

## A contrastive case study of two study abroad participants: Exploring the interface between L2 identity and L2 motivation

二人の留学生の対照的なケーススタディ：  
外国語を学ぶ動機と外国語への主体性について

By Tim Newfields (Toyo University Faculty of Economics)

### Abstract

Most research on how study abroad impacts L2 identity and motivation use short-term time frames, typically comparing pre-departure attitudes with immediate post-return attitudes. This paper seeks to address those issues from a longer time frame. Specifically, it elucidates how a three-week study abroad program may have influenced the English speaking identities and desire to learn English of two participants from a qualitative perspective and a time span of 27 months after their return to Japan. Through semi-structured interviews and analyses of their social network sites, ways that both participants use (or don't use) English to mediate their world are outlined. It concludes by underscoring how career aspirations, EFL proficiency tests, social networks, and overseas excursions have shaped the L2 identities and English learning aspirations of the informants.

**Keywords:** study abroad washback, overseas study, L2 motivation, L2 identities, virtual identities, cyber-persona, identity negotiation

### 要旨

.. 通常の外国語への主体性と外国語を学ぶ動機の海外留学研究は短期のタイムフレームを使用して、出発直前と直後の態度での態度を比較しています。本論文では、ケーススタディのコンテキスト内で意図的サンプリングプロシージャを使用して、より長い時間枠からこれらの問題を解決します。具体的には、3週間のイギリス海外留学プログラムに参加した、二人の学生の帰国後27ヶ月にわたる軌跡を対比させる。本論は、彼らへの半構造化されたインタビューと、参加者が世界とつながるソーシャルネットワークサイトの詳細な分析から構成される。本論では、留学が情報提供者に与えたキャリア願望、英語能力検定試験への受験、ソーシャルネットワークへの参加、外国語への主体性についても言及する。

**キーワード:** 海外留学が及ぼす逆効果、海外留学、外国語を習う動機、主体的交渉術、外国語への主体性、仮想アイデンティティ、サイバー人格

This paper explores the relation between linguistic identities, virtual identities, and how one particular study abroad program may have affected some aspects of two participants' identity negotiation processes. Before mentioning the specific goals of this study, a few terms should be clarified.

### *Linguistic Identities*

The notion of "identity" has undergone significant shifts in recent decades. Broadly speaking, there has been an erosion of many essentialist understandings of a single monolithic identity with

the advent of post-structuralists such as Derrida (1967), Davies (1989), Norton (1995, 2000), and Butler (2005). Previously identity was conceptualized by Erikson (1968) as a stable construct that changed only a few times after adolescence. Now it is more commonly viewed as fluid, multi-faceted, and contextual. Indeed, Bauman's (2000) notion of "liquid modernity" is an apt way of describing the malleable and often relativistic ways that identities appear to be acquired and discarded. Today post-structuralists tend to regard identity as self-reflexive, co-constructed, and kaleidoscopic. Moreover, language is generally viewed as more than a system of rule-based structures; it is also regarded as a primary means by which individuals negotiate their identities and engage in social interactions. Not surprisingly, the process of switching from one language to another frequently involves a subtle persona shift, as well as a shift in social allegiances. It is for this reason that Bauman (1977) describes language as a way of "performing an identity".

The term "L2 identity" has been used by Solé (2004), Block (2007), and Verity (2007). It is akin to what Dörnyei (2009) terms the "L2 self". In this paper, L2 identity will be described as:

a set of connected discourses arising from iterative transactions in a second language.

These tend to foster the notion of a self with a set of norms and a distinct social identity.

As concrete examples of this principle, the male respondent in this study – who adopted the pseudonym Johann – describes himself as a speaker of both Japanese and "Hiberno-English". He identifies with both speech communities and he would be described by Weinreich (1952, 1979) as a "sub-coordinate bilingual". In other words, his primary interface with the world is in Japanese, but he can also interact in English at a CEFR B2 level (Council of Europe, 2001). By contrast, the female respondent in this study – whom we shall call Jun – describes herself as monolingual. During her interview she stated "英語は殆どできない" [I can hardly speak English] and her social network interactions occur entirely in Japanese. When there is an absolute necessity, she does manage to interact in English at a CEFR A1+ level, but she regards her English-speaking self as "幼稚" [*childish*] and "小学生のよう" [*like an elementary school student*]. A question worth reflecting on is "how did these two individuals develop such different L2 identities?" Although they are similar in age and educational backgrounds, their L2 identities appear to differ markedly.

