabu had identified a number of factors that had led to him adopting a more passive approach initially. The first of these was that he had no explicit knowledge of how to learn a language explaining that for the first few months 「何をすればいいかがわからなかった」 (Manabu, interview 1) "I didn't know what I should do" to improve his ability to communicate. Perhaps more importantly though was the underlying idea that the act of living in the host community would eventually lead to linguistic competence.

Levi: 留学は想像通りでしたか？

Manabu: あ、全然、違いました。っていうのは、よく聞く話だと、３ヶ月いれば、「言葉話せるよ、分かるよ」って。聞く、ことがないですか？聞きまよね？（はい）僕は聞いてたんですけど（はい）「…」　で３ヶ月たったのに、僕が全然、しゃべれてないこととか、に気づいて、そこからエンジンかけて、もう、やり始めたって感じです。(Manabu, interview 1)

Levi: Did your year abroad go as you imagined?

Manabu: Ah, it was completely different. What I mean is, a thing I often heard was that if you are abroad for three months, "You'll be able to speak! You'll understand!" Have you heard that? You've heard that, right? ((sure)) Well, that is what I heard. ((uh-huh)) […] then three months passed and I noticed that I still couldn't speak or whatever. So that's when I got started, I like, hit the ignition switch.

What stands out from Manabu's narration of his own struggle with language was that his initial inability to develop competence was not an issue of access to interaction or learning affordances. Rather, it was incorrect assumptions about how that development would take place. Acknowledging the flaws in his beliefs and deciding to adopt a more intentional and strategic approach to his linguistic investment appears as a point of inflection in his developmental trajectory. The extract shows investment in the language of the host community can be influenced by beliefs and understandings encountered before departing, as Kinginger (2008) illustrated in the stories of American's who viewed their sojourn as a modern version of a 'Grand Tour'. The extract also signals the importance of agency can play in the construction of his beliefs about language learning as the change occurred as a result of Manabu's own critical reflection.

Much like other informants (Nikko, Ch. 7; Narumi, Ch. 8) a significant part of language learning was mediated through resources he accessed online. In Manabu's words, his biggest gains in French came from using a combination of language learning applications on his smartphone; Duolingo to increase his vocabulary and LingQ to listen to audiobooks while also reading the text himself. This was supplemented with other authentic resources such as books in French and watching videos on YouTube. Manabu also reported using an electronic dictionary to enable comprehension during classes at school. 「出来るだけフランス語と一緒の時間長くしたって感じですね。」"As much as I could, I made the time I spent with French as long as possible" (Manabu, interview 1). In total, he estimated that he would spend around 2 hours a day in the evenings before dinner working on his own language learning.

Similar to Nikko, Manabu reported that he attempted to connect this independent study with social interaction.

Manabu: 家族とできるだけ多く喋って、あの、で、毎回その、部屋で勉強した、覚えた単語を、できるだけ使うようにして、で、家族と話していました。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: I spoke with my [host] family as much as possible. Also, every time, as much as I could, I tried to use the words that I had studied in my room and remembered in conversations with my [host] family.

Manabu's narrative is remarkable in that it demonstrates how he transformed his orientation to the host language from one of limited engagement, to one that drew on a variety of strategic resources and the interactional opportunities available in the host family setting. It underscores how active

investment emerged from the intersection of individual agency with a stable, accommodating and supportive social environment.

It was around the three-month mark that Manabu had an encounter with a classmate that would prove to be a strong influence on his developmental trajectory. Antoine was a Québécois proficient in English and French and Manabu had sat next to him in Maths class for the first three months without speaking. Manabu described how an incident in the third month led to them becoming close friends.

Manabu: 先生が何というかわかんないで、どこのどこをやればいいのかわかんないみたいな状況だったんですけど。その子が、無言で、何も言わずにページだけこうやって見せるんですよ僕に（@）、「今ここだよ」って。で。その時は本当、なんも言わずに、その子はずっと先生の方見ながら僕に、教科書のページパって見せるだけ。で僕は、「あ、ありがとう」っていうぐらいで。だったんですけど。それがどんどん毎回毎回続いてて。でその数学になっ、授業から親友みたいな感じになりました。（んんんん）はい。で、たまたまなんですけど、その子と同じ、全部同じクラスとってて。［…］次の教室も一緒に行って、一緒に授業を受けてってという風だったんで、すごい仲良くなって。て、家に住んでいる方向も一緒で、途中まで一緒のバスに乗って帰ったりとか。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: I couldn't understand what the teacher was saying, and I was lost trying to figure out what part of what I should be doing. Then a student, without a word, just showing me the page like this, without saying anything ((@)), he's like "we're up to here." At that time, he really did that, without saying anything, just looking straight at the teacher the whole time he's showing me, pointing to the page of the textbook we are on. And so I was like "ah, thanks". And it continued like that day after day, then from being in classes together, we became friends. ((mmmm)) Yeah. Then, it was a coincidence but, that student was taking all the same classes as me […] so it was like, we would go to the next classroom together and we would take that class together. We became really close. His house was the same direction as mine, so we would be together on the bus for part of the ride home as well.

This extract is remarkable in the detailed description it provides of how a moment of assistance led to what Manabu described as the closest friendship of his time abroad and became an essential part of his ongoing linguistic development. Notably this moment occurred as a result both of Antoine's proximity to Manabu and his willingness to spontaneously support Manabu as he was struggling to participate. This led to other reoccurring, unplanned opportunities for interaction from which their friendship emerged. Similar to the way Nikko expanded her local networks (see Ch. 7.3), the existence of this relationship created opportunities to connect with Antoine's friends and build a network of French-speaking peers. In particular, a close friend of Antoine's also became friends with Manabu and the three of them spent much of their time at school together.

Despite Antoine and his friend's Francophone backgrounds, they initially used English to communicate with Manabu. As Manabu's French competence was developing through the investment he was making at home, he sought to renegotiate the language of interaction they used.

Manabu: フランス語あまり喋れなかったんで、最初英語でしゃべったんですけど、僕が１回もう、「フランス語に変えようよ」って。言ってから、 たまに英語混じってたんですけど。僕が絶対フランス語でしか話さないで。もうフランス語で。会話しています。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: I didn't really speak French, I was speaking English at first. But at one point, I said "Let's change to French". After I said that, sometimes English would be mixed in [to our conversations] but I definitely didn't use anything but French and from then on, I was conversing in French.

Effectively, the stance taken by Manabu reveals that he had reached a point where he felt confident enough and possessed the linguistic resources required to make this demand and begin to negotiate how he wished to be recognised by others. This emerged as a critical point in his account of gradually accumulating the markers of a multilingual identity with an emphasis on his ability to use French.

Manabu explained that finding himself in this environment where both English and French were spoken, he had begun to imagine himself becoming proficient in both. However, he also found that language use was a contested space as Antoine and his friend had different reactions to his request.

Manabu: ［Antoine］は僕には英語で話しかけて、僕は英語を理解して、フランス語で答えるみたいなことが多くて、その３人いたうちのもう一人の人は、僕にフランス語で、頑張って話しかけてくれて。で僕何回も聞き返してみたいな、そんな感じでした。まあでも、それはどんどん良くなってて。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: A lot of the time it was like ［Antoine］would speak to me in English, I would understand the English and reply in French. The other member of our three person group would try to speak to me in French as much as possible, and I would like ask him to repeat it a bunch of times. It was like that. So I got better [at French] doing that.

This episode highlights the questions of choice, access and identity which govern situations where various linguistic resources can be deployed to achieve similar communicative aims. Key among these was Manabu's desire to develop an identity as a competent French-speaker. Returning to the description in Chapter 8.2, in the multilingual context he found himself, becoming competent in French had taken on additional significance for Manabu given his limited English competence in relation to his AFS peers. Furthermore, in a different part of the interview Manabu explained that in the city he lived 「移民がすごい多くて。で、英語喋れるとか、すごい多くて、ダウンタウン行くと大体英語で話しかけられるんですよ」 "There were a lot of migrants. A lot of them spoke English or whatever, so when you went downtown you pretty much only heard English being spoken" (Manabu, interview 1), which indicates that using English combined with his appearance may have

indexed a migrant identity. French on the other hand would have indexed a more local identity, more viable by his status of living with a Francophone family. Therefore, Manabu's insistence on renegotiating the linguistic terms of their relationship, despite Antoine's reported preference for English appears to indicate his desire to invest in a French-speaking identity. Moreover, while the host family would have remained a key site for Manabu's linguistic development, the language varieties he was exposed to there would have differed from those used by his male friends. For him to begin performing the identity of a teenage French-speaker, appropriating the voices of these friends would have been critical.

9.4.   **Late stages**

At the seven-month mark into his stay, there was a clear change in the types of photos Manabu posted, beginning with two shots surrounded by members of his hockey club to mark the close of the season. Over the following months Manabu posted a number of images which highlighted his growing social connections in the host community; standing with friends at Niagara Falls (Month 9), a group shot with his AFS cohort (Month 10), a group shot with his flag football friends (Month 11), two shots celebrating graduation with his two close French-Canadian friends (Month 11) and a final image before departing in a restaurant surrounded by a group of friends captioned "What a surprise" in French (Month 12).

The shift in focus from selfies and cultural items to the communities he was connected to was a visual confirmation of the social network development Manabu described in his interviews, similar to Umino and Benson's (2016) findings in the photographic archives of two international students in Japan. The development of Manabu's local peer networks was also evident in the larger number of non-Japanese comments from his audience these posts received compared with those in the first few months: 3 of 17 comments in the first four months, 4 of 7 comments in the second four months and 13 of 21 comments in the final three months. While Manabu continued throughout his time abroad to caption his images with short sentences and hashtags in French, the switch from the touristic and cultural to a more communities-oriented focus also indicates a change in the intended audience for these posts from his Japanese networks, to one that also included peers in Canada. The multilingual nature of this audience is also reflected in the diversity of the comments on Manabu's posts, including Romanised Japanese, demonstrating that language learning was a reciprocal process in Manabu's peer groups.

Manabu explained how the contexts that he now found himself in allowed him to develop competence in both French and English and the multi-competence of these communities brought

new understanding and awareness about the way that language could work, as translanguaging (Li Wei, 2018) became part of his communicative repertoire.

Manabu: 英語とフランス語を使って話してましたから（うん）何だろう「…」フランス語と英語が混じって話しているんで。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: I used both English and French to speak ((mm)) What would you say? […] I mixed French and English together when I was speaking.

Essential also were the physical affordances of the places Manabu inhabited which afforded greater opportunities to develop both his peer networks and linguistic competencies. Firstly, the public transport available allowed him to independently travel to meet friends, particularly on the weekend, something that became more frequent in the final months as his social networks expanded. Secondly, Wi-Fi connectivity facilitated participation in peer networks at school and similar to other informants (e.g., Nikko, Ch. 7; Raiken, Ch. 12.3) this allowed for multimodal interaction to take place both with and without co-presence.

As Manabu's time abroad began to head towards its conclusion, he spent less time studying and more time out with friends, particularly on weekends. Like Nikko, continuing development of his networks and strengthening relationships with friends was made bittersweet by the knowledge that he would soon need to leave behind the communities he was just beginning to become a part of. With developing competence also came a greater contextual understanding of his linguistic knowledge, effectively demonstrating the development of his linguistic competence.

Manabu: 自分がフランス語勉強してて、分かってくることが増えるじゃないですか？（うん）でもわかったことが増えると、また分からないことも増えるんですよ。（うん、うん、うん）新しいことを発見しちゃうというか、[…]それできりがないんですよ、言語って多分。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: I studied French, so the things I knew about increased, right? ((mm)) But as the things I knew increased, so did the things I didn't know. ((mm, mm, mm)) I would like discover new things […] and there is no end to that. That's what language is, maybe.

Manabu described a great sense of satisfaction towards the progress he had made during the final gathering of his AFS community before departing. The community had gradually shifted from using English as the main language to French during their monthly meetings and at the final meeting many of the other exchange students praised Manabu for his French ability, which he felt had caught up to the other romance language speakers in his group. For Manabu, to have his identity as a French speaker recognised by those in the community he had initially felt excluded from on linguistic grounds was a significant validation of his progress.

9.5. **Post-sojourn**

Like many of the informants in this project, Manabu struggled with the demands of Japanese high school life after returning. As he indicated in his second-round interview, the strictness of high school as something he felt acutely, exemplified by rules he now found to be arbitrary, such as being unable to drink water during class and echoing Nikko's experience (Ch. 7.5), being pressured by teachers to adopt a more conservative hair style. On top of this, he also described how the changes he displayed in his behaviour after returning resulted in reactions from fellow students which made him feel displaced.

Manabu: ときどきあっちで普通だったことやって、やってしまって、で、こっちでちょっと引かれてしまうこととかもありました。(Manabu, interview 2)

Manabu: Sometimes I would do things that were normal there [in Canada] and here [in Japan] there were times that people would recoil a little from me.

This was exemplified in the way some of his behaviours were labelled as *ryūgaku kabure*; essentially, trying too hard to be seen as an exchange student. While Manabu felt that this might be considered a compliment, the underlying implication was that he was acting in a way that displayed his overseas experience and therefore his difference to others. As noted in Nikko's case study, in Japanese high school settings deviations from norms tend to be marked negatively, which can play out in intra-student interactions (see also Yoneyama, 1999).

The other aspect of high school which bothered Manabu was the lack of support he now found for his linguistic competencies, particularly English.

Manabu: 学校の英語めちゃめちゃ簡単で、なんか、全部ね、全部寝てるというか@（@@）@「これ英語じゃない」［…］だから本当に英語も、家で、好きな時間、なんか、映画みたりとか、TED をみたりとか、あとは YOUTUBER をみたりとか。(Manabu, interview 2)

Manabu: English class at school is so simple, like, the whole time I'm sleeping through it @ ((@@)) @ "This isn't English!" […] So really with English too I watch movies or TED talks at home when I want to. Also, I watch Youtubers.

One of the remarkable aspects of Manabu's return experience that contrasts with many of the other informants is the extent to which he went to maintain his multilingual competencies despite the lack of institutional support. As the above extract demonstrates, he intentionally sought affordances online that would allow him to continue engaging with the language he encountered abroad, however more than that, Manabu made significant changes to the way he structured his time outside of school in order to align with the multilingual identity he now claimed for himself and underpinned his future imagined self. In response to a question about the effect study abroad had on his future plans, Manabu gave the following response.

Manabu: ライフプランは変わりました［…］部活をもうやめて、今は、その、そういう時間は、英語の本を読んだりとか、フランス語の本を読んだりとか、フランス語とか英語とか映画見たり［…］で長期の休みとかは、何だろう自分のやりたいこと、なんかチャレンジしたいんでいろいろ、［…］今度の夏は、どっかヒッチハイクとかでもして行ってみたいなとか、あと自転車でどっか遠いとこまで行ってみようかなあとか。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: My life plan has changed […] I already quit my [extra-curricular] club. Now, in that time I'm reading books in English, I'm reading books in French, I'm watching movies in English and French […] and during longer breaks, there are all sorts of things I want to do, things I want to try. […] This summer I want to try hitchhiking somewhere maybe, also I'd like to try and ride a bicycle to somewhere far away.

The experience had transformed what Manabu valued. Previously, Manabu had described himself as someone who was looking for something different, and his multilingual identity afforded him that. He also found himself developing a desire to seek out new experiences; a kind of wanderlust and desire for novel experiences. This was also linked to a sense of empowerment he now felt as a result of overcoming the difficulties encountered abroad.

Manabu: 結構留学でつらいこともあったんで、［…］でそれを乗り越えたから自信が 付いているので（うん）［…］なんか、リミットが、外れた。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: There was quite a bit of stressful stuff that happened during my year abroad […] and because I got through that I gained a lot of self-confidence ((mm)) […] it's like I don't have any limits now.

In the months after returning Manabu continued to maintain contact with his social networks that he had developed in Canada, mainly through Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, text messages and Skype, while he also continued to caption messages on Instagram in French and receive comments in French and English. Manabu explained how the verbal linguistic practices he had adopted with his friends in Canada, including translanguaging between English and French, continued in written online communication after he returned to Japan.

Manabu: 僕もフランス語で話すんですけど。ちょっと、あっ、この時フランス語わかんないと思った時でも英語を話せば。伝わるとかそういうの、はありました。（うん）で今も、友達チャットとかするんですけど。（うん）すごい、すぐその子も英語が混ざるんですよね。（あー）なんか。ところどころフランス、英語が入ってみたいな（うん、うん、うん）感じが、の文章とか。(Manabu, interview 1)

Manabu: I speak French too, but there are times when I think, ah, wait a sec, I don't know the French for this, and if I say it in English then [the other person] will understand. ((mm)) So now, when I'm messaging my friends or whatever, ((mm)) my friend will just start mixing in lots of English [with his French]. ((ahhh)) So it like this bit of the sentence is written in French and that bit is in English ((mm, mm, mm)), like that.

Like other participants (Nikko, Ch. 7; Takumi, Ch. 10), the strength of the connection he had made with his host family facilitated an opportunity to reunite with them. In Manabu's case, this occurred

when his host parents visited Japan as part of a trip to see their daughter who had begun an exchange in Japan just after Manabu returned. As fate had it, Manabu now found himself in the role that his host sister had played, interpreting between his parents and host parents.

Manabu: 僕の本当の親と僕のカナダのパパとママだったんですけど。そこは会うことができて、でお酒飲んだりとかして、僕は通訳するんですけど全部、それでちゃんとコミュニケーションも生まれてたんで、うーん、すごい、［…］楽しかったし、なんか僕としてはそこに、そこのつながりが生まれたのがすごい嬉しかったですね。(Manabu, interview 2)

Manabu: So it was my real parents and my Mum and Dad from Canada. They were able to meet each other, and they were drinking. I was interpreting everything and real communication happened between them. Yeah. It was so […] enjoyable. Like, because I was there, a connection happened and I was just so happy.

In the year after returning from study abroad Manabu had begun a part-time job at the coffee shop chain Starbucks. Among young people in Japan this is considered to be a very desirable position due to both the symbolic value associated with the brand and the increased likelihood of needing to use languages other than Japanese, with the growth in international visitors and their preference for the recognisable brand of Starbucks over other domestic alternatives. The cosmopolitan image of Starbucks was particularly attractive for Manabu upon returning, providing him with opportunities to perform his multilingual identity.

Manabu: やっぱスターバックスだと結構くるんですよね、外国人の方が。でメニュー、あ、メニューは英語でも書いてあるんですけど、やっぱオーダーは英語になるんですけど ［…］ ただ昨日、スペイン人の方がいて、日本語ペラペラな方なんですけど、あの僕ちょっとスペイン語留学先で覚えたんですよ。挨拶とか、挨拶程度ですけど。でなんかちょっと話したら、すごい喜んでくれたんで、嬉しかったですね。(Manabu, interview 2)

Manabu: As you would expect, quite a lot of foreigners come to Starbucks. We have an English menu. So of course they order in English […] Just yesterday, a Spaniard came in. They are fluent in Japanese. So I remembered a bit of Spanish from my time abroad. Just greetings. So I just spoke to them a little [in Spanish] and they were really pleased. I was so happy.

Another benefit that emerged from beginning this job was that the income provided him with increased opportunities for mobility. Manabu saw himself using the money he was earning to travel to Australia over the Japanese winter and back to Canada in the following summer. He also saw himself travelling to other places connected to the friendships that he had made with other AFS informants in the later stages of his time abroad.

Despite returning to the same year of high school as Nikko (Ch. 7.5) and Narumi (Ch. 8.5), the structure of Manabu's high school meant that he had two and a half years to complete before graduating. This meant that despite the changes Manabu had made to the way he spent his time outside of school, he was unable to relocate to an institutional environment that better aligned with

his current identity in the way that Nikko and Narumi had. As the year after returning progressed the pressure of the school testing regime and the need to study for industry qualifications linked to his study limited the opportunities he had to engage with French and English, as well as interact with his networks in Canada. The effect of this pressure was a growing sense that it was diminishing the competencies and identity that connected him to these networks.

Manabu: もし僕がこのまま話さなくなって、絶対忘れるので、［…］カナダで、仲良くなった友達、とコミュニケーションがとれないってことになるんで、（うん）それは悲しいじゃないですか？（うん）［…］それは絶対いやなので、そのフランス語と英語は大切にしたいというか、これからも喋りたいですよ。だって損になることは絶対にないし。
(Manabu, interview 2)

Manabu: If I go on without speaking like this, I will totally forget […] it will mean that I will stop being able to communicate with the friends I made in Canada ((mm)) That's sad, right? ((mm)) […] I would really hate that, so I want to maintain my French and English. I want to keep using them. I mean it's never going to be a disadvantage.

The ongoing tension between his desire to invest in the competencies he had developed abroad and the pressure exerted by the institutional situation he found himself had come to define the most recent part of his time before the second-round interview. Manabu described in the interview how he felt that this way of life, the constant pressure and busyness, was not a stage but a feature of Japanese society; 「本当は生きるために働くべきなのに。なんか、働くために生けてるみたいな」 "It really should be working in order to live but, instead it's more like living in order to work" (Manabu, interview 2). This dissatisfaction combined with the opportunities he felt his competencies provided fuelled an imagined future leaving Japan to live and work in France.

9.6. **Discussion**

Manabu's time abroad was one of communities, key relationships and the development of multilingual competencies. Before encountering the host community, Manabu's desire to study abroad had stemmed from a wish to live in Canada and experience life away from Japan. Like many of the informants though, the connection between language, participation and belonging became palpable after arriving and in Manabu's case, the inability to perform his identity as he had in Japan was a strong motivator to invest in language tied to the communities he inhabited. In many ways, his investment was about reclaiming an identity in French and English that he had possessed in Japanese and yet, through the developmental process he found his understanding of himself altered.

In what could be called a *critical incident*, following Benson's (2011) definition of events "that were recounted in order to account for a change of direction or a transition between phases in the learning career", Manabu identified his experience of exclusion during AFS events as the genesis of

investment in language learning. While Manabu still had to overcome his initial understanding that language learning would largely occur organically, a belief found in other informants' accounts (e.g., Misa, Ch. 11.2), the intentional and strategic approach he later adopted marked a rapid increase in his competence, particularly in French. A notable aspect of this approach was selecting apps which complemented each other, revealing a metacognitive awareness of his own learning needs similar to Nikko (Ch. 7). While appearing later in this thesis, it is helpful to contrast Manabu's response to his limited linguistic development with Misa's decision to trust in the discourse that her linguistic competence would develop given enough time in the host community. Furthermore, the support Manabu received from host sister and mother, particularly during the initial few months, appear critical to his overall developmental. This support meant that even while he contended with the difficulties of a new school environment and a lack of connection in the AFS community, his host family life was comprehensible and stable. This highlights how an individuals' desire to act agentively in their own linguistic development is a function of both individual dispositions and the nature of the wider social contexts they travel through.

It should also be noted that while Manabu's initial sense of exclusion was linked to his English competence, the presence of French in the multi-competence of the host community provided an alternative linguistic system for Manabu to develop his competence in, relative to other exchange students. This was significant since it was his competence in French that he found the most pride in and received recognition from his peers for this. Many of the informants encountered the English ability of their exchange student peers negatively, reflecting wider observations of anxiety Japanese sojourners often experience (see Ch. 2.5.1), and the presence of linguistic alternatives may have provided an opportunity to begin on what could be considered a level playing-field. This raises the question of whether informants in English-only settings may have experienced more anxiety as their only point of linguistic comparison was English.

Like Nikko (Ch. 7) and Narumi (Ch. 8), the presence of someone willing to initiate social contact at school was crucial to the formation of social networks outside of the host family. In Manabu's case, it also appears that the high numbers of migrants who attended his school allowed him to find community with others who also fell into the category on non-locals (see Ch. 2.3.1). Again, this experience bears comparison to the later cases of Misa (Ch. 11) and Megumi (Ch. 12.1) whose experience being explicitly positioned as an outsider cut them off from community and interaction. It is also worth noting the way that Manabu successfully navigated membership across a number of communities, including an ice hockey club, the two linguistically different groups at school and, eventually, the local AFS community. Of note was his agentive negotiation of the use of French in one of those groups. Desire for membership communities were a reason to invest in language while

also providing recurring contexts of interaction. Manabu's use of both co-present and online modes of combination with peers, found also in Nikko's and Narumi's accounts, points to the way that multimodal participation was both a norm of communication in these social networks and an essential part of forming an authentic teenage identity.

Manabu's experience returning to high school in Japan also reflected the themes of other informants, in that he found language classes underwhelming and encountered reactions from his peers that highlighted his otherness. Again, it was Manabu's intentionality and willingness to resist the constraints that the high school context placed on his ability to maintain his competencies that stood out. His decision to leave his club, a crucial part of belonging and socialisation in the Japanese high school context, to concentrate on language learning speaks to the changes in his values. Manabu's affiliation with a more international, multilingual identity can also been seen in his decision to seek employment at Starbucks. This identity also informed an imagination laced with ideas of freedom and escape; hitchhiking around Japan and moving abroad to work and live in France. Study abroad and his ongoing linguistic investment therefore provided Manabu with the means to reimagine and achieve a new future for himself.

Manabu's narrative exemplifies how sojourners can agentively resist and renegotiate aspects of the social context, including the nature of social networks, to better enable investment in linguistic practices deemed necessary to achieve the identities they desire for themselves. It also demonstrates how support provided by key individuals at distinct points can be crucial to their ability to invest. The transformation Manabu underwent during his time abroad sent ripples through his lifeworld and provoked him to begin renegotiating his way of being in Japan and what he imagined he could be beyond that.

10 Takumi: The centrality of family in rural US

Takumi's account is significant as it builds on many of the key themes which emerge from the other focal cases while also diverging in important ways which provide more nuance to the results of this study. Due to the geographical isolation provided by his host family's cattle farm, most of Takumi's interactions outside of school were with his family and the church community they attended, providing contrast to the importance peer networks played in the later parts of the previous cases. Takumi indicated that he was confident in his English ability before departing and did not report struggling with language the way most other informants did. Takumi chose to use Japanese in both interviews although he interspersed his responses with English when describing interactions.

10.1. **Background**

Takumi was a first-year high school student whose home in Japan was on the northern edge of the Greater Tokyo urban sprawl when he left to live abroad in the US. Takumi made the decision to study abroad while his older sister was already in the US on her own year-abroad program. When I asked if his decision had been influenced by his sister, he laughed, saying 「ちょっと羨ましいなあって、本人には言いませんけど」"I felt a bit jealous, but I would never tell her that" (Takumi, interview 1). Like Manabu (Ch. 8.1), Takumi also perceived study abroad as 「格好いい」 "cool" and was attracted to the unknown possibilities it offered.

Levi:　その時に留学についてどう思いましたか？

Takumi:　そうですねー、えっと、何か、とてもすごいものだと思っていて［…］何があるかわからないっていうのがちょっと楽しみでした。［…］日本の学校に暮らして、日本にいて、日本の勉強して、というのはずっと何があるか全然、全く分かってて、全部予想できるんですけど。もし海外に行って、何かするっとなったら、もう想像もつかないようなことができるんじゃないかみたいな期待もありました。で、それと同時にまあ何があるかわからないと言うので、ちょっと不安もありました。(Takumi, interview 1)

Levi:　What were your thoughts about studying abroad at that time?

Takumi:　Let me think. Um, so, I was thinking it's this amazing thing […] I was kind of looking forward to not knowing what would happen [in the US] […] Attending a school in Japan, being in Japan, studying in Japan, I understand what is going to happen, everything is totally predictable. But if I was to go and do something overseas, then I hoped that maybe, I could do things I couldn't even imagine yet. At the same time not knowing what could happen made me a bit anxious too.

Takumi explained that this was a case of 「怖いもの見たさ」 "wanting to look at something precisely because it scares you" (Takumi, interview 1). This again points towards an exoticised view of view of study abroad and the way the informants viewed it as an opportunity to encounter something which

would differentiate them from their peers, what Coleman (2015) calls "a yearning for novelty" (p. 38).

One way that Takumi diverged from the other focal cases was the instrumental role he saw study abroad playing in life. His aim upon graduating university was to work in aeronautical engineering and given the strength of American industries in this area, he saw this as a logical step towards that goal. Language was also a consideration since as Takumi explained, 「英語だったら、ちょっと自信があったので、それもアメリカが決めた理由のひとつですね」 "If English was the language used then I had confidence [in my ability to communicate]. That was one of the reasons I decided on the US" (Takumi, interview 1). Takumi's declaration is significant here since his lack of anxiety represents a clear contrast to many of the other informants in this study.

10.2. **Early stages**

Two days after arriving and completing the orientation process, Takumi travelled to meet his host family in a rural area of the Midwestern United States and this first encounter was indicative of how the relationship with his host parents would play out over the course of study abroad. Realising as he met them that he could not remember his host parents' names, Takumi improvised with "Nice to meet you, Mum, Dad". He described them reacting positively to this statement and Takumi credited this moment for their ongoing positive relationship, establishing the parent-child roles they adopted throughout his stay. The desire to create a close relationship appears to have been reciprocal, since during that same meeting his host father also sought to establish rapport with Takumi, showing him pictures of radio-controlled planes on his iPhone, something that Takumi had described being interested in in an introduction letter he had written to them earlier.

The change from Takumi's home city of 60,000 people to a farm with 50 head of cattle initially came as a shock, but he gradually became accustomed to his new surrounds. Takumi indicated that the transition was eased by having an internet connection which allowed him to continue his hobby of reading e-books. This sense of continuity would certainly have been a factor, but a broader look at the way he approached study abroad suggests that his openness to new experiences, confidence in his communicative ability and the rapport he quickly established with his hosts would have all contributed to his adjustment. Takumi's experience here contrasts with other informants (Narumi, Ch. 8.2; Misa, Ch. 11.2) who found themselves disorientated by the cultural and linguistic practices they initially encountered.

