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Additional Language Acquisition as Professional Development for Graduate Students Training to Teach L2 in an L3 National Context

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Abstract

In the current global economy, the number of non-native English teachers working outside of their own national context is steadily increasing. This trend has made it increasingly common for non-native English-speaking prospective teachers to pursue advanced professional degrees outside of their own countries and simultaneously outside of the English-speaking world. The following case study presents six students in an graduate-level English-teaching program in Japan who are all non-Japanese and non-native English speakers (NJNE). For such students, pursuing Japanese L3 proficiency is an essential component to their professional development for pursuing a teaching career in Japan after graduation from the program. The study, using survey and interview data, examines the attitudes and practices that lead to successful and unsuccessful L3 learning results. Positive feelings toward their local environment and close, early relationships with TL speakers were among the factors most predictive of L3-learning success.

INTRODUCTION

English-language teaching has become an enormous global industry. The field has grown rapidly since the post-war period (circa 1950). It's estimated that there are roughly 375 million native speakers (Kuper, 2025) of English spread throughout the world, but more incredibly, there are another estimated 430-742.8 million proficient (L2) speakers of English and an eye-popping 1.5 billion English-language learners in the world. Obviously, this massive amount of language-learning educational activity means that the industry involves an incredible amount of money. *GlobeNewswire* (Global English, 2020) reported that the English language teaching sector would generate $49.93 billion USD by the year 2027. This includes some 250,000 teachers (estimated before the 2020 COVID pandemic) who are native speakers of English (Prior, 2024); however, it necessarily also involves millions of non-native speakers of English working as teachers of English language (12 million, as estimated by the British Council in 2013), spread out in practically every country across Earth. In Japan alone, there were 18,127 foreigners

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working as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in 2024 (Miyagawa, 2024). The majority of these are from English-speaking countries, but some are not. In the country's national JET Programme, which provides ALTs for public schools across the country, roughly 10% of the over 5000 ALTs are from countries such as Philippines, Singapore, etc. where, while English proficiency standards are high, it is nevertheless not the native language of all participants (*Jet Programme | The Unofficial Guide*, 2025).

Traditional notions of non-native English teachers, for most people, would largely entail public school teachers, educated in English as an L2, teaching to classrooms of students who share a similar national and linguistic background with the teacher. While that is still true for the vast majority, it has nevertheless become increasingly common for non-native teachers of English to venture outside of their own national contexts in their teaching careers. Not only do they sometimes teach in English-speaking countries, but also in other countries where a third language – foreign to both the non-native teacher and to speakers of English – is spoken. For these sorts of teachers, learning the national language (L3) spoken within their teaching context is an important matter of professional development. This study will explore the L3 acquisition by non-native English teachers who came as foreigners to Japan to study in a graduate program for English language teachers, and, in order to find post-graduate employment in Japan, need to acquire a working proficiency in the Japanese language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Non-native English-speaking teachers

While it has long been acknowledged that many schools in East Asian countries subscribe to the notion that students are best served by a native-speaker "model" teacher (i.e., NEST, or native English-speaking teacher), this perception of the native-speaker teacher ideal has long been questioned (e.g., Andrews, 2007), and there seems to be some dawning awareness in the East Asian context that highly-proficient non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) can perform similarly if not better in East Asian classrooms. The arguments have been made for a long time: e.g., Lipovsky and Mahboob (2010) claim that such NNESTs are more highly aware of students' classroom needs, and Phillipson (1996) seconds this, noting that it may stem from NNESTs having been through the language acquisition process themselves. NNEST's own learning experiences with English as an L2 help them to better act as a learner model to students (Cook, 2005). While native speakers would typically be assumed to have a higher degree of grammatical fluency, that advantage is often offset by lack of fluency in the students' native tongue. This can lead to variation in student perceptions of teachers' abilities and teaching effectiveness. Ma (2012) interviewed Hong Kong secondary students and found that, while the students praised native-speaker teachers for their high proficiency in English language, they nevertheless found NNEST instructors easier to understand, as well as finding them to be much more aware of their learning difficulties.