### ***Cultural Identities***

Cultural identity can be understood as the facets of a culture that an individual identifies with. This may include such diverse elements as religious affiliations, political views, economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, fashion preferences, culinary habits, or any other social artifacts to which a person has an affinity. Cultural identity is akin to what Tajfel (1974) refers to as "social

identity" and it has been discussed at length by Byram (1998), Pennycook (2007) and Otcu (2010). The term "sociocultural identity" is preferred by Duff and Uchida (1997) since it underscores the fluid interface between culture and society. Speaking and writing can be interpreted as ways of asserting one's cultural identity. Listening and reading are ways that the cultural identities of others can – almost unknowingly – seep into our consciousness.

To contrast the cultural identities of the two informants in this study, Johann expressed an avid interest in Japanese history and *anime*, Irish beer, British rock and football leagues, as well as several prominent Japanese writers. In doing so, he also expressed an amalgam of allegiances towards Japanese, Irish, and British cultural artifacts. On the other hand nearly of all Jun's interests hovered around things Japanese. The sole exceptions were charismatic vocal artists such as Kim Hyung Jun (South Korean), Lady Gaga (American), and Daniel Powter (Canadian). In other regards, she displayed a solid preference for artifacts that are Japanese rather than foreign. Indeed, Jun chose to describe herself in this way:

わたしは一般的なごく普通の日本女性です。

[I am a very ordinary Japanese woman with no special abilities.]

### ***Virtual Identities***

In the context of this paper, virtual identities refer to the cyber personas individuals adopt when presenting themselves online. According to Jones (1997) a virtual identity represents an idealized mask or façade of how one would like to appear. This hypothesis is rejected by Back et al. (2010), who regard personal accounts in social networks such as Facebook as accurate real-life portrayals of individuals. Regardless of which hypothesis is valid, in this paper all discussions of "virtual identity" shall be limited to how the informants depict themselves via one specific social network site: Facebook.

It is possible to display multiple virtual identities via different Internet portals. Social networking sites such as MIXI and Tumblr enable individuals to adopt *avatars* (fictitious identities) affording a degree on anonymity. This study mentions how two individuals from one study abroad cohort represented themselves via Facebook in January 2012. A summary of their Facebook sites in terms of Japanese vs. non-Japanese content appears in Table 1.

Table 1. *The Facebook Representations of the Informants in This Study in January 2012.*

Informant	Content Language(s)	Friends	Likes	Photos	Maps
Johann	~65% Japanese ~35% English	243 total (95 Non-Japanese)	23 (4 Non-Japanese)	1693 (1505 Non-Japanese)	91 (68 Non- Japanese)
Jun	100% Japanese	123 total (10 Non-Japanese)	50 (3 Non-Japanese)	41 (29 Non-Japanese)	5 (1 Non- Japanese)

The photo icons at the top of the Facebook pages of the two informants suggest the cyber-identities each is trying to manifest. Johann has an image of himself gazing at the Atlantic Ocean from the granite cliffs of Moher, Ireland. In this, he projects himself as an explorer, bravely facing the edge of a vast ocean. By contrast, Jun has chosen the image of two kittens stuck in cups as her identity marker. In doing so, she manifests qualities of playful mischievousness and cuteness. Both photo icons can also be interpreted as gendered discourses (Sunderland, 2004), but that is a topic for another paper.

### ***Investment and Identity***

Norton (2000) has employed an economic metaphor to describe the process of identity development. She speaks of learning new material as an "investment" and notes that the more deeply one invests in learning something, the more that it tends to become "iterated" (structured from repetition) as a part of one's identity.

