

Students' Experiences of a Short Homestay in England ~ the Case of Regional Studies Students

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Abstract

Many universities see short term programs as a good way for students to experience a shortened version of the full study abroad experience, but these programs can generally be contingent on how successful the homestay situation is. This paper followed 19 students from the Tourism Department at Toyo University on a three week program at a university in England, with a homestay component to find out what students thought about the homestay before and during their stay. This paper is a small part of a much larger qualitative study, and in it the author employed diaries and interviews with both students and families, setting ten distinct codes. This paper finally offers recommendations to maximize the homestay interaction.

Keyword: homestay, diary studies, qualitative research

Introduction

There are many universities now in Japan that offer some form of short study abroad experience, either as part of the curriculum, or not. These shorter study abroad programs are a good way to increase the numbers of students who can have an intercultural experience while in university by eliminating many of the obstacles that longer travel abroad study programs have (Arenson, 2003). These shorter programs are less expensive than, say, year-long programs, and participating students can also get study credit at their universities. Participating students tend to be together more on a shorter program so there is less fear of being alone, as with longer study abroad. Plus, owing to the time factor, a lot more organized activities can be packed in to the time frame, whereas on longer study abroad program the students may not do so many extra activities because these will need to be paid for and organized most often by the student him/herself.

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One particular feature of the short programs, as opposed to more long term study abroad situations, is the existence of a homestay, which is usually at least one student staying together with a local family for the duration of the study. This situation can provide an excellent way of making real contact with the L2 target culture. Students are left on their own in the family, and need to communicate in order to make their stay a satisfying one. Unlike the native country, the homestay setting may provide more opportunities to engage in the target language and can help students to experience the culture inherent in the family setting in a safe and relaxed way. Very often these short programs can be a success or not depending on the homestay environment, and the interaction between the host family and the student or students in the home.

Study abroad situation of Faculty of Regional Studies at Toyo University

At present the Faculty of Regional Studies has a number of short term programs for studying English in Canada, the Philippines and England. These programs have been running from between one and four years and the duration of these short programs is three or four weeks. In the Philippines four weeks is quite cheap, but in Canada or England four weeks can make the price too inhibitive, so for Canada and England the program is just three weeks long. These programs are popular in the faculty and many students are usually interested in them going by the number of students that take part in explanations about each program to encourage students to take part.

This paper will focus on the Bournemouth program because the author escorts the students each year for the duration of this program. The Bournemouth program runs at the end of February to the middle of March, and is made up of the following core components:

- English communication classes
- Tourism major classes
- Tours and trips to famous sightseeing spots
- Homestay with an English family

The homestays are arranged by the educational institute that offers the English and tourism classes, which will be referred to as BU in this paper. BU draws a base of willing homestay families from its staff and through local advertisements. Each application is then assessed by a representative at BU, and a decision is made, based

mostly on how close the homestay location is to BU. From the Toyo side students' homestay preferences, including children, pets and willingness to share with another Toyo student in one homestay location are recorded and a match is made with the conditions given and those available.

The first time this program was run was in 2007 and 11 students went on that original trip. The second time in 2010 19 students took part. This second time will be the focus of this paper. Lots of data was collected during the 2010 visit, and the author wishes to create a large qualitative study looking at all aspects of the program holistically. For this paper, the focus is on the homestay situation, and how the students felt before and during their experiences of being in an English home.

Theoretical Framework

Now, I will explain how the research in this paper was undertaken. The data in this study was collected using qualitative techniques because it was hoped that closer inspection of data would produce insights of a deeper nature than undertaking quantitative analysis. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is based not on the number of instances, but on the depth of each instance itself. Generally, the qualitative study does not set hypothesis questions prior to the data collection. Data, collected through techniques, such as observation, diaries and interviews, will serve to produce reoccurring themes that can be grouped to explain the phenomena.

The research technique I have used for data analysis is called situated qualitative research. Situated qualitative research displays the following characteristics (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to describe this type of research. The researcher aims to:

- 1) Maintain prolonged contact with the situation.
- 2) Gain holistic understanding of the event.
- 3) Include the understanding and the perceptions of the people involved in the situation.
- 4) Keep the data in its original form.
- 5) Make multiple interpretations of the data, where possible.
- 6) Become the main measurement device.
- 7) Use words, rather numbers, to analyse the data.

