Understanding Study Abroad Programs from the Viewpoint of Apprenticeship Learning

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徒弟教育論から海外研修プログラムを理解する

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Abstract

This article aims to illuminate basic characteristics of study abroad programs in a Japanese college from the viewpoint of apprenticeship learning to identify what problems exist and suggest what educational arrangements and practices are necessary for an effective program. This is an anthropological study focusing on students' learning and based on ethnographic data from two case studies. As I will show later, learning in study abroad programs has many interesting parallels with apprenticeship learning that will help us gain better understanding of it.

More importantly, such a comparative approach is deeply rooted in academic traditions of educational studies as well. Comparing school education with informal learning or situated learning (which includes apprenticeship learning) has always been one of the most effective approaches, especially in educational anthropology and sociology, to yield persuasive accounts of how complicated school mechanism works and to illuminate basic characteristics of its taken for granted aspects which may have gone unnoticed. Thus, the analytical approach taken in this article will likewise be useful in highlighting certain characteristics of study abroad programs that are otherwise hard to recognize.

As case studies, I chose two programs of University A. The school has been known in Kansai region for its carefully designed and well-organized study abroad programs making full use of active learning. Therefore, analyzing its programs provides useful tips about how to create an effective program. It is also a central purpose of this article to attempt a theorization of what constitutes a good program that can trigger deep learning among students.

Keywords: apprenticeship learning, study abroad program, educational studies, fieldwork, anthropology

要旨

本稿の目的は、徒弟教育論の視点から、大学によって組織される1~3週間程度の海外スタディ・ツアーである海外研修(study abroad)プログラムの特徴を明らかにすることにある。徒弟教育と海外研修プログラムには、興味深い共通点が多々あるので、こうした比較分析は示唆に富んだ結果をもたらすものと思われる。本稿は、文化人類学・認知科学におけるインフォーマル教育や状況的学習(徒弟教育も含む)から学校教育を相対化するという教育研究の理論的流れを汲むものであり、大学Aの2つの海外研修プログラムの質的データを踏まえた事例研究である。事例校では、海外研修プログラムを必修化し、アクティブラーニングを導入するなど、全国的に見てもその質の向上にかなり意欲的に取り組んできたので、そのあり方について考える上で格好の資料を提供する。本稿では、徒弟教育論の視点から、事例校のプログラムを分析し、その特徴を明らかにするとともに、改善点も提案して、効果的な海外研修プログラムの理論的モデル構築への貢献を目指したい。

キーワード:徒弟教育、海外研修プログラム、教育研究、フィールドワーク、人類学

1. Introduction

This article aims to illuminate basic characteristics of study abroad programs ¹⁾ in a Japanese college from the viewpoint of apprenticeship learning to identify what problems exist and suggest what educational arrangements and practices are necessary for an effective program. This is an anthropological study focusing on students' learning and based on ethnographic data from two case studies. As I will show later, learning in study abroad programs has many interesting parallels with apprenticeship learning that will help us gain better understanding of it (cf. Lave 2011; Nomura 2003).

More importantly, such a comparative approach is deeply rooted in academic traditions of educational studies as well. Comparing school education with informal learning or situated learning (which includes apprenticeship learning) has always been one of the most effective approaches, especially in educational anthropology and sociology, to yield persuasive accounts of how complicated school mechanism works²⁾ (Minoura 2003: 258-259; Pelissier 1991: 75-95; Sakamoto 2006: 31-33; Stafford 2010: 217-220). For example, whether evaluating school education positively or not, such authors as Becker (1972) and Erickson (1984) have compared it with workplace learning (including apprenticeship learning) or a village in Trobriand Islands to illuminate basic characteristics of its taken for granted aspects which may have gone unnoticed (cf. Lave 1982; Nojima 2006; Resnick 1987; Strauss 1984). Thus, the analytical approach taken in this article will likewise be useful in highlighting certain characteristics of study abroad programs that are otherwise hard to recognize.

As case studies, I chose two programs of University A. The school has been known in Kansai region for its carefully designed and well-organized study abroad programs making full use of active learning. Therefore, analyzing its programs provides useful tips about how to create an effective program. It is also a central purpose of this article to attempt a theorization of what constitutes a good program that can trigger deep learning among students.