The two informants in this study exhibited markedly different investment patterns with respect to English study. Even while she was in England, Jun spent most of her time chatting with other classmates in Japanese – she simply did not feel comfortable speaking English. By contrast, Johann made a conscious effort to socialize extensively in English, even if his utterances were awkward at times. Going to Warwick gave him the confidence to enroll in further study abroad programs. He studied for the TOEFL after returning to Japan and subsequently attended a university in Ireland for a full academic year in 2010. Not satisfied with that achievement, upon returning to Japan he invested further time studying for the TOEFL, eventually securing admission to a prestigious graduate school in Japan.

Jun, by contrast, stopped studying English as soon as her sophomore year foreign language requirements were completed. In her view, formal English learning did not seem like an efficient time investment. During the interview she commented:

英語は得意ではありません。うまくなりたいのですが、なかなか上達しません。私はこれからの仕事に役立つことを学びたいと思います。例えば、ビジネス用語をもっと勉強したいと思っています。  
[I'm no good at English. I've tried to become fluent, but haven't had much success. I want to focus on things that will be useful when I work. For instance, I want to learn more business Japanese.]

Norton's notion of "investment" can be likened to the widely used concept of "motivation". Metaphorically, it can be regarded as a sort of "fuel" enabling one to progress towards a specific goal.

## Research Questions

This paper addresses three basic research questions:

- (1) How do the informants in this study differ in terms of their L2 identities?
- (2) What factors appear to have fostered the informants' L2 motivation?
- (3) What factors appear to have constrained the informants' L2 motivation?

## Method

### *Sampling*

Although some universities have ungraded "pass/fail" study abroad programs (Trooboff, Cressey, & Monty, 2004), Toyo University's Economics Faculty program is graded. Participants receive not only academic credits when completing a program, but also grade points.

Of the 25 participants in the 2009 program, only one student received a "S/A+" grade. 8 participants got "As" and 10 received "Bs". "C" grades were awarded to the remaining 6 students. Examining the grading distribution, I decided to interview the first person with the highest grade that consented to be interviewed, and then the first person with the lowest grade that also offered his/her consent. This contrastive study was limited to two informants for practical reasons.

In January 2012 I began the process of soliciting informants via Facebook. The reason I chose Facebook was because many of the informants' email and cell phone addresses had changed since 2009. By contrast, Facebook identities remain relatively stable. When seeking respondents for this research project, to reduce the possibility that the informants would not respond due to L2 language anxiety (Iizuka, 2011), the initial Facebook contacts were made in Japanese. That message appears in Appendix A, along with an English translation.

The rationale for using Facebook is that it offers a "glass window" to gaze at the informants unobtrusively: several times a week I could read what each informant was posting and observe how they were interacting with other online "friends". I could also ask for clarification of issues that arose during their interviews unobtrusively in a language of their choice.

The person with the highest grade in the 2009 group immediately consented to be interviewed. I was unable to locate the first two persons with "C" grades on Facebook. The third person I contacted never responded to my request. The fourth person – Jun – consented to be interviewed, provided that the interview was in Japanese and that she could also bring a friend. I agreed to those conditions, since informant comfort was a prime concern.

### ***Informants***

Since the goal of this study was to contrast two study abroad program participants over a long time span, participants from my university's 2009 study abroad program were selected as the informant pool. That program would be classified by Engle and Engle (2003, p. 10) as a "Level Two: Short-Term Study" with only limited cross-cultural integration activities over a span of three weeks. Since I was a chaperon for that program, I had detailed knowledge of the participants. Also, the fact that at least some of the participants would be in their final undergraduate year and hence relatively easy to contact was a further reason for using this sample.

Basic information about the informants is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. *A Demographic Overview of the Informants in This Study at the Time of the Interview.*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Yr.	Nationality	Major	TOEIC / TOEFL iBT Score
"Johann"	M	21	4 <sup>th</sup>	Japanese	Economics	865 / (over 70)
"Jun"	F	22	4 <sup>th</sup>	Japanese	Economics	"around 400" / never taken

### ***Instruments***

Two instruments were used in this research. One was a semi-structured interview in the informant's language of choice. This instrument was based on the questions contained in similar interviews by Kim (2006, 2011), Elola and Oskoz (2008), Stewart (2010), and Fryer (2012). The core questions comprising that interview are in Appendix B.