From answers given to relevant questions the author probed in-depth to find out more key information about particular points. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) recognize that...

“While the aim is to minimize the influence of the researcher on what the interviewee says, some structuring is necessary in terms of what is and is not relevant”. P. 153

The structure in this analysis comes through coding. The coding analysis was taken from ideas on pattern coding from Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 69) that began with me reading all the data several times to try and inductively generate some main themes for each of the diaries, observations and interviews. These sheets were then made into one large sheet that visually represented all the relevant coded data pertaining to student participants from the first-level coding, plus any miscellaneous data that could not be assigned a code.

After having established tentative codes for this study, my next analysis involved some interpretation of parts of the codes. From quotes and descriptions in the field notes and tape transcripts, I used a process called particular description that Erikson (1986, p. 149) described as basic units of analysis that use instances of social action and quotes (presented in smaller italic type face) from the study to add necessary credibility to the data used.

Qualitative studies of study abroad

There should be a wealth of knowledge of the homestay environment, but as Woodall and Takeuchi (1999) claim the experience “may often be taken for granted, and its nature...has rarely been described or evaluated in the research literature”, p.35. These authors wanted to explore the expectations through interview responses of both homestay hosts in America and four Japanese students using the homestays. The students had lived with families from seven weeks up to seven months, and the host families had had between five months to eight years of hosting experience. The range of experiences even in this small group clearly showed that the situation is a complicated one. Misunderstandings in the home environment can be cultural-based expectations. One host mother recognized her forthrightness and strength in the house and the fact that the male homestay students would often see the father doing housework, something that would be unusual in the Japanese household. The mother said that this created a kind of friction between her and those students. Other problems arose in the expectations of how homestay parents should communicate with the students. One homestay mother used what has been referred to as foreigner talk (FT), or making conscious adjustments to grammar, vocabulary and register in order to

make the message more understandable to the homestay student. The parent, through having hosting many Japanese students before, was able to know instinctively what the nature of the message was even if the message delivery was incorrect. Although this may have been perceived as helping the student in the eyes of the host, the student was dissatisfied with the quality of the conversation. Indeed, the authors go on to claim that these kinds of impoverished conversations deny students the opportunity to listen to “authentic language”, p. 41. They do advocate quality rather than quantity of conversation during the homestay as beneficial. Perception of time also played a role in the homestay environment. Students claimed that they were engaged in conversation for around three to four hours every day with the homestay parents, whereas the same parent claimed this amount was less than one hour. Actually, the homestay student although not engaged in conversation directly, was doing his homework in front of the homestay family, and this for him, was regarded as a sense of engagement, though the host did not see it this way. Finally, for students that had little speaking proficiency before they left for their homestay program, some homestay parents made an effort to engage the student through heavily scaffolded conversations, but others seemed to simply get frustrated and withdraw somewhat. This situation may have partly lead to students becoming tired with making conversations and spending more time alone in their rooms.

Another study by Tanaka (2007) was a qualitative study of 29 Japanese students' in New Zealand for 12 weeks. Tanaka used interviews and diaries in that study and found that study abroad did not necessarily provide as many opportunities to use English outside the classroom as could be imagined. Even if students are using a homestay, the subsequent interactions with families were quite limited. There is also the problem of Japanese keeping up their regular associations with other Japanese outside the classroom. In order to create situations where students can come into more contact with English in the target setting, factors such as the learners' initial target language (L2) proficiency, and how well native speakers (in New Zealand) could adjust their level of speaking to make it comprehensible to the learner were two important factors. Tanaka went on to say that overall 58% of participants reported having had less than one hour of interaction with homestay families during an average day. Interaction only took place at meal times and was restricted to simple, everyday English about routines and daily activities. The students spent much time alone in their rooms. We might associate this time spent alone with shy and withdrawn students, but even students with outgoing personalities would sit in their room waiting to be

asked to join the family, as they thought it signalled politeness (Schmidt-Rinehart and Knight (2004), p. 257). The most significant factor related to the adjustment appeared to be prior to the homestay environment and was knowledge of the culture and its customs. The problems listed by students during the homestay related to food, time, clothes, etc, but the biggest problem was that they did not feel they had been included in enough of the family activities. From the host families' side the biggest problem was students did not communicate with families about problems, instead preferring to wait to the end to complain to the director of the program. In most situations, however, the homestay mothers did offer linguistic, cultural and psychological support; taking on the role of surrogate mothers to the students. It is clear that the host families feel that the family situations warrant discussion of problems on time.

