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As the volume of research on study abroad (SA) expands, the task of evaluating the growing number of studies becomes ever more arduous. A wide variety of methods are employed to see how SA might impact foreign language learning motivation. This paper highlights some recent SA research in English on EFL motivation. Three studies that I consider exemplary are contrasted with three that are problematic in some respects. The rationale for this is twofold. One goal is to critically assess some of the methodologies employed in SA research; another is to examine some divergent claims made about SA on language learning motivation.

According to Richards (2009, p. 148) the bulk of current social science research is informed by several competing philosophical frameworks. One framework is positivistic and purports that objective reality can be quantified and measured. Strong claims are often made about precision, universality, and objectivity. More recently, post-positivists have hedged some of the claims made by this camp while endorsing the same methodological procedures. Most quantitative research is informed either by a positivist or post-positivist framework.

Another competing research paradigm comes from constructivism. Constructivists contend that knowledge is locally situated and socially co-constructed. This paradigm is suited to a wide range of qualitative research procedures and proponents of this paradigm tend to renounce assertions of “universal knowledge”. Piaget (1964), von Glasersfeld (1987), and Papert (1994) are but a few of the leading constructivists.

Still another framework informing some research is critical theory. Broadly speaking, this attempts to examine the social and historical forces thought to shape the accounts of many phenomena. Critical theorists point out that researchers influence observed outcomes and that subjectivity is inherent in all inquiry. Quantitative research is, in the view of most critical
theorists, but one of many possible ways of obtaining information and there are severe limits to how widely the findings from such research can generalize to other contexts. Leading critical researchers include such scholars as Schroyer (1973), Chomsky (2000), and Kincheloe (2002, 2005). Critical text analysis and narratology are two procedures widely used by many researchers within this tradition.

In light of these research frameworks, let us now examine some SA papers published over the last decade to see each how the theoretical framework behind these papers is (or possibly is not) congruent with their research methodology.

**Three Exemplary SA Motivational Research Studies**

1. **Chirkov, Vansteeniste, Tao, and Lynch (2007)**

   The most sophisticated quantitative SA research in recent years on motivation is probably Chirkov, Vansteeniste, Tao, and Lynch's comparison of two groups of Chinese students in Belgium (n=122) and Canada (n=98). They used a 21-item questionnaire that highlighted different types of motivation thought postulated by Deci and Ryan (2002) along with four other scales reputedly measuring academic motivation, subjective well being, vitality, and depression. Detailed analyses revealed that intrinsic motivation and autonomy correlated highly with self-reported “success” in study abroad. Underscoring the role of autonomy in determining motivation, the authors state, “it is not the content of peoples' motivation (intrinsic vs. extrinsic goals) but their level of autonomy that actually predict people's [well being]” (p. 199).

   To their merit, Chirkov, Vansteeniste, Tao, and Lynch used a variety of well-known scales that have been applied in previous motivational research. They offer a considerable body of evidence suggesting that the extent that respondents felt in control of their own SA decisions correlates strongly with their "academic motivation" and subjective well being. The least motivated informants were generally studying abroad to satisfy academic requirements or parental pressures. Conversely, the most motivated were studying abroad due to a keen personal interest or belief that SA was “fun”.

   Also to their credit, Chirkov, Vansteeniste, Tao, and Lynch openly acknowledge their ideological biases at the onset of their study. They adhere to Deci and Ryan’s views on motivation, not attempting to address factors mentioned in competing theories.

   Another good feature of this study is the researchers beta-tested their survey, then revised it slightly based on the feedback prior to doing any large-scale sampling. Too many SA surveys are not adequately beta-tested. The fact that the researchers also dropped one of the
measurement scales that was found to be statistically unreliable is laudable; it demonstrates an admirable willingness to reject findings that fail to meet a priori standards of reliability or validity.

Finally, the authors include detailed effect size measures (expressed in terms of Cohen’s $d$) to facilitate meta-analysis. According to Denis (2003, par. 1), too many quantitative studies neglect such measures.

One significant weakness of this study was that it was not sensitive to parameters outside the theoretical predictions. Positively speaking, this study could be described as “tightly focused”. However, a limitation of quantitative studies of this sort is that a certain amount of “methodological straight-jacketing” occurs: a combined-method design that included some more qualitative and open-ended responses that were coded a posteriori on the basis of the data assembled rather than any specific motivational theory might round out this study well. In fairness, such a procedure would involve a significant amount of extra work.

Also, studies relying entirely on self-reported data are vulnerable to some distortions and biases. To their credit, the authors used a wide range of different research instruments in their study. However, none of the instruments were based on observed behaviors, objective records, or on peer reports. Chirkov, Vansteenis, Tao, and Lynch's study has the same weakness as most single-method studies: the lens they used was sharply focused, but we are left to question whether the responses filled out on the paper-and-pencil questionnaire reflect "reality". Critical theorists in particular tend to view such data as one type of narrative discourse rather than as a measure of any "objective truth" (Bleakley, 2004).

Finally, the authors suggest that a parallel exists between migration motivation (decisions to shift long term residence to a foreign locale) and study abroad motivation (decisions to study overseas temporarily). However, there is no reason to assume that these two phenomena are based on the same motivations. What prompts students to study at a foreign university for six months may differ from what prompts others to live abroad for six years.

(2) Kim and Yang (2010)

Another excellent SA research project was about the learning beliefs and community participation patterns of two Korean university students who spent an academic year in North America. Adopting multiple qualitative research methods, Kim and Yang found that beliefs about L2 learning changed as one individual participated more actively in her L2 community. Another individual in this study remained isolated and did not manifest many positive gains as a
consequence of her SA experience. According to Kim and Yang, “the crucial factor for successful SL L2 learning may not be L2-rich contexts per se, but the learners' recognition of and appreciation for L2 participation” (p. 76). In other words, active involvement in a L2 community – rather than mere physical presence in it – is thought to impact foreign language learning motivation.

A particularly nice feature of their study was the use of triangulated data from semi-structured interviews, language learning autobiographies, and picture-cued stimulated recall tasks. Since readers may not be familiar with the latter two procedures, a brief description is in order.

The language learning autobiographies in this study consisted of a series of written answers to questions about the respondents' language learning history, academic backgrounds, and most/least pleasant experiences as L2 language learners. A sample language learner autobiography, likely similar to what Kim and Yang employed, is described by Goetz (2009).

Picture-cued stimulated recall tasks were photos from the respondents’ blogs about their SA experiences. Basically, the researchers asked the respondents to comment on various photos, transcribing comments for later coding. A more detailed description of this type of activity for younger learners is offered by Fox-Turnbill (2009, 204-217). Collected memorabilia, student drawings, or non-blog photos can be used to elicit memories about various SA experiences, providing valuable springboards for reflective discourse.

Kim and Yang’s study has many of the hallmarks of good qualitative research: detailed “thick” narrative descriptions, independent coding by more than one person, and a precisely stated inter-coder reliability coefficient. Importantly, the student participants were given the chance to verify the researcher codings to ascertain whether or not their interpretations reflected their beliefs. This is what Falout and Murphey (2010, pp. 370-380) refer to as “critical participatory looping” and it should be a feature of all qualitative SA research.

The main weakness of Kim and Yang’s study concerned their sampling. Their study consisted of only two female respondents. A broader range of respondents might have yielded more diverse response patterns. In particular, the absence of male respondents in their study was perplexing. Although positivistic and post-positivist research generally attempts to be gender-blind, studies that are informed by constructionism and critical theory such as this recognize gender as a key variable in many social interactions. The fact that both researchers were female would probably be ignored in most traditional positivistic studies. In this type of study, however, it might be helpful to have persons of diverse gender and ethnicity code the
Indeed, gender and ethnicity are variables that may have influenced the participant interactions in subtle ways.

The fact that 4 of the 6 potential participants opted out of this study also raises questions about what research incentives should be provided for informants. It may be unrealistic to expect large numbers of persons to participate in time-consuming interviews unless adequate incentives are provided.

(3) Goldstein & Kim (2006)

Goldstein and Kim's study about pre-trip SA motivations had an interesting experimental design that is known as *case controlled study* (Mann, 2003, pp. 54-60). In this type of study, those with a specific outcome (in this case, university SA experience) are retrospectively compared with those who lack that outcome. The goal is to pinpoint factors that may account for the outcome difference. This type of study differs from a *paired propensity cohort study* (Stuart, 2010) in that the grouping is done post hoc rather than a priori. Goldstein and Kim administered a survey packet to 282 first year university students to assess their SA expectations, ethnocentrism, prejudice, intercultural communication apprehensions, foreign language interest and self-reported competence, as well as their tolerance of ambiguity and basic demographic variables. Four years later they checked the university records to ascertain which students had participated in SA programs at least a semester in length. The school records indicated 58% of the respondents (N=61) who hadn't opted out of the original survey or left school prematurely had participated in semester or year-length SA programs. The characteristics of this group of students were then compared with the 105 students with no record of any extended SA experience during their university years. Case controlled studies permit a convenient post hoc comparison of two groups.

With the exception of one survey scale in this study, all six of the scales employed obtained Cronbach alpha levels exceeding the .80 minimum suggested by Nunnally (1978, cited in Goldstein and Kim, p. 514). One scale with a Cronbach alpha level of only .76 should have probably been deleted from this study. It may be worth mentioning once again that a hallmark of good quantitative research is that instruments with insufficient reliability or validity are discarded.

Goldstein and Kim then employed one-way ANOVAs and regression analyses to ascertain how the experimental and control groups differed. What they found was SA participation was "... associated with favorable expectations of study abroad, lower levels of ethnocentrism,
intercultural communication, apprehension, prejudice, and ambiguity intolerance, as well as higher levels of foreign language interest and competence” (p. 517). The authors also found that students with high levels of ethnocentrism or prejudice were less likely to participate in SA. Female students also were about twice as likely to participate in longer-term SA programs than males. Camilli and Shepard (1987. pp. 87-99) have raised serious questions about the appropriacy of ANOVAs in detecting bias. Ideally, Goldstein and Kim's classical analytical procedures should be reinterpreted within a one-parameter Rasch framework.

