Extracurricular Programmes in EFL: Learning Opportunities Outside the Classroom

Aaron Francis Ward
Aoyama Gakuin University

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This paper presents a theoretical and empirical investigation into how opportunities outside of the classroom make a difference to the study experiences of EFL students studying abroad. There has been relatively little research conducted on the importance of opportunities outside the classroom for EFL students or how this affects learning (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). Yet, extracurricular opportunities present students with wide-ranging opportunities for natural language exposure and pastoral care in the form of sociocultural interaction. This study extends an understanding of the role of extracurricular activity (ECA) programmes by comparing long-term observational data with demographic variables. The results suggest that cultural background and sex in particular influence the value students place on ECA. This may reflect differences in student perceptions of the value of enculturation in language acquisition (see Bernstein, 2003; Bourdieu, 1991; Horibe, 2008).

本論文は、授業外での経験が留学中のEFL学習者の学習経験にどのような影響を与えるかについて行った、理論的、かつ経験的な調査について述べたものである。EFL学習者にとっての授業外経験の重要性や授業外経験が学習に与える影響について行われた研究は、比較的少ない（Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003）。しかし、授業課程外の経験は社会文化的交流という形で、学習者に自然な言語に広く接する機会と心理療法的効果を与える。本研究は、長期に渡る観察データと人口統計学的変数を比較して、課外活動の役割への理解を広めるものである。研究の結果、学習者の課外活動に対する価値観に特に影響を与えるのは、文化的背景と性別であることが分かった。このことは、言語習得における文化適応力に対する学習者の価値観の相違を反映している可能性がある（see Bernstein, 2003; Bourdieu, 1991; Horibe, 2008）。

This paper presents a brief practical outline of extracurricular activity (ECA) programmes, a preliminary empirical investigation, and theoretical discussion of the role these programmes play in the experiences of EFL students studying abroad. ECA differs from curricular EFL programmes in that it runs outside of class time, is less pedagogically structured, and is voluntary for students.

While there is a variety of literature available on the curricular theory and practice of EFL education, there is a notable lack of material concerning student engagement outside the classroom. Relatively little investigation has been done on how studying abroad affects students' learning or on international student tourism behaviour (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). Reasons for studying abroad are multi-faceted, dynamic, and complex. The actual time spent in the classroom context and working on classroom-related tasks (homework, self-study, etc.) constitutes a relatively small proportion of a student's

time in the native-speaker context. As such, an examination of what students do outside of curricular time is important as these interactions are likely to have a meaningful impact on the learning experience. As MacCannell (1999) pointed out, leaving one's own context necessitates new sociocultural experiences. Consequently, extracurricular engagement must constitute a reasonably large element of students' study abroad, regardless of their orientation towards it. In recognition of this, national bodies, such as English New Zealand, require member institutions to offer ECA to their students as part of pastoral care management.

Unlike EFL curriculum, ECA is vernacular, making it highly adaptive to student interests. A wide range of activities can be offered as a part of ECA programmes, ranging from sports and recreation to cultural experiences and out of town trips and tours. ECA offers a variety of benefits to EFL students and hosting institutions. It is widely understood within the practice of EFL that native-speaker culture and language are inseparable and culture should be incorporated into teaching practice (Horibe, 2008). ECA extends this logic by providing opportunities for students to learn and practise language skills outside the classroom environment by facilitating engagement in the native-speaker context. This occurs actively in language-based activities (such as conversation clubs with native speakers), or passively through naturalistic exposure. In addition to EFL study benefits, ECA provides pastoral care to students through social opportunities and facilitates a community atmosphere. Study-abroad students are typically isolated from social-support networks (families, friends, etc.), making them prone to homesickness and culture shock. To compound this, cultural contexts often create a number of implicit social barriers which preclude authentic engagement (Goffman, 1959; MacCannell, 1999). ECA helps students to negotiate these sociocultural obstacles by facilitating cultural participation and breaking down language barriers.