2. What is apprenticeship learning?

Let's first clarify the basic characteristics of apprenticeship learning then. Although there are many different kind of apprenticeships, all of them basically include human relations based on different level of mastery such as those between masters/teachers and apprentices/students (Rikowski 1999). Moreover, often being differentiated from school learning where didactic teaching, systematic curriculum, and decontextualized learning are predominant, most apprenticeships are for acquiring artisan skills or learning performing arts through actual work experience in workplace settings (Coy ed. 1989: 1-2; cf. Sigaut 1993).

Meanwhile, apprenticeship is related to a certain historical stage. For example, Goody has pointed out that it replaced premodern domestic production run by family members by incorporating outsiders without blood relationship into workforce to rationalize labor and employment process. Thus, for him, it is something closely related to those period of industrialization (Goody 1989: 236-246). His viewpoint may not be agreeable to all, but it is true that it is a product of preindustrial society with feudalistic elements. So, many scholars view it as quite outdated in today's context (e.g. Fukushima 2002).

In educational studies, however, apprenticeship learning got positively reevaluated in recent years. Anthropologist Jean Lave was especially responsible for it. She constructed the famous theory of LPP (Legitimate Peripheral Participation) in early 90's based on her ethnographic studies of apprenticeship cases to decenter basic characteristics of school learning (Lave and Wenger 1991). At that time, she found that apprenticeship learning of African tailors was quite effective regardless of no curriculum and no didactic teaching by masters. She then saw in it some cues to revitalize problematic school learning which eventually led her to develop the theory (Lave 2011).

Since then, many researchers have critically applied her theory to analysis of their case studies in various settings of non-school learning (e.g. Ainley and Rainbird ed. 1999; Singleton ed. 1998). Some have expanded on it to analyze modern school education exclusively (e.g. Eckert 1989; Shimizu 2012, 2015). The main reason for its broad applicability is that it has generalized apprenticeship learning to include human relations based on different level of mastery in which a novice learner gradually changes his/her degree of involvement from peripheral to full participation in an apprenticeship organization as he/she acquires occupational skills and identities required at respective levels. Furthermore, it asserted that the above feature of apprenticeship learning can be found in any settings of situated learning (not strictly confined to apprenticeship).

Recently, Lave has claimed that ethnographic practice by anthropologists also contains this feature of apprenticeship learning (Lave 2011). I found that my own anthropological fieldwork process conducted in China has a strong resemblance to it as well (Shimizu 2005). For example, there were also human relations based on different level of mastery in my fieldwork among actors and actresses of traditional theater. Namely, I was a novice learner of Chinese theatrical culture and my key informants were like my masters who had much deeper understanding of the theatrical trade and had mastered occupational skills. With their help, I then gradually learned to speak like them and shared their worldview. I am sure it is necessary to be so if any anthropological fieldworks are to be successful.

So, the above feature of apprenticeship learning is the one that I will mainly focus on in this article as a tool of analysis. And it is the main assumption of this article that study abroad programs also have a certain resemblance to it especially because even structurally similar anthropological fieldwork process contains such a feature. Let's then turn to study abroad programs now.

3. Introduction of case studies

I will take up two case studies in this article both of which are the short-term study abroad programs that I organized with a colleague at University A.

First one is the Philippine program conducted in Cebu in March 2016. Its main purpose was to let students learn about poverty by engaging them in volunteer activities like serving lunch to poor children in some remote villages. Students also taught Japanese culture and the importance of sanitation to them. Duration of the program was 12 days and 19 students participated in it. It was the program especially designed for students who want to become teachers in the future. Therefore, it involved a lot of teaching activities as well as interaction with local children. It is by far one of the most popular programs of the school due to precious experiences it provides to students. Thus, the program has been in existence for at least four or five years. Table 1 shows contents of this program.

Second example is the Taiwan program conducted in Taizhong in September 2016. Its main goal was to help students gain better understanding of Taiwanese who are said to be mostly friendly toward Japanese regardless of the colonial past. To achieve this goal, students visited two

Time	Main Activities					
Day 1	*Leave Japan for the Philippines and arrive in Cebu at night					
Day 2	*Visit a local college and attend a lecture on poverty and sanitary condition of the Philippines *Visit a garbage disposal plant and slum areas in Cebu to learn about poverty					
Day 3	*Visit a village to have orientation *Give a class on Japanese culture and sanitary condition in a high school and an elementary school					
Day 4	*Cook lunch and visit remote villages to feed local children					
Day 5	*Free day (visit a remote island in Cebu to do scuba diving)					
Day 6	*Cook lunch and visit remote villages to feed local children *Buddy activity					
Day 7	*Cook lunch and visit remote villages to feed local children *Buddy activity					
Day 8	*Cook lunch and visit remote villages to feed local children *Give a class on Japanese culture and sanitary condition in a high school and an elementary school					
Day 9	*Cook lunch and visit remote villages to feed local children *Buddy activity					
Day 10	*Cook lunch and visit remote villages to feed local children *Farewell parties in a high school and an elementary school					
Day 11	*Free day (visit some tourist sites in Cebu city)					
Day 12	*Leave the Philippines for Japan					