One good thing about this study is that the researchers acknowledged some of the sub-scales used were wobbly and in need of revision. They also wisely pointed out that the results might not be generalizable to other populations.

An inherent limitation in this study is that it did not consider short-term SA experiences of nine weeks or less. It also did not consider any experiences that earned no academic credits. This points out how easily data can slip through the cracks of many experimental designs. To some degree their research was also constrained by the theoretical orientations inherent in the six sub-scales. Important data that did not relate directly with those orientations could have easily been disregarded. It is for such reasons I am developing a belief that quantitative research is often best used in tandem with some qualitative methodologies.

Now let us turn our attention to three problematic SA studies.

**Three Problematic SA Motivational Research Studies**

(1) **Hadis (2005)**

Hadis offers a convenient example of some mistakes to avoid when conducting SA research. He sought to gauge the impact of SA on American university students by use of one single online retrospective questionnaire.

Let us begin by considering some of this study's sampling problems, since sampling is a common problem in much SA research. Hadis sent email notices to 772 American university students asking them to reply to a lengthy retrospective questionnaire about their SA experiences. Only 95 students with SA experience completed the survey, representing a 12% response rate. The fact that over 87% of the potential informants failed to complete the survey suggests that adequate incentives were not provided. Another possibility is that the survey task load was simply too high. Practical tips on how to design and implement online surveys are offered by Sue and Ritter (2007) as well as Bhaskaran and LeClaire (2010).
Now let us consider briefly the research instrument. Unfortunately the lack of detail makes it difficult to tell precisely what the instrument was, how many items it contained, or even what its response format was. Lerner and Ogren-Balkama (2009, p. 2) point out a widely accepted adage: well-written research papers provide enough detail to enable readers to replicate the study. In this respect, Hadis has been negligent.

Another concern not critically addressed by Hadis is whether post-hoc reflective responses can substitute for a pretest/posttest design. According to Hill and Betz (2005) there are serious validity concerns with using such retrospective reflections in lieu of pretests. The reconstructed memory of events that occurred months or even years ago frequently differs from the fresh impressions of such events due to recall bias and/or other cognitive biases. Retrospective questionnaires serving as "pretests" are probably not a reliable methodology from a positivist or post-positivist perspective. However, they might offer interesting insights about how people situate their experiences in studies that are informed by critical theory or that utilize constructed narratives. This illustrates how different research tools can be suited to different philosophical frameworks.

(2) Meyer (2009)

Using a 26-item pretest/posttest design, Meyer sought to ascertain the effects of a 3-week Canadian SA experience on 31 Japanese high school students. To his credit, he employed 4 well-known attitudinal scales along with some open questions to explore possible reasons behind any changes. He found slight, but statistically insignificant ($p > .05$) increases in the "international posture" (Yashima, Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004) and the motivation to learn English among participants. I will raise one concern about this study's design time frame, then a few apprehensions about the survey items themselves.

The pretest was administered seven months prior to the SA departure and the posttest shortly after the SA experience was completed. With this timeframe, it becomes difficult to ascertain whether any changes were due to the actual SA experience or to the pre-departure training. Moreover, it is difficult to know how lasting the changes were: it is not uncommon for some SA students in programs to exhibit a short-term surge in motivation that wanes as they re-socialize back into their familiar milieus. To obtain a more accurate picture of what changes (if any) may have occurred, a longitudinal study with at least two post-tests over an extended time frame should be employed.

Now let us turn our attention to the survey items. A common problem in much SA
research concerns *confirmation bias* (Skeptic's Dictionary, 2011) – this is a sort of expectancy effect that occurs when respondents can discern researcher agendas. If the researcher is working with small numbers of students as a teacher in conditions in which complete anonymity does not exist, respondents may feel compelled to give socially desirable answers rather than those that are entirely candid. Questions such as “I often try to understand English movies and TV” (Item 7) or “I look forward to my English classes” (Item 14) have an agenda that is all too transparent. As Marsden and Wright (2010, p. 281) suggest, to reduce confirmation bias it is good to use *counterbalanced items* that ask essentially the same thing with a completely different nuance. For example Item 7 could be counterbalanced by a statement such as, "Listening to movies and TV programs in English is a hassle." Item 14 could be counterbalanced by stating, "My English classes usually are boring." This makes it easier for students to express a wider range of viewpoints.

Another concern is that some survey questions might not measure the intended construct. For example, question #11 “I am very interested in the world outside Japan” can be interpreted in various ways. It is quite possible that "the world" does not mean the same thing to all people. In other words, it is very hard to design attitudinal questionnaires that measure *only* a single intended construct. That is why beta testing survey items with a dozen or so students using think-aloud protocols (van Someren, Barnard, & Sandberg, 1994) is recommended: these might offer some insight into what is going on in the minds of potential respondents.

Another point to consider concerns the response format for some questions. For example, question #4 “I don't mind initiating conversations with foreigners” is probably not well suited to a multiple-choice response format: this type of complex statement is probably better handled though an open-response format. We should also reflect on whether most respondents conceive of a "foreigner" as single mental construct. It is quite possible some Japanese classify foreigners into a variety of mental categories. This survey item could create an artificial unidimensionality that might not exist. Indeed, the bulk of quantitative research can be said to have a unidimensional bias: it seeks to generalize and universalize experiences that do not necessarily fit neatly into single empirical categories.

Having said this, Meyer's work provides some evidence that short-term SA programs do not necessarily produce dramatic results in participant motivational levels. The small sample size and small amount of items for each construct, however, make the results inconclusive. One way to enhance the reliability of studies such as this would be to have at least three items tapping into each key variable so that the study could be used in *factor analysis* (DeCoster, 1998).
Another way to enhance this sort of study would be to use cohort sampling (Hefferman, n.d.). In Meyer's case, that would probably involve using data from two separate cohorts of SA students over a two-year period rather than data from a single year.

### (3) Newfields (2010)

To make it clear that I am by no means immune from bad writing, I cite one hastily written SA research paper recently published. The fact that it was a nine-month longitudinal study with two different post-return samplings (return day, and 8 months later) is the only redeeming feature of this study. This afforded a chance to ascertain how lasting the impact of a three-week SA experience in England appeared to be. Also, the suggestion that about a third of the respondents made their SA decisions primarily out of touristic motives rather than any desire to improve their English or communicate with foreigners is intriguing, but the sample size (n=25) was too small for proper quantitative research and the questionnaire itself should have been beta tested more carefully. This research project could have yielded more reliable and valid results by utilizing either multiple cohort samples over several years and/or by employing qualitative methodologies such as journaling (Newbury, 2001) or in-depth interviews (Warren & Karner, 2010).

Let me briefly mention three weaknesses of this study simply because many of the small-scale SA research studies have similar limitations.

First of all, the informed consent procedures were not congruent with current standards. Until recently it was common practice in many parts of Asia to simply hand out surveys to students and politely ask them to complete them with minimal explanation. As more publications require researchers to adhere to guidelines similar to TESOL's Informed Consent Policy Statement (2007), it has become an accepted procedure to inform students in detail about the study, request their voluntary cooperation, indicate any possible incentives that might exist, and finally remind them that they may opt out of the study. Those doing social science research should probably read the literature review by Wiles, Heath, Crow, and Charles (2005) on informed consent.

A second problem with this article involved the lack of proper back-translation procedures of the survey items. As Griffee (1998) points out, at times it is difficult to capture the same nuance between Japanese and English expressions and therefore an independent back-translation procedure is recommended. For research transparency, it is also probably best to have any bilingual research instruments listed in both languages in separate appendices at the
end of the paper. Although these were not included in the article due to space constraints, the URLs to both the Japanese and English online surveys were mentioned.

Finally, this study relied entirely on student self-reports. Such information is prone to all sorts of biases and needs to be corroborated with other types of data such as peer reports, teacher observations, or classroom records. As Bowen (1996) points out, self-reports are not entirely worthless, but they need to be backed up by other sources of information.

**Conclusion**

This paper has pointed out some of the research methods being employed to explore the impact of SA experiences on motivation. The more successful research studies mentioned are characterized by an overall congruence between their philosophical frameworks and actual research procedures. The less successful ones exhibit some incongruities in this respect. In particular, the sampling and data collection procedures in many studies fall short of the research goals they espouse.

So what do we actually know about the impact of SA on motivation? I will conclude by venturing two brief hypotheses. First of all, it is probably naïve to assume that SA programs will automatically enhance the motivation to study a foreign language or culture unless participants interact with members of a target group to an extended degree over a period of time. The previously cited study by Meyer (2009) can be interpreted to support the *threshold hypothesis* that posits a requisite level of linguistic input and interaction with members of a target community is needed before significant changes occur.

Second, the studies by Chirkov, Vansteeniste, Tao, and Lynch (2007) as well as Kim and Yang (2010) made it clear that a sense of "ownership" in the SA decision process may be important in enhancing motivation. Those who are forced to study abroad to fulfill some academic requirement and those who do so voluntarily tend to have differing *initial* levels of language learning motivation. What many motivation studies made clear, however, is that motivation levels can change rapidly in response to critical incidents or significant stress (Fryer, 2012). Shocks such as property theft, racial discrimination, the breakup of an intimate relation with a target language member, or even lower than expected performance on a high-stakes foreign language test can significantly erode foreign language learning motivation. For this reason, Dörnyei (2001, cited in Falout & Maruyama, 2004, p. 3) emphasizes the need to study *demotivational factors* closely in order to understand motivation in a more balanced way. We are now beginning to understand motivation not merely as a psychological construct, but also as
a complex array of attitudes and behaviors that are socially mediated to a significant degree.

