The impact of study abroad on Japanese language learners’ out-of-class interaction and social networks

Rikki Campbell
Doctoral Candidate
Japanese Studies
School of Language, Cultures and Linguistics
Monash University, Australia

rlcam3@student.monash.edu
Research Background

- Research interest stemmed from personal experience as Japanese learner
- Part of a larger doctoral project examining pre-, during, and post- study abroad networks and social interaction with both native and non-native Japanese speakers
- Currently 1.5 years into doctoral candidacy
Research Questions

1) What is the nature of Japanese language learners’ networks with native Japanese speakers post-study abroad?

2) What factors influence the nature of learners’ networks and interaction with native Japanese speakers post-study abroad?

3) What are the patterns of language usage within these networks and what factors influence them?
Research Design

- Six Japanese language learner informants
  - Background questionnaire
  - Semi-structured interview
  - Interaction journal and follow-up interviews
  - [Samples of naturally occurring interaction]

- Conceptual framework:
  - Boissevain’s (1974) criteria for network analysis
  - Grosjean’s (1982) factors influencing language choice
  - Takai’s (1990) factors influencing intercultural contact
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Ethnicity and other languages spoken at home</th>
<th>Approximate length of formal Japanese study prior to university study abroad</th>
<th>Approximate level of formal Japanese study prior to study abroad</th>
<th>Length and purpose of trips to Japan prior to study abroad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Angela</strong> (F)</td>
<td>Australian born Chinese. Speaks English with parents and siblings</td>
<td>Three years at Australian high school, and two and a half years at university</td>
<td>CEFR B1 JLPT N4 (Japanese 5)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alex</strong> (M)</td>
<td>Caucasian New Zealander, speaks English (with son and daughter), Polish (with parents) and Korean (with wife) at home</td>
<td>Two years at New Zealand high school and one and a half years at New Zealand university</td>
<td>CEFR B1 JLPT N2 (Japanese 8)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marie</strong> (F)</td>
<td>French, speaks French and English at home</td>
<td>One year high school exchange in Japan and one year at university</td>
<td>CEFR B1 JLPT N2 (Japanese 8)</td>
<td>2004 three week holiday 2005-2006 One year high school exchange 2006 One month holiday to see host family 2007 Three one-week trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sophie</strong> (F)</td>
<td>Caucasian Australian, speaks English at home</td>
<td>All of elementary and high school, and two and a half years at Australian university</td>
<td>CEFR B2 JLPT N2 (Japanese 9)</td>
<td>2006 Two week high school tour (homestay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phoebe</strong> (F)</td>
<td>Caucasian Australian, speaks English at home</td>
<td>All of high school and one and two years at Australian university</td>
<td>CEFR B1 JLPT N2 (Japanese 8)</td>
<td>2007 Five week high school exchange (homestay) 2011 One week holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jane</strong> (F)</td>
<td>Caucasian Australian, speaks English at home</td>
<td>Two and a half years at Australian university</td>
<td>CEFR B1 JLPT N4 (Japanese 5)</td>
<td>2011 Two weeks, program was meant to commence but was cancelled in wake of Tohoku Disaster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Informant background post-SA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Details of study abroad program in Japan</th>
<th>Time since SA program completion</th>
<th>Subsequent Japanese studies</th>
<th>Subsequent trips to Japan</th>
<th>Current occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela (F)</td>
<td>One year 1997-1998 (3rd year of university) at University in Chiba</td>
<td>14.5 years</td>
<td>1999 Honors in Japanese studies</td>
<td>1999 Research Trip (one week) 2003 Holiday (three weeks) 2006 Holiday (one week) 2007 Holiday (one week) 2010 Holiday (one week)</td>
<td>Working in law firm in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex (M)</td>
<td>One year 2007-2008 (2nd year of university) as research scholar at University in Hiroshima</td>
<td>4.5 years</td>
<td>2011-12 Honors in Japanese/Korean 2013 Applying for Phd in Japanese translation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Applying for Phd in Japanese translation at Australian university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie (F)</td>
<td>One year 2008 (2nd year of university) at University in Tokyo</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>2009 Japanese 10, 11 &amp; 12 2010 Intensive Japanese course at university in Tokyo (one year)</td>
<td>Jul 2009 Holiday (three weeks) Dec 2009 Holiday (one week) 2010 Intensive Japanese course at university in Tokyo (one year)</td>
<td>Returned to France, looking for job in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie (F)</td>
<td>Six weeks June-July 2012 (2nd year of university) at Language Institute in Kansai</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>Semester 2, 2012 Japanese 10</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Full time undergraduate student at Australian university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoebe (F)</td>
<td>One semester 2012 (3rd year of university) at University in Tokyo</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>Semester 1, 2013 Japanese 11</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Full time undergraduate student at Australian university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane (F)</td>
<td>One year 2011-2012 (3rd year of university) at private university in Tokyo</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>Semester 2, 2012 Japanese 8</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Full time undergraduate student at Australian university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS
Current networks with native Japanese-speakers

