Foreign Territory: An Ethnographic Study of an
"English Village" within a Japanese University

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes the results of an investigation into one Japanese university's attempt to overcome obstacles to the development of English language ability among its students by providing an alternative educational resource. This 'English Village' facility is a non-formal, non-assessed learning space situated in one corner of the university campus where the English language can be experienced through interaction with fluent, mostly native speakers. The primary research aim was to identify the extent to which English Village has been judged successful as a learning environment, what students might be achieving, and how this differs from classroom achievements.

The approach taken to this interpretive research was an exploratory case study in the ethnographic tradition. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with five key stakeholders, participant observation among students and staff over seven working days (reinforced through three previous years of work at the facility), and acquisition of relevant documents. The resultant data were analysed through a single set of codes and categories arrived at through an inductive process.

The data show that communicative and other competencies as well as comfort using English among native speakers may be fostered at English Village. While claims of linguistic improvement or test score increases could not be confirmed, and there was little evidence that student motivation was enhanced, the data point to a lessening of anxiety which may facilitate second language learning and socialisation. Learner authenticity is also apparently enhanced. Findings as a whole indicate that many tertiary-level Japanese learners of English fail to progress at least in part due to anxiety and lack of opportunity to acquire the language in a learner-authentic, meaning-oriented environment. English Village seems to successfully address some of these obstacles among those students who are invested in learning the spoken language.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND JAPANESE TERMS

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching
An approach to second or foreign language teaching aimed at developing conversational skills through communicative instructional methods.

Eikaiwa 英会話:

Independently-run English conversation schools generally employing unqualified native-speaking instructors from Anglophone countries. Commonly seen as a necessary supplement to the grammar-based approach in schools and universities.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

Gaikokumura 外国村:

Cultural theme parks representing foreign cultures, most often featuring a single country, which have been common in Japan for some time. Natives of the focus culture are usually employed as performers, while buildings are often quasi-authentic replicas of famous structures. The target culture's food is likely to be served. The goal is to make visitors feel as if they have actually travelled to the target country.

Manga 漫画:

A Japanese word (also used in English) which refers to comics and cartooning. Outside Japan it refers specifically to graphic novels published in Japan.

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SLL: Second Language Learning

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

TOEIC: Test of English for International Communication
An English language test designed to assess English used in business environments which is taken about 1.5 million times a year in Japan, usually for reasons related to assessment of current or potential employees.

Yakudoku 訳読:

Teacher-led, form-focused instruction commonly employed in English language classrooms in Japan. Similar to grammar-translation but including both reading and oral translation elements.

1   Introduction

Upon passing through the giant, wide-open doors into *"English Village"* you might find yourself overwhelmed by all the noise and activity within. The bright and high-ceilinged space holds as many as a hundred visitors interacting with each other and up to a dozen staff members. They might be chatting, playing games, eating lunch at small café tables, making crafts, or engaging in sport just outside. Although English would be heard and seen all around, you would not be in a British town. *"English Village"* is actually situated on a university campus in a Japanese megaloplis.

My own long experience 'in the field' leads me to believe that the scene described above is highly atypical. With the exception of independent conversation schools called *eikaiwa,* English is treated primarily as a study subject whereby learners gain knowledge about the elements and structure of the language. Although the results of this 'bottom-up' approach have not been entirely unsuccessful, most Japanese would probably agree that the populace is not known for a widespread ability to communicate in English, particularly face-to-face. The fact is many adult learners fail to progress to a point where they can use the target language effectively. Some teachers and learners alike have attributed the relatively poor performance of Japanese learners of English to affective barriers or cultural attitudes. Others blame the educational system itself. While these considerations surely play a role, I have long suspected that a major contributing factor is their relative lack of opportunity to develop communicative skills through meaningful social interactions.

1.1   Rationale and aims

This paper describes the results of an investigation into one Japanese university's attempt to overcome obstacles to linguistic development by providing an alternative educational resource. I worked at the resultant facility (hereto forward referred to as *English Village*) for three years as a 'language facilitator', and thus participated in a seemingly innovative approach to addressing the issue of poor English-language communicative ability among Japanese university students. Although students seemed to benefit from our efforts, I left with some unanswered questions, particularly why such an enormous investment on the part of the university should be considered prudent. I wondered whether the facility's existence reflected weaknesses in how English is taught in Japanese classrooms specifically, or said something about how foreign languages should be learned in general. The primary aim of this dissertation has thus been to identify through qualitative research the extent to which *English Village* is judged successful as a learning environment, how this may be occurring, and why it was built.

1.2   Focus

At the heart of this inquiry there has been a consistent sense that *English Village* would never have been established if English language education were better conceived and delivered, both at the university in question and across Japan as a whole. I initially felt that *English Village* must contribute to learner development at some level, because while I worked there it certainly appeared that some students' fluency improved and many others exhibited increased comfort interacting with non-Japanese people. I had a further sense that these accomplishments could not occur in a vacuum, suspecting that a certain synergy must exist between classroom-based English study and the *English Village* experience. However, my feeling alone could never fully illuminate the subject, meaning that this research had to be designed in a way that would grant me insight into others' perspectives. In light of these considerations and the primary aim of the research, the following research questions arose:

- *What (if anything) do different stakeholders believe students achieve at English Village?*
- *How do these stakeholders think such learning differs from that occurring in the classroom?*
- *Why is a non-formal, university-based learning environment seen as desirable?*

While my findings could obviously influence the design and implementation of similar facilities in Japan, I also hoped that any emergent themes might indicate whether immersion/socialisation spaces have a significant role to play in tertiary foreign language education as a whole, based on the particular affordances they may offer.

1.3   Outline

In the subsequent chapter of this dissertation there is a description of research context, comprising an examination into various aspects of English language learning in Japan with a particular emphasis on tertiary education. This is followed by a brief look at the relationship between education and entertainment in East Asia, before *English Village* itself is described in the context of its university setting. Chapter three consists of a review of literature relevant to both the research design and its findings, after which there is an explanation of methodology and procedure. The findings are then outlined and discussed, while the final chapter addresses recommendations for educators and suggestions for further research.

2   Background

English Village seems to be a fairly unique language learning environment, at least in Japan. Hence, the facility ought to be clearly described and explained in relation to its educational and cultural context so the reader can appreciate this research.

2.1   English education in Japan

Tertiary foreign language education an a whole remains a formalised activity in Japan. In terms of extended discourse, the target language is rarely heard in many classrooms. Despite criticism from all levels of society, the grammar-translation teaching method (referred to as *yakudoku*) remains entrenched in the educational system (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). Even nominally 'oral' communication classes tend towards pre-digested pair and group activities which may not be of interest to participants, with syllabi largely organised around grammatical structures. Independent *eikaiwa* have long filled this communicative gap.

2.1.1   English as a required subject

All Japanese students must study English for three years during junior high school, and the great majority will go on to high school and a further three years of study (Matsuda, 2003). Those who wish to attend a Japanese university must take a high-stakes entrance exam, much of which assesses English reading and listening ability (Underwood, 2010). Once students enrol in higher education, further English classes are almost inevitably required. Although these often include communication-oriented lessons, the educational system has not resulted in a large proportion of Japanese university graduates who are able to function using spoken English in everyday life or for work.

2.1.2   *Yakudoku*

English teaching in Japan has long been grounded in *yakudoku* at both high school and university levels (Berns, 1990), and governmental efforts to force secondary level English classes to utilise pedagogical techniques believed to be more conducive to developing communication skills have met with resistance (Nishino and Watanabe, 2008). Despite a distinct distaste for lecture-style English classes among Japanese university students (Davies, 2006) lessons are also still frequently taught using *yakudoku* or other transmissive techniques, with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the most commonly attempted alternative.

One reason for the slow pace of change seems to be that instrumentally-significant English tests such as university entrance exams and *TOEIC* have traditionally avoided measuring two-way communication skills (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). High marks on *TOEIC* in particular can be a distinct advantage in finding steady employment, hence many colleges and universities offer preparatory classes.

2.1.3 *Eikaiwa* **and edutainment**

For a time independent *eikaiwa* were seen as the best way to develop conversation skills (Seargeant, 2005). However, their popularity has dropped perceptibly since two of the largest chains went bankrupt in the late '00's. This may be due to loss of trust in the industry, or because few learners saw good results. Several university students have told me that they have no need for English in any case, or that it might be more useful to learn Korean or Chinese because many Japanese holiday or do business regionally. *Eikaiwa* also seem to fit into a pattern of providing entertainment through experiencing foreignness in Japan, such as the purportedly educational and frequently foreign-themed theme parks which were once ubiquitous across the nation (Hendry, 2000). This *gaikoku mura* (literally 'foreign-land village') tradition has been extended to facilities built specifically for educational purposes such as *British Hills*, originally designed as an "authentic" English immersion environment for tertiary-level students (Seargeant, 2005). It and the many English villages for children in Korea provided much of the inspiration for *English Village* (Kitazume, 2010), itself explicitly designed to be simultaneously educational and entertaining (Kitzman & Nitta, 2010).

2.2 **One university's English curriculum**

The private university which owns and operates *English Village* is large and relatively well-funded. While not highly-ranked, it is popular regionally and recognised nationally for certain strengths such as Agriculture, Engineering and Sports Science. Provisions for English language learning are tripartite, consisting of formal English classes, a foreign language centre offering both self-access study and unaccredited classes in language subjects such as *Movie English*, *Chinese* and *TOEIC,* and *English Village*. The 2013 university prospectus places formal classes on the left of a scale that progresses through *English Village* to the foreign language centre before culminating with study abroad, with an implication of increasing exclusivity (see figure 1)

Figure 1: Depiction of English language gradient from 2013 university prospectus (translation by author)

2.2.1 Formal English classes

English seems to have a dual role in the curriculum. One is to provide a minimum level of English so graduates will be able to deal with English texts in their careers. The other is to start a select few students down a path towards study abroad, which is associated with fluency, internationalisation, and employability. Although it depends to some extent on faculty or major subject, students' required formal English classes ordinarily include one to four semesters of *Oral English*, held once a week, alongside four semesters of *Reading* or similar traditional classes held twice a week. Nominally communicative *Oral English* thus comprises a third or less of all formal English instruction, and is the only class which includes verbal interaction as part of its assessment criteria.

2.2.2 *English Village*

English Village was opened in 2006 as a purpose-built immersion environment where English language and related cultures can be experienced by "low-level" learners in a relatively unstructured way (Kitazume, 2010). Only English is permitted within and immediately surrounding the building, although this rule is not strictly enforced (Kitzman & Nitta, 2010). It is mostly staffed by native English speakers from Anglophone countries. Numerous round tables surrounded by three to five chairs each are arranged so as to encourage small conversational groups. Alongside informal chats there are large, scheduled group activities that require listening and participation but little linguistic output, smaller communicative activities for more advanced students, and monthly major events. There are also attractions such as a café, analog games and *Nintendo Wii*, reading material, musical instruments, and a basketball half-court.

2.2.3 Integration of *English Village* with formal English classes

Although *English Village* and English classes are distinct, there is some overlap. First and second year undergraduates are required to visit the facility four times a year, usually as part of *Oral English*. One visit to the facility per day can be recorded on a mock passport if a student converses

for at least ten minutes or participates in one of the daily scheduled activities. In addition, students who have performed poorly can exchange excess passport stamps for higher *Oral English* marks. Apart from the passport system, integration depends to a large extent on classroom teachers themselves. Some instructors have students report back about their experiences at *English Village* either verbally or via written reports (Abbot, 2010; see figure 2). Others apparently do nothing beyond recording the four required visits. It is also unclear what proportion of students engage with the facility beyond their minimum obligation, but anecdotal evidence suggests that a relatively tiny number attend daily, many more come occasionally or infrequently, and a significant majority never voluntarily visit the space.

