

## 【研究論文】

### Motivational Changes through Study Abroad Experience in the U.K.

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#### 要旨

本研究では日本人大学生の対象に、短期留学が参加者の英語学習に対する動機付けに影響を与えるか、また参加者の動機付けが帰国後も持続するかを分析した。具体的には、量的アプローチとして Process Model of L2 Motivation (Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998)の枠組みを利用して、留学初日、留学最終日、そして留学帰国3ヵ月後において Motivational Factors Questionnaire (Ryan, 2009)の質問紙を同様の学生に3回実施した。その結果、international contact, interest in foreign languages, travel orientation, intended learning effortの項目で統計上の有意な差が見られ、留学初日と比べ留学帰国3ヶ月後において参加者の英語学習に対する動機付けが上がる結果となった。つまり、短期留学を経験したが帰国後も英語学習に対する動機付けを持続させることが分かった。

Keywords: motivation, short-term study abroad programme, quantitative approach

キーワード：動機付け、短期留学、量的アプローチ

#### Introduction

The Japanese government has pushed students to study abroad as a national policy to increase the country's international competitiveness. Study abroad programmes have been seen as the best means to learn English because learners could put themselves in an ideal environment which gives them extended exposure to English input from native teachers and host families. Previous research on study abroad mainly reports on a general positive gain in terms of language and cultural awareness. However, little research has been conducted into students' motivational changes of learning English after returning back to Japan. In this paper, I am going to focus on a four-week short-course exchange programme for Japanese students in England. I would like to see whether or not even short courses can encourage Japanese learners to

maintain their motivation for learning English for a longer period of time. This investigation will be valuable not only for the Japanese government but also for English educators who may wish to recommend study abroad to Japanese learners.

## **1. Literature review**

### **1.1 Study abroad and the Japanese ELT context**

Although study abroad programmes have been reported to have had effective aspects for language learners, Tanaka (2007) pointed out that Japanese learners did not have as many opportunities to use English outside the classroom as previous research had suggested because of a lack of linguistic proficiency, as he showed through the example of a Japanese student's interaction with a host family. Wilkinson (2002) explained that learners expected their host families to play a role similar to that of a language instructor and to take the initiative in conversations outside the classroom. Japanese learners tend to think of English teachers as facilitators and initiators, as English education in Japan is often represented in terms of 'teacher-centered classrooms'. The significant expectations Japanese students bring to the language learning environment easily seems to lead them to get nervous once the real setting turns out to be different from their prior beliefs.

Yashima (2009a) notes that although research on the language-acquisition dimension of study has been widely conducted there are relatively few research studies on affective variables such as 'anxiety' and 'willingness to communicate' in relation to study abroad. She investigated how a few weeks' international volunteer work impacted on the emotional experiences of Japanese students of English by using interviews and the Motivational Factors Questionnaire (MFQ) developed by Ryan (2009). She pointed out that students who had studied abroad previously showed a lower level of anxiety and a higher level of 'willingness to communicate' than those who had no previous experience of study abroad. This meant that Japanese students who had only participated in domestic English education showed more negative affect than those who had spent time in education outside Japan. There seemed to be a strong relationship between students' previous English learning experiences in Japan and their affective response to the international volunteer programme.

## 1.2 Conceptualising L2 motivation

Research by Gardner and Lambert, and especially their publication in 1972, has had a great impact on L2 motivation study. Their well-known concept of ‘integrativeness’, which was defined as “reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group” (Gardner and Lambert 1972, cited in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011,p.2), has been strongly associated with social psychological research and explored using statistical approaches. In Gardner and Lambert’s L2 framework, integratively- motivated students have a positive view of the L2 and an expectation to identify with the L2 community which leads to a positive evaluation of the learning environment. However, over the past few decades, alternative insights into L2 motivation have been provided. Some researchers have questioned the dichotomy in Gardner’s (1985) motivation theory because he treated instrumental motivation, which is defined as “the degree of effort a learner puts into learning an L2 as a result of the desire to achieve some functional goal” (Ellis, 1997, p.140), as the utilitarian counterpart of integrative motivation. Ushioda (1998 and 2001) emphasised the need to explore the language learning and motivational processes over time, because the customary approach using a measurable empirical test only tends to show ‘snapshot motivational indices’ (Ibid 2001, p. 95).