The remoteness of Takumi's host family's farm meant a long commute to school each day and as a result, he left school quickly each day in order to catch the bus home. Takumi reported enjoying his

time at school, particularly the more practical subjects such as a robotics class and felt that he had a good relationship with many of his peers there. His narrative however, implied that the interactions he had there had not played a large role in his experience. Instead, he prioritised relationships with his host family, particularly during the first several months. Takumi explained that his daily routine involved doing homework after arriving home and helping his host father with chores around the farm before spending the evenings with his host parents in the house. His host parents had two adult children, a son who lived nearby and a daughter who lived in South Central US. This meant that Takumi was effectively the only child in the house. He therefore had regular, ongoing access to the recurring contexts of interaction instrumental for his emotional and social well-being as well as his linguistic development without the tension or support of host siblings that other informants described.

As was the case with other informants (e.g., Nikko, Ch. 7.2; Megumi, Ch. 12.1), Takumi's host mother was a crucial source of language learning support and her presence and availability during the periods he was working on homework provided the opportunities for their relationship to develop.

Takumi: ホストマザーにあの、課題を見せてて、これはどういう意味なのと聞いたりするのは、それは、それで一つのコミュニケーションのきっかけになって」 (Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: I would do things like show my host mother an exercise and ask her what something means and that would become a chance to communicate.

These interactions often arose out of questions around language, particularly those connected what he was studying in his English class. While Takumi had entered study abroad confident in his ability to interact in English, the proximal process underpinned by interactions with his host mother was vital to his ongoing linguistic development. This process is exemplified in an interaction which involved the word 'wolf'.

Takumi: やっぱり発音繰り返しても通じなくて、で、私まだ発音完璧できないんですけど、たぶん /wɒlf/ みたいな発音だったと思うんですけど、それがどうしても通じなくて、その時大変だなあと思いました。

Levi: なんか、その通じない時は［…］どうしましたか？

Takumi: スペルを言ってました。(Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: So no matter how many times I repeated it [my host mother] couldn't understand. And, I still can't say it perfectly but, I think maybe I pronounced it like /wɒlf/. Whatever I did, she couldn't understand and at that time I felt it was pretty bad.

Levi: So, when you couldn't get her to understand […] what did you do?

Takumi: I just spelt it out.

146

Despite eventually adopting an alternative mode of meaning making in order to communicate his message, Takumi reported that throughout this incident his host mother 「ちゃんと聞き取ろうとしてくれる」 "kept trying to grasp what I was saying" (Takumi, interview 1), providing him with valuable opportunities to continue to negotiate meaning.

The combination of his host mother's willingness to accommodate Takumi's attempts to communicate and Takumi's own attitude towards these kinds of obstacles were crucial to his developing competence. Takumi displayed resilience in the face of communicative difficulty which allowed him to attempt progressively more complex interactions required for development to take place (Bronfenbrenner, 1999).

Takumi: やっぱりポジティブに考え、そこで何て言うんでしょ、あの、しゃべったら迷惑かなという風に考えると、そこで、何って言うんでしょう？会話とかコミュニケーションが全部終わってしまうので、できるだけそういう風に考えないように、自分が何って言うんでしょう？自分がうまくなればいいんだという風にポジティブに (Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: It's better to think positively. If I worry that I'm causing difficulty to the person I'm speaking to, then like, the conversation or communication would just end there. So I try as much as possible not to think like that. I try to be positive, just thinking "I need to improve".

As indicated earlier, Takumi's attitude stands in contrast to the research which has emphasised the tendency of Japanese to experience anxiety around second language communication, particularly English (see Ch. 2.5.1). By prioritising the need to maintain interaction over the momentary discomfort caused by lapses in comprehension, he increased the opportunities he had to use language.

The atmosphere of accommodation and his host mother's role in fostering Takumi's knowledge and investment in the linguistic practices of his host community was further made clear through another episode in which he asked his host mother about the strangeness of his host father's English.

Takumi: 「この地方の英語はヒルビリーの英語だから［…］周りも十分に訛ってるから、あなたが一人日本語訛りでも、誰も気にしないわよ」みたいなこと。（@）それは良かったと思います。なんて言うんでしょ、すごいみんな綺麗な英語話す方だと自分がすごい気にするかもしれないけど、みんな訛ってると、自分がそのままどんどん話そうって (Takumi, interview 1).

Takumi: [Mum] said something like, "that's because the English of this area is 'Hillbilly English' […] and since around here people speak with strong accents, no one is going to care if you are the only one speaking with a Japanese accent" ((@)) I was relieved to hear that. If everyone had been speaking clear English I might have been really conscious of how I spoke, but since everyone had accents, I felt I was free to keep speaking just as I was.

The informational and affective support offered by Takumi's host mother in this extract highlights the way that she supported his linguistic development through not only direct linguistic knowledge, but also helping him to positively contextualise his own ability, similar to Manabu's host mother (Ch. 7.2). This again points to the multifaceted support role that host mothers played in the lives of the informants and their significant contribution to the informants' linguistic development.

Even while his mother was an important source of support, Takumi was spending a lot of time with his host father on the farm. Takumi explained that his host father had a bad back and so he would travel with him in the truck, getting out to open gates, feed livestock or help with other jobs that needed to be done. Their conversations during these times centred on the practicalities of running the farm and on the nature of the area including the wildlife. The concrete topics of these interactions were something Takumi would indicate was important for his ability to participate.

10.3. **Mid stages**

One thing that had motivated Takumi to study abroad was the opportunity to encounter something unexpected or novel. At around the mid-point of his time abroad Takumi felt he had acculturated to life in the host community and settled into a routine.

Takumi: その時期、アメリカの生活に慣れて、例えば毎朝学校、毎日学校に行って帰ってきて、で宿題を終わらせて、で、例えば Dad の手伝いをしてと言うので、［…］この例を後半年続けるのかなと思った時に［…］そのすごい不安になりました。［…］ただ単に自分がなんとなくアメリカで暮らせることになって、暮らせるよという風になって帰ってて。それが自分の後の人生にどう影響するかと言うと、単に何って言うんでしょう？人に自慢する時に「俺はアメリカに行ったんだよ」という自慢するのに、軽いというだけで終わってしまうのはちょっと嫌で、ただ、何って言うんでしょう？その：：、もっと何って言うんでしょう？すごいものが身に付けられると言ったら何ですけど。（うん）何かすごいことが起きるんじゃないかなと思ってて、ただ平穏無事に終わりそうになった時に、「自分の留学がこれで終わっていいのか」という風に思って。(Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: I had got used to life in America at that time, for example, every day I went to school and back, I would finish my homework, then for example, Dad would ask me to help him. […] Thinking that things would just continue like this for the next half a year […] that made me really anxious. […] Basically, I had just got used to living in America without much effort and if you asked me what impact that would have on my life after study abroad, I would just be able to boast to people, "Hey, I've been to America", ending as just some trivial thing and I really didn't want that. I wanted to experience something amazing. I was thinking something amazing might happen, but then it seemed like my time abroad was going to end uneventfully. I was thinking like, "Is it OK for it to just end like this?"

Like other informants (Nikko, Ch. 7.3; Narumi, Ch. 8.3, Manabu, Ch. 9.3), the mid-point in the year abroad represented a turning point Takumi's approach to the contexts of the host community. After overcoming initial stages of adjustment to unfamiliar social and geographical environments, the

attention required to process this was reduced as they developed new frames of reference. This freed up their attention to begin looking beyond their immediate environment and refocus on other aspects of their experience such as friendship networks and actualising their reasons for studying abroad. Inevitably, when their aspirations were aligned with their current situation, they experienced negative emotions such as disappointment, anxiety or depression. Importantly after noticing this gap, they began taking intentional actions to reshape these situations. Takumi's response was to begin actively seeking out new experiences rather than waiting for them to occur to him, joining an after-school golfing club and a local clay target shooting centre, volunteering at his host parents' church and taking a more active role helping out at home. This was also the time Takumi's host father introduced him to hunting, which he identified as one of the most significant aspects of his experience abroad.

Takumi's participation in hunting expeditions began when his host father and host brother had first shown him their guns. He described being both surprised and excited, since he had had an interest in firearms even when living in Japan. The opportunity to use one himself on a trip tracking deer proved to be the type of experience Takumi had been longing for since arriving. The exoticism and novelty, something he could never have done in Japan, appeared to be a large part of that. Moreover, the experience of killing and butchering a deer himself served as a *critical incident* (Benson, 2011) which he felt gave him new appreciation and understanding for the food he consumed.

Takumi: 日本にいた時に、［…］ 牛の（うん）屠殺（うん）Processing についての授業があって。でそれちょっと、何て言うんでしょう？自分が食べてる物に対して、自分はどうやって生きてるかに対してというの、ちょっと、その、頭から、何て言うんでしょう？最初から心の中取っ掛かりがあって、なんか消化できない感じがあって［…］それで、実際に、その鹿を殺して、で実際に、あの、フィールドストリップまで自分でやって［…］鹿の内臓を取って、（うん）その肉を見て、（うん）あ、これが自分が普段食べてる肉で、これを食べてるんだなという実感が湧いた時には、ちょっと満足感がありましたねその時 (Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: When I was in Japan, […] we had a class on cattle processing. ((mm)) At that time, thinking about the food I eat, thinking about the way I was living. In my mind, from the start there was something I felt I couldn't quite grasp. […] So, I literally killed the deer and actually did everything, including the field strip[14]. […] I disembowelled the deer, ((mm)) saw the meat ((mm)) and at the time I had this deep realisation that this is the meat I usually eat. It gave me a kind of satisfaction at that time.

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[14] Field stripping refers to the process of disassembling a gun into its component parts

As Takumi saw it, this experience allowed him to reconcile the abstraction of meat production with the visceral reality of a hunting, killing and butchering an animal. This revelation was important for Takumi, since he felt that in Japan he had consumed meat without the realisation that it had once been a living creature. Looking at the experience as it applied to his narrative, it also appears that it helped to validate the decision to go abroad, given his disappointment at not having the revelatory experience he had initially sought.

On another level, the activity of hunting was also an important site for Takumi to strengthen the relationship he had to his host father and host brother. The hours they spent together represented not only an opportunity to learn about hunting, but also for emergent processes of language learning to take place.

Takumi: Hunting ついて話をした時に、その、例えば、ここは鹿が通る場所だとか、そういう時に何て言うんでしょう？あのすごい具体的な話だったので、あの、ちょっと落ち着かない良くない英語でも、十分通じて。その時、すごいあの話ができたなっと思いました。その Practical な話って言うか。(Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: When we talked about hunting, for example, "This in the place the deer pass through", it would be a very concrete kind of conversation, even if my English wasn't clear or good I could communicate fine and those times I really felt like I was able to communicate. Those kinds of practical conversations.

Takumi contrasted these types of conversations with others in which he felt unable to express himself adequately while abroad on topics such as politics, the effects of different kinds of laws or cultural differences between Japan and the US. In effect, activities where meaning and understanding could be constructed contextually and multimodally provided opportunities for Takumi to more fully engage and participate and therefore better invest in the practices of his host family. The effect of this participation was a greater sense of integration and belonging to the host family.

Takumi: 一緒にひとつの作業をして、その、例えば、鹿を狩って、それを解体するということが、その一つの一だい、何と言うんでしょう？ひとつの１年を通したプロジェクト、て言ったんですけど。それについて、皆で参加して、皆でやるというのが大きかったと思います。(Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: Doing something together, for example hunting down a deer and then butchering it that was like the project for the year, in that everyone participated. Everyone doing it together was important I think.

Returning to the revelation Takumi described upon killing and butchering a deer, it is in some ways emblematic of the relationship he had to language. While Takumi had lived in Japan, English had predominately been a school subject, experienced abstractly even while he understood that there were practical implications in other contexts. Studying abroad in the US, the language became an

organic part of the relationships and experiences he shared with his host family, in effect becoming something real and lived. It would appear that the most salient identity for Takumi as study abroad unfolded was that of family member and so the language for accomplishing that role was the target of his investment.

10.4. **Late stages**

While school life abroad was not a prominent part of Takumi's narrative, one episode in the later stages of his time abroad stood out. In his English class they had studied a book called "Killing the Rising Sun", written by former TV commentator Bill O'Reilly, which dealt with America's conflict with Japan during the Second World War. While he had received most other challenging experiences during his time abroad with an open mind, including a visit to the Creation Museum in Kentucky, he described struggling with this book in class. Takumi reported that this experience was the one time that his Japanese identity became particularly salient, triggered by what he saw as an inaccurate depiction of the conflict. Unlike many of the other experiences he had encountered where he had tried to interpret them positively, it was something he could not accept, explaining「さすがにこんなに自分が変化しても、この本で喜んで、「こ本が いいほんだ 」っていうよりにはならないかなと思いました。"Even if I had changed a lot in myself, there was no way I could enjoy the book, no way I could say "This is a good book" (Takumi, interview 1). The incident stood as a reminder of his affiliation with Japan even as he felt a strong connection with his host family.

The sense of belonging Takumi felt with his host family was apparent in a confession that as the time he had left in the US dwindled, he had no desire to return to his life in Japan.

Takumi: 帰るのが寂しくて、やっぱり［…］嫌だったので、あの、あんまり考えないようにして、で、どうやったかと言うと、すごく自分のスケジュールを詰め込んで、忙しくして、あの、頭が動く前に、体を動かさないといけない　(Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: I was sad to go back to Japan […] I didn't like the idea of returning. I tried not to think about it and to do that I just really packed my schedule full, made myself really busy, I had to get my body moving before my mind could start thinking.

Like many of the other informants, Nikko (Ch. 7.4) and Manabu (Ch. 9.4) in particular, Takumi experienced a sense of ephemerality which heightened the affective experience of the final months, weeks and days of his time abroad. This was exemplified in the way he approached his final day with the host family, waking up at 4am to spend the final few hours before he had to depart hunting with his host brother.

Takumi: 七面鳥狩りに行ったんですけど、成功しなかったんですよ。で、それで、「絶対に戻ってきて、七面鳥食べよう」という話をしました。「絶対に、何年後かわからないけど、

また七面鳥を、狩りに、2人でショットガンのを持って［…］狩りにいって。今度こそ射止めよう」という話をしました。（はい）彼は「いつでもいいから来い」って。(Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: We went wild turkey hunting but we didn't get anything. So we were saying "We definitely have to come back and eat some turkey. I don't know how many years it will be but definitely, the two of us will come back again with shotguns […] and hunt turkey. Let's bring them down next time." [My host brother] was like "Come whenever you want Takumi, come and hunt turkey."

Relaying this moment to me in the interview, Takumi's happiness was palatable. It signified the degree to which he had been accepted as part of the host family and the motivation he had to return, not simply to hunt but to again be part of something which he had contributed to for the past year. The relationships he had developed with his host family, mediated through language and activities such as hunting, had made the space of his homestay a place he felt an affective connection with and was invited to return to.

10.5. **Post-sojourn**

Like many of the other informants, Takumi initially experienced the return to high school in Japan negatively, however within a month of arriving back, he felt that he had reacculturated and described himself as 「ちょっと英語ができる日本学生」 "a Japanese student who could use a bit of English" (Takumi, interview 1). Unlike other informants, he did not describe feeling restricted by the institutional system he returned to, nor did he describe any major changes to the way he presented himself or interacted with others. On the surface, this would appear unremarkable, but in the context of Takumi's motivation for studying abroad and his desire to experience something that would significantly impact him, it would seem to be a disappointing outcome. Reflecting upon this idea though, Takumi reported that he did feel that he had been transformed. To take a relevant expression from the educational sociologist Mezirow (2018), the transformation was not *epochal* in the way that initially fuelled Takumi's desire to study abroad. Rather, the change had been *cumulative*, a gradual accretion of small things that he had not noticed at the time they occurred.

Describing the ways study abroad had affected his way of being, Takumi was now consuming more English language media, including news channels produced by CNN and the BBC. While Takumi explained that one aspect of this consumption was that it allowed him to access information not covered by Japanese outlets, there was also an affective connection to this media.

Levi: 「海外の」ニューズ見る時には、なんか、どういう気持ちがありますか？

Takumi: んー、｛9秒間｝変な話ですけど戻りたいなと思いますね（@）@［…］アメリカのニュースを見てるとアメリカに帰りたいなと思いますね。ニュースの内容に関係なく。(Takumi, interview 2)

Levi: When you watch [foreign] news, how do you feel about it?

Takumi: Um, {9 second pause}. It's a bit strange to say but I think it makes me want to go back ((@)) @ […] When I watch American news, I feel I want to return to the US. It doesn't matter what the content is.

Takumi's connection with, and ongoing desire to invest in the practices of his host family was, in part, underpinned by the availability of English-language media, which triggered affective memories of his time abroad. In Takumi's case, watching American news was part of wider imagination he had of his sojourn which fed a desire to return, particularly during periods of heightened stress and hardship brought on by the demands of high school life. He explained in the interview how he often found himself contrasting the crowded spaces of his life in Japan with the 「懐かしい」 "nostalgic" memories he had of himself wandering the open spaces of his host parent's farm alone.

Part of what made Takumi's imaginings of returning more tangible was a promise that he had made with his host brother to go hunting again.

Takumi: そういう約束事ができたのが、今結構支えになってる 「…」 今辛くても、また何年後にアメリカに戻って、ホストブラザーと彼に行こうという約束したから、今頑張ろうっていう風に (Takumi, interview 1)

Takumi: Making that promise, right now I get a lot of support from it […] Even when things are tough now, years in the future I'll go back to America, because I made a promise to my host brother to go with him. So, it's like I can keep working hard.

In the year after returning, this imagined idea of travel and return had become more substantial, incorporating the idea of studying overseas in university and the goal of becoming an aerospace engineer which had partially underpinned his original desire to travel to the US.

Takumi: 今考えてるのはですね、あの、大学は日本の大学に入って、大学院で、その海外行けたらいいなって思ってて。それで、まあ、今勉強したらきっと海外に、将来ことができるみたいなモチベーションで、頑張ってるんですけど。そうですね、でもまあ、たまに、「あー帰りたい」、あの、「田舎の暮らしがいいな」と言う風に思い出しますね。(Takumi, interview 2)

Takumi: What I am thinking now is I'll go to a university in Japan, then I think it would be good to go overseas for graduate study. So my motivation for studying now is that I'll definitely go overseas to do things in the future. Well I'm working hard to do that anyway. But yeah, sometimes I'm like "ah, I wanna go back home [to the US]". I just think back and am like, "It'd be great to live in the country."

Takumi's maintained contact with his host family in the US in the year after returning, mainly through email and text messages and in the weeks before the second-round interview, the imagined return had taken a more definitive form. With the completion of university entrance exams in the coming spring, he planned to fly back to the US and spend time with his host family, and also to

travel to another area of the US to begin exploring the possibilities of studying at a university there in the future.

The changes that Takumi experienced to his identity were also less a case of destabilisation and more of a growth into something more complex. One of the parts of Takumi's questionnaire data that stood out compared to the other informants was that he indicated there had been very little change in his affiliation with a Japanese identity after studying abroad. Since this topic did not emerge organically during our interview in the way it had for other informants, I decided to directly ask him about it.

Levi: まだ日本人だと思いますか？

Takumi: そうですね、あの―、やっぱり何て言うんでしょ？こう植物みたいに根っこが日本人で、そこから述びいく、述びていくんですけど、例えば、一つの枝はアメリカに偏ってたり、一つの枝は日本に偏ってたり、もしかしてひとつの枝は何か、何か全然違うところに寄ってたりするかもしれない。でも根っこが日本人で、それから伸びていくという感じですね。根っこを引っこ抜いてアメリカに植えたんじゃなくて、枝が伸びていってという感じです。(Takumi, interview 1)

Levi: So, do you still think you are Japanese?

Takumi: It's like there is a plant and the roots are Japanese and then as you go up, like, for example, there is a branch that's leaning towards America and there's another branch that's leaning towards Japan, perhaps there is another branch heading towards somewhere totally different. But it's like the roots are Japanese and it grows from there. It not like the roots have been pulled out and replanted in America, it's like the branches are growing that way.

The sophisticated metaphor he used to describe his emerging sense of identity after returning to Japan reflects the trend in other informants' accounts of developing a broader, more complex identity. Reflexively, they still affiliated with a Japanese identity but now saw themselves as more internationally facing. In the second-round interview when I asked him to describe his affiliation, he again explained that he felt no more or less Japanese than he had before going abroad.

10.6. **Discussion**

Takumi's account diverges somewhat from the other cases examined, supporting his outlier status in the exploratory factor analysis (see Ch. 6.1). While Takumi had initially envisioned study abroad as an opportunity to encounter a life-altering experience, he had instead encountered it as a time of gradual growth and expansion. Takumi's sojourn was very much about becoming and being part of a family and living in a place radically different to what he had previously experienced, and so his growth largely occurred through life in the host family; conversing with his host mother and hunting with his host father and host brother.

Turning to question of how Takumi's investment evolved, his account differs from other focal cases. For Nikko (Ch. 7), Narumi (Ch. 8) and Manabu (Ch. 9), investing in the linguistic practices of the host community was critical to enabling greater participation. Takumi on the other hand, found he was largely able to navigate the social contexts of his sojourn with his initial English competence. Language learning therefore remained a relatively unremarkable part of his sojourn, woven as it was into the fabric of his life abroad and mediating the more important business of being part of a host family.

At the times that language did arise as an issue, his host mother emerged as a key source of support, both linguistically and in contextualising his experiences with the norms of the wider community. Uniquely among those interviewed for this project, Takumi's host father also appeared to play a significant role in his experience. This was underscored by his attempt to relate to Takumi from their first meeting and the hours they spent together each day working around the farm they lived on. The invitation to participate in the apparent masculine activity of hunting during the mid-point of Manabu's stay illustrated the strength of their relationship and the embedded support which it offered. Along with the relationship he formed with his host brother, also facilitated through hunting, the meso-level structure of the host family appeared to have the most significant effect on his developmental trajectory.

This may have been furthered by the location of his homestay, far removed from school and communities of peers. In contrast to Misa (Ch. 11) who experienced a similar kind of isolation negatively, Takumi found the geographical environment liberating. The remoteness and life stage of his host parents also meant that he often experienced long periods of time with them one-on-one. These contexts of interaction contributing to his sense of belonging and growing participation in activities of the host family. Takumi's linguistic investment during study abroad occurred largely in the proximal processes of interaction with his host family, explaining the focus on what he termed 'practical' language.

Not encountering the life-altering experience Takumi had expected and finding himself in a routine had led to disappointment. However, in the same way that other informants had overcome the linguistic hurdles they faced, Takumi adopted a more intentional approach in seeking out activities and communities that would provide the experiences he sought. Once again, this underscores the agency the individual can exert on the trajectory of their sojourn, taking into account the affordances and constraints of the wider context.

Upon returning to Japan, Takumi's experience of study abroad fuelled an imagined return to the places that he had spent a year, the congestion and stress of his life in Japan contrasting with the

openness and intimacy that had characterised his time in the US. The role of this imagination in regulating his emotions during time of hardship bears some similarities to the accounts of Narumi (Ch. 8.5) and Manabu (Ch. 9.5), who in different ways also contrasted the feelings they had experienced while abroad with the dissatisfaction that had with experiences in Japan. This perhaps also speaks to the desire for novelty and difference, something more difficult to find in the familiarity and gravity of returned-to high school contexts.

In summary, Takumi's case is perhaps the most definitive example of the central role that the host family played for the informants in this study. The relationship Takumi formed with his host father is particularly remarkable given that in no other accounts did the host father appear to be so supportive or central to the informant's study abroad experience, perhaps tied to their shared gender identity. Furthermore, Takumi's own desire to experience transformation during study abroad speaks to the tendency among the cohort to view it as a site for self-actualisation and change. Finally, the linguistic development that Takumi did experience was intimately connected to his role and experiences in the host family and was an important outcome, while not a primary motivator in and of itself.

11 Misa: Exclusion in the US Midwest

Misa's account is most compelling for the way it highlights the enormous impact the host family can have on a sojourner's experience, exemplified in the differences of the two families she lived with during her sojourn. Examining her narrative, it is apparent that Misa's outcomes were intrinsically tied to social and geographical factors in her host community as well as her own dispositions and beliefs about language learning. Misa's account highlights how these factors can interact to create conditions where a sojourner feels excluded and isolated from the host community. Unlike the majority of the interview informants, returning to high school in Japan was described as a positive experience and Misa's time abroad afforded her additional status rather than marking her as different. Misa's narrative therefore provides vital contrast and is illustrative of outcomes not found elsewhere in the qualitative data for this project.

One detail which helps to contextualise Misa's experience is that several times during interviews, Misa expressed regret that she had missed many opportunities to interact with others while abroad. Reviewing my recordings and interview notes later, I found Misa's interviews, conducted entirely in Japanese, some of the most challenging in terms of eliciting longer reflections and responses. This led me to infer that a contributing factor to the difficulties Misa faced abroad may have been her willingness to take a limited role in interactions, reflecting the reluctance to initiate interaction or impose found among Japanese participants in Tanaka's (2007) study of homestays in New Zealand.

11.1. Background

Misa was a second-year high school student who lived in Tokyo with her parents and older sister before going abroad. Attending a high school which had a large number of *kikokushijyo*, as well as an active population of students studying abroad at any given time, she would have been exposed to discourses which emphasised the importance of international experience. Misa herself, credited a talk given by one of her *senpai* on their experience studying abroad as the genesis of her own interest. Misa reported that she enjoyed English as a subject but felt at a disadvantage compared to her *kikokushijyo* peers. Misa's questionnaire and interview responses indicated that her decision to study abroad was related to developing her English competence and improving her chances in future university entrance exams and looking for work, placing her motivations more in line with the general high school population. Despite this, she expressed reservations about the idea of spending a full year abroad and only decided to apply to AFS after a close friend also expressed a desire to apply. Misa reportedly chose to apply for a placement in America due to it being the only English-

speaking destination still available at that time. When queried about providing access to social media, Misa offered to show the researcher parts of her online interactions with her host sister.

11.2. Early stages

In the period just prior to departing, Misa also began to imagine the life that awaited her in the US. This was revealed through messages Misa exchanged with her host sister prior to study abroad. An excerpt of these conversations shown to the researcher focused on Misa's own imagined experience, including her desire to wear a gown at graduation and the subjects she would take at school. The extract lacked reciprocity, both in the form of questions from the host sister and in Misa's curiosity about the host family itself. Taken together with later reported interactions, it indicated to me that Misa had approached her time abroad touristically, anticipating a romanticised experience of American high school life. These early online interactions in some ways predicted the nature of the relationship Misa would have with her host sister as her sojourn progressed.

Misa's host family was located in a suburban area in the US Midwest and this was the first time they had hosted an exchange student. Very soon upon arriving, Misa began experiencing discomfort as she encountered the practices of her host family, which she interpreted through frames which equated the unfamiliar with the foreign.

Misa: 朝、アメリカは、やっぱ海外は普通かもしれないんけど、朝ご飯作ってくれなくて、自分でなんか、シリアル勝手にとって食べたりとか［…］日本ではその、お母さんが作ってくれるから、やっぱりそこは自分で用意しなくてはいけないのが大変だった。 (Misa, interview 1)

Misa: In America in the morning, this is probably normal overseas but, breakfast isn't made for you. You need to get your own cereal to eat […] In Japan, your mother will make breakfast for you, and that you have to get it ready yourself was tough.

At the same time, Misa also found she lacked linguistic proficiency to operate at a day-to-day level both to complete simple tasks such as understanding how to operate her locker at school and to interact with her local peers, for example during lunch breaks in the cafeteria. Misa struggled to understand and contribute to the conversations happening around her, impacting her ability to form meaningful relationships and contributing to a growing sense of isolation. As Misa revealed though, the inability to participate in interactions was not purely a matter of linguistic competence.

Misa: 普通の友達みたいな関係が全然できなくて。やっぱり留学生だからみたいな感じで接してくる人も多くて、なので、それは本当に、つらかったですね［…］アメリカ人同士は、やっぱすごいジョークとか言えるし［…］今までその幼稚園の話とか、［…］でも私は、そのつい２〜３ヶ月前に来た、ただの日本人という感じだったので、やっぱ話の

内容もそんなに深くまでできないし。ただなんか、「さっきの授業大変だったね」とかその簡単な会話しかできなかった。 (Misa, interview 1)

Misa: I wasn't able to make any connections that were like normal friends. There were lot of students I encountered who were [not interested] because I was an exchange student and so that was really tough. […] Americans could joke with each other a lot […] they would talk about what had happened back in pre-school […] but for me, I had only got there two or three months ago, I was just the Japanese girl, so I couldn't say much on those things. All I could say was "That last class was difficult" or something, that kind of simple conversation.

Here, Misa's positioning as stranger felt emphasised by her peers' choice of topics which allowed them to demonstrate their insider status. Putting aside questions of intentionality, this episode illustrates the power local students had, both through their linguistic competence and shared role as insiders, to determine who could and could not participate at an interactional level.

Misa's response to these difficulties is instructive, since it stands in contrast to those of Manabu (Ch. 10) and Megumi (Ch. 12.1) who also felt marginalised at different points during their time abroad.

Levi: その時どうしたんですか？

Misa: その時は，もう何もできなくて。えっと、日本人の一緒に留学している子に相談してるとか、でも実際向こうも同じような問題抱えてて。（うん、うん、うん）でもえっと、AFS通信という、AFS が 2、3 ヶ月に一回出してる新聞みたいな記事があって、で、そこに「やっぱり慣れるまではしょうがない」って書いてあって。その時英語もわかるようになれるし、なんか、そういう、「コミュニケーション取れるようになる」って書いてあったの。それを本当に信じるしかなくて。ひたすら時が過ぎるの待ってました。(Misa, interview 1)

Levi: What did you do at those times?

Misa: At those times, there was nothing I could do. I talked to another Japanese student who I was on exchange with, but they said they were actually dealing with the same problem. ((mm, mm, mm)) There was something called 'AFS *tsūshin*', every two or three months AFS would put out like a newspaper with articles in it and in there it said "it can't really be avoided until you get used to it." When you get used to [life in the host community] you'll become able to understand English". It said in there, "You'll become able to communicate with others." So there was nothing but to believe in that. I just intently waited for that time to pass.

The first point to note is that Misa sought support from a fellow Japanese sojourner, which makes sense given her limited proficiency and will be discussed in more detail in the next section. The second point though, is how Misa found reassurance in AFS communications which promoted a discourse of language learning by osmosis, something other informants also described hearing (Manabu, Ch. 8.3). Misa's uncritical acceptance of this discourse and her resolution to wait until she acquired English competence required to communicate more effectively speaks to a wider theme in her narrative of limited personal initiative when it came to language learning.

