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Everyone Wants to Speak English: The Struggles of an American Study-Abroad Student in Japan

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Abstract

This case study examines an American undergraduate student's study abroad (SA) experience in Japan, focusing on his self-perceived interactional experiences. Despite achieving notable success in language acquisition and developing social networks during his SA period, the student viewed his experience in the context of academic language learning—specifically, learning Japanese—as a failure due to his predominant use of English. This study explores the gap between the student's experience and perception through quantitative and qualitative analysis of the student's language use. Quantitative analysis revealed that overall, the student used Japanese more frequently than English, but most of his interactions outside the classroom involved either English or a combination of English and Japanese. Qualitative analysis uncovered the student's struggle in reconciling the locals' preference for English conversations with his own desire to use Japanese when interacting with Japanese local people. The results also indicate that the student encountered challenges in effectively using English as a global language, illustrating the complexity of navigating intercultural interactions. These findings suggest that the global dominance of English impacts and, at times, complicates the language-learning experiences of Anglophone SA students in Japan.

"A failure… because there was so much English."
—Frank, Study Abroad Student

1. Introduction

Immersion in a target language (TL) environment is widely regarded as one of the most effective methods for language acquisition. Many language students believe that living in a country where the TL is spoken will naturally provide them with the immersive experience necessary for rapid language improvement. This assumption underpins the popularity of

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study abroad (SA) programs, which are seen by many as golden opportunities for immersive language learning.

However, studying abroad does not always provide an immersive language learning environment. Studies by Freed et al. (2004), Diao, Freed, and Smith (2011), Magnan and Back (2007), and Ranta and Meckelborg (2013) have shown that SA students often use their first language (L1) more than expected. Freed et al. (2004), for instance, found that SA students frequently used their L1 outside the classroom, limiting their exposure to the TL. Similarly, Ranta and Meckelborg (2013) noted that students used the TL for interaction less often than they anticipated.

The use of L1 in SA environments is particularly relevant for Anglophone students studying abroad in non-English-dominant countries.[1] English is increasingly recognized as a global language, largely due to its widespread adoption as the official language of instruction in many higher education institutions worldwide (Kinginger 2019). As a consequence, Anglophone SA students often face challenges in finding opportunities to use the TL with local people; when many locals speak English, SA students do not find themselves in situations that require them to use the TL. In addition, many locals prefer to practice their English rather than help SA students practice the TL. These challenges may become even more prevalent as globalization and technological advancements continue to expand. Because of these diminished needs and/or opportunities to practice the TL during SA, Kubota (2016) has argued that the dominance of English can also diminish Anglophone students' motivation to learn the TL during their SA experiences.

While some studies report the positive impact of local residents' English proficiency on American SA students' social network development and language learning (Baker-Smemo et al. 2014; Dewey, Belnap, et al. 2013), other research indicates that Anglophone SA students' lack of intercultural competence in English as a global language can hinder meaningful interactions among these students, locals, and other international peers when they speak English. For example, Anglophone SA students' overuse of slang and American cultural references makes it difficult for locals and other international peers (i.e., L2 users of English), to engage socially, which may further discourage interaction with the SA students (Kalocsai 2009; Kimura 2019). However, research on Anglophone students' SA experience in relation to the global dominance of English is still limited.

The Japanese government's post-COVID efforts to bring foreign students back to Japan through scholarships and SA support have greatly increased the number of American college students studying abroad in Japan ("Aiming to Recover" June 21, 2022). It is crucial now more than ever to understand what is happening during SA programs in Japan from the perspective of SA students to better support their learning. By analyzing an SA student's experience from the student's own perspective, this study provides insights into the realities of language and culture learning in Japan, aiming to contribute to ongoing discussions of how home institutions in the United States can help facilitate SA students' learning in Japan.

This study focuses on one American SA student's frustration regarding the inescapable proliferation of English use during his SA experience in Japan, despite his successes in language learning and social networking. This student was one of the seven participants in a larger study I conducted to examine social network construction, language acquisition, and style-shift development. In this original study, this SA student was categorized as a "high-gainer," meaning that he demonstrated notable language proficiency and style-shifting development after one academic year of study abroad. In addition, this student constructed the second-highest number of social ties with Japanese people among the seven study participants, having joined social groups both in- and outside of his host university. However, upon his return, the student described his SA experience as "a failure…because there was so much English."

By focusing on this single case, this study provides an in-depth analysis of an individual SA student's perspectives and insights into his interactive experiences, learning process, and how his identity influenced his language use. Recognizing that each SA language learner has unique and tailored experiences (Polanyi 1995; Kinginger 2004; Kimura 2019), this study further seeks to enhance our understanding of an Anglophone SA student's TL learning and to offer pedagogical insights to support such learning in the twenty-first century.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Effect of Target Language and First Language Use during Study Abroad

Previous studies have reported a positive relationship between the interactive use of the TL and SA students' TL development (Hernandez 2010; Taguchi et al. 2016). Hernandez (2010) collected data about SA students' TL use through the Language Contact Profile, a data-gathering

tool developed by Barbara Freed, Dan Dewey, Norman Segalowithz and Randall Halter in 2004. The study found that the amount of interactive TL use, such as speaking Spanish with L1 or fluent Spanish speakers and writing emails in Spanish, was a predictor of SA students' TL development. In an effort to increase TL use, enhance TL learning, and limit student use of L1, some domestic and SA programs have adopted language pledges, in which program participants agree to use the TL exclusively (Hasegawa 2019). However, other studies have not found a positive relationship between SA students' TL use and their TL development (Magnan & Back 2007; Mendelson 2004).

The use of English (L1) among Anglophone students abroad also plays a positive role in their social and linguistic development. For example, among Anglophone SA students, L1 (English) has been shown to enhance social network development during SA. Dewey, Spencer, et al. (2013) reported that SA students in Jordan who exchanged English tutoring for TL tutoring perceived their English use to be a positive factor that facilitated relationship development. Hasegawa (2019) also reported that a foreign language (FL)-Japanese student developed a close relationship with one of his Japanese roommates who was a FL-English speaker because of "their shared passion for language study" (130). In addition, English proficiency of SA students' friends was reported as a predictor of Anglophone SA students' TL gain (Baker-Smemoe et al. 2014).

