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The Influence of a Study Abroad Teacher Training Program on the Language Development of Korean Teachers of English

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This study investigates the effects of a four-week study abroad teacher training program for Korean teachers of English for their language development. To assess linguistic development, pretest and posttest listening, reading, grammar, speaking, and writing were assessed. The participants completed self-assessment questionnaires that asked them to assess the extent to which their language had improved after the program. The participants' daily journal entries were collected and some of the participants were interviewed to examine their perceptions of their language development. The pretest and posttest scores were compared with a MANOVA and follow-up ANOVA tests. The results showed that, except for their reading scores, their skills had significantly improved. On the self-assessment questionnaire, most participants considered a few items as improved after the program, and a few believed that their listening and speaking skills had declined after they experienced communicative failures during the study abroad. This study provides significant insight into the implementation of English teacher training programs, how they can be improved, and their extension to other types of foreign language teachers.

Keywords: study abroad teacher training, language development, Korean teachers of English

Introduction

Many countries have emphasized the importance of teaching and the significant impact that teachers have on students' academic performance. Although it is widely accepted that teachers must continually develop their teaching skills and advance their knowledge, foreign language teachers must be particularly diligent in this regard because of the unique characteristics of teaching foreign languages. Languages are dynamic, and teachers who do not regularly use the foreign languages that they teach could lose their language proficiency. However, few studies have been published on continuing teacher education for foreign language teachers, despite the many studies published on general teachers' professional development (Allen, 2010; Choe, 2012). Teachers, particularly foreign language teachers, also have been under heavy pressure from Ministries of Education, school districts, administrators, and parents, regarding the demand to maintain high competency levels.

The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (2006) contends that accomplished foreign

language teachers are those who are highly proficient in their target languages. However, foreign language teachers' uses of their target languages are usually limited to their classrooms (Allen, 2010). Thus, foreign language teachers need opportunities to develop and refresh their language proficiencies by engaging in frequent teacher training programs (Allen, 2013). In the foreign language educational field, study abroad is commonly accepted as one of the best ways to develop foreign language proficiency.

Although available, study abroad in-service teacher training programs for foreign language teachers are relatively uncommon in Korea, and studies on the effectiveness of these programs for the participants' language development are few. Some studies have considered the outcomes of American foreign language teachers' study abroad programs (Allen, 2010, 2013; Barfield, 1994; Campbell, 1996; Choe, 2012; Rissel, 1995; Thompson, 2002; Walker de Félix & Cavazos Peña, 1992); however, few of these studies focused on foreign language teachers from Asian countries, including Korea. A few studies on Japanese teachers of English who participated in study abroad teacher training programs can be found, but these studies considered the teachers' teaching practices and beliefs after the study abroad programs, not the teachers' language development (Cook, 2010; Kurihara & Samimy, 2007). Moreover, many studies assessed the linguistic outcomes of study abroad programs by employing only formal language measures, such as the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), although the OPI and similar assessments do not necessarily capture developmental language processes (Freed, 1995). This study aimed to overcome the limitations of the previous studies on the effects of study abroad teacher training programs for Korean teachers of English on language development by combining language assessments with the participants' subjective assessments.

Literature Review

Foreign Language Teachers' Language Development in Study Abroad Teacher Training Programs

Many previous studies of language development in study abroad experiences have focused on undergraduate students' study abroad programs. However, only a few studies have investigated the effects of study abroad on foreign language teachers' language development. Walker de Félix and Cavazos Peña (1992) examined the effects of a four-week study abroad program in Mexico on 16 bilingual heritage language teachers, using quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were derived from the subjects' scores on the Modern Language Association reading and writing tests before and after the program. The comparison of the posttest to the pretest scores found a significant increase in the participants' writing skills and a significant decrease in their reading skills, for which the authors had no detailed explanation. Barfield (1994) similarly investigated the effects of a six-week study abroad program on teachers' language development using pretest and posttest scores on the OPI. The results showed that the proficiency range was the same from the Intermediate–Mid to the Superior levels, but the mean increased to 7.31, suggesting that the participants needed more than six weeks to move up one level in the OPI (Barfield, 1994).

Campbell (1996) evaluated her personal language learning experiences during a two-month experience abroad in Mexico. She found that social interaction with the local people and previous language learning in a target language developmental context were important. Thompson (2002) examined the effects of a five-week study abroad training program in Spain on 18 elementary and secondary school teachers, and Rissel (1995) similarly examined the effects of a five-week study abroad program on 25 K-12 Spanish teachers. Thompson (2002) and Rissel (1995) found increased listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, and Rissel (1995) found that the participants had gained confidence in their Spanish language skills, a sense of professional rejuvenation, and passion about using native materials collected during their study abroad in Mexico.