Kitao (1993), carried out a journal study of the thoughts of 115 Japanese university students on a four-week program, including four days homestay in the US. Journals revealed that homestay interaction meant engaging in many adventure activities, and all students formed good relationships. One student commented "They were all very kind and treated us as members of their family, I was very glad to stay with them for a week, I won't forget them." p.8. This four week program was shorter than some of the other programs and there maybe less time for negative feelings to build.

Kendall-Smith and Rich (2003) concentrated wholly on the perspective of the hosts. They interviewed seven hosts from New Zealand, all with previous hosting experience, who had opened their houses to students. The study showed that hosts were satisfied with the cultural enrichment of having people from other countries staying at their homes, as well as intellectual stimulation derived from conversing on a wide variety of topics. It is quite clear that the hosts who enjoyed this level of stimulation had students who were very proficient in English. Host dissatisfaction in the study, however, did come from financial problems such as a feeling that the student was wasting money, or the way that students paid the homestay family directly instead of through a third party. This took the family feeling away from the experience. Food was also the source of problems; both a dislike of the family diet or that consideration was not given by students when they arrived late for dinner or, in some instances, eating too much food. This kind of attitude maybe strong for the Japanese students. The biggest complaint by hosts though was what they perceived as attitudes of the homestay students ranging from rudeness to an unwillingness to join in with the host culture. This not joining in was observed more in younger sojourners

than older sojourners who it was thought would be more pressured by their parents to join an abroad program, and therefore would have less personal stake in positive outcomes. The people who did not join in were seen to congregate in their own cultural groups. Some saw this as laziness, but it could also be interpreted as some reaction to culture shock, and lots of emotion. Lastly, complaints were made about having little support from the homestay organizing company when it came to solving bigger problems like students wanting to move families or health issues. The authors concluded that even though we perceive the students to have a kind of culture shock, actually, the hosting family may well go through a similar upheaval, living in close proximity to a potentially new culture with language and value differences. It was recommended that effective support systems, training and knowledge of the homestay culture be imparted to host families to limit the potential for problems, as onus for success seems to rest with the family as the knowledgeable older.

It can be seen from the above sample of qualitative studies that there are positive and negative experiences for both students and hosts in the homestay situation. This paper sets out to look at the homestay environment of the students from the Faculty of Regional Studies who embarked on a three-week study tour to England in March 2010, and what they thought about before and during that experience.

Method

As stated before this paper is to be part of a larger qualitative paper, which employed a number of different qualitative data collection methods and analyses. The methods pertaining to this paper specifically include student diaries, student interviews and homestay interviews. Firstly, the diaries were used to collect data from students before and during the homestay experience. Guidelines for the student journals come from a study by Numrich, 1996, p.152, originally designed to collect information from novice ESL teachers in the U.S. For this study students were further requested to write in English in their diaries with recourse to some Japanese if they could not express a word. Students completed one diary entry before they left, which covered their reason for joining the program, goals, and worries about the homestay. The diaries were checked four times during the three week period. Each time the author left a comment, followed by questions or assignments that would guide the following diary entry. These questions were a mixture of set questions for all members and personal questions aimed directly at a point or comment a student had made in

their diary. The four diary entries totaled from between 14 to 24 pages of the diary in the form of an A4 notebook. The diary entries were followed up with a final English interview with each student at the end of the program that lasted around 15 minutes. The topics and questions for this interview were taken from a holistic examination of each student's diary. For the homestay families, the contact was confined to three e-mails: before, during and after the homestay experience. Further there was an interview with willing homestay families held at the homestay house.