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References


http://www.iteaconnect.org/Conference/PATT/PATT22/FoxTurnbull.pdf


Understanding L2 motivation in a study abroad context

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Abstract

Second language (L2) motivation is a complex yet vital component in the L2 acquisition process. L2 motivation has been the center of much research over the years as understanding the factors that facilitate and constrain L2 motivation is vital for both L2 teachers and learners. This paper presents a single case study of the L2 motivational process of a Japanese high school graduate in a study abroad context and discusses significant factors that facilitated and constrained her L2 motivation. Six factors thought to have enhanced her L2 motivation are contrasted with five that appear to have inhibited it.

Keywords: L2 motivation, L2 demotivation, study abroad, Japanese high school EFL programs, L2 motivation self

No other factor has to date been the center of so much research or received so much attention in the field of L2 acquisition as motivation (Ellis, 2008). Scott and Butler (2008) stated that motivation is a concept that attempts to identify and explain the thought processes governing behavior. It provides a basis for understanding of the actions of individuals and insight into the reasons behind their actions. Motivation appears to incorporate both psychological and social processes with many different and overlapping factors such as interest and desire that result in arousal, direction, intensity and the persistence of goal-directed, voluntary actions (Williams & Burden, 1997). Motivation concepts have been adapted in L2 research to facilitate the identification, understanding and explanation of L2 learners’ reasons for studying an additional language (Dornyei & Csizer, 1998). Dornyei (1994, 1998) emphasized that motivation is a key factor in initiating and sustaining L2 acquisition processes and that it appears to influence both the speed and success of foreign language learning. Moreover, Brophy (2004) highlighted that factors attributed to motivation have the ability to override aptitude. These might be more influential in shaping learning outcomes than curricula and teaching methods.

Research questions

This paper addresses the following two research questions:

1. What are the most important factors that appear to have facilitated the informant’s L2 motivation in this context?
2. What factors appear to have constrained her L2 motivation?

Context

The study focuses on a teaching context in a mid-ranked private Japanese high school with students enrolled in a three-year EFL program that involves one year of overseas study in New
Zealand during the second year for all students. The class size varies from year to year; however, there were 16 students in the participant’s class.

The focus of the student’s first year of study is to improve their communicative competence to facilitate engaging in authentic discourse with the target language (TL) group. Lessons include two oral communication lessons and four language and culture lessons per week in the student’s first year. Classes include instruction in grammar as well as task-based activities to contribute to the students’ ability to engage in and sustain real-world communication whilst abroad with their host families, teachers and at school in addition to gaining an understanding of the TL culture. Prior to studying abroad all students enrolled in the program are required to pass the third level of EIKEN, which is considered equivalent to A1 CEFR level (Society for Testing English Proficiency, 2011). After returning to Japan, the students focus on improving their grammatical competence to pass university entrance exams in classes held three times per week.

Method

Participant

The participant in this research project, a twenty-year old Japanese female student we shall name Yuko, voluntarily agreed to partake in an interview to provide her opinions, views and experiences in relation to her L2 motivation and L2 learning experiences in this teaching context. The participant was a former student in the study abroad course and like most Japanese students her age, had studied English formally in classroom settings for six years. During her one-year study abroad in 2008 Yuko interacted extensively with the TL group. At the time of this interview in 2010, Yuko was in her first year at university, majoring in English. By 2012 she was in her third year and studying in England. Yuko consented to having her responses recorded.

The participant was selected for the interview because of her seemingly positive predisposition towards second language learning in addition to her high test results. She was the only student in the class to pass the EIKEN Level 2 examination, which is considered equivalent to a B1 CEFR level (Society for Testing English Proficiency, 2011) immediately after returning from her study abroad. In addition, during classroom discussions after returning to Japan it became apparent that she had experienced periods of high and low motivation. Despite this, she continued to study English diligently throughout high school and into her first year of university when this interview took place.

Instrument

A semi-structured interview with sixteen questions in English was used. These questions, which appear in Appendix A, contained eight questions directly related to the learner and eight concerning her classroom, materials, activities and tasks.

Procedure

Yuko’s responses were transcribed after reviewing the recorded data. The next step was to code the data, as qualitative analysis invariably involves coding to facilitate appropriate and
adequate analysis to provide the researcher with the link to respond confidently to the research question/s (Richards, 2009). Glaser and Strauss’ (as cited in Dornyei, 2007) grounded theory was implemented to code the data. The interviewer coded the data himself into conceptual categories that seemed relevant at the time.

**Results and Discussion**

Six factors that appear to have enhanced Yuko's motivation will be presented, and then five that seem to have hindered it will be outlined.

**Motivating factors**

*(1) Connecting present English study with future goals*

Although Yuko's goals for studying English were manifold, she sometimes sensed how her current learning activities related to her future aims. In section 4 of the interview she stated:

*I was thinking I wanna study English for my future to get a job*

This suggests the importance of Yuko’s L2 motivational self. Markus and Nurius (as cited in Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011) posited a theory of possible selves. According to Oyserman and James (as cited in Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011), a learner’s possible self includes future identity projections and represents the person’s image of what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming. Markus and Nurius outlined how the possible self can be a powerful mechanism to regulate behavior by setting of goals and expectations. Yuko indicates a possible self in section 4 of the interview by uttering:

*I wanna talk and speak English use it for my study abroad again. My dream is to be English speaker*

This statement indicates Yuko had a vision of herself sometime in the future as a speaker of English. In section 38 she even acknowledged, "Now I am half Kiwi girl". Yuko’s L2 ideal self appeared to be an important factor regarding her L2 motivation that guided her efforts and academic achievement.

*(2) Integrating socially with L2 target groups*

A desire to form close friendships with many of the foreigners in New Zealand was a positive factor enhancing Yuko's desire to learn English. In section 10 of the interview she remarked:

*I wanna talk with my host mum, host sister, host little brother, host granny and I wanna know what they are saying what they mean (. ) I wanna talk like them and ask them about culture.*

In section 4 she added:

*my goal was to be talking more and more with foreigner.*

It seems English was not just an academic subject to Yuko, but also a means to interact more with those from others cultures. In section 34 Yuko exemplified this by asserting:
I wanna talk more with Paora and Maori and Kiwi people to know their culture (..)

(3) Gaining satisfaction from successfully completing task activities

Assessing her own competence enabled Yuko to regulate her learning strategies to accomplish/perform specific actions to achieve her goals. Commenting on a classroom activity, in section 28 she mentioned:

*You showed us many way when I watch a movie I learn new words , when I don’t know a word I check it in the dictionary (.). same when I read a book listening to music talking with a friend when I am talking with a friend when I don’t know some words or some grammar or stuff I know I must study more*

Her responses indicate that self-regulation strategies helped her sustain her L2 learning and L2 ongoing motivation (Dornyei, 1998). According to Deci and Ryan (1985) and Ellis (2008), students who self-regulate are better able to maintain and monitor their own learning and motivation. Teachers must educate students about the importance of self-efficacy and self-regulation, especially in study abroad contexts, as students often must make the transition from studying with their L2 teacher to studying by themselves when they are abroad.

Elsewhere in section 28 Yuko also indicated the motivating power of task completion by stating:

*Also activity was good for us , ordering pizza was good (.). I could do it in newzee , my host mum so happy I could do it (..)*

(4) A desire to obtain good grades

At one point in section 12 Yuko conceded that high academic marks mattered to her by averring:

*at school I wanna pass all my subjects and getta good score in English class*

This suggests her motivation to learn English was not entirely intrinsic: an instrumental-extrinsic desire to earn high scores may have also impelled her to study.

(5) A desire to pass more EFL proficiency exams

Yuko's attitude towards exams was ambivalent: at times they appeared to demotivate her, but the following statements from sections 4, 20, and 22 respectively suggest that tests may have had complex washback patterns on her L2 motivation:

*mokuhyou right to pass EIKEN and TOEIC test the level one (.). it is hard goal but I wanna do it

but I need test to go to the uni so I must study (.)

I memorised words (.). I mean vocabulary for EIKEN and TOEIC test all the time , at school on the train at my home (.). ahh*

(6) Intrinsic joy of enjoying recreational activities in English
Finally, we should mention that Yuko employed a range of leisure activities such as watching English movies or listening to English music to maintain her interest in English. In section 22 she stated:

I wanna watch more English movie and listen to English music ((unintelligible))
I was watching movie all the time in newzee and listening to music with host sister

This should remind us that even so-called recreational activities can have significant value in bolstering motivation.

Demotivating factors

Let us now examine the factors that appeared to constrain Yuko’s L2 motivation.

(1) The pressure to achieve high marks on tests

The most salient demotivating factor according to Yuko was test-driven instruction. She laments how studying for university entrance exams impinged on her L2 motivation by asserting:

I had to study for entrance exam for uni, it is too stressful, newzee not like this, the time I was studying for the entrance exam was hard for me. The English for the test is not fun, I must remember many things and I think no point for this, it’s only test and real English speaker don’t speak like this () but I need test to go to the uni so I must study () but back in Japan sometimes my mind is down () because no one can speak in English and we have to do test all the time it made my mind down sometimes when test score is bad (.) but I had good memory in newzee so I think that was best for me.

(2) Fears of language loss

A second factor constraining Yuko’s motivation was an awareness of her own L2 language attrition. She felt that the language gains she made in New Zealand were being lost during her final high school year in Japan. In section 16 her disappointment was evident as she stated:

Gradually my English becoming worse, I forget English every day.

(3) Difficulty adapting to natural-speed English

A third factor inhibiting Yuko’s motivation was the stress of adjusting to natural-speed English. In section 10 she remarked:

I had a stress because everybody was talking fast all the time () I couldn’t catch what they said

Fortunately, Yuko gradually became accustomed to the speed of those around her in New Zealand.