Anglophone SA students' L1 (English) use has been discussed in studies of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) as well. Although the native norm is no longer seen as the ultimate objective, especially in learning English within ESL and ELF contexts (Cai et al. 2022), L1 English speakers—including Anglophone SA students—often bring the "native norm" into interactions with ESL and ELF speakers. For example, Anglophone SA students have been reported to have poor communication skills in ELF interactions, by not adjusting their language use to the needs and intercultural context of their ELF interlocutor (Kimura, 2009). Therefore, in SA settings, locals and other international students who are ELF speakers sometimes avoid speaking in English with Anglophone SA students (Kalocsai 2009; Kimura 2019; Surtees 2018). In addition, ELF speakers distance themselves from Anglophone SA students due to a "sense of inferiority" (Kimura 2019: 89). Surtees (2018) also reports that Japanese SA students in Canada tended to connect with other students who had "international and multilingual experiences" (51), with whom SA students "feel comfortable and accepted"

(166), rather than L1 speakers of English. These ESL and ELF studies point to the importance of developing communication skills in ESL or ELF contexts for Anglophone SA students who wish to develop social networks with people from countries where English is not the main or first/official language.

2.2 Anglophone SA Students in Japan: Complex Power Relations

Bourdieu's (1991) work on power relations provides a framework with which to examine an Anglophone SA student's interactive experiences in Japan and how Japanese people perceive the Anglophone SA student's status. Bourdieu (1991) argues that language serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a channel of power, allowing individuals to pursue their personal interests and to showcase their practical proficiency. In a multilingual and intercultural world—which includes SA settings—the risk of such miscommunications increases (Kramsch 2009). When miscommunication occurs between a native speaker (L1) and a non-native speaker (L2), power dynamics in language use become evident. Typically, the non-native minority speaker is blamed for the miscommunication, while the L1 is rarely held accountable (Kurhila 2005).

Although Anglophone SA students are considered linguistic minority speakers when they speak the TL, their status as L1 speakers of English can further complicate their SA learning in non-English-dominant countries where English is viewed as a global language and lingua franca. Researchers who investigated Anglophone foreign language (FL) speakers/learners in workplaces in Japan and China reported that by virtue of their status as native speakers of English, they were often viewed as "representatives of internationalism and…thus not expected to assimilate" (Moody 2017, 778; see also Iino 2006; Moody 2019; Zeng 2021). In other words, Anglophone FL learners who wish to learn and acquire the TL and target culture (TC), by immersing themselves in the TL and TC often find that they are expected by local speakers *not* to acquire or use the TL, so as to preserve their value as native English speakers.

A study conducted by Kumagai and Sato (2009) also addressed the impact of Anglophone SA students' racial appearance on their interactive experiences with L1 speakers of Japanese in Japan. Their study reports that Japanese people's associations of English with the "civilized" white race (Kumagai and Sato 2009, 312) influenced how white American SA students were perceived as obvious foreigners, irrespective of their actual language proficiency in Japanese. As a result, Caucasian SA students were

more likely than Asian SA students to encounter Japanese people who interacted with them in English, even though both demographic groups spoke English as their first language.

2.3 Third Space in Intercultural Communicative Contexts

Previous studies reporting SA students' struggles with TL use and local people's behaviors often discuss the impact of identities (Isabelli-Garcia 2006; Siegal 1995; Wilkinson 1998). Siegal (1995) reported that the learners' own identities and their perceptions of the TC seemed to affect their use of sociolinguistic features, specifically humble and honorific language in Japanese at the beginning of their SA experience. Other studies also reported that SA students often failed to acknowledge the cultural differences between themselves and people of the TL community and held negative views of people in the TL community (Isabelli-Garcia 2006; Wilkinson 1998). For example, Wilkinson (1998) reported that American SA students' misunderstanding of French people's reactions resulted in their negative perception that "the French hate Americans" or "the French are cold" (29–30).

To avoid such misunderstandings and maintain FL learners' identities, scholars of East Asian language (EAL) pedagogy argue that FL pedagogy of EAL should focus on developing the "personae" of FL students (Jian 2021; Walker 2010; Walker and Noda 2010). According to Jian (2021), *personae* is defined as "public perception[s] of who one is based on, what one does in interaction" (20). In contrast, *identity* is defined as "a self-imagination of who one is based on, what one prefers in one's mind" (20). An individual usually operates multiple personae in different settings, and these different ways of interacting allow them to conduct various daily tasks effectively. Expectations for what constitutes an appropriate persona (i.e., what to say and how to behave) are greatly influenced by culture. For example, Ting-Toomey (1985) reports that Japanese people, who value subtle or indirect communication, tend to use conflict prevention strategies when trying to influence others in order to minimize interpersonal conflicts. In contrast, Americans tend to value direct communication strategies, such as confronting ideas and using argumentation (Hirokawa and Miyahara 1986). An important part of TL acquisition is learning to present personae that will be viewed as appropriate in the TL culture (Walker 2010, Walker and Noda 2010, and Jian 2021). Therefore, American learners of Japanese must learn to "produce speech that is not only [able] to be understood but also [will] be listened to and recognized

as acceptable" (Zeng 2021, 70).

Research has further revealed that merely accepting the L2 norm and aiming for native-like fluency or behavior is both unrealistic and potentially counterproductive, as local people may not expect Anglophone SA students to be like them (Iino 2006; McAloon 2008, Moody 2017, 2019; Tobaru, 2019; Zeng 2021). To cultivate the FL skills that are most suitable for Anglophone FL learners to be successful in the twenty-first century, Walker and Jian (2016) and Jian, (2021) further developed the idea of culturally appropriate personae. They note that Anglophone FL learners' L1 and first culture (C1) are increasingly considered to be significant economic, cultural, and social capital and that people in the target community may consider the learners' first language to be more socially valuable than the learners' own TL or TC. Walker and Jian argue that FL pedagogy should focus on the so-called "Third-Space personae" that enable foreign language learners to co-construct a productive Third Space. According to Jian (2021), the "Third Space" is a multilingual and transcultural interactive context,

> where different cultures converge, contest or cooperate; where expectations for the actors and interpretations of their actions do not entirely or constantly conform to the assumptions and norms of one culture but [they are] dynamic and fluid, motivated by specific goals of the interaction and negotiated among involved actors. (8)

The concept of "thirdness" refers to a metaphorical space between "nativeness" and "non-nativeness", "us" and "them", "self" and "other", etc. (Kramsch, 2009). It is characterized by hybridity, exploration, invention, and resignification, and has been explored by various scholars under different terms (Bakhtin 1981; Bhabha 1994; Kramsch 2009). For instance, in discussing the process of language acquisition by immigrants to the United States, Kramsch (2009) rejects the conventional binaries that underlie language education, such as the distinction between native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS). Instead, she highlights the multilingual perspectives of L2/FL speakers by proposing the term "symbolic competence." This perspective empowers L2/FL learners to challenge and confront implicit TC norms protected by the monolingual policies of powerful nation-states (199).

