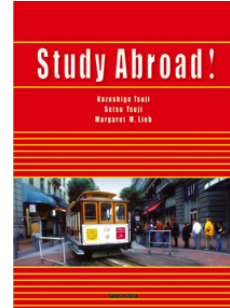




Textbook Review

## **Study Abroad!**

by Kazushige Tsuji, Setsu Tsuji, and Margaret M. Lieb  
Tokyo: Sanshusha (2009)



One thing that is fascinating to observe is how English teachers make textbook decisions. To some degree, textbook choices are statements of pedagogical allegiance. I have often noticed that Japanese and non-Japanese university EFL teachers tend to choose different EFL materials. Last year I decided to conduct an experiment by selecting a textbook designed for Japanese university level EFL students and instructors. After thirty years in Japan, I felt confident enough to read the Japanese material smoothly. This brief review describes the reactions of 28 first-year undergraduates to an EFL study abroad text, along with my impressions.

This text consists of twelve chapters, plus two review tests and short quizzes. A word-for-word script of the dialogs from the accompanying teacher's CD also appears at the end of this 95-page volume. Chapters are thematically grouped around a visit to the USA by a generic Japanese student (who is sometimes depicted as male and other times female). Most of the themes parallel what is covered in many study abroad EFL texts. Flight procedures, host family interactions, shopping, and medical problems are sample topics.

Each chapter begins by introducing 16 - 19 English words and their supposed Japanese cognates. The vocabulary level is quite mixed: it claims to be at a 300-word level (publisher's website). However, comparing the vocabulary to the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), I found some words such as "fit" (ranked as the 6,511th most widely used word) are taught alongside more obscure lexical items such as "counterbalance" (ranked at 31,178). Whereas many EFL textbooks are now aligned to specific CEFR levels, this text is more laissez-faire about vocabulary. Moreover, since it is for Japanese readers, I was perplexed to find words such as "trend" – familiar to all Japanese as *トレンド* – on a vocabulary list.

After pre-teaching vocabulary, each chapter features a 70-80 word reading passage. Most of the passages are relevant to study abroad, though the chapter on public phones is out of date. Following this, four open-ended reading comprehension questions appear. Many of these questions pertain to study abroad, but some are unmistakably clunky such as, "What is the role of a campus tour?" (p. 37) "What does performance consist of?" (p. 59).

Following a fill-in-the-blanks short English dialog, students are asked to translate five Japanese sentences into English. This is followed by some multiple-choice dialog comprehension questions and another translation exercise. Each chapter concludes with some "practical tips" – a reading passage on a topic somewhat related to the chapter theme.

### **Pros and Cons**

During the final lesson of the second semester when using this text, I distributed a textbook questionnaire to students. This Japanese language questionnaire consisted of an informed consent statement and fourteen Likert-like items. It was similar to an earlier survey I designed to evaluate a different study abroad textbook (Newfields, 2014). The responses by this particular group of students appears with the survey in Appendix A. A translated version of this survey is available online at <http://jalt-sa.org/PDF/8-2-Newfields-EngApp.pdf>.

The students felt the best feature of this text was how it explicitly presented vocabulary with Japanese translations. This parallels the way many Japanese learn English words in high school

(Yamada and Hristoskova, 2011, p. 14). The recorded conversations got a lukewarm rating and most other parts were not so highly rated.

Personally, I felt this text's forte was its attempt to teach all four language skills. It also prompted some students to think about study abroad more. The chapter about academic presentations seemed useful for students who will need to give overseas presentations in English. This volume has been used at Doshisha University as a component of an Australian study abroad preparation program (Doshisha University Office of International Affairs, 2015) and it might have some value in helping students to prepare for academic study abroad programs. However, since its pedagogical approach is not congruent with my personal beliefs, I was less than enthusiastic about this text.

### **The Bottom Line**

Is this text worth using? That depends foremost on your teaching philosophy. If you believe in the extensive use of grammar-translation and discrete vocabulary teaching, then this textbook may appeal to you. If your allegiance leans towards more communicative or constructionist teaching approaches, this is a text you will probably not be comfortable using. Still, I believe it is valuable to periodically examine textbooks that challenge our teaching assumptions. Reflective teachers should consider *why* some pedagogical practices are widely adopted by some members of our profession and why other practices are either marginalized or discounted altogether. Though this book is not explicitly about "culture", it did help me understand how cultural beliefs may impact our pedagogical practices.

- Reviewed by Tim Newfields  
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### **Appendix A. Student Textbook Evaluation Form for Study Abroad!**

**承諾同意書**：このアンケートの目的は、来年の使用教科書を決定するための意見を伺うことです。参加は自由です。成績には影響しません。すべての情報は非公開で、来年の教科書を決定する参考のために使用します。このアンケートに 質問があれば、下記のアドレスに連絡してください。 ティモシー・ニューフィールズ (20906研究室, 電子メール: timothy@toyo.jp)

**パート I. それぞれの問いに対し、あなたの意見を以下の7段階から選び、番号をチェックしてください。**

3=非常に明確でない 2=明確でない 1=やや明確でない 0=どちらでもない 1=やや明確である 2=明確である 3=非常に明確である

1. この教科書の目的は、どれくらい明確でしたか?

-3: 0      -2: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   -1: 18%<sub>(n=5)</sub>   0: 39%<sub>(n=11)</sub>   +1: 21%<sub>(n=6)</sub>   +2: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   +3: 0   NR: 0

2. この教科書に付いているCDは、どれくらい役に立ちましたか?