(source: Abbot, 2010:146)

Figure 2: Student report about English Village

2.2.4   Key stakeholders

Naturally, students and staff hold a variety of opinions about *English Village*. Some see it as useful, some superfluous. No stakeholder grouping can be expected to have a uniform point of view, both within and among the following categories: language facilitators, classroom English teachers, university administrators, and university students. Students in particular may be keen users of the facility, ambivalent, or antipathetic. Other potential stakeholders such as parents or future employers are not part of this study because they are not found at the facility; I've focused instead on the categories outlined above in hopes of understand ing *English Village* through its participants.

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3   Literature review

English Village by its very nature seems to cross many codified boundaries, however it remains necessary to contextualise this study in a wider body of empirical and theoretical research. This chapter consists of an examination of relevant literature.

3.1   Is *English Village* EFL?

English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have been seen as rather distinct learning contexts. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), ESL is frequently understood as referring to acquisition of English as an additional language in a setting where it is the dominant mode of communication, while EFL is envisioned as classroom study in a region where English does not play much of a role internally. EFL programmes wherein learners are exposed to a target language in small doses over a long period are sometimes referred to as 'drip-feeding'. While this is probably the most common experience of classroom foreign language learners, it has been found relatively ineffective in leading to functional fluency (Baker, 2011).

Drip-feed EFL contexts have been associated with supposedly less-motivated learners. According to Gass and Selinker (2001) there also tends to be minimal access to English speakers, and therefore fewer learning opportunities. Figure 3 depicts their view of the second/foreign continuum, according to prominence of a target language in a learners' community and the extent to which learning occurs in classrooms.
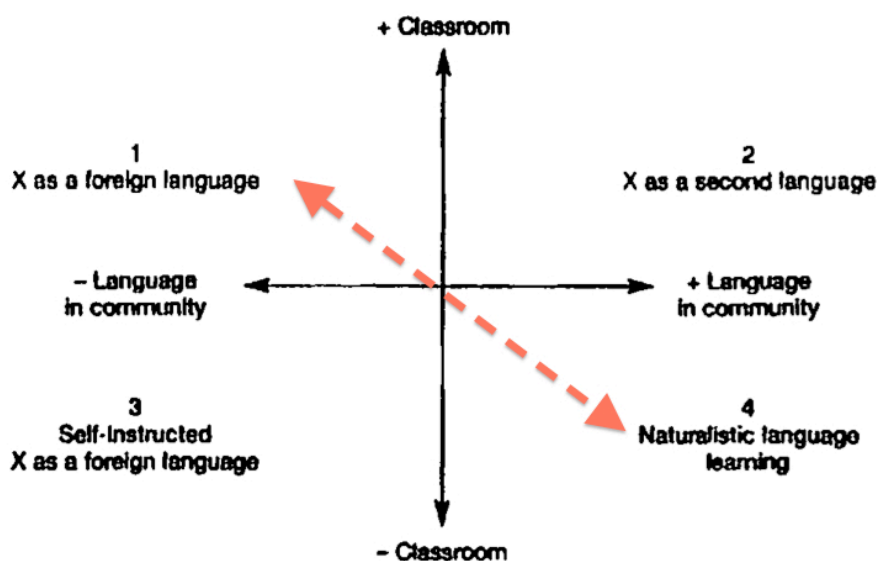
(Source: Block, 2003:34)

Figure 3: Gass and Selinker's EFL/ESL model, modified by the author

Gass and Selinker's model associates ESL and EFL with classroom environments, whereas "naturalistic" English acquisition is seen as occurring only in Anglophone contexts and outside of classrooms. Berns (1990) has shown, however, that there are no such cut and dried divisions. For instance, while Germany and Japan would both be classed as EFL environments, Japan provides a much less conducive learning circumstance due to linguistic distance and its unique social history. Similarly, Schmidt (1983) and Norton (2000) have shown that living in an Anglophone country is no guarantee of opportunities to develop English ability.

3.2   Acquisition and learning

One area of contention is whether second language acquisition (SLA) is distinct from second language learning (SLL). The former is broadly concerned with informal, unconscious and 'natural' development of linguistic ability, whereas the latter relates to formal, conscious learning such as one might associate with classroom environments (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Krashen (1982), associated 'acquisition' with a focus on meaningful communication, contrasting it with 'learning' concerns such as formal rules of grammar and spelling. Moreover, Krashen claims that learned information is entirely unrelated to eventual acquisition. Fellow cognitive psychologist McLaughlin (1987:22) insists that Krashen's hypotheses are untestable and thus non-scientific. Meanwhile, Ellis (2009) associates the term 'acquisition' with classroom environments. Throughout this dissertation the disputed term 'acquisition' should not be understood to imply an exclusively cognitivist understanding of language learning. As a highly social learning environment, *English Village* will instead be examined from the perspective of social language learning theory.

3.3   Social theoretical frameworks

While cognitivist views continue to dominate many major TESOL journals (Zeungler & Miller, 2006), since the late 70's sociocultural perspectives have also risen in prominence. According to Ellis (2001, in Muto, 2011), sociocultural SLA emphasises participation over acquisition. While this is a useful way to distinguish it from cognitivist psycholinguistic theories, Block (2003) notes that Ellis neglected to mention psychosocial phenomena such as emotion (affect) and motivation. Firth and Wagner (1997) argued strongly for embracing such elements within SLA and broadening the field to incorporate sociocultural and sociolinguistic theories. However, they have been resisted by many researchers. For example, Gass (1998) attempted to exclude Firth and Wagner's social learning from her psycholinguistic approach to SLA by separating language acquisition from language use and placing both under the umbrella term "Second Language Studies" (see figure 4).
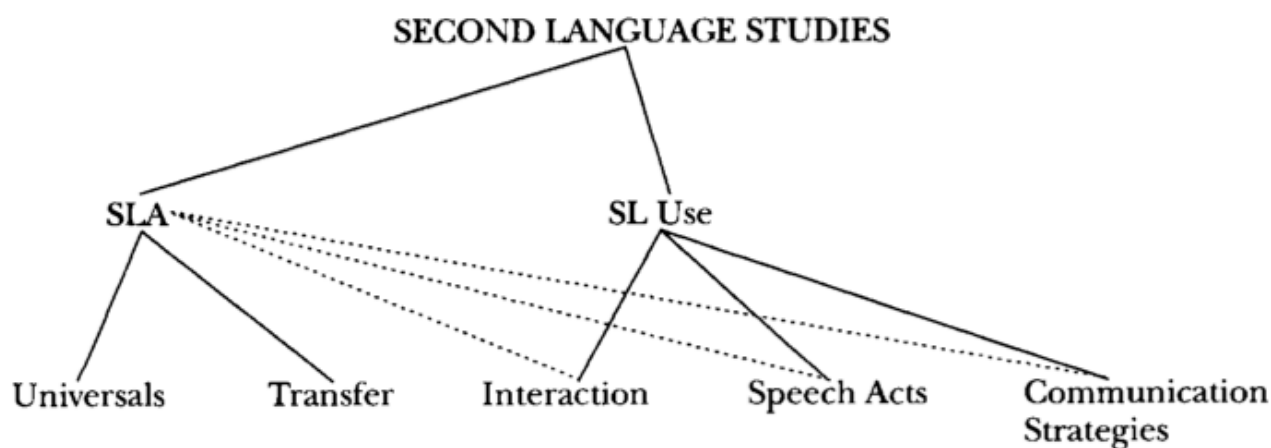
Figure 4: Gass' characterisation of SLA research

The dashed lines in figure 4 depict connections which Gass claims are weakly connected to SLA. While Gass' construct is elegant, I share the concerns of Firth and Wagner (1998) about any attempt to impose artificial boundaries on such an intricate phenomenon as SLA. Simply stated, she seems to have divided intra-mental acquisition from inter-mental use in a manner which in my view is not supported by the *a priori* experiences of second language learners. As Block (2003:118) puts it:

> *"...in the minds of language learners, it is likely to be the case that none of this debate really matters. For it is there that individuals are experiencing language learning in complex webs encompassing language acquisition, language use and language activity."*

3.3.1   (Second) Language Socialisation

Sociolinguistics is the study of language as it is used socially. In SLA it focuses on the dynamics of learning in terms of interactions between social surroundings and individual identity, motivation, and agency. Within this field, language socialisation is concerned with humans becoming competent members of social groupings (Zeungler & Miller, 2006), and is defined by Duff (2010:427) as an exploration of "...how people learn how to take part in the speech events and activities of everyday life ... and also the values underlying those practices". Second language socialisation is specifically concerned with novice members of a second language community gaining communicative competence in a new sociolinguistic environment (Wang, 2010:57; Ochs, 1999).

3.3.2 Ethnography and social language learning

Ethnography has been utilised since the 1990's to describe and interpret language learning and use in relation to social context in naturally-occurring settings (Harman & Harklau, 2013). There have been a wide range of such inquiries within SLA. For example, Norton (2000) used an ethnographic approach to study identity and investment among female immigrant second language learners in Canada, while Morita (2004) examined academic socialisation among six Japanese students at a North American university from both their perspective and that of their instructors. The ethnographer in such studies is ideally an 'insider' in the social environment studied, and hence able to interpret and describe phenomena from the perspective of participants (see 4.1).

3.4 Affective factors

In SLA, 'affect' refers to aspects of emotion which may influence language learning (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). These include relatively fixed aspects of personality such as being outgoing or introverted, more mutable attitudinal features like motivation or disinterest, and fluid states such as frustration or joy. Several of these are discussed in this section.

3.4.1 Anxiety and inhibition

Whether it reflects innate personality or develops as a reaction to frequent criticism for mistakes and errors in language class (Arnold & Brown, 1999), anxiety is believed by learners to interfere with their ability to use foreign languages (Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) found that anxious students tend to be perfectionists whose foremost goal is to avoid errors, whereas practicing a new language entails risking inaccuracy. Research undertaken by Kojima (2009:2) among Japanese suggests that "[t]he role of aesthetic completeness in traditional Japanese arts might also negatively influence the attitudes of Japanese learners of English, in that their aspiration for precision can easily outrun their real linguistic ability". Fear of speaking, however, is not unique to Japanese language learners. As Dufeu (1994, in Arnold & Brown, 1999:10-11) puts it, the necessity of a sturdy affective foundation for language learning means educators must "...create a climate of acceptance that will stimulate self-confidence and encourage participants to experiment and to discover the target language, allowing themselves to take risks without feeling embarrassed."

3.4.2 Motivation and investment

Motivation in SLA is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2010) as a mix of learner attitudes, wants, and willingness to make an effort to learn an additional language. Although considered by some as reductivist, a distinction has been made between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, according to whether learning is undertaken for internal (voluntary) or external (education or career-based) reasons (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). However, this theory of motivation seems to have been superseded by different models, including 'flow' and 'investment'.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), flow emerges when skill and effort are in balance. In such circumstances a language learner can experience "pleasure in the activity itself" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:250). As Goleman (1995, in Arnold & Brown, 1999:15) expresses it:

> *"Because flow feels so good, it is intrinsically rewarding. It is a state in which people become utterly absorbed in what they are doing, paying undivided attention to the task, their awareness merged with their actions".*

This view has parallels with Dewey's (1938) experiential learning, with its emphasis on enjoying learning in the moment.

The notion of investment is associated with Bonny Norton, who developed the concept from a sociological standpoint to capture the complex, ambivalent relationship language learners may have with their target language (Norton Pierce, 1995). Unlike the psychological concept of motivation, investment supposes the learner may be influenced not only by internal personality factors, but also by social context. A learner may, for instance, be motivated to learn a language but not care for the way it is taught (Norton, 2000). Norton (2013) has found that learners who have a sense of 'ownership' over their learning engage in it more effectively, whereas those whose learning environment is tightly controlled by a teacher tend to focus on the ritual of study itself.

The other side of motivation is said to be demotivation, a reduction in or loss of motivation due to external forces (Dornyei, 2001). Falout and Falout (2005) cite several demotivation studies undertaken in Japan that revolve around dictatorial teaching style, responding to questions with anger, and publicly mocking students who make mistakes. A further demotivating factor in that country has been found to be language classes themselves, due to their focus on abstract grammar without relating it to real life situations. Ushioda (2001) found that for learners who desired to

remotivate themselves the best method was to use the target language in a way relevant to and meaningful in their lives, while avoiding the stressors or expectations found in institutional learning environments. This conclusion has been corroborated by Kojima (2009), who found that motivation is higher when Japanese learners see English as a means of communication rather than a study subject.