According to Zeng (2021), Kramsch's (2009) concept of "thirdness" focuses on the rights of learners whose primary language and culture are less symbolically powerful, such as immigrants in the United States (70),

while the "Third Space" concept proposed by Walker and Jian (2016) emphasizes the co-construction of meaning between individuals from the target culture (TC) and Anglophone FL learners, whose L1 and C1 may be perceived as more powerful than the TL and TC. This difference may suggest that Anglophone FL learners might encounter different challenges compared to those discussed in Kramsch's studies.

Applying Walker and Jian's (2016) conceptual framework of Third Space, Zeng (2021) investigated intercultural communications of an American FL student named Alan, a white L1 speaker of English, and provided examples of successful "Third Space" personae in his workplace. While demonstrating excellent linguistic accuracy and culturally appropriate use of Chinese, Alan often used conventional Chinese expressions creatively to "appropriate the language for his own use" (79). However, his creative application of these expressions was perceived as errors by local Chinese speakers. Interestingly, while most of the Chinese locals who interacted daily with Alan evaluated Alan's Chinese proficiency as very high, they were also critical of Alan being "too Chinese" and lamented "his losing an asset—his globalness" (Zeng 2021, 84).

Although previous research that addresses this Third Space (McAloon 2008; Zhang and Jian 2021; Zeng 2016; Zeng 2021) has focused mainly on advanced Chinese FL learners—those with academic credentials beyond a four-year undergraduate education (Zeng 2016) or those in workplaces (McAloon 2008; Zeng 2021)—the concept of a Third Space can also be applied to American SA students. It is equally crucial for American non-advanced-level FL learners, like undergraduate SA students in Japan, to acquire cultural and language skills to negotiate "locals' expectations" and co-construct intercultural spaces that benefit both FL learners and people in the local community (Zeng 2021). In Japan, where "English and Western cultural practices are often seen as valuable" (Moody 2018, 778), English education has become mandatory for elementary school students (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology 2022). Many Japanese universities also actively foster campus internationalization by offering opportunities for local students to engage with English. It is thus quite common for American SA students to encounter Japanese locals who are eager to use or practice their English with native speakers (Kubota 2016).

Despite the growing emphasis on English in Japan, limited attention has been paid to the impact of English as a global language on Anglophone SA students' experiences in Japan and their perspectives. This study

examines the case of a SA student, Frank, who demonstrated success in language development and networking, and provided detailed reflections and insights on his use of Japanese and English during his SA experience.

Three research questions guide this study: 1) How much English and Japanese language did the SA student use during an academic year in Japan? 2) When and where did interactive language use occur? and 3) What aspects of the SA student's experience led him to describe his study abroad experience as a 'failure'?

3. Current Study

3.1 Participant: Frank

Frank (a pseudonym) completed ten months of a SA program in Japan. Frank, who is white, was born and raised in the United States. He is a native English speaker and uses English as his primary language for daily communication in the United States.

Frank completed the level-3 Japanese language course at his home institution, with approximately 415 hours of Japanese language instruction (i.e., six semesters) prior to his ten-month SA program. Three months before this ten-month program, Frank also participated in faculty-led, four-week summer SA program in Japan through his home institution.

Frank's SA host institution was a four-year liberal arts college located in the Kanto region and is known for its international and global educational program. Classes are taught in Japanese and/or English. The university has a considerable number of Japanese students with international backgrounds and, notably, the English proficiency of these Japanese students is expected to be higher than that of average university students.[2] For housing, the university provides dormitory options for international students. Frank's living situation will be discussed in a later section (Section 4.2.2).

Frank's language proficiency was measured before and after his ten-month SA experience using unofficial ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) ratings. His language proficiency before SA was rated Intermediate-Mid. After the SA program, his rating improved to Intermediate-High. According to ACTFL standards, speakers at Intermediate levels have no difficulties talking about topics related to daily life and themselves but may show some difficulties discussing topics beyond their own interests (ACTFL 2012). Frank's improved post-SA OPI rating indicates that his language skills benefitted from the ten-month SA experience.

3.2 Instruments

The data consist of four interviews and language use logs provided by Frank.

3.2.1. Interviews

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted in English: one before SA, two during it, and one after. The pre-SA interview was conducted primarily to understand the participant's background. The interview consisted of nine semi-structured questions regarding his initial motivation for studying Japanese, personal history of Japanese study, host institution, type of accommodation in Japan, goals, expectations of the SA experience, and so forth (Appendix A). These questions were selected and modified based on previous research (Isabelli-Garcia 2006; Iwasaki 2011). The interview lasted approximately fifty minutes.

Interviews conducted during and after the SA program aimed to gain more detailed accounts of the participant's learning experiences during SA. These interviews consisted of twelve questions, specifically designed for this study, regarding the participant's overall impressions of the SA experience, what he most learned from the SA experience, and the strategies he used to overcome his challenges, including his struggles to interact with locals (see Appendix B). The length of each interview varied from approximately forty to ninety minutes.

3.2.2. Language Use Log (LUL)

To document the student's SA experiences and perspectives on his language use, a new instrument called the Language Use Log (LUL) was specifically designed for this study. Research indicates that collecting data on SA students' use of L1 and TL after SA programs can result in low reliability (Mitchell 2021). Therefore, the LUL was developed to allow Frank to report his L1 and TL use while he was still in Japan. Additionally, unlike previous studies (Freed et al. 2004; Diao et al. 2011; Magnan and Back 2007), I had Frank report his usage of language based on activities (leisure activities, club participation, class attendance, homework, etc.) instead of skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills). Since multiple skills may be used simultaneously in a single activity (e.g., listening and speaking skills are used when conversing with a friend), reporting language usage based on activities may more accurately reflect actual TL use than reporting it based on skills.