Allen (2010) examined the influences of a three-week study abroad program on the professional lives of 30

teachers, via qualitative research, and found that the teachers' French proficiency and cultural knowledge increased. Allen's (2013) subsequent study explored teachers' beliefs about developing their language proficiencies during a three-week study abroad in France by analyzing their diaries in a naturalistic inquiry. She found five distinct beliefs¹ about developing second language proficiency and related corollaries about second language acquisition

Scant research specific to Asian teachers' language development in study abroad was found, although there are a few studies on Asian learners' English language learning in study abroad (Sasaki, 2004, 2007; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003) and Asian English teachers' English development in their domestic teacher training programs (Kim, 2009; Kim & Ahn, 2011; Na, Ahn, & Kim, 2008; Yang, 2009).

Measures of Foreign Language Development: Formal Assessments and Self-Assessments

To examine the extent to which participants in study abroad programs develop their language abilities, researchers have employed established measures to assess their language gains. However, the results have not been consistent. The skills that students have acquired abroad may be either overestimated or underestimated, depending on what was measured and the particular tool that was used (Choe, 2013). For example, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) used the OPI to examine oral fluency gains by comparing students who did to those who did not study abroad, and Juan-Garau and Perez-Vidal (2007) assessed fluency, accuracy, complexity, rate of formula use, and other outcomes of the oral performance of participants in role-play and narrative tasks with the OPI. However, the OPI is limited in determining oral fluency development because it is not sensitive to short-term changes, particularly at the upper levels (Freed, 1995; Liskin-Gasparro, 1995; Milleret, 1996), and it is not known how consistently it would perform in assessing teachers' language skills' development.

Most of the few studies on listening comprehension used standardized tests, such as the listening component of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) taken by Japanese learners studying in the US (Tanaka and Ellis, 2003). Allen (2002) used a 14-item listening skills test and self-assessment questionnaire to assess changes in listening skills in a study of a six-week summer program in France. Cubillos, Chieffo, and Fan (2007) assessed comprehension using the listening portion of the College Board Spanish Advanced Placement Test and used pretest and posttest questionnaires on self-perceived linguistic competence to determine the influence of a study abroad program.

Competence in reading and writing relative to study abroad is under-studied (Kinginger, 2008, 2009). However, a variety of instruments has been employed to assess reading skills. For example, Brecht, Davidson, and Ginsburg (1993) used the Educational Testing Service reading exam; Hayden (1998) utilized a computer-adaptive test for reading Chinese; and Dewey (2004) used free recall protocols, vocabulary knowledge, and self-assessments. With respect to writing, some studies have considered the influence of study abroad (Freed, So, & Lazar, 2003; Sasaki, 2004, 2007; Juan-Garau & Perez-Vidal, 2007). Sasaki (2007) compared students abroad with their peers at home in general proficiency, essay quality, and fluency. Juan-Garau and Perez-Vidal (2007) analyzed study abroad learners' written compositions for fluency and accuracy as well as for grammatical and lexical complexity gains.

Overall, the previous studies tended to focus on the effectiveness of long-term study abroad and neglected the effects of relatively shorter study abroad experiences. Furthermore, the subjects of previous studies were mostly undergraduate students, although the effects of study abroad on foreign language teachers with relatively more advanced language proficiency levels should be assessed.

¹ The five distinct beliefs were 1) the existence of different levels in L2 and the negative effects of external factors in L2 comprehension, 2) a long process in becoming proficient in L2, 3) the need for immersion in L2 proficiency, 4) the importance of increasing vocabulary beyond one's personal set of words and expressions in L2 proficiency, and 5) negative effects of code-switching in L2 learning.

This study examines the effects of a short-term study abroad teacher training program on the participants' language development using a mixed methods approach. First, pretest and posttest scores of the subjects' listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammatical grammar were compared using an omnibus MANOVA test followed by separate ANOVAs. Then responses to self-assessment questionnaires (developed by the National Language Corps Services) were analyzed to determine the extent to which the subjects perceived they had improved with respect to listening, speaking, and reading. To enrich our interpretation of the quantitative data analytical results, data were collected from the subjects' daily journal entries and some face-to-face interviews were conducted regarding their beliefs about their personal linguistic development in the program. This study adds to our understanding of this topic by extending the body of previous studies on the effects of study abroad programs on the language development of foreign language teachers. It addresses the following two questions.

1. To what extent did the participants' English language skills change after the four-week study abroad teacher training program?
2. In what ways did the program influence the participants' language skills according to their self-assessments?

Methods

Participants and the Program

The sample was comprised of 42 Korean teachers of English who participated in a four-week study abroad teacher training program in the US. All of the subjects originated from a large province near Seoul. Their ages ranged from 26 to 49. Nine teachers were male, and teaching experience ranged from five to 20 years. The program was financially supported by the Korean government and held at a large, state-funded university in the southwestern US. Table 1 presents the program's daily schedule.

