

English Tourism Support in Small Japanese Towns

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English club students from Tokai University's Shimizu, Shizuoka campus and local community members support local English needs by providing volunteer interpretation services to luxury liner passengers disembarking at Shimizu Port. To support the volunteers and create a stronger connection between the university and the town of Shimizu, the English club advisers received a To-Collabo grant from Tokai University to develop community outreach projects. The grant money was used for a project in which they surveyed volunteers about their needs and researched the English support that other small port towns offer tourists arriving on luxury liners. After analyzing volunteer questionnaires, they made recommendations to the town office and port authority. Then they created a training program and *Volunteer Interpreters Handbook* for the students and other volunteers to use during the portside interpreting activities. This paper details the progress of the presenters' ongoing community outreach project and the creation of the *Volunteer Interpreters Handbook*.

東海大学海洋学部清水校舎の英語クラブの学生達は、地域のコミュニティーメンバーと共に清水港に入港する豪華客船の乗客を対象に英語ボランティア活動を行い、乗客のサポートを行った。本プロジェクトは大学と静岡市清水区との連携をはか

るため、東海大学が得た文部科学省「地」の拠点事業(COC)補助金 To-Collaboプログラム「地域志向教育研究経費」を利用して行ったものである。まずボランティアの人々へアンケート調査を行い、その後、清水港と同様に豪華客船が寄港する港を視察し英語サポートの実態調査を行った。また、これらアンケートの分析結果を市や港振興課に報告した。さらに、学生や地域の人々を対象にトレーニングプログラムを行い、ボランティア通訳ハンドブックを作成するなど、港における英語通訳のためのサポートを行った。本稿では、これまでの筆者らの地域貢献プロジェクトの途中経過を詳述し、ボランティア通訳ハンドブック作成までのプロセスを紹介する。

Japanese scholars and business groups have been aware of the growing popularity of Japanese pop-culture products abroad since the early 2000s (Mandujano, 2013). With an understanding of this popularity, the Japanese government is increasingly implementing measures to promote the country as an international tourism destination with the aim of improving local economies (Osumi, 2016). One aspect of this international tourism promotion is the renovation of small Japanese ports so they can accommodate large international luxury liners (“Japan meets goal,” 2015). The Japanese Ministry of Tourism has also designated Yokohama Port, Shimizu in Shizuoka City, Sasebo in Nagasaki Prefecture, and Yatsushiro in Kumamoto Prefecture as well as Motobu and Hirara in Okinawa Prefecture as international cruise ship hubs that will feature terminals where immigration procedures can be conducted for passengers (“Japan eyes int’l hubs,” 2017). Passengers’ disembarking at ports outside of metropolitan areas will help local economies and enable international passengers to experience the unique hospitality and culture of rural Japan.

Although the tourism trade is beneficial to these small port towns, residents in rural parts of Japan also face some difficulties arising from the influx of non-Japanese-speaking tourists. For instance, although the Japanese government has made plans to offer subsidies to hotels, Japanese-style inns, and other tourist spots, the lack of English speakers outside of large cities creates difficulties for shops, restaurants, and other service providers to communicate with foreign visitors (“New subsidy,” 2015). In fact, although 73% of respondents to an English-proficiency survey conducted in two local tourist destinations felt positive about the influx of inbound tourism to their areas, more than

three fourths indicated that they are not confident in their ability to communicate with foreigners in English (Fujita, Terui, Araki, & Naito, 2017). Because small towns such as Shimizu do not have the financial means to provide professional English support, they look for other avenues, including local residents and students who wish to practice their English skills, for volunteers to be English interpreters and guides. Volunteering to provide English support in the local community can be beneficial for university students and local citizens wishing to hone their English language skills and learn intercultural communication because it gives them opportunities to use English in authentic situations outside the classroom (Gough & Kato, 2016). In this paper the authors will first describe luxury liner tourism and local efforts to accommodate cruise tourists as well as outline the activities undertaken by the Tokai University Shimizu campus Active Tokai Local Ambassadors (ATLAS) English Club and local citizen volunteers that provide English language support. Second they will explain the discrepancies that they, as the ATLAS English Club advisers, noticed between the passengers' needs, the English services, and the volunteers' linguistic knowledge for using English to provide portside interpretation in the first 2 years that the ATLAS students have helped at the portside. Based on this information, the 2016 project was devised to develop the Shimizu *Volunteer Interpreters Handbook*. This handbook can be used as English education material for students, volunteers, and potential volunteers at Shimizu Port or as English reference material for volunteers to use when talking to tourists at the port.