3.4.3 Learner authenticity

Motivation, meaningful communication and ownership are all elements of authenticity. Although many Japanese students presumably understand the potential benefits of learning English, this may not be sufficient to sustain their day-to-day efforts if they feel the learning process is inauthentic.

While several researchers have claimed that teaching materials derived from real-world texts are inherently more motivating (Tomlinson, 2012), authentic classroom communication is conceptually less developed (Guariento & Morley, 2001). For Willis (1996) it entails putting linguistic accuracy aside and focussing on authenticity of purpose, whereby students may interact naturally to achieve a specific aim. Baynham, *et al*. (2007) relate authenticity to investment, finding that classroom students engaged in contrived role-plays and dialogues speak much less than those allowed to converse about topics which have personal meaning for them. Ultimately, it is perhaps language learners who must judge whether their study reads true (van Lier, 1996) and can thus be called 'learner authentic'.

Taking this to an extreme, Thornbury (2000:2) attempted to apply the stripped-down *dogme* filmmaking technique to the classroom to maximise learner authenticity. He asserted that all conversation should foreground the concerns of those actually in the room rather than "contrived" coursebook characters, situations, and grammatical structures. By grounding language learning in the real world, Thornbury hoped to ensure that students could relate to and acquire the language they actually need. However, a significant complication regarding *dogme* is that it appears unrealistic in assessed learning environments, with their curricula, syllabi and final exams. While the issue of whether EFL classrooms can be made 'learner authentic' is ambiguous, it is possible that the type of environment provided by *English Village* may enhance learner authenticity, and by extension investment, beyond what is possible in a classroom setting.

3.5   Pedagogical and learning models

English Village might be considered a naturalistic environment since there is no formal instruction, yet most attendees are simultaneously engaged in classroom study through *yakudoku* and/or CLT. Hence, learning models at both ends of this continuum bear brief discussion.

3.5.1   Traditional pedagogy

In instructed SLA, grammar-translation and *yakudoku* have been characterised as deductive approaches, meaning they involve direct 'input' of grammar rules or vocabulary items, followed by application in either written or oral 'output' exercises (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Considering that untold numbers have learned languages successfully in this way, grammar-translation cannot be condemned, but it should probably be complemented by more inductive, social approaches if competencies other than mere linguistic knowledge are included among intended outcomes.

3.5.2   Ecological, non-formal and experiential approaches

There are several social learning frameworks which could also be usefully applied to *English Village*. For example, the ecological perspective outlined by van Lier (2000) sees language as involving relationships among thoughts and actions, and learning as a series of opportunities, enablements, demands and other affordances. Thus, a learning environment may be formal or informal, as long as a productive ecology is stressed.

From a different perspective, non-formal learning may be characterised by its lack of:

- *"a prescribed learning framework;*
- *an organised learning event or package;*
- *the presence of a designated teacher or trainer;*
- *the award of a qualification or credit;*
- *the external specification of outcomes".*

(Eraut, 2000:12)

As learners acquire a skill in this model, they simultaneously progress from novice to expert, and in doing so move from a "rigid adherence to taught rules or plans" to having "an intuitive grasp on situations" (Eraut, in Eraut, 2000:23). Eaton (2011) applies these categories to language learning, including second languages. Her research has shown that second language learners are much more

likely to attain fluency if they supplement formal classes with non-formal and informal experiences with the target language (Eaton, 2011:9).

Dewey's (1938) very early formulation of 'experiential learning' suggests that learners build knowledge by mapping new experiences onto their previous knowledge. He reasons that educators thus have a duty to create experiences that will allow learning to happen. Because traditional educational institutions and methods tend to transmit knowledge out of context, Dewey argued that they fail to promote effective learning. The deductive, 'top-down' approach of *yakudoku* seems to fit within the pattern of which Dewey was so critical. Eaton (2011) attributes such approaches to the desire of educators to teach knowledge which can be easily assessed rather than skills which can be applied to lifelong language learning

3.6   Competencies and desired outcomes

English teaching in Japan has historically strongly emphasised knowledge of syntax, vocabulary, and similar building blocks of language because such 'linguistic competence' was seen as more useful than communication skill (Berns, 1990). In Applied Linguistics, 'communicative competence' initially referred to linguistic combined with sociolinguistic competence, the latter meaning understanding the suitability and propriety of language in use (Ellis, 2009). To this Canale and Swain (1980) added strategic competence, or the ability to maintain communication when there is a breakdown or to increase the effectiveness of one's communication. With their claim that communicative competence should be an integral goal of instructed SLA, Canale and Swain triggered the boom in CLT which remains influential to this day.

There are additional competencies envisaged by SLA researchers. Byram (1997) developed the concept of 'intercultural competence', or "....an ability to interact with 'others', to accept other perspectives and perceptions of the world, [and] to mediate between different perspectives" (Byram, *et al*., 2001:5). This competency allows appropriate and effective communication with people from different cultures. Cook's (2008) multi-competence model echoes Byram, contributing the notion that bi- and multi-lingual people are distinct from monolinguals due to the fact that "[l]earning another language makes people think more flexibly" and "leads to better attitudes towards other cultures" (Cook, 2008:232).

3.7   Summary

As the research examined in this chapter makes clear, SLL/SLA is a complex area of inquiry amenable to a variety of approaches which may not always mesh easily. Despite claims to the contrary, it has not been established that the participatory and affective factors common to a sociocultural perspective have no correlation with acquisition. That said, the relationship between social second language learning and individual acquisition seems to be a difficult area to research. Ethnography may enable researchers to address such challenging questions (Watson-Gegeo, 1988). A researcher may thereby position him or herself as a lens through which social phenomena can be understood indirectly (Harman & Harklau, 2013).

4 Research design

This chapter focuses on methodology, the participants and data collection, methods and procedures, and relevant research issues. The overall aim has been to answer the established research questions:

1. *What (if anything) do different stakeholders believe students achieve at English Village?*
2. *How do these stakeholders think such learning differs from that occurring in the classroom?*
3. *Why is a non-formal, university-based learning environment seen as desirable?*

Methods should correlate with what is being studied. In other words, when studying cognitive phenomena experimental, cognitive methods are appropriate, while social phenomena might ordinarily entail interpretive methods.

4.1 Methodology

The approach taken for this interpretive study has been phenomenological, which entails experiencing a phenomenon from within as its fundamental features unfold (McLeod, 2001). This is in large part because the research questions themselves focus on attempting to understand a particular setting as experienced by myself and others. As it is an explicitly social learning space, *English Village* was examined from a sociocultural stance (Firth & Wagner, 1997).

An ethnographic approach was selected so as to effectively illuminate and reflect on other people's teaching and learning experiences within a particular educational setting. It appeared that the research questions could be best answered via an exploratory case study within this ethnographic tradition, the specific case being *English Village* as a learning environment (Stake, 1998). Not only had I known several of the participants for years, lending a longitudinal flavour to the research (Bryman, 2012), but the research questions seem suited to practices associated with ethnography such as participant observation, interviewing, field notes and documentary analysis (Richards, 2003) which can in turn be triangulated to maximise validity. Having worked in the facility for three years in the recent past I could be said to already have an 'emic', insider's perspective (Watson-Gegeo, 1988), reinforced through engaging in staff member's duties during the course of investigations. Since I was simultaneously functioning as social science researcher, I could also be said to have an 'etic', or outsider's view, thus conforming to the established dual nature of ethnographers (Richards, 2003).

4.2   Data sets

In order to triangulate data, they were obtained from three sources: interviews, participant observation, and documents (Richards, 2003), which led to four data sets. Each data set has been analysed through the lens of a common set of codes and categories (see section 4.3).

4.2.1   Data set 1: Interviews

In a case study, researchers often interview informants so as to understand the case indirectly from their perspectives (Stake, 1998). This study focuses on what happens within and surrounding *English Village*, so with one exception interviewees were limited to those found on-site (table 1). It was decided in advance to interview the direct manager of the facility and its "mayor" (the director) because they were felt to have unique perspectives and instrumental roles. I intended to select the remaining interviewees through 'snowball' and convenience sampling (Richards, 2003), based on six pre-determined stakeholder types:

1. an Anglophone 'language facilitator'
2. a classroom English teacher
3. a third or fourth-year (expert) student who is a frequent visitor
4. a second-year or later student who visits infrequently
5. a second-year or later student who only visits to play basketball
6. a first-year (novice) student who has exhibited interest in the facility

psuedonym	"Rika"	"Makoto"	"Mick"	"Minami"	"Rod"
roles	*English Village* site manager; graduate of the university	3rd year university student; frequent visitor to *English Village*	Language Facilitator at *English Village*	Professor and administrator; "Mayor" of *English Village*	Associate Professor; Director of English, Faculty of Economics
years at *English Village*	6.5	2	+/- 5	7.5	none (at the university eight years)
gender	female	male	male	female	male
nationality	Japanese	Japanese	British	Japanese	Canadian
first language	Japanese	Japanese	English	Japanese	English
interview date(s)	Friday, 19; Monday 22; Wednesday, 24 April 2013	Tuesday, 23 April 2013	Wednesday, 24 April 2013	Wednesday, 24 April 2013	Thursday, 25 April 2013

Table 1: Interview participants

These categories were meant to be representative of as wide a variety of stakeholders as practicable, with an equal number of students and staff for a balanced perspective. Ultimately only one student was interviewed, due to the unexpected quality of data obtained through participant observation and in consideration of the difficulties the first student interviewee encountered, as described below. The result is labelled data set 1 (DS1; see appendix B for student interview).

Interviews were semi-structured and conducted in English. Initial questions utilised image cards (appendix A), based on the premise that photo elicitation evokes different emotional responses than verbal questioning (Harper, 2002). Each of the nine images depicted an aspect of *English Village*, and were used at the outset of each interview so that themes might emerge spontaneously. If target topics did not arise, I asked direct questions designed to shed light on the research questions. Two early interviews were transcribed immediately to help with the identification of themes. The others were transcribed at the analysis stage.

While Silverman (1993) suggests that interviewing entails assiduous piloting, he also states that open-ended questioning allows interviewees to illuminate their worldview without being unduly influenced. Interview questions were intended to be piloted in informal discussions with users and staff during my first two days visiting the facility, but logistical constraints meant that the first interview occurred prematurely. Thus some questions were abandoned or reworked in later interviews. In fact, in keeping with Silverman's (1993) claim about flexibility, each interview was somewhat different. Problematic questions were eliminated or altered. Those that were retained focused on emergent themes (see table 3 in chapter 5).

I had known the single student interviewee briefly during my last and his first month at the university. He suggested afterwards that, despite his relative fluency, the interview had provided a strong linguistic and intellectual challenge. Meanwhile, I had discovered that in-depth, relevant responses could be obtained through participation in conversations with students. Because of the tension provoked by my initial student interview in comparison with the more comfortable, natural quality of informal interactions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), I decided that the latter might produce more useful data, so long as they could be well-documented.

4.2.2 Data set 2: Field notes from participant observation

Participant observation occurs over an extended period, so that researchers can develop relaxed relationships with informants in a natural setting (Bailey, 1978). To this end, approximately 45

hours spread out over seven workdays were dedicated to observation within *English Village* (April 18th - 26th, 2013), beginning nine days after the start of a new academic year. Structured observation would have been conspicuous and logistically difficult, so in the main I functioned as an extra member of staff. This involved constant interaction with visitors and thus allowed me to participate, observe and, more frequently than anticipated, to discuss topics related to my interview and research questions. Field notes were audio-recorded at frequent intervals out of sight of students and staff, with an attempt at 'thick description' so that a detailed and comprehensive picture could be drawn (Geertz, in Richards, 2003). Almost without exception this occurred as soon as an event had concluded, because a shorter gap may contribute to more accurate recollections (Richards, 2003). The thirty-seven field recordings were later transcribed as forty-six recounts, vignettes, or notations. The results constitute data set 2 (DS2; appendix C).