11.3. **Mid stages**

While Misa initially encountered this sense of exclusion in the school setting, as time went on, she found that the relationship with her host sister also began to deteriorate.

Misa: 私、私のホストシスターは、まあ優しかったんですけど、（はい）そんなにフレンドリーではなかったので、その、質問したりとか、向こうが、指摘しも、その反応が結構薄くて、（うん）、で、私がそれに、なんか嫌われてるんじゃないかって思っちゃったりとか。（うん）結構怖い印象、を、あの、得たので。それで結構、あの、喋ることに、抵抗感じてしまって。でどんどん、どんどん、向こうもそれ気がついて、どんどん喋れなくなったお互い、（うん）その距離ができて、壁ができてしまって。(Misa, interview 1)

Misa: My host sister was, well she was kind, but she wasn't that friendly. So if I asked her questions, her reaction was pretty half-hearted, ((mm)) So, because of that I thought that maybe she didn't like me. ((mm)) I got quite a negative impression from her. I felt that she was quite reluctant to speak to me. Then over time she noticed that I felt like that and we gradually stopped speaking to each other. ((mm)) The distance grew between us and there was like a wall between us.

Like the accounts of other participants (Nikko, Ch. 7; Narumi, Ch. 8; Nagisa, Ch. 12.4), the relationship became more strained over time, perhaps owning to the burden Misa's host sister felt she was carrying.

The breakdown in this relationship had ramifications for both Misa's opportunities for interaction and her mobility in the host community. The town where Misa lived required a car to travel almost anywhere. This included travel to and from school each day, with her host sister driving. Under different circumstances this could have become a space where regularly recurring interactions between the two young women may have occurred. Instead, the only noise during these trips now came from the car radio. Misa reported a lot of anxiety around communicating in this space, which appeared not entirely due to her limited English competence.

Misa: 結構、その子は文句言う子だったので、友達とかすごく仲良い友達の悪口とかを普通にお母さんとかに言ってたので、［…］自分の意見を言ったらそれにすごい反抗してくるんじゃないかと思って。(Misa, interview 1)

Misa: [My host sister] was actually someone who complained quite a lot. About her friends for example, friends she was really close to, she would just say terrible things about them to [my host] mother. […] I thought that if I ever said what I thought she would go against me.

Places are socially constructed through the actions and language of individuals (Lamb & Murray, 2017) and can become infused with emotion through that process (White & Bown, 2017). The physical space of the car became, at that time, associated with silence and anxiety for Misa through the daily routine of driving to and from school. During the interview, Misa associated feelings of regret with this space, since in hindsight she felt that she could have made a greater effort to broach

those silences and challenge the status quo that existed. Adopting a critical perspective, it would also appear that underlying the construction and maintenance of the dynamic was issues of power. The car was not a neutral space but belonged to the host sister, who would have controlled not only the departure time and route, but also how that space was used. Furthermore, the host sisters' English proficiency would mean she had more resources for initiating and encouraging interaction and had elected not to. The cumulative effect would have constructed the space as one of non-interaction, a dynamic that may have been difficult to resist, even if Misa's ability and desire to invest in the practices of her host community had not been so limited.

This tension with her host sister also extended into the space of the home, complicating Misa's relationships with her host parents.

Levi:　コミュニケーションにしにくい場面車以外のありましたか？

Misa:　車以外、二人っきりではなかったんですけれど、やっぱり一緒にご飯食べる時は［…］4人、私とホストシスターとペアレンツ（うん）［…］やっぱり結構沈黙が続くとどうしようかなと思ったりとか、（うん）後は、はい、結構、そのファミリーが、あの、内輪ネタが多かったりとかして、その全然、あの、昔のこととかは知らないので理解できなかったりとか。　(Misa, interview 1)

Levi:　Were there places other than the car where it was difficult to communicate?

Misa:　Other than the car, it wasn't just the two of us but when we ate meals together […] the four of us, me, my host sister and [host] parents ((mm)) […] I wondered what I should do if that silence was to continue a lot. ((mm)) Also, yeah, the host family had a lot of inside jokes, and I had no idea about things that had happened long ago and couldn't understand [their conversations] at all.

Again, Misa felt marginalised by topic selection and the way it deprived her of opportunities to engage with the conversation she was privy to but not part of. This illustrates one way the structures of power that exist within host families can limit a sojourner's ability to contribute to family life. Effectively, the choice of topics again highlighted Misa's role as stranger and prevented her participation, even in a passive role. Drawing on the notion that participation is necessary for language learning to occur (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000), the selection of topics which emphasise the strangeness of sojourners can effectively exclude them from language learning processes. Additionally, the extract again demonstrates how Misa positioned herself as relatively powerless to resist or renegotiate these situations, which stands in contrast to actions other informants took when encountering tension in the host family (e.g., Nikko, Ch. 7).

Another factor which may have contributed to the state of Misa's relationship with her host family was the ongoing communication she had with a Japanese friend also on exchange in the US. Prior to encountering the difficulties with her host family, Misa was already been spending her evenings

talking to her friend on Skype. Misa explained that earlier in the sojourn, her friend had encountered issues with her own host sister and these conversations had developed into nightly sessions of support and solidarity. I asked her about the content of these conversations.

Misa: お互いどういう状況とか、悩みが本当に大きかったですね。それぞれやっぱり ホストファミリーとかにも結構不満を持ってたりとか、それでどうしたいかとかもありましたし、後ホームシックお互いになって、［…］で今日本こういう事が起きてるんだよみたいな報告し合って、（うん）はい、相談とかもし合ってました。 (Misa, interview 1)

Misa: [We talked about] each other's situations for example, we were both really troubled by them. We both had a lot of complaints about each of our host families and talked about what we wanted to do about the situation. We were both became homesick […] we would let each other know about things that were happening in Japan we heard about. ((mm)) Yeah. We consulted together on what we should do.

It is difficult to know to what extent hearing about her friend's difficulties served to reinforce Misa's own reactions to the situation she was experiencing, however, there is a sense that these sessions served to reinforce the feelings of homesickness and isolation they were experiencing.

Importantly too, this situation sheds light on the statistically significant relationship between difficulties in personal relationships and use of VoIP and Social Media in Japanese found in the questionnaire data and described in Chapter 5.5.2. As I suggested in Durbidge (2019), the increased use of technology in L1 here is support-seeking behaviour, while perhaps also providing a shared 'Japanese' space away from the challenges of their host family environments. Due to limited competence in English and a social context in which Misa felt excluded, she was unable to develop or draw on social networks in the host community in the same way that Nikko and Narumi did when they faced issues in the host family. Instead, the connection with another Japanese speaker provided her with the affective and embedded support she sought.

Later in the school year, Misa suffered a broken leg, which meant she could not participate in extra-curricular sporting activities and was required to travel directly home after school. Her host sister was active in a different sporting club which meant that she and her host parents were out at related events most evenings, leaving Misa at home by herself. Already estranged from her host family and confined to the house, Misa spent most her evenings alone at home watching videos on YouTube in Japanese.

Misa: もうその時やることがなくてずっと YouTube 見てたりとか、でそれも結構日本のものを見てしまったのでそれを本当に後悔ですよね

Levi: 後悔ですか？なんで後悔って言いますか？

Misa: やっぱりその、アメリカに行って、アメリカにいるのに、その日本のものから離れないというのは、やっぱり来てるの意味がないと思ったので、あと英語の勉強になりませんし。(Misa, interview 1)

Misa: At that time there was nothing to do, so I just did stuff like watch YouTube the whole time and what I watched was pretty much just Japanese stuff which I really regret.

Levi: You regret it? Why do you say you regret it?

Misa: So despite going to America, being in America, I couldn't, how do you say, get away from Japanese stuff. I thought there was no point in me being here, and it didn't help me study English.

While many of the other informants used YouTube as a means to access authentic examples of speech, it became a way for Misa to pass the time, and perhaps more importantly cope with the isolation she was experiencing as she waited for her sojourn to end. In retrospect, she admits regretting spending her time this way, yet it is apparent from her statements that there was an element of comfort in consuming media that connected her with Japan. It would seem that while there was a desire to improve her English, circumstances and personal dispositions precluded any investment from taking place during this time.

With around two months remaining in the US, an AFS representative arrived to resolve the situation which had now deteriorated to a complete communication breakdown between Misa and her host family. Misa was granted a change of host family for the final months of her stay. The day after she graduated from her host high school, Misa collected her things and left her host family without speaking to any of them.

11.4. Late stages

Misa's host family for the final two months of her stay lived in a town about half an hour away from her previous host family. In contrast to her first host family, they were an older couple whose children had already left home and had hosted exchange students several times in the past. This change stood as a point of demarcation in Misa's account as the new environment reshaped the way she experienced study abroad. The most significant difference Misa described was in the opportunities to communicate and engage with her host parents.

Levi: 前のホストファミリーと新しいホストファミリーに何が一番違ったんですか？

Misa: やっぱり、その、質問ちゃんとしてくれたりとか、なんか、自分が喋るような機会を与えてくれたので、その自分が思ったより積極的になれるような、前のホストファミリーは、やっぱりシスターがいてたので、やっぱりシスター中心に家族が回ってて、なので、あの、はい、会話に入るような機会があまりなかったですけど、２番目の家族は、そのちゃんと待って、私が言うまで待ってくれるみたいし、その話す機会はちゃんと与

えてくれたので、それは本当に自分の意見もしっかり言いましたし、すごく、はい、いい時間でしたね。 (Misa, interview 1)

Levi: What was the biggest difference between your previous host family and your new host family?

Misa: So, [the new host family] would ask me questions properly, like, they would give me chances to speak, I was able to do that more actively than I thought I could. With the previous host family, [my host] sister was there and so was the center of everything and the rest of the family revolved around her. So, yeah, there weren't really many chances for me to join conversations. But with the second [host] family, they would wait for me, like, wait until I spoke. They gave me proper chances to speak, so I was actually able express my opinions clearly. I had a great time with them.

Misa also found her mobility markedly improved in her new environment. Her new family were both retired and so could provide transport to both see friends and visit places that Misa had been unable to go with her previous family. This episode demonstrates how, in Misa's case, the nature of her host family and the types of support they offered her were critical to her experience. Furthermore, the contrast between the two host families underscores how dependent adolescents are on the host family and the effect this can have on their opportunities to interact. Misa's situation, like others (Takumi, Ch. 10; Kumiko, Ch. 12.5) was exacerbated by the geographical remoteness of the location she found herself and her own sense of powerlessness at her circumstances.

The effect of geographical location on opportunities for interaction was also made apparent by her move as she found herself now living close to an exchange student from Thailand who she had been friendly with during AFS meet-ups. With school finished, Misa began spending a lot of time at this friend's host family's house, playing in the pool and watching movies. Misa also began interacting and spending time with others in this friend's social network. In her new host family, Misa had no internet access and therefore could not access YouTube or Skype with her Japanese friend. Misa said she did not miss this though as she now found herself immersed in communities where she felt she had opportunities to interact. Upon the completion of these final months, Misa felt a marked difference in her ability to comprehend and participate in English to the point that she experienced a strangeness when returning to Japan and again being able to use Japanese to communicate.

11.5. **Post-sojourn**

A year after returning from the US, Misa's reflections echoed the analysis of her responses to the questionnaire which indicated she had experienced very little of the changes other informants reported (see Ch. 6.1). Arriving back in Japan during summer vacation of her final year in high school, Misa was immediately immersed in *jyuken* (see Glossary). In some sense, this was reassuring since Misa described the situation as 「全然違和感がない」 "not feeling out of place at all" (Misa, interview 2). She was able to share her experiences with the friend that she had been Skyping

with while in the US, and now found herself able to participate in the same classes as her returnee peers. The impact of the time spent with her first host family was still tangible and associated with strong feelings of regret.

Misa: そういう[ホストファミリー]ことを考えると、ちょっと気が引けるし。結構後悔するような部分はたくさんあるんで、そういうこと考えると、落ち込む時もあるし、あと、たまに夢に出てきたりとか@、そういうこともしますね　(Misa, interview 2)

Misa: When I think about [that time with the host family], I feel a bit ashamed. There is quite a lot of parts I regret. When I think about it, there are times it makes me depressed. Also, occasionally I will have dreams about it @ That happens too.

More than the positive experiences in the final months of her time abroad and the gains in competency that Misa had made, the time spent with her first host family had defined how she understood her time abroad. The one major difference she identified in herself was an improved ability to communicate, both within her own family and among her friends at school born from increased tolerance and empathy.

One area of Misa's account that particularly resonated with the other informants was the sense of restriction that she felt upon returning to high school in Japan.

Misa: やっぱりもう勉強量が違うので、もう宿題の量も多いし、テストを、毎日テストがあったりとか、塾も行ってるので、アメリカに行った時はもう家に6時ぐらいに帰ってきたら、ずっと自由時間だったんですけど。もう最近は夜の9時ぐらいまで塾にいなきゃいけないので。もう、あの、自分の自由な時間があまり持ってない、で大変。(Misa, interview 2)

Misa: Of course the amount we have to study [in Japan] is different, there's so much more homework, tests, every day we have a tests for example. I'm going to *jyuku* too. When I went to America, I'd already be home by six pm and then it would just be free time. But recently I have to be at *jyuku* until nine pm, so now I don't really have any free time and that's tough.

Contrasting with other focal participants but aligning with Misa's ongoing sense of powerlessness to shape the circumstances she found herself in, she sees the surrounding environment as something immutable that she must simply bear, 「日本の[…] 文化というか、[…] 受験の生徒なので、しょうがないことかなと思います」 "You could say it's Japanese [...] culture[...] and since I'm a *jyuken* student[15] I don't think it can be helped" (Misa, interview 2).

In the year after she had returned from study abroad, the only person she appeared to remain in contact with was her friend from Thailand, who came to Japan as part of a University exchange

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[15] A student preparing to take entrance exams (in this case university exams) and therefore devoting a lot of time and effort to studying.

program. During an opportunity they had to spend time together during this period, Misa stated that they found it harder to communicate than they had while in the US but still were able to enjoy the moment. Regarding Misa's plans for the future, she was focused on moving on to higher education in Japan. Misa stated that any future study abroad would be short-term and probably to Europe、 remaining ambivalent about further experiencing different ways of living or learning language abroad.

11.6. **Discussion**

Misa's account is important for a number of reasons. Primary among these is that like other focal informants (Nikko, Ch. 7; Narumi, Ch. 8, Manabu, Ch. 9), Misa's limited competence in the host language had a significant impact on how she experienced study abroad. Unlike, the other informants though, she sought support within her Japanese-speaking network and significant language learning emerged after she changed host families.

Misa's understanding of her year abroad was largely defined during the eight-and-a-half months spent with her first host family. Visible in Misa's accounts of this time and the contrast which came with her second host family, was how she perceived mechanisms such as topic selection in conversation as a failure to include or accommodate her. This signifies the type of dissociation sojourners can experience as strangers in the host context, as their "past, both personal and collective, ceases to exist in the eyes of those around [them]…strangers are in no position to participate in the taken-for-granted pattern of the new group, nor in their heritage" (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p. 17).

The subjectivity of the data precludes knowing exactly what took place in the various interactional situations she encountered. What is apparent is that Misa felt marginalised both at school and in her first host family, her status as stranger was highlighted by these experiences. This is perhaps exemplary of how the attitudes communities hold towards outsiders can manifest in the micro contexts of interaction, reinforcing roles which mark them as such. Misa's case also emphasises how the geographical location of the homestay and the lack of access to alternative options for transportation can reduce the opportunities to develop and interact with social networks outside of the host family. In Misa's case, the deterioration of her relationships further limited her mobility and breaking her leg effectively cut off opportunities to interact with others outside of school hours. The isolation that Misa experienced, particularly within the first host family, still affected her dreams a year after returning indicating the psychological impact this experience can have, even

long after the sojourn. It further emphasises the critical role host families can play and the vulnerability of adolescent sojourners in the host community.

Despite this, Misa did not feel that the experience had changed how she understood herself apart from becoming more empathetic towards family and friends. A defining feature of Misa's experience abroad was her tendency to view herself as largely powerless and limited her agency in the circumstances she found herself. Returning to Japan and *jyuken*, this disposition appeared to remain unchanged. This stands in contrast to the agentive role the more successful informants featured above took in overcoming the difficulties they faced. Interestingly though, simply by experiencing an improvement in her English competence, she was now able to take classes with *kikokushijyo* students, essentially achieving what she desired from studying abroad. In a sense, Misa was not dissatisfied by her life in Japan in the way many other informants were and was more apprehensive about leaving for a year. Ultimately, she may have had less desire to invest in the symbolic resources needed for membership that other informants sought.

Misa's case shows how investment is tied to interactions between the individual's dispositions and desires, intertwined with the social context they encounter in the host community. From Misa's retelling, development in her linguistic competence largely occurred during the final two months of her stay, once she had switched host families. The accommodation her new host parents showed in their interaction and opportunities to spend time with the exchange student from Thailand fostered increased participation. Like other informants, improvement in Misa's linguistic competence occurred when the circumstances allowed her to engage in regularly recurring contexts of interaction and encouraged investment in the linguistic resources of those contexts. The *proximal process* of development, at least in Misa's case, was therefore contingent on support that affirmed her status as someone worthy of interaction and provided her with the type of communicative situations that would allow her to engage. The effect of changing host families on her investment and linguistic development speaks to the centrality of the host family to the adolescent sojourners' experiences abroad.

The fact that Misa's communicative competence appeared to have diminished in the year after returning to Japan despite her placement in an advanced class lends further credence to the theme found throughout the project that Japanese high school contexts were not conducive to maintaining competence developed abroad. Misa also lacked the ongoing connections to the host community found in the other informants' accounts, which also may account for her diminished competence.

The sense of powerlessness and the lack of self-driven strategic language learning stands in contrast to the other informants who sought to exert agency on their own learning trajectories and the social

networks. While Misa reported participating in extra-curricular activities, relationships from these settings did not appear to move beyond that setting, online or otherwise. Outside of her relationship with her host sister, the only other relationship she spent time describing was her friendship with an exchange student from Thailand, which subsequently appeared to be the only relationship she maintained after returning to Japan. In sum, Misa's account demonstrates how both individual and contextual factors intertwine to affect sojourners' developmental trajectories and how constellations of these factors can lead to disaffiliation with, or exclusion from, the host community.

12 Enriching the picture: Support and contrasts from additional cases

The following section presents selected parts of five more informants' narratives to both support key findings from, and provide contrasts to, the previous cases. Due to the limitations of this document, only those aspects of the narratives that were deemed directly relevant have been included below. The presentation below is largely descriptive due to issues of space and while some analysis of these results does take place below, the main contextualising discussion is left until Chapters 13 to 15.

12.1. Megumi: Marginalisation and inclusion in Germany

Megumi was a second-year high school student from the Kansai region when she left on a year-long sojourn to central Germany. Megumi's account echoes many of the themes found in other informants' narratives, including the support her host mother offered and the role of agency in negotiating the multilingual settings she inhabited. Her story sheds further light on the marginalisation that exchange students can face, its effect on opportunities for interaction, and provides an important parallel to Misa's (Ch. 11) experience in the US.

Megumi's interest in study abroad emerged after encountering exchange students who were often hosted at her high school in Japan. Initially, she intended to participate in a short-term program organised through her high school, however when she brought the idea to her parents, her mother convinced her to enrol in a year-long program instead. Due to Megumi's interest in soccer and stories, she had heard of her grandmother's travels to Europe, Germany was her first choice when applying to AFS.

Once living in Germany, Megumi's host mother quickly became central to her experience and the person she interacted with most. Megumi described how they would work through German textbook activities together at home, as well as spending most evenings together watching news on TV. Initially these interactions occurred in English, but by the fourth month Megumi described transitioning mostly to German.

While home life remained stable throughout her time abroad, high school life soon became problematic. Megumi had been placed in a local gymnasium with students who were on the track to attend university in the future. Megumi described the school she attended as being exclusively white Germans and standing out as a visible minority. While she made a few friends in her class, Megumi

explained how she regularly encountered casual racism directed at herself and other visible minorities.

Megumi: 私の友達なんですけど。 駅とか、街とか行った時に、その外国人の、 その移民の人とか見ると「あまり良くないよね」って言ったりしているような人たちで。学校でも、あの、あの「你好」って言われ、知らない人とか「你好」って言われたりとか。そういうのがあったりしてて、[…]普通に「中国人と日本人ってすごい似てるよねー」とか。言われたりして。(Megumi, interview 1)

Megumi: So when my friends went to the station or into town and they saw foreigners, immigrants, they were the type of people who would say things like "They're not very good people". At school too, people would say "*ni hao*" to me, people I didn't know would just come up and say "*ni hao*". That kind of thing happened […] people would say "Chinese and Japanese really look alike don't they" and things like that.

Implicitly too, Megumi felt 'othered' through her peers language use; they spoke to each other in German but refused to use it with her, instead communicating only in English. Megumi explained that she had attempted to renegotiate the language of interaction indirectly at first by continuing to use German when they spoke English to her, and then through direct requests. However, she found her requests ignored or herself excluded from interactions, often spending lunch by herself. One excursion in particular stood out in this regard.

Megumi： 一回クラスで、あの、旅行に行ったんですけど［…］そのときにずっと一人で、バスの中一人で。行ってからも、先生が「メグミと一緒にいてあげて」と言って、その何人が一緒にいてくれるけど、その全然、あの、ほったらかしみたいな感じで、だったので。そこでも、何回か学校で、もうすごい、心の中ですごい、なんか色々圧迫しちゃうこととかあって。二回ぐらい、もう学校で泣いたことありました。(Megumi, interview 1)

Megumi: This one time the class went on a trip [..] and the whole time I was by myself. On the bus I was by myself and after we got there too. So the teacher says "make sure you include Megumi", and a bunch of people came over and were there with me but they didn't do anything, they just neglected me. So along with that and many times at school, I really felt all kinds of tension deep inside my heart. There were two times at school when I just cried.

Megumi shared her concerns about this with her host family, however they did not appear to really understand what she was feeling. Those who she was most able to relate to were instead other exchange students, including a friend from China who was having similar experiences at a different school. At one point, Megumi recalled attending a *Bundesliga* football match with this friend, something she had been excited for. At the game other spectators submitted them to racialized stereotypes, asking them whether they ate dogs. Research has shown how encounters with racism in the host community can have a negative impact on sojourner's desire to invest in the linguistic practices of the host community (e.g., Goldoni, 2017; Talburt & Stewart, 1999). In Megumi's case however, these experiences appear to have been counterbalanced by the positive relationships she

shared with her host family, once again demonstrating the pivotal role it can play in offering embedded support which contributed to her ongoing desire to invest. Furthermore, Megumi was able to secure permission to change schools during her fifth month abroad.

Megumi's new school was known for having a large migrant population and the students at her first school warned her that it was unsafe and regularly attended by police. The prejudices of the students at her first school were again highlighted, since once Megumi began attending the new school, she found that the reality was completely different.

Megumi: 実際行ってみると、もう今までの学校生活と、ほんと180度変わるぐらい楽しくて［…］みんなとすごい仲よくなって、 いろいろ、 日本のことについても聞いてきてくれたり（うん）、そのドイツ語しゃべったら全然ドイツ語で返し帰ってくれるし。休み時間も一人じゃなかったし。その、私がすごい印象的だったのが、この、お手洗いに行く時に一人で行こうとしたら、その友達が、「いや一人で行かなくていいんだよ」言ってくれた。「いつも一緒に行ってくるからと言ってくれて」。 それがすごいその心に残りました。(Megumi, interview 1)

Megumi: When I actually went there and experienced it, it was so fun, like a 180-degree change to the school life I had until then […] I became close friends with everyone. They asked me all kinds of questions about Japan ((mm)) When I spoke German to them, they spoke German back to me. During breaks I wasn't alone. One thing that made a big impression was when I went to go to the toilet by myself, this friend says to me, "No, you don't have to go by yourself. Just ask and I'll always go with you." That really sticks in my memory.

The new social environment translated into plentiful opportunities for interaction, and Megumi found the presence of English and German as *lingue franche* allowed her greater freedom to select between them as desired. She was therefore able to quickly build multilingual social networks, including friends from Turkish and Syrian backgrounds. Similar to Manabu's (Ch. 8) experience, multiethnic, multilingual communities which included other 'newcomers' were highly accommodating to the sojourners and conducive to their participation and investment. The upshot of this was that her online connections also flourished and included using Snapchat in German and English with her school-based networks, and posting on Instagram in German to her largely Japanese audience.

Megumi's understanding of her time abroad was strongly shaped by the experiences in the second-half of her stay, including actively contributing to a local soccer club. This in turn meant that like other informants, Megumi struggled to reintegrate upon returning to high school in Japan. In particular, the strictness of classes was something she reported struggling with in the months after returning. Like Ruka (Ch. 12.2), this was also compounded by the fact that she had to return to the same grade she had departed from which meant needing to establish friendship networks among her *kohai* (see Glossary), as her previous classmates were preparing to graduate.

12.2. **Ruka: Limited transformation in Italy**

Ruka was the only *kikokushijyo* (see Glossary), among the informants, living in Hong Kong until the age of 13 due to his father's work. This had shaped his multi-competence, allowing him to interact with users of Mandarin, Cantonese and English, with implications for his experiences during his year abroad. He was attending the second year of high school in the Kansai area when he departed for his homestay in northern Italy. Ruka's background provides a key contrast to the rest of the informants, since it appeared to influence his desire to invest during his time abroad and his perceptions of what the experience meant in the year after he returned. Furthermore, Ruka's account indicated he was made to feel different by fellow students both as a *kikokushijyo* and for the time he spent in Italy, echoing other experiences found across the data.

From Ruka's narrative, three points emerge as significant in the context of this project. The first was the connection between Ruka's social networks and his linguistic development. In the interviews, Ruka emphasized the difficulties he faced connecting with Italian locals, which he attributed partially to his own tendency to avoid interaction. Ruka also explained that his English competence was a barrier to developing competence in Italian, since when he did interact he felt the need to prioritise communication over his own personal desire to learn and use Italian. This is an interesting contrast to the participants in R. Mitchell et al. (2017) for who the tension around language use occurred when locals insisted on using English over other varieties. The closest relationship he did develop while abroad was with a Chinese-speaking exchange student from Malaysia, who he visited during the year after returning from Italy.

The second point to note is the sense of ephemerality Ruka experienced had during his time abroad. During the interview, Ruka explained that he had possessed limited desire to invest in the language and social networks of his host community, attributing this to the knowledge that he would leave once his time was up. As Murphy-Lejeune (2002) indicated, a sojourn abroad can be characterised by feelings of transience, passing and precariousness in relationships with others. In other accounts, such as Nikko (Ch. 7), these feelings of transience appeared to induce a greater intensity in her relationships. The contrast in Ruka's case can perhaps be attributed to previous encounters with precariousness as a result of his family's mobility; having already made and left behind friendship networks in Hong Kong, he was more reluctant to relive the experience.

Ruka's strategic approach to language also serves as an important contrast to other informants. While he did take private lessons and interact with members of his host family in Italian, his own self-directed strategy for learning involved mainly looking up vocab he encountered. Missing were the more integrated strategies found in the accounts of others, including Nikko (Ch. 7) and Manabu

(Ch. 9). Taking into account the previous points also, it seems that Ruka's limited investment in Italian was a result of intersecting factors which touched on his personal history and dispositions; the linguistic tension inherent in the choice multilingual settings provide, the language learning affordances he perceived and engaged with, and limited participation in Italian-using peer networks.

While he initially described the year abroad as a significant personal experience, a year later in the second interview he was more reserved in his evaluation.

Ruka:	正直にいます、と、僕はあまり変ってない[…]当然知識増えました[…]でも自分のコアの部分、考え方はあまり変わってないですね。(Ruka, interview 2)
Ruka:	To be honest, I haven't really changed […] naturally I know more now […] but the core of who I am, my way of thinking hasn't really changed at all.

Essentially, what Ruka describes is an epistemic transformation rather than a personal one. Viewing this experience in the context of Ruka's background and language learning career (Benson, 2011), including his extensive travel experience, there is a sense that it was one in a series of mobility experiences in which life in Hong Kong played a larger, more definitive part; a reading that Ruka himself also suggested. Italian was the language of a community he experienced transitorily, while English and Mandarin were also viable modes of communication. Rather than representing an experience that "opens up second language identities to change" (Benson et al., 2012, p. 3), as study abroad was in many of the other informants' narratives, it appears to represent a manifestation of the "mobility capital" (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p. 52) he had acquired through his family history.

In a sense, spending time abroad did affect Ruka personally, although it was the consequences of leaving and returning to his high school community, rather than the experience itself that appeared to have greater impact. The first of these was that Ruka's school did not grant him credit for the year he spent attending school in Italy. Like Megumi (Ch. 12.1) he returned to take classes with his *kōhai* in the same grade he had left. While his former classmates advanced to university, he remained at high school.

Ruka:	結束力は、まあ、少し弱まったんです。すごく仲いい友達が減りました。その代わり、まあ、普通の付き合いの人というのがかなり増えました。(Ruka, interview 2)
Ruka:	The cohesiveness [of this year group] is a little weaker. The number of friends I am really close to has dropped. Instead, the number of people I just hang out normally with has increased a lot.

In addition to the weakening of his social networks at school, he had also found himself an object of attention and interest, since studying abroad was a relatively uncommon practice in his school.

Ruka:	皆さん、それこそ言い方悪いですけれども、「動物園に新しい動物が来た、ワイー、見に行こう」みたいな感じなんですけども。@ そういう感じで、最初の2ヶ月ぐらいは、物珍しさが皆さんありました。(Ruka, interview 2)

Ruka: I know it's bad to say it like this but everyone acted like "A new animal has come to the zoo. Yay! Let's go and see it!" @ It was like that. For about the first 2 months everyone was acting like I was the most curious thing.

He described being frustrated by the shallowness of this interest, with much of it just being called out to him in the hallways between classes, such as *"itaria gaeri ga kita"* which roughly translates to "Here comes the one returned from Italy", making the fact that he had been to Italy his sole defining feature. He also experienced demands to "say something in Italian", much like Nikko (Ch. 6.5). The attention provoked a complicated response.

