

A Survey of Pre and Post Self-Reported Acquisition of Language Functions, Topics and Situations in Short Term Study Abroad-Home Stay Programs

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Abstract: This paper attempts to investigate the self-reported acquisition of the functions, topics and situations that are predicted to be encountered in short term study abroad-home stay environments, by comparing self-reported pre-program ability with post-program self-reported acquisition. The data from two short-term study abroad-home stay programs—one of 3 weeks duration and the other of 6 weeks duration—was collected and analyzed. The study also examines whether the difference in the length of the program affects the degree of perceived language acquisition as well the types of functions, topics, situations and language categories that were perceived to have been acquired. While the results must be interpreted in the light of the shortcomings in the survey design, and problems with the survey timing, the results indicate modest self-reported language acquisition in a limited number of individual language functions, topics and situations in the 6-week program group and a greater number in the 3-week program. The lack of overall correlation between the two groups of the self-reported language items acquired leads to the conclusion that each program is unique and the language functions, topics and situations that are acquired are dependent on its participants and their interaction with the social contexts encountered.

Key words: study abroad, home stay, language acquisition

Introduction

Short-term study abroad programs have become increasingly popular recently with university level students throughout the world. Research into the setting up and background, administration and the success or shortcomings of various programs has been well documented. (e.g. Drake, 1997; Foster 2001; Bodycott and Crew, 2000; Geis and Fukushima 1997) However, as Freed (1995) points out they have offered very little “empirical-based research which describes or analyses the impact of a study abroad experience on the language skills of students who have been abroad” (1995: 6). The principle quantitative and qualitative studies that have been done on the subject to date have been overviewed by Freed (1995). They include such studies relating to overall proficiency, grammar, vocabulary, speaking-listening skills, fluency and sociolinguistic competence. They tend to support the notion that study abroad has a positive effect on the linguistic skills of participants, and this is seen to be especially true for low-level students.

While studies utilizing students' perceptions of their language experiences (Freed 1995) have focused on student diaries and narratives and "provide insights into how students perceive their time abroad and their own thoughts on how their language experiences relate to the learning process" (1995 : 24), no study to date has attempted to examine exactly what potential language functions, topics and situations students may encounter during their sojourn abroad are perceived to have been acquired and to what degree. This study, therefore attempts to investigate what language functions, topics and situations students perceived were enhanced or acquired (if any) during two different study abroad programs—one of 3 weeks duration and the other of 6 weeks duration. Except for duration, both programs had the common features of intensive ESL training and individual home stay accommodation. The following questions were investigated:

1. By comparing self-reported pre-study abroad ability with self-reported post study abroad gain of discrete language functions, topics, situations and language categories, which of these did students perceive they acquired the greatest degree of acquisition in?
2. Was there a difference in degree or level of self-reported language acquisition between the 3-week program participants and 6-week program participants?
3. Did the participants in both programs rate similar or different language functions, topics, and situations as having been acquired?

Study Rationale and Design

¹ Short-term study abroad programs coupled with a home stay component, present students with a number of unique social contexts or environments in which potential language interaction and practice can take place. These social contexts may be defined as:

- (1) The formal classroom (especially where classes are multi-cultural and English is the *lingua franca*)

- (2) The community at large of the target language
- (3) The home stay setting.

In each of these social contexts, it may be predicted that students may be required to use various language functions and topics and be able to negotiate various situations with some degree of frequency, proficiency and accuracy. These functions, topics and situations may be unique to a particular social context or common to more than one. This study proposes that the functions, topics and situations of these three social contexts, can be categorized as those relating to: (1) self or personal, (2) community and survival, (3) family, (4) school/education, (5) home and neighborhood, (6) city/country (geography), (7) culture. For example in the social context of the "home stay", it may be postulated that students may encounter and may potential be required to use language skills related to the categories of self/personal, family, school/education, home/neighborhood, geography and culture to whatever degree of frequency, accuracy and proficiency in order to communicate. Table 2 summarizes these proposed categories.

1 "Short term" here refers to a program of 3 to 6 weeks in length.

2 It should be noted that these categories were arbitrarily decided upon by this writer, and have not been previously validated as being in any way complete or accurate. They were decided on by considering what kind of language functions, language topics, language situations students would be likely to encounter during a short term home stay and in a multi-nationality language classroom

Table 1: Functions, topics and situations by language category

Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greetings -able to introduce oneself -answer questions about one's name, nationality, hometown, occupation, hobbies/interests -exchange personal information with someone by asking questions—about hometown, nationality, occupation, hobbies/interests -talk about past events-especially about what you did “today?” -describe and ask questions about daily life and routines/schedules -talk, ask and answer questions about plans for the future -describe past experiences
Community and Survival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -able to negotiate Airport: customs, Immigration formalities -complain, apologize, give excuses -talk about likes and dislikes -ask and understand information about transportation services; ask and understand street directions and locations of places; -shopping—shopping—talk and ask about prices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ask and talk about size, color, style /post office/bank; -order a meal in a fast food restaurant/restaurant -talk about and describe health problems; -ask for suggestions and advice about health problems
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -talk and answer questions about families and family members—family member's names, ages, occupations (job title, company name, company business work), hobbies/interests; -able to ask questions about host family's member's names, ages, occupations, hobbies/interests; -describe people's appearance-especially family members -describe personalities of family members -talk and answer questions about biography of family members (one's own family and host family)
School/education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -talk about School—name, location, number of students, -describe and answer questions about faculty/departments, history of school -describe and answer questions about the education system/ask questions about the education system of host country; talk about, ask and answer questions about their special area of study
Home and Neighborhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -describe and answer questions about one's home -ask about and describe their neighborhoods -make comparisons of homes and neighborhoods
City/country-Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -describe about distance and measurement, population about cities/countries -geographical features—make comparisons about seasons/weather/climate; populations industry; agriculture -describe and answer questions about famous landmarks and monuments of Japan -ask about and describe cities and countries (Japan) and making comparisons; express opinions about cities/countries;
culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -talk and ask about Music, movies, TV programs; entertainers describe and give instructions on how to make food dishes -describe and answer questions about holidays, festivals, customs of Japan -talk and answer questions about history of Japan. -talk about and answer questions about topical news stories especially relating to politics, economics, society

The proposed functions, topics and situations that were predicted to be encountered during students' study abroad—home stay were listed up in the form of a survey in Japanese (see appendix 1 and 2), and sent to 42 students in total. Of the 42 students, 12 students had participated in the 6-week Auckland University program in 2002, and 30 students had participated in the 3-week Sligo University program in 2001 and 2002.