4.2.3   Data sets 3 & 4: Documents and secondary questionnaire

type	edited book	quantitative questionnaire data	pamphlet	interview with "mayor" by Language Facilitator "Mick"	article in university's Department of Language Education journal	undergraduate prospectus	brochure (university Foreign Language Centre)	syllabus (university Foreign Language Centre)
English title *(translated)*	*(-- University English Village: A Mayor's Tale)*	*(English Village survey results)*	*(Notes on English Village)*	none	Improving the English Learning Environment for --- University	Touch!	*(User's Guide)*	2013 Syllabus
Japanese title	--- 大学 英語村: 村長の告白	英語村 アンケート 結果	英語村 のこと	none	none	大学案内	語学 センター 利用ガイド	講座要項
audience	English Language education professionals in Japan	university and *English Village* administrators and directors	university students new to *English Village*	postgraduate module tutor	university administrators, educators, and staff	potential students at the university	current and potential students	potential extension class students
date	2010	2009	n.d.	2013	2010	2013	2013	2013
length	214 pages	4 pages	34 pages	4 pages	17 pages	111 pages	12 pages	58 pages

Table 2: Documents collected (partial listing)

Documentary analysis is considered an important element of ethnography (Allan, 2011) and thus was also utilised. During the seven days of observation documents related to the facility were collected, mainly consisting of university publications (table 2). Of these, the most significant turned out to be a book about the facility which was compiled by the mayor and contains sections written by her and other university or *English Village* employees (Kitazume, 2010). As the mayor's

book is only partially bilingual, I translated several chapters from Japanese into English. One chapter was sent back to the original author to determine the accuracy of my translation. There were almost no significant misapprehensions. Other documents were also translated as necessary. Documents are referred to as data set 3 (DS3; see also appendix E).

The mayor's book incorporates the results of a student questionnaire undertaken each June, when the university surveys every student visitor to *English Village* until 1,000 responses have been collected. According to the manager, response and completion rates are over 95%. Questionnaire results are considered separately as data set 4 (DS4; appendix D).

4.3 Data analysis

Other than the first two interviews, which were transcribed and coded early in the data collection process, data were analysed after leaving the field. In keeping with the inductive nature of qualitative research, whereby theories and findings are derived from the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), coding and categorisation was done manually and somewhat intuitively, starting with two layers of initial codes. The first was determined by the interview questions, whereas the second layer emerged through inductive analysis. For instance, the theme of 'anxiety / shyness / shame' was anticipated, whereas 'authenticity' was not. After coding interviews, each code was typed on a small card. These were rearranged until three general themes were detected, each with some relationship to the original research questions (see table 3 in chapter 5). Overlapping codes were combined before being applied to the rest of the data, starting with DS2 and ending with DS4. Some codes were modified or added during this process.

4.4 Research issues

Research issues considered include ethics, concerns such as validity and transferability, and the limitations of this inquiry.

4.4.1 Ethical considerations

Ideally all research subjects should have a right to know how the data they provide has been interpreted, but because some participants may be easily identifiable I do not intend to disseminate this dissertation widely. A copy will be shared with the mayor/director, and the same would be offered to any other interviewee. However, interviews and field notes will be removed to maximise

confidentiality. All names have been replaced by pseudonyms. I chose to redact a section of the student interview (appendix B) due to a potential deductive revelation about a sensitive aspect of his personal history.

The participants were all adults. No rewards or payments were offered. Informed consent was obtained from interviewees through an information sheet and a consent form, both bilingual (appendices F & G), the Japanese content of which was checked for accuracy and comprehensibility by the *English Village* manager. Thus interviewees were made aware of the purpose of the research, how the research findings may be used, and my role. Before and after each interview participants were reminded that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Regarding participant observation, staff on-duty were informed about the nature of my research. As for students, prior informed consent was not feasible because there is no way to predict who will enter the facility, and because sometimes over 100 people are present. That said, more often than not I self-identified as a former staff member currently engaged in research. Student attendance is never directly assessed, so there was presumably no sense of coercion or undue stress.

4.4.2   Validity, reliability, and generalisability

Some authors claim that validity, reliability and generalisability are not appropriate considerations for qualitative research, preferring instead to focus on credibility, transferability and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, in Richards, 2003). That said, generalisability is roughly equivalent to the latter two concerns (Richards, 2003). It is also possible to at least attempt to examine the validity of our own interpretations in terms of their correspondence with the 'facts' on the ground (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Ethnography has been criticised on epistemological grounds, principally based on the claim that a researcher's perspective necessarily colours analysis. Gilbert (2008) states that reflexivity in ethnography requires researchers to acknowledge the fact that their findings may indeed not be fully representative or accurate. This may be unavoidable, but if one wants to obtain a close-up view of an otherwise obscure aspect of culture, ethnography remains a valid approach (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). Moreover, researchers are integral to the social research process, as without their elucidation of meaning results would be limited to descriptions and unanalysed observations. By maintaining a reflexive stance, the researcher can minimise the impact of personal beliefs on research findings.

Validity was also maximised by asking open questions and triangulating the resulting data through participant observation and documentary analysis. Negative or conflicting evidence has been included and considered. While I never expected to determine exactly what students are achieving or whether learning occurs at the site, it has been possible to compare what different stakeholders believe is happening. That said, if the findings are made available to universities designing similar programs, I would expect my interpretations to only be valid and generalisable inasmuch as they resonate with the perspective and experiences of the reader.

4.4.3   Limitations

That my interpretations are necessarily influenced by my perspective (4.4.2) is one limitation to this research. Another is the fairly small number of interviewees. While reliability of interviews may be questioned, because each participant might have a particular agenda (Richards, 2003), the primary aim of this study is to compare various perspectives rather than identifying an objective 'truth'. Furthermore, finding a space where interviews could be conducted without interruption was not always possible. Two had to be done with others present, which could certainly influence responses. Although the original plan to interview four student 'types' was dropped, this was compensated for by unexpectedly good results from participant observation. Perhaps the greatest concern might be accusations of engaging in "blitzkrieg ethnography", meaning parachuting in, noting a few impressions, and running off to write up one's findings (Watson-Gegeo, 1988:576). I believe, however, that my previous experiences add a longitudinal element which partially rectifies this. The richness of the resultant data and my analysis from the perspective of a participant observer should ensure that the discussion which follows is meaningful.

5   Findings, analysis and discussion

Research findings are analysed and discussed in this chapter. Findings have been broken down into three sections in which emergent views are interpreted with support from quotations and recounts, as highlighted in corresponding tables. Each section includes a discussion linking findings to the literature. Table 3 outlines the emergent themes from which the three sections were derived and relates them to relevant research questions:

Theme 1: Competencies (Research Question 1)	Theme 2: Affective factors (Research Questions 2 & 3)		Theme 3: Educational affordances and issues (Research Questions 2 & 3)
TOEIC score increases	"conversion" (of student attitudes)	anxiety / shyness / shame	*English Village* vs. English class
linguistic improvement (in general)	antipathy / ambivalence (towards English)	fear of making mistakes	"input / output"
vocabulary improvement	"conflation" (of English with study)	opening doors (of opportunity)	student-centredness (and lack thereof)
fluency improvement	English as a meaningful communicative tool	motivation / investment (in general)	authenticity (and lack thereof)
listening improvement	barriers to participation (affective)	"intrinsic motivation" / interest	*yakudoku* issues
expanded worldview / cultural knowledge	"low-level" learners (in terms of self-image)	Anglophiles and internationalists	"oral English" class issues
"habituation" (to other cultures)	non-threatening atmosphere	"instrumental / extrinsic motivation" / need	"natural", unconscious language learning
non-linguistic competencies	English-only rule	"trickery" (students forget about English)	(utilisation of) pre-existing knowledge

Table 3: Codes and initial themes

Section 5.1, correlating with theme one, reviews data which seemed to organise itself around research question one: *What (if anything) do different stakeholders believe students achieve at English Village?* The next two sections correspond with different aspects of research questions two and three. Finally, there is an integrated discussion of the findings.

5.1   Learner achievements

In this section, stakeholder viewpoints about what students can and do actually learn at *English Village* are presented. The main focus is on competencies which either are not or cannot be nurtured in classrooms, but have the potential to flourish in an experiential learning environment (Dewey, 1938). Table 4 presents a selection of supporting data.

source ↓	improved TOEIC test scores	improved linguistic skills	other improved competencies	habituation to foreignness
Manager Rika (DS1)	not mentioned	"…[group] activities will teach student naturally without them thinking about learning English a lot of new vocabularies. […] And we also get to teach something that students are missing. […] …they don't know the word 'cutting board'." **(DS1: 651-667)** (Jeremy: "Does it help many people to improve their English to come here?") "If they come in a regular basis. Probably … once a week or once in two weeks, I think that'll benefit them." **(DS1: 872-876)** **"But if they only come once a month, I doubt it." (DS1: 876)**	"[when *English Village* first opened] students **never** said hello when they came in, and they looked at staff strangely… *why are you here?* look. […] And then **gradually** students changed." **(DS1: 715-717: intercultural competence)** "…more than English, they learn how to behave […] …they don't know they are learning but they do learn cultural differences. But mostly I think behaviour…" **(DS1: 856-865: intercultural competence)**	"Students can partially immerged into another culture and language." (Jeremy: "Partially?") "Yes." **(DS1: 163-165)**
Student Makoto (DS1)	no claims	"Seeing myself, and Naoki, and Kohei…And I think maybe Keisuke too… Yeah, I think each one has developed their own English. […] Especially, the most strongly are speaking. This is the only place where I can study speaking. And…yeah. I become pretty better at listening too. Mm. Even I can feel that." **(DS1: 594-606)** **"…if it just a few times they come to *English Village*, I don't think it will helps them to improve their English. (DS1: 593-594)**	"So, if- if I'm in [a local business district] and if I was asked by the foreigner of the direction, or road, I don't think I will be afraid of speaking with him [due to experiences at *English Village*]." **(DS1: 608-610: intercultural competence)**	"I became accustomed to speaking with foreigners. […] …now I think the people in this world is not only Asian tribe, Asian race." **(DS1: 607-617)**
Associate Professor Rod (DS1)	"…[*English Village* is] affecting their TOEIC scores and things like that…" **(DS1: 141-142)**	no claims	"I think [Language Facilitators are] first and foremost just establishing a human relationship, with the students realizing that there's another person who comes from a totally different country, who speaks a totally different language and yet I'm able to in some way form a bond, or even a superficial relationship with this person on a human level…" **(DS1: 273-282, multi-competence)**	"You know, it's pushing them beyond this, this tiny little bubble that [many of them] live in…" **(DS1: 284-285)** **"I don't know this but I think some of the students who go there are already familiar with other cultures? […] …is it they're comfortable so they go there? Or is it because they want to come out of their shell and meet people for the first time?" (DS1: 308-315)**
Language Facilitator Mick (DS1 & DS3)	Takes non-committal stance in response to Mayor's claim of TOEIC score improvements due to attendance at English Village. **(DS3: Mick's Interview with the Mayor)**	"I hear [students] saying to each other, in Japanese sometimes, *I know what he's saying, but I don't know what to say.* […] …as time passes more and more of them will try and speak. And at first it will come out… kind of unclear, but we can understand and… in some cases they'll really go on and improve, and they'll start using quite fluent sentences within a relatively short space of time." **(DS1: 38-44)** "So it's listening first, then speaking… **(DS1: 205-206)**	"I think they learn… a lot. […] …once they get used to how we're talking, they become able to understand that. And their own ability to speak will follow on from that." **(DS1: 198-203: communicative competence)** "So it's listening first, then speaking, but along with the listening comes other understanding of…ah, international culture, or international manners." **(DS1: 205-206: intercultural competence)**	"I think the role [of Language Facilitators] is, to give the students here just more awareness of international, especially English culture. Um, just… try and remove any preconceptions they might have when they go to another country, any fears they might have… When they get to know people like us that are working here they see that we're kind of normal people… maybe not what they're used to but they can experience some kind of different cultures as much as the language." **(DS1: 24-30)**