Ruka: 情けない気持ちもありましたし、逆に注目されて嬉しいなという気持ちもありました。両方その、すごい複雑な心境でしたね。(Ruka, interview 2)

Ruka: It felt demeaning, but on the other hand, I was happy to get the attention. It was a complex state of mind, feeling both ways at the same time.

While more limited, this attention was continuing at the time of his second-round interview and Ruka dealt with it by making it part of his projected identity; responding jokingly to being called 'Mafia' for example. This fit with his ongoing recognised identity, his time spent in Hong Kong had already been marked through a nickname that used a Chinese-language reading of his last name instead of the typical Japanese reading, emphasising his difference from others as the 'Chinese boy'. While he appeared reconciled to this identity, even using the nickname in his Instagram username, his narrative does again highlight how non-conformity is policed by students in Japanese high schools (Yoneyama, 1999). Ruka's decision to accept and "own" this positionality may have also been a defence mechanism, particularly in the year that followed study abroad when there was less social support available.

Returning to the question of how competencies developed after the year abroad, apart from being asked to perform greetings and swear words in Italian at school, the only opportunities Ruka reported for using Italian was in messages he traded with another exchange student from his time abroad. His ongoing desire to invest in Italian was therefore very low, and he was instead interested in seeking out interactions with those from different cultural background in the future, particularly those with a connection to Islam.

12.3. **Raiken: Multilingual advantages in Finland**

Raiken was a third-year high school student from the Chubu region of Japan when he travelled to Finland for a year. He was in the final year of high school when he departed which meant that he effectively left 8 months before he was due to graduate. He was discouraged from going by his homeroom teacher since they felt his decision was unusual and better left until university. Raiken

felt it was important to study abroad during high school, since he imagined himself becoming a teacher and changing the Japanese education system. Experiencing Finland's world-renowned education system from the inside was therefore a key part of achieving this imagined future.

Raiken's narrative is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, his perceptions and experiences of the multilingual environment he inhabited extend those found in the focal cases. Secondly, the way he built social connections despite an ongoing struggle with both English and Finnish gives additional insight into factors that can influence the development of social networks during study abroad. Finally, the way technology featured in his interactions with peers enriches the picture of its role in the social lives of the informants.

From the beginning of Raiken's time abroad, linguistic competence posed a major barrier to interaction and like Nikko (Ch. 7) and Manabu (Ch. 9), other exchange students' English proficiency engendered feelings of deficiency. This was exacerbated by the fact that Raiken's host brothers, both younger than him, appeared more proficient in English than he was. The multilingualism of his host community however afforded him an environment where he felt he could participate relative to other exchange students.

Levi: How did that feel? All those new things together?

Raiken: It was really hard like, [my] English language [ability] was really different compared to other exchange students but Finnish skill is almost same. ((right)) So like, I tried to keep up [with] them and then like Finnish, yeah I have this advantage. I couldn't speak English but if I tried hard to learn Finnish I think I could keep up [with] them. (Raiken, interview 1)

For contexts such as Finland where host community languages are not widely taught or spoken elsewhere, there may be limited expectations around outsiders' competence in the language. This would mean the positionality of a novice Finnish language user was normalised among groups such as exchange students and more likely to be accommodated by locals. In settings where English was predominant, such as the US or even among exchange students, wider proficiency and it status as a *lingua franca* may have made it more difficult to be recognised as a novice user (e.g., Manabu, Ch. 8.2).

Another informative aspect of Raiken's time abroad was the way he was able to develop peer connections earlier than most other informants, despite his limited competence.

Raiken: Somehow, like maybe the first week or like first one month it was really hard to make friends. […] I couldn't speak English so it's really hard ((yeah)) but I think there, like, there's sports, PE Class. So I didn't need [to] like, speak English. So ((yeah)) like, I made [friends] that way, like, for first two months. (Raiken, interview 1)

Again, like other informants (e.g., Manabu, Ch. 9; Takumi, Ch. 10; Megumi, Ch. 12.1) and echoing the trend found in the questionnaire (see Ch. 5.4), sport appears as an important part of their experience. As Raiken's extract emphasises, participation does not require much linguistic competence and serves as a way to build connections and access new opportunities for interaction.

Being recognised as Japanese also led Raiken to form what went on to become one of the most important friendships he made.

Raiken: One friend, he was interest[ed] in Japanese culture ((ok)), so like first [??] he was approaching me like, "Where you from are you from? Japan?" like that, […] and then we talked about culture, […] like anime and manga, and like, Japanese temple and like, how to use chopsticks and like, downhill ski.(Raiken, interview 1)

Later in his stay, interest in his Japanese identity also resulted in a romantic relationship with a local. Appearing across a number of informants' accounts (Nikko, Ch. 7; Nagisa, Ch. 12.4), being recognised as Japanese while abroad afforded opportunities for interaction and making personal connections.

Like other informants, participation in peer communities abroad was facilitated by mobile communications technology. Raiken described using a variety of platforms to communicate at school including WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram and SNS. While interactions usually happened across these platforms in Finnish, Raiken explained how English was also deployed, both by himself and his interlocutors, to support communication when he lacked the competence to follow the interaction. Raiken's account also sheds light on how technology supported co-present interactions.

Raiken: Like maybe 10 minutes or 15 minutes [before class] we always talk in the corridors, and then we talked about […] like Finnish culture and Japanese culture and […] and sometimes we have the really funny T-shirts [in Japan] but [my school friends] don't know what it means […] so like we found [them] in the Internet and then we talked about that. (Raiken, interview 1)

The multimodal affordances offered by technology were therefore not only utilised for direct communication with others, but also as aid to provide understanding and context during interactions.

Returning to the final year of high school after his classmates had graduated, Raiken focused on university entrance exams. He changed his preferred area of study at university from education to business administration, since one of the realisations he had while abroad was that Japanese teachers were time poor. Raiken felt that changing the education system required structural changes to Japanese work culture, rather than simply the education sector. He had also become a volunteer with AFS after entering University, advising departing exchange students.

Raiken maintained contact with his host family in the year that followed, particularly his host brother, but found that communicating with them in Finnish had become gradually more difficult due to his ongoing loss of competency. Raiken attributed this to the lack of opportunities he had to use the language compared with English, and it again demonstrates that linguistic development requires conditions that support ongoing investment.

12.4. **Nagisa: Building connections in Brazil**

Nagisa was an enthusiastic participant in this study who provided a wealth of insights that touch on many of the themes found elsewhere while highlighting some unique features. One of the defining factors of Nagisa's account was that her decision on where to study abroad was tied to her family history and opportunities for language learning.

Nagisa: 最初は自分の学校の勉強とか成績のために英語圏に行くんじゃないかという風なことを考えたんです。（はい）なんですけど。よくよく考えてみ[たら]、［…］お母さんの親戚がいっぱいブラジルに移民で行って、その人達はもう、ほとんど日本語は話せないブラジルにいる日本人なんです。日系ブラジルの人達とポルトガル語でちゃんと会話をできるようにすれば、これからも、もっと、その交流とかコネクションが続いていくんじゃないかと思ったんです。(Nagisa, interview 1)

Nagisa: At first I was thinking that perhaps I might go to an Anglophone country because it would help my study at school or my grades for example. ((sure)) That's what I was thinking. But when I really, deeply thought about it […] a lot of my mother's relatives went to Brazil as migrants and now those relatives, they're [ethnic] Japanese in Brazil who can't speak Japanese. If I could have proper conversations in Portuguese with Japanese-Brazilians, then moving forwards, I thought that maybe, I could continue and increase the connections and exchange [between our families].

While her mother's relatives were located in the north-east of Brazil, Nagisa was placed with a host family in the south, several hundred kilometres away. Nagisa had spent some time before departing learning Portuguese privately, and had travelled to Brazil to meet her relatives when she was several years younger. After arriving, she spent several hours at home each evening developing her competence through self-study.

Like other informants, the dyadic relationship with her host mother and the interactional support it offered was crucial to developing this linguistic competence.

Nagisa: 話しながらお母さんの仕事の愚痴、大変なことを聞いたり、そのお母さんのお母さん、おばあちゃんの話を聞いたりとかっていうことを、ずっと学校帰ってから勉強して寝るまで過ごしてっていう風にしていました。(Nagisa, interview 1)

Nagisa: We would be talking and she would complain about her work, talk about things that were bothering her, also about her mother, she would tell me about things like that. We made a habit of spending our time together this way from the time I got home from school until I studied and went to bed.

The regularly recurring nature of these interactions, enabled through the availability of the host mother, as well as the quotidian nature of the content appears central to both linguistic development and to reinforcing the embedded support offered by the relationship. As a result, Nagisa was able to increasingly interact at home and school in Portuguese and relied very little on English after her fourth month abroad.

Like many other informants, her host sister was an important source of support both linguistically through her knowledge of English and socially, by providing Nagisa with connections to peers in the host community. However, like Nikko (Ch. 7) and Narumi (Ch. 8), tensions soon emerged in their relationship.

Nagisa: 最初は host sister のボーイフレンドや、その友達たちと遊んでいましたが、だんだん私が、その人たちのことをあまり良いと思わなくなって、［…］学期の変わり目で違う友達と付き合う様にしたら、もっと（友達が）増えました。(Nagisa, personal communication)

Nagisa: At the start I spent time with my host sister's friends, her boyfriend, people like that, but gradually I realised that they weren't very good people. […] at the start of the next semester, I started spending time with different friends and I made more friends.

Nagisa's developing Portuguese competence enabled her to exercise agency in renegotiating her social networks to include people who she felt better aligned with her values. This again underscores the connection between linguistic competence, agency and the structure of peer networks highlighted in the accounts of Nikko (Ch. 7) and Manabu (Ch. 9).

Outside of the home, Nagisa also found that being recognised as Japanese provided opportunities for interaction and found that several people she regularly interacted with, including her teacher, made a point of learning and using Japanese phrases with her. On the other hand, she also encountered unwanted romantic attention from boys interested in *otaku* culture[16]. Like the women in Polanyi (1995), Nagisa found herself needing to develop strategies to rebuff their advances, although it appeared to be a limited part of her experience.

Nagisa's narrative is also important for what it reveals about the role mobile communication plays in feelings of inclusion and belonging. Nagisa was a very active user of social media, including Instagram where she posted almost daily. However, she lacked a cellular connection while abroad and relied on Wi-Fi networks to go online. Unlike other informants, her school did not have a Wi-Fi network and she explained that classroom friends would often lend her their devices so she could look up or translate things she could not understand in class. This lack of connection also meant that

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[16] Japanese pop culture including animation, video games and comics, generally aimed at adults.

she was unable to participate in the online interactions that took place while she was at school. While Nagisa explained that this meant she was more focused on co-present interactions or reading books, it did leave her to feel excluded at times.

Nagisa: 先生も「今日は気分悪いから休むわ」ということを授業始まる 30 分前に言ったりして（えっ！）@@それを連絡がソーシャルネットワークザービスで回ってくるので、私はWi-Fi 持ってなくて連絡をもらってこなくて、1 時間とかずっと待ってたりしていて

Levi: 一人で？

Nagisa: そうです。もう大変でしたね。で、その後、あの学校に行った他のクラスの友達に「ねえ今日授業ないの？」と聞いたら「えー？そのクラス今日もうみんなとっくにと帰ってるよ」とか言ったりして。そういうことは 2 週間一回ありました。(Nagisa, interview 1)

Nagisa: 30 minutes before classes start, my teacher would say I don't feel well, I'm taking the day off.（Huh?）@@ That would go around on social media, so because I didn't have Wi-Fi, I wouldn't get the message and would be just waiting there for an hour.

Levi: By yourself?

Nagisa: Yes. It was horrible. Then, when I would ask friends from other classrooms "Hey, is class cancelled today?" they would say stuff like, "What? That class went home ages ago today too!" That would happen like once a fortnight.

This example is particularly instructive since it highlights how a lack of connectivity while abroad can also diminish individuals' abilities to participate in the host community and can contribute to feelings of isolation.

Nagisa, did however maintain an active online social life outside of school, in particular with her Mother's relatives in Brazil and during a school holiday made a several hundred-kilometre trip to visit them. After returning, Nagisa described how her linguistic competence and the connections she had renewed with her relatives allowed family in Japan and Brazil that had not communicated in decades to reconnect through her.

12.5. **Kumiko: Questioning the value of French in Japan**

Kumiko was a second-year high school student from the island of Kyushu whose homestay was located in a rural part of Southern France. Kumiko's account is particularly instructive in the way that her trajectory after returning played out and the role the returned context played in the ongoing development of her competence and investment. For that reason, this section primarily focuses on the year after return.

Following the themes of this project, one of the key aspects of her time abroad was the relative isolation of her homestay. Her ability to go anywhere was dependent upon her host parents and most of the social activities she participated in involved sleepovers with other exchange students who were staying in the area. As a result, her host mother and younger host sister became the people she interacted with the most, and these relationships both remained supportive throughout her stay and were critical to her development of French. In contrast to other female informants, Kumiko did not report tension with her host sister and she described their relationship as one of the strongest while abroad, the connection they shared visible in several videos and photos of them laughing, making faces and playing around in French on Kumiko's Instagram feed.

Learning French though was a source of hardship for Kumiko, and she reported that even several months into her stay she was still struggling with the language. She attributed her eventual success to her determination, but the support offered by her host family also appeared to be a contributing factor. Like Megumi (Ch. 12.1), she also reported being misidentified as Chinese and found being met with greetings of "*ni hao*" by locals as a source of discomfort. Despite this, Kumiko felt her time abroad was a transformational experience which had reshaped her perceptions of herself and the world around her.

Initially after returning from France, she experienced many aspects of her life in Japan quite critically and struggled to come to terms with differences she now experienced.

Kumiko: すごい悔しくて最初はだから、いっぱい泣いてたんですけど。やっぱり文化はそれぞれ良さがあるから、日本の文化もちゃんと慣れていかなぎゃと思って (Kumiko, interview 2)

Kumiko: At first it was really difficult, and I cried a lot. Of course, both cultures have their good points, so I knew that I had to get used to Japanese culture [again]

A key example of the difficulty Kumiko encountered was the way her family in Japan left their plates on the table for her mother to clean up after a meal. Kumiko verbally contrasted this with the way her host family each had cleaned away their own plates after eating, which led to conflict between her and other Japanese family members. Another example occurred on the day she arrived back in Japan.

Kumiko: フランスの家庭がすごい一軒一軒が大きかったんですね？だから帰ってきた時に、自分の家を見た時に、「へー、ちっちゃって」あたしがしゃべたんですよ。でなんか、そういうとか、すごい、こう、親から傷つくわけじゃないですか？（うん）だから何か、そういうのとかを、こう、いわずに、[…]「うん」していこうって思いました。(Kumiko, interview 2)

Kumiko: French homes are really large, one next to the other, right? So when I returned [to Japan] and saw my house I said "Wow! It's tiny". And like, that kind of thing, it really, it hurts your parents, right?

((mm)) so like, I stopped saying things like that. […] and thought I would just keep my mouth shut about those things.

Kumiko's strategy was therefore one of non-confrontation, reserving her opinions and maintaining them privately. Ultimately, Kumiko felt that avoiding conflict in relationships with her family was more important than voicing the new perspectives she had developed.

Kumiko also found the dynamics of her friendships at school had shifted after she returned.

Kumiko: あたしが帰って来て、［…］一年ぶりに会う友達がいて、で　「何々ちゃん、久しぶり。帰ってきたよ」みたいな、ハイテンションで言行ったら、すごい「あ、お帰り」みたいな感じで、すごい冷たい感じだったんですね。［…］今あまり仲良くしてないしみたいな。でもその子とは、留学前すごい仲良くって、毎日遊んでたりとかもしてたから、なんかやっぱり友達の変化とかもちょっとはありました。(Kumiko, interview 2)

Kumiko: When I got back […] I met my friend for the first time in a year and was like, "Long time no see!" I approached her really excitedly, but she was like "Oh hi. You're back". She was really cold. […] Now we are not really friends anymore, but before studying abroad we were really close and would hang out together every day. So yeah, there were some changes in my friendships.

Viewing this experience in the context of other informants' return experiences (e.g., Nikko, Ch. 7.5; Manabu, Ch. 9.5; Ruka, Ch. 12.2) and wider discourses of outsiderness that have been known to mark returnees (Goodman, 2012; Miyachi, 1990), it does suggest that Kumiko may have experienced some distancing as a result of spending time abroad. Kumiko explained that her own internal perceptions of having been transformed also led her to develop new friendships with those who had been abroad and shared similar experiences of overcoming difficulty. This suggests that the distancing Kumiko experienced in her previous friendships may have been a bidirectional process.

One other important point to emerge stresses the predominance of English in second language education in Japan, underpinned as it is by "the deeply ingrained societal association of internationalization with English and the West" (Y. Kobayashi, 2018, p. 15). Most of the other students who had gone away for a year in her grade had travelled to English-speaking countries and so she found her experience was generalised into the same frame by her teachers.

Kumiko: 日本に帰ってきたら、「あなた英語喋れるでしょう」みたいな感じの扱いされるから、それが、帰ってきてからすごく嫌って言うか。それ、そう自分が思っちゃうぐらいんだったら、アメリカに行って、みんなと同じぐらいの英語レベル、身に？付けとけば良かったなぁみたいなの思います。(Kumiko, interview 2)

Kumiko: When I came back to Japan, the way I was treated [by the teachers] was kind of like, 'You can speak English now, right?' I really hated that when I got back. And I thought then that, 'If that's how you see me then it would have been better if I had just gone to America and come back with the same level of English as everyone else.'

In a later exchange, Kumiko clarified that she did not actually regret going to France, however this reaction does highlight difficulties Japanese sojourners who develop non-English competencies may face on return. Even while French is considered by some measures to be a prestigious and globally relevant language (De Swaan, 2013), Kumiko reported struggling to find relevance in the competencies she had developed.

Kumiko： 今まで自分、こう、日本にいたら、フランス語使って何もできないとか。インターネットで調べても、ある程度の情報しか出てこなくて。自分が求めている情報が見つからなくて、ずっと困ってたりしてたんです。(Kumiko, interview 2)

Kumiko: Since I've been back in Japan, I can't use my French to do anything. Even if I search on the Internet, only certain information comes up and I can't find anything on [places I can use French]. I've struggled with this the whole time.

While she attempted to maintain her competence through participation in a French speech contest, international exchange events and watching content on YouTube, the linguistic realities of her environment limited her ability and desire to continue investing in the language. This culminated in a critical incident during a Skype conversation with her host family around eight months after returning to Japan.

Kumiko: その時、[…]自分、フランス語が伝わらないっていうので、こうなんか、しゃべりたくなくなっちゃって、であっちも、え、「［クミコ］ってこんなしゃべれてたよね」みたいな感じ、ってそこで、話してるんですよね。なんか、そういうのがすごい、ショックで、[…]まあ、全然友達とも、ホストファミリーとも電話しなくなりました。(Kumiko, interview 2)

Kumiko: Speaking with [my host family] that time, I couldn't communicate [what I wanted to say] in French and so I stopped wanting to speak. And they were like, "You could speak about this kind of thing before." That was a complete shock for me […] I don't call my friends or my host family on the phone anymore.

At the time of the second interview, Kumiko was still maintaining contact with her host sister through online messaging, but the demands of preparing for university entrance exams limited her engagement with others from her time abroad. Kumiko did see herself returning to France in the future, this time as a tourist though, since she had not had an opportunity to see much of France during her homestay.

12.6. **Summary**

The five accounts above provide both support and provide contrast to the main findings to emerge from the focal cases detailed in Chapters 7 to 11. Importantly too they help to demonstrate the diversity of the settings the informants travelled to and the environments they returned to in Japan.

In conjunction with the other results presented in Part II, they form the basis for the discussion which appears in Part III.

Part III: Discussing the findings

13 A year abroad: Belonging and becoming

For the informants involved in this study, their time abroad was a personal project of self-realisation and self-discovery, mediated through the multilingual relationships conducted both in person and online. During iterative analyses of interviews, social media, questionnaires and other documentation, a broad sense of what the year abroad meant for these adolescents emerged, enmeshed in themes of transformation and belonging. Imagined identities and the possibilities offered by a year abroad fuelled the informants' initial decisions to apply. Investment in the linguistic practices of the host community was driven by their desire to belong and accommodation of that possibility. This investment evolved in response to the roles they sought to inhabit and interlocking individual and contextual factors.

The adoption of a *person-process-context-time* framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1995 and see Ch. 3.2) helped to uncover the complex and dynamic relationship of the individual to context and how it affected the evolution of investment and linguistic development. To varying degrees throughout the informants' time abroad, their opportunities for, and desire to invest in language learning were shaped by diverse sociocultural, geographical, interpersonal and individual factors. The findings also show how the informants were strategic in seeking out and investing in the linguistic resources needed to participate in the communities they wished to belong to and began actively shaping the nature of interactions in those communities. Furthermore, the informants' accounts demonstrate how development of their linguistic competencies transpired through "repeated experiences in regularly occurring and recurring contexts of use" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 27), in which a small number of key individuals played a significant role. While the nature of these relationships was qualitatively different for each informant, they were integral in driving investment in the linguistic practices of the host community.

Guided by the socio-ecological framework presented in Chapter 3, analysis of the questionnaire described in Chapter 5 and the individual case studies presented in Chapters 7 to 12, this chapter traces the broad strokes of the informants' narratives and participation in the host community across their year abroad, highlighting both overarching patterns and points of divergence. The importance of considering the dimension of time in questions of linguistic investment and development is something which this project had sought to emphasise through the methodological, analytical and narrative tools it has employed. Therefore, the organisation of this chapter also follows a broad chronological trajectory, however the diversity of experiences and the intertwined,

recurring nature of certain processes of interaction and development mean that some findings may overlap or be referred to across multiple sections.

13.1.1. *Imagining the possibilities of a year abroad*

The idea of study abroad as a site of self-actualisation and self-discovery is initially apparent in questionnaire responses. In discussion of reasons for studying abroad in Chapter 5.2, three of the four highest mean responses were for items relating to personal development: [Broadening my horizons] (M = 4.61), [Testing myself in a new environment] (M = 4.43) and [Having time to think about my future] (M = 4.17). The strength of this idea is demonstrated by the low value assigned to items which would have indicated external motivations, such as [to give me an advantage in university entry exams and looking for work] (M = 2.76) and [it was recommended by my parents or teacher] (M = 2.18).

Statements made by informants during their initial interviews highlighted the salience of this idea. Many of the reasons given for applying touched on the idea of encountering difference and how that appealed to their reflexive and imagined identities. Takumi's (Ch. 10) account contains the most explicit example, since one of his reasons for studying abroad was to undergo experiences radically different from his current life. Manabu (Ch. 9) too connected his desire to study abroad to a sense of difference from his peers. Manabu and Takumi also emphasised the symbolic value or 'coolness' that was also associated with studying abroad, while both Raiken (Ch. 12.3) and Narumi (Ch. 8) felt that experiencing a different education system from the inside would help them address issues they saw with education in Japan.

Recent research has highlighted a tendency among some study abroad participants to view study abroad as a consumerist activity (Caton & Santos, 2009; Gore, 2005; Jæger & Gram, 2017; Kinginger, 2008) and there is evidence of these ideas in the motivations of some informants. Primarily, the more touristic and exoticised notions of study abroad were attached to images encountered in mainstream media such as TV and magazines. Romanticised images of France and Europe in general fuelled Nikko's (Ch. 7) desire to live there, while dramatized images of American High School life emerged in the accounts of Misa (Ch. 11) and Narumi (Ch. 8).

For some of the informants (Takumi, Ch. 10; Misa, Ch. 11; Nagisa Ch. 12.4) developing linguistic competence was a significant factor in their decision to study abroad, however for the majority, language learning appeared to be simply a means to facilitate participation and not an end unto itself. This too was supported by the questionnaire data on reasons for studying abroad, where the item [Improving my language ability] received only the fifth highest mean response (M = 3.86). This finding indicates that the cohort in this study differed from the general Japanese high school

population, for who improving language ability is the most popular reason for studying abroad by almost 20 percentage points (MEXT, 2019). In part, this was probably due to AFS exchanges emphasising the intercultural and personal development aspects of studying abroad. Paradoxically, the lowered importance afforded to language learning may have played a role in some respondents' decisions to study abroad since the highest rated reason for a majority (63.2%) of general Japanese high school populations not wanting to study abroad was "the language barrier" (MEXT, 2019).

Essentially, the informants' view of study abroad was an empowering one. Through their experiences abroad, they imagined being transformed and obtaining new subject positions which granted them enhanced standing, independence and, in Narumi's (Ch. 8) case, an understanding of her place in the world. A year abroad also presented opportunities to 'try on' different ways of being at a period in their life when the informants were trying to make sense of who they were and who they could become. Investing in the linguistic practices of the host community provided them with the symbolic resources to access these ways of being; obtaining identities they came to desire.

13.2. **Early stages: Arriving as strangers**

13.2.1. *Linguistic barriers and multilingual opportunities*

Arriving in the host community and moving from an abstract, imagined experience to a real, lived one brought with it unanticipated demands, limitations and opportunities connected with language. There was a sense in the informants' accounts that they had not fully anticipated the linguistic demands of life in the host community and how their initial competencies could limit their ability to interact and begin pursuing their goals.

Several of the informants pointed to the AFS orientation sessions held in the days after arriving as confronting and alienating experiences. In these sessions, conducted in English, the informants encountered exchange students who had arrived from other parts of the world as more confident and linguistically competent. This perceived gap presented an immediate obstacle to their sense of inclusion; one that left them feeling "apart" (Nikko, Ch. 7) or excluded (Manabu, Ch. 9). For informants whose host language was also English (Narumi, Ch. 8; Misa Ch. 11), the sense that their limited competence was impeding their ability to connect with others extended into the school and host family settings. While the informants never explicitly stated it as such, understandings and beliefs around English would have been informed by their past experiences with the language, particularly in educational settings and discourses circulating more widely in Japan. Inevitably, the informants' impressions of their ability to successfully negotiate relationships were based on their

comparisons with other exchange students highlighting their own perceived deficiencies, and at times, led to feelings of depression and despondency.

Their struggles to communicate occurred as they found themselves without frames of reference, not only for social interaction, but their geographical sense of location and direction. Developing linguistic competence was therefore crucial for assembling new frames of reference required to better engage with their new community. The ability to create the interactional opportunities needed for linguistic development is however, also a function of linguistic competence (Kurata, 2010). Lacking this competence, informants were therefore dependent upon others to not only navigate the social and geographical topographies of their new environments but to also mediate opportunities for interaction. Host families were critical in this regard and their role is discussed in Chapter 13.2.2.

Those informants who encountered multilingual settings abroad often needed to navigate the learning and use of English alongside other local languages. How they went about this was determined by a range of contextual and individual factors. Raiken, (Ch. 12.3) finding his English competence lacking relative to other exchange students, viewed Finnish as a more even starting point which fuelled his desire to invest in the language. Manabu (Ch. 9) too, disheartened by his relative lack of English competence, invested significantly in French during his time in Canada. When Nikko (Ch. 7) found herself unable to communicate directly with her host mother, the value she placed on that relationship led her to initially prioritise Hungarian over English learning. In each of these cases, the informants' prioritisation of the local language over English highlights how their investment was not only "mediated by the opportunities and struggles of their multilingual lifeworlds" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 26) but their own agency, investing in the languages they perceived to be of strategic importance for reasons of participation or self-confidence. Ruka's (Ch. 12.2) account on the other hand shows how encountering English in Italy proved to be a barrier to interacting in Italian for even a non-English background speaker. Since English was the language which had the greatest shared competence, he found himself interacting in English rather than Italian. Multilingual environments appeared to the informants as both opportunity and barrier, providing alternatives to anxiety-laden English communication or, alternatively, limiting the opportunities to interact in the host language.

There is also an interesting contrast to be made between those in countries where English was just one language variety present, and those who travelled to US and found themselves in essentially monolingual English settings. While there appears to have been an expectation that AFS exchange students would have a level of English competence that allowed them to participate in everyday situations, these expectations did not appear to exist for languages other than English (LOTE). The

upshot of this is that arriving with limited English competence, as many of the informants did, was received differently to limited competence in a LOTE. The identity of novice LOTE user may have been a more attractive and legitimate identity as Manabu (Ch. 9) and Raiken's (Ch. 12.3) accounts seem to indicate. The status of English, as the monolingual norm in the US or as a widely-known *lingua franca* elsewhere, may have limited informants' ability to be recognised as a novice English user, particularly when there exists a tendency to "interpret limited English proficiency as a form of limited intelligence" (Callahan, 2005, p. 310). In particular, I am thinking of Manabu (Ch. 9) and Misa's (Ch. 11) accounts and the exclusion they experienced in the face of their very limited initial English competence, as well as Narumi's (Ch. 8) fear of being seen as unintelligent on the basis of her lack of responses in English.

13.2.2. The centrality of the host family

While initial encounters with peers and the school environment were characterised by disorientation and perplexity, host family settings were described more positively. The informants placed a high value on integrating into family life and almost uniformly, investment in the practices of the host family took priority over those of peers for the first few months. Drawing from both the informants' accounts and the wider literature, several factors emerge as contributing to the importance of the host family for these adolescents.

Key among these was the expectation, created by the placement of participants with 'host parents' who act *in-loco parentis,* that the relationship would function similarly to an actual parent-child relationship. As Kinginger (2015) has pointed out, host families may be more willing to accept high school-aged adolescents as a member of their household, while the participants themselves are more likely than university-aged participants to invest in the practices of the host family. This was evident both in the terms the informants reported adopting when speaking to their host parents, such as Takumi's "Mum and Dad", and in time they spent interacting with them. Overwhelmingly, host mothers were the main source of interaction, providing ongoing affective, informational and embedded support throughout the experience, similar to findings of other studies on the homestay among undergraduates (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Shiri, 2015). Crucially, host mothers were physically and attentively present, allowing for regular, increasingly complex interaction to take place and scaffolding the independent learning informants were doing later in their stays. This appears in the exchanges Nikko (Ch. 7.2) had with her host mother, built upon her diary entries, the way Manabu's (Ch. 8.2) host mother used accommodation strategies in their interactions after dinner or in the contrast between Misa's (Ch. 11) first and second host families and her linguistic development. In essence, these interactions epitomise a vital part of the investment process which

fostered the development of informants' linguistic competencies while engendering a sense of belonging to their host family.