The survey asked students to rate their language ability for 55 different functions, topics

and situations prior to their sojourn abroad and after its completion using a 3-point scale. (If any of the functions, topics or situations were perceived by students to have not been encountered or challenged, then they were asked to leave these unmarked). The 3-point scale is as follows:

Pre- Study Abroad Ability:

- 3-had already acquired the ability
- 2-had already acquired the ability a little
- 1-had no ability
- 0-did not use or encounter

Post-Study Abroad Ability:

- 3-Acquired the ability
- 2-acquired the ability a little
- 1-no change in ability
- 0-did not use of encounter

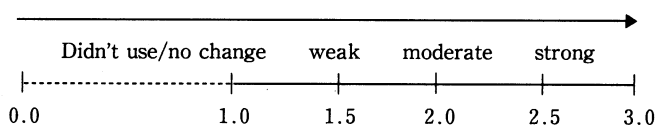
Table 2 summarizes the range of possible combinations of pre-study abroad versus post-study abroad perceived language acquisition.

Table 2: pre- versus post- language acquisition

	Post Acquired the ability (3)	Acquired the ability a little (2)	No change (1)
Pre Had ability (3)	1.0	0.66	0.33
Had ability a little (2)	1.5	1.0	0.5
No ability (1)	3.0	2.0	1.0

The area below the diagonal line (that is values above 1.0 and on a continuum up to a maximum value of 3.0) would be indicative of showing that students perceived that they had acquired some degree of language acquisition or ability in a particular language function, topic or could negotiate a language situation. Scores of 1.0 or below would indicate no change or the function/topic/situation was not encountered or “tested” during students’ sojourn abroad. Figure 1 below summarizes this idea.

Figure 1. Graphic representation of language acquisition continuum



Background to the Programs investigated in this study

Auckland University

The program with Auckland University underwent some drastic changes in 2002 since its original inception in 1996 when it was exclusively designed for Shoin Women’s Junior

College. While details of the former program are not explained in this paper, suffice to say, in its former form it was considered not suitable as a study abroad program for university level students. Therefore, from 2002 the Auckland University program was re-vamped to meet the short falls observed in the previous program. The following new features were added: the length of the program was increased from 3 weeks to 6 weeks; language classes were conducted at the university's English Language Academy (ELA). Here students were placed in classes according to language level and in most cases studied alongside students from other countries. Students studied grammar, reading, writing, speaking, listening 5 days a week in morning and afternoon sessions; all accommodation was home stay style; some students did some specialized practicums that were related to their degrees/majors. For example acting as a Japanese language assistant in a high school and doing class observations in a kindergarten over a period of several weeks; where previously a faculty escort was with students for the entire duration of their program, in the revamped program a faculty escort was present for only the first week, leaving students to fend for themselves for the majority of the program.

Sligo Institute of Technology

The program with Sligo Institute of Technology was started in 2001 and was open to students from all departments on both campuses. This is a summer program of 3 weeks in length. Students did home stays with local families. Morning sessions consisted of English language study in level based multi-cultural classes. (However as our students were almost all low level and the same level, students tended to be bunched in the same classes). They had two—105 minute classes per day (5) times a week. There were about 12-15 students per class. Three times a week in the afternoons, students participated in various cultural activities and field trips.

Background of Respondents in this Study

Responses to the survey were received from 31 students in total. The academic background of the respondents and their language proficiency is summarized in Table 3.

As Table 3 indicates, 62% of respondents in the Sligo program came from the English Literature Department and half of those who responded from the Auckland program were also English Literature majors. It is difficult to gauge the pre—study abroad language proficiency level of these respondents as any kind of proficiency scores were only received from 9 out of 13 of Sligo respondents and 4 out of 10 of Auckland respondents.³

Analysis of Results

Question 1: By comparing self-reported pre-study abroad ability with self-reported post study abroad gain of discrete language functions, topics, situations and language categories, which of these did students perceive they acquired the greatest degree of acquisition in?

3 Suffice to say, based on this writer's personal experience with teaching students at Osaka Shoin Women's University for many years coupled with many years of escorting students abroad, it would be safe to say that most of the participating students in both programs are beginner to low intermediate level students before they went on their sojourn abroad.

Table 3: Academic Background and Language Proficiency of Survey Respondents

Sligo Institute of Technology (3 week program)						
Department	English Literature	Child Science	Psychology	Fashion Science	Japanese Literature	Food Science
Number of students	13	2	1	2	1	2
Language proficiency scores	TOEIC (scores received from 6 students): 320,375, 395,475,565,570	TOEIC (scores received from 1 student): 440				TOEIC (scores received from 1 student): 390
	STEP TEST Pre-grade 2 : students					
Auckland University (6 week program)						
Department	English Literature	Child Science	Psychology	Fashion Science	Japanese Literature	Food Science
Number of students	5	3				2
Language proficiency scores	TOEIC (scores received from 1 students): 465	TOEIC (scores received from 2 students): 390,425				
						STEP TEST Pre-grade 2 :2 students

Tables 4 and 5 show that overall for both programs modest gains in a limited number of functions, topics and situations are perceived by participants. Of the total of 55 language items surveyed, Sligo students rated the overall acquisition gain mean=1.26 while for Auckland students mean=1.09.

Table 8 shows by function, topic, etc., the combined average ranking in descending order of the greatest perceived gains for Sligo and Auckland. The “top 10” and “bottom 10” items, and their respective language categories are re-printed from Tables 9 and 10 below.