Engaging students in ECA presents a unique set of challenges. These range from the appropriateness of particular activities for different groups of students, to practical logistics and cost management. Most of these issues can be attended to through regular review and adjustment of the programme as part of working towards best practice. However, it appears that student perceptions of the relevance of ECA to EFL study impacts participation. Generally, some groups of students are noticeably more likely to participate than others.

Learner beliefs, including motivations, are important factors in EFL student success, and there is a dynamic interaction between what the students believe and do in terms of outcome success (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). Student perceptions also appear to impact engagement outside the classroom. The English as an International Language (EIL) perspective posits that some students study EFL as an instrumental and acultural communication medium. For EIL students, EFL is a means to some other end, and this rationalised view of EFL suggests that native-speaker enculturation is of less value (Horibe, 2008). This may explain why some students are less inclined to participate in ECA. There are a variety of reasons why students may view EFL instrumentally, and one of these, examined in the current study, is the need for English competence to study in other fields as a non-English speaking background (NESB) student. NESB students discontinue their EFL studies once they begin studying other fields, for example nursing or engineering.

From an economic perspective, it is difficult to rationalise the instrumental relevance of target-language enculturation to EFL learners who have a low probability of living in a native-speaker context or who intend to return home to complete their studies and work. Nonetheless, study-abroad opportunities are popular, suggesting that native-speaker context experiences are incorporated into an aestheticized view of EFL. Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) theory of hedonic consumption suggested

that nonrational or hedonic factors also play a role in consumption practices. This perspective is complimented by sociolinguistic theories which suggest that language acquisition is implicit and complicit in cultural consumption. In particular, consumer behaviour studies suggest that cosmopolitanism is central to the reproduction of middle-class lifestyles. Like homestays and other middle-class tourism practices, ECA goes beyond the front-stage performative aspects of the standard tourist experience and facilitates more authentic involvement with the hosting culture (see also Goffman, 1959). Thus for some students, studying language abroad implies that a certain value is placed on the opportunity for cosmopolitan and middle-class culture appropriation (Bernstein, 2003; Bourdieu, 1991, 1993; Holt, 1998; MacCannell, 1999; Ward, Cohen, & Dean, 2011).This helps to explain why some EFL students are more likely to value enculturating experiences as part of their studies abroad. In the current discussion, this practice will be referred to as the English-and-Enculturation (EAE) perspective. It seems reasonable to infer that students who take an EAE perspective are more likely to engage in ECA opportunities.

To help to better understand the relationship between study perspectives and the value placed on extracurricular opportunities, the following presents an empirical investigation into ECA participation patterns and EFL and NESB student demographics. In this research I intend to focus on students of diverse cultural backgrounds and aim to examine if there are any sociocultural factors that underpin the observed differences in preferences. Observational data collected from 2009 through 2011 at a technical institute in New Zealand are drawn on.

Research Questions

1. What kinds of ECA experiences do EFL students value?
2. Do particular groups of EFL students value ECA differently?
3. How do ECA participation rates relate to NESB demographic patterns?

Method

Student participation in the ECA programme was collated according to the type and cost of activity participated in. The types of activity in the programme were classified as sports (surfing, skiing, rock-climbing, etc.), recreation (ice-skating, bowling, boating, etc.), cultural (museums, art galleries, etc.) and noncultural experiences (zoos, aquariums, etc.), hospitality (restaurants, cafés, and bars), and out-of-town trips (one-day and overnight tours).

This data was then compared with student enrolment data over the same period and at the same institution, including nationality, sex, age, and the average proportion of enrolled-full-time-student (EFTS) points. EFTS data is of especial importance to the current study as EFL students often undertake varied study programmes of less than one enrolled full-time year (1.0 EFTS). Students of particular nationalities tend to make up a smaller fraction of total student enrolments yet tend to undertake longer courses of study. For example, a student who studies abroad for 1 year is weighted 1.0 EFTS point and for one semester 0.5 EFTS points. Because EFL students study abroad for different lengths of time, using EFTS provides a more accurate base for comparison with participation rates in the ECA programme across the same timeframe.