Host siblings also emerged as a key source of early linguistic support for many of the informants, particularly translating and acting as a channel of communication between informants and their host parents. This appeared pivotal to their integration into the host family as it allowed the informants to comprehend the practices of the family without the required linguistic competence, as exemplified in Manabu's account. The multilingual repertoires of some informants' hosts siblings (Nikko, Ch. 7; Manabu, Ch. 8; Ruka, Ch. 12.2; Raiken, Ch. 12.3; Nagisa, Ch. 12.4), also meant that communication often involved negotiation across multiple languages and provided scope for the informants to gradually integrate more of the host languages into their communication as their competencies developed. Notably in Nikko's and Manabu's case, the reciprocity of using Japanese in interactions was important for their host sisters' future sojourns to Japan.

Host sisters were also a significant source of tension in the accounts of some female informants. This appears to explain results from the questionnaire that indicated responding female to the question of gender predicted choosing personal relationships (p = 0.031) as a significant area of difficulty (see Ch. 5.4). Nikko understood this tension as stemming from the caretaker role her sister was playing, acting as both translator at home and Nikko's main social contact at school. Both Narumi (Ch. 8) and Misa (Ch. 11), whose host sisters were both the only child, felt their arrival had disrupted the status quo. Narumi also felt the jealousy demonstrated by her host sister played a role in the tension that ensued in their relationship. Nagisa (Ch. 12.4), on the other hand, disliked the behaviour of her host sister and friends and felt need to distance herself from them. In the cases of Nagisa and Nikko, this tension led to seeking out and developing alternative social networks which did not include their host sister. Narumi on the other hand found her host sister to be a source of support during a difficult time later in her stay and eventually developed a close friendship with her. Kumiko's experience (Ch. 12.5) was a key exception, since one of the strongest relationships was with her host sister and it lacked the tension found in other accounts. Reviewing the accounts of the male informants did not reveal the same tensions. Instead, they often did not discuss the relationship beyond the interactional level (Manabu Ch. 9; Ruka, Ch. 12.2) or in the case of host brothers, described it as one of the strongest relationships they had formed while abroad (Takumi, Ch. 10; Raiken, Ch. 12.3).

To my knowledge, there are no other studies which have linked gender to difficulties in a homestay environment, although I have noted the presence of some isolated cases such as Beatrice in Kinginger (2008) and the informants YF, LK (both female) and SJ (male) in Grieve (2015) who

reported host sisters as a source of tension. As Knight and Schmidt-Reinhart (2002) have noted, homestay arrangements are ultimately a decision made by the host parents and this can be a source of friction with host siblings. What the results of this study do suggest is that this friction most commonly manifests when both the host sibling and the sojourner are female, and more attention should be paid to the configurations of homestay settings when considering how the dynamic of the host family can influence language learning.

Taken together, the experiences of the informants do give credence to the notion of a 'homestay advantage' where participants are supported "linguistically, culturally, and psychologically" (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002, p. 195) and therefore are more likely to thrive. It is certainly true that this dynamic is dependent both upon the host family receiving participants "as persons of consequence" (Kinginger, 2015a, p. 55) and the participants' choosing "to engage with someone in the host family" (Paige & Vande Berg, 2012, p. 37). However, this study has illustrated how the situation can evolve over time in response to the actions and attitudes of both host family members and the participants themselves. Misa's account is particularly poignant as it shows how the relationship with her host family deteriorated over time through the actions of those involved. Narumi's relationship with her host sister also went through a number of phases connected to their inner lives and continued to evolve even after Narumi returned to Japan.

13.2.3. Peer communities and key individuals

The time spent at high school during the first months was typically described in terms which emphasised the informants' unfamiliarity with the language and their difficulty navigating a new educational context. Institutionally, the informants joined the host school at the beginning of the school year and for all practical purposes were generally expected to participate in regular classes alongside their peers. The lack of linguistic competence therefore posed an almost insurmountable barrier to understanding the majority of content presented in classes, achieving practical and administrative tasks and fully participating in the social life of their peers. For several informants, host siblings were their main or only means of support and connection at high school. However, as noted above, these relationships sometimes became a source of tension while for others, differences in age or gender made spending time together at high school unnatural.

As Churchill (2006) demonstrated in his study of Japanese exchange programs, the institutional context of high school can be highly variable for sojourners and shaped by how they are initially received. The degree to which the informants were seen by their peers as worthy of interacting with and accommodating in some cases seemed to index attitudes towards outsiders more generally. Misa (Ch. 11) and Megumi (Ch. 12.1) found the ethnically and linguistically less diverse communities

of their schools to be insular and faced marginalisation on account of their outsider status. On the other hand, the large migrant population at Manabu's (Ch. 9) school allowed him to find community early on as he was recognised by this group which had a similar status. Megumi reported a similar experience when she transferred to another high school with a high proportion of migrants. This suggests that in some instances, sojourners are more likely to find community among those who also find themselves in the role of strangers, not just among fellow sojourners, but among the migrant populations of their host community as Max in Spenader (2011) did.

One other factor that significantly affected informants' participation in peer communities was the presence of *key individuals*. Many of the informants could point to an individual at school who, in those first days, weeks or months of 'not knowing' and 'not understanding' had actively interacted with them and, over time become a central part of their social life and overall experience of study abroad. The most detailed examples appear in Nikko's (Ch. 7) relationship with Kristel and Manabu's (Ch. 9) relationship with Antoine, however the presence of key individual who provided support, access to social networks and socialised the informant into new ways of interacting appear throughout the data. The way that these relationships were initiated varied across the informants' accounts, from Narumi (Ch. 8) being invited to join a group in the cafeteria at lunch to Antoine silently helping Manabu find his place during a Maths class. In some cases, informants' Japanese identities appeared to provide the initial opportunity for interaction, such as Raiken (Ch. 12.3), who had a friendship and a romantic relationship begin from a local's interest in Japan. These interactions were however only the first step in the development of their friendships, which often occurred through repeated, unplanned interactions in spaces they happened to share; the classroom, the cafeteria or school bus.

Misa's (Ch. 11) account is again an important contrast, since the main friendship she developed in the host community largely played out in the final months after high school had finished for the year. There did not appear to be anyone in the host community who emerged in the mentoring role found in the other informants' accounts. Instead, the relationship which appeared to be the most important during her time abroad was the Japanese friend also studying abroad in the US who she conversed with nightly on Skype. In some ways, Misa's and Nikko's stories echo each other in that they both found themselves seeking advice and support in the face of difficulties with their host sister. While Nikko chose to bring her concerns to her classmates which she had been establishing social connections with, Misa's sense of exclusion and limited ability to communicate may have meant that the connection with her Japanese friend was her only means of support.

13.3. **Mid-stages: Growing participation and developing identities**

13.3.1. Noticing the gap, making strategic investments

Typically, after the intensity of the first months abroad and adjusting to the upheaval that a new home, school and sociocultural environment brought, the informants reported feeling dissatisfied with the way their experience was not meeting their expectations. One important part of this was the lack of progress they had made in developing linguistic competencies. An FAQ posted on the website of AFS International Programs Japan (2020) states:

> どの国へ留学しても、言葉については最初の数ヵ月は相当の努力が必要です。現地生活への適応が進めば、相手の話がほぼ理解でき、自分の話したいことも伝えることができるようになるでしょう。語学に対する吸収力の高い高校時代こそ、様々な言語を身につける絶好の機会といえます。

> No matter which country you study abroad in, it will be necessary to put considerable effort into language for the first few months. If you're able to adapt to life at your destination, then surely you'll become able to understand almost everything others say and to say the things you want to say. It's said that adolescence, when the ability to absorb language is high, is a golden opportunity to learn language.

Putting aside the indirect reference to the critical period hypothesis (Birdsong, 2006), it is apparent that the belief found among the informants that linguistic competency would develop after spending several months in the host community, at least partially, came through information provided by AFS. This is supported by Misa's statement (Ch. 11.2) that she read a similar statement in a newsletter from the organisation.

What is important was the informants' reactions when they found that their experiences didn't match this belief. Noticing this gap, many of the informants began to rethink their approach to language learning, adopting daily study routines and seeking out affordances that aligned with the linguistic competencies and identities they desired. Nikko (Ch. 7.3) began a habit of watching Youtubers to learn teenage registers of English, while Manabu (Ch. 9.3) strategically used a combination of apps to work on different areas of his competence. On the other hand, Misa's response (Ch. 11.2) was to continue to trust in the idea that communication would eventually get easier.

Highlighted by these examples is how through the agentive process of investment, informants resolved the tension they encountered between the anticipated and the actual. To offer a non-linguistic example of this process, Takumi (Ch. 10) faced disappointment around the familiar patterns which his life had fallen into after adjusting over the first few months. Upon noticing the gap between his anticipated experience of a life-changing event and where he currently found

himself, he took it upon himself to begin seeking out new experiences with which to challenge himself.

A key point of note about these strategies of self-directed language study was that they would tend to occur concurrently with, or be followed by, interactions with the host family's evening routines. Host mothers in particular were present at these times and a number of the informants linked their self-study to interactions with the host mother. Nikko's use of a diary to scaffold interaction with her host mother and improve her ability to communicate in Hungarian is perhaps the most explicit example of this, but Takumi and Megumi also described how school homework provided opportunities for interaction and learning with their host mothers. Also, the personal nature of these conversations, such as the complaints about work or family-related issues Nagisa's (Ch. 12.4) host mother related, provided informants with embedded support while developing the linguistic and sociopragmatic competence required for those relationships.

Through this strategic investment, participation in peer communities took on greater importance in the informants' social lives as their imagined identities evolved with the opportunities and limitations they encountered. In many cases, these were communities which had evolved out of the relationships they had with key individuals, however there were also more generalised communities based around classes, extra-curricular activities and shared status as exchange students. Communications technology emerged in the accounts of many informants as a means to facilitate participation in these communities, while not having access to an online connection could impede that ability as Nagisa's experience of missing out on key information circulating among her classmates through the lack of connectivity demonstrates. Online communication was also an important resource for developing teenage registers as informants pointed to the affordances it offered for learning 'slang'. Having said that, the mere presence and use of technology to support communication and language learning was not a guarantee of substantial increases in linguistic competence. Ruka's (Ch.12.2) strategy of simply looking up Italian lexical items that he encountered and had an interest in, while demonstrating engagement with the language, lacked the repetition and increasing complexity of the strategies other informants adopted and may have contributed to his struggle to communicate confidently in Italian.

The blending of online resources with face-to-face communication was also a feature of the informants' interactions in the host language. As Raiken (Ch. 12.3) described, conversations would occur between classes over things encountered online and the ability to retrieve images and provide cross-cultural examples supported these co-present interactions. Nikko also described how online searches were used to fill gaps in her lexical knowledge when communicating with her host mother.

The evidence of these strategies and resources to support communication demonstrate how "an understanding of technology as a feature of [study abroad] contexts" (Durbidge, 2019, p. 232) is vital to understanding how language learning and use is now occurring.

The extent to which the informants exerted their agency "within their locally situated contexts of action and interaction" (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, pp. 24–25) to seek out strategic affordances for learning were linked to their investment in that community. The initiative and creativity the informants showed in identifying learning strategies to operationalise their investment stands out as an important factor in developing linguistic competence. Those informants' who described having strong gains in their linguistic competence appeared to actively invest in the linguistic practices of both their host family and peer networks.

13.3.2. Learning and living in a multilingual environment

For several of the informants in this study, their experiences took place in multilingual environments which required them to negotiate interaction and manage their learning across multiple linguistic varieties and communities. While host family settings appeared to encourage the use of LOTEs, interactions with peers (at least initially) appear to have been conducted almost entirely in English. This was due to the fact that English was the language both the informants and their peers had the largest mutual competence in, and possibly their peers having less personal interest than host families in the linguistic development of the informants. The use of English in the informants' schools though did appear to be marked, as classroom content and interactions between local students was generally conducted in the host language. Each informant who travelled to a multilingual setting negotiated it differently, while the linguistic environment, the people and the communities they encountered also affected the opportunities available.

While Nikko (Ch. 7.2) had initially focused on Hungarian in order to communicate with her host mother, she made the decision to switch her focus to English after several months, identifing it as important for participation in the exchange student community. Nikko did continue to invest in Hungarian however, particularly as a shared activity with Kristel during classes they could not comprehend. Drawing support from each other, they renegotiated the language of interaction with their classmates from English to Hungarian, both in the classroom and online. Nagisa had a strong reason to invest in Portuguese and while developing her competence she used decreasing amounts of English in her interactions until she was able to communicate exclusively in Portuguese. Interaction with Manabu's Francophone friends occurred entirely in English until he made an explicit request to interact in French. His friends reacted to this in different ways, with one continuing to use English even when Manabu spoke to him in French. Ruka on the other hand felt

that his proficiency with English had interfered with his ability to learn Italian, since he had felt that the need to enable smooth communication took priority over opportunities to practice language use.

From these diverse experiences, it is apparent that in multilingual settings, sojourners must negotiate both the language varieties they will invest in and their use of that variety when it violates the expectations of their interlocutors. By resisting the current practices of interaction, they demonstrate the power of "agency to restructure contexts" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 44) and therefore their own positioning within those communities. This point was clearly tied to the informants' evolving linguistic competence and their investment in insider identities in their host community and in Nagisa's case, relatives in Brazil. These changes in the language of interaction demonstrate the ability of the informants to effect change upon the social lifeworlds they inhabited.

As Mori and Sanuth (2018) found in their study of American graduates and undergraduates in an eight-week Yorùbá language program in Nigeria, the presence of English as a lingua franca in study abroad contexts may be viewed programmatically, and by sojourners themselves, as an obstacle to learning other 'local' languages. As Moloba's case demonstrated however, translanguaging was a communicative reality of the host community and language learning could also mean adapting to that reality. For the respondents in this project, the linguistic repertoires they utilised across their sojourn evolved as they responded to the multilingual reality of their host communities and exerted agency by investing in, and negotiating the use of, unfamiliar linguistic practices.

13.3.3. High school identities

As indicated in Chapter 12.3.3, as informants' linguistic competencies developed, relationships with, and communities of peers took on greater significance. In many cases, these communities centred on specific shared activities and spaces, both off and online, and involved investment in specific linguistic and cultural practices connected to teenage identities.

Growing up watching the Disney channel and influenced by movies like High School Musical, Narumi (Ch. 8.1) had developed clear ideas about high school life in America and the role she imagined herself playing. The development of Narumi's identity while abroad was therefore partially tied to life at high school, participating in a school production of Grease and singing Opera. In Nikko's account, she described how a certain corner of the school cafeteria became a gathering point for the exchange students in her school to gather to talk or watch Netflix together. While the majority of school life was conducted in Hungarian, this corner became a space where the exchange students developed their English-speaking identities over the year.

Part of the informants' teenage identities also referenced the multilingualism their peer relationships were enmeshed in, with diversification of their linguistic repertoires apparent in reports of translanguaging and the appearance of Romanised Japanese in Instagram comments. This was exemplified in the multilingual participation of Megumi (Ch. 12.1) in the migrant community of her second school, and in the use of "bad" words in Hungarian among Nikko's (Ch. 7.4) exchange student peer networks. This illustrates the way that adolescents can appropriate language from those around them, "being influenced instead by friendship and/or the circulation of ethnic forms as commodities, life-style options and art-objects" (Rampton, 2006, p. 143).

13.4. Late stages: Participation and community

13.4.1. Social network diversification

The final few months of the informants' time abroad seemed to signal a shift in the quantity and variety of interactions they engaged in. Nikko's (Ch. 7), Narumi's (Ch. 8) and Manabu's (Ch. 9) engagement with and investment in the languages of the host community during the middle stages of their time abroad appeared to have a significant effect on the quality and diversity of their relationships as the final few months of their time abroad began. Takumi (Ch. 10) too, while having confidence in his communicative ability from the start, had also taken a more active approach to engaging with and investing in the practices of his host community after not encountering the types of experiences he anticipated.

For both Takumi and Manabu, participation in groups based around sporting and cultural activities such as flag football, clay target shooting and church provided them with opportunities to diversify their social networks and interact with others beyond their immediate family or school social group. Together with Raiken's (Ch. 12.3) use of sport to build initial connections with peers, it provides qualitative description of the statistically significant relationship between responding male and finding sports and extracurricular activities one of the rewarding parts of study abroad found in the questionnaire (see Ch. 5.4). Megumi (Ch. 12.1) also represents an example of the smaller number of female-identifying respondents who built connections through sport. On the other hand, social events such as parties, shopping, meals and sleepovers became important sites of interaction during the later parts of Narumi's and Nikko's time abroad. As Nikko explained, her networks developed through the sharing of social connections across the exchange student community she was part of. The developing linguistic competencies of the informants meant they were also able to develop more meaningful connections in the AFS community where they had initially struggled. Several of the participants' significant relationships (Nikko Ch. 7; Misa Ch. 11; Kumiko, Ch. 12.5) emerged from these exchange student networks.

There were, however, factors which limited sojourners' ability to diversify their networks. As noted earlier in Chapter 12.2.3, the degree to which the host community was accommodating to outsiders limited chances to develop wider networks as was the case with Megumi in her first German high school. There is also evidence in the informants' accounts that their ability to develop diverse connections was, at least in part, dependent upon their mobility in the host community. Misa emphasised how her ability to see friends while living with her first host family was limited by the distances and lack of access to transportation. Takumi also had limited interaction with his peers at school due to the distance he needed to travel to and from home each day. On the other hand, Manabu described the ease with which he was able to join sporting practice and meet friends due to access to public transport, while the mobility afforded to the exchange students in Nikko's city, as well as cities nearby, meant that they were frequently able to socialise and even organise trips to other parts of Europe together.

While all informants' extra-curricular movement was subject to the norms and expectations of their host family and the wider community, Misa's, Takumi's and Narumi's mobility within the host community was closely tied to transport provided by the host family and so access to social interactions outside of school and the host family were dependent upon negotiating transportation. Nikko and Manabu were able to move around more independently, which may help to explain the greater emphasis on peer friendship groups in their accounts. Further evidence for this appears in the images they posted on Instagram, as those with peers were also almost all taken outside of school settings.

13.4.2. Transience and endings

In all the informants' accounts, there was a strong sense of ephemerality which underpinned their closing months and weeks abroad, a feature of sojourns noted by Murphy-Lejeune (2002). This period also coincided with the conclusion of the school year and the beginnings of summer holidays in their host community, which brought with it a more intense social calendar and heightened emotional states. Many of the informants travelled at this time with friends, their host families and with AFS. For some, this served as a motivator to maximise their opportunities to interact and engage with others in the time they had (Nikko, Ch. 7; Manabu, Ch. 9; Takumi, Ch. 10). For others it underscored the ephemerality of their experience and served to limit the incentives to develop their proficiency and pursue deeper interactions (Ruka, Ch. 12.2).

At this point in their journeys, self-directed language study did not emerge as a key factor in their linguistic development. As Manabu described, the final months was the period he spent the least time trying to learn language and instead had a full calendar of social engagements with friends. The

informants' Instagram accounts at this time became largely devoted to images of them in groups of friends travelling, dining or attending social events. This period served as a culmination of their investment as the informants were able to participate more fully in the social life of their peers. Following the informants' trajectories during year abroad, it is clear that the development of their linguistic and sociopragmatic competencies was intertwined with the key relationships they formed and the form, level and reciprocity of their participation in the communities they inhabited.

13.4.3. Multilingual identities

Investment in multilingual identities was key to participation and feelings of belonging in host communities. Developing linguistic competence and social connections in the host community were a contributing factor to feelings of transformation and so it is important to examine their understanding and affiliation with these identities upon returning. Manabu in particular emphasised the importance of the competencies he had developed in both French and English to the sense of self-worth he had developed abroad. While language learning had not been a significant part of his decision to study abroad, his multi-competence had unexpectedly become a central part of his identity. Nikko too had developed a diverse linguistic repertoire, however it was her English competence which appeared crucial to her returned sense of self, since it tied her to the friendships which held the most significance while abroad and possessed a greater perceived value moving forwards. Narumi's account of her struggle to come to terms with the sociopragmatic dimensions of communication while abroad were particularly salient. She explicitly connected these difficulties to the identity issue she was attempting to resolve and so the linguistic, cultural and social were deeply intertwined facets of the identity transformation she underwent while abroad.

Takumi on the other hand had arrived in the US with what he had felt was an adequate English competence for communication and while he reported development in this area, did not describe having the same kinds of linguistically disorientating experiences the other informants did. Like BC and Daisy in Benson et al. (2013), Takumi's experience was perhaps less a transformation and more of an evolution of his relationship to the language. Even for Misa, the development of her English competence experienced late during her time abroad emerged as a key aspect of her self-worth upon returning, since it afforded her the opportunity and symbolic status to take English classes with *kikokushijyo*. Altogether, the linguistic competence and social connections developed during the year abroad through investments driven by their desire to belong, were constitutive of the linguistic identities they returned to Japan with.

14 Return to Japan: Reorienting the self

As Chapter 2.2.4 explained, there is a need to view study abroad within the ongoing trajectories of sojourner's lives and better account for the unfolding and evolving nature of the individuals' experience post-sojourn. This chapter collects the overall findings from that period in the informants' accounts and continues the chronologically-informed structure of previous chapters.

The informants' time abroad was heavily marked by concerns with belonging in the host community and this theme continued to play out after their return to the academically demanding spaces of Japanese high school. Moreover, the theme of transformation, prominent in their decision to live abroad for a year, was once again brought to the fore as they attempted to make sense of what their experience meant in the contexts they returned to. While both the questionnaire and first-round interview pointed towards significant changes across the informants' frames of reference, linguistic competence and sense of independence, the realities of the environments they returned to continued to shape development in these areas. As individual understandings of their time abroad evolved, so too did their desire to invest in the linguistic practices and social networks connected to the host community. This led to a divergence in how informants' feelings of transformation played out across the year that followed their return and the ongoing direction the informants saw their life taking.

14.1. Immediate outcomes

14.1.1. Critical experiences and new identities

Evident throughout many of the informants' accounts, as they concluded their time abroad and returned to their home and school communities in Japan, was how they constructed their identity in relation to the communities they had inhabited abroad. Takumi (Ch. 10.5) illustrated his sense of expanded identity in the metaphor of the tree, with his roots firmly planted in Japan but a branch extending towards the US. Narumi (Ch. 8.5), arrived back in Japan with a more developed sense of herself which acknowledged both her Japanese and American heritage. The friendships that Nikko (Ch. 7) and Manabu (Ch. 9) had formed during their respective trips abroad afforded them a sense of belonging to non-Japanese language communities and fuelled identities they began to imagine for themselves in the future; working and living outside of Japan.

There is a sense that there was something additive in the mobility experiences of the informants and the effect it had on their reflexive identities. With perhaps the exception of Narumi, these identities were not so much linked to wider imagined communities of national identity, but instead to the local communities of their host families, schools and other extra-curricular activities. Indeed, their

investments were in localised linguistic and cultural practices even as they transcended national borders. In essence, the aspects of the identities of the informants returned with were tied to the communities they were part of, rather than notions of imagined national or cultural identity. Rather than existing between places, they inhabited multiple physical and social places at different times. In essence, many of the informants present identities are *translocal* (Appadurai, 1996; Brickell & Datta, 2011), which speaks to the situatedness of the informants during their mobility experiences.

The notion that studying abroad represents an important experience in an individual's life is widely accepted, both academically and more generally. Benson et al.'s (2013) view of study abroad as a *critical experience* in participants' wider language learning careers, emphasises the identity-destabilising potential of new and different linguistic and cultural environments. Combined with the transformative power of language learning (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016), the contexts of study abroad offer participants a number of opportunities to renegotiate their sense of who they are and how they relate to others. The "struggle for identity" (Erikson & Erikson, 1998, p. 72) which characterises adolescent development means that the critical experience of study abroad can be a highly attractive chance to encounter and explore new ways of being. Indeed, for the informants in this study, that potential permeated their reasoning for going abroad and informed the types of identities they imagined themselves inhabiting and later presented through their posts on Instagram.

Concurrent to the development of multilingual identities were reconstitutions of other aspects of the informants' identities. Narumi's renegotiation of her multiethnic identity is perhaps the most powerful example since her experiences abroad were critical in the process of resolving many of the tensions and problematic mental states that were deeply tied to her upbringing. Not only did the American culture of her heritage become tangible through her lived experiences, but she also found new power and attraction in a Japanese identity. In some sense this reflects the experiences of African Americans who discover new power and privilege in their racial identity while abroad, such as Murungi's sojourn to West Africa in Sweeny (2014) and Anya's (2016) participants in Brazil. Nikko also found herself transformed in unexpected ways upon return. While she still felt Japanese, found herself positioned differently by those around her (see Ch. 13.2.1 below). Aside from changes to her appearance, Nikko described doing things she never would have previously, such as asking the teacher questions during class (see Yoneyama (1999), p. 85-87 for a discussion of students' silence towards teachers in Japanese high schools) and being more open in her friendships.

Informants in this study return, not only with more complex linguistic and cultural identities, but in some cases also with an increased affiliation with or appreciation for Japanese identities. This

outcome, seen in other studies such as Emma in Wakana (2018), Niki in Jackson (2008) and many of the respondents in Plews (2015), demonstrates that intercultural contact can result in both a deepening affiliation with the home culture and a broadening into an 'international' identity, highlighting the complexity of possible identity outcomes. While the metaphor of *thirdspace* has been used to explain the processes of identity reconstruction which can occur after encounters with new linguistic and cultural practices (Block, 2007; Kramsch & Uryu, 2012), as Chapter 12.4.3 shows, these identities appeared located rather than liminal.

14.1.2. Transformation

The transformative power enmeshed in language learning processes, highlighted by the Douglas Fir Group (2016), is a key facet of a broader transformative process whereby the informants reshaped their understanding of the social contexts they inhabit and their place in those contexts. As described in Chapter 12.3, the informants' role in this process was evident in their renegotiation and agentive diversification of their social networks to align with the identities they sought for themselves in new linguistic and cultural contexts, with ramifications for their self-efficacy and confidence. Furthermore, as the questionnaire results suggest, developments in linguistic competence and identity were intertwined with changes in frames of reference, as informants returned with variously more critical (Manabu, Ch. 9; Kumiko, Ch. 12.5) or more positive perspectives (Nikko, Ch. 7; Narumi, Ch. 8) on Japanese cultural practices than they departed with.

The idea that their year abroad had changed or transformed the informants in some fundamental way was most salient in the accounts of those who reported being most fulfilled by the experience and had developed the strongest relationships while abroad. Responses to the questionnaire demonstrate that the notion that forming new relationships and a developed sense of self were the most significant outcomes across the larger group immediately after returning. [I broadened my horizons] (M = 4.62) and [I made foreign friends] (M = 4.56) had the first and second highest means respectively. The sense of belonging or being "known" the informants experienced suggested that a fundamental part of their self-image was now connected to the communities, people, places and events of their time abroad.

In essence, navigating unfamiliar sociocultural environments and developing new competencies provided the informants with opportunities to rewrite the identities and ways of thinking they had departed with into more complex, self-conscious and powerful versions. Language learning as Lantolf and Thorne (2006) described it "is about acquiring new conceptual knowledge and/or modifying existing knowledge as a way of re-mediating one's interaction with the world and with one's own psychological functioning" (p.5). While the informants did not initially identify language

learning as the means to obtaining the transformations they desired, their experiences show that language learning was crucial in reshaping perceptions of themselves and the wider environment. However, this process is ongoing and so these understandings and identifications were subject to further reformulation in the contexts they returned to.

14.2. **Institutional indifference**

14.2.1. *Academic achievement pressure, loss of freedom*

A theme which emerged from many of the informants' accounts of returning to Japan was a sense of loss of freedom, both in the way they spent their time and, in their ability, to express their own individuality. The pressures they experienced in this regard emerged from three main sources; statements by teachers, comments by fellow students and wider expectations of academic achievement.

Before reviewing these findings though it is worth briefly noting the importance that high school plays in the lives of Japanese students. Typically, a high school student in Japan attends school five to six days per week for up to 10 hours per day. Most of their time is spent in two main communities. The first is their homeroom class, a group of around 40 students with who they take the majority of their lessons. The second is an extracurricular club, organised through the school, which meets for several hours after classes one or more days a week and often on weekends. On top of this, some students may attend a *jyuku* (see Glossary), one or more evenings per week for further study. In their final year before taking university entrance exams, most students retire from their club to concentrate on studying for exams. Family life can often fade into the background for these students as the demands of school take priority. For this reason, informants' post-sojourn narratives tended to focus on school and comments regarding family life were very limited when compared to their accounts of study abroad.

Typically, the dynamic in Japanese high school classrooms emphasises the authority of the teacher, and tends to enforce conformity over individuality (Yoneyama, 1999). Several of the informants reported that they had adopted changes in their appearance that were marked in the high school contexts they returned to and experienced pressure to change their appearance from teachers. Emblematic of this pressure were comments Nikko (Ch. 7.5) and Manabu (Ch. 9.5) received on their appearance including their hair, which is seen as symbolic of other aspects of a student's personality (Yoneyama, 1999, p. 123).