Table 4: Learner achievements. (Black indicates negative evidence, and grey equivocal evidence)

source ↓	improved TOEIC test scores	improved linguistic skills	other improved competencies	habituation to foreignness
"Mayor" Minami (DS1 & DS3)	"A girl from Science Department, she comes here every day for lunch. And her TOEIC score went by 200 in half a year." **(DS1: 205-207)** Entire section of her book dedicated to 'case studies' of four frequent *English Village* attendees whose TOEIC scores rose dramatically in short periods of time. **(DS3: -- *University English Village: A Mayor's Tale* [pp. 31-35])**	**-- *University English Village: A Mayor's Tale* (p. 29):** *"There is a secret plan in English Village to facilitate improvements in listening skills naturally and with deceptive ease, and which also serves to improve pronunciation. The key is desk size. There are many small, round tables…[…] It is possible from this close distance to see how the native-speaking staff move their tongues and mouths.* **(DS3: -- *University English Village: A Mayor's Tale* [p. 29])** "…we decided that we'll have events and activities…so that students can learn various vocabularies…" **(DS3: Mick's Interview with the Mayor)**	"I think in a formal classes they teach grammars, and very precise English, but it's not communicative English… […] But [English Village] is different. […] We just having conversation, we are just, you know, explaining the activities in English. So naturally, they learn English." **(DS1: 78-94, communicative competence)** "I think they learn other cultures too. […] If someone from France, who lives in for example… mm, Paris, talks about her country, […] then students will be more… much more interested how she lives, where she lives, what she's eating, and so on […] …students can learn culture through that person…" **(DS1: 136-152, multi-competence)**	*"Apparently, real-life experience [at English Village] contributes to understanding international cultures."* **(DS3: -- *University English Village: A Mayor's Tale* [p. 35])** "…students became to know that what we call foreigners are not foreigners, they're human beings. Just like us." **(DS3: Mick's Interview with the Mayor)**
Field Notes (DS2)	no observations	A third-year student who used to visit frequently stated that since he started coming to *English Village* less frequently he has perceived a drop in his own fluency. **(DS2: #33 & #34)** I asked two students what they had learned at *English Village*. One said he became much more fluent and learned some vocabulary. **(DS2: #37)** **The second student tried to express that it was not language per se that he learned, but rather the ability to communicate with different people. (DS2: #37)**	Interacted with two third-year female students whom I had interacted with two years previously. At first I felt that their English ability had not improved significantly, but later I realised that they actually had improved. In particular, they now used only English with me, and the only time they used Japanese was to ask each other how to say a word. They conspicuously avoided using Japanese sentences. **(DS2: #30 & #42, strategic competence)** I asked two students what they had learned at *English Village*. One tried to express that it wasn't language per se that he learned, but rather the ability to communicate with different people. He used the phrase "communication skill". **(DS2: #37, communicative competence)**	Two seemingly very nervous first-year students are approached by a Language Facilitator, who sits down and beckons them to join. They exchange glances as if to say *'what are we going to do about this?'* and wordlessly agree to sit. He then speaks to them, almost insistently calm and friendly. They seem to be relatively OK. **(DS2: #3)**
Documents (DS3)	**25% of foreign language centre extension classes are TOEIC, indicating that it is seen as suitable for formal study. (DS3: Foreign Language Centre syllabus)**	Vice-Chancellor: *"I think that the further one takes [speaking English in intercultural contexts], vocabulary will also improve."* **(DS3: -- *University English Village: A Mayor's Tale* [p. 5])**	Vice-Chancellor: *"In English Village, I want opportunities for [intercultural] experience to be created. Look confident and think 'you will understand what I mean'!"* **(DS3: -- *University English Village: A Mayor's Tale* [p. 5]: intercultural competence)**	**Language Facilitator:** [during cooking activities at English Village] "Students are … introduced to the cultures from which these foods originate. […] …they discovered new, and often misunderstood things about a different 'shokubunka' or 'food culture'." **(DS3: -- *University English Village: A Mayor's Tale* [pp. 120-122)**
questionnaire (DS4)	not asked	not asked	82% of respondents agree or partially agree that due to the effects of *English Village* they *'became able to use English as a communication tool'*. **(DS4, communicative competence)**	84% of respondents agree or partially agree that due to the effects of *English Village* their *'resistance to speaking with foreigners has abated'*. **(DS4)**

Table 4: Learner achievements. (Black indicates negative evidence, and grey equivocal evidence)

5.1.1   TOEIC

Claims about improvements in TOEIC scores due to attendance at *English Village* came from only two sources. Associate Professor Rod suggested that *English Village* may indirectly increase TOEIC scores through improvements in oral English. The mayor strongly advocates a related view; five pages of her book discuss "natural, unconscious" improvements in TOEIC scores (DS3). This is, however, supported only by anecdotal evidence.

5.1.2   Linguistic competencies

Analysis suggests that linguistic competency is believed to improve at *English Village,* as long as learners visit often. Manager Rika commented: "[i]f they come in a regular basis. ...I think that'll benefit them" (DS1: 872-876). Although several data suggest that vocabulary is learned, the general sense is that users become better at listening first, then speaking ability improves. Student Makoto stated that *English Village* is the only place where he can "study speaking" (DS1: 605-606). Like the manager, he believes that students need to come at least a few times a month to experience linguistic gains. On the other hand, one student felt that he did not learn language at *English Village*, but rather developed his ability to communicate (DS2: #37).

5.1.3   Other competencies

The student above referred to improving "communication skill" rather than language. Communicative, strategic, multi- and intercultural competence all emerge from the data quite frequently as potentially bolstered through attendance at *English Village*, even for those who come infrequently or for purposes other than practicing English. Questionnaire results indicate that 82% of student visitors feel they have become able to use English as a communication tool (DS4), while the Mayor stated that "communicative English" can be learned at *English Village* (DS1: 78-94).

Observation indicated that strategic competence may be learned at *English Village*. As an example, I talked to two occasional users whom I had known in my staff role two years earlier. By our second meeting I realised that unlike before they were speaking only English to me. Their technique seemed to include consciously applying the type of language I associate with classroom English, such as the phrase "*Have you ever...*". It seemed that in order to communicate with me they were constructing sentences using the limited linguistic knowledge they posessed (DS3: #30; #42).

I found general agreement that multi- and intercultural competence are fostered at *English Village*. Student Makoto said that because of *English Village* "if I was asked by the foreigner of the direction, or road, I don't think I will be afraid of speaking with him" (DS1: 609-610) University employees emphasised opportunities to form human bonds, such as Associate Professor Rod's belief that students realise "there's another person who comes from a totally different country, who speaks a totally different language and yet I'm able to in some way form a bond [...] on a human level" (DS1: 273-282). Manager Rika thinks that *English Village* has changed the culture of the university, because when it first opened "students never said hello [...] and then gradually students changed", although she sees it as learning behaviour rather than culture (DS1: 715-717).

5.1.4   Habituation to foreignness

Related to intercultural competence is what I have called *habituation*, according to my understanding of Japan as a sometimes xenophobic country. University students often exhibit fear during their first interaction with a foreign person. On one occasion two seemingly very nervous first-year students entered *English Village* for their first obligatory visit. A Language Facilitator approached them, sat down, and beckoned them to join. He proceeded to speak with them, friendly and almost insistently calm, until they visibly relaxed (DS2: #3). The Language Facilitator interviewed (Mick) stated: "When they get to know people like us [who] are working here they see that we're kind of normal people" (DS1: 27-28). The Mayor agreed, saying "...students became to know that what we call foreigners are not foreigners, they're human beings. Just like us" (DS3). Moreover, 84% of questionnaire respondents agreed or partially agreed that their resistance to speaking with foreigners had abated (DS4). On the other hand, Associate Professor Rod wondered whether students go to *English Village* are already comfortable with other cultures (DS1: 310-315).

5.1.5   Learner achievements: Discussion

The data show that comfort with using English among native speakers may be fostered as part of a larger socialisation process (Wang, 2010), but there is no consensus that linguistic competence and higher test scores are primary potential achievements at *English Village*. Claims about TOEIC improvements might be the most controversial, but it is important to focus on the specifics of the claims made. Associate Professor Rod seems to indicate that it is the different affordances of oral English which may influence test scores positively, referring probably not only to understanding spoken English, but also to vocabulary and grammar forms different to those found in the classroom. In her book, the mayor also attributes much of certain students' TOEIC score

improvements specifically to listening, citing a student's statement that English now sounds slow to her instead of impossibly fast. Key to this is Mayor Minami's strong assertion that listening gains occur naturally and without conscious effort, in line with Krashen's (1982) sense of acquisition.

It seems that with the increased learning opportunities *English Village* seems to provide it must be considered "naturalistic" (Gass & Selinker, 2001), even though it would be considered EFL according to most definitions. Clearer is the sense that the facility helps solve the 'drip-feed' dilemma by temporally extending opportunities to develop functional fluency (Baker, 2011). Whichever linguistic skills may be learned, the data point to frequent attendance as an important contributing factor. It is important to remember, however, that this is not the norm at *English Village*. Thus, while Makoto and similarly keen students apparently do become relatively fluent during their undergraduate careers, achieving this depends on their determination to spend time at *English Village*. The implication for educators is that they must inform learners of the unique affordances experiential learning provides, and their responsibility to take advantage of it.

Perhaps the most useful finding is the sense that facilities like *English Village* can contribute to communicative and other competencies in ways that classrooms perhaps do not. The data show general agreement that Japanese classrooms are where students learn micro-skills and elements of English, with a focus on precision but not on communication. By contrast, at *English Village* students appear to evolve and mature their skills as part of a second language socialisation process involving much more than language itself (Zeungler & Miller, 2006). It seems that learners gain the ability to interact with foreigners and communicate with them effectively, even if at a small scale. Thus language socialisation relates as much to communicative behaviour as to linguistic practices.

It seems that, at least from students' perspectives, second language acquisition can happen through use (Firth & Wagner, 1998; *cf.* Gass, 1998). If so, the question then becomes whether classrooms are necessary. While analysis of the data shows that *English Village* has useful affordances, there is no clear indication that formal learning does not have its own, unique potential. Certainly every learner at the facility comes 'pre-loaded' with several years worth of linguistic information obtained in school, although it may be dimly remembered or poorly understood. Without this, students would have to acquire English from the ground up, entirely inductively. As it happens, *English Village* users have the potential develop quite quickly because they have the advantage of pre-existing linguistic knowledge. Thus, they can learn through inductive and conscious processes simultaneously (see 3.5.1). The following section looks at other possible synergies and differences between formal learning and *English Village* acquisition.

5.2   Affective benefits

2. How do these stakeholders think such learning differs from that occurring in the classroom?
3. Why is a non-formal, university-based learning environment seen as desirable?

Data regarding research questions two and three emerged as two loose themes, the first being positive affective benefits for learners. Anxiety reduction is the most strongly supported advantage, followed by improved attitudes. While there was little evidence that students become more motivated, it does appear to benefit those whose pre-existing investment in English is hindered by affective constraints. Table 5 presents a selection of supporting data for these three themes.

5.2.1   Anxiety reduction

The data contain many references to student anxiety, shyness, and shame. Although Manager Rika claimed "they're not shy, they are lazy" (DS1: 214), mayor Minami more typically asserted that Japan's shame culture leads to fear of making mistakes (DS1: 102-108). At the least, there seems to be some carryover from classroom teachers' harsh reactions to inaccuracy. The Foreign Language Centre user's guide notes:

> *"although there is an English-only rule,* English Village *is not a classroom,*
> *so it's okay to make mistakes"* (DS3).

That very rule was, however, controversial among students. Relatively fluent students claimed that others were afraid of *English Village* because they felt it would be impossible for them to participate perfectly (DS1: 494-500: Makoto; DS3: #45 & #46). Hence, the rule may be keeping potential visitors away.