TABLE 1
The Daily Schedule of the Teacher Training Program

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri
9:00 – 9:50 Reading/Discussion				
10:00 – 10:50 Writing Improvement				
11:00 – 11:50 Listening/Speaking				
Noon – 2:00 Lunch				
2 – 2:50	2 – 4:50	2 – 2:50	2 – 4:50	2:00 – 2:50
Culture/ Idioms	Guest Lectures /	Culture/ Idioms	Guest Lectures /	Culture/ Idioms
3 – 3:50 Communicative	Field Trips	3 – 3:50 Communicative	Field Trips	3 – 3:50 Communicative
Grammar		Grammar		Grammar
4 – 4:50 Pronunciation		4 – 4:50 Pronunciation		4 – 4:50 Pronunciation

The participants in the study were grouped into three classes according to their English proficiency levels, but the contents of the program were the same in all classes. In the mornings, courses for improving the participants' four English skills were offered, and the courses on grammar, pronunciation, culture, and idioms were provided in the afternoons. Three lecturers with expertise in the content areas taught the courses. They also had extensive teaching experience in Korea, which gave them a strong familiarity with Korean learners' usual weaknesses and strengths in English language learning.

In the reading/discussion sessions, contemporary English literature, such as short stories, was taught and discussed. The writing sessions aimed to develop the participants' academic writing skills using a process-based approach. The lecturer gave daily feedback on each participant's writing samples. In the listening/speaking sessions, current listening scripts, such as news reports and lectures, were covered, and speaking strategies were taught. In the culture/idioms sessions, the lecturer taught authentic and frequently used idiomatic expressions used in the US with their embedded cultural backgrounds and information. In the communicative grammar sessions, grammatical rules were applied and practiced in meaningful and communicative contexts given by the lecturer. In the pronunciation sessions, the lecturer demonstrated correct English pronunciation of words and sentences focusing on authentic American intonation.

Data Collection

Formal language assessments

To measure the extent to which the participants' English proficiency in listening, grammar, and reading improved (and to address research question 1), pretest and the posttest language tests were administered online with a test originally developed by the University of Michigan. Native English-speaking raters used holistic rubrics to assess their speaking and writing skills. Table 2 lists the tests, numbers of items in each test, and the time allotted to complete each test.

TABLE 2
Components of the Listening, Grammar, and Reading Tests

Section	Time (in minutes)	Number of Items
Listening	35	50
Grammar	45	75
Reading	30	35
<i>Total</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>160</i>

The pretest and the posttest used in this study have been reported as being at the same level of difficulty, so it was appropriate to use both tests to examine the participants' progress. To measure speaking and writing, well-developed items were chosen from the item pools. Speaking was measured with responses to four interview questions. Writing was measured by assessing one essay. Trained raters rated all of the writing and speaking data. The components of the speaking and writing tests are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Components of the Speaking and Writing Tests

Section	Time (in minutes)	Number of Tasks
Speaking	30 – 35	4
Writing	30	1

On the first day of the program, the participants underwent oral proficiency interviews with trained interviewers who were native English speakers. Similarly, during the last week of the program, the participants underwent exit oral proficiency interviews. The interview contents were scored by the interviewers for fluency, accuracy, and quality, using holistic rubrics based on the ACTFL Guidelines (Advanced High, Advanced Low, Intermediate High, Intermediate Low, and Beginner). The interviewers were certified experts in rating English speaking and writing. Rater training was conducted before the program to achieve high inter-rater reliability, which was .81. The pretest and posttest scores were compared

to determine the changes after the study abroad program regarding the participants' oral proficiency.

On the first day of the program, the participants chose one of several topics, such as "Someone who moves to a foreign country should always adopt the customs and way of life of his/her new country," about which they wrote 30-minute essays. Similarly, on the last day of the program, they wrote 30-minute essays, but they chose from a different set of topics. Using rubrics, four major domains were identified and rated: content, organization, grammar, and lexical complexity. The inter-rater reliability was .79.

Self-assessment questionnaires

The participants' self-assessments were administered before the program began to assess the four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). The self-assessment questionnaire², which was developed by the National Language Service Corps (NLSC), applies "yes" or "no" statements to a list of 88 actions or situations. The items were originally developed by the Interagency Language Roundtable, which contributed the basic forms to the ACTFL Guidelines. The respondents chose either "yes" or "no" in response to 37 speaking, 30 listening, and 21 reading statements. Because they were adult learners as well as English teachers, the participants provided interesting comments in the margins of their questionnaires regarding their perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the self-assessment responses were also used to assess the participants' self-perceptions of their linguistic improvement.

Data Analysis

Multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests with follow-up analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were performed to quantitatively address the first research question. The MANOVA test was chosen because it corrects for inflation of Type 1 error due to multiple tests. The independent variable was the timing of the test (before or after the program), and the five language skills were the dependent variables.