Language logs were recorded using a mobile phone app called

AppSheet (https://about.appsheet.com/home/) also created for this study to enhance user convenience and gather more detailed information about language use, thereby, improving the reliability of the data.

Information collected with AppSheet included which language was used, when and how long the language was used, whether the language use was interactive or non-interactive, who the interlocutor was, descriptions of the language activity, and the participant's thoughts and feelings during the activity. When only one language was used for an activity, the participant could choose "English," "Japanese," or "Other" (i.e., a language other than Japanese or English). When more than one language was used in one language activity, the participant could choose "J = E" (Japanese and English were used in equal amounts), "J > E" (Japanese was used more than English), or "E > J" (English was used more than Japanese). Examples of interactive activities include conversing with friends and asking questions in class. In contrast, non-interactive language use is activities that are done alone, such as doing homework alone, self-study, watching TV, or listening to music without others present.

Frank received instructions on using the app before logging his language use (see Appendix C). The distinctions between interactive and non-interactive language use were also explained in the instructions. When the language use was interactive, Frank was also asked to provide information about his communication partner(s), such as the nature of their relationships (e.g., friends, professors, or club members) and their names. To document the changes in the participant's language use and socialization, Frank was asked to log his language activities for one week in October, December, February, and April, for a total of four one-week periods. Data were automatically recorded on Excel spreadsheets.

3.3 Procedure and Data Analysis

After Frank supplied his written informed consent, a pre-SA interview was conducted in English two weeks before his departure to Japan. During his SA program, I interviewed him in English twice using a video communication tool, each lasting between thirty and fifty minutes. Following his SA, a post-SA interview was conducted in English. All the interviews were transcribed. Regarding Language Use Log (LUL), the collected data consists of 120 logs from twenty-seven days in October, December, February, and April. Frank's overall response rate was 96.42 percent, missing one day in December.

Interview responses and LUL descriptions/journals were first

categorized into several phenomena defined as "central ideas in the data" (Corbin and Strauss 1998, 103). The central ideas used in this study were locations, purposes, and Frank's recurring associations with his language use that were positive or negative.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Analysis of Frank's Language Use

Table 1 shows the total minutes of Frank's Japanese and English use in a week (seven days) in October, December, February, and April. Data from one day in December were missing; therefore, the total time in minutes in December is lower than in the other months.

Table 1. Frank's Japanese and English Language Use by Types

	October	**December***	**February**	**April**	**Total**
L Type / Total	4295 min. (%)	2910 min. (%)	3680 min. (%)	3480 min. (%)	14365 min. (%)
Japanese	1620 (37.71)	1860 (63.91)	2070 (56.25)	1190 (34.19)	6740 (46.91)
English	550 (12.8)	285 (9.79)	900 (24.45)	1150 (33.04)	2885 (20.08)
J>E	630 (14.66)	60 (2.06)	1190 (32.33)	990 (28.44)	2870 (19.97)
E>J	1425 (33.17)	705 (37.9)	60 (1.63)	150 (6.41)	2340 (16.28)
J=E	70 (1.62)	0	0	0	70 (0.04)

The table reveals that Frank used predominantly Japanese, accounting for 46.91 percent of the total logged minutes. Specifically, Frank primarily used Japanese for interactions in October, December, and February, but in April, his usage of Japanese slightly surpassed English.

Chart 1 presents the interactive and non-interactive language use sorted by different language types. Frank used interactive language more frequently than non-interactive language across all the language use types. The difference between interactive and non-interactive language use was minimal for Japanese (less than 10 percent) but more pronounced for English, Japanese > English, English > Japanese, and Japanese = English (more than 30 percent).

Chart 1. Total Minutes of Interactive vs. Non-interactive Language Use (min.)

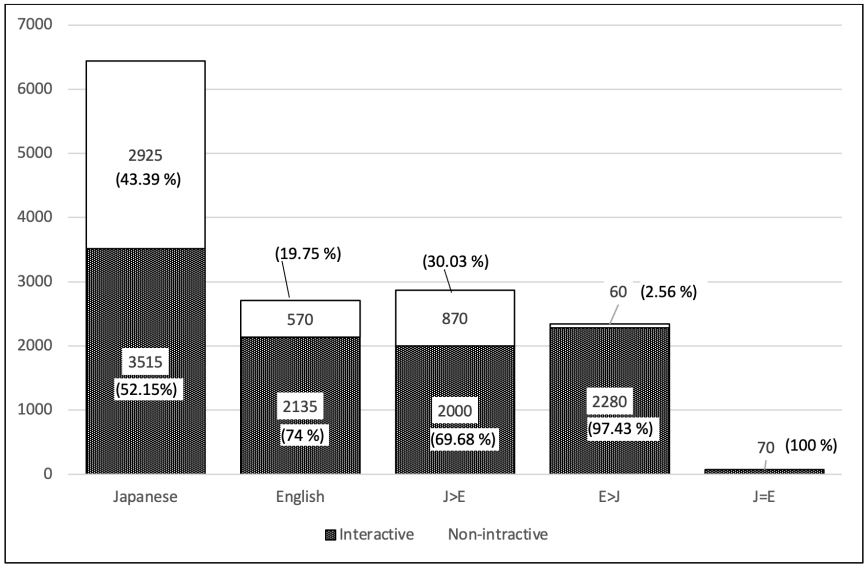

Chart 2. Total Minutes of Interactional Language Use by Language Type in Three Different Contexts (min.)