(4) Textbook activities whose level (or content) did not fit

In section 32, Yuko acknowledged that she found some of her EFL textbook activities uninspired by declaring:

I didn't like some textbook activities () some activities are too easy for me and also some are little boring () the topics ((unintelligible)) was too hard not activity but how to do it,
I was thinking what should I do

Yuko mentioned how tasks that she deemed too simple or too difficult blunted her motivation to learn English at that particular time.

(5) Tiredness and too many other schedule demands

A final factor that diminished Yuko's desire to study was simple fatigue and lack of time. In section 8 she stated that being too tired and busy prevented her from studying more:

in 1B class I studied in your class only (.) I was too busy and too tired to study more

For Yuko, luckily these were not long-lasting; since entering college she has had more time to devote to her English studies.

Conclusions

The study confirms Taguchi, Magid and Papi’s (2009) finding that Japanese L2 learners often display various types of L2 motivation at the same time. The study indicates that inappropriate testing and fear of language attrition can negatively influence L2 motivation. Teachers should be aware of these points and discuss them with students to ensure they understand that their learning experiences, attitudes and motivational shifts are common. In addition, teachers should ensure that their materials, tasks and teaching practices remain relevant and reduce any negative influences on L2 motivation and that facilitate the goals of the learners and their L2 motivation (Lightbown & Spada, 2001). In study abroad contexts, introducing the learners to the TL group and culture in addition to promoting cross-cultural awareness can develop the learners’ interest, which is a significant factor in L2 motivation. The L2 ideal self is a powerful motivator as learners envision themselves in the future as a L2 speaker and this guides their academic efforts and achievement (Dornyei, 2005). L2 motivation is a complex phenomenon; however, understanding how and why it changes over time and ensuring classroom materials and activities remain relevant and facilitate learners’ needs ensures teachers are able to fulfill their roles as facilitators in study abroad and all teaching contexts.

Limitations of this study and suggestions for further research

Four limitations of this study need to acknowledged. First, this study focused on a single informant who appeared well motivated to study English. Future studies should utilize more diverse groups of informants, including those who do not appear to be particularly adept language learners.

Second, this study is based on a single interview that was approximately 35 minutes. As such it is subject to recall bias (Thomas & Diener, 1990, pp. 291-297) and hindsight bias (Christensen-Szalanski & Wilham, 1991). Future studies should offer longitudinal designs with several interviews at different stages to obtain a more accurate picture of attitudinal changes.

Third, this study is based on self-reported data in which the interviewer was also a teacher. As such, it is subject to social desirability bias (Nederhorf, 1985). Future studies should seek to incorporate other sorts of data such as narrative journals, peer reports or class records. Since
interviews are complex, socially situated interpretative acts in which the gender, ethnicity and age of both locutioners influences what is said, it might also possibly use multiple interviewers to increase reliability (Tabane & Bouwer, 2006).

Finally, this information was coded by one person who was also the interviewer. As such, it is vulnerable to some observer expectancy effect (Sheldrake, 2010). Future studies should aim to incorporate multiple coders and mention the inter-rater coding agreement.

References


**Appendix A. Interview Excerpts**

The sections of the interview that were deemed relevant to this study are included here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-Interviewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.) - short pause &lt; 1 second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[hello]- interjection by interviewer/participant during other speaker’s turn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((laughs, sighs))- non-verbal cue/comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes- said with emphasis</td>
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<tr>
<td>well, maybe- a comma indicates speaker will continue talking</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I: Hi ‘Yuko’ thank you for your time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. P: No problem (.) my pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I: ok let’s begin (.) when you started studying English in grade one of high school why did you want to study English (.) did you have a goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. P: When I was grade one class I was so nervous (.) I wanna study English because I was interested in English (.) I was thinking I wanna study English for my future to get a job and more and more talking with foreigner (.) my goal (.) goal is mokuhyou ne I mean in Japanese goal is mokuhyou right [that’s right] (.) my goal was to be talking more and more with foreigner an:::d (.) to pass EIKEN and TOEIC test the level one (.) it is hard goal but I wanna do it (.) at that time I think &lt;unintelligible&gt; test score is most important</td>
</tr>
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</table>
(..) but later I don’t wanna just get test score (.) I wanna talk and speak English use it for my study abroad again <unintelligible> (.) my dream is to be English speaker

5. I: You had many goals
6. P: Yeah so many goals (.). lucky ha (.). like you did (.) you told us you had many goals for your study when you study Japanese and Spanish <unintelligible>

(some parts here are deleted as the participant’s responses were irrelevant)

7. I: Ok good (.) when you were in grade one how often did you study or spend time using English?
8. P: ((laughs)) uh oh (..) at first , in 1B class I studied in your class only (.) I was too busy and too tired to study more (.) after that I studied sometimes at home before I went to newzee (.) you said to watch English dvd, listen to English singer (.) so I tried it then before I went to newzee

9. I: good answer (.) when you were in New Zealand why did you want to study English (.) did you have a goal?
10. P: At first when I got to newzee I hada stress because everybody was talking fast all the time (..) I couldn’t catch what they said , I studied hard everyday (.) I wanna talk with my host mum, host sister, host little brother, host granny and I wanna know what they are saying what they mean (.) I wanna talk like them and ask them about culture ((unintelligible)) Kiwi English

11. I: Did you have a goal?
12. P: Yes I hada goal to talk English everyday with host family and learn new words phrases and be like Kiwi (.) , at school I wanna pass all my subjects and getta good score in English class

13. Ok good when you were in New Zealand how often did you study or spend time using English?
14. P: I studied everyday ((laughing)) honto ni it’s truth , I studied hard for English in newzee , I read a book talking with host family in English everyday talking with friends at school and teachers everytime (.) they can’t speak Japanese , so I must speak English everyday (..) [ok] even [sorry] when I meet other class members I was talking in English everytime (.) but sometimes it made me very tired and sometimes I hada stress but I always like English and I wanna make a good experience in newzee (.) newzee time was hard but fun for me (.) even when it’s hard I try to keep my mind hard (.) I mean <unintelligible> keep positive (.) in newzee I’m always positive (.) but back in Japan sometimes my mind is down (.) because no one can speak in English and we have to do test all the time it made my mind down sometimes when test score is bad (..) but I had good memory in newzee so I think that was best for me

15. I: Really that’s great Yuko when you came back to Japan and when you were in grade three of high school why did you want to study?
16. P: When I came back to Japan I wanna talk in English as possible, talk with you, other teachers in English (. ) also I wanna practice English everyday so I don’t forget English ((laughing)) at that time I wanna study English so I can be a better English speaker (. ) but gradually my English becoming worse, I forget English everyday (. ) I must study harder (. )

17. I: It’s natural to lose some English (. ) did you have any other goals?

18. P: Yes I had to study for entrance exam for uni , it is too stressful (. ) newzee not like this (. ) the time I was studying for the entrance exam was hard for me

19. I: Why was it hard for you?

20. P: The English for the test is not fun (. ) I must remember many things and I think no point for this it’s only test and real English speaker don’t speak like this (. ) but I need test to go to the uni so I must study (. )

(some parts here are deleted as the participant’s responses were irrelevant)

but I learned many good points from you and my host mum and some teacher in newzee for how to study , also I wanna watch more English movie and listen to English music ((unintelligible)) I was watching movie all the time in newzee and listening to music with host sister

21. I: Ok good , when you came back to Japan and when you were in grade three of high school how often did you study or spend time using English?

22. P: At first I studied same as newzee but after few months I had to study more and more so I can pass university testo (. ) I had to study more than before (. ) it was tough for me (. ) [anything else] sou da that’s right , at that time I tried hard to speak with you in English everyday about different topics [ that’s right I remember] I memorised words (. ) I mean vocabulary for EIKEN and TOEIC test all the time , at school on the train at my home (. ) ahh

23. I: good answers (. ) ok (. ) when you came back to Japan (. ) with your study (. ) your goal (. ) your feeling about English (. ) what changed do you think?

24. P: What changed (. ) you mean my skill or my mind

25. I: Both (. ) your English ability (. ) your motivation , goals (. ) your feelings about English

26. P: Oh ok , ((unintelligible)) my English skill definitely improved , also I was (. ) I mean I become (. ) I became , more confident I know I can speak English , I know I can do it , I become , I mean I became more positive about English (. ) also I know how to study by myself

27. I: How do you study by yourself?

28. P: You showed us many way when I watch a movie I learn new words , when I don’t know a word I check it in the dictionary (. ) same when I read a book listening to music talking with a friend when I am talking with a friend when I don’t know some words or
some grammar or stuff I know I must study more

(also you tell us best way to study by yourself is to know what we must learn (. ) remember you said to us your story when you talk with Japanese or watching Japanese movie you try to know or hear what you don’t know (. ) then you know what to study (. ))

(some parts here are deleted as the participant’s responses were irrelevant)

29. I: What activities did you enjoy the most and what activities didn’t you enjoy

30. P: I remember many fun activities , best one for me was the Maori guy who came to school and he talked with us (. he showed us about Maori culture Maori tattoo Maori dance (. ) what’s that scary dance [the haka] yes that’s right , I was thinking he is so:::o cool I wanna talk more with Paora and Maori and Kiwi people to know their culture (. ) at first you showed us Maori dvd , I enjoyed it (. ) a little more , I also like talking activities in textbook with class members , it was good for us , we could know how to order pizza , sandwich , answer telephone (. ) oh yeah tell what is wrong when I get sick (. ) [that’s all] also dancing activity was fun , it made me more confident [ok good] one more , maybe I don’t enjoy it so much but when we have to make questions and check words by ourselves (. ) after that I could study harder so then I can enjoy English more and more (. ) sore dake kana , that’s all