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) have provoked considerable debate regarding Gardner and Lambert’s integrative concept in view of the current ‘global’ community. They questioned whether the integrative concept can be adopted if the learners do not have any specific group which they want to be a member of. In EFL countries such as Japan, there are few opportunities to communicate with native English speakers outside the classroom and it seems difficult for students to have a desire to assimilate with other ethnic groups. Yashima (2002 and 2009b) proposed the concept of ‘international posture’ for Japanese learners of English, which refers to how Japanese students are aware of foreign affairs and are willing to go abroad in order to interact with native English speakers without narrowing the frame of reference to a specific ethnic group. Dörnyei and Csizer’s (2002) work using longitudinal research on schoolchildren in Hungary proposed that in the absence of a salient L2 group in the learners’ context with which learners want to identify themselves, the concept of ‘integrativeness’ in respect of L2 motivation cannot fully be supported. Instead, they

suggest that learners can relate to ‘the *identification process* within the individual’s *self-concept*’ more effectively than attempts at identification with other referential groups (Dörnyei and Csizer, 2002, p.453). Dörnyei (2009) also proposed a new L2 Motivational Self System, which is united with Higgins’ ‘possible selves’ theory based on a learner’s *ideal self* and *ought-to self*. Possible selves are captured as ‘the future-oriented aspects of self-concept’, which includes the positive and negative selves that are ‘the desired and feared images of the self already in a future state’ (Oyserman and James 2009, cited in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p.81). In addition to the Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self, which relate to the traditional concepts including integrative motivation and extrinsic motivation, Dörnyei (2009) suggests a third constituent in the ongoing learning environment, since some learners’ motivations are triggered not by self-images but by successful learning experiences. Ryan (2008) indicated that Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self system acts as a go-between for existing concepts of L2 motivation and new theoretical approaches, and has more profound implications in terms of the emotional aspect of identification on an individual basis.

### 1.3 The process of L2 motivation

I often observed that students would show me their great resolution and interest in improving their English but then suddenly seem to lose all willingness to learn. This seems to happen before reaching the final stage of demotivation. There are two stages: ‘initiating motivation’ and ‘sustaining motivation’. The former stage is needed for a learner to decide what they are interested in, and in the latter stage they are actually engaged with various activities (Williams and Burden 1997, cited in Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p.61). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p.65-66) reported that the ‘Process Model of L2 Motivation’ consists of three phases:

- Pre-actional phase: corresponds to ‘choice motivation’, which leads to the selection of the goal or task to be pursued
- Actional phase: corresponds to the ‘executive motivation’, that energises action while it is being carried out.
- Post-actional phase: involves critical retrospection after action has been completed or possibly interrupted for a period.

(Dörnyei and Ottó, 1998)

This Process Model of L2 Motivation divided into three stages is an effective framework within which to observe how the students' motivation is changing systematically and longitudinally. Nitta and Asano (2010) noted that motivation research has recently changed tack, characterising motivation not as static but as dynamic. They concluded that students' motives to learn English and expectations toward the class at the pre-actional stage before starting the course are concerned with the perception of enjoyment, understanding, and involvement with their classes and appear to have a considerable impact on their willingness to learn English over time. Dörnyei (2001) comments that motivation can be facilitated both by providing a certain choice through implied guidance and by showing learners a concrete way to achieve goals. He also postulates that some people may be easily motivated given the right opportunity. 'Motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how they are going to pursue it' (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p.4). In addition, "motivation is often seen as the key learner variable because without it nothing happens" (Schmitt 2002, quoted in Ryan 2008, p.44). In the motivation research field, Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009) consider that it is time to reconceptualise L2 motivation because for L2 learners the learning environment has changed dramatically due to the development of technology.

## **2. Methodology**

In my research, my research questions are: to investigate (1) the effectiveness of short-term study abroad over a longer period; (2) the relationship between choice motivation before the course and executive motivation during the course; (3) the relationship between choice motivation and motivation after the course for Japanese learners of English. To address these questions, I have decided to use quantitative approach in order to understand the motivation of the group. By pursuing these inquiries, I would like to explore the long-term affective impact of Japanese students' experiences of study abroad – an area which has not yet been researched fully.

### **2.1 Research methods and instruments**

As a framework, the process model of L2 motivation proposed by Dörnyei and Ottó (1998, cited in Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011, p.65-66) was chosen. Following this process

model, I divided this research into three stages: *a pre-actional stage*, at which time the participants had not yet started their classes in England; *an actional stage*, covering the period when they were taking their lessons; and *a post-actional stage*, when they had finished their course and returned to Japan.