A brief word about the translation of this interview should be made. After a draft version of the English items was completed, I translated the items into Japanese and then had two Japanese bilinguals check the translation. The Japanese version was then back-translated into English by a different pair of English/American bilinguals. The English wording was then adjusted to make it more congruent with the Japanese. Finally, the back translations were further forward translated by two different Japanese to insure the conceptual equivalence of both versions. This is similar to the procedure recommended by Chen (2009) for translating bilingual surveys.

The second instrument used in this study consisted of the Facebook pages of the two respective informants. Their Facebook pages were analyzed according to the following criteria: (1) the ratio of Japanese to English posts, (2) the ratio of Japanese to non-Japanese "friends", (3) the ratio of Japanese to non-Japanese "likes", (4) the ratio of Japanese to non-Japanese photos, and (5) the "basic information" contained online. I also kept track of the Facebook messages and online chats that I had with each informant.

## ***Procedure***

After letters of invitation were sent and both informants agreed to participate in the study, I exchanged Facebook mail with them regularly and also engaged in occasional keyboard chats. If the informants wrote in English, I responded in English. If they wrote in Japanese, I responded in that language. Johann chose to consistently communicate in English and Jun remained in Japanese. After a modicum of rapport was established, I suggested separate face-to-face interviews.

Both interviews were held in January 2012 in Tokyo and the interview with Johann lasted 45 minutes while Jun's was just 30 minutes. To minimize tension, I avoided tape-recording the interviews. Instead, I wrote unobtrusively 3-4 times during each interview, then jotted down as much as possible that I could remember after each interview was finished. Although audiotaped transcriptions would have afforded better phonetic accuracy, the goal of this research was not a detailed speech analysis. Also, I believe the informants would have been less forthcoming if they knew every word was being recorded. For this study, unrecorded interviews seemed like the most appropriate methodology.

## **Results**

Let us now compare the L2 motivation of the two informants in terms of the following five factors that appeared to have had impacted their English L2 identities and L2 motivation: (1) career aspirations, (2) social interactions, (3) touristic motives, (4) intrinsic rewards, and (5) proficiency tests. The fact that most of these have also been noted by Fryer (2012) in his analysis of one successful study abroad participant should be conceded. I acknowledge that information from previous research has influenced my categorizations. Each factor will be briefly highlighted.

### ***(1) Career Aspirations***

Johann and Jun have chosen markedly different career paths. As a consequence they conceptualize their L2 "future selves" (Dörnyei, 2009, 10) in vastly different ways. Whereas Johann plans to enter a graduate school to get his Ph.D. in economics this spring, Jun had more a modest goal of becoming an "office clerk" (事務員) at a small company after graduation. Speaking of his career goals, Johann reflected:

Actually, I hesitate to tell my long-term goals to others. The fact is I want to become the mayor of [NAME OF CITY] . . . so I need to take an unusual career path. After graduate school, maybe I'll become a public servant or maybe work for a volunteer group or do some social welfare. . . I do not want to focus just on moneymaking: I want to do something for my community.

Jun's aspirations focused on domestic concerns rather than career building. Early in the interview she remarked:

大きな野心はあまりありません。ごく普通であれば幸せです。30歳までには結婚して、幸せな家庭を築きたいです。金持ちになりたいは思いません。家族が幸せであれば良いと思います。

[I don't have any big ambitions. Very ordinary happiness is fine with me. I want to marry by age 30 and raise a happy family. I don't expect to become rich, but if my family is happy that's okay.]

Johann recognized that English as important not only for his success in graduate school, but a key ingredient in his future marketability. On January 13, 2012 he made this Facebook posting:

wanna say one of my selling pont [sic] is that I can speak Chinese, Korean as well as English fluently when a job interview a year later.