“Family” and “culture” related items occupy three of the “top 10” spots each, followed by “community/survival” (2) and “education/school” (1).

In the case of the “bottom 10”, “self/personal” and “community/survival” related items occupy four of the bottom 10 spots each, followed by “town/city/geography” and “home/neighborhood” one spot each. While the combined average results for both groups are shown here, it should be pointed out that there was actually very little consensus between the two groups on what language items were perceived to have been acquired. ($r=0.128$) The results should be viewed in this light. A statistical treatment of the bottom 10 items for each group presents also reveals a much weaker relationship than the top 10 items ($r=-0.5$).

On the other hand, examining the results by the ranking of categories, a little stronger correlation ($r=0.43$) between the Sligo group and the Auckland group is obtained. Both groups ranked “culture” (see Table 7) as the category that showed the greatest improvement in perceived language acquisition. Within in this category, the item “Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one’s country” showed the biggest improvement in language acquisition for both groups. Although ranked differently as a categories per se, within the category of “school/education”, the item “Can

talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university" was ranked highest by both groups.

Question 2: Was there a difference in degree of self-reported language acquisition between Sligo University participants (3 week program) and Auckland University participants (6 week program)?

The Sligo students ranked on average a greater number of items and to a higher degree perceived language acquisition than did Auckland students. If a minimum ranking of "1 • 2" —based on the model in figure 1. is used as indicating that a function, topic or situation had been perceived as having been acquired, then Sligo students ranked 34 out of 55 items as compared with only 16 out of 55 for Auckland students— (see Tables 6). Looking at the top ten functions, topics and situations perceived to have been acquired by each group, (tables 12 and 13) Sligo students' data reveal a mean=1.66 (range=1.95 to 1.55) while Auckland students' data reveal a mean=1.55 (range=2.38 to 1.29). These results are probably unexpected as it would have been predicted that a longer sojourn abroad would have produced higher perceived gains in language acquisition. (In the discussion section below this point is addressed in more detail).

Question 3: Did the participants in both programs rate similar or different language functions, topics, and situations as having been acquired?

As stated above, a Pearson r correlation to test how closely students in both programs rated similar functions, topics, etc., showed $r=0.128$. When the data is further examined by ranking of items within each category (see Table 9), only the items in the category of "school/education" shows a very strong relationship between both groups ($r=0.99$). This is followed by the items in the category of "self/personal" ($r=0.5$). Other items in other categories show negligible or negative correlations between both programs. This would seem to suggest that students in both programs perceived very different language functions, topics and situations as having been acquired.

Looking at the results of each program separately, the top ten functions, and categories are shown in tables 12 and 13. For Sligo participants "culture—related" items occupied three of the top ten positions, with "family" and "school/education" holding two spots each. Looking at the case of Auckland students, a different set of items seems to have been acquired. Auckland participants perceived items relating to the category of "community/survival" as having been acquired more prevalently (4 out of the top 10 positions), followed by items relating to "self/personal" (2 out of the top 10). The fact that Auckland students ranked "community/survival" amongst the top 10 items to the extent they did, may be a reflection of the physical and social environments students were immersed in coupled with the length of their sojourn. For example, students were required to commute using "user unfriendly" public transportation every day. They also had more free time that was afforded by the structure and length of their program. Consequently, their skills related to the category of "community/survival" were possibly called upon more frequently and thus were honed to a greater perceived degree.

Table 4 : pre-study abroad ability and post-study abroad gain (Sligo)

pre-study ability	Sligo				
assigned points value	3	2	1	0	
Please note: if you did not use any of the following language functions while you study abroad- homestay, please leave blank.	had ability	a little	no ability	not used	total
1. Can do greetings	27	22	1		50
2. Can introduce oneself.	24	22	2		48
3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	27	24			51
4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	12	24	4	0	40
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	6	28	5		39
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	3	20	5		28
7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	3	20	10		33
8. Can talk about one's future plans.		24	9		33
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.		20	9	0	29
10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	9	16	9	0	34
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	3	12	14		29
12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	9	18	9		36
13. Can complain.		2	19	0	21
14. Can apologize.	15	22	5		42
15. Can give excuses.		4	16	0	20
16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes.	6	30	3	0	39
17. Can make invitations.	3	2	15	0	20
18. Can accept and refuse invitations.		8	14	0	22
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.		12	14	0	26
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	3	14	12	0	29
21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	12	22	6	0	40
22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.		18	10	0	28
23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.		12	15	0	27
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.		28	7	0	35
25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.		12	11	0	23
26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.		2	10	0	12
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	6	14	5	0	25
28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	3	10	9	0	22
29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).		7	12	0	19
30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).		7	11	0	18
31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).	3	1	16	0	20
32. Can ask questions about other's biography.			13	0	13
33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	3	9	9	0	21

34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.		7	13	0	20
35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	3		17	0	20
36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.	3		16	0	19
37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.		7	10	0	17
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).		3	14	0	17
39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.		6	12	0	18
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.		7	10	0	17
41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.		5	14	0	19
42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.		6	15	0	21
43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.		5	14	2	21
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country).		3	16	0	19
45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.		7	11	0	18
46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.		1	17	0	18
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.		11	9	0	20
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	3	6	13	0	22
49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).		6	14	0	20
50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.		5	12	0	17
51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.		2	17	0	19
52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.		2	18	0	20
53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)		4	15	0	19
54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).		1	19	0	20
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.		12	9	0	21