The issue of NNESTs teaching outside of their own native contexts, however, introduces some particular difficulties. These NNESTs would have all of the traditionally-perceived deficits of

the non-native instructor (e.g., reduced fluency, phonological accuracy, etc.); however, as the students' L1 and culture may also be foreign to these NNESTs, it is an open question regarding whether the NNEST advantages would carry forward. NNESTs teaching in a foreign context can no longer automatically be assumed capable of addressing students in their L1. They would still potentially be aware of students' learning trajectories, albeit the degree of overlap in awareness of individual grammatical needs may be dependent upon the degree to which the NNESTs L1 grammar mirrors the students' L1. Due to the relative rarity of such non-Japanese NNESTs teaching in Japan, there is little data regarding the needs, issues, and experiences of NNESTs from specific countries, albeit the presence of Filipino teachers in programs such as JET has raised the profile of Filipino teachers of English in Japan. According to Balgoa (2019), such Filipino teachers are often forced to assert their legitimacy as speakers of English in the classroom, and the explicit favoring of accents and dialects from inner-circle English-speaking countries can cause such teachers to consciously alter their accents to better mimic those of NESTs.

L3 study factors

The study of L3 as a distinct phenomenon from L2 study has received increased attention in recent years. The pre-existence of a studied L2 imparts some potential advantages for L3 study – e.g., the student has already established foreign language study habits, and any areas of grammar or pronunciation that overlap between the L2 and L3 may yield benefits to the learner; however, it is important to note that L3 study nevertheless is distinct from L2 study. In the proposed Linguistic Proximity Model, Westergaard et al. (2017) demonstrate how linguistic overlap between L2 and L3 can help to overcome potential negative transfer issues from L1. In a subsequent presentation, Westergaard (2021, as cited in Bardel & Falk, 2021) claims that all language learning is UG-driven, and that both L1 and L2 can both positively and negatively transfer into L3 acquisition. Of course, the degree of typological dissimilarity between the languages would heavily impact potential transfer. In a study on Chinese learners simultaneously studying English and Russian, Huang et al. (2020) found that those students were not negatively affected compared with students studying English only. All languages in the mind of the multilingual compete for activation (e.g., Rice & Tokowisc, 2020), and as such, whenever one language is activated, all others will be activated to some degree and involved in decoding tasks and other processing schemes. This effectively means that the L3 learner can exploit preexisting linguistic knowledge (i.e., the L1 and the L2) for L3 learning, and there is an assumed cumulative effect of learning which allows positive transfer of similar features from previously learnt languages to the L3, such as that seen in the Cumulative Enhancement Model (Berkes & Flynn, 2012).

THE CURRENT STUDY

Given the steady increase in the number of NNESTs teaching outside of their own L1/home country context, it is of equally increasing importance that we examine professional L3 studies in order to identify what factors correlate with successful learning. In this way, we in the teacher training industry will be able to better assist such teachers at the starts of their careers.

The following study is a small-sample case study of such NNEST teachers studying in a graduate (Master of Arts) level English language teaching program at an English-medium university located in rural Japan. This particular study environment introduces several notable methodological and theoretical aspects which make the study of note for NNEST practitioners who move to practice teaching in an L3 environment. Of note, the NNESTs, by leaving their own L1 milieu, are exposing themselves to the demerits of both NESTs (e.g., not sharing an L1 with students) and NNESTs (not having native-level fluency in the target language). Additionally, as L3 learners, all subjects were studying an L3 (Japanese) that was morpho-typologically distinct from both the various L1s of the subject participants, as well as their universal L2 (English). This heavy distinction in grammatical plan would potentially limit positive transfer from both L1 and L2.

The study used survey methods with graduating and recently-graduated program participants to investigate their L3-Japanese proficiency attainment, their perceptions of how critical (or not) L3 study was at the beginning stages of their careers, and how much effort and what methods/activities did they utilize in studying Japanese. Analysis of the survey responses attempted to ascertain commonalities in the attitudes and practices of both successful and unsuccessful L3 learners. Specifically, this research study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1) Are there student practice factors that are predictive of successful L3 acquisition?
2) Are there affective factors which are predictive of successful L3 learning?