By contrast, during her interview Jun remarked:

将来、英語を使う機会はあまりないと思います。たまに海外旅行やボランティア活動をするぐらいかしら。

[In the future I don't think I will have any opportunities to use English. I'll probably use it just for occasional overseas trips or perhaps international volunteer projects.]

## (2) *Social Interactions*

During their stay in England, Johann and Jun were assigned to quite different host families. This may have had had some impact on their subsequent language learning histories. For 18 days Johann lived with a host family with two British youths approximately his age, and he enjoyed chatting with them regularly. Reflecting on that experience, he remarked:

Warwick was the first time I discovered English is a living language used for communication. Intellectually, I knew this before going overseas – but at Warwick I *jikkan shita* [felt this keenly and directly]. . . I used English to communicate with my host family. My host family's son had the same interest in *anime* [animation] as me and we'd often chat in pubs about *anime* . . . I learned a lot of English relaxing and chatting in pubs. . . the only bad thing about that program is there weren't many chances to talk with other students on campus: most were on summer holiday.

On the other hand, Jun describes her host parent – an affable, elderly widow – quite differently:

私のホストママは優しくかったけれど、あまり上手くコミュニケーションがとれませんでした。大抵、テレビの前に座っていたり、食事をしながら短い会話をしました。もっと話したかったのですが、語彙が少なかったので、できませんでした。

[My host mother was kind, but I couldn't communicate so well with her. Mostly we sat in front of the telly or had short conversations during meals. I wanted to speak more, but the words would not come out.]



In other words, Jun felt that her lack of English hampered her ability to interact socially. Rather than risk making mistakes, she would sometimes be silent if her partner could not understand Japanese. When she went to Vietnam for a 2-week volunteer project in 2010, she also felt it was difficult to sustain long conversations in English. However, since English was also a foreign language for the Vietnamese students that she interacted with, Jun mentioned that in some ways it was easier to talk with them than with native speakers:

[出会ったベトナム人]は、あまり難しい単語を使いませんでした。彼らは訛りがありましたが、だんだん彼らの話に慣れてきました。彼らは英語が完全でなかったので、私の英語の間違いをそんなに気にしなかったと思います。

[... They did not use very big words. Their accent was different – but gradually I could get used to that. I probably felt more relaxed about making English mistakes because they were also making mistakes.]

### (3) *Touristic Motives*

Johann and Jun share a common interest in travel. Since English is a lingua franca of many tourist venues, both were exposed to English during their travels. On January 15, 2012 Johann remarked, "My motivation for Warwick was half travel, half English study" and since that initial overseas adventure he has visited a dozen other European countries. This spring he is planning to travel to four Asian countries and he'll likely travel to the USA during summer break. By contrast, Jun made one short trip to Hong Kong Disneyland in 2010 and a 2-week trip to Vietnam the same year with a Japanese volunteer network known as the Never-ending International workCamps Exchange (NICE). Whereas Johann sometimes travels abroad alone or with non-Japanese, Jun is generally surrounded by Japanese when overseas. Jun made all of her travel arrangements for both trips in Japanese and ventured outside of her Japanese group only occasionally. She did manage to have limited contact with several Vietnamese university students. Both of Jun's trips provided some exposure to English, and she expressed some interest in participating in additional international volunteer projects in the future. As soon as she saves up enough money, she wants to go to India.

### (4) *Intrinsic Rewards*

At one point in the interview Johann noted how an intrinsic sense of satisfaction came from reading material in English related to his primary interest, economics. In late 2011 he was actually reading Gray and Arrow's *International Perspectives on the Irish Economy* (1997) and though he confessed that it presented much difficulty, he also indicated that understanding at least parts of it afforded great satisfaction. At other times, he expressed a similar sense of pleasure from understanding episodes of the popular BBC podcast series, *The Economist*.

Jun's rewards came from more modest accomplishments. A few times a year she would exchange messages from her Warwick host mother or from Vietnamese Facebook friends, and Jun said those exchanges were fulfilling.