The student participants for the 2010 program were 14 female and five male students all from years one to three in the Faculty of Regional Studies. All except two had never been on a homestay before. The two that had did so in their high school years for two weeks. The students' permission to use work from their diaries was obtained before the trip to England. Of these nineteen, eight students stayed in pairs at four locations. The remaining 11 students were in a house by themselves, or at least without another Toyo Japanese student staying with them.

The homestay families mostly had previous experience hosting students, but for one participant in the program it was her first time hosting. These homestay participants understandably become less the more data was asked for. Initially, of the 13 families, an e-mail was received from one person in ten of those families. The second e-mail was received from seven participants. An interview was held with a representative of three houses. Finally, after the homestay, finished two replies were received from homestay families regarding final thoughts and impressions of the homestay. As with the dairies, topics and questions for the homestay families were derived from set themes and themes that appeared in the data.

From the student and homestay participants a tentative set of ten codes were created and the data was assigned to one of these codes. The results section will present the data within these codes. The codes and their brief descriptions were as follows:

1. Pre-trip worries – *things that students and homestay families were anxious about before the homestay started.*
2. Pre-trip expectations – *what the students hoped would happen or not happen during their time in the homestay.*
3. Homestay rules – *the importance of adhering to rules set by the homestay families.*
4. Observations – *things that Japanese student noticed during their homestay that they found interesting.*
5. Homestay communication – *how students and homestay families felt about the*

spoken interaction in the homestay, and what efforts were made to enhance that interaction.

6. *Different experiences – how the students felt about having experiences that were challenging and different from those they would have in Japan.*

7. *Missing Japan – Japanese ideas, people or things that Japanese students missed during their homestay.*

8. *Two Toyo students in one home – the benefits and drawbacks of having two Japanese native speakers sharing the same homestay environment.*

9. *Facebook – how students used the technology of facebook on the Internet to maintain contact with people.*

10. *Future plans – what students wanted to do in the future as a result of being in the homestay.*

Results

Pre-trip worries

It is natural that students would have concerns and worries before going to England. Part of these worries stem from a lack of knowledge of the culture and how to act in certain situations. One student was worried about eating and taking a bath. She felt that her mistakes related to these two unknown areas might make the host family feel “unpleasant”. Other students may have had friends who have had bad homestay experiences in England. Japanese people certainly take store in what their peers tell them. In one story a student related in her dairy about a friend who had been asked to pay every time she used the washing machine. This story had obviously made an impact on the Toyo student as she listed something similar happening as one of her main worries. Other worries included a female student who did not want to be left alone in the homestay house after school. Part of this worry is a possible self related to not being liked or accepted by the homestay family. This type of worry came across as the strongest worry.

Pre-trip expectations

The expectations of the trip will be explained as possible images of the self. These possible selves range from positive selves to negative selves. The positive selves revolve around getting involved with the family and becoming a “real” family member. As one female said, she really hopes to look after the children in the

household. This same female had already had a homestay before in Australia during her high school years. At that time she felt like a second family, and she wanted the same situation with the England homestay family. She said that...

"I do not want to be a guest but everything without reserve"

This means she wanted to live both the good times and bad times with the family, and she wanted to look after children kids after being told she would have children in the homestay. This lack of reserve was evident in another student who claimed that she wanted the homestay family to tell her what

"she does not know – even if she is impolite"

These two quotes illustrate the self of being similar to their family in Japan, but in an English environment. Other students wanted the homestay experience to be a two-way learning process. One male student said that he wanted to know about English culture, but he wanted the family members to be interested in Japan. Luckily for this student, the son of the homestay father had lived in Japan for a time, and was currently dating a Japanese girl. Another female student planned to bring pictures of Japan, and envisaged herself explaining about Japan to the homestay family. Indeed, at one point this student taught her homestay mother about 20-30 words in Japanese, which the mother happily remembered. This mother was evidently enjoying the two way experience. There was, however, an expectation from students that because the students are accepted in the house that the homestay family would automatically be interested in Japan – some students felt this to not be the case upon arrival as the homestay family did not directly ask questions about Japan to the student. Other students saw themselves talking about their interests with the homestay family. Their interests being, in some cases, soccer or cooking, or music. Students were using their interest to approach the homestay situation. Although I have explained a number of intrinsic views of self, there was one extrinsic view of the possible self. A female student did not have enough money for a long trip abroad as yet, so she tried this short program to see if she would like being in another foreign country. She hoped her future job would take her to other countries to live for extended periods and that England was a kind of testing ground.