Luxury Liner Tourism

The international luxury liner industry is taking advantage of Japan's efforts to promote foreign tourism. According to Maarit Aratoaho, a Japanese tour agent for the Princess Cruises Company who was interviewed by the authors (Gough & Kato, personal communication, June 30, 2016) in Hakodate, Japan,

Passengers can cheaply fly into a major metropolitan airport then board a luxury liner. The ship sails to several smaller Japanese ports offering chances for passengers to disembark and take trips on tour buses arranged by the ship's tour company or to see small-town Japan by wandering through the local area by themselves.

International passenger ships stopping in small port towns bring passengers from a variety of countries in North America, Europe, and Asia. The passengers arriving on the North American or European luxury liners tend to speak English as one of their languages. Although the passenger demographics vary depending on the luxury liner company, the people disembarking from the ships have the opportunity to experience

omotenashi (Japanese hospitality). International tourism also boosts the local businesses such as bus, tour, and taxi companies when passengers take tours prearranged by the ships' tour agents. At the same time, towns such as Shimizu are eager to keep tourism revenue in their community. According to Hiroko Suzuki from the Shizuoka City Association for Multicultural Exchange (SAME) office at the Shimizu town office, in Shimizu's case the town office and port authority want passengers to patronize local shops and restaurants rather than travel outside of the town using optional tours from the ship (Gough & Kato, personal communication, April 2017). As a result, the SAME office and Shimizu Port Authority have asked the authors to advise them about teaching the English skills necessary for interacting with tourists and to create materials for learning English. Members of the ATLAS English Club have also been working on their own original projects to support local English needs.

Shimizu Port Tourism and Tokai University

In 2014, ten luxury liners carrying international passengers stopped at Shimizu port in Shizuoka City. Because the Japanese government has designated Shimizu as an international hub, the number will continue to increase year by year. To support the passengers when they disembark from the ships, the SAME office and the Shimizu Port Authority organize a portside information table with local maps in several languages. Local shop owners, taxi companies, a bank, and the post office also set up booths at the portside that sell local products and provide services. Free Wi-Fi access, tea ceremony demonstrations, and opportunities to try on kimono are available inside the port terminal building. A free shuttle bus runs regularly from the port to Shimizu Station where passengers can catch the JR train into Shizuoka City or shop and dine at the shopping arcade and fish market near Shimizu Station. Because the local people who set up their shops and services at the portside do not have strong English language skills, the town office and port authority recruit university students and local citizens who have English-speaking abilities to volunteer as interpreters for the passengers through advertising in local newsletters. Since its inception in 2014, the ATLAS English Club from Tokai University has worked with SAME and the port authority to plan special projects related to the English tourism needs of the town.

ATLAS English Club

Students at Tokai University Shimizu Campus major in marine sciences and technology, but some are also interested in learning English and practicing their English communication skills in real-life contexts. To support these students, the ATLAS English

Club was established in 2013. The students were eager to find more opportunities to use English outside of school. As a result, a new English professor, who had become the second ATLAS English Club adviser the following school year, contacted the SAME office. The SAME office gave her information about the visiting luxury liners and the need for English speakers to help the passengers. Discussions between the authors and the SAME office began, leading to cooperation with the Shimizu Port Authority and the Shimizu town office, and in October 2014 several students began to volunteer as portside interpreters when the international luxury liners made port calls in Shimizu (Gough & Kato, 2016). Consequently, the students also began developing original projects to help the luxury liner passengers who could not understand Japanese learn about the town and to practice their English. The ATLAS English Club students received a Challenge Center Grant for Student Projects from Tokai University and created an English language map detailing how to take the city bus to the *Miho no Matsubara* seaside woods, which is part of the Mt. Fuji World Heritage Site (Gough & Kato, 2016). Later, they developed student-led tours to *Miho no Matsubara* as well as *Minowa Inari*, a well-known local shrine near the port, and began participating in other volunteer opportunities such as providing English support for a visiting professional soccer team, volunteering at JALT conferences held in Shizuoka, and participating in events with international students visiting from Tokyo.