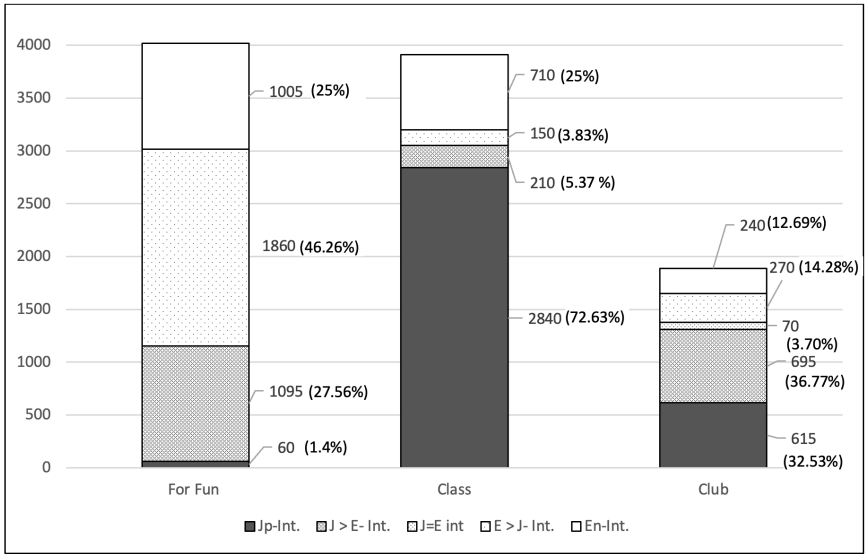

Chart 2 shows Frank's interactive language use categorized by the top three purposes: *for fun*, *club*, and *class*, in Japanese, English, and a mix of Japanese and English. For *fun* purposes, the largest proportion of language use was English > Japanese (46.26%), followed by Japanese > English (27.23%), English (25%), and Japanese (1.4%). In terms of interactive language use during classes, Frank predominantly used Japanese (72.63%), which remained consistent throughout his SA experience. Regarding Frank's language use during club activities, Frank mostly used Japanese > English (36.77%), followed by Japanese (32.53%), English > Japanese (14.28%), and English (12.69%).

The quantitative analysis indicated that Frank used Japanese more frequently than English, which seems to contradict his characterization of his SA experience as "a failure…because there was so much English." The following section focuses on how Japanese and English were used in different contexts and Frank's perceptions of these interactions.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis of Frank's Language Use

The qualitative analysis revealed Frank's motivations for joining the SA program, highlighting his desire for language acquisition and cultural integration. He mentioned his primary reason for participating in the ten-month SA program as a desire to learn more Japanese. In terms of his goals for the SA program, he mentioned making friends, getting to know people, and learning "how to live successfully" in Japan. He wanted to learn "how to be a Japanese citizen" (Pre-SA interview) because he planned to go back to Japan to get a job using Japanese in the US Navy. In short, Frank expected that he would improve his language proficiency through the SA program.

Interview and LUL data were categorized into neutral (i.e., simple descriptions of events), positive, and negative groups. Frank's reports of non-interactive language use were mostly neutral, short descriptions. For example, to describe the non-interactive language use type of *homework*, Frank wrote, "Grammar and reading homework" (February 15); of *self-study*, he wrote, "studying with Anki", (October 25); and of *fun,* he wrote, "listening to podcasts on train, at home, etc." (February 14). On the other hand, descriptions of positive and negative feelings were found mostly in reports of interactive-language use. [3]

In the following sections, I focus on three settings—classes, dorm, and clubs—because these were the primary environments where Frank used interactive language.

4.2.1 Interactive Language Use in Class

Similar to the logs of non-interactive language use described above, most of Frank's logs describing *class* were often short, such as "general class activities" (October 23, 24, 25, 27) and "typical day of class" (February 12, 13, 14), but sometimes he included his evaluation of his own performance and feelings along with descriptions of class activities.

> The listening assignment in class went pretty well. Had a presentation as well, which was painfully mediocre. I did well enough, but my Japanese presentation skills are still miles behind mine in English (in terms of delivery and effectiveness). (LUL April 13)

Interestingly, Frank seemed to have positive impressions of interactive language use in classes mainly taught in English. For example, in the third trimester, Frank took an anthropology class. Although these courses were taught in English, the presence of many Japanese among his fellow students led to occasional conversations in Japanese (post-SA interview). Frank's logs from these classes also reflected a positive experience:

> [Anthropology] class [was]… in English, and surprisingly the vast majority of students were Japanese. It does allow me to be cool sometimes though and translate a term or a sentence into Japanese for a classmate when the need arises…it's possible sometimes to convince people that I actually know what I'm doing in the language. Also [my roommate] is in this class and he sits next to me and talks to me, which makes me happy cause I would expect him not to want to cause my Japanese is always awful when I try to talk to him. (LUL, April 12)

In the log, Frank used expressions such as "allow me to be cool" and "convince people that I actually know what I'm doing in the language," which suggests confidence in his Japanese proficiency. It seems to suggest that by actively participating in the class, Frank was also able to make up for previous negative experiences using Japanese with his roommate.

4.2.2 Interactive Language Use in the Dorm

The dorm was where most of Frank's interactive language use *for fun* occurred, as Frank mentioned: "So in the [dorm] environment, you always do have the chance for interaction with other people" (Post-SA interview). Frank had two Japanese roommates and one American roommate who was also a SA student. Within these dorm interactions, however, Frank

constantly had to negotiate to have the chance to use Japanese, because the other residents who were L1 speakers of Japanese often wanted to use English. Moreover, Frank had to negotiate the use of Japanese while trying to maintain good relationships with other residents. The excerpt below from the post-SA interview shows Frank's struggles:

> I thought I should speak Japanese so I could practice, and he [Yuuki] was considerably more comfortable with Japanese, but he also wanted to practice English. Also, it was often difficult and awkward for me to try to speak Japanese effectively to him. (Post-SA interview)

Frank's use of "difficult" and "awkward" illustrates his discomfort using Japanese with his roommates.

When I asked him about his Japanese roommates, Frank noted that Kito and Yuuki, both male, were "talkative" and often engaged in gossip. Frank provided his impressions of Kito and Yuuki as "chirpy, like, gossipy type of person[s], which is generally more associated with girls… " (Post-SA interview). Frank mentioned that these behaviors exhibited by his Japanese roommates were "not really positive" (Post-SA interview). He contrasted his Japanese roommates' behaviors with his perception of "guys" from the United States, whom he said did not "always act super nice" (Post-SA interview). His observations of differences in male students' behaviors in Japan and in the United States seem to have resulted in an incident with Kito. In this incident, Kito asked Frank to help with a job application in English. The following is an excerpt from Frank's LUL regarding this interaction:

> Helping [Kito] with his job application that must be submitted in English. It's fun to help, but difficult to balance explanation with simply giving him new suggestions (LUL, February. 13.)