It would appear that L2 correspondence is less threatening to Jun than L2 face-to-face encounters: she preferred to have ample time to decipher messages to/from Japanese and consult her dictionary at leisure. Indeed, in Jun's case her L2 identity does not appear to be evenly distributed across all four language skills: she is decisively more confident about her reading/writing skills than she is about her oral/aural skills.

### (5) *Proficiency Tests*

Many study abroad scholarship and placement decisions are made on the basis of foreign language proficiency tests. Johann understood this clearly and soon after returning from Warwick University began studying for the TOEFL. He was reluctant to specify his precise TOEFL score, but January 2010 he obtained a TOEFL score that was sufficient for him attend Dublin City University for a year. Soon after returning, he resolved to enter a first-rate graduate school. Here too, the English proficiency exams serve as a gatekeeping criterion for admission. Johann concedes it was hard for him to raise his TOEFL scores, but remarked that the test gave him an incentive to learn many academic words that he otherwise would not have encountered. The following motto from his Facebook page may offer a clue about Johann's attitude to tests:

Your enemies make you stronger. To fail to try amounts to accepting defeat.

In a macho, almost samurai sort of way Johann seems to regard tests metaphorically as "enemies" to conquer and he does not want to be "defeated" by any low-test scores.

On the other hand, Jun's feelings about tests are probably more typical of most Toyo University students. On January 27<sup>th</sup> she stated:

試験は、嫌いです。そして TOEIC や TOEFL は 難し過ぎると思います。それだけでなく、テストの内容自身もそんなに面白くありません。英語が大事だと解っていても、私は苦手です。

[I dislike tests. Moreover, the TOEIC and TOEFL are simply too difficult. Not only that: the test content itself isn't so interesting. I know that English is important, but it is not my forte.]

This suggests that tests had very different washback patterns on Johann and Jun. For Johann, English proficiency tests provided benchmarks to aspire towards. Recently when he got a 895 TOEIC score, he felt that was not good enough. On January 15, 2012 he stated, "I want to get over 900". For Jun, tests merely provided confirmation that English was a subject she was not gifted at.

Even though she intellectually understood the need for the gate-keeping function of tests, emotionally she described them as "distasteful" (不愉快).

### ***Demotivating Factors***

Several times during his interview, I tried to get Johann to specify things that have dampened his L2 motivation. In each case, he seemed reluctant to go into specifics: he preferred to focus on things that motivate him. With stoicism he remarked, "I do not worry about failures." His capacity to shrug off setbacks and criticisms has enabled Johann to tenaciously move towards his goals.

I did notice one example of task overload: in 2010 I requested Johann's help in translating a complex document. That document was clearly over his head and rather than decline my request, for several weeks he simply avoided contact. On hindsight, I believe he was indirectly telling me that the task was too daunting. When we met again a few months after the incident, the whole affair was ignored. In other words, failures are buried in silence – whereas successes are mentioned publicly. Johann's Facebook postings display the same pattern: he mentions accomplishments periodically, but setbacks or failures tend to get buried in silence.

By contrast, Jun was more forthcoming about factors that may have inhibited her L2 motivation. Long prior to her study abroad experience, she was drilled in a tradition emphasizing formal correctness and translation skills. When she found herself unable to interact in realistic time frames in L2 conversations, she developed a belief that she was poor at English. Jun also seemed conscious of the fact that she was one of the least adept L2 speakers in her study abroad cohort. Rather than attempt to compete with her peers in English, she felt it was easier to interact with them in her L1. In doing so, she underscored a point made by Kinginger (2009, p. 112, 113): not all study abroad participants actually position themselves as second language learners; some feel more secure by clinging to their L1 interaction patterns. During her final SA presentation, Jun wrote out the main ideas of her presentation, then attempted to memorize small chunks, relying on written notes and support from peers to guide her through her short spiel. When traveling to Hong Kong, she mentioned that she also relied on either written communication or non-verbal gestures to communicate with non-Japanese. Very basic shopping transactions were handled directly in English.

## **Conclusion**

### ***Limitations of this Research***

Before concluding this paper, some of its limitations should be acknowledged. First, this study is based on just two informants with markedly different career trajectories. Most participants in the study abroad program at my university fall in between these extremes. Indeed, these informants were chosen precisely because they represented outliers in terms of grading. A more normative picture could have likely been obtained by examining respondents with average grades.