31. I: What about any activities you didn’t like

32. P: Souka didn’t like (. ) ((laughing)) can I say (. ) [it’s ok there is no problem] I didn’t like some textbook activities (. ) some activities are too easy for me and also some are little boring (. ) the topics ((unintelligible)) was too hard not activity but how to do it , I was thinking what should I do (. ) but you helped us read the word we know and check the word we don’t know and how to ask questions so next time we can do activity ourselves then I liked it (. ) a little more , another one was book review , I didn’t like that one it was difficult for me and a little bit boring gomen ne I’m sorry (. ) I was nervous talking about book review to class members

33. I: Great answers Yuko thank you (. ) in grade one what activities motivated you to study English

34. P: Motivated (. ) to wanna study English [that’s right] (. ) I think talking with Paora and other Kiwi teachers who came to our school and your rugby friends (. ) Tattoo dvd was interesting for me (. ) in Japan tattoo is bad but Maori tattoo is culture (. ) I wanna study English so I can know culture more and more (. ) and textbook activities was good for me , I understand I must study English for school I newzee to study and for talking with my teachers and host family , I think many different activities are good

35. I: What activities helped you to study English harder

36. P: The activities we had to make a question , how do you say nani nani in English or Japanese and what’s your favourite nani nani it helped me when I was talking in
newzee with everybody (...) best activity was sometimes you don’t speak to us and we have to ask question like what page what are we doing or we have to study ourself and you only help us when we ask a question, that’s best one for me (...) at that time I was thinking ha de kanji what should I do, after that I can study harder then I can know more English and get more confidence after that

37. I: Good answers I am glad they helped you, how important was the classroom environment for you?

38. P: Environment (...) you mean atmosphere [yes ok] (...) ok well I love our class, everybody friendly and you are good teacher for us, you help us before we go to newzee, we can understand what we should study, you show us how to study (...) interesting stuff (..) sometimes you strict for us, you tell us we have to think for our future our experience (...) we know you not angry just trying supporting us (...) and we studied interesting topics and activities, our class is like Kiwi or Aussie class, not Japanese class ((laughing)), now I am half Kiwi girl

39. I: ((laughing)) Good answer, ok, a few more questions, is the time ok?

40. P: It’s ok for me

41. I: Thank you [no problem] when we did a difficult activity or a speaking test was the help and the feedback (...) feedback is my comments to you (...) were they important and helpful for you?

42. P: In 3B class when we had a speaking test you told us score and explained why that score (...) sometimes I felt bad because I was trying hard but it helped me (...) I can know what I should study harder, why I got it score and what I should do so I get better score for the next test (...) Japan always having test and stress, Kiwi life for me is best, I can enjoy my life in newzee (...) ah:::h I wanna go back to newzee and see my friends and host family

43. I: That is natural (...) what about help, help with activities and studying in class

44. P: mmm (...) you helped us to study by ourselves, I mean we know how to after you helped us (...) sometimes activity was too difficult but you showed us how to do it, so we can study in newzee when you are not there, and we can know what we should study and how to do it

45. I: Good ok what activities in grade one helped you the most in New Zealand and in grade three?

46. P: Same one as before, at first you show us how to study ourself ((unintelligible)) and how to and fah to make us study ourself in newzee (...) you tell us many times it’s up to you, then we know we must study ourself and make our good experience

47. I: I see good, were the materials, textbooks, activities relevant and useful for you in grade one and grade three? Were the textbooks and activities good?

48. P: Yes very much, I like textbook it shows Japanese student like us in textbook, I mean
textbook character, is that right word [it’s ok] (..) also activity was good for us, ordering pizza was good (.) I could do it in newzee, my host mum so happy I could do it (..) time activity was good all Kiwis use half past and quarter to toka, it’s good (.) Also you always told us it’s up to you, it’s truth, we have to study for ourselves [that’s in 1B class] yes 1B class

49.I: Ok what about 3B class

50.P: I see, 3B class same I think (.) textbook was same it had Japanese students so I think it’s same for us for me (.) The topic was good for me, we can know different cultures (.) and religions (.) customs and another one (..) it was difficult topics for everyone [diversity topic] yes diversity (..) that was difficult topics but it was good for me (.) I could learn about people from another country and know important diversity is for Japan (.) like women getting same job as man (.) more women become the boss of Japanese company (.) it was good topics

51.I: Great answer I am glad you remembered
海外留学の展望
浅井宏純氏へのインタビュー

Timothy Newfields

浅井 宏純（あさい ひろすみ）氏

プロフィール： 1974年に渡米、パイロットを目指しユースト・ロサンゼルス・カレッジに入学。1978年同校卒業。

帰国後、（株）海外教育コンサルタント（EDICM）に入社。主に北米、欧州、ニュージーランド、オーストラリアの留学事業に33年間携わる。同社代表取締役社長に就任。

2008年、EDICMを退職後、13カ国の仲間と大型トラックで10ヶ月間でアフリカ大陸を一周する。

2010年EDICM顧問を退職。クラス・アフロート（世界を旅するカナダ洋上高校）前日本代表。NPO法人「未来の学校」理事。

著書に『アフリカ大陸一周ツアー』（幻冬舎新書）、『知っておきたい！海外留学の理想と現実』（岩波新書）、『小・中学生の海外留学事情』（講談社プラスアルファ新書）などがある。

海外留学コンサルタントとして30年以上、お仕事を続けてこられ、海外留学をする日本人の変化に気付かれた点はありますか？

日本で海外留学が広まっていったのは1975年頃からです。それから約35年、留学業界の仲間で話題となるのが、留学の中身が大きく変わって来たということです。

変化を挙げるとしたら次の3点です。

（1）留学先の多様化

90年代以降、留学先の多様化がはじまりました。定番であったアメリカやイギリスだけでなく、国策として留学生招致に力を入れてきたカナダ、オーストラリア、ニュージーランドなどに留学する日本人が増加しました。

さらに21世紀に入ると、中国、マルタ、フィリピン、フィジーなどの国にも日本人は留学しています。

（2）プログラムの多様化

昔、留学といえば、一定期間海外で教育を受けること、研究に携わること、と考えられていた。近年の留学は、期間にかかわらずプログラムに「学び」が含まれて留学と呼ぶようになった。

90年代までは、語学留学、学部留学、大学院留学と明確にタイプが分かれていました。しかし現在は、語学を勉強してから条件付きの入学が認められるプログラムや、語学留学だけでなく、プラスアルファが学べるプログラム、例えばスポーツ、ダンス、芸術、ネイル、フラなどを学ぶプログラムなどもあります。親子留学も含まれ、語学研修のいないサーフィンや乗馬留学もあり、また、インターンシップを絡めた留学も人気です。

（3）留学イコール学位取得では無い

語学留学が多様化、「旅行化」している。参加者のハードルが精神面でも費用などの物理面でもだいぶ下り、気軽なものになっています。海外の大学に留学する場合も留学前の学位取得ではなく、日本の大学との交換留学、認定留学として1年間のみ留学するパターンが増加しています。今後も1年間のみの留学パターンは、増加するでしょう。

短期留学プログラムを単なる観光旅行だと批判する意見もありますが、どう思われますか。
留学後のフォローアップレッスンをしない学校があります。そのためか、留学中に習得した語学力を維持できない学生を多く見かけます。そのことについてどう思われますか？

大学でフォローアップレッスンがないとすれば、大学側のカリキュラムの組み方に問題があると思います。民間のプログラムには、フォローアップレッスンを提供する機関はたくさんあります。当然費用もかかります。

そもそも、留学生は帰国後どのようなフォローアップレッスンを受けたいのか、しっかりしたビジョンを持つべきです。留学中にやる気をもって臨んだ学生は、帰国後、習得した語学力を維持する勉強法を自分自身で見つけます。また、留学後、やる気のない学生をフォローアッププログラムに無理矢理参加させること自体に、疑問の余地があります。

留学に対する日本人の誤った捉え方、認識についてどうお考えですか？

誤った捉え方というより、日本の「留学」の定義は、とても曖昧なニュアンスで捉えられていました。誤った捉え方と言えば、先進国の方がその他の国より、優れているという考えです。こういった考えは捨てることが必要です。それぞれの国が持つ文化の価値は、単純な判断基準では分かりません。誤った捉え方を下記にあげてみます。

(1) 留学とホームステイを同一に考えている人が多いこと。
　職業を問わず、私と「留学の仕事です」と答えると、「ホームステイですね」と今でも言われます。
(2) 成績が悪ければ退学させられる。
　日本では、成績が悪くても退学させられることは滅多にありませんが、海外の留学（語学留学以外）ではよくあることです。留学生が退学させられ、転校許可を得られない場合には、自動的に学生ビザも失います。日本に帰国せざるを得ません。海外で学ぶ日本人学生に、学業平均値が一定基準を下回ったらどうなるか、事前に伝えても理解されていないケースが多いのです。
(3) 海外の教育レベルが日本より低いと思っている。
　特に中学、高校の数学のレベルが日本より低いのではないかと心配するケースがよくありました。今ではこのような懸念は減っています。日本の学力レベルが下がったのでしょうか？

2005年版の御著書についてお尋ねします。「留学をすると国際性が育つのか。外国人との違いが理解できるのか。（中略）他の文化に先入観を持たないためには、かなり努力が必要であり、国際性を身につけるには、先入観を持たないことが重要です。」
(P.24) と、ありますが、浅井さんのおっしゃる国際性とはどのようなものでしょうか。

私の言う国際性とは、敬意と好奇心をもって海外（異文化）に目をむけたときに、自国の文化を理解することです。人は自分の親と生まれた場所を選ぶことはできません。自分の家族のことで、住んでいる町のこと、日本のことをより深く知ることで、自己をはっきりと表現することができるようになります。他国の人たちの様々な価値観も尊重することができるようになるのです。