degree of acquired ability	Sligo						
assigned points value	3	2	1	0			
Please note: if you did not use any of the following language functions while you were on your study abroad-homestay, please leave blank.	ac-quired	ac-quired a little	no change	not used	post-total	pre-total	post/pre
1. Can do greetings	21	0	14		35	50	0.70
2. Can introduce oneself.	15	2	15		32	48	0.67
3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	18	2	14		34	51	0.67
4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	15	8	12		35	40	0.88
5. Can talk about past events (especially 'today's topics')	21	8	10		39	39	1.00
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	21	16	6		43	28	1.54
7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	9	16	10		35	33	1.06
8. Can talk about one's future plans.	9	12	12		33	33	1.00
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	3	6	15	0	24	29	0.83
10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	12	8	12	0	32	34	0.94
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	6	8	15	0	29	29	1.00
12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	9	8	13	0	30	36	0.83
13. Can complain.		8	13	0	21	21	1.00
14. Can apologize.	9	8	14	0	31	42	0.74
15. Can give excuses.		8	13	0	21	20	1.05
16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes	12	0	16	0	28	39	0.72
17. Can make invitations.	6	2	15	0	23	20	1.15
18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	9	10	10	0	29	22	1.32
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	6	24	6	0	36	26	1.38
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	9	22	7	0	38	29	1.31
21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	15	12	10		37	40	0.93
22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	15	14	7	0	36	28	1.29
23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.	9	18	9	0	36	27	1.33
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	12	10	11	0	33	35	0.94
25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	6	6	13	0	25	23	1.09
26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.		8	10	0	18	12	1.50
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	6	12	13	0	31	25	1.24
28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	9	16	9	0	34	22	1.55
29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).		10	13	0	23	19	1.21

30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	3	10	12	0	25	18	1.39
31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).		20	9	0	29	20	1.45
32. Can ask questions about other's biography.		16	8	0	24	13	1.85
33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	6	18	9	0	33	21	1.57
34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.		20	10	0	30	20	1.50
35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	3	10	12	0	25	20	1.25
36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.		8	14	0	22	19	1.16
37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	3	6	15	0	24	17	1.41
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	3	14	10	0	27	17	1.59
39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	3	12	11	0	26	18	1.44
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	6		15	0	21	17	1.24
41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.		6	16	0	22	19	1.16
42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	3	12	14	0	29	21	1.38
43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	3	14	11	0	28	21	1.33
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country).	9	18	7	0	34	19	1.79
45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	3	14	10	0	27	18	1.50
46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	3	10	12	0	25	18	1.39
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	15	18	6	0	39	20	1.95
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	15	18	6	0	39	22	1.77
49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	6	12	11	0	29	20	1.45
50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.		14	9	0	23	17	1.35
51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	3	16	9	0	28	19	1.47
52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	6	12	12	1	31	20	1.55
53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)	3	12	12	0	27	19	1.42
54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).	6	10	13	0	29	20	1.45
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	6	20	9	0	35	21	1.67

Table 5 : pre-study abroad ability and post-study abroad gain (Auckland)

degree of pre study abroad ability	auckland				
assigned points value	3	2	1	0	pre-totals
Please note: if you did not use any of the following language functions while you were on your study abroad-homestay, please leave blank.	had ability	a little	no ability	not used	
	15	10	0	0	
1. Can do greetings	15	10	0	0	25
2. Can introduce oneself.	12	10	1	0	23
3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	9	8	3	0	20
4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	0	10	5	0	15
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	6	12	2	0	20
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	3	10	4	0	17
7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	3	8	5	0	16
8. Can talk about one's future plans.	3	8	5	0	16
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	3	8	5	0	16
10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	0	8	6	0	14
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	9	12	1	0	22
12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	3	0	8	0	11
13. Can complain.	6	14	1	0	21
14. Can apologize.	3	0	8	0	11
15. Can give excuses.	6	10	3	0	19
16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes.	3	0	7	0	10
17. Can make invitations.	3	0	6	0	9
18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	3	2	6	0	11
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	6	4	5	0	15
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	3	8	5	0	16
21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	6	10	3	0	19
22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	3	8	5	0	16
23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.	3	2	8	0	13
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	6	10	3	0	19
25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	3	4	7	0	14
26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.	3	2	7	0	12
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	6	12	2	0	20
28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	3	8	5	0	16
29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).	3	10	4	0	17
30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	3	6	6	0	15

31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).	0	4	6	0	10
32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	3	2	6	0	11
33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	3	10	3	0	16
34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.	0	10	2	0	12
35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	0	8	4	0	12
36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.	0	4	6	0	10
37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	0	8	2	0	10
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	3	4	3	0	10
39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	3	6	2	0	11
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	3	2	4	0	9
41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.	0	4	6	0	10
42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	0	6	5	0	11
43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	3	4	4	0	11
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries.(especially host family's country).	3	0	6	0	9
45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	3	4	5	0	12
46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	0	2	7	0	9
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	3	6	4	0	13
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	3	2	7	0	12
49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	3	2	8	0	13
50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	3	4	6	0	13
51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	3	4	6	0	13
52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	0	2	6	0	8
53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country).	0	4	4	0	8
54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).	0	4	4	0	8
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	0	12	3	0	15

degree of acquired ability	auckland						
assigned points value	3	2	1	0	post-totals	pre-totals	post/pre
Please note: if you did not use any of the following language functions while you were on your study abroad-homestay, please leave blank.	acquired	acquired a little	no change	not used			
1. Can do greetings	9	0	7	0	16	25	0.64
2. Can introduce oneself.	12	0	6	0	18	25	0.72
3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	12	2	5	0	19	23	0.83
4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	15	4	3	0	22	20	1.1
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics").	18	8	0	0	26	15	1.73
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	15	4	3	0	22	20	1.1
7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	9	8	3	0	20	17	1.18
8. Can talk about one's future plans.	6	4	6	0	16	16	1
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	6	8	4	0	18	16	1.13
10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	6	10	3	0	19	16	1.19
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	6	8	4	0	18	14	1.29
12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	6	0	8	0	14	22	0.64
13. Can complain.	0	8	5	0	13	11	1.18
14. Can apologize.	9	4	5	0	18	21	0.86
15. Can give excuses.	0	8	5	0	13	11	1.18
16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes.	9	4	5	0	18	19	0.95
17. Can make invitations.	0	4	5	0	9	10	0.9
18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	0	4	6	0	10	9	1.1
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	12	6	3	0	21	11	1.9
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	12	6	3	0	21	15	1.4
21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	9	6	4	0	19	16	1.19
22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	3	6	6	0	15	19	0.79
23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.	12	6	3	0	21	16	1.31
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	9	6	4	0	19	13	1.46
25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	0	6	6	0	12	19	0.63
26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.	0	2	9	0	11	14	0.79
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	9	4	5	0	18	12	1.5
28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	18	4	2	0	24	20	1.2
29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).	9	8	3	0	20	16	1.25
30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	9	6	4	0	19	17	1.11