Frank described the experience as "fun," which suggested that he viewed the experience as positive, although he expressed some difficulty in helping his Japanese roommate. However, when the same incident came up in the post-SA interview, Frank's description of the same event was rather negative:

> So [Kito] asked me to help with [his job application].… So, the way I perceive that situation, I'm like, this is a serious thing. He's going to try to do this. I don't want to worry about trying to dance around… I'm gonna do my very best to as much as possible to help you out, know you, but that

> ended up not being a good thing…He got quite upset about, you know, me being condescending, you know, stuff like that... I tried to be very helpful with it, but I wasn't gentle enough about it… And that was very upsetting for me because it's just like I really tried… I even put myself on the line. I knew that was a risk. I'm just going to trust him that he understands what I'm doing right now… Basically, that was very mean about that kind of thing. And that was very upsetting for me because it's just like I really tried. (Post-SA interview)

Frank's descriptions, such as "[I didn't] want to worry about trying to dance around, try to not be me," because "this [helping with Kito's job application] is a serious thing," suggest that his approach to the situation was influenced by his identity as a "guy in the U.S." who does "not always act super nice." Frank also mentioned that he "knew [his way of communicating in English]…was a risk," but he believed that his Japanese roommate would understand that his actions were meant to be helpful. Despite these interactions, however, Frank's behaviors (i.e., persona) were interpreted by his roommate as being "condescending," which ended up making both of them "unhappy" (Post-SA interview).

4.2.3 Interactive Language Use in a School Club and a Local Club

Frank joined both the school dance club and the local dance club. However, his language experiences in the school dance club and the local dance club differed drastically. In the school dance club, he encountered a conflict between his personal goal of speaking Japanese with Japanese students to improve his language skills and the local Japanese students' preference to speak English with him. As he described it, "the biggest struggle was trying to decide if I should speak English or Japanese" (Post-SA interview). The following remarks are from Frank's LUL and post-SA interview describing his language use/choice in the school club:

> Mostly in English although some Japanese, but because of the English-speaking students there (myself probably included) the girls would often speak in English or go back to English if I started something in Japanese, which is less than ideal for me but they do want English practice too, so I don't mind. (LUL, December 11)

> Mix of both languages, often one person would speak in one language and get a response in the other. If I speak in Japanese and get a response in English it makes me think my Japanese probably wasn't good enough, but it's hard to be sure. (LUL, February 12)

Frank described how using English with Japanese students at the club was "less ideal for me" and that "[it] makes me think my Japanese probably wasn't good enough." In these interactions, Frank seemed to be positioned as a linguistic minority whose Japanese was not good enough to continue the interaction in the language; therefore, his interlocutor decided to switch to English. Such incidents made him feel incompetent or powerless. Frank further expressed his frustrations over these interactions during the post-SA interview:

> I would try to speak in Japanese too sometimes. But then there's a lot of times when it's like, well, they want to practice speaking in English and a lot of times when it's like, oh, their English is better than my Japanese. …If I think of things from purely my perspective of I want to practice Japanese, is that selfish? Are there sometimes when that's selfish while they come to this international school and maybe they want to speak English, and of course, I've actually had these conversations with them sometimes, but they're not going to come out and say, yes, please speak English all the time. (Post-SA interview, 1:27)

Frank's rhetorical question of whether it was selfish for him to want to practice Japanese revealed his frustration with and negative perceptions of his interactions with Japanese students in the school club.

In contrast to the school dance club, Frank held very positive perceptions of his experiences at Kyogi Dance Club (a local competition dance club, most of whose members were in their thirties and forties), where he participated twice a week. During his time at the local dance club, Frank predominantly used Japanese. Reflecting in the post-SA interview on his experiences, he mentioned, "I did have times where I was only in a Japanese environment at Kyogi Dance Club that was only Japanese." Here, Frank compares his experiences in the two different dance clubs:

> Pretty much everyone else there was just Japanese. Sounds really good. And over time, I got to become more comfortable with them and tried to talk more with them and everything like that. And that was really great. And that was probably my favorite experience in terms of just like getting into Japanese culture. It was awesome. I enjoyed that a lot and got to make some real memories of Japanese society because in school, we're just students doing our things there and stuff like that, and especially international school. So that was really cool. I really enjoyed that. So yeah, overall, it was good, but I'm definitely unsatisfied with it from an academic perspective.

(Post-SA interview, 3:05)

In this excerpt, Frank used terms like "awesome," "my favorite experience," and "really great" to describe his experience at Kyogi Dance Club. In addition, he viewed his experience there as positive, because it enabled him to "[get] into Japanese culture" and "make some real memories of Japanese society." There was no mention of his struggle with using Japanese in these contexts. At the end of the quote, Frank mentioned that, by contrast, at the school dance club, he felt that he was a just student at the "international school" and that he was "definitely unsatisfied… from an academic perspective," which suggests his negative view of the interactive experiences at his host university.

5. Discussion

The quantitative data revealed that Frank used Japanese more often than English during his SA experience. Despite this, he expressed dissatisfaction from an academic perspective, feeling that he did not practice speaking Japanese nearly as much as he could have or would have liked. As shown in Table 1, Frank's use of English interaction increased later in his SA experiences, particularly in February and April. In contrast, his use of Japanese decreased at the end of his SA program. These shifts may have left him with a strong impression that he used English more than Japanese during his time in Japan. The quantitative data also indicated that most of Frank's interactive language use (both Japanese and English) happened in the dorm (for fun), in class, and at the school club.

Frank used Japanese for interaction mostly in the Japanese language classroom, as presented in Charts 1 and 2. However, most of the language use in classes were often controlled by instructors, who were able to choose the language spoken in class. In addition, Frank's LUL data revealed that the classroom interactions largely occurred among other international students who were also learning Japanese as a foreign or second language. Having expressed his SA goal as learning "how to be a Japanese citizen" (Pre-SA interview) who could use Japanese for career purposes, Frank may not have perceived these in-class interactions as reflective of authentic, everyday Japanese use.

Frank's interactive language use in clubs and leisure, on the other hand, was mostly a mix of English and Japanese. The qualitative analysis also revealed that Frank struggled to secure opportunities to use Japanese in interactions outside the classroom and, consequently, often perceived

these interactions negatively. Receiving responses in English even when he had used Japanese made Frank think that his Japanese was not good enough; previous studies describe L2 speakers of Japanese in Japan having similar experiences and similar self-perceptions (Moody 2019; Takeuchi 2021). Furthermore, Frank's race as a white American could have been a mitigating factor in shaping Japanese people's perceptions of him and his interactions with Japanese L1 speakers, who may have wanted or felt obligated to speak English with him, a dynamic found in a 2009 study by Kumagai and Sato. These experiences of continually having to negotiate the use of Japanese may have also left Frank with a strong impression that using Japanese outside of the classroom was difficult.