For the quantitative research, I used the Motivational Factors Questionnaire (MFQ) (Ryan 2009), since this MFQ was developed especially for the Japanese educational context based on previous (Hungarian) research studies and validated in relation to these. Ryan added a variable - the Ideal L2 Self - a concept proposed by Dörnyei, and observed that there was a correlation with the concept of integrativeness used in the Hungarian research. Ryan concluded that the Ideal L2 Self was essentially equivalent to integrativeness statistically, and that the Ideal L2 Self could be a more appropriate measurement than integrativeness since in many countries English is not always viewed as a communication tool as it is in ESL (English as a Second Language) contexts. This MFQ covers 18 attitudinal/ motivational factors comprising 106 six-point Likert-type items written in Japanese. Although the MFQ was focused on people or cultures in the United States of America, since American culture was thought of as mainstream in Japan, I changed the questions referring to American people or American cultures by adding British people or British cultures. My participants were thirty students from a Japanese University attending a four-week short course at the University of Warwick in 2011. I expected that they were more or less interested in the United Kingdom and had chosen the programme in England accordingly. I administered the altered MFQ three times. At the pre-actional stage on their first day of the short course 29 participants filled in the first questionnaire, and at the actional stage I collected 2nd MFQ data from 25 students. I also collected 3rd MFQ data from 23 students by email because it was difficult to meet each student face-to-face. Finally, I focused on the data from 23 participants who filled in the MFQ three times in order to see if there were any changes in motivational factors.

### 3. Results

I first carried out a Cronbach alpha test to establish the internal consistency or reliability of a psychometric test score for the collected data. Cronbach alpha shows how closely related a set of items are as a group on my first MFQ and proves that the

named common factors can be used as independent or predictor variables. Ryan (2008) noted that there were a number of issues related to the translation of the questionnaire from other languages into Japanese in his pilot study, and he rewrote several items and modified the MFQ, which I employed in my research. According to the results (as presented in Table 1.), the alpha coefficients for each item on the first MFQ suggest that most of the items have relatively high internal consistency, as a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is usually considered 'acceptable' in most social science research situations (Nunnally, 1978). Although there are several items which showed lower levels of internal consistency, I decided to employ the MFQ because my sample size was too small to justify the omission of these items.

Table 1. The internal reliability of variables in the first MFQ

Variable name	Number of items	Cronbach alpha
Cultural Interest	6	.64
Attitude towards L2 community	8	.69
Instrumentality	10	.80
International contact	4	.72
Interest in foreign languages	5	.51
International empathy	3	.77
Fear of assimilation	4	.72
Ethnocentrism	5	.31
Travel orientation	4	.69
English anxiety	6	.88
Attitudes to learning English	6	.66
Milieu	6	.78
Parental encouragement	4	.65
Ideal L2 self	6	.85
L2 self-confidence	5	.42
Willingness to communicate(L1)	8	.87
Willingness to communicate(L2)	8	.91
Intended learning effort	8	.74

I then carried out a *f*-test to determine whether two independent estimates of variance can be treated as estimates of the same variance or not on the MFQ at three stages. Table 2 shows even if the same questionnaire conducted at different times could be regarded as the equivalent factor or not. As the *p*-value of milieu on the *f*-test is below the threshold of the 0.05 level, milieu could not be treated equally between different stages and was excluded from the object of this research. (as presented in Table 2)

Table 2. Comparison of *f*-test scores among three MFQ

	SD (1 <sup>st</sup> MFQ)	SD(2 <sup>nd</sup> MFQ)	SD(3 <sup>rd</sup> MFQ)	p (1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	p (1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	P (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Cultural Interest	0.64	0.54	0.59	0.449	0.721	0.689
Attitude twrds L2 community	0.54	0.84	0.70	0.053	0.250	0.423
Instrumentality	0.62	0.60	0.77	0.893	0.322	0.262
International contact	0.61	0.87	0.62	0.117	0.980	0.123
Interest in foreign languages	0.68	0.69	0.78	0.924	0.549	0.614
International empathy	0.77	0.81	0.66	0.783	0.485	0.331
Fear of assimilation	0.94	0.79	0.98	0.441	0.845	0.335
Ethnocentrism	0.53	0.61	0.71	0.500	0.175	0.491
Travel orientation	0.59	0.52	0.40	0.550	0.071	0.221
English anxiety	0.97	0.95	0.81	0.912	0.421	0.487
Attitude to learning English	0.75	0.86	0.75	0.535	0.965	0.506
Milieu	0.98	0.74	2.80	0.206	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Parental encouragement	1.38	1.36	1.31	0.956	0.806	0.849
Ideal L2 self	0.89	0.90	1.04	0.952	0.495	0.533
L2 self-confidence	0.68	0.66	0.56	0.908	0.377	0.442
Willingness to com. (L1)	0.84	0.87	0.81	0.857	0.894	0.753
Willingness to com.(L2)	1.01	1.06	0.96	0.819	0.849	0.675
Intended learning effort	0.71	0.56	0.67	0.301	0.817	0.421