32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	0	6	5	0	11	10	1.1
33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	0	4	7	0	11	11	1
34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.	3	2	5	0	10	16	0.63
35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	0	8	4	0	12	12	1
36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.	0	6	5	0	11	12	0.92
37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	0	2	5	0	7	10	0.7
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	0	4	4	0	8	10	0.8
39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	0	2	5	0	7	10	0.7
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	0	0	6	0	6	11	0.56
41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.	0	8	4	0	12	9	1.33
42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	0	8	4	0	12	10	1.2
43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	0	2	3	0	5	11	0.45
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country).	0	10	2	0	12	11	1.09
45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	0	4	6	0	10	9	1.1
46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	0	8	4	0	12	12	1
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	3	10	2	0	15	9	1.6
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	0	14	2	0	16	13	1.23
49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	0	8	6	0	14	12	1.16
50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	3	10	3	0	16	13	1.23
51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	3	8	4	0	15	13	1.15
52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	0	6	4	0	10	13	0.77
53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)	3	2	4	0	9	8	1.13
54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).	3	2	5	0	10	8	1.25
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	9	8	2	0	19	8	2.38

Table 6: Rank order by function/topic/situation Sligo versus Auckland

Auckland vs.		sligo	
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	2.38	47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country	1.95
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	1.90	32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	1.85
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	1.73	44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries (especially host family's country).	1.79
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	1.60	48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country)	1.77
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	1.50	55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	1.67
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	1.46	38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	1.59
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	1.40	33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	1.57
41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.	1.33	52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	1.55
23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.	1.31	28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	1.55
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	1.29	6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	1.54
29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).	1.25	26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.	1.50
54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).	1.25	34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.	1.50
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	1.23	45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	1.50
50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.23	51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.47
28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	1.20	31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).	1.45
42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	1.20	49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	1.45
10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	1.19	54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).	1.45
21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	1.19	39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	1.44
7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	1.18	53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)	1.42
13. Can complain.	1.18	37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	1.41
15. Can give excuses.	1.18	30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	1.39

49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	1.16	46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	1.39
51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.15	19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	1.38
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	1.13	42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	1.38
53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)	1.13	50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.35
30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	1.11	23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.	1.33
4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	1.10	43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	1.33
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	1.10	18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	1.32
18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	1.10	20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	1.31
32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	1.10	22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	1.29
45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	1.10	35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	1.25
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country).	1.09	27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	1.24
8. Can talk about one's future plans.	1.00	40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	1.24
33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (location, student number).	1.00	29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).	1.21
35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	1.00	36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.	1.16
46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	1.00	41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.	1.16
16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes.	0.95	17. Can make invitations.	1.15
31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).	0.93	25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	1.09
36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.	0.92	7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	1.06
17. Can make invitations.	0.90	15. Can give excuses.	1.05
14. Can apologize.	0.86	5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	1.00
3. Can answer questions about one's nationality, home town, interests	0.83	8. Can talk about one's future plans.	1.00
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	0.80	11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	1.00
22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	0.79	13. Can complain.	1.00
26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.	0.79	24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	0.94
52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	0.77	10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	0.94
2. Can introduce oneself.	0.72	21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	0.93

37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	0.70	4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	0.88
39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	0.70	12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	0.83
1. Can do greetings	0.64	9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	0.83
12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	0.64	14. Can apologize.	0.74
25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	0.63	16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes	0.72
34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.	0.63	1. Can do greetings	0.70
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	0.56	2. Can introduce oneself.	0.67
43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	0.45	3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	0.67

Table 7: Rank (descending) Order by Categories—Sligo versus Auckland

Sligo		Auckland	
culture	pre/post	culture	pre/post
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	1.95	47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	1.6
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	1.77	54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social sports).	1.25
52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	1.55	48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	1.23
51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.47	50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.23
49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	1.45	49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	1.16
54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).	1.45	51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.15
53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)	1.42	53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)	1.13
50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.35	52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	0.77
average:	1.55125	average:	1.19
family	pre/post	family	pre/post
32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	1.84	27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company) interests.	1.5
28. Can ask questions about other's name occupation, interests.	1.54	29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).	1.25
31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).	1.45	28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation interests.	1.2
30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	1.38	30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	1.11
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names ages occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	1.24	32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	1.1
29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).	1.21	31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).	0.93
average:	1.44	average:	1.1817
town/city/geography	pre/post	town/city/geography	pre/post
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country).	1.78	41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town city and country.	1.33
45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	1.5	42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	1.2

46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	1.38	45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	1.1
42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	1.38	44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country).	1.09
43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	1.33	46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	1
41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.	1.15	43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	0.45
average:	1.42	average:	1.0283

home/neighborhood	pre/post
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	1.58
39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	1.44
37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	1.41
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	1.23
average:	1.415
school/education	pre/post
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	1.66
33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	1.57
34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.	1.5
35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	1.25
average:	1.426

home/ neighborhood	pre/post
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	0.8
37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	0.7
39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	0.7
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	0.56
average:	0.69
school/education	pre/post
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	2.38
33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	1
35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	1
36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.	0.92
average:	1.186

survival/community	pre/post
26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.	1.5
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	1.38
23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.	1.33
18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	1.31
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	1.31
22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	1.28

survival/ community	pre/post
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	1.9
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	1.46
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	1.4
23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.	1.31
21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	1.19
13. Can complain.	1.18