On the other hand, there seems to be significant agreement that students who do come eventually become less anxious. For novices, the role of activities, games, and other lures may be important distractions. On the day I acted as greeter (DS2: #13) many first-year students came get their first requisite passport stamps. I explained the initial task, a self-guided 'Treasure Hunt' which requires them to walk around discovering information, and culminates with a brief chat with a Language Facilitator. I saw that this procedure allowed students to expose themselves to the facility, alleviating fear of the unknown in the process.

source ↓	reduced anxiety	changed attitudes	increased motivation
Manager Rika (DS1)	**Regarding students shyness: "That's how they say, but for me they're just very... they're not shy they are lazy." (DS1: 214)** "So if [basketball players] **see** ten different non-Japanese people faces daily, they will feel unthreatened, and they will act **normal**. So at least it's good for that. And, for the some of the students who are interested in speaking English tend to come in and drink Coke or something inside and start chatting." **(DS1: 529-532)** "So, if we have a lot of those [non-English] events, students...will come in, and once they come in, they will see what's inside. It's not that threatening. Actually it's open and relaxing atmosphere, so they will feel like coming again." **(DS1: 395-397)**	**(Jeremy: "Do you think people avoid [English Village]? Or why do you think they don't come?") "Um, it's not that deep. They have better things to do. It's not convenient. It's far away. And they'd rather wanna chit-chat about their boyfriend with their friends in their... familiar language." (DS1: 845-850)** "Again, after we have those event, a lot of students will feel ah, *English Village* is a place that cool students hang around, not English nerds." **(DS1: 452-453)** [for the first two years] "Students really didn't want to deal with you . [...]...three years ago things changed a lot. Students attitude." **(DS1: 721-730)**	**"...Japan is economic giant who actually don't need international language to survive. Therefore... students don't learn." (DS1: 762-765)** "...activities are for everyone, which is our target, that they don't want to deal with English, or they're not motivated at all." (Jeremy: "But they have to come here.") "And they will learn something new and they have good time eating chocolate cookie and comes back the next time." **(DS1: 683-688)** "...if they know they have to study English, they don't want to. That's why *English Village* was built, to come in between. They're....to make them feel like they want to study language." **(DS1: 701-705)**
Student Makoto (DS1)	**"About speaking Japanese at this facility. As I heard, most of the students are reluctant to come to English Village are really afraid... afraid of, mm, afraid of speaking Japanese in this facility. They... they think they have to speak all the thing in English, only, and... (Jeremy: That's the rule though, isn't it?) Yeah yeah yeah. But... yeah, I can do that, but... I think it's impossible for all the students." (DS1: 494-500)**	"I think second language is nothing you have to learn. [...] Language is 身につける物 *(a personal accessory)*. [...] Yeah, and at least you have to like it." **(DS1: 451-465)** (Jeremy: "So why do you think so many people avoid [*English Village*]?") **"I think some of them are even not interested in English [itself. They... they don't even want to be able to speak English. They don't even want to touch another culture." (DS1: 560-566)**	(Jeremy: "Why do you think they have events?") "I think more Japanese people are interested in something special. Like, uh... you know, when it comes to the drinks sold in convenience store or snack shop, it's always 'this is only for season' or something like that. [...] Well, I think it will make more people feel like coming to *English Village*. Maybe because it's special." **(DS1: 244-252)**
Language Facilitator Mick (DS1)	"I think people do become less nervous as we go through the academic year. I think that's what... a lot of students gain from it." **(DS1: 31-33)** "...[games] get them to relax, because when they're sitting at a table people can be very uptight... just looking at the teacher, looking at other students... but when there's something to focus on, like Wii or Jenga or something like that, then the focus automatically goes onto that, and the conversation will stem quite naturally from the game, in.... not every case, but that's the idea." **(DS1: 79-84)**	"...there have been some students who come in just to play basketball and after time they start to come in more and more and more and you actually start talking to them several months later, when it's raining and they don't want to play basketball." **(DS1: 58-61)**	"...those students who are more motivated will get over [shyness]. But they'll still be nervous when they do something for the first time." **(DS1: 175-176)**
Associate Professor Rod (DS1)	"So, you know, for me I think those activities definitely get the students in there. And if they can go in and realize you know it's non-threatening, it's fairly comfortable, then they're just participating in the activity, maybe they're having a chance to eat or having a little fun..." **(DS1: 186-189)**	"And also it needs to just be fun. I mean what we're trying to do is bring these students away from what they know as English hell, you know, to how it can actually be used in a useful, practical way. Because many of them don't understand [...] English is supposed to be a means for them to communicate!" **(DS1: 200-205)**	"...for many students [establishing human relationships is] key to their motivation to study English, and it's also the first time they've ever experienced something like for many of them, I feel." **(DS1: 278-280)** "For me as a teacher here I'm not sure if it's fulfilling the role we had hoped it would, but it's not the fault of that building, I think it's the fault of the motivation of the students and of ... [...] And it's probably rooted much deeper than we can handle here at a university." **(DS1: 83-86)**

Table 5: Affective benefits. (Black indicates negative evidence, grey equivocal evidence)

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source ↓	reduced anxiety	changed attitudes	increased motivation
"Mayor" Minami (DS1 & DS3)	"Japanese people are shy people and uh, they dislike to speak out because, ah, Japan is a culture of shame. It means, you're very afraid of making mistakes, and be laughed at. [...] ...even if you're talking in a small group they just try to be quiet and shy... But through these activities, they have to speak out." (**DS1: 102-108**) "Well, main role [of Language Facilitators] is –err- make them make students speak English. [...] But you know, you shouldn't put any pressure on it. I think the native staff's job is to make them speak English without making them notice that they have to speak English." (**DS3: Mick's Interview with the Mayor**)	"…even the students who are not good at English or who don't like English because of their own way of education in junior and senior high schools can enjoy English communication with native staff, and –err-, if we can change the attitude toward English, I think it's going to be a success." (**DS3: Mick's Interview with the Mayor**) *"The instant gratification of times when one is able to experience the satisfaction of successful communication with a native speaker is likely to engender the effect of stoking further interest in and positive feeling towards English." (*DS3: -- University English Village: A Mayor's Tale* [pp. 30-31])*	And they forget sometimes, of being laughed at by making mistakes, because they want to know what is going on." (**DS1: 110-111**) "'Cause once they get the impression that this is a pleasant place, a comfortable place, then they want to have a chat. And they want to come to [the facility] to meet friends, or to meet native staff." (**DS1: 227-229**)
Field Notes (DS2)	The experienced Makoto brought a 1st-year male student to the table, who did not say very much. I recognised in him a common pattern, in which newer students who are interested tend to come and sit and say very little while remaining fully attentive. Such novices seem quite content just to sit and listen. I had forgotten this typical pattern from when I worked at English Village previously. (**DS2: #12**) Many first-year students arrive with their brand-new passports, instructed to get their first passport stamp by going on a self-guided 'Treasure Hunt'. This seemed to me to be an effective way to get nervous students to at least expose themselves to the space and the people in it in a relatively non-threatening manner, potentially relieving some of their fears. (**DS2: #13**) **A student complained that many classmates do not come to English Village because of the English-only rule. He argued that a 70:30 English to Japanese ratio would be more natural for students less fluent than himself.** (**DS2: #45 & #46**)	It seems that, unlike a few years ago, now students who want to come just to have fun at English Village are not intimidated by the super-keen students. There is a kind of coexistence; the less-advanced students don't feel inferior to their more advanced fellow students. They are not afraid to be here just to have fun. (DS2: #35) **Female student came inside and demanded a basketball in Japanese, saying 「バスケットボールを出しなさい」 ("Gimme a basketball"). She was refused. Soon after, the manager discovered that the student was playing basketball, and told her that for that day she was banned from playing. The student narrowed her eyes and looked very angry. She was then given an ultimatum (in English): either stop playing basketball today or be banned from playing basketball permanently. The girl then consented to stop playing basketball today.** (DS2: #8)	**Was asked to do a chat for a passport stamp with three first year female students who had clearly come only to get that stamp. They did not seem particularly afraid to speak or resentful of the task, but, all of them claimed not to be interested in English or any other foreign languages, preferring sports and similar hobbies. It seems that there are students who come only to get those passport stamps who are not inspired to study more English as a result. (DS2: #21, see also #23)** **Numerous field notes show that the students I interacted with were already motivated to learn English. There was little evidence of students becoming motivated where they had not been before. (DS2: various)**
Documents (DS3)	**Language Facilitator:** "If the students are having fun, then we find it much easier to engage them in conversation. The focus is on the game instead of the student who is answering the question, so any embarrassment is lessened." (**DS3: -- University English Village: A Mayor's Tale [p.136]**) *"Although there is an English-only rule, English Village is not a classroom so it's okay to make mistakes." (***DS3: Foreign Language Centre User's Guide***)* *"It's okay if you cannot speak English." (***DS3: Notes on English Village***)*	**Language Facilitator:** "When I first started working at [*English Village*], many students were too shy to talk to me, and if they did try, they spoke Japanese. After spending time with them on the basketball court, however, I feel that they slowly changed. Many of those same students are now more comfortable speaking to me in English, which is after all the whole point of [*English Village*]. I do not believe this would have been possible had we not played basketball together." (**DS3: -- University English Village: A Mayor's Tale [p. 124]**)	**Classroom English teacher:** "…the activities conducted at [English Village] provide beneficial stimulus for students to participate more in their normal classroom lessons. It gives students a reason to take their studies of English in the classroom more seriously…" (**DS3: -- University English Village: A Mayor's Tale [p. 144]**)
questionnaire (DS4)	not asked	82% of respondents agree or partially agree that due to the effects of *English Village* they *'came to feel that English can be something enjoyable'*. (**DS4**) 62% of respondents agree or partially agree that due to the effects of *English Village* they *'became more interested in study or travel abroad'*. (**DS4**)	95% of respondents agree or partially agree that due to the effects of *English Village* they *'have the feeling that they have to study English more'*. (**DS4**)

Table 5: Affective benefits. (Black indicates negative evidence, grey equivocal evidence)

One day the experienced Makoto brought along a nearly silent first-year student, in whom I recognised a familiar pattern; newer students who are interested tend to speak very little, while remaining fully attentive. Over time, such students usually start engaging verbally (DS2: #12). Language Facilitator Mick reinforces this observation, stating "...people do become less nervous as we go through the academic year" (DS1: 31-33).

5.2.2   Changed attitudes

Although students who are keen to learn may lose their anxiety at *English Village*, evidence that it changes negative attitudes towards the English language and non-Japanese people is equivocal. Manager Rika hopes that through hosting events popular among the general student body "...a lot of students will feel *ah,* English Village *is a place that cool students hang around, not English nerds*" (DS1: 452-453). The student questionnaire seems to support changes for the better, as 82% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that they '*came to feel that English can be something enjoyable*' (DS4). However, this datum came only from students already at the facility.

Language Facilitators did recount gradual attitudinal changes in certain students. Mick said "...there have been some students who come in just to play basketball and after time they start to come in [the building] more and more and more and you actually start talking to them several months later, when it's raining and they don't want to play basketball" (DS1: 58-61). Another wrote:

> *"When I first started working at [English Village], many students were too shy to talk to me, and if they did try, they spoke Japanese. After spending time with them on the basketball court, however, I feel that they slowly changed. Many of those same students are now more comfortable speaking to me in English."*
> (DS3)

Nevertheless, such evidence seems to apply largely to students who come voluntarily. Rika believes that non-attendees do not necessarily dislike English, but rather simply prefer to do other things or socialise in a "familiar language" (DS1: 845-850). Student Makoto also emphasises the importance of volition, stating that "language is 身につける物 (*a chosen accessory*). […] ...and at least you have to like it" (DS1: 456-465).