Second, an inherent artifact exists in the sampling procedure of this study: only Facebook users were pooled for this research. Since roughly half of the university seniors in do not use that social network service, they were excluded *a priori* from this study. Future studies should probably employ different sampling methods. This particular paper adopted a purposive sampling procedure within a case context (Dencomb, 2007, p. 39-41). Different results would likely have been obtained by different research designs and/or sampling methods.

Third, the possibility of transcription artifacts in this study must be acknowledged. Since the data is based on hand-written notes rather than exact phonetic transcriptions, a degree of distortion likely occurred. I'm still struggling to find a way to obtain the accuracy of taped recordings without sacrificing the naturalness of informal discussions. As Woodward et al. (2006) suggest, probably the best solution is to think of data collection as an ongoing, iterative process of confirming and reconfirming evidence as well as theories: continuing informant engagement is essential. In this study, I was able to reconfirm a number of the points raised in interviews with the informants via Facebook. On hindsight, more multiple face-to-face interviews would have been desirable, but time constraints did not make this feasible.

### ***Main Findings***

This study has contrasted the trajectories of two different study abroad participants. In one case, we see how study abroad provided an important springboard that sharpened Johann's interest in English learning, world travel, foreign cultures, and international economics. His L2 identity appears to be growing as he forms new bonds with other English language learners from around the world. At this same time, he is also expressing an interest in learning Chinese and Korean. At some point in the future, those interests might compete with the amount of time he is able to invest in English. Although Johann displays many of the characteristics of gifted language learners suggested by the Modern Language Association of Victoria (1972, p. 1-2), he will need to make many investment decisions regarding English and other foreign languages in the future.

Johann mentions that interactions with other university students his age or just slightly older were particularly helpful in strengthening his L2 motivation and in forming his identity as English

speaker. Murphey and Arao (2001) also describe near peer role models as having a more profound impact on most learners than, for example, interactions with teachers or host parents. Reflecting on his experiences in Dublin, Johann remarked:

It is a good experience for me to talk with intelligent people in graduate school. . . on the other hand, I wanna avoid really heavy drinkers. Some people in Ireland have a serious alcohol problem.

Although Jun is less gregarious than Johann, Jun also appears to enjoy interacting with "near peers" whose language ability does not too differ too markedly from hers. She is conscious of the fact that she is not particularly adept at English and needs more exchanges with others of similar age, interest, and English ability to bolster her confidence. Whether or not this will happen after she starts work is an open question.

Study abroad often represents a significant investment in time, money, and mental resources. For some, it is a critical incident that significantly changes their life trajectory. For others, it represents little more than a brief touristic excursion with no directly discernable long-term impact. The two informants in this study seem to represent different extremes of the potential of study abroad to foster change. As a result of his SA experience, Johann sees now himself as a budding international economics scholar. Jun, by contrast, regards herself as a very average Japanese woman whose ambition is to marry within seven years and have children. She believes she will only use English only a few more times in her life when making traveling abroad. Having said that, we should remember that the L2 identities are never fixed. As working conditions, friendships, and interests change, people continually "re-negotiate" their L2 identities.

### **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to Yasuhiro Kondoh, James Lassegard, Noriko Saitoh, James Short, Kaya Taguchi, and Melissa Tsuchiya for validating the translations in Appendix B.

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## Appendix A. Initial Contact Letter and English Translation

2009年度ウォーリック語学研修経験者各位

あなたのウォーリック大学の留学プログラムから2年以上の月日がたちました。皆さんにあの経験が役立っていることを願っていますが、それについて30分弱インタビューに応じていただくようお願いします。目的は留学の長期的影響を探るという学術的な価値のある調査です。もちろんすべての情報は匿名で、参加は任意であり、調査は今月いっぱい行う予定です。白山の私の研究室（2号館9階 経済学部30研究室）またはカフェテラスでも結構ですので、ご都合をお知らせください。友だちと一緒に来訪していただいても構いません。この研究に参加協力していただける方は、フェイスブックや電子メールのいずれかでご連絡ください。私のメールアドレスはXXXXXです。たくさんの方のご協力をお願いいたします。