Finally, Frank's unsuccessful experience of English interaction with his roommate may have further reinforced his negative perceptions of English use in Japan. Consistent with findings from previous studies (Moody 2018; Zeng 2021), Frank's status as a native speaker of English was seen as an asset by his roommate, who needed assistance with an English job application. If Frank had presented a Third-Space persona in this context, he would have employed more indirect, conflict-prevention strategies, rather than providing issue-oriented arguments and reasonings or his corrections (Ting-Toomey 1985). Instead, however, Frank's interaction with his roommate was shaped by his identity as an American man, who "[doesn't] always act like super nice" (Post-SA interview). Frank's corrections, including issue-oriented arguments, were perceived by his roommate as condescending, causing tension in their relationship. From the perspective of the Japanese roommate, Frank's behavior may have been interpreted as "a personal attack or a sign of mistrust" (Ting-Toomey 1985, 77). Had Frank approached the situation with a more Third-Space persona, he might have navigated the interaction more successfully and fostered a better relationship with his roommate. This, in turn, could have created more opportunities for meaningful interactions in the TL (Isabelle-Gracie 2006), ultimately strengthening Frank's social connections with locals and enhancing Frank's language proficiency and cultural understanding (Baker-Smemoe et al. 2014).

The findings collectively shed light on the complex and nuanced interactive experiences of being an Anglophone SA student in Japan. As a learner of Japanese, Frank frequently felt uncomfortable and eventually discouraged from using Japanese, suggesting that he was positioned as a linguistic minority (Kramsch 2009). However, when helping with his roommate's English job application, the power dynamics between Frank

and his roommate seemed to shift. During this interaction, Frank did not appear to feel powerless, especially as he expressed his American "guy" identity through his use of English, giving him a sense of control over the content. Unfortunately, his approach did not contribute positively to their relationship.

Frank's comment, "they want to practice speaking in English" (Post-SA interview), exemplifies a clear recognition of the host community's expectations of him. However, because there was a conflict between their expectations and his own language practice aspirations, he consistently struggled with the choice of language use in the school setting.

6. Supporting SA Students' Construction of Third Space Personae at Home Institutions

Merely recognizing local people's expectations (i.e., speaking English with L1 speakers of English) does not lead Anglophone SA students to successfully construct strong relationships with locals. This is especially true when the SA students' goals (i.e., using the target language) conflict with the locals' expectations. Furthermore, "knowing" cultural differences does not guarantee that a FL learner can present a constructive Third-Space persona. For instance, despite recognizing the "risk" involved, Frank employed direct communication strategies when assisting his Japanese roommate with a job application—an approach influenced by his identity as a young man from the U. S. This highlights the need for home institutions to equip SA students with the skills to construct and present Third-Space personae effectively. These skills enable FL learners to navigate gaps in expectations and collaboratively create a meaningful and mutually beneficial Third Space (Jian, 2021).

To help SA students develop Third-Space personae, Japanese language classes at home institutions should go beyond simply teaching vocabulary and grammar. Encouraging FL learners to freely communicate in the TL may backfire when students apply their C1 norms to TL communication. Instead, FL classrooms should focus on teaching students how their words and actions might be perceived in the target community (Walker and Noda 2010). Certain speech acts may make students feel uncomfortable or conflict with their identity, especially when there is significant social distance between the C1 and TC (Schumann 1976; Siegal 1995). However, with deliberate and repeated practice, FL learners can develop the skills to interpret local people's intentions and communicate in a culturally coherent manner within the TL/TC (Noda

2007; Walker and Noda 2010).

The strategic use of English can serve as a useful tool for gaining more access to interactional opportunities with locals and strengthening relationships, rather than entirely avoiding locals who want to speak English (Dewey, Belnap, et al., 2013). To cultivate meaningful relationships with Japanese people and improve their own Japanese language skills, Anglophone students must learn not only to communicate appropriately in Japanese, but also to adopt a Third-Space persona when using English. Incorporate the TC's communication strategies during English interaction can be particularly beneficial (Byram 2021; Fantini 2009). Establishing initial social connections through English may provide SA students with a foundation for more substantive and meaningful interactions that contribute to their Japanese language use.

Home institutions must also clearly communicate to their Anglophone students a fundamental reality defining the SA experience in Japan: the global status of the English language (Kubota 2016). SA students should also be informed that interactional experiences with Japanese L1 speakers may vary based on their racial appearances (Kumagai and Sato 2009). For example, non-Asian American SA students may encounter Japanese people who want to speak English more often than Asian American SA students do. This disparity can affect the level of immersion and the opportunities for practicing Japanese, potentially leading to different language use and learning experiences among students of diverse racial backgrounds.

Finally, because mutual understanding and collaboration are necessary to construct a meaningful Third Space (Jian 2021), cooperation between host institutions is imperative. Tobaru (2019) also discusses training local Japanese students who participate in a short SA program as language partners; this helps to adjust the local Japanese students' prior images of Americans, thereby helping to mitigate the feeling of "psychological distance" (125). Home and host institutions can also provide long-term support to both pre- and post-SA students, aiding both Japanese and American students in recognizing and understanding each other's expectations. Japanese students who have previously participated in SA programs in the U. S. could be trained to act as peer mentors for American students coming to study at Japanese universities. By fostering these ongoing relationships, both local Japanese students and American SA students can co-construct a meaningful Third Space.

7. Conclusion

This case study examined the experiences of an American undergraduate studying in Japan, focusing on his perception of language use during study abroad. Although he succeeded in language learning and building social networks, he viewed the academic aspect of his study abroad experience as a failure due to the abundant use of English. Quantitative analysis showed that he used Japanese more overall; however, most non-classroom interactions included English. Qualitative analysis highlighted his struggle to balance locals' preference for English with his desire to use Japanese, revealing the complexities of intercultural communication and the role of English as a global language.