METHODS

Participants

A total of 6 participants were included in the survey. All were both non-native speakers of Japanese and non-native speakers of English. Four came from China, 1 from the Philippines, and the final participant came from Vietnam, and there were 4 different native languages among them. All four native languages are morpho-typologically distinct from Japanese, and only one of the native languages (a minority language in China) bears the same basic SOV canonical order as Japanese. Four of the six participants' native languages have some basic syntactic overlap with English regarding canonical sentence order.

All subjects were extremely accomplished speakers of English. The average age of commencing English study was 7.16 (ranging from age 3 to age 14), and the average amount of time engaged in formal English study among them was 18.5 years. All of them tested at a "professionally competent" level of English proficiency (either a TOEFL iBT score of 98-100 or IELTS 8+).

All participants either were currently enrolled in or had recently graduated from (see procedures, below) a Masters of Arts degree-granting program in English Language Teaching offered by an English-medium liberal arts college located in northern Japan. The program is quite small – rarely surpassing 20 students in total at any given time. As such, while the non-Japanese NNEST

students recruited for the study were small in number, they represented nearly a third of the program at the time. This program seems quite representative of the rising numbers of NNESTs studying advanced degrees outside of their own L1 context. The graduate program featured in this study was originally devised as a graduate-level professional training program for Japanese secondary teachers, but since 2017, there has been a rapid rise in the numbers foreign students. The numbers of non-Japanese NNEST students rose from comprising 5% of the program upon the enrollment of the first one in 2017 to 35% at present day (there is an additional 15% native-speakers of English, therefore fully half of the enrolled students are of foreign origin). At the time of the study, these non-Japanese NNESTs comprised a full thirty percent of the students in the graduate program. The motivations for such students to study at a Japanese vary: some are motivated by an attraction to or curiosity for Japanese culture; many are attracted by the relatively low tuition price (in comparison with other international programs) charged by the university, ergo allowing them to attain a foreign degree at a moderate price; and all of them are interested in working in Japan (at least upon commencing their graduate studies), and see a Japanese graduate degree as a means of better securing employment in Japanese schools.

However, regardless of their motivations for studying in Japan, none of them have the professional-level of Japanese competency required to study at most Japanese universities, and thus they are attracted to studying at an English-medium university in an all-English program. Students' history of Japanese study varies starkly with their English proficiency and learning history. The average age of beginning Japanese instruction was 23.66 (range: 18-35), and the length of study averaged 3.8 years (range of 1.5 to 6 years – note that all of them had studied throughout their time in the graduate program). In terms of formal proficiency measures, 3 of the students had successfully passed level two[1] of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (日本語能力試験), one had passed level three, and the other two had not taken the exam.

Materials

A survey instrument (see example in Appendix A) was created to gather information on participants' background information (8 questions), their study habits and activities directly impacting their Japanese acquisition while enrolled in the graduate program (11 questions), and the degree to which they liked or didn't like aspects of life in Japan (6 questions). Please see Appendix 1 for a modified version of the survey form (with identifying information redacted). Due to the small size of the survey, the survey instrument was able to utilize open response to most questions; however, the final section used a 1-10 scale rating system to gauge affective response to life in Japan.

[1] The JLPT exam has five levels with level 5 being the easiest and level 1 being the most advanced. Typically, universities and many employers would require foreign applicants to demonstrate a passing score on the level 1 test in order to display professional competence.

Procedures

The survey was distributed via email to a list of current students in their final semester and recent (within one year) graduates of the program who fit the non-Japanese, NNEST profile. As all the students were well known to the researcher, there was no attempt made at anonymizing the data received (as the answers would make it abundantly clear who the respondents were); however, once received, identifying information was removed for data storage and publication purposes. All responses were received within two weeks of the initial request for participation. A request for permission to engage in follow-up interviews if necessary was included in the survey form, and two participants were contacted for follow-up interviews in order to clarify potentially confusing responses within their survey writeups.