5.2.3 Motivation

Manager Rika stated that *English Village* was built to make students "feel like they want to study English" (DS1: 701-705). Nonetheless, intractable roadblocks to motivating students apparently remain. I did not encounter any students who claimed to have become motivated to study English by their experiences at *English Village*. The issue appears to be lack of instrumental need. As Manager Rika noted, "…Japan is economic giant who actually don't need international language to survive. Therefore… students don't learn" (DS1: 762-765). Associate Professor Rod attributed lack of motivation to more profound social issues, lamenting:

> *"...I'm not sure if [English Village] is fulfilling the role we had hoped it would, but it's not the fault of that building. I think it's the fault of the motivation of the students and [...] it's probably rooted much deeper than we can handle here at a university."* (DS1: 83-86)

However, Rod also noted that whatever possibility there is for breeding motivation depends on interpersonal connections, stating "...for many students [establishing human relationships is] key to their motivation to study English" (DS1: 278-280). Indeed, my previous experience was that many so-called "English-lovers" started out as occasional visitors. As Mayor Minami said:

> *"...once they get the impression that this is a pleasant place, a comfortable place, then they want to have a chat. And they want to come to [English Village] to meet friends, or to meet native staff"* (DS1: 227-229).

5.2.4 Affective benefits: Discussion

This section has presented potential affective changes among students that may be brought about by *English Village*. Despite lack of evidence that motivation is enhanced, the data point to a lessening of anxiety, which may in turn facilitate the language learning process.

According to traditional definitions, improvements in motivation should entail better attitudes, increased willingness to make an effort, or a greater desire to acquire an additional language (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Of these, only the first has been seen, as with Manager Rika's observation that over the years the general student body has become less resistant to dealing with English and its speakers (DS1: 701-703). Moreover, from Gardner and MacIntyre's (1993) perspective, *English Village* does not seem to generate internal motivation among disinterested learners. I often observed students merely going through the motions to get their passport stamps (DS2: #21 & #23). Unless they are already intrigued by English, nothing more seems to come of it.

It has been shown, however, that many Japanese students are alienated not by English, but by classroom learning (Davies, 2006: Falout & Falout, 2005). The following section (5.3) provides evidence that many who like English profoundly *dislike* learning it in lessons at the university. Such data coincide with Norton's (2000) notion that learning context can negatively affect investment. By contrast, *English Village* seems to provide a sense of 'ownership' which can lead to more effective learning (Norton, 2013). The fact that the facility is dominated by smiling students rather than authoritarian staff probably helps. As Mayor Minami states, during activities "[students] forget sometimes of being laughed at by making mistakes, because they want to know what's going on" (DS1: 110-111). They may not achieve the effortless 'flow' envisioned by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), but many students in *English Village* are certainly enjoying themselves (Dewey, 1938). I also observed that, unlike years past, students whose English ability is low are no longer intimidated by their keener peers; they appear to be fully-engaged in having fun (DS2: #35). The example of certain basketball players slowly coming around to using English further aligns with Kojima's (2009) finding that when English is seen as a communication tool, motivation is higher.

Although *English Village* students apparently cannot be motivated to study a language in which they have no interest, the facility does appear to influence anxiety levels. Perhaps the most important effect is alleviating fear, of the unknown and of making mistakes. The experience of successful communication in a non-judgemental atmosphere seems to slowly enhance self-confidence, such that students begin to experiment with actually using English to communicate (Dufeu, 1994, in Arnold & Brown, 1999). It also seems that much learner anxiety is not innate, but rather a reaction to students' previous unpleasant experiences (Arnold & Brown, 1999). This is not to say that error correction does not occur at *English Village*, but when it does occur it is most often due to communicative difficulties brought on by mistakes; students and staff cooperate to achieve communicative goals. Neither are students called on to perform, so the silent period exhibited by many novices is not challenged (DS2: #12). Indeed, such learners are allowed to begin speaking at their own pace, which may suit those Japanese learners who prefer to communicate when they can be assured of relative accuracy (Kojima, 2009).

On the other hand, the English-only rule has some drawbacks. An incident wherein a basketball player was threatened with permanent expulsion due to her blatant insistence on using Japanese (DS2: #8) demonstrates that the rule is not accepted by all, at least those who have no interest in English. For those who do, the rule may inhibit participation (DS1: 494-500; DS3: #45 & #46), despite the fact that ordinarily the rule is not strictly enforced. It is possible that students who would

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like to participate are being unintentionally excluded due to self-doubt regarding their ability to communicate in English. For them, *English Village* poses a Catch-22.

5.3 Educational affordances

2. *How do these stakeholders think such learning differs from that occurring in the classroom?*
3. *Why is a non-formal, university-based learning environment seen as desirable?*

The second overarching theme which emerged in relation to research questions two and three is educational affordances, meaning how the properties of *English Village* combine with learner characteristics to enhance learning potential (see table 3, p. 30). It has been divided into 'student-centredness and authenticity' and 'synergy with classroom learning'. Table 6 presents a selection of relevant data for both.

5.3.1 Student-centredness and authenticity

Student-centred learning is an approach that focuses on student needs above those of educators. This seems to have been an intentional element of *English Village* from the beginning. Mayor Minami wrote that during the design process student suggestions led to the inclusion of English manga and basketball (DS3). A look at monthly activity schedules (see appendix E) shows that many different interests are catered to, ranging from art to sports cars (DS3). Events are also derived from student preferences because, in Manager Rika's opinion, "...it's not always good to have event that *English Village* offer" (DS1: 445-446). Language Facilitator Mick, by contrast, stated that activities are not adequately student-centred. His suggestion that one month be set aside for activities nominated by students was rejected by higher-ups (DS1: 244-247).

In addition to noting that activities are never student-led, Mick also mentioned that conversations are sometimes dominated by Language Facilitators (DS1: 222-233), an issue which was noted in the field (DS2: #18). This is not always the case, however. Many students mentioned that *English Village* allows them the freedom to speak about their own interests, unlike their formal classes (DS2: #19; #33). Manager Rika pointed out:

> "...according to students interests we can just change subject, change topic, and according to their level. [...] ...that's the reason why [...] ten people working together every day. So students can choose who they want to talk with. [...] Quiet guys, cheerful guys, loud guys, and different countries, different backgrounds." (DS1: 558-574)

source ↓	student-centredness	authenticity	synergies
Manager Rika (DS1)	"…according to students interests we can just change subject, change topic, and according to their level. […] …that's the reason why […] ten people working together every day . So students can choose who they want to talk with. […] Quiet guys, cheerful guys, loud guys, and different countries, different backgrounds." **(DS1: 558-574)** "…in my opinion, it's not always good to have event that *English Village* offer. **(DS1: 445-446)**	"…this is gimmick…of overseas… but it's a gimmick so we have to be nice and encouraging, but at the same time we have to be as authentic as possible. But… because all of the staff actually live in Japan and understand about students sometimes that gimmick kind of collapse culturally." (I: "It's not authentic because the staff…are used to being among Japanese people?") "Yes." (DS1: 194-201)	"Mostly in the classroom they're having input. So here it's a chance for them to do output, so I think it's very good either way." **(DS1: 918-921)** "Some of the teacher correlate their classroom and *English Village* quite well. […] And they even teach students how to deal people here and then they send them here and they ask how they feel… and also they ask them to write essays about *English Village*…" **(DS1: 912-917)** "Some teachers don't care. So it doesn't correlate at all." (DS1: 917-918)
Student Makoto (DS1)	not mentioned	"I think this kind of place is a real necessary, for student to learn English. Because, you know, we can… we can really touch real, authentic English." **(DS1: 152-158)** I think *English Village* is much realer. You c-… you can communicate with real English speakers. Like a… yeah. If… If I make a mistake, somebody corrects me. […] So I think… English Village is much closer to real things." **(DS1: 640-648)**	"I think *English Village*'s function is basically for output of English ability for student. [….] Yeah, what I think is, classroom is output." **(DS1: 320-329)** "… I think [we need] only few things. Like a basic grammar, and… a little verb conjugation. And, some […] subjective things like I, or you, he, she, like pronoun. […] I think… these are enough. (Jeremy: "And then after that you can begin participating in something like this?") Yeah, I think so." (DS1: 677-685) "English class is just a… I don't even think this is a part of English. This is just a class. […] Like, uh… for me, English is language, but English class is subject, […] what I have to do in the school…. […] I don't really use the thing I study in the English classroom in *English Village*." (DS1: 70-82)
Language Facilitator Mick (DS1)	"…it should be about, uh, student-led activities, not about staff-led activities, and… a lot of the time the students come in, and they might be interested in a particular topic, but […] they end up talking about whatever the staff member is trying to talk about, and I think if we can drag out of them somehow what it is they want to do, then that would show a much more, uh, student-centred approach which would be really beneficial for them?" **(DS1: 222-233)** "We did actually suggest having a… a… one month this year where the activities are nominated by students, and we'd try and get lots of suggestions for them when we do the annual questionnaire… and pick out the best ones, but it was rejected, unfortunately." **(DS1: 244-247)**	not mentioned	[Japanese people] "…find [English] quite alien in a lot of cases. And even if they've had education in school they don't feel it's something they can do[…] it's more like a collection of rules and grammatical points that don't have necessarily any particular point to them, so I would keep them quite far apart." [moves cards ENGLISH and ENGLISH CLASS away from each other on the table top] (DS1: 7-12)
Associate Professor Rod (DS1)	"You know, those students who aren't very good learners or book learners they have a-another outlet, another place for them to go to study. […] I thought just, these are the kind of, you know, wild kids. They're not ever gonna be good students of English, but I've heard from Rika you know that there are some like that who go regularly and kind of enjoy the atmosphere and they learn in that way." **(DS1: 104-109)**	"You'd have to talk to the students but there may be a sense that it's not authentic." (I: "Well I have talked to the students about this, and it's… so, if you're curious, they seem to think that it's semi-authentic.") "Yeah. That's what I thought." **(DS1: 457-472)**	"…students that I know of that are going [to *English Village*], they sometimes tend to be rambunctious in my class, or they're not really attentive and… So I think they're able in that way to take advantage of that kind of communication-based oral- based learning rather than sitting at a desk and reading or learning from a book. So in that way I think it's provided a pretty nice complement to what we do in classes." **(DS1: 98-102)** "I don't think [some Japanese English teachers] understand the value of it. I think they think that… just like the students, it's a place for them to hang out and play. So unfortunately I don't think there's a terribly great relationship between *English Village* and the teachers who are conducting the assignments in my department." (DS1: 367-372)

Table 6: Educational affordances. (Black indicates negative evidence, grey equivocal evidence)

source ↓	student-centredness	authenticity	synergies
"Mayor", Minami (DS1 & DS3)	"[Professor Moto] collected many suggestions from students [...] This was the origin, for example, of the choice to offer English manga. I think such student contributions greatly assisted the development of our English Village concept." (DS3: -- University English Village: A Mayor's Tale [p. 21])	(Mick: "How authentic are the materials being used here?") [...] "...it's not Japanese you know who make materials but native staff [...] so they are authentic aren't they?" (DS3: Mick's Interview with the Mayor)	"I think in a formal classes they teach grammars, and very precise English, but it's not communicative English, because teachers usually teacher twenty or thirty students. So they can listen to the native speakers' English, but usually they don't have so many chances to speak out. [...] But this place is different. We have a very small table, with students usually talk one by one, or in a group of at most five, so they have to speak English." (DS1: 78-88)
Field Notes (DS2)	Spoke with a second year couple. Both students expressed a strong preference for English Village over English class. The female attributed this to have a choice about conversation topic in English Village. (DS2: #19) A third-year student said that in English Village he can discuss topics he wants to talk about with a native speaker, whereas in English class he is never able to speak about his own interests. He said that in class "we don't speak at all, the teacher speaks". (DS2: #33)	A student said that English Village is more "useful" than English class, because he can talk about anything, whereas in class he can't talk so much. He noted that in English class he usually ends up with a speaking partner who dislikes English. Another student agreed and added that if his partner does not want to use English it is very frustrating for him, because it deprives him of a learning opportunity. (DS2: #37)	A student told me that he needs both English class and English Village. He said that in classes he got "information" about English, while in English Village he had a chance to use or practice that information. (DS2: #16) A first-year student said that English Village and "Oral English" class were useful in different ways. In the former he can speak to a native-speaker for a long period of time, while in class he can speak to people who have the same ability level as him and who are otherwise similar, which is more comfortable. (DS2: #26) A Japanese teacher of English physically brought her entire class to English Village to introduce them to the facility, something which happens a lot at the beginning of the academic year. I felt that this type of physical introduction was a smart choice. (DS2: #43) **Two male students asked to speak with a staff (myself) in order to get a passport stamp. They chose to play cards, and didn't seem very anxious to use English, and used Japanese with each other. (DS2: #23)**
Documents (DS3)	"You can come and go anytime." (DS3: 2013 undergraduate prospectus [p. 26]) There seem to be activities for many different interests: sports, crafts, food, gardening, travelling, art, news discussion, animals, etcetera. (DS3: April and May, 2013 Activity Schedules)	Student: [The Christmas Charity Dinner Party] "seems like really being in a foreign country." (DS3: -- University English Village: A Mayor's Tale [p.31]) Document used to record English Village visits is mock-up of actual passport, with space for "visa stamps" (DS3: English Village "passport")	Classroom English Teacher: "I decided to assign students to attend [English Village] as an extra-curricular activity that was to be reported on in class. [...] I believe the exercise provided students with something they could not get from just a classroom based activity. That is, out-of-class research with another native English speaker, and then experience in preparing a report about it... [...] Activities give] students a reason to take their studies of English in the classroom more seriously and to understand that they can learn grammar and vocabulary in the classroom, and then apply that knowledge of English practically at [English Village]." (DS3: -- University English Village: A Mayor's Tale [pp. 142-144])
questionnaire (DS4)	not asked	not asked	88% of students surveyed felt that there were greater opportunities for them to improve their English because of English Village. (DS4) Only 19% agreed that they used the language learned in formal English class while at English Village. 40% partially agreed, and 41% didn't agree much or disagreed entirely. (DS4)