To further understand the participants' language skills' development, their Self-Assessment questionnaire responses, daily journal entries, and interview data were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is a "careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meaning" (Berg, 2009, p. 338). It is a widely accepted method to analyze artifacts of human communication (Allen, 2013). First, open coding was performed by reading and rereading the interview transcripts and highlighting the sections that explicitly related to the participants' self-assessments and awareness of their linguistic differences. Then the interview transcripts and the daily journals were read again to draw out phrases and sentences that indicated a self-assessment and awareness of linguistic differences. Using these procedures, open coding of "manifest content" and "latent content" was accomplished (Berg, 2009, p. 344). Then axial coding was performed as an iterative sorting process using index cards. Member checking and peer debriefing were performed in this process to overcome subjectivity in the data interpretation. Last, several themes emerged that represented the participants' perceptions of their language development and the linguistic differences that they perceived.

² The self-assessment includes 88 "can-do" statements previously found to have relatively good predictive power for Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) scores (Stansfield, Gao, & Rivers, 2010).

Results and Discussion

Language Development Assessed by the Formal Assessments

To obtain data on listening, grammar, and reading, the participants completed an online test before and after the program. Possible scores ranged from 0 to 100. The speaking and writing tests, which were developed by the University of Michigan, were administered face-to-face and holistically evaluated by native English-speaking instructors. The ranges of possible scores on those two tests were 0 to 9. The descriptive statistics of each of these four types of tests are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Descriptive Statistics of Test Scores of Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Grammar (n = 42)

Test type	Pretest			Posttest		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Listening	83.00	12.60	40.00 – 98.00	87.40	8.40	68.00 – 98.00
Speaking	5.53	0.78	4.00 – 7.00	6.19	0.72	4.50 – 7.50
Reading	87.10	9.91	54.00 – 100.00	87.10	7.99	65.00 – 100.00
Writing	6.40	0.77	5.00 – 8.20	7.00	0.75	5.00 – 8.00
Grammar	84.70	7.38	65.00 – 99.00	86.90	6.90	67.00 – 96.00

A one-way MANOVA that simultaneously analyzed the five dependent variables indicated a significant effect of time ($F(5,37) = 127.3, p < .001$). Because the result was statistically significant (Hotelling's T^2 test: $t = 172.04, F(5,37) = 127.3, p < .001$), follow-up ANOVA tests were performed to identify which of the proficiency outcomes was significantly influenced by time. Table 5 shows the results of the ANOVA tests for speaking, listening, writing, reading, and grammar. The posttest scores on all of the proficiency measures were significantly different from the pretest scores, except for reading.

TABLE 5
Main Effects of Separate ANOVA Tests of the Effects of Time on Speaking, Listening, Writing, Reading, and Grammar (n = 42)

Outcome	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Partial <i>eta</i>	Observed power
Speaking	9.00	155.62***	.791	1.000
Listening	407.44	8.67**	.175	.820
Writing	9.07	115.78***	.738	1.000
Reading	.05	.01	.000	.050
Grammar	100.76	11.31**	.216	.907

* = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$

Note. $df = 1, 41$

Overall, the results of the MANOVA test found a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ($p < .0005$, observed power = 1.000). The ANOVA results were: listening = $F(1,41) 8.669, p < .001$; grammar = $F(1,41) 11.311, p < .001$; speaking = $F(1,41) 155.615, p < .000$; writing = $F(1,41) 115.778, p < .005$. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores on reading ($F(1,41) .005, p = .947$).

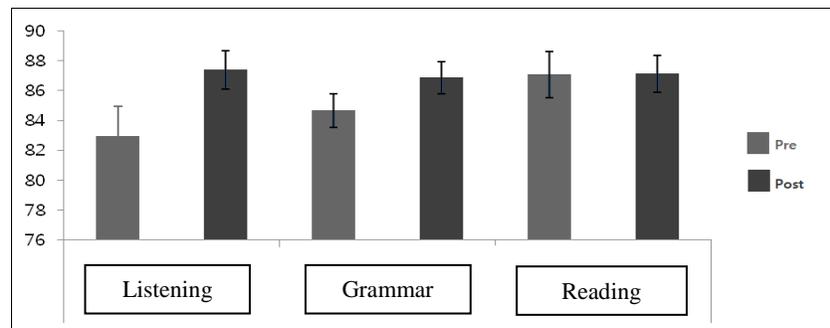


Figure 1. Pretest and Posttest Listening, Structure, and Reading Scores

Figures 1 and 2 show the differences between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the five proficiency outcomes, with error bars on top indicating reliability results for each test. Figure 1 displays the means of the three proficiency outcomes scored on a 100-point scale: listening, grammar, and reading. In Figure 2, the means are displayed for the proficiency outcomes scored on nine-point scales, for speaking and writing.