Analysis

The study participants were assigned to one of two groups for analysis purposes: "successful" and "unsuccessful" learners, respectively. The designation of L3 study success was based upon two factors: 1) the learner's own self-evaluation of the results of his/her efforts at Japanese learning, based upon improvements (or lack thereof) in proficiency test scores, ability to communicate in order to fulfill daily tasks, etc.; and 2) whether or not the participant received an offer of employment from a school in Japan. This latter criterion was determined to be a critical factor in the objective evaluation of the relative success or failure of learning as all subjects admitted a largely instrumental motivation for Japanese study (i.e., gaining employment in Japan after graduation). In the end, two participants were categorized as "unsuccessful" learners, and the other four learners were classified as "successful." The researcher knew all the participants quite well and was inclined to agree with the self-assessment of all participants. The two "unsuccessful" learners also declined to look for employment in Japan upon finishing the degree program, instead choosing to return to their respective places of origin, despite the fact that both, at the beginning of the program, had professed to want to continue working in Japan after graduation.

With the study participants so grouped, the researcher undertook a qualitative analysis of survey responses, with the goal of identifying common factors to successful and unsuccessful learners. While the survey device allows for calculation of scores across categories, the low overall number of subjects precluded any reliable statistical analysis.

RESULTS

Analysis of study practice factors

While it was expected that prior Japanese learning experience would heavily impact the success of L3 acquisition during the course of the graduate program, such didn't seem to be a primary factor in successful acquisition. Three of the four successful learners had studied Japanese prior to coming to Japan, and those three indicated that Japanese study was a priority and one of the major rationales for studying their MA program in Japan. At the same

time, it is notable that the one of the successful learners only began Japanese study once enrolled in the graduate program, and was still able to learn enough to succeed in finding a job upon graduation. All four successful learners made a point of taking Japanese-language classes throughout the course of their graduate studies.

Conversely, of the two unsuccessful learners, one had studied Japanese for over three years prior to coming to Japan, but didn't experience any significant degree of improvement over the course of the two-year graduate program. The other unsuccessful learner came with no prior Japanese language learning experience, and did not develop much in the way of L3 proficiency. This lack of development on the part of both unsuccessful learners was despite taking Japanese-language classes throughout their respective two-year terms of study at the university.

Practice factors seemed to be a better predictor of L3 acquisition success than were study factors. Successful learners admitted that they used much more English than Japanese on a daily basis (note: the university is English-medium, so all classes are conducted in English, and all students are highly proficient in English; as the study participants are aspiring English teachers with a high degree of English ability, English would definitely have been the easier *lingua franca* to choose for discussions with Japanese classmates and undergraduate students). Still, they claimed to use Japanese approximately 5-20% of the time day-by-day. Only one of them claimed to consciously seek out opportunities to practice Japanese during the first three semesters of study, but all of them admitted that they put much more effort into Japanese practice as they approached graduation and began looking for jobs. While the successful learners didn't seek out L3 practice opportunities, they didn't try to avoid them either. The unsuccessful learners, by contrast, admit that they spent "most" of the time in the graduate program surrounded by friends from their own L1 background. While one still estimated that Japanese was used approximately 10% of the time, the other unsuccessful learner put Japanese use at 0%, practically. The one caveat came in the form of the fact that during a period wherein the first unsuccessful learner had a Japanese roommate, Japanese was spoken "daily" on a limited basis.

Interestingly, cross-comparisons of learner experiences according to nationality and/or native language did not reveal sizeable differences. While more in-depth study of, for example, which specific linguistic features of Japanese they found difficult would undoubtedly reveal differences (e.g., the Chinese speakers come to the learning task already being able to read *kanji* – the Chinese characters used in Japanese script), still learners of all language backgrounds expressed that the biggest challenge was simply forcing themselves to use Japanese, rather than to overly rely on their English skills, given the environment wherein most potential interlocutors were highly proficient English speakers.