Some of the negative selves that female students created were based on communication they perceived would take place in the home. One such quote sums it up:

"I'm afraid of my English skill"

This showed her fear of hesitancy when speaking to native English speakers. Other

females were afraid of the “silence” between talk that punctuates people who don't know each other so well. A student said that she gets tense, so she hopes the homestay family will talk when there is silence,

“she feels silence is bad”

She further explained that she hopes they don't pay attention all the time, but she felt the homestay family members get upset if she does not speak.

Homestay rules

When students were staying at the homestay it became clear to them that they should follow the rules of the house. This point was made clear in explanations before the Bournemouth trip. Students were told to make sure they asked about, and followed the rules because they would be guests in someone else's house. However, what kind of rules should be adhered to was not clear until they arrived in England. Most problems focused on the use of water in the home. Unlike Japan, most houses in England have a limited supply of hot water to use. Due to this, the use of water in the home is somewhat regulated. Some students washed their clothes in the bath because they could not wait for the next washing load in the washing machine. Further, even though in Japan students take a bath every evening, in England this custom is usually replaced by a shower. English people rarely take baths. The action of using too much water brought complaints from the homestay families.

Also, some of the homestay families had small children, and the students felt a little restricted because they did not want to wake the children up, or because one of the parents was tired from parenting. One student said

“The young children lead mother to a sickness because of tiredness”

It is clear that students became aware of these problems for the first time as they occurred in the homestay.

Observations

There were a number of keen observations that student made during their time in England. Firstly, before the trip I held a semester-long class about English culture. Part of that course involved looking at the cultural topics presented in class and comparing the situation in England with that in Japan. One female student used the diary as a chance to note down every cultural difference she could find. She later told me that she felt like an observer who had come to England to learn the culture and have a greater understanding by herself. Secondly, students became aware of the role

of the father in the house. Without making sweeping generalizations, traditionally the father in the Japanese household is away at work for most the time, coming home late and not taking an active role in child-rearing or housework. However, the students all commented that the father in the English household would help with the housework, and usually had his own tasks to do. One female student was surprised that the father took the day off work to attend his 5-year old son's birthday. This, she claimed, would "just not happen" in Japan. The Japanese students enjoyed seeing these cultural flash points first hand.

Homestay communication

Students used a number of ways to try and bring about interaction between themselves and the members of the homestay family. One of the first things they tried to do was to bring an item in the form of a souvenir for the family. Some students brought things like a sushi clock or Japanese sweets. One student even brought a "furoshiki"; a towel used for the bath, a common gift in Japan, but would not be seen as anything special in England, where such gift giving culture does not exist. Other items like origami seemed to work well. These provided the students with something to talk about at the beginning of the stay as that is when the souvenirs were given. Also, in many of the houses there were children of varying ages, and as such there was a Playstation or Wii game consoles which students could use to talk about or play together with the homestay members. Further, other students tried to prepare ideas to talk about with the homestay family. One male student studied Kendo in Japan, and taught his homestay father some of the basic moves, which went down very well. This communication needs to be two-way, however, as one student claimed, he thought the homestay family did not like him because they did not ask him directly about Japanese culture, even though he believed he was ready to tell them something. Other students who could not find ways to communicate would go to bed. One student said...

"I was unkind to them."

because he had gone to bed early rather than tried to communicate. That student had been living with another student who had the better English ability of the two and was able to talk to the homestay family more. One homestay mother did seem a little concerned that her student could not ask basic questions in the house, and said they should be drilled on how to ask questions about family, job or hobby before they arrived in England. The homestay families were expecting that students would be happy all the time. One homestay mother said...

"Happy is important to break tension"

The student had obviously been affected by these words from the homestay mother because this mirrored what her homestay student said about forcing herself to not be gloomy with the homestay family.