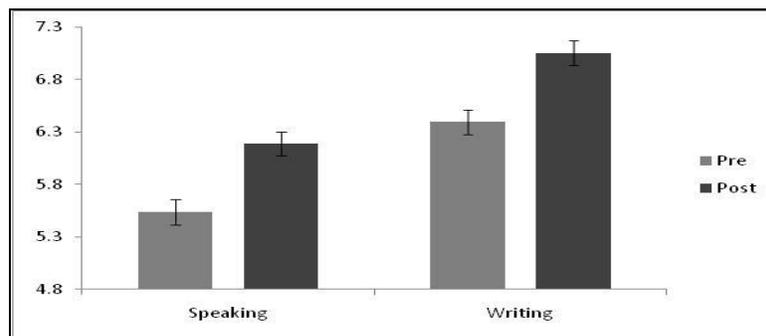


Figure 2. Pretest and Posttest Speaking and Writing Scores

The mean pretest and posttest reading scores were not statistically different (Figure 1), although the mean listening, grammar, speaking, and writing differences between the pretest and posttest scores were statistically significant in the MANOVA test results. Perhaps the participants in this study abroad program were more engaged in the local community to improve their oral communication proficiency than in reading books or articles (Freed, 1995; Kinginger, 2008; Stewart, 2010). The participants also may have wanted to make new friends in the target culture and community instead of spending time alone. In addition, the study abroad program director reported that the participants' reading proficiency levels were already high, leaving little room for improvement. The program director stated: "Their reading proficiency was so high, almost at the ceiling of the measure. So, it was hard to improve more." (Study abroad program director, personal interview).

These findings support those of many previous studies that reported positive linguistic outcomes from study abroad programs regardless of the programs' durations (e.g., Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsburg, 1993; Freed, 1995; Freed, Dewey, & Segalowitz, 2004; Juan-Garau & Perez-Vidal, 2007; Kinginger, 2008, 2009; Sasaki, 2004, 2007). Interestingly, however, there was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores on the reading test.

This finding could be explained by the characteristics of the participants in this study abroad program. As a group, the participants were experienced and trained teachers of English as a foreign language. They were knowledgeable about numerous teaching and learning methodologies. This preparation made it relatively easy for them to improve their linguistic skills. Their preparation also may explain the lack of a significant difference on the reading assessment because their reading skills were already advanced, as was pointed out

by the study abroad training program director onsite. Thus, there was little room for significant improvement.

Moreover, Korean English teachers focus on teaching reading comprehension skills, and most of the Korean curriculum concentrates on enhancing students' reading comprehension skills, so it is logical that this would be one of their strengths (Jeon, Lee, & Lee, 2015). This result seems to indicate a ceiling effect, which occurs when a dependent variable is insensitive to detecting differences when participants score high on both compared tests and instruments (Allen, 2010). Reading competency may simply have been too advanced for the program to have much influence. Conversely, it can be argued that a four-week study abroad program is too short to improve reading skills, particularly when the participants focus on practicing their oral language skills by engaging with the local people.

Self-assessments of Language Development

Interestingly, some of the participants reported that they realized that they were not as proficient as they had thought before the program. Therefore, some of the participants' posttest scores were lower than their pretest scores. Many of them had never been to an English-speaking country, and only a few had experienced an English-speaking country for longer than two weeks. They stated that some aspects were much more challenging than they had expected. Seven of the 42 participants reported that their English proficiency had declined, meaning that they believed they had become less able to use their English language skills. Because most of them had never been to an English-speaking country, they did not expect as many communication misunderstandings as they experienced.

This finding suggests that the English language the participants had studied and taught before they went abroad was different from the English used on location in the US. More than one-half of the participants reported that their English language skills did not improve as much as they had expected, even though they chose "yes" for two or three more sub-items than they chose on the self-assessments they completed before the program.

One participant, who was a good speaker, wrote on her speaking self-assessment questionnaire that, "Pronunciation became the major issue for many teachers including me. I found native speakers' pitch more exaggerated. I feel like I became more familiar with the native speaker's speech music [rhythm] over the program." (Participant B, written notes in self-assessment questionnaire, 4th week of the program).

In response to one item regarding speaking, this same participant checked the column "yes" and wrote a note in the margin stating, "I became more aware of the specific patterns of errors, especially related to the pronunciation. This overseas training program helped me to correct myself rather [than] being frustrated when native speakers couldn't pick up what I said." (Participant B, written notes in self-assessment questionnaire, 4th week of the program). She also wrote a note next to an item that stated,

I am able to adjust my speech to suit my audience, whether I am talking to university professors, close friends, employees, or others ... [and] ... still not that comfortable, but now I feel like I can handle casual conversation with anyone. (Participant B, written notes in self-assessment questionnaire, 4th week of the program)

Thus, she apparently doubted her ability on this item, but she believed that she had improved somewhat over the program.