Table 6: Educational affordances. (Black indicates negative evidence, grey equivocal evidence)

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Another, related factor is that *English Village* appears to connect with students whose learning style is not suited to the classroom environment. Associate Professor Rod supported this view:

> *"You know, those students who aren't very good learners or book learners they have a-another outlet, another place for them to go to study. [...] I thought just, these are the kind of, you know, wild kids. They're not ever gonna be good students of English, but [...] there are some like that who go [to English Village] regularly and kind of enjoy the atmosphere and they learn in that way."* (DS1: 104-109)

One student similarly stated that *English Village* is more "useful" than English class, because he can talk about anything, whereas in class he can't talk so much (DS2: #37). This student experience can be seen through the lens of learner authenticity (van Lier, 1996). Indeed, student Makoto repeatedly used the words "real" and "authentic" to describe *English Village* (DS1: 153-158; 640-648). Moreover, while *English Village* does not go to the extremes of *British Hills* to create an ersatz sense of authenticity, it does serve Western food and contain a library of English language books and magazines. However, there are limits to how authentically foreign a building situated on the edge of a Japanese university campus can be. Manager Rika asserted that *English Village* is essentially a "gimmick of overseas" and that, because the staff are accustomed to being among Japanese people, authenticity may "collapse culturally" (DS1: 194-201).

5.3.2 Synergy with classroom learning

As figure 1 makes clear (p. 12), the foundation for English education at the university in question is the formal curriculum. However, the data detail many allusions to a synergistic relationship between classroom and *English Village*. The most explicit were suggestions by both manager Rika (DS1: 918-921) and student Makoto (DS1: 320-329) that formal classes provide "input", whereas *English Village* is a place for "output". Another student said he needed both; in classes he gets "information" about English which he can use or practise at *English Village* (DS2: #16). The student questionnaire showed that 88% of students surveyed felt there were greater opportunities for them to improve their English because of *English Village* (DS4).

The most salient drawback to this arrangement is that most students apparently do not attend *English Village* unless required to do so. When this happens, the results appear fairly productive. The teacher mentioned in section 2.2.3 described her approach:

"I decided to assign students to attend [English Village] as an extra-curricular activity that was to be reported on in class. […] I believe the exercise provided students with something they could not get from just a classroom based activity. That is, out-of-class research with another native English speaker, and then experience in preparing a report about it..." (DS3)

Despite her successes, whether or not to utilise *English Village* in such a manner is at the discretion of the instructor. Manager Rika pointedly stated "[s]ome teachers don't care, so it doesn't correlate at all" (DS1: 917-918). Associate Professor Rod agreed:

"I don't think [certain teachers] understand the value of it. I think they think that... just like the students, it's a place for them to hang out and play." (DS1: 367-372)

Some students also don't perceive any connection between formal study and *English Village*. Makoto said "English class is just a... I don't even think this is a part of English" (DS1: 70-71). Language Facilitator Mick agreed, stating that for many Japanese people English is "a collection of rules and grammatical points that don't have necessarily any particular point to them" (DS1: 7-12). It seems that in order for *English Village* to fulfil its synergistic potential, instructors and learners alike will have to reevaluate their preconceptions.

5.3.3 Educational affordances: Discussion

English Village seems to fill a void which English classes can or do not. For many students, this is simply the opportunity for their voices to be heard (DS2: #19). For others, it is the chance to speak their target language in the first place (DS2: #33). The 'input-output' analogy, wherein classrooms provide the input and *English Village* output, was unexpectedly prominent. This indicates that the grammar-translation approach of facilitating input and output within a single classroom (Richards & Schmidt, 2010) is not functioning as intended, at least at the university which operates *English Village*. Rather, students who only attend English classes seem at best to be gaining linguistic knowledge without any attendant communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980).

By contrast, *English Village* appears to be at least somewhat successful in creating a learning ecology unlike that currently found in university classrooms (van Lier, 2000). Thus, the facility may provide affordances and learning opportunities suited to extending linguistic knowledge into other areas, namely communicative and intercultural competence, and the confidence to interact on an equal basis with non-Japanese. While this does not disprove Gass' (1998) division of second language acquisition from use, it does indicate that the two potentially overlap. Furthermore, while

English Village is not entirely authentic, this does not seem to be much of a barrier to the facility providing unique educational affordances. Authentication by the learner is perhaps sufficient (van Lier, 1996).

In addition, the data provide ample evidence that many students prefer to learn in a naturalistic, non-formal environment (DS2: #12; #37). It may well be that in moving beyond a "rigid adherence to taught rules or plans" learners are able to develop their skills at their own pace and within their own 'comfort zone' (Eraut, in Eraut, 2000:23). While Dewey (1938) strongly criticised decontextualised classroom approaches such as *yakudoku*, as Eaton (2011) pointed out the necessity of assessment make them difficult to avoid. For instance, one *Oral English* instructor I spoke to maintained that, in his classroom at least, every activity revolved around speaking (DS2: #41). However, he admitted that his students' final exams assess grammar, meaning that despite his good intentions students may not be receiving the linguistic knowledge they need to achieve high marks.

While van Lier (2000) suggested that formal learning environments can be aligned with a productive learning ecology, doing so seems to remain a challenging obstacle in the Japanese educational and social system (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008). By taking advantage of *English Village*, some classroom teachers have taken the best from both worlds (section 2.2.3), but many others seem to be content to leave things as they are (DS1: Rika, 917-918; Rod, 367-372). Students as well must perceive the potential if they are to benefit from *English Village*. I do not believe that either of these issues can be forced. For teachers, forced integration might lead to superficial attendance to form, which would presumably degrade the effectiveness of such intervention. As for students, we have seen that learners who are not invested in learning a language are not likely to succeed at doing so (Baynham, *et al*., 2007; Norton, 2000). In the end, there does not seem to be a solution to the conundrum that frequent attendance at *English Village* should not be required or assessed if it is to be optimally effective.

5.4   Summary discussion

These findings as a whole indicate there are several root causes of poor oral communication ability in English among Japanese university students. It appears that many learners fail to progress due to institutional barriers such as ineffective pedagogical techniques, authoritarian teaching styles, washback from exams, and lack of opportunity to acquire English in a naturalistic, meaning-oriented environment. Individual factors also seem to play a role, particularly lack of interest or

perceived need and, for those who do wish to become more fluent, high-levels of anxiety. As an alternative educational resource, *English Village* seems to successfully address many of these obstacles, but is clearly no panacea. Most obviously, disinterested students are not being motivated to learn English in large numbers. However this does not seem abnormal to me. As the facility manager stated so clearly, students will not learn unless they either have to or wish to do so.

If learners are indeed more likely to attain fluency by supplementing formal classes with non-formal, experiential learning, then the *English Village* / English class dyad seems to be an ideal arrangement for learners who wish to make the extra effort. As has been seen, however, fluency is not a goal for most students, even those who aspire to high marks in English class and on the TOEIC exam. For this reason, the current arrangement whereby only a few introductory visits to *English Village* are required so as to provided motivated learners the catalyst to overcome their initial fears seems to be well-grounded. It may be that students who would otherwise never have engaged in learning English through social means are able to do so thanks to the existence of *English Village* and this requirement. On the other hand, it appears that many classroom teachers could be doing a better job of introducing their students to the facility and its singular affordances. Simply requiring students to attend a few activities may not be sufficient to make them see English as a communication tool, rather than a subject to be mastered.

6   Conclusion

In this final chapter, I discuss the extent to which this research has achieved its aims, the implications of its findings, and consequent recommendations for educators, researchers and policy makers. Finally, I provide some suggestions for future research, both within and beyond *English Village*.

6.1   Achievement of aims

The primary aim of this dissertation has been to identify through triangulated, qualitative research the extent to which *English Village* as an adjunct to formal classroom instruction is judged successful by key stakeholders, how this is seen to be occurring, and whether there remains room for improvement. By and large I feel that this has been achieved. Through engagement with learners, administrators, and documentary evidence a diversity of views have emerged, oftentimes convergent, but occasionally quite divergent. Where the data have been contradictory, I have been able to analyse them and come to conclusions as seen through the lens of personal experience and grounded in appropriate theoretical perspectives. My only regret is that I was not able to speak directly with non-participating students, including those who spend their time at *English Village* on the basketball court. If I had been able to do so, I feel that an even clearer picture might have emerged.

6.2   Implications

A central question of this research revolves around the reasons why constructing *English Village* was considered necessary in the first place, and whether it is achieving its potential. Given its goal of addressing the needs of learners who have not been successful in learning English for communicative purposes, it appears that the facility is only partially successful. While it seems that motivation to learn English may not come about simply by seeing and interacting with native speakers, for many students *English Village* may play a crucial role in alleviating affective barriers to social language learning. It therefore seems to have been a worthwhile undertaking. As time goes by the facility has become an accepted presence on campus, and so it can only be hoped that more learners and instructors will make productive use of its unique affordances.

6.3   Recommendations

The university which owns and operates *English Village* has invested and continues to spend large sums in hopes of helping "low-level" students of English become more invested in learning, and more able to do so. Many educational institutions have apparently copied *English Village* since its establishment. It is my hope that those who do follow suit invest sufficient funds and effort, so that an even more finely-tuned *English Village* concept can contribute to foreign language learning throughout Japan into the future. I also recommend that educators start seeing foreign language learning as much more than a standardised set of words and rules. Without some opportunity to use a language in a meaningful way, it is unlikely to be learned. For those institutions that are not willing or able to allocate funds to a similar facility, I would strongly suggest that its methods be incorporated into classroom pedagogy as much as is practicable. For Japanese policymakers, I would suggest that universities change their entrance exam system, such that any English language element include a realistic measure of communicative competence.

6.4   Suggestions for further research

Naturally, the completion of this study leaves some questions unanswered and has created new potential lines of inquiry. As implied above (6.3), it may be useful to research methods of embodying the principles behind *English Village* in classroom learning, particularly its lack of assessment and learner-centred approach to conversational practice. Regarding the institution at the heart of this research, future investigations could fruitfully follow a diverse set of students through their four-year academic career, in order to map gains in various competencies and to determine the extent to which they can be attributed to participation or non-participation at *English Village*. Due to its time-limited nature, this study was not able to take such a systematic longitudinal approach.

6.5   Reflections

Through doing this research, I have discovered that interview and participant observation produce very different, yet complementary data. The former seemed more productive with peers, whereas with younger or novice informants the latter provided more useful data. In terms of second language education, I've come to understand the great importance of student investment in their own learning. This is something I will surely attempt to integrate in my continuing career as an educator.

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