Table 1: main contents of Philippine program

Time	Main Activities				
Day 1	*Leave Japan for Taiwan and arrive in Taizhong at night				
Day 2	*Visit an elementary school to learn about contemporary Taiwanese view of Japan and give a class on Japanese culture				
Day 3	*Visit places in Taizhong related to colonial past to learn about how history is treated				
Day 4	*Visit an elementary school to learn about contemporary Taiwanese view of Japan and give a class on Japanese culture				
Day 5	*Cultural exchange with Taiwanese students of a partner school				
Day 6	*Cultural exchange with Taiwanese students of a partner school				
Day 7	*Visit places in Taizhong related to colonial past to learn about how history is treated				
Day 8	*Leave Taiwan for Japan				

Table 2: main contents of Taiwan program

different type of places: two elementary schools and places where Japanese colonial influence can be seen. Visiting the former was to understand contemporary Taiwanese view of Japan by observing how and what they teach about the colonial period and modern Japan-Taiwan relations. As for the latter places, they were to give students general ideas about what Japan has done in the past as well as how the colonial past is treated in Taiwan now. The program continued for 8 days and 19 students participated in it. Unlike the Philippine program, it was a new one just created from scratch that year. It did not target anybody special, so students from different departments got together to form a diverse crowd. Table 2 shows contents of this program.

Although these two programs were different in contents and goals, they shared following structural similarities. First off, they both had a few days of classes before departure to let students prepare. More specifically, students gathered basic information about the country they were going and familiarized themselves with schedule of the program. Secondly, they both had several days of classes after students came back to let them reflect upon the activities they conducted. Finally, they required students to write a diary every single day during their stay in respective countries and submit a final report upon their return. One of the chosen students also participated in a schoolwide briefing session to share experiences with participants of other programs. So, as we can see from this description, these programs are well-structured with multiple means to enhance students' learning. By the way, all the study abroad programs of this school have the structure like this which aim to trigger deep active learning among students.

I have organized the above characteristics of the two programs in table 3.

Program Name	Objective	Duration	Number of Participants	Target Students	Structural Similarities
Philippine Cebu program	learn about poverty	12 days	19 students	students from department of education	have classes before and after the program, writing a diary and final report are required
Taiwan Taizhong program	gain better understanding of Taiwanese view of Japan	8 days	19 students	any students	have classes before and after the program, writing a diary and final report are required

Table 3: basic characteristics of the two programs

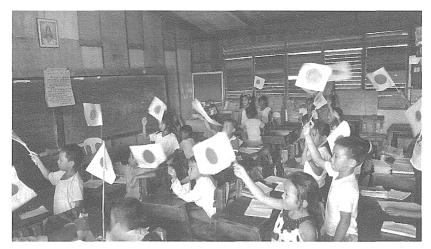
4. Analysis

Despite the school's effort in carefully organizing the programs, they were not without problems. In fact, following three problems were relatively conspicuous.

1 Problem of students' forgetfulness

Firstly, students often forgot what they had learned in classes before departure. For example, in the Philippine program, I mentioned about the importance of learning Cebuano language, a Pilipino dialect used in Cebu, in classes before we took off because many local children we interacted with didn't speak English. However, they totally forgot about this crucial point until they got to the villages where they practiced Cebuano in haste. This problem was also manifested in comments written by some students in their diaries. They wrote that they wished they had learned Cebuano sooner so that they could have communicated more with small children who could barely speak in English.

Meanwhile, in the Taiwan program, being afraid that same problem might occur, I took precautions and gave a copy of Chinese language textbook to every student before leaving Japan so that they can use it in Taiwan. It proved to be a very effective tool for them to communicate with local people, but some students forgot or underestimated the importance of learning the local language even then. Unfortunately, some students also forgot about details of places that we have visited in Taiwan by the time they participated in a schoolwide briefing session a few weeks after their return.