14.5 years
Angela

Percentage of SA network maintained = 43%

4-5 years
Alex

Percentage of SA network maintained = 8%

Marie

Percentage of SA network maintained = 91%

8-9 months
Phoebe

Percentage of SA network maintained = 71%

Sophie

Percentage of SA network maintained = 13%

Jane

Percentage of SA network maintained = 82%

Pre-SA
SA
Post-SA
Factors influencing maintenance of networks

- Common technology: email, Facebook, messaging apps
- Further travel/opportunities to meet up
- Other commitments (family, work, study etc.)
- Closeness of relationship developed
- Passing of time
Development of new networks

- Key domains for network development:
  - Japanese class
  - Japanese university alumni associations
  - University’s “Japan Club”
  - Other social groups/societies outside of university
  - Language exchange
  - Through friends
  - Subsequent trips to Japan (Marie)

- Factors influencing degree of network expansion
  - Desire to “keep up” Japanese use and proficiency
  - Other priorities (study, work, family etc)
  - Distal proximity to social events
Current patterns of language use with NSs

Language varieties (Nishimura 1992)
- Mixed
- Predominantly other language
- Predominantly English
- Predominantly Japanese

Marie: 51% Mixed, 40% Predominantly English, 9% Predominantly Japanese, 0% Predominantly other language
Jane: 17% Mixed, 20% Predominantly English, 5% Predominantly Japanese, 0% Predominantly other language
Frankie: 10% Mixed, 30% Predominantly English, 1% Predominantly Japanese, 0% Predominantly other language
Alex: 2% Mixed, 30% Predominantly English, 0% Predominantly Japanese, 0% Predominantly other language
Angela: 10% Mixed, 0% Predominantly English, 0% Predominantly Japanese, 0% Predominantly other language
Sophie: 1% Mixed, 1% Predominantly English, 0% Predominantly Japanese, 0% Predominantly other language
Factors impacting language selection (1)

Grosjean (1982): participant, situation, discourse content, function

- **Participant-related factors**
  - Network members’ knowledge of English (or French)
  - Own or others’ insistence in using L2
  - Language that relationship was established in

- **Situation-related factors**
  - Location/setting
  - Dominant language
  - Presence of monolinguals
  - Channel of interaction
Factors impacting language selection (2)

- Discourse content-related factors
  - Common L2 phrases/words
  - Topics

- Interactional function-related factors
  - To include/exclude someone
  - To clarify L2 vocabulary/grammar
Opportunities for learning within networks

- Significantly increased opportunities for Japanese use post-study abroad

- Language exposure on Facebook
  - Reading input and writing output
  - Observation of natural NS-NS discourse

- Mediated language assistance
  - Utilisation of Facebook chat
  - Language exchange
Network analysis and SNSs

- Facebook provides enhanced opportunities for network maintenance, L2 exposure, use and learning
- Incorporating Facebook usage into current frameworks for network analysis
  - Does simply being connected on Facebook classify as maintained contact?
  - To what extent does reading or ‘liking’ of posts constitute interaction?
    - Active/passive or reactive
    - Emotional closeness (strong/weak ties)
Thank you for your time!

Any questions, comments or feedback welcome

Rikki Campbell
rlcam3@student.monash.edu
References