Affective rankings

The rankings for both the successful and unsuccessful student groups can be found in Table 1. Average scores and the range are displayed. Due to the small sample size (and considerable range in the responses), it would not be useful to attempt statistical analysis; however, we can

still note possible areas of discrepancy between the two groups with the understanding that statistical relevancy may only become detectable with larger group sizes. At first glance, the differences between the successful and unsuccessful groups are not large regarding their feelings towards Japan as a whole or towards speaking in or studying Japanese. The unsuccessful learners group is lower across the board, but the range reveals that even this was due to extremely negative scores from one of the unsuccessful learners. It is in the case of feelings towards Akita (the area where the university is located) that the difference between group scores opens up a bit. Again, the range would suggest that one should avoid hasty generalizations, but the reactions here were particularly low. This may have been a reaction against isolated, rural environment of the university, or perhaps a reaction to the university (or the graduate program) itself. Unfortunately, there was nothing in the survey device to ascertain the participants' rationale for their rankings.

Table 1

Affective ratings for categories in range from 1-10

	Averages for "Successful learners"	Range for "Successful learners"	Averages for "Unsuccessful learners"	Range for "Unsuccessful learners"
Japan	7	5-10	6	4-8
Akita	7.25	5-9	4.5	2-7
Speaking in Japanese	5.75	5-6	5	2-8
Studying Japanese	7	6-8	6	6
Spending time with Japanese people	7	5-9	4.5	2-7

DISCUSSSION

Ultimately, the results of the survey were highly individualistic, and as such, it is difficult to determine specific factors from the results that directly or perfectly correlate with learning success. Some of the most highly successful L3 learners among the participants (as measured by increase in proficiency level over the course of the graduate program) were fairly open about the fact that they didn't make any extraordinary efforts to learn it (other than enrolling in Japanese classes concurrently while studying their graduate courseload). On the other hand, one of the unsuccessful learners claimed to have made considerable effort at learning Japanese, but to no avail as the student's overall proficiency level did not change much from the beginning of the program until its end.

One of the most repeated negative themes in the survey results was the perception that they struggled to make friends and to express their true personalities in Japanese. This held equally true for both successful and unsuccessful L3 learners. Many claimed this caused Japanese conversations to be relatively stressful activity for them and caused them not to seek out many opportunities for interaction in the Japanese language. While this may seem strange from the

outset, given that all of them are highly successful L2 learners of English – surely they've been through this sort of conversational stress before – it is key to remember that all of this took place on an English-medium university campus. Their rejection of Japanese conversational opportunities as "stressful" did not reflect an unwillingness to talk to the people around them, but rather, the recognition that an easier and more efficient means of communication was readily available to all participants – English. As the study participants were already proficient speakers of English, and they were aware that the vast majority of their potential conversational partners at the university were also fluent in English, the temptation to employ English as a lingua franca which enabled more direct and truer conversation was always present. Speaking in Japanese was not a natural means by which to get to know the people around them or to connect to their fellow students, but rather, any attempts at communication in Japanese would have the feel of a purely academic exercise much more akin to the forced conversational practice which takes place in many L2 classrooms than in true social activity.

Adding to the patterns of stress that affected both successful and unsuccessful learners alike, most learners admitted high levels of stress due to acculturation factors. The pressure to "do things the Japanese way" affected learners both inside and outside of the university setting. Curiously, none of the learners reported the same sort of acculturation stress regarding English. Whether that is more due to the fact that none of the participants surveyed had ever spent significant time in an English-L1 country, and thus had not experienced this sort of culture shock in and English-speaking setting, or alternatively if this was more related to their relative ease in English speaking/listening tasks compared to communicating in Japanese is not immediately obvious from their answers. Nevertheless, as the same sort of acculturation stress was found in both successful and unsuccessful learners, this suggests that acculturational variables are critical factors to L3 learning success; however, as such acculturation factors would affect students' willingness to study and to socialize within the L3, we cannot discount the effect entirely.