17. Can make invitations.	1.15	15. Can give excuses.	1.18
25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	1.08	18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	1.1
15. Can give excuses.	1.05	16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes.	0.95
13. Can complain.	1	17. Can make invitations.	0.9
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	0.94	14. Can apologize.	0.86
21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	0.925	22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	0.79
12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	0.83	26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.	0.79
14. Can apologize.	0.73	12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	0.64
16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes	0.71	25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	0.63
average:	1.1	average:	1.0853

self/personal	post/pre
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	1.53
7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	1.06
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	1
8. Can talk about one's future plans.	1
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	1
10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	0.94
4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	0.87
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	0.82
1. Can do greetings	0.7
2. Can introduce oneself.	0.66
3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	0.66
average:	0.93

self/personal	pre/post
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	1.73
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	1.29
10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	1.19
7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	1.18
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	1.13
4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	1.1
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	1.1
8. Can talk about one's future plans.	1
3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	0.83
2. Can introduce oneself.	0.72
1. Can do greetings	0.64
average:	1.0827

Table 8: Average combined rank order of functions, topics and situations

combined pre vs. post			
	sligo	auckland	average
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	1.66	2.38	2.02
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	1.95	1.6	1.775
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	1.38	1.9	1.64
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	1.77	1.23	1.5
32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	1.84	1.1	1.47
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries (especially host family's country).	1.78	1.09	1.435
28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	1.54	1.2	1.37
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	1.24	1.5	1.37
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	1	1.73	1.365
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	1.31	1.4	1.355
54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).	1.45	1.25	1.35
23. Can negotiate bank and post office	1.33	1.31	1.32
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	1.53	1.1	1.315
51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.47	1.15	1.31
49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	1.45	1.16	1.305
45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	1.5	1.1	1.3
50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	1.35	1.23	1.29
42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	1.38	1.2	1.29
33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	1.57	1	1.285
53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)	1.42	1.13	1.275
30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	1.38	1.11	1.245
41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.	1.15	1.33	1.24
29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).	1.21	1.25	1.23
18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	1.31	1.1	1.205
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	0.94	1.46	1.2
46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	1.38	1	1.19
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	1.58	0.8	1.19
31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).	1.45	0.93	1.19
52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	1.55	0.77	1.16
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	1	1.29	1.145
26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.	1.5	0.79	1.145
35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	1.25	1	1.125
7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	1.06	1.18	1.12
15. Can give excuses.	1.05	1.18	1.115

13. Can complain.	1	1.18	1.09
39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	1.44	0.7	1.07
10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	0.94	1.19	1.065
34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.	1.5	0.63	1.065
21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	0.92	1.19	1.055
37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	1.41	0.7	1.055
36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.	1.15	0.92	1.035
22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	1.28	0.79	1.035
17. Can make invitations.	1.15	0.9	1.025
8. Can talk about one's future plans.	1	1	1
4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	0.87	1.1	0.985
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	0.82	1.13	0.975
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	1.23	0.56	0.895
43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	1.33	0.45	0.89
25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	1.08	0.63	0.855
16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes.	0.71	0.95	0.83
14. Can apologize.	0.73	0.86	0.795
3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	0.66	0.83	0.745
12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	0.83	0.64	0.735
2. Can introduce oneself.	0.66	0.72	0.69
1. Can do greetings	0.7	0.64	0.67

Table 9: Pearson r correlation of items in each Category

culture		town	
sligo	auckland	sligo	auckland
47	47	44	41
48	54	45	42
52	48	46	45
51	50	42	44
49	49	43	46
54	51	41	43
53	53	r	-0.02
50	52		
r	0.2		

family		home	
sligo	auckland	sligo	auckland
32	27	38	38
28	29	39	37
31	28	37	39
30	30	40	40
27	32		
29	31		
r	-0.82	r	0.2

self		survival	
sligo	auckland	sligo	auckland
6	5	26	19
7	11	19	24
5	10	23	20
8	7	18	23
11	9	20	21
10	4	22	13
4	6	17	15
9	8	25	18
1	3	15	16
2	2	13	17
3	1	24	14
r	0.5	21	22
		12	26
school		14	12
sligo	auckland	16	25
55	55	r	-0.14
33	33		
34	35		
35	36		
36	34		
r	0.99		

Table 10: Top 10 combined results (in descending order)

Function/topic/situation	category
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university	education
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	culture
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	Community/survival
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	culture
32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	family
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country).	culture
28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	family
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	family
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	Self/personal
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	Community/survival

Table 11: Bottom 10 combined results (in ascending order)

Function/topic/situation	category
1. Can do greetings	Self/personal
2. Can introduce oneself.	Self/personal
12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	Community/survival
3. Can answer questions about one's nationality, home town, interests	Self/personal
14. Can apologize.	Community/survival
16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes	Community/survival
25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	Community/survival
43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	Town/city/geography
40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others	Home/neighborhood
9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	Self/personal

Table 12: Top 10 results in descending order— Sligo

Function/topic/situation (score)	category
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country. (1.95)	Culture
32. Can ask questions about other's biography. (1.84)	Family
44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country). (1.78)	Town/city/geography
48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country). (1.77)	culture
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university. (1.66)	School/education
38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood). (1.58)	Home/neighborhood
34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history. (1.57)	School/education
52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history. (1.55)	culture
28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests. (1.54)	family
6. Can talk about one's daily schedule. (1.53)	Self/personal

Table 13: top 10 results in descending order— Auckland

Function/topic/situation (score)	category
55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university (2.38)	School/education
19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation. (1.9)	Community/survival
5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics") (1.73)	Self/personal
47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country. (1.6)	culture
27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests. (1.5)	family
24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant. (1.46)	Community/survival
20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside (1.4)	Community/survival
41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country (1.33)	Town/city/geography
23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities (1.31)	Community/survival
11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences. (1.29)	Self/personal