-3: 43%<sub>(n=12)</sub>   -2: 29%<sub>(n=8)</sub>   -1: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   0: 39%<sub>(n=11)</sub>   +1: 14%<sub>(n=4)</sub>   +2: 0   +3: 0   NR: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>

3. この教科書は、あなたのプレゼンテーションスキルを向上させるのにどれくらい役に立ちましたか?

-3: 32%<sub>(n=9)</sub>   -2: 25%<sub>(n=7)</sub>   -1: 14%<sub>(n=4)</sub>   0: 14%<sub>(n=4)</sub>   +1: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   +2: 0   +3: 0   NR: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>

4. この教科書にあるActivityの指示はどれくらい明確でしたか?

-3: 0      -2: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>   -1: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>   0: 32%<sub>(n=9)</sub>   +1: 25%<sub>(n=7)</sub>   +2: 21%<sub>(n=6)</sub>   +3: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   NR: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>

5. 来年の学生のために、この教科書をどの程度、薦めますか?

-3: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   -2: 25%<sub>(n=7)</sub>   -1: 29%<sub>(n=8)</sub>   0: 29%<sub>(n=8)</sub>   +1: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   +2: 0   +3: 0   NR: 0

6. この教科書はどのくらいオンライン・シラバスの中身をカバーしていますか?

-3: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>   -2: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>   -1: 32%<sub>(n=9)</sub>   0: 32%<sub>(n=9)</sub>   +1: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   +2: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   +3: 0   NR: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>

パート II. それぞれの問いに対するあなたの意見を以下の7段階から選び、番号をチェックしてください。

-3=強く反対   -2=反対   -1=少し反対   0=中立   +1=やや同意   +2=同意   +3=強く同意

1. この教科書全体の長さは、適切であった。ちょうど十分な内容量であった。

-3: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   -2: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   -1: 18%<sub>(n=5)</sub>   0: 21%<sub>(n=6)</sub>   +1: 14%<sub>(n=4)</sub>   +2: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   +3: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   NR: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>

2. この教科書は、適正価格であった。

-3: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   -2: 46%<sub>(n=13)</sub>   -1: 21%<sub>(n=6)</sub>   0: 14%<sub>(n=4)</sub>   +1: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   +2: 0   +3: 0   NR: 0

3. この教科書のイラストは、はっきりしていて、役に立った。

-3: 25%<sub>(n=7)</sub>   -2: 36%<sub>(n=10)</sub>   -1: 29%<sub>(n=8)</sub>   0: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   +1: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>   +2: 0   +3: 0   NR: 0

4. この教科書のレベルは、私にとってちょうどよかった。

-3: 7%<sub>(n=2)</sub>   -2: 18%<sub>(n=5)</sub>   -1: 21%<sub>(n=6)</sub>   0: 25%<sub>(n=7)</sub>   +1: 11%<sub>(n=3)</sub>   +2: 14%<sub>(n=4)</sub>   +3: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>   NR: 0

5. 私の海外旅行への関心は、この教科書によって変わった。

-3: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>   -2: 18%<sub>(n=5)</sub>   -1: 32%<sub>(n=9)</sub>   0: 43%<sub>(n=12)</sub>   +1: 4%<sub>(n=1)</sub>   +2: 0   +3: 0   NR: 0

パート III.

1. この教科書で、あなたにとって最も役に立ったのはどの章でしたか?(最大3つあげて下さい)

春学期: Ch. 1: <sub>(n=4)</sub>   Ch. 2: <sub>(n=3)</sub>   Ch. 3: <sub>(n=10)</sub>   Ch. 4: <sub>(n=14)</sub>   Ch. 5: <sub>(n=8)</sub>   Ch. 6: <sub>(n=4)</sub>   Review Test 1: <sub>(n=4)</sub>   Quiz 1: <sub>(n=2)</sub>

秋学期: Ch. 7: 0   Ch. 8: <sub>(n=1)</sub>   Ch. 9: <sub>(n=4)</sub>   Ch. 10: <sub>(n=18)</sub>   Ch. 11: <sub>(n=3)</sub>   Ch. 12: <sub>(n=2)</sub>   Review Test 2: <sub>(n=1)</sub>   Quiz 2: 0

2. この教科書であなたにとって最も役に立たなかったのは、どの章でしたか?(最大3つあげて下さい)

春学期: Ch. 1: (n=3) Ch. 2: (n=7) Ch. 3: (n=2) Ch. 4: (n=1) Ch. 5: (n=2) Ch. 6: (n=3) Review Test 1: (n=8) Quiz 1: (n=12)

秋学期: Ch. 7: (n=11) Ch. 8: (n=1) Ch. 9: ∅ Ch. 10: ∅ Ch. 11: (n=4) Ch. 12: (n=4) Review Test 2: (n=7) Quiz 2: (n=16)

3. 各章の項目のうち、あなたにとって最も役立ったのは、どの項目でしたか?(最大2つあげて下さい)

最初写真: ∅ 1 Expand Your Vocabulary!: (n=24) 2 Elevate Your Knowledge!: (n=5)

3 Enhance Your Communication Skills I: (n=16) 4 Enhance Your Communication Skills II: (n=7)

5 Enrich Your Expressions!: (n=10) 6 Explore Practical Tips!: (n=3)

4. この講座が終わった後、このテキストをどうするつもりですか?

捨てる: (n=15) 売る: (n=3) 自習をして役立たせる: (n=3) 友人にあげる: (n=2) NR: (n=5)

ご意見をお寄せいただきありがとうございました。すべてのコメントは匿名扱いとなり、

あなたの成績に影響を与えることはありません。

(2014年01月07日改訂)