

How has the "L2 Self" of learners of Japanese changed through their study abroad?

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Abstract

This paper investigates how the learners of Japanese at a British university changed their motivation and view on learning Japanese through one-year study abroad in Japan. It focuses on the Dörnyei's notion of the "self" in his L2 Motivational Self System. 30 students studying in Japanese universities were surveyed using two open-ended online questionnaires, one completed at the end of their first term and the other completed towards the end of their study abroad. Eight of the 30 students both completed the questionnaires and provided their names. Two of the eight appeared to have made significant changes during the year. A qualitative analysis of their comments revealed noticeably different degree how they had consolidated their integrative motivation, enhanced their self-confidence and self-efficacy, and transformed from "Ought-to L2 Self" to "Ideal L2 Self". This was dependent on social and personal communication networks, experience of acceptance and the integration of academic knowledge and their actual experience of Japanese culture.