Port Activities

In the first 2 years of the student volunteer activities, the authors as advisers accompanied the students during their volunteer activities at the port to provide English assistance; make observations of the general situation and the English needs that were or were not being met; and talk to passengers, volunteers, port staff, and ship staff. From their observations and interviews, the advisers identified some areas where the portside services could be improved. For example, although the town's services for the passengers expanded over time, the town officials and volunteers did not have a clear idea of the passengers' needs or what English skills were necessary for the volunteers. One reason for this is that the passenger demographics change depending on the luxury liner company. This results in different English support needs depending on which ship makes a port call. For example, passengers on some ship lines tend to be older and wealthier, using taxi services or taking bus tours prearranged by the ship's travel company. These passengers, therefore, do not need the local volunteers' interpretation services because they are not interested in exploring the area on their own; however, they are interested in using the free Wi-Fi service when they return to the port. Other luxury liners tend to appeal to

younger, middle-class passengers who often travel with their families. These passengers are more interested in walking around the town or taking public transportation to see the local sights. They ask for directions to local shopping spots and have questions about local sights and famous products. The citizen volunteers at Shimizu Port are not trained and do not understand the differences in needs among the passengers depending on the type of ship they arrived on. The authors further noticed that the local citizen volunteers were not familiar with the bus timetables, locations of international cash machines, or the shops and restaurants at the portside shopping mall and surrounding neighborhood. On the other hand, the ATLAS English Club students are not from the Shimizu area and do not have much knowledge about the local history and sightseeing spots. As a result, there was sometimes a mismatch between the passengers' needs, the English services, and the volunteers' knowledge of the local area.

The authors also observed some discrepancies between the expectations of the local citizen volunteers and the student volunteers. For example, one local citizen volunteer enjoys giving long explanations about the local history or famous places to people who are unfamiliar with the Shimizu area. This shows his pride in the local area but does not consider the visitors' needs. Passengers disembarking from the ships tend to want specific information about transportation, Wi-Fi services, or places to visit and they want the information in a timely fashion. In general, they do not seem interested in listening to a long historical description of the area. Other local citizen volunteers are simply eager to share Japanese culture with the passengers by, for example, doing tea ceremony, teaching them how to do origami, or helping them try on kimono. On the other hand, the students' main interests are to develop their English language skills and to design original projects such as the map or tours that involve using English to assist the passengers. They are also interested in providing helpful information such as how to login to the free Wi-Fi service, how to exchange money at the bank, or about the shops at the portside shopping center. Thus, although the town, local citizen volunteers, and students are eager to provide hospitality to the visiting luxury liner passengers at Shimizu Port, there is also a mismatch concerning the aims and expectations of the volunteers from the various groups.

Developing English Support for Shimizu Port

As a result of their observations and local interviews at Shimizu Port, the authors realized more English support was needed and decided to create a project to develop a handbook with materials for reference and to learn English expressions and vocabulary that would be useful for the portside volunteers. The aim of this handbook is to support the students

and local citizen volunteers, helping them to better serve the English needs of visiting international luxury liner passengers at the port. The handbook project began in the 2016 school year and will expand in future years as the ATLAS English club advisers continue to work with their students, the Shimizu town office and the local citizen volunteers. The project began by researching the volunteer English support offered to passengers at Hakodate Port and the language needs of the two volunteer groups in Shimizu. Then after an analysis of portside observations and interviews at Shimizu Port and Hakodate Port, meetings with the Shimizu Port Authority, and conducting a Shimizu volunteer survey (see Appendices A & B) at a seminar for local citizens and volunteers at the Shimizu town office, the authors created the Shimizu *Volunteer Interpreters Handbook*. They used information gleaned from interviews and observations they conducted at Kobe and Hiroshima later in the year to advise the Shimizu Port Authority about how to create useful English-medium tourist materials such as simplified maps and involve volunteers in activities in Shimizu.

Method

This section describes the timeline for researching other towns in 2016 and planning and completing the *Handbook*.

Date	Activity
June, 2016	Research in Hakodate, Hokkaido
September, 2016	Volunteer seminar, Shimizu city office
December, 2016	Survey data entry and translation
February, 2017	Research in Kobe and Hiroshima
March, 2017	Handbook completion
April, 2017	Distribute handbook to the citizen volunteers
September, 2017	Handbook used as a community English course textbook
October, 2017	Community English course survey

Figure 1. Timeline for researching, planning, and completing the *Volunteer Interpreters Handbook*.