\**p* < .05; SD= standard deviation 1<sup>st</sup>=pre-actional stage (first day of the course); 2<sup>nd</sup>= actional stage (during the course); 3<sup>rd</sup>= post-actional stage (three months after the course).



Finally, I carried out a  $t$ -test to assess the statistical significance of the difference between the two groups' averages in order to analyse my MFQ data; the  $t$ -test is effective given my small sample size, in which the number of participants was 25. If the  $p$ -value on the  $t$ -test is below the threshold of the 0.05 level, the null hypothesis, in which there is no difference between two groups statistically, is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis. This indicates that the difference is statistically significant. According to the results (as presented in Table 3), there are some changes in the scale means between the first MFQ conducted on the first day, the second MFQ in the 4th week and the third MFQ, administered in Japan three months after the final day of the course. Between the first and second MFQ administrations, there is only one significant change, in *English anxiety* ( $p=0.001$ ), which means that students became less anxious and nervous when they speak. As Yashima (2009a) noted, the affective variables can be the key factors in observing how the participants change their motivation during short-term study abroad.

Several statistically significant changes were observed in *international contact*, *interest in foreign languages*, *travel orientation*, and *intended learning effort* between the first day of the course and three months later in Japan after finishing the short-term study abroad. *Travel orientation* and *intended learning effort* especially, show extremely low  $p$ -values, which are 0.002 and 0.004 respectively. Students became more eager to travel abroad and learn English after the course, compared with how they felt at the beginning of the course (as presented in Table 3). They also increased their motivation for *international contact*, which means that they think that English is helpful in communicating with people from other countries. They tend to regard English as an important tool to meet and get to know people in the world through the course. As for *interest in foreign languages*, there are questions such as 'I think I would study a foreign language even if it weren't compulsory' and 'If I planned to stay in another country, I would study the local language' and so forth. Students gain interest not only in English but also in other foreign languages. The evident increase in the aspiration to travel abroad through the short-term programme seems to have triggered a motivation to communicate with foreign people and learn the local language. Interestingly, their motivation for *attitude towards L2 community* and *willingness to communicate (L2)* increased not during the programme but after returning back to Japan. With these

motivations, the students are driven to work hard to learn English even in an EFL context where they have few opportunities to come into contact with native English speakers.

Table 3. Comparison of t-test scores among three MFQ

MFQ average	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1st and 2nd		1st and 3rd		2nd and 3rd	
	MFQ	MFQ	MFQ	df	p	df	p	df	p
Cultural Interest	4.54	4.55	4.65	0.01	0.444	0.11	0.213	-0.43	0.191
Attitude towards L2 community	4.75	4.63	4.99	-0.12	0.253	0.24	0.067	-0.37	<b>0.007</b>
Instrumentality	4.92	4.95	4.95	0.03	0.387	0.03	0.426	-0.36	0.500
International contact	5.27	5.16	5.45	-0.11	0.164	0.18	<b>0.038</b>	-0.27	<b>0.008</b>
Interest in foreign languages	4.65	4.72	4.9	0.07	0.261	0.25	<b>0.017</b>	-0.19	<b>0.033</b>
International empathy	4.91	4.85	4.82	-0.06	0.343	-0.09	0.291	-0.40	0.419
Fear of assimilation	2.93	2.97	2.82	0.04	0.414	-0.11	0.212	-0.37	0.178
Ethnocentrism	3.07	3.15	3.02	0.08	0.263	-0.05	0.342	-0.18	0.069
Travel orientation	5.32	5.38	5.61	0.06	0.283	0.29	<b>0.002</b>	-0.22	<b>0.013</b>
English anxiety	4.17	3.79	4.05	-0.38	<b>0.001</b>	-0.12	0.177	-0.38	<b>0.050</b>
Attitudes to learning English	4.32	4.32	4.39	0	0.5	0.07	0.282	-0.50	0.242
Parental encouragement	3.88	3.89	3.97	0.01	0.457	0.09	0.189	-0.45	0.280
Ideal L2 self	4.32	4.31	4.23	-0.01	0.475	-0.09	0.275	-0.49	0.254
L2 self-confidence	3.72	3.74	3.72	0.02	0.435	0	0.5	-0.42	0.443
Willingness to communicate(L1)	4.24	4.11	4.14	-0.13	0.075	-0.1	0.16	-0.21	0.383
Willingness to communicate(L2)	3.13	3.35	3.04	0.22	0.161	-0.09	0.341	0.06	<b>0.008</b>
Intended learning effort	3.69	3.77	4.04	0.08	0.268	0.35	<b>0.004</b>	-0.19	<b>0.012</b>