ごく普通の家庭に育ち、親が海外経験がなくても国際性は育ちます。外国語や海外の文化に興味を持つことで、インターネットを通じて外国人とコミュニケーションを図ったり、海外からJETsプログラムで来られた英語の先生と進んで交流を持つことも国際性は育つと思います。大人数でも、留学しなくても、本来国際性は身につくと考えます。
日本の大学は国際交流の仕方に迷いがあると思います。私の知る国際交流の形番のほとんどが、日本学生に「日本がいかに豊かである国」かを思い起こさせるもので、国際性を身に付ける方法として、私は次の3つの提案をしたいと思います。
(1)大学にサマースクールプログラムを作る。例えば、留学生(外国人)と日本人学生が二人一組になって活動するバス旅行もいいでしょう。理想は1週間から1ヶ月ほどですが、一泊二日でも、行き先はどこでも構いません。キャンプ、東京見物、震災被災地訪問、他の大学との交換訪問などが考えられます。費用は留学生が自分で払える範囲内で、できるだけ安く抑えることです。食べ物は、水とオニギリや缶詰で十分です。大学の駐車場、公園、河原など電気・水道・ガスがない所でテントを張って泊まる経験はとても良いと考えます。日本は便利さで溢れています。この地理的には、電化製品を持っていない人がいるのですから、旅行中、旅行で得た体験を発表しあうことや、お互いの違いを実感することができます。一つ屋根の下で生活を共にすると、不思議と互いに理解し合えるものです。
(2)大学の学費のためにアルバイトをする留学生と日本学生が共に働く。短期間でも、職種を選ばず死で働く彼らと一緒に働くことができれば、得るものは多いでしょう。
(3)日本の学生が日本語を(安くてまたは無料で)世界の人に教える。教えることで異文化を学びます。

関係を築くことができます。フェイスブックなどですでに海外の仲間と交流する学生もあります。このような活動は日本語を学ぶ興味を刺激するだけでなく、海外にいる日本人学生のイメージをも高めることにもなると思います。

「日本にいると普通のことが、外国に行って初めてそうでないと気づくことがあります。（中略）留学生が国際的であるかどうかは、日本を出る前に受けた日本でのしつけや教育によるところが大きい。」（P.25）とありますが、留学前に学生に必要な教育、またはしつけとはどのようなものでしょうか？また、留学プログラムを作る上で何を重要視すればよいと思うでしょうか。

アフリカでは日本では当然あるべき電気・水道・ガスのない不便な生活を送っている人がほとんどでした。現地の人とは、笑顔で挨拶する挨拶ですぐに仲良くなれました。ここで言うしつけや教育とは、最近、私たち日本人が失いつつある、見知らぬ人にも礼儀正しく挨拶できるよう基本的なエチケットを身につけることです。また、誰に対しても恩恵を守る言う誠実さも必要です。このようなことが、自動に当たり前になるよう努力します。留学する人には、次に述べることを渡航前に身につけてもらいたいと考えます。

(1)挨拶ができる。年配者を敬う。
　スマズにコミュニケーションを図るために、「あらいどう、いただきます。どうぞどうぞ、おはようございます。」は挨拶の日本語でも通じます。日々の生活の中で礼儀正しさを示していくことは大切なことです。
　かつて、世界中から選ばれた20名ほどの中高生が船上で学ぶ「世界を旅する学校・クラスアフロード」を広島県の協力を得て1週間ほど、日本に招待することがあります。彼ら中高生は皆に覚えたばかりの日本語で礼儀正しく挨拶をしていた。広島の路面電車に乗ると、年配の人にすぐ席をゆずっていました。それを見た広島県の先生が「近隣の日本の若者にはなかなかできないことね。」と感心していました。クラスアフロードの学生は、多くの国を訪問するので、どのようにすれば受け入れてもらえるのかを知っているのです。
（2）約束を守る。時間に正確。我慢（辛抱）できる。
朝きちんと起き、身綿麗にすることは留学に際し重要です。特にホームステイ先で歓迎されます。あなたが、留学生を自宅に受け入れることを想像してみてください。どんな人がいいですか？
最近、イギリスの学校の校長先生から「最近の日本の生徒は、しっかりといることができないので、どこでもがんやだ、ズボンをズラして履いている。だらしない」と聞きされ、ショックと同時にとても失望させられました。

（3）人を疑う能力（判断力）を養うこと（これは、日本人に欠けていることです。）
担当した学生（中高生）が学校内で所持品をよそにしまれ、お金を他の学生に貸しても返ってこなかったことがあります。彼はイギリスの名門校に通っていたのですが、先生から「とけえルームメイトであっても気をつけてください。」と注意を受けました。日本人は騙しやすいと狙われています。相手が「信用できるか？」、「言っていることが「本当か？」とちょっと疑ってみることです。
もう一つは、イタリアのインターナショナルスクールに入学する女子中学生を学校に連れていった時のことです。「女の子（留学生）、男の子（留学生）がいきなり入室を演じて、結局利用され、傷つくこともあるから注意が必要ですよ」と初日目に先生から注意を受けました。
自分を不幸な状況に陥らせたいのでも、しっかりとした判断が、中学学生なら女子学生には特に必要です。自分も出会った状況をしっかりと判断でき、サバイバル術を身につけたほうがよいのです。また、失礼にならない程度に、はっきりと「NO」が言えることも必要です。

「インターネットや携帯電話の普及により、コミュニケーションのあり方がすっかり変わってしまいました。パソコンやメールに依存しないと、自分の考えが伝えられない学生が出てきたのです。」（P.48）と、留学先での些細なことを携帯すく日本の親に伝え、親がエージェントに文句を言って介入する事例が紹介されていました。留学しても日本人の友達にメールしたり、日本の親に通話をばかりしていては、留学する意味がありません。
携帯電話についての対処方法をどうお考えになりますか？

携帯電話やインターネットの急速な普及で、私も対処方法は分からなくなりました。学生が携帯電話を使いすぎないための策をとっている学校もあります。例えば、全寮制のアメリカの学校では携帯の使用を全面禁止していました。学生たちは何らかの制限が必要だと思っていますが、スイスには、全員に携帯電話を持たせる学校もあります。
手紙は、書きながら自分の考えを整理できるという利点があります。また、返事を受け取るまでに時間がかかるので、相手との問題が解決することも少なくありません。しかし、電話は感情的になり、すぐその場で結論を下してしまう危険性があります。そのことを十分に心得て、親は子供を甘やかさず、子供たちの要求にすぐに応じないことです。EDICMのスタッフとは、ここに話し落ち着きました。

留学のリスク管理についてですが、親は現地の治安や麻薬、暴力について心配しがちです。しかし、それとは違うリスクとして、留学生がやる気を失いニートになる（P.55）可能性があると書かれています。これについて教えてください。

留学生が学校に通わなければ当然、学生ビザを失効します。1980年代から日本では子供たちの登校拒否の問題が深刻になりました。この頃は、不登校といえば学生をたくさんの世話しないため、自ら留学したいから応援したい。海外で高校や大学を卒業した学生も多くいるし、親が喜ぶような成功例はたくさんあります。
不登校になった自分の子供に「家でぶらぶらしてないで学校に行ってほしい」と、ほとんどの親は願っていますが、「学校に行きたくなければ、行かなくてもいいのよ」と言う親もいます。後者の場合、子供は留学先で不登校をしても平気です。親が「いいよ」というのですから・・・。
それでも、親は子が日本にいるより海外にいることを望みました。こういう場合、お金の要求以外に連絡がとれなくなり、挙げ句に親から依頼を受け、私が留学先に学生を迎え行ったことが幾度かありました。たいていこのような学生は何もせず、日本人の仲間と一日をすごしていました。ビザが切れていたので不法滞在となり、帰国しなければなりませんでした。他の留学コンサルタントとの問題について話をしたが、彼らも海外にかなりの数の留学ニートがいると認識していました。

私は本当にやることがなく、退屈すれば、人を読んだりスポーツをすると思っていました。しかし、インターネットとゲームがあれば、ひきこもり人が多いことを知ったのもこの時です。お金が続く限りひきこもり生活をしている人は数多くいます。子供がこのような留学生活をしていた、现状を知らないためか、それは心配してないように見受けられる親もいます。

浅井さんは「留学とはお金をして、苦労を買いたいくもの（p. 87）」と書かれています。苦労について学生に留学前にアドバイスするとしたらどのようなことをされますか？

かつて、アメリカ留学の草分けである初期のフルブライト留学生の方々に話を伺ったことがあります。$1 = ¥360 固定相場の頃です。皆さんは、働きながら勉強され、相当苦労されたようですが、「今としては、よい思い出」とおっしゃっていました。

これから留学する大学生に「留学すると どんなことで苦労すると思う？」と聞くのですが、「苦労はいやだ」と言う学生が増えています。日本人には「苦労に価値を見出す」と言う考え方、なくなりつつあるのでしょうか。

日本は生活水準がとても高い国なので、どの国に留学しても生活面に不便に感じる人がたくさんあります。しかし、不便かどうかは、それぞれの育った環境によるようです。最初は満足しないかもしれません、まもなく不便に慣れます。私自身は、アメリカで大げな旅行したので、今では飲める水があるだけラッキーだと思うようになりました。人は何にでも慣れることができると思います。住む場所、苦労も慣れて楽しくなります。

「受け入れの海外の学校は、自立した責任ある大人が来ていると判断しています。しかし、じつのところ、現在の日本では 18 歳でも自立した大人になっていない人が多く留学しているのです。」（p.128）とあります。そうした未熟な大学生の留学をサポートするには何が重要で、また渡航前にどのようなことを、教えておく必要があるとお考えですか？