One of the limitations of this study is that the design of the language use log may have influenced the participant's perception that using more Japanese is desirable. Future research should provide clear instructions to mitigate such biases. In addition, research should investigate how race influences SA students' interactions with Japanese L1 speakers by including SA students from diverse racial backgrounds. Furthermore, examining local people's perspectives on SA students' language use and behaviors, along with the influence of ESL/ELF communication skills, can provide deeper insights into the intercultural communication skills required for Anglophone students to succeed as global citizens. Lastly, this study focuses solely on one SA student's experience. Future research should explore the effects of English as a global language on a larger number of Anglophone SA students' experiences. These issues hold significant pedagogical implications for enhancing Anglophone SA students' language and cultural learning in Japan.

NOTES

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[1] In this paper, the term "Anglophone" refers to speakers of English as their first language.

[2] This university require students to submit IELTS (6.5 or higher) and TOFEL iBT (79 or higher) scores, and their requirement tend to higher than some of the top universities in Japan.

[3] There is a possibility that the instructions of LUL could influence Frank's positive and negative perceptions of his own language use.

APPENDIX A

Pre-SA Interview Questions

1. Which part of Japan will you be staying?
2. When do you leave for Japan? How long is your stay going to be?
3. What is your primary reason for studying abroad in Japan?
4. What are your goals for studying abroad in Japan?
5. What strategies will you use achieve these goals?
6. What do you think about Japan?
7. What do you think about the US?
8. Do you have any concerns about your up-coming study abroad year in Japan?

APPENDIX B

During and Post-SA Interview Questions

1. How is/was your overall study abroad experience (so far)?
2. What did you learn most from this experience (so far)?
3. What had you wanted to learn/experience before SA but feel you did not learn/experience as much as during SA?
4. How would you describe your personal and social environment where you live(d) in Japan?
5. In what areas do(did) you struggle? How do(did) you cope with or overcome those areas of struggle?
6. Who do you consider your closest friends in Japan? How did you meet them?
7. What aspects of your Japanese friends or people's behavior confused or surprised you?
8. What aspects of your Japanese friends or people's language use confused or surprised you?
9. What challenges or difficulties do you feel you have had while communicating with your Japanese friends or people?
10. What strategies do you use when communicating with Japanese people?

APPENDIX C
Language Use Log Instructions

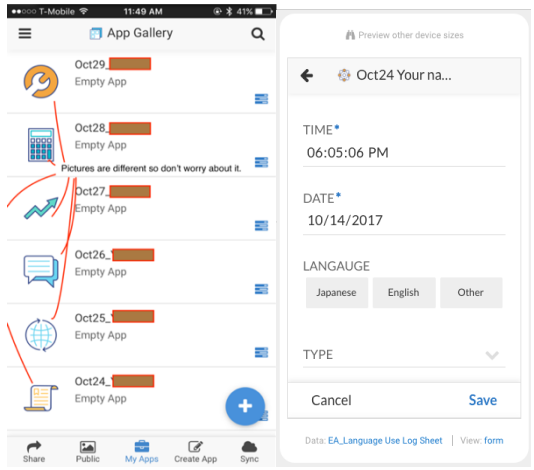
How to download and use the Language Use Apps (Ver.2)

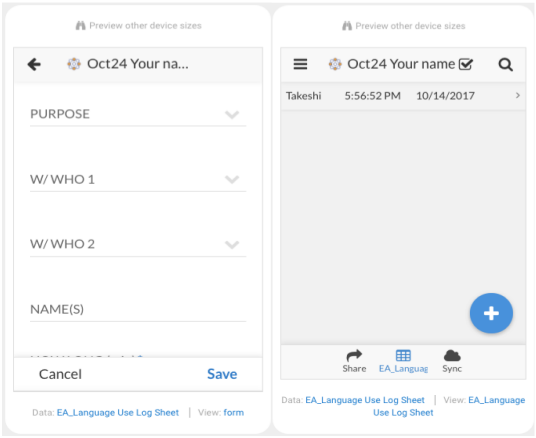
1. Access to the app through the link I shared via Line or email.
2. If you don't have the AppSheet app on your phone, please download it.

   (**Android:**https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=x1Trackmaster.x1Trackmaster&hl=en) or (**iPhone**: https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/appsheet/id732548900?mt=8)
3. After downloading AppSheet, please open the app. You will see an icon Practice_YourName. Please use this app to practice your language use until Oct. 23, 2017.
4. The first Language Log Use will **start Oct 23, 2017** and **ends Oct 29, 2017.** Every morning around JST 7am, I will send a link for access to Language Use Log app for the day. For example, you will receive a link for an app named Oct23_YourName in the morning of Oct. 23, 2017. Please use the app to log your language use for October 23, 2017. In total, you will receive 8 apps (including the practice app). If you tap the mark with the three lines at the upper left-hand corner and tap App Gallery, you will see all the apps like the first screenshot on the right.
5. You can enter your language use anytime you want, and it doesn't have to be in a chronological order. But I recommend that you log your language use as soon as you finish whatever language activity. However, if a frequent language use like reading English/Japanese news or messages on your phone or tablet, you should enter the total amount of time spending on the language use as one entry at the end of the day. In order to enter your language log, please tap the plus button on the lower right- hand corner.
6. You will see the screen on the right. Please skip the first two sections (i.e., **TIME & DATE**). You don't have to do anything about them.
7. Please tap the language (i.e., Japanese, English or Other) you use.
8. And choose the type of language you use (i.e., Interactional or non-interactional language). For example, talking to someone would be an interactional language, but if you are talking to yourself (e.g., practicing for CC or speech etc.), that is non-interactional. Another example is, if you are writing a journal or essay, it's non-interactional. But if you are typing a message in a chat-box or writing emails, this would be another example of interactional language use.
9. After completing **TYPE**, please choose type of language (**TYPE 1-4**), namely, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. If you use more than one type of language, please list the most used language type on **TYPE 1** to the least on **TYPE 4**.
10. For the **PURPOSE**, please choose from Homework, For Fun, Self-study, Work, Class, Club (サークル) and Other.
11. In **WHO1-2**, if you selected interactional language use in #9 above, please provide whom you are interacted with (i.e., Friend, Professor etc.)
13. In **NAME(s)**, if you selected interactional language use in #9 above, please provide the name of the person whom you interacted with.

14. In **HOW LONG (min)**, please provide the length of time you are engaged in the language use (e.g. 14 min. or 90 min. etc.).
15. In **DESCRIPTION**, please provide a brief description of what you did (e.g. talking about politics in Japan etc.).
16. Finally, please input the time you started the language use. Please make sure to use military time.

When you finish, please tap **SAVE** to save the data.





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