

# Cambodia Study Tour Revisited : Refining the Experience and Finding a Research Focus

George SCHAAFF\*

カンボジスタディーツアー再考：経験の洗練と研究の確立

ジョージ シャーフ

## Abstract :

Ballou and Schaaff (2013) reported on an International Studies-themed study tour that included real-world content via experiences beyond the classroom for the primary purpose of building global citizenship. A global citizen may be defined as one who embraces a new culture as a learning context. This culture-as-context is experienced as a set of similar, differing, or unique beliefs, communicative challenges, and seeming contradictions. A global citizen actively participates in discovering this culture as well as oneself within it. The global citizen embarks upon this learning with the purpose of serving communities and societies across borders. Within the second chapter of this continuing project, a second group of students studied firsthand Cambodia's challenges in development, the meaning of responsible tourism, and the influence of history and culture on a national identity. This paper will serve as a brief interim report of the study tour, summarizing the events of its second chapter and providing a specific new focus for further research for the third chapter of the project.

要旨：Ballou and Schaaff (2013) は、カンボジスタディーツアーに関する報告を行った。このスタディーツアーの中心的な目的は、学生達が教室内に留まらず、実生活の経験を通じてグローバル市民になるための手助けをすることであった。ここでグローバル人材とは、新しい文化の背景を学ぶことができる人材であると定義することができるだろう。この新しい文化背景は、様々な信念や、コミュニケーション上の困難や、矛盾を通じて経験されるものである。グローバル人材は、積極的に新しい文化を学習すると共に、自己啓発ができる人材である。ツアーの参加者は、新しい文化を学び、将来グローバル人材として、国際社会に貢献することが期待される。今回、スタディーツアーの第二弾として、別の学生グループが、カンボジア経済と社会の発展、地域に密着した観光事業や歴史、文化を学んだ。本論文では、第二弾のスタディーツアーの内容を要約し、さらに、第三弾のスタディーツアーの研究方針を明らかにしている。

**Key words** : content-based language learning, global citizenship, conversation analysis, lingua franca

---

\*Instructor of English as a Foreign Language, School of International Studies, Kwansei Gakuin University

## **The 2013 Study Tour : A Reinforcement of Principles**

The guiding principles of the second chapter of the study tour remain the same as when they were first conceived : learning is regarded as not only an effort to produce certain outcomes but also as a valuable unfolding of a process in which the real world is the very content of learning, as opposed to the study of a supposed concept of ‘the real world’ within the classroom. In terms of language use, the study tour is ‘the ultimate contextualization’ in which experience and communication do not simply occur simultaneously so much as students communicate within the experience (Ballou & Schaaff, 2013). Procedures were similar to those of the first chapter of the tour. Once again, several pre-departure lessons were held ; these were condensed into one intensive day of lessons covering several areas : what to expect when travelling abroad, possible intercultural and communicative challenges in interacting with relevant parties (non-governmental organization representatives, volunteers, and hotel and restaurant staff), and most importantly deciding upon specific study-related questions that might be asked during on-site visits. The process of learning, then, essentially began within the preparation stage of the study tour.

### **Procedures**

Site visits and interaction with local organizations in the Siem Reap area supplied the main content for study and experience as well as the opportunity for language use. Students visited NGOs that focus specifically upon basic needs of the people of Siem Reap. Students participated in a visit to ConCert, an organization that provides oversight to non-governmental organizations so that they may perform efficiently and ethically (ConCert, 2013). Students received a talk from the head of the organization that detailed the needs of those whom poverty most affects, as well as a philosophy and approach of how to best handle these challenges. Students also visited and made a donation to The Trailblazer Foundation, an NGO that addresses basic needs of the local community, particularly the building, delivering, and installing of bio-sand water filters. Students received an extended discussion with the head of this organization. In addition, students were welcomed to the newly expanded Paul Dubrule School of Hotel and Tourism, where they enjoyed a sample of their chefs’ creations and received a tour of the facilities. Students lent their efforts as guest teachers and learned about education’s role in development at the Savong School, a supplemental education facility that provides language and computer skills classes to approximately 1000 students, many of who are children and some of whom are orphaned.

Angkor Wat and countless other ruins comprise Angkor Archaeological Park, where students explored the largest religious structure in the world while receiving a guided tour that explained the site’s role in Cambodia’s history as well as how it influences the identity of the country and its people. A visit to the Landmine Museum once again provided students with opportunity to understand the effects of the violence of war on a society, as Cambodia’s many unexploded landmines are still embedded in areas throughout Siem Reap ; efforts to safely remove them continue. At all of these sites, students received ample opportunity to interact with representatives and professionals in the field of development and ask detailed questions that they had first conceived in their pre-departure lessons. Some of the study tour funds were given to each of these organizations as donations so that students would be able contribute to development as they took rich content from their experiences.

The trip to Siem Reap as a whole would itself contribute to the local economy by having the group stay in Cambodian-owned hotels and dine in NGO-affiliated restaurants, as responsible tourism is one of the guiding principles of the project.

## Outcomes

Not surprisingly, students' journal responses once again revealed a variety of new discoveries on a few different levels. Some discoveries were regarding the very content of the tour, specifically reflecting upon new bits of learned information integrated with previous notions or expectations that may have first been aroused during the pre-departure lessons and preparation :

- “At first, the staff in Trailblazer Foundation showed us the facility. Actually, I’ve thought that water filters connected to water pipe of water well. But it did not . . . Just pouring water and maintaining is fine . . . It’s very good thing to use it easily.”