As mentioned above, finding common ground between the students and homestay members was important from the beginning. These days Japanese animation has really taken off outside of Japan. Thanks to this contemporary culture the students could at least build rapport with the children. Many reported watching Studio Ghibli movies or Pokemon in English with the children. The students had mixed reactions with different members of the family, especially children. Some of the females got on with the boys in the house, but some found it very difficult. One student said that she got on very well with the child on some occasions, but at the breakfast table she felt frustrated because she was lost for words.

For others this common ground came from the fact that the mother or father of the family was not born in England, and had to previously go through some of the same communications problems that Toyo students were now facing. These homestay family members were able to build empathy and were aware to talk slowly when there were communication problems. One mother predicted the angst the arriving student would face in the household, and even though it was her first time to host, she prepared dictionaries, maps and other information to ease the student into the foreign life straightaway.

Before students arrived they intimated that they wanted to be treated like family members. Luckily, when the students were in England it was Mother's Day. This gave the students an opportunity to give presents to the family and show that they were part of the family. Even though this was not done by students in Japan on Mother's Day, they felt they should do it in England. Others did housework, like washing up after each meal. Most of the homestay families felt this was fine, and were probably happy to have it done for them. From the point of view of the homestay families themselves, one mother said in an interview that having students is like having a "guest" in the house. This was important because it forced her own children to be polite at the dinner table in the presence of a guest, so although some students wanted to be accepted as a family member, the homestay parent was also happy for the student to be a de facto guest. One experienced homestay mother claimed that it was important to get the student involved in the family from the start to stop them feeling homesick through inclusion in household chores and events.

Other homestay families tried to get the students feeling as part of the family by taking them to events that the children were involved in. One student often went to tennis practice with the son, and even took part in a “fun-run” with the family. Other students complained that they were not taken out anywhere during the three week stay. Such students were really expecting to be taken to tourists sites, or even shopping, but this did not happen. There was obviously a disparity between what the various homestay families did with their students.

Three weeks can seem like a very short time, once students settle into their routine. Was this time used well in interaction? Of course, most of the day was spent at school, but how about before and after school? Some reported that there was little interaction in the evenings. One mother often went out and went to the gym leaving the child in the care of the homestay student. Others did not eat in the evening with their homestay families. One student said that her mother was on a diet and did not want to eat much. Students reported somewhere between ten minutes and three hours of talk time a day with a homestay member. The students who gave a longer time interaction time were in the kitchen doing things like homework, or watching TV and talking, so the actual talk time would have been considerably less than the three hours reported. All of the students claimed that the 3-week period was too short and that they felt as though they had wasted the first week with getting to know people too slowly.

Different experiences

Some of the students had an idea of other things / activities they wanted to do that were not included in the schedule itself. Luckily, some of the homestay families pushed their students in to doing these journeys, saying that it was important for the students to gain some kind of independence during their trip. For a female student in the first week contact with the homestay family had been only in the form of being asked questions. It must have been like an interrogation with the student answering all the questions. That student organized a trip to Oxford with other students, and had to ask for help from the homestay mother. This meant now that the student became the questioner to find out what to do. She wrote in her diary that it was good for her self-confidence. Two other students that stayed in the same house were dropped off in the town centre on only their second day in England by the homestay family. As the homestay was located at least a bus ride from the centre, at first they felt very surprised, but they said that they could do shopping, and that they felt like they had

achieved something early on in the visit.

Missing Japan

Being that only two students had been abroad on a homestay before, it was inevitable that some students would feel a little homesick. Things that made students feel homesick were the food and showers in England. One student exclaimed "I can't have patience more", and asked her mother to send rice from Japan. She had really gotten tired of potatoes for dinner every night. Another male student claimed that he was in a constant state of stomach ache, which came from the food given at the homestay. About showers, this complaint was also part of a difference in culture between England and Japan. The bath is a time to relax and a bath is taken frequently in Japan. In England, however, people shower frequently, instead of taking a bath, so psychologically a few students felt that they could not shake their tiredness because they could not take a bath.