私は、物理的に親から離れることが自立の一步と考えるので、海外留学は未成年が自立のため（修行）にあってこそだと思い、長年の間、たくさんの中高生の留学支援をさせていただきました。しかし、この本を書いてから、「高校を卒業しても、未熟で自立できないのが当たり前」という考えに変わりました。特に英語の勉強もせずに漠然と語学留学する方には思い切って「家出するくらいの気持ちで飛び出せ」かな？

海外留学をしても語学力が身に付かなかったという話を聞きます。語学習得のため的一番良い方法とは何だと思われますか？

留学で語学力が身につくかどうかは、しっかりした動機があるかどうかです。パブル期の金余り時代には多くの学生が留学し、ただ遊び回っていただけで終わった学生もいました。それはそれでよかったでしょう。しかし、この数年、当たり前のように就職で英検や TOEIC の点数が要求され、必死で学ぶ学生が増えています。留学機関や英語学校経営者の仲間に聞くと、「やる気のある人は、留学しなくても英語力を身につけている」そうです。近年は親の経済事情が厳しいので、学生のハンギング精神が蘇っていても聞き、嬉しく思っています。
御著書の中で、留学を成功させる学生の条件は、語学の点数以外に、①社会的常識や礼儀をわきまえていること。②ラップ思考であること。発見を楽しもうとしていること。③日本の論理を持ち込まず、相手の文化をまず尊重することだとおっしゃっていますが、このお考えは今も変わらんのか？

基本的に変化ありません。ただ、書いておきながら”今社会的常識”が何なのか私自身が説明できなくなっているので、最近はこのような質問を受けると、次のような答えています。
①＋③＝敬意をもって人々や外国に接すること。②＝好奇心が旺盛であること。
留学は自分自身や家族のためだけでなく、「日本のためにある。日本は世界のためにある。」と私は思います。高い志を持って挑戦する人は、それだけで「成功」です。そして、たとえ挫折や失敗があったとしても、留学先から元気に日本に帰って帰れば「大成功」である、と信じています。

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Hirozumi Asai is a pioneering figure in the field of commercial study abroad programs in Japan. Shortly after graduating from West Los Angeles College in 1978, he started a company that is now known as Educational Information & Consultants (EDICM). Subsequently he wrote two books about overseas study: one focusing on elementary and middle school Japanese students overseas (2002) and the other on misconceptions about study abroad (2005). In 2005 he also co-authored a book with Kazuko Morimoto about persons who are not employed, receiving education, or training - described in Japanese as "NEETs". In 2008 Mr. Asai resigned as CEO of EDICM to undertake a 10-month bus tour of 13 African nations. His experiences are summarized in a 2011 volume published by Togensha. Currently he divides his time between serving as vice-president of the Taste of Japan LLC, a slow-food restaurant chain, and serving as director of a non-profit organization known as the "Future School" as well as another NGO known as "Class Afloat".

This interview was conducted in October 2011 in Tokyo. The original Japanese interview precedes this English version. I acknowledge the help of Noriko Saitoh and Melissa Tsuchiya in working with this translation.

**What changes have you noticed in study abroad patterns among Japanese since you first started work as an overseas consultant and mentor about 35 years ago?**

I've consulted with some colleagues about that. Three broad trends are discernable since the 1970s, when the notion of "study abroad" became popular among Japanese university students.

One trend involves the diversification of study abroad destinations. Early SA programs were mainly to the USA or UK, then later to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Since the 1990s, however, interest in more exotic destinations such as China, Malta, the Philippines, and Fiji among Japanese has been growing . . . .

A second trend involves the diversification of program types. At one time the Japanese word **ryūgaku** implied formal academic study overseas for an extended period. Now it has come to connote any learning experience over any time span occurring abroad. Prior to the 1990s, most SA programs for Japanese entailed research in a specialized academic field or else receiving foreign language courses with the intent of streaming into some standard academic program. Since the 1990s, however, we've seen more programs incorporating alternative activities as such sports, dance, fingernail art, and so on – and only some feature foreign language classes. As a case in point, there are now SA programs in which parents and children participate in diverse activities such as surfing or horse riding. Overseas internships are also becoming more popular.

A third trend involves the commercialization of study abroad. Study abroad has lost much of its academic focus and can now be viewed as a sort of tourist commodity that's light-heartedly bought and sold. Most of the physical and emotional hardships that were once associated with many overseas study programs have been significantly reduced, making most SA programs an easy tourist experience. Although many universities still sponsor academic years abroad, we see more and more short-term programs being offered as packaged tours, particularly during summer break.

**Some people criticize short-term study abroad programs as mere sightseeing excursions. What are your thoughts on this?**
Even sightseeing tours have value and I want young people to experience more of the world. Chances are, they'll learn new things while traveling. I think we should abandon the notion that overseas study has to be a stringent academic pursuit related to formal study. In my view, those preconceptions are outdated and too rigid. People can study abroad for many different purposes and also in many different ways.

**Some schools have little or no post-return component in their SA programs. As a consequence, many students seem to lose whatever linguistic gains they may have made overseas rather quickly. Do you have any concerns about this?**

Well, perhaps the lack of follow-up lessons in many SA programs is a curricular issue that should be addressed by school staff. Quite a few commercial SA programs do offer follow-up programs, but naturally these involve some expense.

Actually, I believe SA participants themselves should have a greater voice in deciding what sort of follow-up lessons they receive after returning. If students become really motivated to learn more about a foreign language or culture, after returning they'll find ways to continue their studies. On the other hand, if they are merely forced to participate in such programs, I doubt their effectiveness.

**In your view, what misconceptions do many Japanese have about study abroad?**

Since the term *ryugaku* is vague and encompasses many varied nuances, I hesitate to label any given notion of that word as a "misconception". These days some people term mere overseas trips as "study abroad" experiences. One misconception that Japanese do need to discard is the notion that some overseas destinations are somehow "superior" or "inferior" to others. Cultures simply cannot be ranked by any single yardstick. A few of the more prevalent misconceptions about study abroad among Japanese include:

1. **A belief that study abroad involves a homestay.** Many people even today mistakenly equate "study abroad" with a homestay experience. Although many SA programs do include homestays, this is not necessarily the case.

2. **A belief that extended academic study overseas is possible regardless of academic performance.** In Japan it's rare to expel students because of low grades. However, this is often not the case at overseas educational programs, particularly outside of sheltered foreign language classes. If a student is expelled from school, in most cases they'll lose their student visas and have to return home. Japanese studying overseas need to understand what the consequences are if their GPA drops below a certain point. Sometimes this is not explained clearly enough to students prior to departure.

3. **A belief that the academic standards of overseas courses are inferior to those in Japan.** In particular, Japanese secondary school students often worry whether their mathematics instruction overseas will fall below Japanese standards. The fact is that standards vary widely from place to place. At any rate, such fears appear to be diminishing.

**In 2005 you wrote, 'we should question whether studying abroad will foster an international sense or an ability to comprehend how foreigners and Japanese differ . . . by the time most people finish high school, they have culturally-determined identities. For this reason, it often takes conscious effort to overcome some cultural biases, but that's essential to foster internationalism' (p. 24). In light of this, could you briefly highlight what 'internationalism' means to you?**

*Kokusai-sei*, which might be translated in English as 'international sense', is a perplexing term to pin down. In my opinion, it involves appreciating one's native culture and language while maintaining curiosity and respect for differing cultures and languages. We have no choice about our
birthplace or parentage. To cultivate internationalism, we must be able to express our identities clearly - and also respect other expressions. Paradoxically, children who have been well-loved by their parents and grandparents up through their middle school years and who develop a clear sense of their own heritage seem to be ones most capable of adapting to diverse situations when studying abroad. I suspect they have an inner sense of security and basic self-esteem.

It can be said that foreigners living in Japan as well as children growing up in international households can become significantly "internationalized" even without formal study overseas.

There are cases of people growing up in very ordinary families whose parents lack any overseas experience becoming "internationalized" simply by developing a keen interest in foreign languages and cultures through such pursuits as reading books, communicating with foreigners on the Net, or becoming familiar with overseas teachers. Once there is a desire to understand foreign cultures and languages more deeply, "internationalism" arises spontaneously. In other words, even adults, without formal study overseas, can develop an international sense.

On page 25 of the same book you mention, "international exchanges in Japan are basically packaged projects for Japanese . . . their purpose is to make Japanese less embarrassed when traveling overseas - they do not foster internationalism in any true sense." How do you feel internationalism should be fostered?

Japanese universities are often perplexed about how to conduct international exchanges. Most so-called "international events" seem intent on instilling a feeling that "Japan is more fortunate than other countries" among participants from Japan. Here are three ideas about how I believe international awareness should be fostered:

(1) **Have more summer school programs at universities.** One option would be to have a bus trip in which Japanese students were paired off with international students via a buddy-system. Ideally, this trip should be a week, but even an overnight trip might do. The destination could be anywhere. It would be nice if students camped out in tents. Possibilities include various sightseeing spots in Tokyo, visiting earthquake-afflicted areas in Japan, or conducting exchange visits to other universities. The cost should be as low as possible so that students can cover their own expenses. The food needn't be fancy: rice balls and canned goods should suffice. I believe students should stay in places without electricity, water, or gas – a simple riverbed is fine. Too many Japanese are isolated by their gadgetry. Also, we need to realize that most of the people on this planet don't have fancy appliances. Each buddy-pair should be responsible for giving some kind of presentation during the excursion. With this basic set up, you'll start to notice a real difference in the interactions occurring. Some powerful alchemy can manifest once people are living together under the same roof with a common purpose!

(2) **Have Japanese and foreign students work side by side.** If international students are working someplace part time to cover their expenses, much can be gained by having Japanese students work along side with them at the same venue, even for a short period.