Discussion

The results of perceived acquisition of various language functions, topics and situations are far from impressive and are at best extremely modest. The length of each program may have been a major contributing factor to this. Three weeks and six weeks respectively may just have been too short to bring about acquisition in great leaps and bounds. Brecht, Davidson et al in Freed (1995) state that in the case of American students learning Russian, that at a minimum, at least one semester in the target language country is necessary to become at least functional competent in the target language. While language acquisition is probably not exactly exponentially linear, based on the axiom “longer is better”, it would have been predicted that participants in the 6 week program would have consistently rated more language functions, topics and situations as having been acquired and to a higher degree of proficiency than the 3 week program participants did. The results show the opposite trend in this study. A number of factors may have been brought to bear to explain why this result occurred. The survey was administered to the Auckland group some six months after they had returned home. This brings up the point of attrition. Raffaldini (1987) shows that even though students may continue their language studies upon return there seems to be attrition in areas of communicative effectiveness, vocabulary and grammar. Extrapolating this phenomenon to this study, Auckland students’ perception of what language items may have been acquired (or not), may have been overly influenced by students current linguistic ability. Sligo students were given the survey within a month of their return, so their perceptions may be more reliable and true. The survey design itself may have also affected the results. Students’ self-perception and interpretation of the language items, coupled with the cultural-bound trait of modesty, may have also affected the way they filled out the questionnaire. Previous English language training background of participating students may have also been a factor in influencing the results. It may also have been that the Sligo program participants’ overall pre-study abroad ability may have been lower than that of Auckland participants. As a result of this, these students may have perceived their post-acquisition ability to have been stronger and in a wider range of items than Auckland students did. This is cautiously supported by such conclusions as Freed, who states, “There is also added support for the impression that the greatest gains in an immersion environment are made by students with initially lower language proficiency” (1998a : 7).

That there were no strong correlations between the language items and language categories that were predicted to be encountered during students’ sojourn abroad across both programs (except for the category of “school/education”) as well as there being no definite trends amongst the individual language functions, topics and situations within each

4 By dividing the pre-study abroad data “had ability” + “had ability a little”/“had no ability”, a score for the Sligo group of 1.72 is obtained. For the Auckland group a score of 2.25 is obtained. This would suggest that the Auckland group had a higher perceived pre-study abroad ability overall as compared with the Sligo group.

5 By “cautiously” it is meant that in general terms, the majority of students at this institution would be rated as students with low language proficiency.

program itself, may just be indicative of the reality of the situation. That is, the uniqueness of each program, interacting in a multitude of ways with each individual may so dominant that common trends and correlations by group analysis are just not to be found. As Freed points out it is necessary to recognize the...“highly complex nature of the study abroad experience, (and) the significance of individual variables in each student’s profile”, so it may difficult in...“making unwarranted generalizations.” (1998b : 2)

Conclusion

This study has been an attempt to identify and quantify which language functions, topics and situations, having been predicted would be encountered during a study abroad—home stay sojourn, were perceived by students as having acquired some kind of ability in.

Based on the results of this study, the following findings are concluded:

1. Students from both programs perceived that they gained the most acquisition in the category of “culture”.
2. Within the category of “culture”, only the item “Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one’s country”, was perceived to have been acquired the most by both groups.
3. Although the category “school/education” was ranked differently by both groups—Sligo (5th) and Auckland (2nd)—the ranking of the items within this category were almost exactly the same. However, only the item “can talk about and answer questions about one’s major or field of study”, was *commonly* perceived as having been acquired.
4. There was an inverse relationship between the number of language items perceived to have been acquired and the degree of perceived acquisition compared to the length of the program. Factors such as the influence of attrition, due to the timing of the administration of the survey, could have adversely affected these results and thus produced this unexpected phenomenon.
5. The lack of any strong trends and patterns between the two groups in terms of the perceived acquisition of categories, and the overall weakness in perceived acquisition of the language items within each group, may have been influenced by the lack of sensitivity of the measurement tool in this study, and the duration of each program. It may also be due to the undeniable fact that the myriad of individual differences (linguistic, personality and degree and quality of social interaction in the target culture) that each participant in an overseas sojourn brings to bear, maybe so diverse and broad, that common group trends and patterns in language acquisition are just not be found.
6. It may therefore prove to be more profitable to utilize an ethnographical-type tool, using a fewer number of students of various pre—study abroad abilities to investigate to what degree different functions and topics are being acquired (or not) and which situations are being successfully negotiated. While recognizing the need to avoid over—generalizations, such data collected could prove to be useful in defining those language functions, topics and situations that pose the biggest immediate problems for students on study abroad programs. Pre—study abroad language orientation programs/courses could

6 The conclusions reached in this study are limited and applicable only to the students in this study and should be interpreted in this light.

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then be geared to helping lessen the inevitable immediate culture shock experienced by many low level second language learners.

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3	2	1	25. 健康状態や病気名について説明できる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	26. 健康問題について相談することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	27. 自分の家族の名前, 年令, 職業 (特に職名, 会社名, 会社の事業活動), 趣味に関する質問に答えることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	28. 相手や他の人の名前, 年令, 職業 (特に職名, 会社名, 会社の事業活動), 趣味について質問することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	29. 人の (特に 自分の家族の) 外見を描写できる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	30. 人の (特に 自分の家族の) 人格を描写できる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	31. 自分の家族やホストファミリーの家族の経歴について話したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	32. 相手や他の人の経歴について質問することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	33. 自分の学校名, 所在地, 学生数について話したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	34. 自分の学校の学部/学科や歴史について説明したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	35. 自分の国の教育制度について説明したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	36. 他の国の教育制度について質問することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	37. 自分の住まいの面積, 部屋数, 建物の材料について説明したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	38. 相手や他の人の住まいの近辺や近辺の施設 (特に, ホームステイ先) について尋ねたり, 理解することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	39. 自分の住まいの近辺や近辺の施設について説明することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	40. 住まいや近辺について相手と比較することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	41. 町/市/国の面積, 人口を言うことができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	42. 町/市/国の季節, 天候, 気候, 産業, 農業について説明することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	43. 自分の国の歴史的建造物や記念物を説明したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	44. ホームステイ先や他の国の歴史的建造物や記念物について質問し, 理解することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	45. 自分と他の人 (特にホームステイ先) の, 町/市/国の季節, 天候, 気候, 人口, 産業, 農業について比較することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	46. 町や市や国について意見を言うことができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	47. 自分の国の音楽, 映画, テレビ等の娯楽について話したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	48. ホームステイ先の国の音楽, 映画, テレビ等の娯楽について質問することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	49. 料理の作り方を説明することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	50. 自分の国の祭日や祭りや習慣について説明したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	51. ホームステイ先の国の祭日や祭りや習慣について質問し, 理解することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	52. 自分の国の歴史について話したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	53. ホームステイ先の国の歴史について質問し, 理解することができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	54. 時事問題 (特に政治, 経済, 社会, スポーツ) について話したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1
3	2	1	55. 自分の大学の専攻について話したり, 質問に答えたりすることができる。	3	2	1