Two Toyo students in one home

Owing to the large number of students and the smaller number of homestay locations available, it was sometimes necessary to put more than one Toyo student inside a homestay family. For the students this had situation had both good and bad points. The good points were that the female students could feel safety in numbers. Many students enjoyed a full social life in England, meaning they returned home late at night. At that time two students was a lot safer than one. These female students claimed that had they been by themselves they probably would not have gone out. The bad points included privacy and opportunities for using English. Two sharing males both agreed that they had little private time. These males also said that while they were doing their diaries, the other student would be disturbing him by watching TV or listening to music, breaking their concentration. One of these males also recalls his frustration in English.

"I got lost and called home for ask help, but I could not make homestay person understand, so I gave phone to (other student) – he understood and did everything".

This student also felt that his homestay family was ignoring him in favor of the stronger English speaker. In order to stop themselves from relying on each other, the Japanese students claimed they would stay in the living room where Japanese is felt to be taboo, and not go to their own rooms. One student wrote down that she decided not to talk to the other Toyo student she was staying with in Japanese, but I think that

this is very unrealistic, and indeed, she used Japanese a lot with the other student. Although it appears that students are against the idea of sharing with another Japanese student, one lower-level student wanted to stay with another student because of his self-perceived lower level. From the homestay families' point of view two students is better because they get double the money. One homestay mother hosting two students said that two students can stop each other becoming depressed and getting homesick. Two students can also confer and help each other with the language they need to communicate.

Facebook

Many of the students used FACEBOOK to keep in contact with friends that they had made at events for foreign students. This was encouraged by the homestay families who themselves used FACEBOOK to keep in contact with students they had previously hosted. One student reported using FACEBOOK to keep in contact with her own family back in Japan, but for all of the students it was the first time to use such media to contact with their homestay families, other foreign students studying for longer periods at Bournemouth University, and each other. One of the homestay parents told me that she both encouraged and showed two students how to get online and use FACEBOOK.

Future plans

The effect of studying in England even for a short time had a noticeable impact on the students. Because many had felt that three weeks was not enough, they often felt as though they had not done enough in the time they were given. Some students hoped to come back to England to study and to see their homestay families again. Even if they couldn't fulfill what they wanted to do this time, this was a spur to visiting another country in the future. It is clear that England had broken down some of their insecurities of using English. For four students, however, the return to Japan signaled something different than just a desire to study in another country. It was a chance to reexamine what they knew about Japan. During the three weeks and before many students realized that they did not know enough about their own country to be able to explain things to foreigners. One student claimed:

"I want to study Japan more, I want to think that Japan is a fascinating country."

This was a very important issue for them to be able to do this, partly because they must have felt that they were ambassadors of Japan. Not being able to explain is

the impetus for going back and finding out more about Japan. This could be part of a possible self that sees being able to convey knowledge about Japan to people in other countries as important.

Conclusion

Many universities see short term programs as a good way for students to experience a shortened version of the full study abroad experience. These programs can be, however, contingent on how successful the homestay situation is. In other words, how well did the students interact in English at home, and how well did a student get on with the host family? This paper followed 19 students from the Tourism Department at Toyo University on a three week program at a university in England, with a homestay component to find out what students thought about the homestay before and during their stay. This paper is a small part of a much larger qualitative study, and in it the author employed diaries and interviews with both students and families, many of whom had hosted other students, including Japanese before. From these data collection methods ten key codes were chosen for analysis.

Before students left for England they had some pre-trip worries mostly related to a lack of cultural knowledge, especially about baths, and the rules of the homestay. This could be helped by providing information about these points, and getting the homestay families to send their main house rules to students before they arrive, thus making sure there is less room for misunderstanding. The students also had visions of good and bad scenarios about being in England. The positive selves revolved around being treated like a real family member and being taken to different places. The negative selves revolved around offending the homestay families, or worse still, not being liked by the homestay families. This kind of angst is natural before any trip of this nature, but the teacher's job should be to reinforce the positive benefits of doing the homestay.