(3) **Have more Japanese teach JSL/JFL to foreigners.** If more Japanese taught their native language (either freely or cheaply) to others around the world it would foster valuable cross-cultural learning and friendships. We already see some Japanese interacting with peers from other countries on Internet social networking sites. Activities such as this not only stimulate an interest in JSL/JFL, they also enhance the image of Japanese students abroad.

You have also stated, "Things that are taken for granted while living in Japan may not appear so when visiting another country . . . whether or not Japanese can be called "international" depends on no small degree on the sort of discipline and education that they receive prior to going abroad" (2005, p. 25). What sort of pre-departure training do you
recommend before embarking on overseas study? Also, what do you feel should be emphasized in such programs?

Traveling around Africa prompted a major change in my thinking about this issue. In Africa, most people experience life without electricity, tap water, or gas – things which folks in Japan now take for granted. What I would like all Japanese going overseas to have is a sense of basic etiquette – they should be able to greet strangers politely. They also need a sense of integrity and a commitment to uphold the promises that they make, regardless of where a person is from. When others remark that these are common characteristics of Japanese, I feel happy. As you can see, these are not intellectual attributes; they are basic attitudes and guiding principles of behavior. A few things that those preparing to study abroad should learn include:

(1) **How to express basic greetings and show respect for the elderly.** It's helpful to know when to use common phrases such as "Thank you", "It was a feast", "I've finished", "Good morning" and so on to facilitate smooth communication. One should also demonstrate basic politeness in day-to-day interactions.

As a case in point, a while back I was traveling with some Canadian students in Hiroshima. We were interacting with teenagers from around the world and the Canadian teens greeted everyone politely. Later that day when we were on a street train, some of those Canadian teens gave up their seats promptly to elder folks. Witnessing this, the Japanese teachers were deeply impressed because most Japanese youngsters nowadays lack this sort of politeness.

(2) **A commitment to honor agreements made, to be on time, and endure hardships.** For success in study abroad, it is good to cultivate a habit of rising at a reasonable hour, maintaining a modicum of proper grooming, and developing inner steadfastness. One British headmaster recently told me, "These days Japanese students have become slovenly and they lack inner composure." I was both shocked and disappointed to hear his remark.

(3) **A capacity for critical thinking and lack of gullability.** One middle school student I was responsible for had lots of his personal belongings stolen at school. He also lent money to schoolmates who never bothered to pay him back. Even though he was attending a prestigious school in Switzerland, his teacher had to advise him to be less gullable and develop a degree of "street smarts". All too often, con artists overseas sense that Japanese are easy targets.

A similar situation happened with some middle school girls from Japan attending an international school in Italy. The Italian boys used sweet words to entice them, then quickly took advantage of them. Shrewder teenagers would have seen their ploy and avoided the unfortunate situation that occurred. In short, Japanese need to develop a capacity to critically assess the agendas of people they encounter. They also need to learn how to say "no" in ways that are emphatic, without being unduly rude.

You also mention, "The Internet and cell phone have dramatically changed some aspects of study abroad. Now it is far too easy for Japanese students overseas to complain to their parents on a daily basis about trifling matters, and this creates a real headache for those organizing study abroad programs. I encourage young people not to depend too much on their cell phones or computers when studying abroad since this may impede their ability to communicate face-to-face and resolve conflicts in real time. When studying abroad, a certain amount of cross-cultural friction is inevitable" (2005, p. 48). In light of that comment, what do you feel is the best way to cope with cross-cultural communication conflicts?
I have some ideas of how to deal with the rapid spread of mobile devices and Internet use. Some schools are now taking measures to limit the use of mobile by students. For example, a boarding school in America has banned student cell phone use. A Swiss boarding school has taken similar measures and I think there should be some restrictions regarding student cell phone use.

Letter writing has several advantages over electronic texting. Writers can organize their thoughts more systematically in letters than in e-texts. It is also time-consuming to reply to every single electronic message. Most of the minor gripes mentioned over cell phones work themselves out over time. In addition, there's a tendency to be overly swayed by the emotional tone of cell phone messages: to solve some problems, a degree of calm detachment is needed. The staff of EDICM repeatedly reminds parents with children studying abroad not to spoil their children by responding on the spot to all of their requests.

Most Japanese parents sending their kids overseas worry about issues such as personal safety, crime, or drug abuse. However you mention a different sort of risk associated with overseas study - the possibility that some kids might succumb to idle ennui and languor – a condition described in Japanese as "NEET" [not employed, not receiving education or training - in other words, idle] (2005, p.55). Could you briefly discuss this?

Well, obviously foreign students who do not attend school risk losing their student visas. Since the 1980s truancy has become a more serious problem with Japanese children – both inside and outside of Japan. During that period I talked with many truant students. A fair number of them felt glad to be overseas, even though they didn't want to attend school. Generally I suggested that they find a way to cover their own expenses rather than be a financial drain on their parents. I should point out many Japanese do graduate successfully from institutions overseas and often their parents are very pleased. It's easy to find examples of both success and failure with overses study.

Desperate parents are apt to implore, "I want my children to attend school instead of loafing off in their rooms!" However, some other parents are inclined to say, "If my kids don't want to go to school, then they shouldn't have to." Such children are more apt to be nonchalant about school attendance. However, the parents whom I've dealt with seem to want their children to be overseas rather than in Japan. In such situations, there's little need for contact other than handling occasional money transfers. On several occasions I've had to go to the USA at the request of parents to pick up their truant children. Generally speaking, such students do nothing except stay in their apartments all day long and hang with fellow Japanese. Since their visas have expired, they must leave as illegal immigrants. I've consulted some other study abroad personnel about this issue, and they have told me there are a significant number of "NEETs" overseas.

In the past if folks got bored, they used to read books or play sports. However, with the spread of Internet games, people are now more prone to stay indoors all the time without directly socializing with others. Many persons get stuck in a pattern of social withdrawal into virtual worlds. Some parents are not particularly bothered by this.

Could you explain what you meant when stating, "students will purchase hardship from the money they have used for study abroad" (2005, p. 87)? Also, what sort of advice do you believe schools should give students before they venture abroad?

A number of Japanese Fulbright scholars who studied in the USA after WWII have shared their stories with me. In the period of 1949-1971 there was a fixed exchange rate of one US dollar to 360 yen. During that period many Japanese had to struggle to continue their studies in the USA, but now they often regard those times as fond memories. The point I wish to make is that there's a certain value in going through some hardship.
These days when I ask university students planning to study abroad, "What hardships do you anticipate overseas?" most of them reply, "hardship is a drag!" They're focused solely on having fun. I'm tempted to say that the notion of "worthwhile hardship" is disappearing in Japan.

Japan has one of the highest standards of living in the world. As a consequence, anywhere you travel is likely to be less convenient in some respects than here. However, a friend recently told me, "Studying abroad in Japan is more inconvenient than other places". The perception of whether or not something is 'inconvenient' appears to depend on our background knowledge and expectations. Even though we might be dissatisfied with something at first, we can grow accustomed to it before long. After traveling extensively through Africa, I've come to regard simply having water to drink as a blessing. I believe people can become accustomed to anything.

You've written, "... overseas schools accepting international students tend to regard students as independent adults who are accountable for their actions. However, students in Japan generally aren't considered independent adults till they are twenty" (2005, p. 126). In your view, what's the best way to train people to be more independent when studying abroad?

I believe that parting from parents physically is one step towards independence and therefore study abroad is a way for minors to work towards independence. Indeed, many high school students' have moved towards greater independence as a result of overseas study for many years. However, my ideas have changed since 2005 when I wrote "even without much foreign language preparatory study, it's good to escape the confines of ones household and venture overseas." Now I've come to believe that it's natural for minors to be somewhat immature and dependent on their parents even after finishing high school.

Some overseas students make little (if any) linguistic progress while studying abroad. In the light of that, what do you think is the best way to learn a foreign language?

Whether or not students actually acquire foreign language skills while studying abroad depends primarily on their motivation to learn in my opinion. During the so-called 'bubble era' (1986-1991) in Japan when money was awash lots of Japanese were studying abroad. A fair number of those going overseas back then simply played around. However, in recent years as Japan's job market has gotten tighter and more companies are requiring high STEP-Eiken or TOEIC® scores among prospective employees, the situation has changed considerably. Now many Japanese are desperate to improve their test scores. It seems as if more people are motivated to learn English. Though fewer students are opting to study abroad because of financial constraints, the actual desire to learn foreign languages is growing in my opinion. I'm pleased that some of the "hungry spirit" of the post-war generation of Japanese is being revived.

In your 2005 book on study abroad, you emphasize the following three points: ① for success in study abroad, basic etiquette and commonsense are essential, ② it's important to stay positive, since new experiences will seem more enjoyable, and ③ Japanese traveling overseas should not discard their sense of Japanese-ness since persons lacking any clear sense of identity are generally not well regarded by others. Were there any other points you wished to emphasize?

Those are the basic points. However, the notion of "common sense" is a social construct that's difficult to explain. Also, I'm tempted to speculate about the relationship of those three factors previously mentioned. Perhaps we can say that ① + ③ create the conditions facilitating interactions with those from other countries. Also, I wish to underscore that a vigorous sense of curiosity when traveling abroad can facilitate our ability to stay positive.
I encourage more Japanese to study abroad not only for themselves or for their families, but also for the nation as a whole and indeed for the entire world. Only people with that sort of transpersonal attitude towards study abroad can succeed in the deepest sense of the word. With that frame of mind, even if they experience momentary setbacks or disappointments, they'll be able to return to Japan with a feeling of success and accomplishment.

References


WEBSITE INFORMATION

The following information is freely available via our website:

SIG Constitution
http://jalt-sa.org/con.htm

Information about Upcoming Events
http://jalt-sa.org/events.htm

Study Abroad Links
http://jalt-sa.org/links.htm