Major findings

Despite the large degree of individualism which was displayed throughout survey responses, nevertheless some patterns emerged which are of note to programs, such as the one examined here, wherein students from other language background study in an English-language teaching program in a non-English speaking country that is not their own. First, it is notable that the students' high proficiency in English actually acted as a disincentive to study Japanese. In a way, this suggests that one of the factors that attracted them to study at this university – i.e., it being a an English-medium institution – actually worked against their Japanese acquisition. As nearly every conversation they could be having on-campus could just as easily (if not more so) be conducted in English (which the participants were already fluent in) as in Japanese (which they were not), there was the ever-present temptation to simply use the easy communication method which they had already acquired.

Counter-intuitively, the results of the survey seem to suggest that one does not have to artificially boost L3 exposure through extraordinary effort. One of the surprising features of the responses from the successful learners was how little (relatively) effort they made at

language learning. None of the successful learners were making any sort of special effort (beyond coursework) to learn Japanese. By contrast, one of the unsuccessful learners was (at least via self-reporting). At the same time, however, the successful learners never attempted to limit their exposure to Japanese. They simply took it as it came, and accepted whatever opportunities to practice as came naturally. It is possible, given this pattern, that the unsuccessful learner who tried hard simply managed to "burn out" through exhaustion by putting too much stress on Japanese study, which then caused demotivation and frustration when positive results for the effort were not immediately discernable. Of note, both unsuccessful learners made reference to attempts to essentially "block out" Japanese input by limiting their access to L3 speaking scenarios for stretches of time over the course of their graduate studies. These blackout periods did not seem to be a factor for the successful learners. This suggests that perhaps more important than what you "do" for L3 learning is what you "don't do." The successful learners, while hardly being exemplars of high motivation in language learning, were nevertheless open to L3 input opportunities as they came. They never tried to limit the input or their own output. By contrast, the intentional limiting of L3 contact may well be a predictive factor of lack of learning success. Related to this factor, unsuccessful learners spent more time home in their own countries (i.e., taking vacation time back home) than did successful ones. While this tendency is frankly more representative of socio-economic background factors than anything related to language acquisition, it is nevertheless notable in the context of the unsuccessful learners' attempts to shut out the L3 for stretches at a time, as well as their tendency to more frequently congregate with other speakers of their own L1.

A final factor worth noting arose in contrasting the most successful learners with the others in the "successful" group. All learners (both successful and unsuccessful) had largely instrumental reasons for L3 study. All of them took language classes (frequently together) and all of them had plenty of opportunity to use Japanese with classmates and other students on campus. There was one factor that emerged separating those who had improved the most over the rest of the successful learners. That factor was taking short-term employment in Japan during vacation periods. These (retail) jobs did force the students to engage in the L3 for longer periods. While completely instrumental (the students openly admit that their primary goal was earning spending money – not necessarily improving their L3 proficiency), nevertheless, the highest proficiency gains were seen in these students. By wrapping the L3-acquisition process into a more immediate and tangible goal (i.e., getting money to live) the students were able to make wide proficiency gains which also translated into increased competitiveness for employment upon graduation.

CONCLUSION

This study is certainly limited in scope, and it is important to note that a mere six respondents cannot definitively decide how best to facilitate L3 learning by such NNESTs studying outside of their own L1 university contexts; however, the common themes which appeared in the survey responses do suggest some general advice for such students. All students were driven by instrumental motivations – specifically to gain employment in Japan – and, thus, possibly lack the sorts of internal motivation that often form the basis of English (L2) acquisition by