Results

Over the period of observation (January 2009-December 2011) there were 1844 student registrations for the programme. Within the EFL school and ECA programme, the largest groups of students were Japanese, Chinese, South Korean, and Saudi. (Refer to Table 1.) Although there were a number of students

of other nationalities, none of these exceeded 5%, and thus fell outside the standard statistical margin of error. For the purposes of analysis these students were grouped as *other*. Because of the various nationalities grouped as other, these results should be viewed tentatively.

The results of the study indicate that student nationality and sex played important roles in participation rates in the ECA programme. There was no significant difference in the average age of the different nationality groups. As the following analyses demonstrate, although there was some similarity in the behaviour patterns of the different student groups, some of these groups were statistically significantly far more inclined to engage outside of the classroom than others.

Table 1. Percentage of International Students Studying EFL or NESB Courses and Participating in ECA Programme (2009 – 2011)

Nationality	EFL School*	ECA	NESB*
Japanese	20.80	39.80	1.97
Korean	22.92	21.00	2.93
Chinese	24.39	17.70	30.82
Saudi	15.26	15.20	2.07
Other	16.63	6.40	62.21

*Percentage of enrolled full-time students

Table 1 shows that students were differentially inclined to participate in the ECA programme. In particular, some nationalities joined the programme significantly more than others. When comparing the relative percentage of EFL and NESB students with the percentage participating in the ECA programme, the observed pattern is statistically significant ($\chi^2_{(df=8)} = 126.22$, $p < 0.00$). Japanese students represented a disproportionately large number of students joining the ECA programme compared to their fraction of the EFL school (39.80% and 20.80% respectively). Korean and Saudi students tended to participate at rates consistent with their fraction of the EFL student body, and Chinese and other students tended to underparticipate. While Chinese students composed 24.39% of the EFL school, they only accounted for 17.70% of the students in the ECA programme. Similarly, other students made up 16.63% of the EFL school, yet only 6.40% of these students participated in ECA.

When comparing the participation rates of each student nationality in the ECA programme to the percentage of NESB students at the same institution, it is interesting to note that the pattern described above is reversed. While a significant percentage of students joining ECA were Japanese, there were almost no Japanese NESB students (39.80% and 1.97% respectively). In contrast, although the percentage of Chinese and other students was lower in the ECA programme compared to their fraction of the EFL school, there were more Chinese and other NESB students. This suggests that nationalities of students who are more inclined to become NESB students are less inclined to join ECA, and may be more instrumental in their EFL orientation.

As Figure 1 shows, this pattern of participation in the ECA programme for each nationality was relatively consistent across the 3 years surveyed. Although the absolute numbers of students participating in the programme changed over the years, the relative proportion of students of each nationality was approximately the same.

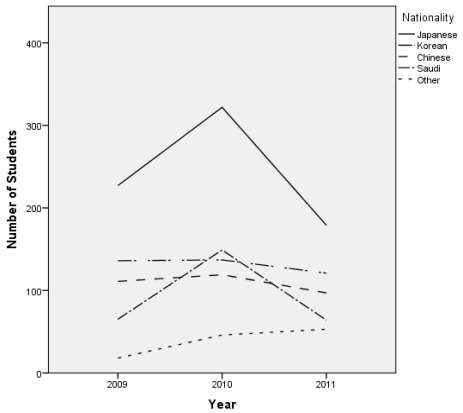

Figure 1. Student Participation Rates in ECA Programme by Nationality (2009 - 2011)

As can be seen in Table 2, each of the nationalities had a statistically significant pattern of preference for activities ($\chi^2_{(df = 20)} = 121.70$, $p < 0.00$). There were similarities and differences in the patterns of participation; recreation activities were the most popular across all of the groups.

Table 3 shows that although approximately the same number of male and female students joined the programme, there was again a statistically significant pattern of preferences ($\chi^2_{(df = 5)} = 47.38$, $p < 0.00$). In particular, more female students took out-of-town trips, and more males joined recreation activities.