Students had differing success with members of the homestay family. Some students had taken it upon themselves to bring souvenirs so that they could explain about them to the family. Other students used their hobbies, for example cooking or soccer, to begin conversations with the homestay family. These situations gave students confidence early on to settle in and become less nervous in the homestay environment. Other students thought that the homestay family did not like Japan because they did not ask questions about Japan to the students. This partly made the

students feel a little unwelcome. This common ground or interest in each other is vital for success in the homestay. Homestay families should be made to realize that these students will be looking for positive reinforcement about how welcome they are in the home, and one way of achieving that would be to take an interest in Japan and Japanese things.

During the time in England other situations presented themselves that brought the opportunity for more interaction. One of these was Mother's Day. Students used this event to send cards to the homestay mother and try to deepen their position in the family. Other homestay families tried to get the students feeling part of the family by taking them to events that the children were involved in. This being part of family life is what students really expected to have before coming to England. This mutual understanding can be enhanced through such things as doing projects together, like an interview with the homestay family (Churchill, 2003). The relationship between the homestay family and the student is also an important one to get right from the very start. Rivers (1998, p.497) in advice to make the homestay more linguistically productive, puts forward the idea of pre-departure intervention aimed at matching students and families. Rivers also says that organizers need to make clear to students what they are getting themselves into. The chance to give their choices for conditions of the English homestay worked to some extent, but it has to be borne in mind that this trip was in winter, and it was more difficult to secure the number of homestay families, compared to a similar trip in the summer.

As for communication difficulties, many of the family members were able to almost second guess what the students were trying to say, even if the message being delivered was incorrect. Woodall and Takeuchi (1999) believe that these degenerated conversations reduce the ability for students to hear real language. This situation certainly happened during the BU trip. Some students were not given the opportunity to struggle to communicate a message. Without this struggle students will not be able to notice their language deficiencies and make any meaningful language gains. On the other hand, three weeks is a very short time, and language gains themselves are also unrealistic. The most that students can get is a growing confidence in using the language. Maybe some families were just content for the students to suffer the minimum of communicative stress so were willing to fill in the missing parts of the message for them. In fact, a program as short as the BU program may have been short enough for homestay families to help students with language problems. A similar short program in a study by Kitao, (1993) carried out a journal study with Japanese

university students and found that everyone had a positive experience. As with the BU program maybe four weeks is enough to have an enjoyable experience, but owing to the shortness the focus is on the brevity of understanding the message, rather than forcing students to use language that they don't know how to use yet.

The students' regular association with each other outside of class and during lunchtime or social events in the evening meant that a lot of Japanese was used. This was confirmed in a previous study by Tanaka (2007) who said that the classroom and the homestay were the only two places where students used English. While they were eating lunch, or shopping, and other activities they were with their peer groups. For this paper this situation is realized by many students who claimed they would try to speak English with their Japanese peers, but in reality it never happened unless in the class, and in a situation where two students shared one homestay location. Even in the house itself Toyo students reported speaking to their hosts between ten minutes and three hours per day. The students who claimed to have been interacting for longer periods were very often in the same place, for example the kitchen doing their homework, so talk time was probably much less.

It is clear that students did not have much improvement in their communication abilities, but the England trip did offer students other positive benefits. It increased their awareness of foreign countries, it gave them confidence to become independent and to speak more English. It also sparked a desire to learn more about their own country of Japan. Many a time students were asked about something in Japan, but could not articulate themselves and felt embarrassed at not being able to answer. Before students arrive it is necessary to spell out that students will not improve their speaking ability greatly, but they will get other benefits.

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イギリスでの短期ホームステイの経験 国際地域学部の学生の事例

要約

多くの大学では学生の長期留学体験の代わりに短期海外研修プログラムを取り入れている。しかし、これらのプログラムの成否は現地ホームステイ制度の充実度によるように考えられる。ここでは、東洋大学国際観光学科が英国の大学で実施したホームステイを含む3週間のプログラムに参加した同学科の19名の学生について、学生たちがホームステイに関して、ホームステイの前とホームステイ中にどのように感じたかを調査した。この論文はこの分野に関する包括的な質的研究の一部であり、調査方法として、学生のプログラム中の生活記録と学生、及びホームステイ・ファミリーメンバーに行った面接を10項目のコードで分析した。最後に、この論文はホームステイプログラムで最大限の効果を得るための推薦できる方法を示している。

キーワード：ホームステイ、生活記録、質的研究