Pre and Post Language Acquisition Survey of Discrete Language Points in Study

Abroad- Home stay Programs

Name: Faculty: Department:

Program participated in: Auckland University (6-7 weeks)

Sligo University (3 weeks)

Latest language Proficiency Score— TOEIC: ____ TOEFL: ____ G-Telp: ____

Other: _____

Part one

Question 1: Before participating in your Study Abroad program, what language functions/topics/situations did you feel you had already acquired some ability in? Please rate each item.

Question 2: After the completion of your Study Abroad program, what language functions/topics/situations did you feel you acquired some ability in? Please rate each item.

Please note: if you did not use any of the following language functions while you were on your study abroad—homestay, please leave blank.

Question 1				Question 2		
Had acquired the ability	Had acquired the ability a little	Had no ability		Acquired the ability	Acquired the ability a little	No change
3	2	1	1. Can do greetings	3	2	1
3	2	1	2. Can introduce oneself.	3	2	1
3	2	1	3. Can answer questions about ones nationality, home town, interests	3	2	1
3	2	1	4. Can ask questions about other's nationality, home town interests	3	2	1
3	2	1	5. Can talk about past events (especially "today's topics")	3	2	1
3	2	1	6. Can talk about one's daily schedule.	3	2	1
3	2	1	7. Can ask questions about other's daily schedules.	3	2	1
3	2	1	8. Can talk about one's future plans.	3	2	1
3	2	1	9. Can ask questions about other's future plans.	3	2	1
3	2	1	10. Can talk about one's past experiences.	3	2	1
3	2	1	11. Can ask questions about other's past experiences.	3	2	1
3	2	1	12. Can negotiate airport immigration and customs formalities.	3	2	1
3	2	1	13. Can complain.	3	2	1
3	2	1	14. Can apologize.	3	2	1
3	2	1	15. Can give excuses.	3	2	1
3	2	1	16. Can talk about one's likes and dislikes.	3	2	1
3	2	1	17. Can make invitations.	3	2	1
3	2	1	18. Can accept and refuse invitations.	3	2	1
3	2	1	19. Can ask and understand information about public transportation.	3	2	1
3	2	1	20. Can ask and understand the location of buildings and places outside.	3	2	1
3	2	1	21. Shopping: can ask and understand about prices.	3	2	1
3	2	1	22. Shopping: can ask and understand about colors, sizes, styles of clothing.	3	2	1
3	2	1	23. Can negotiate bank and post office formalities.	3	2	1
3	2	1	24. Can order food in a fast food or restaurant.	3	2	1
3	2	1	25. Can explain about one's health condition and state one's illness.	3	2	1
3	2	1	26. Can negotiate a medical examination consultation.	3	2	1
3	2	1	27. Can answer questions about one's family member's names, ages, occupations (especially occupation, company), interests.	3	2	1
3	2	1	28. Can ask questions about other's name, occupation, interests.	3	2	1

3	2	1	29. Can describe physical appearance (especially one's family members).	3	2	1
3	2	1	30. Can describe personality (especially one's family members).	3	2	1
3	2	1	31. Can talk about and answer questions about biography of one's family and other's (especially host family).	3	2	1
3	2	1	32. Can ask questions about other's biography.	3	2	1
3	2	1	33. Can talk about and answer questions about one's school (name, location, student number).	3	2	1
3	2	1	34. Can explain and answer questions about one's school's faculties, departments, history.	3	2	1
3	2	1	35. Can explain and answer questions about one's country's education system.	3	2	1
3	2	1	36. Can ask questions about the education system of other countries.	3	2	1
3	2	1	37. Can explain and answer questions about floor area, number of rooms, building materials of one's dwelling.	3	2	1
3	2	1	38. Can inquire about and understand information about neighborhoods and their facilities of others especially host family's neighborhood).	3	2	1
3	2	1	39. Can describe one's neighborhood and its facilities.	3	2	1
3	2	1	40. Can make comparisons between one's dwelling and neighborhood and that of others.	3	2	1
3	2	1	41. Can talk about the area and population of one's town, city and country.	3	2	1
3	2	1	42. Can explain about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country.	3	2	1
3	2	1	43. Can explain and answer questions about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of one's country.	3	2	1
3	2	1	44. Can ask questions and understand information about historical monuments, landmarks and buildings of other's countries. (especially host family's country).	3	2	1
3	2	1	45. Can make comparisons about the population, weather, climate, seasons, industry, agriculture of one's country and other's countries.	3	2	1
3	2	1	46. Can give opinions about towns, cities and countries.	3	2	1
3	2	1	47. Can talk about and answer questions about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of one's country.	3	2	1
3	2	1	48. Can ask about and understand information about entertainment (music, T. V., movies) of other's countries (especially host family's country).	3	2	1
3	2	1	49. Can explain how to make dishes (recipes).	3	2	1
3	2	1	50. Can describe and answer questions about one's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	3	2	1
3	2	1	51. Can ask and understand information about other's country's customs, national holidays and festivals.	3	2	1
3	2	1	52. Can talk about and answer questions about one's country's history.	3	2	1
3	2	1	53. Can ask about and understand information about other's country's history. (especially host family's country)	3	2	1
3	2	1	54. Can talk about and answer questions about current events (politics, economics, social, sports).	3	2	1
3	2	1	55. Can talk about and answer questions about one's major or field of study at university.	3	2	1