There was also some evidence of students' transformation on a human level, acknowledging one's own experience within the new context :

- “Aki Ra (*founder of the Landmine Museum and activist who has independently removed thousands of landmines*) is brave . . . but I couldn't do same action. I'm afraid of death and injury, so I sometimes hate myself for being timid.”

On a still deeper level, there were journal entries that denoted students' awareness of their own growth into global citizens :

- “The image that women should be inside the house and that men should be outside the house is clearly seen in Cambodia. However this was same in Japan. I think we had a same step to develop. From this I think we can share our experience or our fault.”

Journal data collection is valuable for two reasons. In a practical way, it may provide researchers with student perspectives on aspects of the tour : which may be exploited for a deeper learning experience, which improved for logistical purposes, which expanded to include additional relevant content, or which should be clarified when difficult to grasp. In terms of research, it may reveal attitudes on study themes and content, communication with Khmer (Cambodian) locals, and growth of a personal worldview. Development of this worldview is essential in establishing one's status as a global citizen : embracing a new culture as a context for learning, complete with all of its challenges, differences, beliefs and seeming contradictions.

Two areas possible areas of improvement previously mentioned in Ballou and Schaaff (2013) were that of pre-departure preparation and the students' writing tasks. The two are closely related ; the preparation stage of the study tour was refined to yield positive effects upon the effectiveness of the writing tasks. Instead of expanding the amount of preparation time, as was first considered as a way to improve the preparation stage, a more intensive approach was taken in which students were encouraged to create specific questions that they would ask NGO representatives and guides upon

arrival. While in Cambodia, they sought and recorded answers to these questions. Students then reflected upon these specific areas in their journals, integrating their previous notions and expectations with new information and experience. By demanding somewhat more structured and focused preparation from students, it seemed that deeper reflection in journal entries emerged as a result. General impressions and reactions were somewhat less prevalent than in journal entries observed in the previous chapter of the tour.

As the project is presently approaching its third chapter, a question may be asked: How may research be focused and improved, now that the guiding principles and procedures seem to have been solidified? This paper has thus far recounted events of the project and discussed the values and principles surrounding content, experience, and global citizenship. In order to capitalize upon the successes of the study tour thus far, language and its role in becoming a global citizen may require further attention.

### **A Focus for Research : Conversation Analysis**

Since the focus of this research project regards experience as learning content and culture as learning context (as opposed to classroom language learning), the acquisition of language is not a key area of interest here. Although it is expected that some new lexical items will emerge within students' use, and perhaps even becoming evident in journal entries, students' interaction with Khmer locals (wherein English is *lingua franca*) provides rich opportunities to investigate not language use per se, but the matter of human interaction via both verbal and nonverbal communication. Conversation Analysis (CA) might then be a useful approach for the research aspect of this study tour.

Conversation Analysis is a form of qualitative research. It is the study of human interaction that focuses on the actions within conversation, which may be both verbal and nonverbal. It is concerned less with language use and more with the *organization* of conversation (Ten Have, 1999). Heritage (2010) expresses CA methods as “designed to deal with fundamental features of human action and interaction”; he offers some “basic principles” which are essential to analysis :

1. The concept of “sequence” is a “default assumption” that communicative actions are normally (though with exceptions) responsive to what has come “immediately prior”.
2. A “practice” is a feature that has a “specific location” and “is distinctive in its consequences” within the sequence.
3. “Collections” of practices may be called “conversational and social organization” (p.4–7).

CA was, in its origin, “basically a sociological, rather than a linguistic, enterprise” (Ten Have, 1999). It looks closely at the interaction between communicators via language and other actions, and therefore may have some implications for this research project. Study tour participants are English learners; they are necessarily communicating in their L2 with other non-native speakers, who themselves are non-native Japanese in neither language nor culture. English is therefore *lingua franca*, a non-native language of both L2 groups. CA may then be used to begin to approach questions regarding the inclusion of ‘third language’ within the interaction :

- How does L2 interaction differ when interlocutors are from a common L 1 culture (Japanese

students), as opposed to different L 1 cultures (Japanese students and Cambodian locals)?

- What are some practices that emerge in communication among common L 1 interlocutors? How do they differ when the native languages and cultures differ?
- How does the inclusion of a native speaker of the lingua franca (teacher) affect the interaction?

## Moving Forward

The next chapter of the study tour will be an opportunity to seek answers to the above questions. The researcher will begin by video recording students' interaction in Cambodia and then utilize CA's data collection and annotation methods. The researcher will undertake the task of identifying communicative practices and considering their significance as it applies to communication with English as a 'third language', or *lingua franca*.

## References

- Ballou, K. and Schaaff, G. (2013). *Building Global Citizenship through an International Studies-themed Study Tour*. Kwansei Gakuin University School of International Studies, Vol.2 No.1. March 2013.
- ConCrt (2012). Retrieved January 4, 2013, from <http://concertcambodia.org>.
- Heritage, J. (2010). *Conversation Analysis: Practices and Methods*. In David Silverman (ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* 3rd Edition. Sage: London.
- Ten Have, Paul (1999): *Doing Conversation Analysis. A Practical Guide*, Sage: London.