\*p < .05.

#### 4. Discussion

Firstly, there is a tendency for Japanese students to experience a reduction in anxiety towards English as they became more confident through interaction with their host families and instructors. Although Yashima (2009a) pointed out that anxiety towards English in Japanese students on the short-term International volunteer projects decreased with statistical significance following a comparison of questionnaire data before the project and questionnaire data a few months later, after the course, in my research it was revealed that the changes in anxiety towards English had already occurred in the fourth week, during the course. This means that affective factors can have a direct impact on students' motivation on short-term study abroad. It can be said that anxiety was reduced by students' gains in confidence through the L2 learning experience, which Dörnyei (2009) defined as the third component of the L2 Motivational Self System.

Secondly, significant changes emerged between the first MFQ, conducted on the first day before the course itself had started and the third MFQ, three months after the course had finished. These changes were in relation to *international contact*, *interest in foreign languages*, *travel orientation*, and *intended learning effort*. This means that Japanese students on short-term study abroad increased their motivation to learn English more after finishing the course than was the case by the final week of the course.

Thirdly, motivation for *attitude towards L2 community* and *willingness to communicate (L2)* increased not during the programme but after returning back to Japan. Once the students went back to Japan and their previous life in EFL context, they realised how ideal the life in England was and were eager to speak English more.

The most marked statistically significant change lay in *Travel orientation*. Yashima (2000: 130) pointed out that in general 'Travel and Passive sociocultural', 'Intercultural friendship' and 'Interest in Anglo-American culture' were strongly related to each other for Japanese students. These three seemed, for those at university level, to be significant factors and reflect their eagerness to understand other cultures, socialise with people from different countries, and unite with foreign countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

As for *Intended learning effort*, a surprising finding was that three months after

the course students showed an inclination to make more effort to learn English than in the final week - during the course itself. Especially in the final week of the course, they were busy with preparations for the final group presentation. At that time, some participants complaints about group work, because students each had different interests and it required them to spend a lot of time searching for information online and they tended to speak Japanese with each other during their discussions. Yet, three months later, their attitudes seemed to have changed. This transformation from negative feelings to a willingness to learn English reflects the dynamic nature of motivation, as demonstrated by Dörnyei (2009). It seems that Japanese learners take time to internalize both their good and bad experiences, objectively comparing the situations in England and Japan, since during the course itself they were too busy to stand back and reflect on their ongoing experiences.

## 5. Conclusion and limitations

Based on statistical data from this research, I was able to confirm some evidence that Japanese learners of English on short-term study abroad increased their motivation for learning English, especially in relation to *international contact*, *interest in foreign languages*, *travel orientation*, and *intended learning effort*, even three months after finishing the course. Even a short-term study abroad programme could sustain their motivation for studying English for a longer period.

Although I adopted a quantitative approach in order to make my research more objective, I shall need to conduct the questionnaire surveys with larger samples and more reliable measures in order to confirm whether the low internal consistency was the result of the small sample size or whether the items on the MFQ developed by Ryan (2008) require further improvements.

Finally, while the Japanese students of English seemed able to sustain their motivation for learning English three months after the short-term study abroad, my research design did not permit me to affirm whether short-term study abroad can sustain motivation for a period longer than three months. It was difficult to conclude only the study abroad experience triggered the motivational changes since the participants might be affected by other factors. For these reasons, continued research is needed so as to observe changes in motivation over a much longer time frame.

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