Micro-level interactions with peers who had not gone abroad, while not directly confrontational, also suggested an underlying discourse that connected time spent outside of Japan with diminished

'Japaneseness'. This was evident in Manabu being accused of *ryūgaku kabure*[17], the undue attention Ruka (Ch. 12.2) received on returning, feeling like a new animal at the zoo and being described as *itaria gaeri*[18] or Nikko being told to "say something in English" and her friends joking that she was "not really Japanese anymore". Kumiko (Ch. 12.5) also described how a classmate who she had been close friends with before departing acted coldly after she returned leading to her spending more time with others who had also had study abroad experiences. In the past, *kikokushijo* were sometimes ostracised or bullied when they returned to Japan based on perceptions that they weren't 'fully Japanese' (Miyachi, 1990). While the status of *kikokushijo* has been significantly elevated in Japanese society over the intervening decades (Goodman, 2012), the experiences of the informants show how macro-level ideas of 'Japaneseness' (which also underpin attitudes toward multi-ethnic Japanese discussed briefly in Ch. 8) still exist in high school settings. While being marked as different by peers after returning from a sojourn may not be an experience unique to Japan, it does appear prominently in the informants' accounts and fits with a broader history of discrimination *kikokushijo* have faced. In fact, as Ruka, a *kikokushijo* himself, explained, the time he spent living in Hong Kong had already made him marked at school with a nickname that used the Chinese reading of his name. In an environment where conformity is emphasised and often enforced by peers (Yoneyama, 1999), being marked as different can have significant ramifications for identity and belonging.

On top of these experiences, Ruka (Ch. 12.2) and Megumi (Ch. 12.1) also did not have their year abroad recognised by their Japanese high school and were forced to return to the grade they had been in before departing. This meant that they needed to re-establish themselves in a grade of their *kohai* while those who they had been classmates with graduated ahead of them. Ruka described how he did not really have the close friends in this grade that he had had in his previous grade. Other students who had returned during the mid-year summer holiday of their final year of studies described how they had to immediately begin focusing on catching up on what they had missed while away. Known colloquially as *jyuken jigoku*[19], final year high school students are expected to devote most of their waking hours to studying to get into the best University possible. Performance in these exams and the university which the student gains entrance to has ramifications for their career prospects and future social status. Subsequently students' identities and self-worth can be strongly correlated with their performance during this period (Fukuzawa & LeTendre, 2001). While these pressures were described by most of the informants who returned in third year, Narumi (Ch.

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[17] trying too hard to be seen as an exchange student
[18] roughly translates as "Here comes the one returned from Italy"
[19] Literally, 'exam hell'

8.5) in particular found this pressure oppressive and felt it diminished her ability to connect with the freer, happier person she had been when living in the US. Takumi (Ch. 10.5) described how he used his memories of study abroad and thoughts of returning to help cope with the pressure. This academic achievement pressure also reduced informants' ability to maintain contact with social networks developed abroad and diminished the opportunities they had to maintain competencies and perform identities associated with them, further limiting their sense of freedom and individuality. Even Misa (Ch. 11), whose negative experiences abroad had left her wanting to return to Japan commented on the loss of freedom she experienced after returning.

14.2.2. Irrelevance of developed competencies

In addition to finding their freedom and ability to express their individuality diminished after returning to school in Japan, over time there was also a sense among some informants that the competencies gained while abroad were of limited value in the lives they returned to in Japan. Their accounts also revealed how these competencies were often institutionally undervalued or ignored by the high school contexts they returned to. As discussed in Chapter 2.5.1, English is the predominant form of second language education in Japan. Despite this focus, the informants typically complained that what happened in English classes at school had no connection with the language they had spent the past year investing in. In a sense, this reflects an ongoing focus on memorisation of vocabulary and translation between English and Japanese (Benesse, 2014) and wider institutional failure to develop graduates who can use English in communicative contexts (Y. Kobayashi, 2018).

More troubling however, was that those who had developed competencies in languages other than English found them lacking in value and support. Nikko, Raiken, Kumiko and Ruka all spoke of the limited opportunities they had to use language other than English on return and the deterioration of the competencies they had spent the previous year developing. Kumiko's experience is particularly instructive since most of her linguistic development while abroad was in French. The disappointment at the limited value placed on her French competence in Japan, including teachers' statements that seemed to equate overseas experience with English competence meant that her desire to continue to invest in developing her competence waned. This reduction in competence also meant a deterioration in the strength of the connections the respondents had to their host families (Nikko, Ch. 7.5; Raiken, Ch. 12.3) and in Kumiko's case anxiety about speaking to them using VOIP. While this ongoing change in their competencies is not surprising, given changes in their ability to participate in speech communities related to the language, it is worth briefly noting the broader implications. At a national level, Japanese national policy has been emphasising the need to develop an internationalized cohort of *gurobaru jinzai* (see Glossary) in order to maintain its international

standing and protect the national interest, reflected in the ongoing investment in a range of study abroad programs reflect this (Aspinall, 2013). By failing to provide support for those with competencies other than English, either within the institutionalised settings of high school or through external measures, Japan may be missing a critical opportunity to develop exactly the types of people its own guiding policies insist are critical to promoting Japan's interest abroad.

Overall, it appears that study abroad was institutionally seen as a contained experience that, while significant for the individual, had no major relevance for the business of teaching and learning that was happening at the informants' high schools. This was made more evident, when at the conclusion of the final interviews many of the informants thanked me for the chance to speak at length about their experiences and the significance it held for them, something which they felt they lacked the opportunity to do elsewhere.

14.2.3. Reintegration and renegotiation

Returning to the environments the informants were prompted to re-evaluate how they positioned themselves. For some this meant finding ways to reintegrate into high school life, others made changes that aligned more with maintaining the identities and connections they had while abroad. A significant factor was how long the informants spent at high school after returning.

Nikko and Narumi had both graduated several months after returning and both initially had plans that linked to their experiences abroad. Coincidently, they were both independently accepted to a university famous for its high international student population which offered them an environment which appealed to the identities they sought to maintain after returning. For Nikko, this was a place she could continue to exercise her liberated transnational identity, developing international friendships as an English-speaking Japanese. Narumi saw opportunities to continue resolving the ambivalence of her own identity, in particular resolving the newfound appreciation she had developed for her Japanese heritage. In essence, they relocated to a community that they could belong to while maintaining the identities and competencies which they had developed while abroad.

Turning to those informants who returned with more than a year until their graduation, the informant who appeared most satisfied with the situation they returned to was Misa. While this is unsurprising given the difficulties she faced while abroad, Misa's improved English competence meant that she was able to take English classes with the *kikokushijyo* at her high school. The environment of her school, with high numbers of *kikokushijyo* and other returnees from study abroad programs meant that she experienced elevated status. Ruka on the other hand had not felt that study abroad had changed his view of himself or the world, and while his return was met with

increased attention from other students, he found was able to adapt to this attention. He had already experienced being marked as different in his high school before leaving, so he adapted to a new but similar role in his changed social circumstances.

Kumiko had returned with a positive view of her experiences and the French competence she had gained, however the limited value she found the language had was accorded in relation to English diminished her desire to continue to invest in developing it. She initially struggled with what she saw as cultural inadequacies around her in Japan, but resigned herself to the status quo, particularly as the pressure of entrance exams loomed during our final interview. Takumi was also in his final year during his second interview and experiencing pressure related to university entrance exams. In contrast to Kumiko, he had maintained strong links both to the linguistic identity he had developed through consuming media in English and also had a clear plan to return to the US both once exams were completed and during university. While he worked within the system he had returned to, he used the imagination of what waited for him beyond high school as both a motivator and a way to cope with the pressure.

Due to the nature of Manabu's technical high school, he was not due to graduate for several years and in this context his actions make sense. Rather than accepting the status quo as Kumiko had or bearing with it as Takumi was, he sought to renegotiate his circumstances to maintain the new identities he had developed and actively made changes that allowed him to maintain the competencies he had developed, quitting his club and taking on a part-time job at Starbucks. His plan to hitchhike around Japan and resistance to changing his hairstyle were also symbolic of his desire to maintain and explore his independence and his long-term goal of leaving Japan to live and work abroad.

14.3. **Diverging trajectories**

14.3.1. *Ongoing, multimodal connections*

Examining the informants' trajectories post study abroad, the ongoing nature of their connections to the host community had a dialogic relationship to their continuing investments in the competencies and identities developed abroad. Informants used a variety of technologies to stay in frequent contact with their new networks initially, however in the months after returning, there were changes in the form and frequency of ongoing communications driven by a number of factors. As described in Chapter 13.2.2, the informants found the academic demands of high school particularly oppressive after returning from abroad. Reflecting the findings of other studies of interaction with L2 social networks (Campbell, 2015; Kurata, 2007), communication with those who were

geographically remote during academically demanding periods, including *jyuken jigoku*[20], was dramatically reduced.

Another factor, particularly for ongoing communication with peer networks, was a sense of diverging life trajectories. Narumi (Ch. 8.5) in particular expressed a reluctance to make extended contact with the friends she had made at high school since she felt they were leading a "completely different life than I do" and struggled to relate to their experiences. Nikko (Ch. 7.5) too remarked that she could see people were changing and felt they had less in common than before. In essence, this was the reverse process to the way key connections had been formed abroad (see Ch. 12.2.3), as a lack of co-presence and shared experience gradually began to take its toll on the frequency of interactions over time. The importance of shared, co-present experiences was highlighted by the significant investments of time and resources informants and their social connections were willing to spend to make these occasions happen. This can be seen in the trips made by Kristel to visit Nikko in Japan and by Nikko and Kristel to reunite with their host families and school friends in Hungary, as well as the visit by Manabu's host family in Japan and Takumi's (Ch. 10.5) plans to return to the US and spend time with his host family following final exams.

The informants' use of networking technologies to maintain contact with the networks they had developed while abroad in many ways reflect the findings of Campbell (2015) but expand upon these findings in important ways. While online communication was mainly used with peers while abroad, contact with members of the host family became the main form of online communication with the host family after returning. Raiken (Ch. 12.3) and Kumiko (Ch. 12.5) explained that their most frequent interactions with host community networks a year after study abroad were with their host sibling. Narumi, in particular, maintained a strong relationship with her American host mother and host sister and described wanting to show them around the campus of her new university. For several informants, there seems to be a qualitative difference in the relationships they formed with their host families, despite the emphasis they often placed on friendships while abroad.

14.3.2. Diverging developmental trajectories

Ongoing interaction with host community networks and the realities of the social and linguistic environments informants returned to in Japan were a major factor in ongoing linguistic investment. Once again however, individual agency and initiative, expressed through an ability to reshape and renegotiate the circumstances they inhabited was a key factor in maintaining and developing linguistic competence.

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[20] Exam hell

The clearest example of this is Manabu's decision to retire from club activities, a central part of Japanese high school life, and instead spend that time reading and watching movies in both French and English. He also applied for and began a part-time job at Starbucks which afforded him opportunities for language practice. Takumi described how he now spent time consuming news in English since it helped him to reconnect to the time he had spent abroad, the imagination of which was a key motivator during periods of academic stress. Nikko and Narumi both continued to consume media in English online and made separate decisions to attend a university with a focus on internationalisation and English. Raiken volunteered to work with AFS, sharing his experiences to help prepare others who were planning to make their own sojourns.

On the other hand, some informants who had returned with a strong sense of being transformed had, over time found that the feelings of the initial few months failed to hold up. Kumiko's trajectory is a particularly poignant example of this as she found her competence in French devalued and felt the value of her experiences were dismissed. Her struggle to find value in the competencies and perceptions she had gained while abroad, the limited attendance at a French speech contest being a distinct example, meant that her desire to continue to invest decreased. Limited opportunities to use Hungarian and Finnish in Japan were also reported by Nikko and Raiken respectively and they also expressed disappointment over their loss of competence in the year after they returned.

Looking across the responses of the informants to the environments they returned to and the perceived institutionalised indifference to what were largely transformative experiences, there is a sense of opportunities lost. Individually, the participants reflected positively on their experiences and as journeys of self-realisation and development they were incredibly successful. More broadly though, rather than their experiences contributing to the life of the educational contexts they returned to, or their newly developed linguistic and intercultural competencies being fostered and valued, their experiences were in effect self-contained experiences 'abroad' which had limited to no connection to high school life in Japan. On a personal level, there was a sense of transformation among some of the informants and the difference that relocating to new environments at university made was apparent. Even among those who remained at high school, several continued to value their experiences abroad and maintain connection to the host community. One question this study can't answer is how those who spent longer in high school after returning understood their experience once transitioning to university and the longer-term effects on the trajectories of lives beyond institutionalised education.

14.3.3. Looking to the future: new imagined identities

When looking at where the informants saw themselves heading in the future, the events of the year after returning continued to shape the extent to which the experience abroad served as a touchpoint in shaping their future visions of their life trajectories. Of the focal informants, Manabu was the only one who communicated a strong vision of himself leaving Japan permanently in the final interview, describing differences in the work-life culture of Japan and France as a key reason for wanting to leave. His English and French competencies were therefore not only critical for maintaining connections to his networks in Canada, but also in enabling him to continue to pursue the life he imagined himself living once he left high school. Prior to study abroad, Takumi had imagined himself working as an aerospace engineer and so had a concrete desire to return to the US to study during university or after for postgraduate study, receiving materials from his host family on institutions in the US. Nikko too imagined herself working as a development consultant implementing Japanese innovations internationally in developing countries, drawing on her developing international Japanese identity and English ability.

On the other hand, some informants saw their experience overseas being applied in Japan. Both Narumi and Raiken had travelled abroad in order to learn more about educational systems outside of Japan. Part of Narumi's imagined future was developing educational materials connected with the personal development of Japanese students but was also interested in pursuing other goals such as opening her own café and starting a family. Raiken too had adjusted his vision of himself from reshaping Japan's educational system to reshaping Japanese work. Others spoke of future plans to study abroad during university, with Raiken expressing an interest to experience Islamic culture on his next sojourn, while Misa was interested in a short-term sojourn to Europe during university. Travel was also part of many of the informants' future imagined trajectories, Manabu and Narumi also expressed a desire to travel in the short term, and Manabu saw his part-time job as affording him that opportunity in the coming six months. Other participants, such as Kumiko had expressed disappointment at being able to experience much of France during her time living there and wanted to return a tourist in order to experience that.

15 Tying it together: Concluding discussion and implications

This project was conceived with several aims in mind. The first of these was to contribute an in-depth and holistic investigation of study abroad, focusing on a population which remains underrepresented in the literature. Furthermore, in adopting an ecological approach, I sought to take into account broader views of the individual, context and their interrelatedness to develop a more complex picture of how sojourners encounter, learn and use language while abroad. To these ends, I adopted the following questions to guide my research and analysis: (1) How did participants' investment in the linguistic practices of the host community evolve during and after their time abroad? (2) What individual and contextual factors most significantly affected this investment?

From the analysis conducted in service of these questions, a number of important findings emerged which are summarised in this chapter. The first of these are related to the social connections formed in the host community, in particular the pivotal role that the host family and other key individuals played in supporting informants, including their investment in the linguistic practices of the host community. Next, the way that linguistic competencies developed during study abroad will be discussed with reference to the multilingual, multimodal forms of participation and investment that took place in the host community before addressing the effect of the material environment on opportunities for interaction. Discussion will then address how the informants experienced the year after returning to Japan and the effect this had on their ongoing investments in the competencies they had developed while abroad. Finally, the chapter will address the appropriateness of the methodologies and frameworks employed in the study, acknowledging the limitations of the project and making suggestions for further research.

15.1. The role of the host family in adolescent study abroad

The results of this study have underscored the decisive role that host families play in the experiences of adolescents studying abroad. It adds to a limited but growing body of work (see Ch. 2.5.2) highlighting the importance of the family unit both to adolescents' linguistic development and their perceptions of study abroad. Even as they are developing their own identity and independence, the embedded support found in a host family provides a crucial sense of belonging and a key site for repeated contexts of interaction. Broadly speaking, the results show that the relationships formed in the host family setting are a function of both the informants' investment, linguistic or otherwise, and the willingness of members of the family to support them in that endeavour. Misa's account (Ch. 11)

in particular highlights how this dynamic can be susceptible to a range of personal and contextual factors. Essentially, this conforms to Kinginger's (2015a) assessment that the outcome of homestay arrangements is contingent on both participant and host family's willingness to accept each other and mutually engage in the socialisation process.

The results of this project take these ideas a step further, providing insight into the dynamics of major relationships within the host family, and the role they played in informants' participation and linguistic development. One of these relationships was the support that host siblings provided during the critical first months. When informants had limited competence in the home language, host siblings acted in the role of language brokers, mediating informants' participation in family life. Furthermore, they also acted as guides, sources of mobility and an initial contact with the social networks of the informants' host school, demonstrating the pivotal role they played. While in many cases these relationships became strained over time, they also emerged as some of the most enduring in the year that followed study abroad (e.g., Narumi Ch. 8, Takumi Ch. 10, Raiken, Ch. 12.3). The role that host siblings play in enabling participation in host community life has been touched on in other qualitative research (e.g., Hashimoto, 1993; Kinginger, 2008; Wilkinson, 1998a), however this study goes further in exploring the connection between siblings and host family participation, particularly in demonstrating how the dynamics of this relationship affects the construction of social networks.

Having said that, the informants almost universally identified host mothers as the person they interacted with most while abroad, emphasising the importance of this dyadic relationship for their linguistic development. Reflecting results elsewhere (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Shiri, 2015), host mothers were a significant source of support. Their availability and willingness to engage with the informants not only offered opportunities for interaction, but also provided embedded support that came with the trust and stability of the mother-child relationship they adopted. On the other hand, host fathers remained generally absent from the informants' narratives. The one exception was Takumi, whose host father actively initiated interaction on their first meeting over radio-controlled planes and developed through performing chores and hunting together. Given that host fathers seem to be so often absent in even the wider literature on homestays, there is a genuine need to better examine the role that cultural ideas around gender roles have on the dynamics and configurations of homestay settings and what that means for the experiences of participants, both from an in-situ and a programmatic perspective.

Finally, it must be noted that the importance of peer networks to informants' experiences began to emerge only after they had spent several months in the host community. This follows findings

elsewhere (Grieve, 2015; Yashima et al., 2004) that supportive relationships in the host family are crucial for developing peer relationships outside of the host family and further emphasises the interrelated nature of social connections in the host community.

15.2. **Key individuals in peer communities**

The narratives of the informants in this project have emphasised the importance of community, particularly for the sense of belonging it provided. From a developmental perspective however, it would appear that certain individual relationships played a significant role and underscores Bronfenbrenner's (1995) notion that at the micro-interactional level, particular persons have more influence in this regard than others. As described in the previous section, the support offered by various members of the host family appeared to be a key factor in promoting informants' linguistic development, particularly during the early and mid-stages of their year abroad. Outside of the host family however, in many of the informants' accounts, there appeared key individuals who significantly contributed to informants' social network development and socialisation as well as providing various forms of support.

In general, research which has looked at the effect that various social connections have on the linguistic investment and development of sojourners has tended to focus on the broader structures of their social networks (e.g., Dewey et al., 2013; Hasegawa, 2019; Isabelli-García, 2006; Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015), producing a number of significant findings. The accounts given by the informants in this study though often pointed to specific relationship with a peer which had a substantial impact on their experience and while being part of a wider community, also stood apart from that community as something more meaningful.

The importance of certain individuals in providing newcomers with access their social networks was noted by Tomiya (1997) in her study of non-Japanese women who married Japanese men. The findings of her study highlighted how the social networks of her participants expanded through knowing someone who already had developed networks which were shared with her participants. In much the same way, it appears that developing close contact with peers in the host community provided access to their social networks also. While the nature of data collection in this project did not allow for a detailed analysis of who and how many connections occurred, the informants' accounts of this process (summarised in Ch. 12.2.3) indicate that the expansion of their social networks was often tied to these key individuals.

However, it was not only the access to larger network that key individuals provided participants with. Murphy-Lejeune (2002) has pointed out the role specific, key individuals can play in

socialising sojourners into the practices of the host community and providing them with affective and informational support. In this study too, key individuals were a crucial source of support outside of the host family, providing them with affective support as Kristel did with Nikko (Ch. 7) or informational support as Antoine did with Manabu. Socialisation appeared in Narumi's (Ch. 8.3) account as her friends took her clothes shopping to improve her 'image', or as interactions with Kristel and Martina reshaped the way Nikko communicated.

Furthermore, the very nature of developing a close relationship with a key individual who wasn't a co-national meant that the informants were afforded many opportunities to interact in a language they were investing in. As Dewey et al. (2013) have pointed out, having more intense relationships with locals can be a predictor of improved linguistic competence, perhaps through the opportunities it offers for more complex interactions and new communicative situations. R. Mitchell et al. (2017) in their study of Anglophone sojourners also found certain intensive relationships were an important contributing factor in the linguistic development of those who made significant gains while abroad. The accounts and Instagram streams of the informants indicated that time spent with these significant individuals was not limited to the contexts of school, but also included activities such as shopping, sleepovers, sports, eating out, sightseeing and watching Netflix, in addition to the online interactions they reported. The multiplex nature of these contexts of interaction, a significant contributor to linguistic development (Kurata, 2004), combined with their frequent and recurring nature would have provided the conditions of "progressively more complex reciprocal interaction" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 620) that characterise developmentally effective processes.

The accounts contained in this study indicate that making a strong connection with a key individual during a sojourn can be a significant factor both in improving the conditions for linguistic development and in supporting and enriching the sojourner's experience of their time in the host community.

15.3. Multimodality of belonging and investment

While individual relationships were key to linguistic development, participation in wider communities of peers was closely tied to some informants' sense of self and belonging. Present throughout many of the informants' accounts was evidence that participation in peer communities abroad occurred through multiple modes of communication, often simultaneously. Moreover, it appears that in many informants' cases, online forms of communication were a vital part of developing connections with peers and participating in online interactions was as much about belonging and investing in the practices of their peers as it was about communication.

Nikko's (Ch. 7.2) account perhaps best exemplified this as she described how being invited to join her classmates' WhatsApp group facilitated greater participation as a member of that community. Also, the possible romantic connection she had with a local was also appeared to be enabled by the ability to continue interaction online, even as she had to leave soon after meeting him. Several other informants (Narumi, Ch. 8; Manabu, Ch. 9; Raiken, Ch. 12.3) also provided accounts which highlight how online communication was part of their interactions with peers at school. Essentially, mobile technology was a regular part of social life at school. Several of the informants also pointed towards the affordances that online modes of communication provided them with for learning 'slang' which they identified as vital for performing teenage identities. In other cases, informants described how they used technology to support meaning-making in co-present interactions. In these cases, mobile communications technology was a resource that enabled gaps in interlocutors' competencies and knowledge to be bridged and enabling communication and participation to take place where it may have been otherwise impeded.

Communications technology was also part of the informants' investment strategies, using the affordances it provided such as language learning apps, YouTube, and dictionaries to support their learning. The more successful informants combined these affordances with others they perceived in their environment, such as writing diaries or interacting with others to engage with the language in successively more complex proximal processes of linguistic development. The data in the questionnaire also indicates that the affordances of technology may have a role in helping or supporting the respondents during difficulties, indirectly leading to circumstances where they were better able to invest in the practices of the host community.

Platforms such as Instagram provided spaces for the informants to perform the identities associated with their status of sojourner and language user with an audience online. The emphasis on the visual in Instagram is also significant from a language learning perspective, since it reduces the need for language to be the main semiotic content in the message being produced. This also has the effect of maximising the potential audience for the informants' posts (see Androutsopoulos, 2014), a significant factor given the linguistic repertoires of their followers became more varied over the time they spent abroad. As Nikko explained, the ability to communicate her experiences and follow those of her friends in Japan through images helped her to feel connected, emphasising the semiotic richness conveyed through the medium. These posts also offered informants the opportunity to use the voices of others (Wertsch, 1991) they had appropriated to rehearse and perform new multilingual identities online. Semiotically-mediated interaction in online spaces therefore complemented co-present interactions and informants' own independent language learning in the host community and represent a key aspect of their communicative development.

Finally, the pervasiveness of communications technology meant that the informants were able to continue to interact with their networks from abroad after returning, which Campbell (2015) indicated can contribute to ongoing investment in the language of the host community. Despite these affordances, the diverging life trajectories of the informants and their peer networks meant that the desire to continue investing in these connections diminished over time. Ultimately it was the host families that the informants were more likely to maintain contact with. Also, the importance of renewed co-presence through the mobility of both informants and their networks in the year that followed, such as Kristel and Nikko reuniting twice and Manabu's host parents visiting him, appeared vital to continued investment in those relationships and associated linguistic competencies.

Participation in peer communities abroad was a multimodal experience and constructing an identity as a member of these communities required investing in the semiotic practices of those communities. While it is beyond the scope of this study to examine in detail how informants participated using combinations of speech, text photos and emoji, it speaks to the need for holistic models of language learning, such as that proposed by The Douglas Fir Group (2016) (see Ch. 3.3) to account for the semiotic richness of communication in study abroad contexts and, indeed, life in general.

15.4. **In-situ mobility**

One factor which seemed to emerge as important when looking at the diverse contexts that the informants travelled to was the mobility afforded to them by their destination. The location of Nikko (Ch. 7) and Manabu's (Ch. 9) host families in large cities with extensive public transport systems granted them and their peers a significant degree of independence, and both appeared to regularly interact with peers outside of school settings. On the other hand, Misa's account (Ch. 11) demonstrates how her opportunities were limited by the need to drive anywhere and her reliance on members of her host family to do that. While the importance of the social context to language learning abroad is well understood, the informants' accounts demonstrate how social realities may be contingent on the material and geographical realities of their destination. To be clear, what I am saying in this instance is distinct from current theorising around the connection between space and language learning (see Murray & Lamb, 2017) and the connections to this I explored in Misa's account. Rather, the point being made is a practical one; greater access to transportation increases the opportunities for interactions beyond school and the host family and therefore the likelihood of developing stronger, more diverse social networks.

Takumi's account (Ch. 10) on the other hand, supports the assertion of Murphy-Lejeune (2002) that the different ways people experience space may mean that they react differently in certain geographical settings. Takumi placed a lot of importance on engaging with his host family and spending time by himself in the bucolic surrounds of his host family's farm and appeared less concerned with developing relationships with local peers than many of the other informants. It is certainly not hard to imagine how a sojourner with different priorities may have found the setting socially isolating. This also underscores the need to look not only at how the geographical settings sojourners travel to may affect their opportunities to develop social networks, but also how the types of social and material settings align with their preferred modes of interaction.

15.5. **Something gained, something lost: Multi-competence develops dynamically**

Looking broadly at the ways that the informants' developmental trajectories unfolded while abroad, interactions both on and offline became increasingly multilingual over time both in response to increased linguistic competence and their diversifying social networks. The development of competencies was interrelated to the relationships they invested in, the identities they sought to perform and the participation it afforded them. Translanguaging (Li Wei, 2018) became a salient meaning-making strategy for both communicative and indexical reasons. For example, among Nikko's exchange student friends, swearing in Hungarian was an important marker of their status as young people. Raiken (Ch. 12.3), on the other hand, described translanguaging between Finnish and English as an important strategy for overcoming issues of comprehension when messaging his friends in Finland. The multidirectional flow of linguistic resources was also apparent in the use of Japanese expressions by non-Japanese members of the informants' social networks, such as the comments posted on Manabu's Instagram.

The longitudinal design of this project provided key insights on the development of the informants' linguistic multi-competence, particularly in the year which followed their sojourn. Perhaps the most important insight was that initial evaluations of the significance of the year to the informants' own sense of transformation did not necessarily predict their ongoing linguistic development. Chapter 13.2 revealed how the institutional contexts that the informants returned to played a crucial role in informants' ongoing investment in the language and connections from their sojourn. The entrance-exam focused nature of secondary education in Japan limited informants' opportunities to apply their competencies, while peers were either ambivalent about their experiences abroad or positioned them as less authentically Japanese as a result. In other words, the experiences, perspectives and competencies the informants returned with had little value in the high school contexts they returned to.

How the informants responded to these situations was a product of interwoven individual, contextual and life stage factors and meant that those who had felt quite similarly about the outcomes of their year abroad were at different places a year later. Those who completed high school in the six months after they returned from abroad including Nikko (Ch. 7.5), Narumi (Ch. 8.5), and Raiken (Ch. 12.3) all appeared to make choices about university which were directly connected to their experiences. In essence, reaching this transition point in their lives so soon after returning meant that it remained a strong factor in the decisions they made and provided an opportunity to align their future trajectory in a way that connected their experiences and multilingual competencies with the next stage of their life.

Those who returned with more than a year remaining at high school appeared less likely to view their experience abroad as a defining point in their life a year after the fact. The social and meritocratic realities of high school became more immediately pressing, diminishing their desire and ability to maintain the connections and competencies developed abroad. However, Manabu's example of agentively redefining how he spent his time after returning in order to maintain and use the linguistic competencies he developed while abroad demonstrates that alternative responses did exist. Takumi (Ch. 10.5) also used the memory and imagination of his time abroad as a motivator during difficult periods in his life. Predictably, maintaining connections with the host community were critical to ongoing investment in language as Campbell (2015) revealed. For those who entered university in the year that followed, new connections they made with international students contributed to their ongoing desire and ability to invest in the competencies they had developed abroad.

The post-sojourn trajectories of the informants speak to the dynamic nature of development; of change in response to context and the needs of the individual rather than continual improvement. Study abroad research has overwhelmingly focused on elucidating the immediate linguistic and intercultural outcomes of the time spent in the host community. The results of this study, however, highlight the value of exploring the persistence of these gains and the role that ecological factors can play in ongoing development after return. The ebb and flow of the informants' competencies was a product of their histories, personal dispositions and the wider ecological contexts they moved through and interacted with. This was made apparent by the longer-term approach which viewed both their year abroad and the year that followed. Fluctuations that appeared in the informants' multi-competence over time highlights its dialogic and diachronic nature and how it evolves in face of communicative and identity-based needs, surrounding social contexts and individual agency and initiative.

15.6. **Approaching study abroad ecologically: Limitations and directions for future research**

Approaching study abroad ecologically allowed for the interrelationships between identity, investment, social connection and participation to be explored while accounting for the impact of the surrounding social, material and symbolic contexts. There is no doubt that these interrelationships and their effect on developmental trajectories are highly diverse and complex, however this approach has shed light on key events, factors and interactional processes which have directly affected informants' linguistic investment and highlighted key areas for further investigation. Furthermore, the unfolding processes of individual development across time and the dialogical nature of interaction between the individual and surrounding context has been a key methodological consideration of this project. As the results have shown, the informants shaped and were shaped by the social contexts they encountered and interactions at the micro-level were indexical of both investment at the meso level and wider ideological structures at the macro-level. Accounting for not only the social, but also the material and symbolic in the ecological approach (van Lier, 2010) has made factors which affected participation, such as informants' access to transportation and the multimodal affordances of technology in their lives visible.