June 2016

Observations and interviews with port staff, a Diamond Princess Liner tour agent, and a high school teacher were conducted in Hakodate, Hokkaido in June 2016. Hakodate was chosen because international passenger ships have been stopping there for about 10 years and students from a local high school volunteer to help these passengers. The high school students received an award for their activities from the Japanese Tourism Board in 2015, so the authors wanted to find out about the students' activities and learn about hospitality that can be applied to Shimizu Port. They chose to visit Hakodate when the Diamond Princess ship made a port call because the ship also makes port calls at Shimizu Port.

When they visited Hakodate, the authors identified several differences between the conditions in Hakodate Port and Shimizu Port. First, Shimizu Port is close to the town center, shopping, and the local train lines, but Hakodate Port is far from the town center. Therefore, Hakodate City provides free shuttle buses for the passengers to get to the downtown area and local places of interest. Another difference was the number and types of booths on the dockside at Hakodate. Because Hakodate is an established port town with a booming tourist industry in the downtown area, there were fewer booths on the dockside than at Shimizu. Finally, the high school students' activities were quite different than the activities the Tokai University students engage in. The high school students mostly provided a warm welcome to the passengers through a dance activity and by handing out handmade origami. They also gave basic information using local maps. The students took visitors on a tour of their high school on occasion, but due to their age, the school tour in Hakodate was organized by the school administration, unlike the ATLAS English Club tours, which are student organized.

September 2016

The second part of the project took place in the university's 2016 summer break, which fell between early August and late September. The authors prepared a seminar for the Shimizu town office and local citizens who were interested in the portside activities when the ships arrive. Participants were 68 individuals between the ages of 40 and 70. The seminar began with a presentation to discuss the project's aims and report on Hakodate's portside hospitality and local support for international tourists. After that, they led an hour-long group discussion about the audience members' experiences. Finally, the authors gave the participants a two-part questionnaire. The first part asked about their perceptions of possible language issues involved with volunteering. The second part asked them to list in Japanese vocabulary and expressions they wanted to learn how to say in English (Appendix 1). From the questionnaire responses, the authors

found that the participants were eager to interact with foreigners, but the Shimizu town office and port authority did not make their expectations clear to the local citizen volunteers. For example, one of the participants said Shimizu needs “a plan for English support in the community” because volunteers were confused about what they should do when they volunteer to help passengers. Similar to the results reported in Fujita, Terui, Araki, and Naito (2017), many participants mentioned perceived deficiencies in their English skills for communicating with foreign visitors. They also mentioned “the need for vocabulary specifically for people who help at the port” so they can “communicate with passengers in a more friendly manner and answer questions about the town,” such as explaining in English about local history, recommended local products, transportation options, and the portside shopping center.

December 2016-April 2017

The authors began to develop the *Volunteer Interpreters Handbook* using the type of English expressions the seminar participants asked for in their questionnaires. As a first step, they asked ATLAS English Club students to enter and categorize the Japanese expressions from the questionnaire in a Google Doc. The data were divided into eight categories according to topic, and then the students made preliminary translations. Afterwards, the authors checked the English translations, revised them into more natural English, and created grammar points with Japanese explanations. The handbook includes information and expressions such as giving directions, explanations about how to use public transportation, vocabulary and expressions for describing local products, and useful vocabulary for chatting with the passengers. In this way the handbook could serve as a general tool for English language learning as well as to help the volunteers explain local sights, products, history, and transportation options. An ATLAS English Club student who is an artist made the cover art. The handbook was completed in March 2017. During this time, the authors also made trips to Kobe and Hiroshima when the Diamond Princess ship stopped at those ports. Similar to their trip to Hakodate, they interviewed port authority officials and local volunteers and made observations of the English support provided by Kobe City and Hiroshima City tourism organizations and other local volunteer groups. The authors compiled a report of their interviews and observations in Hiroshima and Kobe to help the SAME office and Shimizu Port Authority develop the local citizen volunteer program to better train the volunteers to serve the passengers’ needs. The authors also recommended offering maps that are simpler than the current maps. These maps should have clear explanations of the sights, transportation times, and other information that would help international visitors.

There is a print version of the handbook and a PDF version that can be downloaded from the Tokai University Shimizu Campus homepage (<http://www.scc.u-tokai.ac.jp/~278092/Inbound%20Tourism/HTML/index.html>). Copies of the *Volunteer Interpreters Handbook* were given to the SAME office and the Shimizu Port Authority, who distributed them to the local citizen volunteers in April 2017. The local citizen volunteers and Tokai University ATLAS English Club students used the handbook throughout the summer luxury liner tourism season. A local English school teacher also requested to use the handbook as a textbook for a short English course that she was planning to develop and teach for potential volunteers in September and October 2017. After the tourism season had finished, these groups were given a survey to assess their impressions of the usefulness of the handbook and whether they had used it during their interpreting activities or before as a textbook to help them improve their English skills. The authors are now in the process of analyzing the results of the surveys. They will use the information to revise the handbook as well as to give future presentations and training seminars for local volunteers as they continue the project to develop English support for tourism in Shimizu.