Unlike the quantitative findings of the pretest and posttest reading test comparison, some of the participants reported in their self-assessments that their reading competencies had somewhat improved after the program from the experience of reading the book, *Twilight*. In the reading class, the participants read this novel as a group, and some of them reported enjoying the novel a great deal. They were observed taking the book

everywhere they went, and their engagement with the book may have contributed to their self-assessments of improved reading skills. One participant wrote, “The strategy of skimming worked really well when I [was] reading *Twilight*.” (Participant F, in-depth interview, 4th week of the program).

Many of the participants reported that their English had not improved as much as they had expected before the program, except for two or three items on the self-assessment, and many participants doubted that they had truly become able to accomplish specific tasks using their English language skills. Thus, many of the participants reported that they were neither “yes” nor “no,” but were somewhere between them, as “somewhat” or “sometimes.”

The participants who reported at the end of the program that they were less able to do certain things in English than they had thought at the beginning also reported more anxiety than the other participants. They reported more frustration and were more disappointed in themselves when they experienced communication failures with the local people. Moreover, they seemed to express more modesty regarding their proficiency levels than other participants. Even though only a few rated themselves as less able after than before in terms of their English proficiency, it was an important finding of this study because it confirms the findings of previous studies that a study abroad experience could differ from what the participants expected.

Overall, the participants believed that they were slightly better speakers, listeners, and readers after their short-term study abroad program. This finding is supported by the fact that the majority of the participants had the explicit goal of improving their speaking skills, and they worked hard to speak more fluently and accurately by changing their pronunciation and intonation. Thus, their desires to improve seemed to have motivated them to work hard and, therefore, they self-assessed that they had improved. Similar to many previous studies (Allen & Herron, 2003; Cubillos et al., 2007; Ginsburg & Miller, 2000; Kinginger, 2008), the participants in this study assessed themselves as having improved their listening skills more than their other skills.

Increased awareness of linguistic differences

To examine the reasons for which eight participants assessed themselves as less able to do some tasks in English after the program, in-depth interviews were conducted with them, focusing on language development and related experiences. The interview data found that these participants became more aware as the program progressed of some of their English linguistic differences, including phonological and pragmatic differences, between the English they had used in Korea and the English they encountered during the study abroad program.

Before the program began, many of the interviewed participants believed that their English language proficiency was quite good, certainly good enough to communicate with local people. However, they quickly discovered that this was not as true as they had thought because they encountered many communication failures. They found that they had to repeat statements and ask for clarifications of what they heard. As a result, many of them reported that they were disappointed and depressed by these failures. Their interlocutors’ puzzled looks in response to the participants’ limited English statements, questions, and awkward pronunciations increased their anxieties. Moreover, the mistakes were often simple ones that violated basic grammar rules, such as singular and plural or tenses. Whenever they made these basic mistakes, they became more frustrated and anxious, and they reported feelings of shame and embarrassment because they were all English teachers. One participant reported,

Whenever we encountered communication failures during grocery shopping, it made me sad and depressed. For example, I asked, ‘where are eggs?’ The clerks couldn’t understand me. I repeated several times. I explained with my hands. But, they were confused with ‘apples.’ At last, I showed a

picture in the store. I didn't know I can't distinguish two different vowel sounds. Actually, in Korea, we are not focusing on distinguishing these phonetic differences. We just learn and study to improve reading and grammar skills. Anyway, the clerks' weird looks when I asked something or when I said something made me very embarrassed. They looked at me in a strange way because they couldn't understand me. It really made me sad because I thought I was quite good at speaking; but, in reality, the local people can't understand me. I feel like I am a dumb and linguistically challenged person. (Participant Z, in-depth interview, 4th week of the program)

Furthermore, after they said something to local people, the participants believed that their American interlocutors pretended to understand what they were talking about to not be impolite or rude to them. They, in turn, pretended to understand what their interlocutors were talking about. Sometimes, they simply laughed at what their interlocutors said, even though they could not quite understand.

Increased awareness of stress and intonation differences

Two linguistic differences of which the participants became more aware were stress and intonation. Standard Korean does not have as much variation in intonation as English. Some Korean dialects have particular intonation variations, but standard Korean is relatively flat, except for interrogative sentences. Moreover, Korean does not use as much stress as English and, therefore, Koreans are not accustomed to speaking with stress and intonation. These differences can create difficulties for Koreans who are not familiar with speaking a foreign language that uses marked stress or intonation. The participants already knew this from their preparation in college. However, they knew this theoretically, and they had rarely experienced how important it is to speak English with stress and intonation. They became more critically aware of the rhythm of spoken English as they tried to follow and imitate these patterns. A participant explained,

When I was [an] undergraduate, I learned all these theories and knowledge in my phonetics course. But I had never practiced speaking words with stress or speaking sentences with intonation. I hadn't recognized how important they are. Now, I can see their importance and am trying to follow these patterns. (Participant G, diary entry, 4th week of the program)

Over the course of the program, many participants concentrated on improving their English speaking skills regarding stress and intonation. The participants seemed to have declarative knowledge of English phonetics, but little procedural knowledge (DeKeyser, 2010).