Dear 2009 Warwick University Study Abroad Program Participant,

Over two years have passed since the study abroad program at the University of Warwick has been completed and I hope that the experience has been valuable in some respects. Sometime at your convenience this month I would like to talk with you about that program, either in Japanese or English. The interview will take less than 30 minutes and the goal is to ascertain the long-term effects of study abroad. All information is confidential and participation is voluntary. The interview can be held at any of the cafeterias on campus or in my office on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of Building 2, in room #30. If you wish to bring a friend along, that is okay.

If you are willing to help me by participating in this study, could you contact me either via Facebook or email? My email address is XXXXX. Thank you very much for your consideration.

## Appendix B. Core Interview Questions

### I. Organizational

1. Would you prefer to speak English or Japanese during this interview?

**NOTE:** The interview was conducted in the informant's language of choice. Johann chose to speak English, but Jun expressed a preference for Japanese.

## **II. Past conditions**

1. **Why did you decide to attend the Warwick Study Abroad Program [in the U.K.] three years ago?**  
3年前のウォーリック海外研修プログラムに何故、参加しましたか？
2. **Have you attended any other study abroad programs besides Warwick?**  
ウォーリック以外の海外研修プログラムに参加したことがありますか？
3. **Since entering university, have your feelings or thoughts about English study changed?**  
大学に入学してから、英語の勉強に対する気持ちや考え方に変化はありましたか。
4. **When you were in high school, how did you feel about English study?**  
高校時代、英語の勉強についてどう思っていましたか？
5. **Tell me about any really good or any really bad English teachers you have had.**  
今まで特に良かった英語の先生の授業、あるいはひどかった英語の授業について教えてください。
6. **How well do your parents speak English? Have either of them been abroad?**  
ご両親はどのぐらい英語が話せますか？また、ご両親のどちらかでも海外に行ったことがありますか？
7. **Can you tell me why you created a Facebook page?**  
なぜフェイスブックのページを作ったか、教えてください？

## **III. Current conditions**

1. **Have your feelings about English study changed since Warwick?**  
ウォーリックの研修後、英語を学びたいという気持ちに変化はありましたか？
2. **To what extent, if any, do you feel "different" when speaking English and Japanese?**  
英語で話す時と日本語で話す時の気持ちは、どのように違いますか？
3. **How would you describe yourself as a person?**  
あなた自身をどのような人物だと思えますか？
4. **Are you satisfied with your current level of English ability?**  
あなたは、現在の英語能力に満足していますか？
5. **At this point would you say that your English is getting better, worse, or remaining stable at the same level?**  
現時点で、英語能力は上達していますか、それとも下降していますか、それとも変化はありませんか。
6. **Are you studying English or any other foreign languages now? (If so, describe how.)**  
今でも英語や他の外国語を勉強していますか？（もししているならば、どのようにしています？）
7. **Only for informants who answered positively to the previous question:**  
**On average, how much time do you spend every week on foreign language study? /studies?**  
平均して毎週何時間英語や他の外国語を勉強していますか？
8. **What do you remember most about the study abroad program at Warwick?**  
ウォーリック海外研修プログラムで一番心に残っているものは何ですか？
9. **Do you have regular contact with any non-Japanese? (If so, describe it.)**  
日本人以外の人で、定期的に連絡をとっている人はいますか。（もしそうであれば、教えてください）
10. **How have you changed over the last three years?**  
この3年間あなたはどのように変わりましたか？
11. **What do you think is necessary for success in study abroad?**  
海外留学を成功させるためには何が必要だと思いますか？

## **IV. Future Goals**

1. **Tell me about your hopes and dreams for the future.** 将来の夢や希望について語ってください。
2. **In what situations do you think you might use English in the future?**  
将来、どのような状況で英語を使うと思いますか。
3. **How likely are you to travel overseas again?**  
再び海外に行く可能性はどのくらいありますか。