Table 2. Student Nationality by the Type of Activity Participated in

Activity		Nationality				
		Japanese	Korean	Chinese	Saudi	Other
Cultural experience	# of students	(*n* = 84)	(*n* = 32)	(*n* = 42)	(*n* = 29)	(*n* = 8)
	% within cultural experience	43.1%	16.4%	21.5%	14.9%	4.1%
	% within nationality	11.5%	8.3%	13.0%	10.4%	6.8%
Hospitality	# of students	(*n* = 141)	(*n* = 73)	(*n* = 54)	(*n* = 46)	(*n* = 20)
	% within hospitality	42.2%	21.9%	16.2%	13.8%	6.0%
	% within nationality	19.4%	19.0%	16.7%	16.5%	17.1%
Noncultural experience	# of students	(*n* = 87)	(*n* = 51)	(*n* = 48)	(*n* = 71)	(*n* = 18)
	% within noncultural experience	31.6%	18.5%	17.5%	25.8%	6.5%
	% within nationality	12.0%	13.3%	14.8%	25.5%	15.4%
Out-of-town trip	# of students	(*n* = 123)	(*n* = 26)	(*n* = 32)	(*n* = 8)	(*n* = 5)
	% within out-of-town trip	63.4%	13.4%	16.5%	4.1%	2.6%
	% within nationality	16.9%	6.8%	9.9%	2.9%	4.3%
Recreation	# of students	(*n* = 167)	(*n* = 106)	(*n* = 83)	(*n* = 93)	(*n* = 42)
	% within recreation	34.0%	21.6%	16.9%	18.9%	8.6%
	% within nationality	22.9%	27.6%	25.6%	33.5%	35.9%
Sport	# of students	(*n* = 126)	(*n* = 96)	(*n* = 65)	(*n* = 31)	(*n* = 24)
	% within sports	36.8%	28.1%	19.0%	9.1%	7.0%
	% within nationality	17.3%	25.0%	20.1%	11.2%	20.5%

Table 3. Type of ECA Participated in by Gender

		Sex	
		Female	Male
Cultural experience	# of students	(*n* = 102)	(*n* = 93)
	% within cultural experience	52.3%	47.7%
	% within sex	11.0%	10.3%
Hospitality	# of students	(*n* = 163)	(*n* = 171)
	% within hospitality	48.8%	51.2%
	% within sex	17.6%	18.9%
Noncultural experience	# of students	(*n* = 140)	(*n* = 135)
	% within noncultural experience	50.9%	49.1%
	% within sex	15.1%	14.9%
Out-of-town trip	# of students	(*n* = 135)	(*n* = 59)
	% within out-of-town trip	69.6%	30.4%
	% within sex	14.6%	6.5%
Recreation	# of students	(*n* = 202)	(*n* = 289)
	% within recreation	41.1%	58.9%
	% within sex	21.8%	31.9%
Sport	# of students	(*n* = 183)	(*n* = 159)
	% within sport	53.5%	46.5%
	% within sex	19.8%	17.5%
Total	# of students	(*n* = 925)	(*n* = 906)
	% within activities	50.5%	49.5%
	% within sex	100.0%	100.0%

Although it appears that both sexes participated at approximately the same rate, this trend is distorted by the absence of female Saudi students. Further, as Table 4 shows, a significant proportion of the Japanese and Korean students who participated in the ECA programme were female ($\chi^2_{(df=4)} = 401.69$, $p < 0.00$).