Increased awareness of pragmatic differences

Another linguistic difference the participants found interesting was related to pragmatics. The participants were confused by simple greetings that were frequently used in the program. Whenever the participants were asked, "How is everything going?" or "Is everything OK?" they tried to answer these questions seriously, not recognizing them as greetings. The participants were not accustomed to these greetings in Korea. They had generally been teaching complicated formal English phrases and sentences and explaining formal grammar rules. However, throughout the program, many participants came to recognize the importance of these informal polite greetings to which they previously had paid no attention. Many of the participants reported confusion and difficulty responding to these casual greetings; for example:

Another one is about greeting. People said, 'How are you?' or 'How is it going, how are you doing? What's up?' as greetings. At first, I interpreted [them] just as literal meanings and tried to explain what happened to me today or recently. So I responded like this instead of saying, 'I am okay. I am great.' Because in Korea, we usually say that 'I am just so-so' or 'I'm feeling like I'm dying because everything is not going well.' Even though that is not true, we just respond like that in a humble [Asian modest] way. (Participant C, diary entry, 3rd week of the program)

Some participants noticed differences in apologies as well as differences in greetings. Several participants became aware of how often apologies were used and when these apologetic expressions were normatively expected. For example, one participant explained that,

They are always saying, 'thanks,' 'excuse me,' or 'excuse us' in stores whenever I block their way. Also, whenever I said to someone [that] they were blocking my way, they always said, 'oops, sorry, or excuse me, or excuse us.' At first, I couldn't understand why they said that even though it was not their fault or mistake. As time went on, I got used to these expressions. However, I saw many of my colleagues not saying those expressions, 'excuse me or oops, so sorry,' to other local people, not because they are rude or impolite, but because they are not used to saying that. (Participant E, in-depth interview, 4th week of the program)

Increased awareness of phonemic and morphological differences

Some participants showed their awareness of the phonemic and morphological differences; for example,

As most Koreans do, I have a hard time pronouncing 'r' since there is no sound close to 'r' in Korean. Korean is very chunky, meaning, it does not have flowing intonation in the sentence, and each word has the same intonation pattern. When I speak English, the intonation and words are chopped up because of my Korean accent. Most importantly, there is no rolling tongue movement in Korea. When I say the word 'church,' I skip the 'r.' And, other phonemes, such as distinguishing the vowel sounds in words like 'live' and 'leave,' and the initial and final consonant sounds like 'd' in 'afraid' are great challenges. Due to a lack of ability to pronounce detailed phonemes, I hear the phoneme but I am unable to pronounce it because I do not have the ability to use my tongue like natives. For example, I cannot pronounce 's' or '-ed' at the end of the word. For any words with 's' at the end, I cannot make that short consonant sound that uses the detailed air flow out of mouth, but instead I make a thick 's' sound. Morphology is another challenge. Since in Korean grammar, distinctions between singular and plural are hardly observed or emphasized and affixes do not exist, I often do not know how to choose the appropriate form of the verb or make plural forms. For example, I say, 'Many people talking about very difficult,' not recognizing the correct form of the verb. Also, I say, 'My family is speaking Korean,' unable to use a more appropriate form of the verb 'to be.' In my sentences, I skip plural forms, such as different four 'season' instead of 'seasons.' (Participant W, diary entry, 4th week of the program)

As shown by the above interview data, the participants became more aware of the linguistic features of English through the study abroad program, although it was only four weeks long. They also became increasingly aware of linguistic differences between English and Korean. These findings seem to support some previous studies that found increased self-monitoring as an outcome of study abroad programs (e.g., DeKeyser, 2010).

In sum, more than one-half of the participants assessed themselves as slightly better at listening, speaking,

and reading, as demonstrated by the fact that they checked a few more of the 88 items on the self-assessment surveys as “yes” after than before the program. However, some of the participants reported that they were not sure of the extent of their improved proficiency. They believed that they had become “more often” or “sometimes” able to do something with their English skills, but “not always.”

Importantly, a few of the participants believed that their language proficiency actually decreased during the program, at least as they reported on the self-assessments, particularly in the speaking section. The participants’ self-assessments also seemed to vary, depending on the extent of the gap between their expectations and the reality of their interactions with native English speakers or their self-monitoring processes. Over the course of the program, some of the participants “felt dissonance in their feelings between valuing non-native accents and yearning for native-like pronunciation” (Lee, Mo, Lee, & Sung, 2013, p. 2). Finally, they found it difficult to acquire native-like pronunciation, which was contrary to their expectations before the program.