The reality is that the complexity of language learning abroad calls for methodologies which are both holistic and longitudinal. Making sense of the dynamic, multidirectional, interrelated processes which contribute to linguistic development, requires analysis which takes into consideration multiple overlapping factors as they occur across time. As Duff (2019) has pointed out, the complexity of examining these processes as they take place through and across multiple cases concurrently has meant that attempts to examine and document these processes, even in the wider field of second language acquisition, remains limited.

Having attempted this, several things have been made abundantly clear. While the call to expand the lens of analysis to better account for the complexity and subjectivity inherent in language learning abroad is necessary, inevitably a point is reached where analysis must be concluded even while metaphorical rocks lie unturned. Described by Sacks (1963) as the "etcetera problem" (p.10), any researcher attempting to investigate the contexts of study abroad must also understand the methodological and analytical complexity they face in this regard.

Secondly, there is a cleanness and clarity in the models, frameworks and theories which by necessity, allow the phenomena and processes of what is going on socially to be labelled and categorised. The actual contexts of study abroad (and human social life generally) are messy, complex, tangled and contradictory which poses a conundrum for the researcher attempting to

present a coherent picture of what is happening over multiple scales of context, time and within interactions. I have done my best to make sense of what occurred, however I am aware that there remains a degree of ambiguity in the findings that stems from both my own limitations as a researcher and the refusal of reality to neatly conform to the frames we attempt to place over it.

On this note, the limits of my own ability to effectively approach the data from multiple perspectives simultaneously has been made clear. The need for interdisciplinary perspectives when it comes to study abroad research of this nature is apparent, echoing calls in the wider field of SLA (Duff, 2019; The Douglas Fir Group, 2016). The diversity of factors (geographical, material, social, symbolic), modalities (speech, image, writing, video) and processes of development (linguistic, pragmatic, cognitive, social) which co-occurred require diverse expertise and perspectives to better comprehend and therefore speak to the need for greater collaboration with peers across disciplines including ethnography, education, human geography and media studies.

While participant accounts remain the bread and butter of qualitative research on study abroad, there would appear to be a need for more ethnographic, in-situ observation of the various ways that context, be it social, material or symbolic, affects the process of language learning. While the retrospective nature of this project precluded the ability to attempt this, the affordances of technology and the ability to capture real-time data of interactions, places and events now allow participants to more effectively practice amateur ethnography as Godwin-Jones (2016) has pointed out. This study has also highlighted the potential of social media as valuable source of data on the lived experiences of sojourners and how they navigate both the host communities and their lives after returning.

15.7. **Conclusion**

Investigating language learning in and beyond the multilingual contexts of study abroad is concurrently a fascinating and demanding endeavour, particularly at the present moment of rapid and disruptive social change. This project has responded to the call for more holistic approaches to study abroad and grappled with the complexity and heterogeneity of how the participants understood their experiences and what that meant for their linguistic investment.

Reconstructing detailed narratives from the informants' accounts of their time abroad and the year that followed generated a picture of study abroad as a deeply personal and emotional journey of self-actualisation and discovery, as well as one which involved struggle and difficulty. Language learning emerged as part of a larger experience of navigating unfamiliar contexts and negotiating new ways to

be and belong, the subjective dimensions of the sojourners' experiences driving changes in their investment in the linguistic practices of the host community, both during and after study abroad.

This project illustrates the value of taking an ecological view of these experiences, highlighting how the environments sojourners inhabit interact with their own desire to invest in language learning. Language learning cannot be divorced from the social, historical and environmental circumstances it occurs in, and understanding how individuals' linguistic development takes place over time requires accounting for these circumstances. As Steffensen & Kramsch (2017) have stressed, "language learning is not a purely cognitive or linguistic activity but a lived, participatory social activity...subject to the multiple, changing, and conflictual forces of everyday life" (p. 10). The better we can account for these forces, the closer we will come to understanding language learning in the contexts of study abroad.

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Appendix A: Transcription guide

English

[ ]	insertion
[…]	omitted section
[??]	unclear utterance
(( ))	backchannelling
@	laughter

Japanese

［　］	insertion
［…］	omitted section
［？？］	unclear utterance
（　）	backchannelling
@	laughter

Appendix B: Invitation and Explanatory Statement

MONASH University

https://goo.gl/FNyin1

あなたの留学体験について教えてください！

モナシュ大学の博士課程で「高校生の留学体験」というテーマで研究しているリーバイ・ダービッジです。最近、全世界で留学というテーマは注目が集まっていますが、ほとんどの研究が大学生を対象としていて高校生の留学体験はあまり研究されていません。

この研究プロジェクトに皆さんに協力していただけたら、高校生の留学体験をよりよく理解できて、それが留学プログラムの向上につながります。

参加したい方は左上にある QR コードをスキャンして、リンクにあるアンケートに記入してください。アンケートは 10 分ぐらいで終わります。

アンケート答えるだけ！

抽選で 5 名の参加者に Amazon ギフト券 2,000 円分プレゼント！

2017 年 9 月末までにアンケートに答えていただけたら、2,000 円分 Amazon ギフト券の抽選にエントリーできます。

アンケートの後、留学体験についてのインタビューの参加もできます。

アンケートの最後に、留学体験についてインタビュー参加が可能かどうかたずねるところがあります。もし、インタビューにもご協力いただける場合は、E メールアドレスをご記入ください。

英語でも日本語でも、自分の留学体験について、良かったこと、困ったこと、自分が変わったところ、視野が広がったかどうかなど、じっくり話をするチャンスです！

説明は裏側にあります

研究アンケートに関する説明

研究プロジェクト: 高校留学の体験と言語学習

研究者：
Mr Levi Durbidge (リーバイ・ダービッジ)
モナシュ大学　外国語・文化・言語学科
電話: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
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研究担当者:
Dr Robyn Spence-Brown (ロビン・スペンス・ブラウン)
モナシュ大学　外国語・文化・言語学科
電話: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
E メール: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

当研究プロジェクトの参加にご協力をお願いいたします。当研究に参加することを決める前にこの説明を読んでください。もし不明な点や質問があったら、電話か E メールで上記の研究者にご連絡ください。

どうしてこの研究に AFS の留学生が選ばれたのか？

ダービッジが日本の高校で AFS の留学生の担任をしていた際に、彼らのの留学体験に関心を持ちました。その関係で、今回博士号の研究のために AFS 日本協会に協力をお願いしました。

研究に参加するメリット・デメリット

研究の結果は、高校生の留学体験を向上させるのに役立つと思っています。

この研究プロジェクトに参加することで何か不愉快な思いをされることはないと予測されますが、万が一、そのようなことがあった場合には AFS 日本協会の▮▮▮さん(▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮)にご連絡ください。

プライバシー

この研究で収集したデーターは２０１９年１２月に終わる博士論文に使用します。または、学術雑誌や学会発表にも使用します。参加者のデータを使用する場合には、プライバシー保護のため、本名ではなく、偽名を使用することとなります。

研究データの保管

この研究プロジェクトのために回収したデータはモナシュ大学にあるパスワードで守られたパソコンで保管します。研究者と研究担当以外はデータを見ることができません。

苦情

このプロジェクトについて苦情がある場合は下記の方にご連絡してください。

英語で：

Executive Officer
Monash University
Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)

Room 111, Chancellery Building E,
24 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus
Monash University VIC 3800

電話: +61 3 9905 2052
E メール: muhrec@monash.edu

日本語で：

▮▮▮▮▮▮
School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
20 Chancellors Walk, Clayton Campus
Monash University VIC 3800

電話: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
E メール: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

https://goo.gl/FNyin1

Tell me about your experiences studying abroad !

My name is Levi Durbidge and I am investigating "High School Study Abroad Experiences" as part of my PhD at Monash University. Worldwide there has been a lot of interest in study abroad recently, but most of that attention has focused on the experiences of those at university and there isn't much research on how high school students experience study abroad.

By cooperating with this project, you can help us better understand high school students' study abroad experiences and improve study abroad programs for high schoolers.

If you would like to participate, just scan the QR code above and answer the survey you find at the link. The survey should only take about 10 minutes to complete.

Just by answering the survey, 5 random participants will win a 2,000 yen Amazon gift voucher.

Complete the survey by September 30th 2017 and you will go in the draw to win a 2,000 yen amazon gift voucher.

A chance to participate in an interview study on your experiences

Those who complete the survey will have a chance to participate in an interview and have their experiences included in a research project on study abroad. In English or Japanese, you can explain in detail about your experiences abroad; the highlights, the difficulties, how you changed and how your horizons were broadened.

Please turn over for the Explanatory Statement

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR SURVEY

Project: Experiences and language learning in High School Study Abroad

Researcher: Mr. Levi Durbidge	**Project Supervisor: Dr. Robyn Spence-Brown**
School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics	School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics
Phone : ███████	Phone: ███████
email: ███████	email: ███████

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact the researchers via the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

Why were AFSers chosen for this research?
When the Levi worked at a high school in Japan, there were often AFS exchange students in his homeroom, and he became interested in the experiences of those students. When planning this research project AFS Intercultural Programs Japan was contacted and agreed to provide information on the project to all returned students.

Possible benefits and risks to participants
We believe that the results of this project will help to improve the experiences of high school study abroad in general. We don't anticipate participants feeling much discomfort as part of participating in this survey.

Confidentiality
The data from this project will be used in the thesis and presentations for a PhD thesis which is anticipated to be completed in December 2019. It will also be used in publications in academic journals and in academic conference presentations. Any data from participants which is used will be presented using a pseudonym (fake name) and we will never use your real name.

Storage of data
All data collected in this project will be stored in a password protected computer at Monash University. Only the researchers will be able to access the data.

Complaints
In the case that you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the project, please contact one of the people below:

In English:	In Japanese:
Executive Officer	███████
Monash University	School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and
Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)	Linguistics
Room 111, Chancellery Building E,	███████
24 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus	20 Chancellors Walk, Clayton Campus
Monash University VIC 3800	Monash University VIC 3800
Tel: +61 3 9905 2052	電話:███████
Email: muhrec@monash.edu	E メール:███████

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Please note that the following questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms and what appears below was generated through the native print function. The original version can be accessed through the following link: https://forms.gle/Pwna2sxgKMvV2ams8 (English translations follow Japanese)

留学体験についてのアンケート

Levi Durbidge（リーバイ・ダービッジ）と申します。
オーストラリアのメルボルン市にあるモナシュ大学（http://www.monash.edu）の大学院生です。

私の研究に興味を持ってくださって、ありがとうございます！

このアンケートは高校生の留学体験についてよく知ることが目的です。
研究結果はこれからの高校留学を向上するのに役立つと思っています。

自分の留学体験を振り返って、答えてください。

最後の画面で氏名とメールアドレスを記入するとAmazonギフト券2,000円分当たるチャンスがあり ます。（2017年9月末まで）

ご協力よろしくお願いします。

*Required

プロフィール

1. 性別

Mark only one oval.

◯ 女
◯ 男
◯ Other: _____

2. 日本で家や日常生活で使う言語

Tick all that apply.

☐ 日本語
☐ 英語
☐ 中国語
☐ 朝鮮語
☐ Other: _____

3. 日本の学校で学んだ言語

Tick all that apply.

☐ 国語

☐ 英語中

☐ 国語朝

☐ 鮮語

☐ スペイン語

☐ ドイツ語

☐ フランス語

☐ ポルトガル語

☐ Other: _____

4. **留学に出発した時の学年** *

Mark only one oval.

◯ 1年

◯ 2年

◯ 3年

5. 留学の行き先（国・州や町）*

_____

6. 留学した期間

Mark only one oval.

◯ 3ヶ月未満

◯ 3 - 6ヶ月

◯ 6 - 9ヶ月

◯ 9ヶ月以上

7. 現在お住まいの都道府県名 *

_____

留学前

8. **留学しようと思った理由として下記のものはどのぐらい重要でしたか？** *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1（全く重要じゃなかった）	2	3	4	5（非常に重要だった）
語学力を向上させる	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
新たな環境で自分を試してみる	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
価値観や視野を広げる	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
大学受験や就職に有利になる	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
外国の人と友達になる	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
行き先に関心がある	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
家族や学校から離れて住む	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
家族や友達の留学体験を聞いて興味を持った	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
自分の将来を考える	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
両親や先生が勧めた	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

上記にない重要な理由があったら書いてください

_____

9. **下記の人達はどのぐらい留学に行くことを勧めましたか** *

Mark only one oval per row.

	該当しない	1（反対した）	2	3（反対もすすめもなかった）	4	5（非常にすすめた）
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

海外経験

10. 今回の留学前に海外旅行したことがありますか？「はい」の場合は行き先の国名を書いてください。いくつでも大丈夫です。

_____

11. 今回の留学前に海外に在住したことがありますか？「はい」の場合は国名・期間・理由（親の仕事や留学等）を書いてください。いくつでも大丈夫です。

_____

今回の留学先の言語について

12. 留学中に自分で最も使用した言語は何でしたか？

Mark only one oval.

⬭ 英語
⬭ 日本語
⬭ Other: _____

13. 留学する前は、留学先で最も使われている言語の力はどのぐらいでしたか *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1（全く能力がなかった）	2	3	4	5（ネイティブレベルに近い）
話すこと	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
聞くこと	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
読むこと	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
書くこと	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

留学中

14. **以下のなかで留学中、一番貴重な経験だったものは何ですか（3つまで選んでください）** * *Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ ホストファミリーとの交流
- ☐ 外国の友達ができたこと
- ☐ 勉強や学校の生活
- ☐ 観光
- ☐ 異文化を体験
- ☐ 住んでいた町の環境（自然 / 施設 / 雰囲気等）
- ☐ ホストファミリーと友達以外の人との交流
- ☐ ボランティア体験
- ☐ スポーツやクラブ活動
- ☐ 家族と離れて住む
- ☐ Other:

15. **留学中に困ったことや期待はずれだったことは何ですか？（3つまで選んでください）** * *Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ コミュニケーション
- ☐ 習慣や食事
- ☐ 人間関係
- ☐ 物価
- ☐ 住んでいた町の環境（治安が悪い / 不便 / 娯楽施設がない等）
- ☐ 差別
- ☐ 人と話す機会が少なかった
- ☐ ホームシック
- ☐ 友達があまりできなかった
- ☐ その国の言葉の力があまり伸びなかった
- ☐ Other:

16. **留学中にいくつのホストファミリーと生活しましたか？** *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3
- ◯ 4
- ◯ 5+

留学でのスマホやパソコンの使い方について

17. 一日にスマホやパソコンで下記のこおについてどのぐらい使いましたか？ *

「英語等」は留学先の言語のことを指している

Mark only one oval per row.

	全く使わなかった	30分以下	30 - 60分	60 - 120分	120分以上
辞書や翻訳					
SNS（日本語）					
SNS（英語等）					
宿題やレポートを書く（日本語）	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
宿題やレポートを書く（英語等）	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
行き先の情報（地図、時刻表、お店の評価等）（日本語）	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
行き先の情報（英語等）					
経験の記録（日記、写真、ビデオ等）（日本語）	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
経験の記録（英語等）					
ゲーム　（日本語）					
ゲーム　（英語等）					
エンターテインメント（Youtube、音楽、ニュース、ウエブサーフィン等）（日本語）	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
エンターテインメント（英語等）	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

留学後

18. 留学を終えた後の現在では、留学先で最も使われている言語の力はどのくらいですか？ *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1(全く能力がない)	2	3	4	5（ネイティブレベルに近い）
話すこと	◯	◯	◯		◯
聞くこと	◯	◯	◯		◯
読むこと	◯	◯	◯		◯
書くこと	◯	◯	◯		◯

19. **留学して、自分はどのように変わったと思いますか？**　　　　　*

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 (全く変えてない)	2	3	4	5 (非常に変えた)
語学力が向上した					
異文化の理解が身についた					
価値観や視野が広がった					
外国の友達が増えた					
自分に自信がでくるようになった					
社会問題に興味を持つようになった	◯				◯
日本の文化に対して興味を持つようになった	◯				◯
将来プランがより明らかになった					
より論理的な考えができるようになった	◯				◯
より創造的な考えができるようになった	◯				◯
考え方がより柔軟になった					
精神的により強くなった					
より自立した					
自分の意見をはっきり言うようになった	◯				◯
日本の生活や習慣が合わなくなった	◯				◯
日本にいる友達や家族の考え方と合わなくなった	◯				◯
日本にいる友達や家族をもっと大切にするようになった	◯				◯
自分は「日本人だ」ともっと強く感じるようになった	◯				◯
自分は「日本人だ」とあまり感じなくなった	◯				◯

上記にない重要な影響があったら書いてください

_____

ご協力ありがとうございます

氏名とメールアドレスを記入して下さった方の中から抽選で5名に2,000円分のアマゾンギフト券をプレゼントいたします。（2017年9月末まで）

氏名

_____

メールアドレス

_____

みなさんの留学体験についてより詳しく知るためにインタビューをする予定です。

このインタビューに協力して自分の留学体験について話してくださる人を探しています。インタビューはSkypeで行う予定で日本語でも英語でもどちらでも構いません。

18歳以下の参加者は保護者の同意が必要です。

興味がある方は以下に「あります」と答えていただくと、詳しい説明等をメールでお送りします。

どうぞよろしくお願いします

Levi Durbidge（リーバイ・ダービッジ）

インタビューに興味がありますか *

Mark only one oval.

◯ あります（上記にメールアドレスをご記入ください。詳しい情報をお送りします）
◯ ありません

Survey on Study Abroad Experiences

My name is Levi Durbidge.

I am a postgraduate student at Monash University (http://www.monash.edu) in Melbourne, Australia. Thank you for showing an interest in my research project.

The aim of this survey is to get a detailed idea about the experiences of high school students on study abroad.

I believe that the results can be used to improve the high school study abroad in the future. Please think back over your experience studying abroad and answer the following questions.

On the final page if you enter your name and address you will have the chance to win a 2,000 yen Amazon gift voucher. (Until September 30th, 2017)

Thank you for your cooperation.
*Required

Profile

1. **Sex**
   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Female

   ◯ Male

   ◯ Other: _____

2. **Languages used at home and daily life**
   Tick all that apply.

   ☐ Japanese

   ☐ English

   ☐ Chinese

   ☐ Korean

   ☐ Other: _____

3. **Languages studied at school**
   Tick all that apply.

   ☐ Japanese

   ☐ English

   ☐ Chinese

   ☐ Korean

   ☐ Spanish

   ☐ German

   ☐ French

   ☐ Portuguese

   ☐ Other: _____

4. **School grade when you left to study abroad** *
   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) High School first year

   ( ) High School second year

   ( ) High School third year

5. **Place you studied abroad（Country・State/Town）** *

   _____

6. **Time on study abroad**
   Mark only one oval.

   ( ) Under 3 months

   ( ) 3-6 months

   ( ) 6-9 months

   ( ) more than 9 months

7. **Place in Japan where you currently live** *

   _____

Pre study abroad

8. **How important were the following reasons in your decision to study abroad?** *
   Mark only one oval per row.

	1（Not important at all）	2	3	4	5（Highly important）
Improving my language ability	( )	( )	( )		( )
Testing myself in a new environment	( )	( )	( )		( )
Broadening my horizons	( )	( )	( )		( )
Giving me an advantage in university entry exams and looking for work	( )	( )	( )		( )
Making friends with foreigners	( )	( )	( )		( )
Having an interest in my destination	( )	( )	( )		( )
Moving away from my family or school in Japan	( )	( )	( )		( )
Hearing about the study abroad experiences of my family or friends	( )	( )	( )		( )
Having time to think about my future	( )	( )	( )		( )
Being recommended to go by my parents or teachers	( )	( )	( )		( )

Please write any other important reasons for your decision not listed above

_____

9. **How much did the people below recommend you to participate in study abroad?** *
   Mark only one oval per row.

	Not Applicable	1（They opposed it）	2	3（They neither recommended nor opposed it）	4	5（They strongly recommended it）
Mother	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Father	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Siblings	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Other family	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Friends	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Teachers	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Experience abroad

10. **Have you every travelled overseas? If so, please write the names of the countries you visited below. You can write as many as you wish.**

_____

11. **Have you ever lived overseas? If so, please write the names of the countries, the duration and reason (e.g., parent's job, study abroad) you lived there. You can write as many as you wish.**

_____

About the language of the country you studied abroad in this time

12. **During study abroad, what language did you use the most?**
    Mark only one oval.
    - ◯ English
    - ◯ Japanese
    - ◯ Other: _____

13. **Before studying abroad、 what was your ability in the main language spoken by people at your destination?** *
    Mark only one oval per row.

	1（No ability at all）	2	3	4	5（Close to native level）
Speaking	◯	◯	◯		◯
Listening	◯	◯	◯		◯
Reading	◯	◯	◯		◯
Writing	◯	◯	◯		◯

During study abroad

14. **From the options below, what were the most valuable experiences during study abroad (Choose up to 3）** *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Spending time with my host family
- ☐ Making friends with foreigners
- ☐ School life and studying
- ☐ Tourism
- ☐ Experiencing a different culture
- ☐ The surrounds of where I stayed (e.g., natural environment, facilities, atmosphere)
- ☐ Meeting people other than my friends and host family
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Playing sports or other group activities
- ☐ Living away from my family in Japan
- ☐ Other: _____

15. **What things troubled you or didn't meet your expectations during study abroad？（Choose up to 3）** *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Communicating with people
- ☐ Local customs and/or food
- ☐ Relationships with others
- ☐ The cost of things
- ☐ The surrounds of where I stayed (E.g., unsafe, inconvenient, no facilities)
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Having no chances to talk with others
- ☐ Feeling homesick
- ☐ Difficulty making friends
- ☐ Not improving my language ability
- ☐ Other:_____

16. **How many separate host families did you live with?** *

Mark only one oval.

- ⬭ 1
- ⬭ 2
- ⬭ 3
- ⬭ 4
- ⬭ 5+

About the use of smartphones and computers during study <u>abroad</u>

17. **Each day, how long did you use smartphones and computers doing the things below?** *

(English, etc.) means the local languages of the place you stayed

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not at all	Less than 30 minutes	Between 30-60 minutes	Between 60 and 120 minutes	More than 120 minutes
Dictionaries or translators	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Social networks (Japanese)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Social networks (English, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Assignments and homework (Japanese)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Assignments and homework (English, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Getting information about your surrounds (E.g., maps, timetables, shop reviews) (Japanese)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Getting information about your surrounds (English, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Recording your experiences (E.g., diaries, photos, videos) (Japanese)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Recording your experiences (English, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Games (Japanese)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Games (English, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Entertainment (E.g., youtube, music, news, netsurfing) (Japanese)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Entertainment (English, etc.)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

After study abroad

18. Now, after returning from study abroad, what is your ability in the main language spoken by people at your destination? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 (No ability at all)	2	3	4	5 (Close to native)
Speaking	○	○	○		○
Listening	○	○	○		○
Reading	○	○	○		○
Writing	○	○	○		○

19. For each of the statements below, how much do you think it represents the effects of study abroad for you? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 (It did not have this effect for me)	2	3	4	5 (It was a very strong effect for me)
My language ability improved	○	○	○		○
I gained understanding in other cultures	○	○	○		○
I broadened my horizons	○	○	○		○
I made foreign friends	○	○	○		○
I became more confident in myself	○	○	○		○
I became more interested in social problems	○	○	○		○
I became more interested in Japanese culture	○	○	○		○
I have a clear idea about what I want to do in the future	○	○	○		○
I became more logical	○	○	○		○
I became more creative	○	○	○		○
I became more flexible in my thinking	○	○	○		○
I became more mentally resilient	○	○	○		○
I became more independent	○	○	○		○
I can now state my opinions more clearly	○	○	○		○
I found it hard to (re)adapt to Japanese customs and life	○	○	○		○
My ways of thinking no longer match those of my family or friends	○	○	○		○
I value my friends and family in Japan more	○	○	○		○
I feel more 'Japanese'	○	○	○		○
I feel less 'Japanese'	○	○	○		○

If there was an important effect for you that was not listed above, please write it here.

_____

Thank you for you cooperation!

5 people will be selected from those who enter their name and email address below before September 30th 2017 to win a 2,000 yen Amazon gift voucher.

Full name

_____

Email address

_____

In addition to this survey, I would like to interview people to find out about studying abroad in more detail.

I'm looking for people interested in talking about their study to cooperate in these interviews. The interviews are planned to be done through Skype in ether English or Japanese, whichever you prefer.

Participants under 18 will need to get permission from their parent or guardian to participate.

If you are interested, answer "I am interested" below and I will send more detailed information to your email address.

Thank you,

Levi Durbidge

Mark only one oval.

◯ I am interested

◯ I am not interested

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Google Forms

Appendix D: Interview Guides

First Round Interview

Intro Question
(今日学校ありましたか？など)

Do you first remember when you first heard about study abroad?
留学について初めて聞いたのはいつか覚えていますか？

> What did you think about study abroad at that time?
> その時に留学についてどう思いました？
> What do you remember others saying about study abroad?
> まわりの人は留学について何を言っていたか覚えていますか？
> When did you decide to study abroad? Do you remember your feelings at the time?
> 留学しようと決めたのはいつですか？どんな気持ちだったか覚えていまか？
> How did you come to contact AFS? How did you feel at that moment?
> どのように AFS に連絡しましたか？その時にどんな感じでしたか？

What country did you want to go to when you applied to AFS?
AFS に申し込んだ時点にはどの国に行きたいと思いましたか？

> What were your thoughts about (destination) at that time?
> その時に（行先）についてどう感じていましたか？
> How was your ability with (language) then? How did you feel about (language)?
> その時の（言語）の力はどうでしたか？（言語）についてどう感じていましたか？

What did you do on your first day at (destination)? Tell me as much as you can.
（行先）に到着した最初の日は何をしましたか？できるだけくわしく教えてもらえませんか？

> What was it like meeting your host family?
> ホストファミリーに会った時はどうでしたか？
> What your first conversation with them like?
> 初めてホストファミリーと話した時はどんな感じでしたか？
> How long did it take you to settle in your new life?
> 新しい環境に慣れるのはどのぐらいかかりましたか？

Tell me about a normal day at your host school? (Beginning / Middle/ End)
ホストの学校に通う日について教えてください。

> What was your （least）favourite class?
> 好き・きらいな科目は何でしたか？
> Who did you eat lunch with?
> 誰と一緒にランチを食べましたか？
> Was school enjoyable?
> 学校は楽しかったですか？
> Did you make friends easily?
> 友達すぐ出来ましたか？
> How were the teachers?
> 先生はどうでしたか？

259

What did you do when you got home?
家に帰ったら何をしましたか？

Did you have any problems with your teachers or classmates?
クラスメートや先生との関係・言葉・コミュニケーションの上で問題がありましたか？

その時どうしましたか？
どんな気持ちでしたか？
これは変化ありましたか？

What was your home like? Did you have your own room? (Beginning / Middle/ End)
家はどうでしたか？自分の部屋がありましたか？

Can you show me any photos of your home/ host family/ school?
家/ホストファミリー/学校の写真を見せてもらえますか？
Who did you speak to the most?
一番よくいっしょに話した人は誰でしたか？
How much (language) did you use on a typical day?
普通一日にどれぐらい（言語）を使いましたか？
What was the internet connection like?
ネットの状況はどうでしたか？

（行先）で冬・夏休みがありましたか？どうでしたか？
Was there a summer/winter vacation at the place you stayed? How was it?

How did you spend New Year's? How did you feel?
正月はどの感じで過ごしましたか？どんな気持ちでしたか？

Struggles
Did you often contact friends and family in Japan? Did that change over time?
日本にいる家族や友達とよく連絡とりましたか？最初のころと比べて連絡する頻度がへりましたか？
Did you ever feel lonely?
寂しい時ありましたか？
How did you stay in contact with the friends you made there? How often did you meet?
（行先）の友達とはどういう風に連絡を取りましたか？ひんぱんに会いましたか？
Do you remember a time when you had difficulty communicating? What did you do?
コミュニケーションし難い場面覚えていますか？何をしましたか？
Did people say anything about your (host language)? How did it make you feel?
自分の（行先言語）について何かコメント貰いましたか？どんなふうに感じましたか？
Was there a situation where you felt like you wanted to end your study abroad?
留学を途中でやめて日本に帰りたい気分になったことがありましたか？

When was your first day back in Japan?
日本に帰国した日はいつでしたか？

What was it like to leave?
帰国する時はどんな感じでしたか？
Is there anything you miss now that you are back in Japan?
帰国してからなにか寂しいと感じることありますか？
How did your (language) change during study abroad?

留学中に（言語）はどう変ったと思いますか？
Do you think you'll use (language) in the future?
将来（言語）を使うと思いますか？

Did you change during study abroad?
留学中に自分は変わったと思いますか？

What was the most memorable thing about your study abroad?
留学中に一番心に残ることはなんでしたか？
What was the best / most difficult / most disappointing thing?
一番辛かった・良かった・がっかりしたことは？

Did study abroad happen the way you imagined? (Survey results)
留学は想像通りでしたか？

Has study abroad changed your plans for the future?
留学してから将来のプランがかわりましたか？

Is there anything else you would like to add?
何か他に言いたいことがありますか？

Second Round Interview

(Note: I did not use a bilingual interview guide for second round interviews as I translated these prompts and also drew from individual analytic memos during the interview)

Today's interview is going to be a little different to last time. Last time I asked a lot of questions. I'm going to ask you a question and then let you answer as much as you would like. I'll just listen and not say anything until you tell me you are finished.

BEING A RETURNED EXCHANGE STUDENT

What is it like to be an exchange student who has returned to Japan?

Have you communicated with anyone you met on exchange recently?

How did your school treat your exchange experience?

LEARNING

Tell me about a time you have used (English) since returning to Japan.

Was there a time recently that being an exchange student became important?

What advice do you have for someone going on exchange?

TRAJECTORY

What is different for you since returning from your exchange?

Has the exchange affected how you see your future?

Have your friendships changed since you returned?

Has anyone around you gone on exchange since you returned?

Do you have plans to SA again?

MEMORIES OF THE EXCHANGE

What is a strong memory you have of study abroad?

Tell me about the area you lived in.