Table 4. Percentage of Students in ECA Programme by Sex and Nationality

		Nationality				
Sex		Japanese	Korean	Chinese	Saudi	Other
Female	# of students	(*n* = 485)	(*n* = 236)	(*n* = 171)	(*n* = 0)	(*n* = 33)
	% within sex	52.4%	25.5%	18.5%	0.0%	3.6%
	% within nationality	66.6%	61.5%	52.8%	0.0%	28.2%
Male	# of students	(*n* = 243)	(*n* = 148)	(*n* = 153)	(*n* = 278)	(*n* = 84)
	% within sex	26.8%	16.3%	16.9%	30.7%	9.3%
	% within nationality	33.4%	38.5%	47.2%	100.0%	71.8%

The pattern of participation mirrors the statistically significantly different volume of student expenditure on ECA ($F_{(4,1579)} = 11.08$, $p < 0.00$), as shown in Table 5. It appears that the groups of students who participated more in ECA also spent on average more money on the programme. This suggests that students who have more discretionary income are more likely to participate in the ECA programme. However, this result is due to an interaction between the cost of particular types of activities and nationality. In particular, there was a significant difference in expenditure on cheaper activities provided by the institution ($F_{(4,1278)} = 5.51$, $p < 0.00$), but not for those more expensive out-of-town trips provided by third parties ($F_{(4,296)} = 1.61$, n.s.), and this difference is itself statistically significant ($t_{(1582)} = -26.84$, $p < 0.00$). Further, when separating the activity types in this way, the

pattern differs from that of participation. In particular, Korean and other students spent noticeably more on institution-provided activities than Japanese students. Additionally, Saudi students tended to spend more on the more expensive out-of-town trips provided by third parties. Therefore, ECA participation is not reducible to the financial circumstances of the different nationalities of students.

Table 5. Average Expenditure by Student Nationality on ECA Programme in New Zealand Dollars

Nationality	Average	Institution-provided activities	Third-party-provided out-of-town trips
Japanese	$77.10	$20.36	$215.93
Korean	$57.20	$25.47	$211.11
Chinese	$44.72	$16.88	$209.84
Saudi	$38.07	$17.45	$289.74
Other	$37.69	$26.41	$218.17
Average	$58.31	$20.64	$218.90

The distribution of students within the sample is relatively consistent with wider study patterns in New Zealand, suggesting that the observed ECA participation rates may be generalizable. As Table 6 shows, the proportion of nationalities studying in English language schools in 2011 and 2012 are much the same as those of the sample presented, although more students classified as other were accounted for (Education Counts, 2012). The higher proportion of Chinese students in the sample collected is probably a consequence of the sampling site being located within a technical institute, thus allowing EFL students to pathway into mainstream study and to become NESB students.

Table 6. New Zealand International Student Study Rates (%)

	English Language (2 d.p.)		Tertiary 2012 (0 d.p.)	
Nationality	2011	2012	Polytechnics	Universities
Japanese	20.49	20.94	5	4
Korean	17.22	12.37	4	5
Chinese	7.87	11.40	33	38
Saudi	8.97	7.54	5	6
Other	45.45	44.75	53	47

Source: Education Counts, 2012

Discussion

It is a commonly held belief among EFL educators and students that living in a native-speaker context is the best way to acquire language and improve inter-cultural awareness (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). However, this research has shown evidence that ECA programmes are differentially valued; some groups of students appear significantly more inclined to engage in opportunities outside the classroom. Further, students of different nationalities and sex have different preferences.

It appears that there is an inverse relationship between ECA participation by nationality within the EFL school and the composition of the NESB student body. From this, there is evidence that international students who are studying EFL with instrumental goals are less inclined to take up extracurricular opportunities and engage in the native-speaker context. In particular, Chinese and other students make up a significantly larger fraction of NESB and a smaller proportion of ECA. From the observed patterns it is difficult to determine whether this pattern of behaviour is explicable in terms of cultural differences or an advent of study goals. Nonetheless, ECA value is not simply reducible to the economic circumstances of particu-

lar groups of students because ECA expenditure by nationality differs from participation. It also is worth recognising that the providing institution arranges bulk-purchasing discounts and passes these onto students. Consequently, if financial constraints impact ECA participation, then the students concerned are even less likely to be able to afford to engage in similar enculturating opportunities under their own initiative.