Concluding Comments

Because small towns such as Shimizu cannot afford to pay professional interpreters to help with international tourism, they will need to rely on local volunteers to support their foreign language needs. The Tokai University ATLAS English Club advisers’ research and community outreach activities in Shimizu could therefore be a useful model for other small Japanese communities that hope to encourage international tourism. This is an example of the creation of a relationship between the local town office and the local university, which promotes good relations between the two entities and encourages future collaboration. The model presented in this paper could be adapted by other university professors, students, and English volunteer groups in Japan who wish to establish a relationship between universities and their local community to provide support for local English needs.

This project will continue as Shimizu becomes a hub for international luxury liners and continues to recruit volunteers to support the English needs of the visiting passengers. In addition to the volunteer handbook, the authors have developed more training seminars to explain passengers’ needs, discuss the town office and port authority expectations for volunteer interpreters, and teach useful English for helping passengers. They are also continuing their community support project by helping the ATLAS and other Tokai University students develop new projects, such as the 2017 project to create

the *Shimizu Tour Guidebook*, which features short tours to local sightseeing spots that can be completed in the time the ships remain at the port. As with the *Volunteer Interpreters Handbook*, a PDF version will also be available on the Tokai University Shimizu campus homepage. The authors are also working on creating i-Book versions of both books that local citizens and ATLAS English Club volunteers can save onto their smart phones and use when they provide explanations and tour information to the international visitors at Shimizu Port.

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Bio Data

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Appendix A

Volunteer Survey 1

アンケート A *研修会終了時に回収します。

Volunteer Survey A (people who have volunteered)

ボランティア通訳をしたことがある人にお聞きします。→ 経験のない人は裏面へ

Please answer these questions about your volunteer activities to help foreign tourists in Shizuoka.

静岡市内でボランティア通訳を経験した人に質問です。

1. Why did you want to become a volunteer to help foreign tourists?
なぜ外国人に対するボランティア通訳をしようと思ったのですか?
2. How many times have you volunteered?
何回ボランティアの経験をしましたか?
3. Where did you volunteer?
どこで行いましたか?
4. What did you do?
何をしましたか?
5. What did you like about volunteering?
ボランティアをして良かったことは何ですか?
6. What was difficult for you?
何が難しかったですか?

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7. What kind of English skills do you think you need to be a volunteer to help foreign tourists?
外国人観光客のボランティアをするにあたってどのような英語スキルが必要だと思いますか？
8. How can Wendy and Kazumi help you learn these English skills?
本日のプレゼンター 2 名に期待することは何ですか？
9. What kind of English services do you think Shizuoka City should have to help foreigners?
静岡市は観光客に対して今後どのような英語サービスが必要だと思いますか？
8. How can Wendy and Kazumi help you learn these English skills?
本日のプレゼンターに期待することは何ですか？
9. What kind of English services do you think Shizuoka City should have to help foreigners?
静岡市は観光客に対して今後どのような英語サービスが必要だと思いますか？

Appendix B

Volunteer Survey 2

アンケート B * 研修会終了時に回収します。

Volunteer Survey B (people who haven't volunteered)

ボランティア通訳をしたことがない人にお聞きします。→ 経験のある人は裏面へ

1. Why did you come to the presentation today?
なぜ今回の研修会に参加しようと思ったのですか？
2. Do you want to volunteer to help foreign tourists in Shizuoka?
今後、静岡で観光客相手にボランティア通訳をしたいと思います？丸をつけてください。
Yes No
3. What do you want to do to help foreign tourists?
外国人観光客にどのようなことをしてあげたいですか？
4. How often do you want to volunteer?
どのくらいの頻度でボランティア通訳を試みたいですか？(例)年に1回
5. What do you think would be fun about volunteering?
ボランティア通訳の何に魅力がありますか？
6. What do you think would be difficult about volunteering?
ボランティア通訳の何が難しいと思いますか？
7. What kind of English skills do you think you need to learn to be able to help foreign tourists?
ボランティア通訳をするためにどのようなスキルを学びたいと思いますか？