such students whose enjoyment of the language is such to decide to embrace English-teaching as a profession. We, therefore, should be hesitant to directly compare their acquisition of Japanese with their previous acquisition of English, as motivation, age of initial instruction, learning history, etc. all vary significantly. Simply put, as language learning is directly affected by such a multitude of factors, it is entirely possible for a highly successful L2 learner to nevertheless struggle with L3 acquisition. As discussed, one of the predictive factors for unsuccessful learners tended to be whether or not they experienced periods wherein they actively avoided engagement in and use of the L3. This most frequently took the form of surrounding themselves in an L1 "bubble" wherein they could speak their native language. It is noteworthy that L2 (English) did not provoke such a response – all students maintained their studies in English and expressed no problems with day-to-day conversational use of English. Nevertheless, it is worth pondering whether any students would have experienced similar negative reactions to English if they were studying in an English-speaking country. In other words, was this general culture shock driven by the first experience of living outside of their native culture for an extended period, or was this more specific to Japan and/or living in a culture wherein they had a substantially more limited grasp of the national language? Such questions unfortunately are impossible to test directly but are important to acknowledge in analyzing the applicability of the results on a wider scale.

The current trend of NNESTs leaving their own countries to study professional degrees in non-English-speaking countries is likely to continue – especially as the number of English medium schools and programs located outside of traditionally English-speaking countries continues to proliferate. The increasing number of such NNESTs studying an L3 in order to teach English abroad should motivate us as a profession to continue this research theme, in order to be better able to assist such students in their L3 study, and therefore to pursue their professional goals. Given the small size and relatively isolated environment of the university where this study was conducted, if follow-up studies could be conducted in similar programs with larger numbers of students, such would greatly enhance our knowledge of the factors which impact such L3 study. This will allow us in teacher-training programs to better serve such students who endeavor to practice their profession outside of their own national/linguistic context.

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APPENDIX A
Survey items

Background

1) My native language:
2) Any other languages I speak (other than L1, English, and Japanese):
3) How old were you when you first began study of English?
4) How old were you when you first began study of Japanese?
5) How long have you studied English?
6) How long have you studied Japanese?
7) What is your current level of English proficiency (estimates or test scores are ok)?
8) What is your current level of Japanese proficiency (estimates or test scores are ok)?

Life at [*Institution where graduate program is located – name redacted in items below*]

9) Was learning Japanese a big priority to you prior to coming to [*redacted*]? Why or why not?
10) Had you engaged in any formal Japanese study prior to coming to [*redacted*]? Please give details regarding the nature of the study.
11) Did you engage in formal Japanese study at [*redacted*] (i.e., have you taken Japanese language classes)? If yes, please note which classes you have taken.
12) How much do you use Japanese in your daily life at [*redacted*]?
13) What proportion do you estimate you use English, Japanese, and your native language, respectively, on a daily basis at [*redacted*]? Please estimate in percentage terms, and give details regarding how they are used (e.g., 70% Eng. – in classes and homework; 20% Jap. – with my roommate and other Japanese classmates and friends; and 10% my L1 with other speakers of my L1 at [*redacted*]).
14) Which statement from the below options best describes you at [*redacted*], and why?
    a. I tend to seek out with people who speak my language
    b. I tend to seek out opportunities to speak/practice Japanese
    c. I tend to just speak English with everyone around me – most everyone understands it anyway
    d. I tend not to allow language to guide/affect my interactions
15) Which statement from the below options best describes you at [*redacted*], and why?
    a. Most of my best friends at [*redacted*] are/were people who spoke my L1
    b. Most of my best friends at [*redacted*] speak/spoke to me in Japanese
    c. Most of my best friends at [*redacted*] speak/spoke to me in English
    d. Most of my best friends at [*redacted*] speak/spoke to me in multiple languages
16) How would you rate your attempts at learning Japanese on a scale from 1 (I learned nothing) to 10 (I am completely fluent in Japanese now)? Explain as necessary.
17) What types of situations/scenarios do you still find it difficult to fully express yourself in Japanese?
18) How will/did your Japanese ability affect your life after graduation from the [name of the graduate program]?

19) How has your view of Japan and the Japanese language evolved over the course of your time at [*redacted*]?

Affective Ratings

Please rank the following according to how much you like the category on a scale from 1 (I absolutely hate it) to 10 (I absolutely love it).

20) Japan
21) [*region where university is located*]
22) Speaking Japanese
23) Japanese food
24) Studying Japanese
25) Spending time with Japanese people