Was it easy to meet other people your age?

What were the biggest differences between your host family and your family in Japan?

Appendix E: Supplementary data analysis

Table 13. Questionnaire respondents by prefecture

1. Hokkaidō		4. Chūbu		6. Chūgoku	
Hokkaidō	2	Aichi	7	Hiroshima	3
2. Tōhoku		Gifu	3	Yamaguchi	1
Iwate	1	Niigata	2	**7. Shikoku**	
3. Kanto		Ishikawa	2	(none)	
Tōkyō	33	Yamanashi	2	**8. Kyūshū**	
Kanagawa	13	Nagano	1	Fukuoka	3
Chiba	4	Shizuoka	1	Ōita	1
Ibrakai	3	**5. Kansai**		Nagasaki	1
Tochigi	3	Ōsaka	3		
Saitama	2	Hyogo	3		
Gunma	1	Mie	2		
		Kyoto	1		
		Nara	1		

*Regions are listed in the traditional order of northeast to southwest. Prefectures are ordered by number of respondents. Only those prefectures with one or more respondents are listed.

Figure 7. Frequencies of primary language competence means prior to study abroad
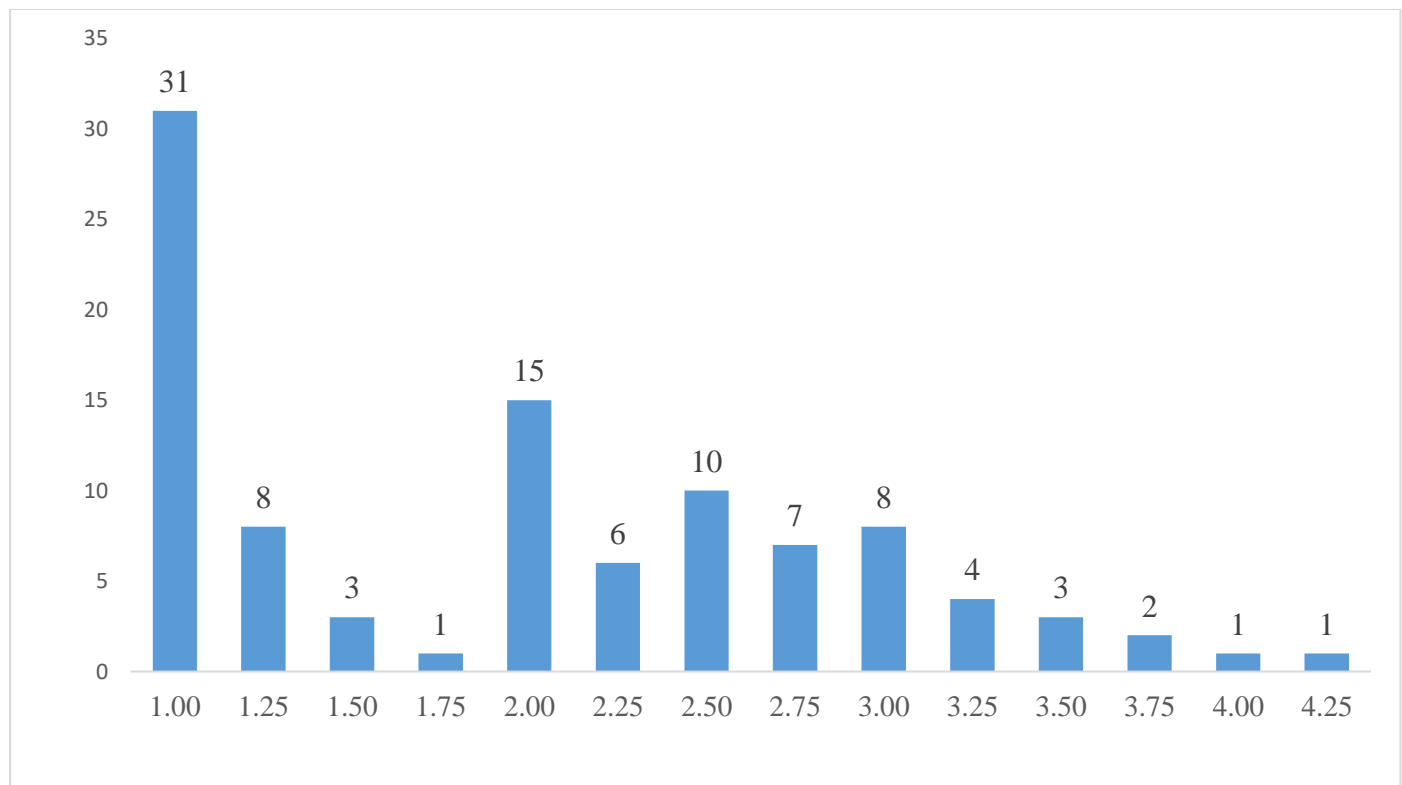
Table 14. Results of Chi-squared tests for all difficulties by gender

Difficulty faced	X^2	p-value
Communicating with people	.620	.431
Local customs and/or food	.079	.779
Relationships with others	4.631	.031*
The cost of things	2.522	.225
The surrounds of where I stayed	1.160	.281
Discrimination	.088	.767
Having no chances to talk with others	.108	.742
Feeling homesick	.127	.722
Difficulty making friends	1.896	.169
Not improving my language ability	.265	.607

* Highlighted row indicates statistical significance (p<0.05), crosstab details are provided in

Table 15 below.

Table 15. Crosstab: Relationships with others by gender

			Gender		
			Female	Male	Total
Relationships with others	Not selected as difficulty	Count	43	27	70
		Expected Count	47.6	22.4	70.0
		Residual	-4.6	4.6	
	Selected as difficulty	Count	25	5	30
		Expected Count	20.4	9.6	30.0
		Residual	4.6	-4.6	
Total		Count	68	32	100
		Expected Count	68.0	32.0	100.0

Table 16. Results of Chi-squared tests for all positive experiences by gender

Positive experience	X^2	p-value
Spending time with my host family	3.563	.059
Making friends with foreigners	2.096	.150
School life and studying	.366	.545
Tourism	.041	.840
Experiencing a different culture	2.460	.117
The surrounds of where I stayed	2.372	.124
Meeting people other than my friends and host family	.950	.330
Volunteering	.094	.759
Playing sports or other group activities	5.148	.023*
Living away from my family in Japan	3.854	.050

* Highlighted row indicates statistical significance (p<0.05), crosstab details are provided in

Table 17 below.

Table 17. Crosstab: Playing sports or other group activities by gender

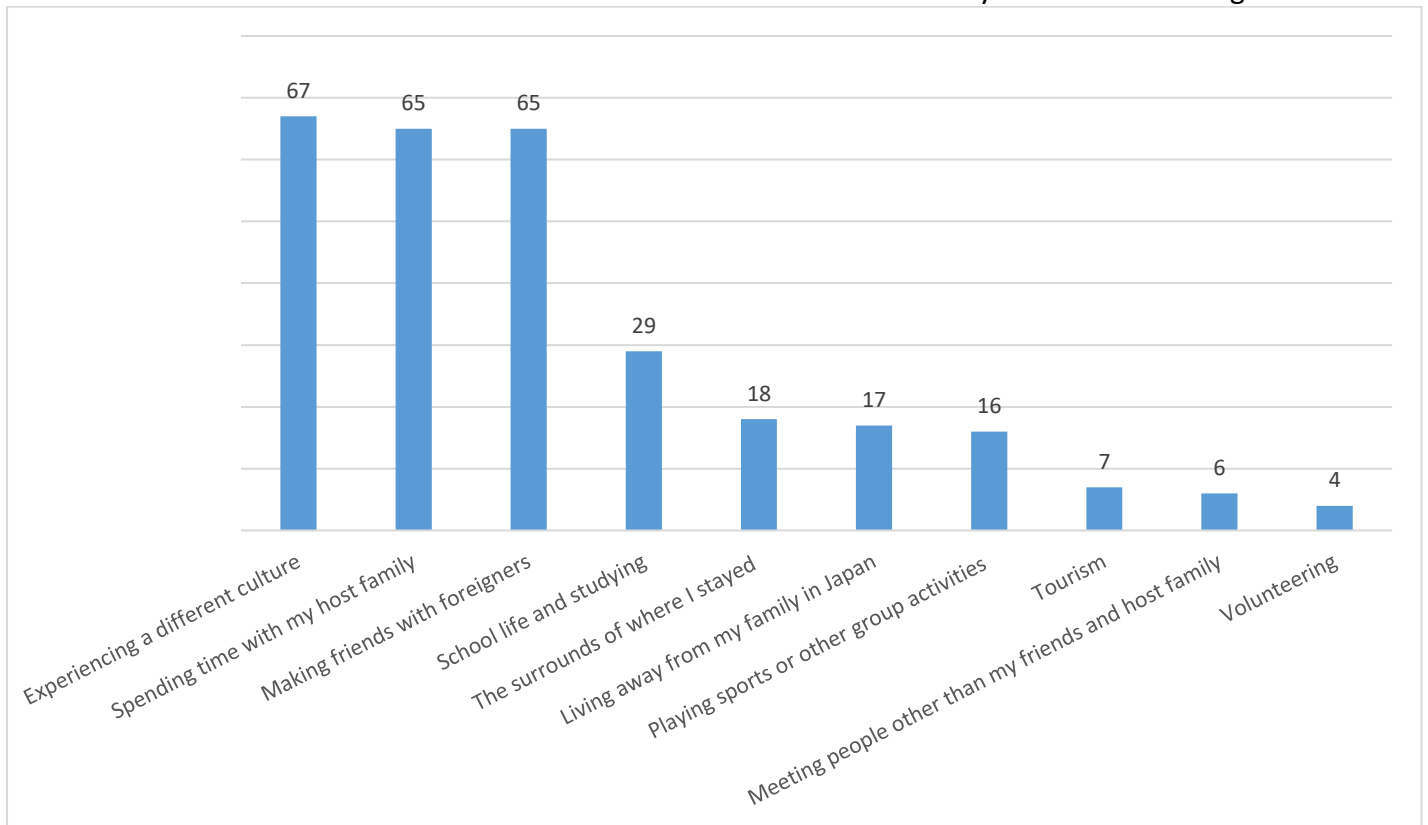|			Gender		
			Female	Male	Total
Playing sports or other group activities	Not selected as difficulty	Count	61	23	84
		Expected Count	57.1	26.9	84.0
		Residual	3.9	-3.9	
	Selected as difficulty	Count	7	9	16
		Expected Count	10.9	5.1	16.0
		Residual	-3.9	3.9	
Total		Count	68	32	100
		Expected Count	68.0	32.0	100.0

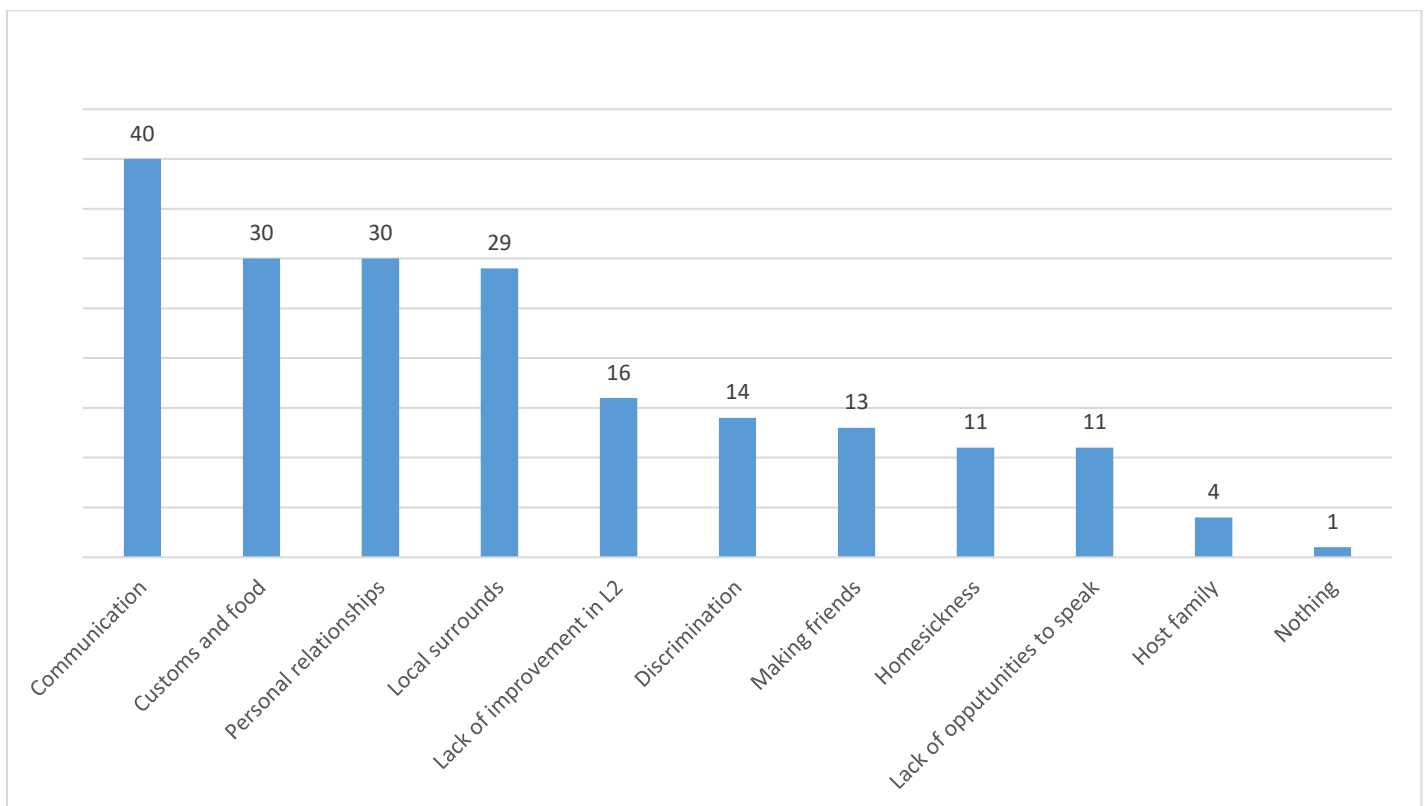*Figure 8.* Frequencies of most valuable experiences abroad

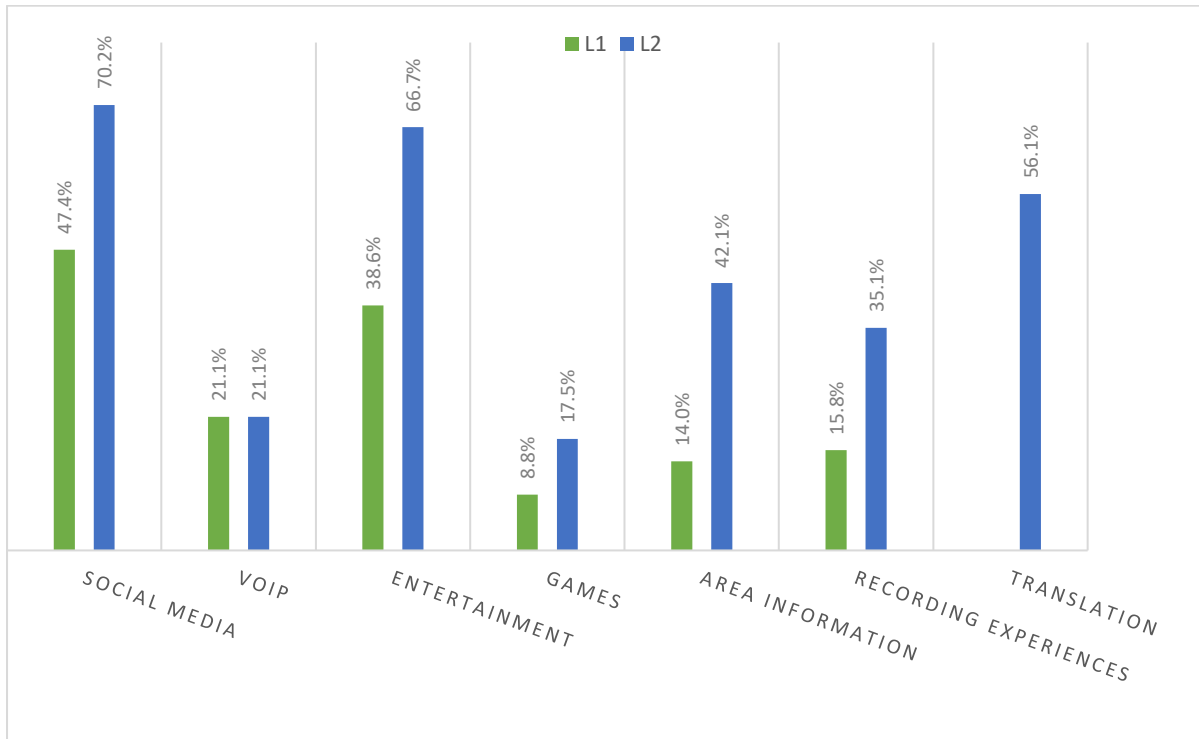*Figure 9.* Frequencies of most difficult experiences abroad

266

Figure 10. Significant technology use among respondents who reported some L2 competence pre-departure (based on data displayed in *Figure 7*)
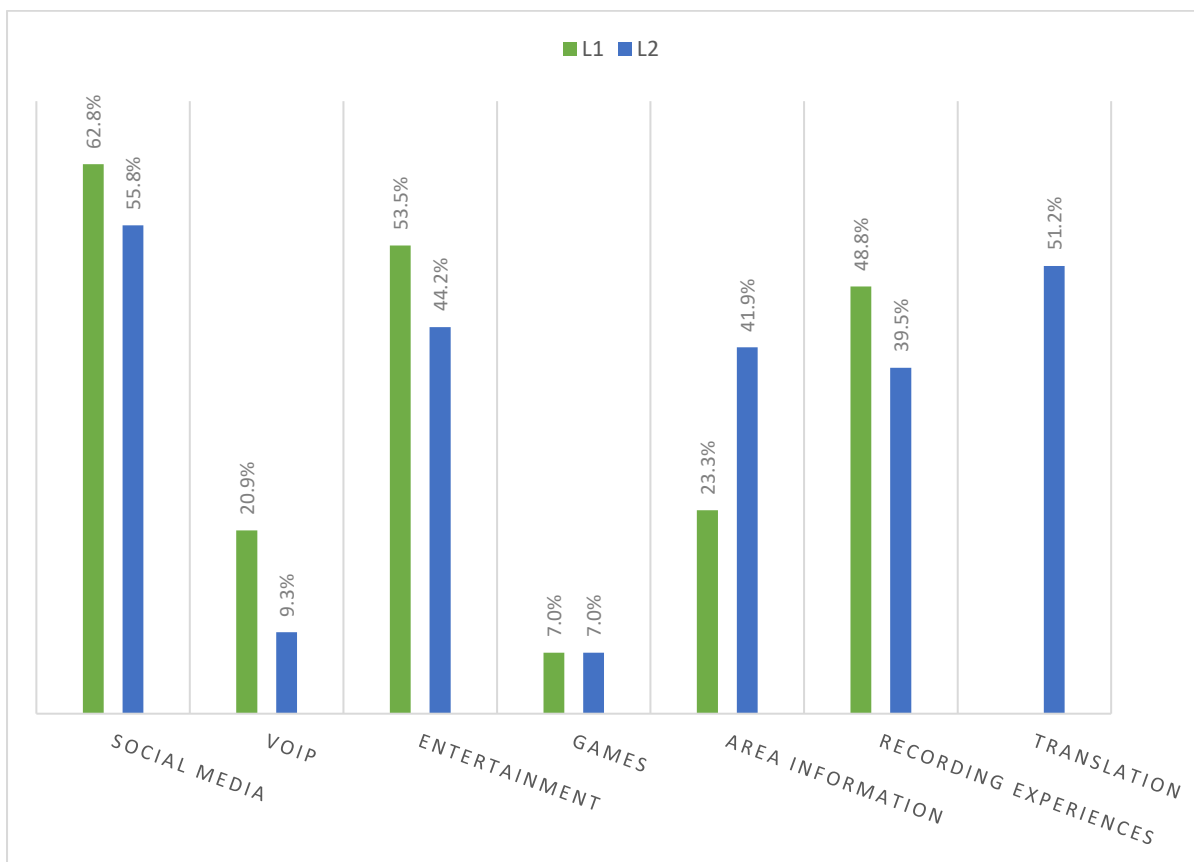

Figure 11. Significant technology use among respondents who reported limited or no L2 competence pre-departure (based on data displayed in *Figure 7*)

267

Table 18. Mann-U tests of difficulties with personal relationships vs. technology use (significant results only)

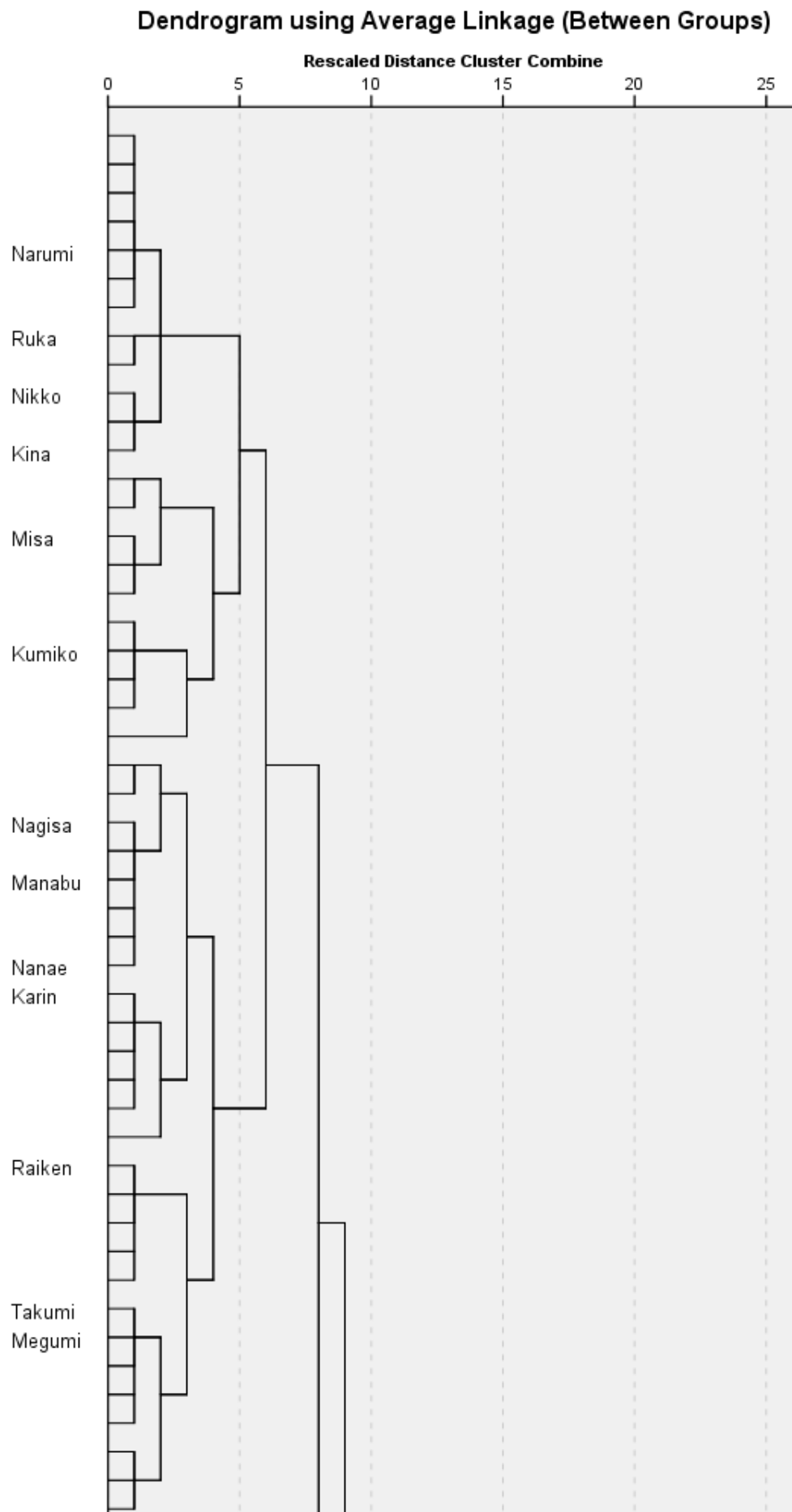| Group	Activity	Difficulty experienced?	Mean rank	U	z	P	r
All	Social media (L1)	Yes (n=30)	59.45	781.5	-2.093	0.036	0.209
		No (n=70)	46.66				
All	VoIP (L1)	Yes (n=30)	58.57	808.0	-1.971	0.049	0.197
		No (n=70)	47.04				
B	Social media (L1)	Yes (n=13)	30.77	81.0	-3.138	0.002	0.479
		No (n=30)	18.20				
B	VoIP (L1)	Yes (n=13)	30.27	87.5	-3.124	0.002	0.476
		No (n=30)	18.42				
B	Gaming (L1)	Yes (n=13)	17.50	136.5	-2.181	0.028	0.333
		No (n=30)	23.95				

Table 19. Mann-U tests of difficulties with local surrounds vs. technology use (significant results only)

Group	Activity	Difficulty experienced?	Mean rank	U	z	P	r
A	Social media (L2)	Yes (n=17)	36.68	209.5	-2.438	0.015	0.323
		No (n=40)	25.74				
B	Area information (L2)	Yes (n=12)	15.96	113.5	-2.043	0.041	0.312
		No (n=31)	24.34				

Table 20. Mann-U tests of Difficulties with communication vs. technology use (significant results only)

Group	Activity	Difficulty experienced?	Mean rank	U	z	p	r
All	Recording experiences (L2)	Yes (n=40)	57.40	924.0	-2.024	0.043	0.202
		No (n=60)	45.90				
All	Area information (L2)	Yes (n=40)	57.49	920.5	-2.051	0.040	0.205
		No (n=60)	45.84				
A	Recording experiences (L2)	Yes (n=18)	36.36	218.5	-2.388	0.017	0.326
		No (n=39)	25.60				
A	Translation & dictionaries	Yes (n=18)	36.81	210.5	-2.529	0.011	0.335
		No (n=39)	25.40				

Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between Groups)
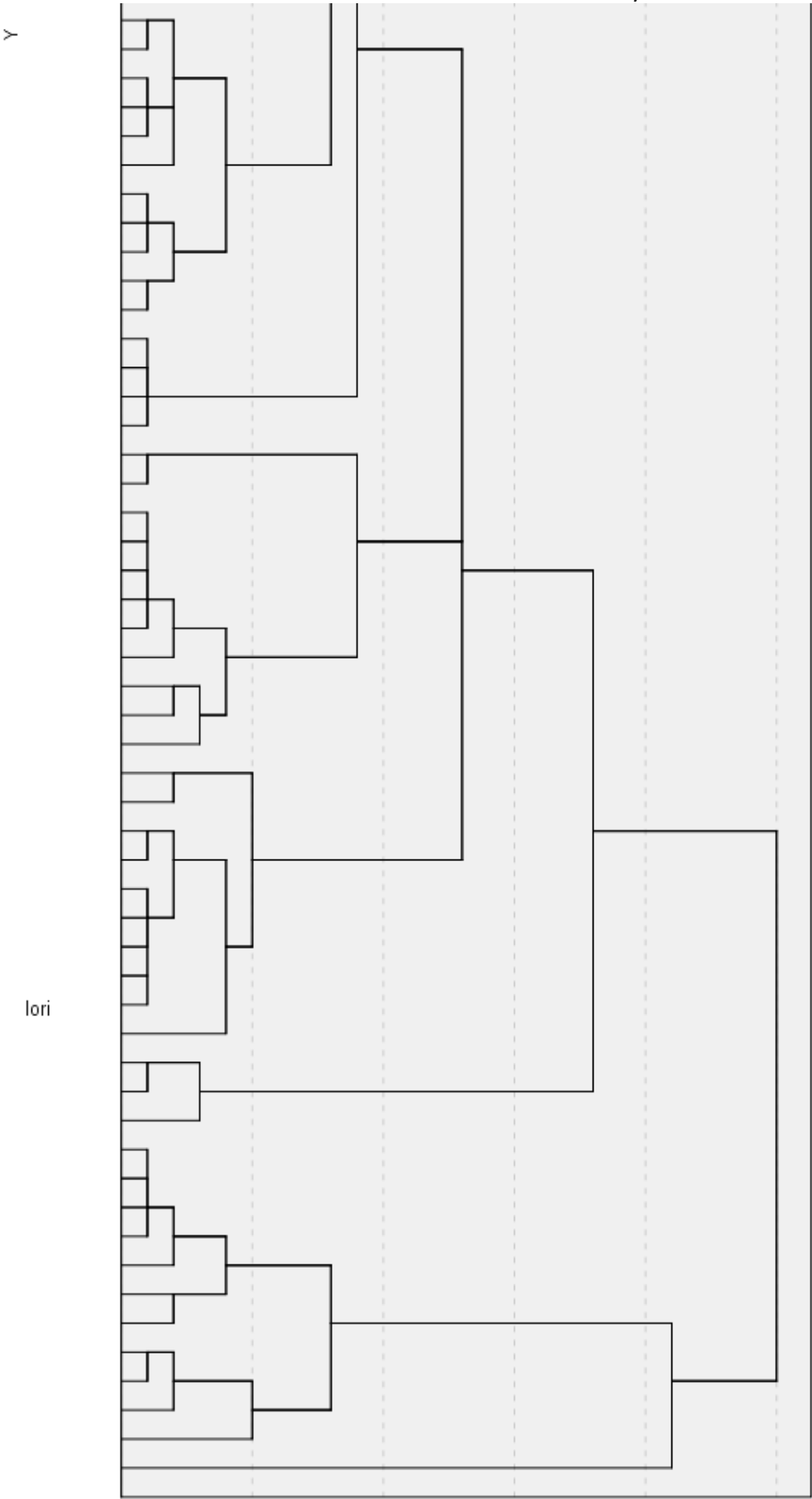
Rescaled Distance Cluster Combine

Figure 13. Dendrogram for cluster analysis of study abroad outcomes (Continued on next page)