Picture 1: Pilipino elementary school students waving Japanese national flags to express gratitude to our students, Cebu, March 2016. (Photo by the author)

2 Problem of students' insufficient understanding of foreign cultures

Secondly, many students wrote in their diaries or final reports that they were most impressed by how poor local people were or how disorganized local situations were in both programs without seeing a broader picture. Let's now turn to diary comments below as examples. First one was written by a female student who participated in the Philippine program.

"We had much shorter time than we expected with our buddies, so we could not sufficiently complete our mission which we prepared so hard. Perhaps, the program like this should have ultimate objectives like understanding cultural differences between Japan and Philippine including the concept of time management³⁾."

As we can see from the comment, she was quite surprised and even shocked by how differently time was managed in the Philippines. In this program, we initially planned to let students spend some time with their Pilipino buddies, poor local high school students. They were supposed to provide them with some ideas to improve their living standard. However, there was a last-minute change in our program and they were obliged to shorten amount of time for the buddy activity. A sudden schedule change like this could take place in any foreign countries, but she didn't have much oversea experience and the incident somehow impressed her the most. Most importantly, she misunderstood it as a uniquely Pilipino problem without sufficient knowledge about Philippine culture. Likewise, those who were shocked by how poor local people were also blamed Philippine culture for it without considering even for a moment that poverty problem could be in any developing countries. They were supposed to deepen understanding of Philippine culture,

so they should not have confused more universal problems of time management or poverty with it.

There is another diary comment written by a male student in the same program which shows a similar problem.

"Not having exact information about how many children were coming and what time to start serving lunch was the biggest problem for us during feeding. So, I was quite frustrated by the situation⁴."

Just like the girl in the first comment, he was surprised by how sloppy things were organized in Philippine compared to Japan because they sometimes didn't have enough food to serve to children. What's more, on several occasions, they couldn't even find children because they got to their villages too early or too late. He then assumed that this is a uniquely Pilipino problem without thinking further that it could take place in any other foreign countries. Fortunately, I was close to him and was able to tell him to have wide views about the situation. So, he stopped complaining eventually and seemed to have modified his views gradually.

(3) Problem of students' culture shock

Finally, some students had a major cultural adaptation problem. It is natural to have certain degree of such a problem when they go abroad, but it was so serious for some students that they totally refused to eat any local food. In the Taiwan program, for instance, some of them went to a Seven Eleven near our hotel every day to buy Japanese food. Taiwan is culturally so similar with Japan that local food is not that exotic for Japanese, but they could not eat it even then. Surprisingly, a few of them also could not stand the smell of a local fruit and meat market.

Meanwhile, many of them could not do away with their smart phones always checking SNS or web news whenever they had time. Some even maintained Japanese life habits like playing video games or card games every night to such an extent that they ended up spending much less time on writing diary. Of course, it was not surprising that most of them complained about how dirty public toilets were both in Taiwan and the Philippines.

Certainly, the problem like this was related to the fact that most of they were abroad for the first time. More importantly, though, it also had a lot to do with their spontaneity because some of them chose this program after they got rejected by all the other programs. Some didn't even like going abroad, but reluctantly participated in the program since study abroad program is a significant requirement for graduation at University A.



Picture 2: Taiwanese elementary school students learning how to make Japanese tops with our students, Taizhong, September 2016. (Photo by the author)

5. Discussion

The three problems that I have identified above are by no means limited to these two programs. They are common problems in most programs of the school. In fact, they could also be found in programs of any other schools. It is then easy to blame students for their lack of attention span, critical thinking, or spontaneity which may cause the problems. As educators, however, we are also responsible for improving the quality of programs by refining and adjusting educational arrangements and practices. And it is the main assertion of this article that the views from apprenticeship learning provide useful tips for that.

① Suggestions for the first problem

From its viewpoint, this first problem can also be interpreted as the result of a lack of coherence in teaching contents because some teachers were not sufficiently familiar with the program's requirements or didn't have enough knowledge about the country that they visited. Apprenticeship learning suggests that an educational guidance by a knowledgeable and skillful master is quite indispensable if an apprentice's learning is to be successful (Ainley and Rainbird ed. 1999; Singleton ed. 1998). A master doesn't always need to teach didactically if he/she can be a good role model for an apprentice by making his/her works and himself/herself observable (Lave and Wenger 1991). In a school setting, however, we often don't have an educational arrangement like this. Especially, in University A, teachers in charge of study abroad programs are rather randomly selected.