Together, these results suggest that ECA programmes are more than just idiosyncratic entertainment options for students. Student participation reflects a complex interplay of sociocultural factors. Particularly, not all EFL study-abroad choices are driven by a strictly rational tendency to maximise educational utility. Thus, there is evidence that particular groups of students are more inclined to adopt EIL or EAE perspectives. In these regards, the current study makes an important contribution to the EFL literature.

To a certain extent, the EIL and EAE perspectives are bridged by Allen (2002), who suggested that student orientation to educational choices are overdetermined and naturalised by the relationship of the students' socialising context (particularly the family, social origin, and social trajectory) to macrosocial rules and institutions. These predispose particular groups of students towards either a relatively pragmatic or liberal view of education and occupational choices. This argument and the observed relationships of study patterns to ECA are underscored by the typically instrumental orientation of NESB students towards economically pragmatic study fields. In New Zealand the most popular NESB fields are commerce (28%), information technology (5%), natural and physical sciences, health, and engineering (all 4%) (Education Counts, 2012). Consequently, it may be better to view EIL and EAE as being manifest social theories of education which are indicative of latent socialising processes. The implication of this is that ECA participation reflects student predispositions to take up cosmopolitan opportunities as a function of their wider socialised orientation to education.

However, this emphasis on sociohistoric contexts moderating student choice generates a number of practical and theoretical problems for the current study. Essentially, the EIL and EAE theoretical perspectives draw on incommensurable ontologies and epistemologies (c.f. Kuhn, 1996; Newton-Smith, 1981). Importantly, EIL suggests that students rationally elect not to engage with the associated culture of the language they are studying. As such, the structuralist and poststructuralist roots of EAE conflict with the positivism of EIL in two important respects. Firstly, structuralism and poststructuralism are theories which emphasise social class as the primary socialising mechanism, not national boundaries. Indeed, other EFL studies have shown that age, culture, and background have an influence on language-learning beliefs (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). Further, the theoretical roots of EAE do not delineate language from culture and stress the former as fundamental in the reproduction and stratification of the latter. As previously noted, EAE's problematisation of EIL is compounded by that fact that when studying abroad, some degree of enculturation is inevitable in the course of daily interaction. However, this does not preclude the fact that particular groups of students and practitioners may adopt an EIL perspective in their respective learning and delivery strategies (Bernstein, 2003; Bourdieu, 1991; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Horibe, 2008; MacCannell, 1999).

These issues could be clarified by further research examining if there are socioeconomic differences between particular groups of students who study abroad. It may be the case, for example, that students from developing countries such as China tend to be more instrumental in their EFL studies and adopt an EIL perspective. Any observed differences in acultural demographic variables, such as symbolic capital, could help to explain this interrelationship between scholastic orientation and cosmopolitanism as part of EFL acquisition and whether these are more

likely for particular nationalities (c.f., Allen, 2002; Holt, 1998). Because the current study relies entirely on observational data, it would also be valuable to investigate the relationship between student opinions on the value of ECA and their participation behaviour. There is also a need to assess the relationship and impact of ECA participation on EFL acquisition and expression. Such research may help to clarify the EIL and EAE debate.

Conclusions, Implications, and Future Directions

Although only preliminary, in the current study I have made a number of observations which could provide the basis for further study. Notably, the results suggest that extracurricular experiences are more important to some groups of students than others. This may hold importance for EFL programme design in terms of the emphasis placed on native-speaker culture content in the classroom.

This study also has implications for institutional recruitment strategies. It makes a contribution towards a better understanding of student choice and motivation to study abroad, and may help to improve the marketability of study abroad programmes and EFL schools, particularly given the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations in study destination choices of international students (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Michael, Armstrong, & King, 2003). This may be important in a context of online social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Mixi, where students often blog and upload their extracurricular experiences.

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Bio Data

Aaron Francis Ward currently works at Aoyama Gakuin University as a lecturer of EFL. His interests are in the application of sociological theory to a variety of contexts, including EFL. <aaronfrancisward@gmail.com>

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