Another reason for this finding could be that the participants overestimated their English listening, reading, and speaking skills before the program. Measuring one’s practical English proficiencies in Korea, where there are few native English speakers to talk to, is a challenging task. The participants’ formal English test scores were quite high, but native English speaking interviewers had rarely, if ever, evaluated them. Although some formal English proficiency tests are similar to the TOEIC and TEPS³, these tests cannot fully capture English proficiency levels because they do not have speaking and listening sections. Thus, the participants could have overestimated their skills before the program and only discovered their actual proficiency levels during the program.

An important aspect of the self-assessments is that, as well-trained English teachers, the participants could not help but self-monitor during the program. Using DeKeyser’s (2010) argument, the self-monitoring process was likely activated by these participants because they were “prepared in the form of proceduralized or at least declarative knowledge of the second language grammar” (DeKeyser, 2010, p. 80). Their declarative knowledge of English grammar needed to become automatic through practice with input and interaction. Through their interactions and practice, the participants may have become more self-aware as they self-monitored and assessed their English proficiency in detail. Therefore, the participants may have realized that they were not such good speakers, listeners, or readers as they had thought before the program.

A final important point is that the self-assessment asked the participants to assess their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge. Many of the items required knowledge of the target culture to answer “yes.” However, the participants were Korean teachers of English unfamiliar with the target culture. In the English language educational curriculum in Korea, teaching and learning about the target culture has been de-emphasized until recently. Therefore, the participants had few opportunities to be exposed to the target culture. This weakness in their preparation may partly explain why some of the participants believed that they were less competent after than before the program. Before the program, they had not realized many of the cultural differences. During the program, however, they learned more about the culture and realized that appropriately using English without cultural knowledge was not possible (i.e., greetings and apologies). Perhaps they realized that linguistic skills cannot be improved without cultural knowledge and that their English skills lacked adequate cultural knowledge to perform some of the functions in the Self-assessment questionnaire.

Conclusions

The results of this study contribute to the limited body of research on the language development of in-service foreign language teachers, their self-assessments, and their perceptions of their language development

³ TEPS (Test of English Proficiency), developed by Seoul National University, is an English proficiency test that assesses English language skills in four sections: listening, grammar, vocabulary, and reading.

in a study abroad program. Finding that the participants' listening, speaking, and writing proficiencies were statistically improved after the program was encouraging and compatible with previous studies' results on the positive outcomes of study abroad teacher training (Allen, 2010; Barfield, 1994; Campbell, 1996; Choe, 2012; Rissel, 1995; Thompson, 2002; Walker de Félix & Cavazos Peña, 1992).

However, the findings of the self-assessments on increased English language proficiency were mixed. A few of the participants stated that they were less confident than before. Many of them reported that they became slightly more able to use English than before, although some of them directly referred to increased proficiency. The interview data found that some participants gained an increased awareness of the authentic English used in the US. Perhaps their increased self-monitoring during the study abroad program explains this perception. Although the self-assessment results were mixed, the finding of their increased awareness of linguistic differences during the study abroad program seems quite positive for their future language development after the program.

This study aimed to examine the language development of Korean English language teachers by comparing pretest to posttest scores on English proficiency tests taken before and after the four-week program. As some previous studies have discussed, four weeks seems to be too short a period to produce a profound change in language skills. Therefore, to investigate the effects of a short-term study abroad teacher training programs on language development in more depth, future studies should compare the effects of short-term to long-term study abroad programs with respect to their influences on participants' language development. It also would be helpful to design follow-up studies with participants to determine the extent to which their experiences in study abroad programs influenced the extent to which their language development affected their teaching after the program.

This study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to improve our understanding of language development phenomena and to examine participants' language development. However, the results cannot be generalized to other teachers who have different language proficiencies or teachers from different educational and social contexts. Further research on the language proficiency of foreign language teachers will most likely lead to different results, so the next study should investigate the effects of language proficiency, social context, and the language development of study abroad teacher training programs. The results of this study should stimulate discussion among foreign language teachers, teacher educators, and policy makers, and it should encourage reflection on foreign language teacher education.

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Appendix

Self-Assessment of Foreign Language Proficiency

Name or nickname: _____; **Gender:** F M

Number of years of teaching experience: _____

Please respond “yes” or “no” to all of the statements on Levels S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4 and S-5.

	Self-Appraisal of Speaking Proficiency	Yes	No
S-1	I can tell/ask someone how to get from here to a nearby hotel, restaurant, or post office. I can order a simple meal. I can arrange for a hotel room or taxi ride. I can buy a needed item such as a bus or train ticket, groceries, or clothing. I can ask and answer simple questions about dates and places of birth, nationality, marital status, occupation, and so on. I can make social introductions and use greetings for arrival and departure expressions. -----		
S-2	I can handle conversations about familiar topics in an organized way. I can speak with some organization on familiar topics that extend beyond my daily routine. I can give detailed information about my family, my house, and my community. I can interview an employee or arrange for special services, such as taking care of the details of salary, qualifications, hours, and specific duties. I can state a brief autobiography, including my immediate plans and hopes. -----		

Self-assessment in speaking score: _____