Under such a circumstance, there is always a chance of teachers who don't have any oversea experiences chosen (they also may not know anything about the country that they go). So, to solve

this problem, the school needs to choose teachers in charge more carefully by considering their area of expertise. If they can't do that, they should at least give certain amount of training or lesson to those teachers who lack knowledge and experience. They should also let teachers know more about what local resources are available for their programs since international relations division of the school assumes responsibility for contacting local stakeholders and thus teachers are sometimes not well informed about local situations.

2 Suggestions for the second problem

As for the second problem, the views from apprenticeship learning suggests that it can be attributed to teachers' failure in not teaching enough about meaning of going abroad. Comparing a school teacher with a master in apprenticeship, Fukushima has pointed out that the former can only provide a general career guidance to students because he/she doesn't know enough about the jobs that they try to get (except for teaching jobs). He thus calls such a teacher "a moratorium counselor" who focuses more on helping them figure out what they want to do with their lives (Fukushima 2010: 122-124).

Likewise, if a teacher's specialty has nothing to do with intercultural communication or oversea fieldwork, he/she may become sort of a moratorium counselor providing only a general educational guidance to students in study abroad programs. However, he/she does not need to be an anthropologist to teach them about meaning of going abroad. All he/she needs is to develop a bit of global awareness that they may have culture shocks when they go abroad (especially for the first time). Of course, knowledge about the host country also helps very much, so he/she should learn about it a lot. More importantly, though, the school should give lectures on intercultural communication or cultural anthropology to teachers who lack global awareness.

3 Suggestions for the third problem

The last problem is quite similar with the second problem, so suggestions above may help a lot in minimizing the problem. The views from apprenticeship learning suggests something more, though. If the problem is related to spontaneity of students as well, we need to do something about it. Most studies on apprenticeship learning share the view that spontaneity of learners has never been a problem because they choose to be apprentices by their own will (e.g. Coy ed. 1989; Jordan 1993; Singleton ed. 1998). Unlike compulsory classes of school education, they are not forced to learn something that they are not necessarily interested in (cf. Sigaut 1993). Masters, on the other hand, have certain ways of screening out insufficiently motivated learners by making them do chores unrelated to acquisition of essential occupational skills or refusing to teach until they have shown enough endurance (Fukushima ed. 1995; Shimizu 2010).

Meanwhile, in a school setting, it is certainly difficult to create an educational environment like this. Especially, in the case of University A, taking one study abroad program is required for

graduation, so it is unavoidable to have certain number of unmotivated students. Under the circumstance, the school should then make participation to study abroad programs optional or provide more programs with different contents in different countries to meet the diverse needs of students. It may also help a lot if teachers in charge become more charismatic "cultural mediators" (cf. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002) by acquiring certain level of global awareness and minimizing the above first and second problems.

6. Conclusion

In this article, I have analyzed two study abroad programs of University A from the viewpoint of apprenticeship learning and identified three conspicuous problems as well as some suggested solutions. To sum up, students can't be held solely responsible for the problems. Educational arrangements and practices need to be refined and adjusted as well in terms of improving teachers' global awareness and coordination with international relations division of the school. Meanwhile, it is quite important to note that findings in this article are by no means unique to the school and can be broadly observable in other schools. I am sure that students there also forget to a certain extent what they have been taught in classes, have problems of understanding the meaning of going abroad, and manifest certain degree of cultural adaptation problems. Therefore, the suggested solutions here can be applicable to other schools.

What I have attempted in this article is just a first step in theorizing about what constitutes a good program. To develop better one with more fruitful results, I know that more thorough comparison with study abroad programs of other schools is necessary in the future. I also see the need to keep strongly in mind the importance of risk management for every program. However, I believe that scrutinizing the programs of University A, as the school which has given them a top priority, is a good start because it has structured them so well regardless of the existing problems that it offers a kind of vantage point to think about the issue. I hope that more and more researchers in educational studies take active interest in this topic from the viewpoint suggested here to create an effective program.

Notes

- I use this word to mean short-term study tour programs of about one to three weeks organized by colleges
 to learn about certain themes such as poverty or world peace. I don't mean a long-term studying abroad in
 a foreign college by an individual student.
- 2) Fukushima (1996: 141-142) has even gone so far as to assert that the approach is one of the two ways to analyze school anthropologically. For him, the approach is as effective as the other Bourdieusian approach based on the reproduction theory.
- 3) A diary comment written by the student in March 13th, 2016.
- 4) A diary comment written by the student in March 11th, 2016.

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