

**AN ATTEMPT TO HELP LEARNERS OF JAPANESE  
CONSTRUCT THEIR IDEAL L2 SELF**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Student attrition in foreign language programs is a common phenomenon (Horwitz, 1988), and motivation is considered one factor that determines whether students continue their foreign language study (Saito-Abbott and Samimy, 1997, Wesely, 2010, Oshima and Harvey, 2017a). According to the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), learners are motivated to close the gap between their actual self and ideal self. In other words, the construction of learners' ideal L2 self leads to generation of L2 motivation. In this thesis, by combining this system with the identity approach in Second Language Acquisition, L2 learners are viewed as people who 1) visualize themselves using their second language in their imagined community, 2) are trying to close the gap between their actual self and their future ideal self, and 3) are struggling with power imbalance and social inequalities which prevent them from obtaining access to and membership in their imagined community as their imagined identities are constituted and reconstituted in the process.

This thesis hypothesizes that when learners get to know successful L2 users and engage in video making assignments modeled after them, they will become role models for L2 learners and help L2 learners construct their ideal L2 selves. The primary purpose of this thesis is to design an intermediate Japanese language course that incorporates activities that are thought to promote the construction of learners' ideal L2 selves, such as video making and self-assessment, and to examine whether the course had an impact on the course participants' ideal L2 selves.

The data were taken from students' information sheet in which students were asked to answer questions regarding, for example, their purpose of studying Japanese and how they would like to use Japanese in the future. The data were also retrieved from two essays and one presentation on the same theme, "This is the kind of person I want to be" to discern their ideal self and examine the relationship between their purpose of learning Japanese and their ideal self. The main findings are as follows. Some students have a clear future image related to Japanese while others do not. Only two students out of 31 have role models that speak Japanese as an additional language. The relationship between learners' purpose of learning Japanese and their ideal self can be classified into three cases: congruent, partially congruent, and unrelated. It is conceivable that the intervention may have been effective for students in the congruent and partially congruent cases although successful L2 learners of Japanese who were showcased in class did not appear in

anyone's essays or presentations. In particular, the possibility cannot be denied that there was an effect of the course on two students who mentioned L2 users of Japanese as people they respect and want to be like. Strong statements cannot be made regarding the effectiveness of the course based on the collected data alone. It may be possible to clarify the effects of the intervention by conducting interviews with students in future studies.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of This Study**

In her study, Thomson (2008) wrote about the Japanese program at the University of New South Wales in Australia as follows,

In 2006 half the students who entered the first semester course in Japanese never started the second semester, and half of them never started the third. Three-fourths dropped out before they learned to use Japanese. (p. 317)

The phenomenon of learners leaving Japanese after at least one year of study is not limited to the context in Australia. The similar phenomenon is observed by Saito-Abbott and Samimy' study (1997) in America, too. Oshima and Harvey's studies (2017a, 2017b) are unique in that they deal with student attrition in the transition from secondary to tertiary education in New Zealand. "Large-scale attrition in foreign language programs is a well-known phenomenon," (Horwitz, 1988, p. 292) and it has been observed in different language programs in high schools and universities as well (Lemke, 1993, Obadia & Theriault, 1997, Damron & Forsyth, 2012, Meyer, 2013).

The same tendency can be found in the Japanese program at Purdue University where the current author works as a graduate teaching assistant. Table 1 shows the number of students enrolled in Japanese language classes at Purdue University for the past two years. The numbers in parentheses indicate the maximum number of students who can enroll in the course. It is clear from this table that the number of students tends to decrease as the level of the class increases. In the 100-level Japanese classes, the number of students exceeds 100, but in the 400-level classes, the number of students is less than 20.

Table 1. Number of Students Enrolled in Japanese Language Courses at Purdue University

	JPNS 101	JPNS 102	JPNS 201	JPNS 202	JPNS 301	JPNS 302	JPNS 401	JPNS 402
Fall 2018	186 (192)		89 (95)		45 (48)		16 (15)	
Spring 2019		133 (144)		60 (64)		33 (32)		8 (16)
Fall 2019	189 (192)		81 (96)		32 (32)		17 (16)	
Spring 2020		123 (176)		63 (64)		27 (32)		12 (16)

Why does the decline in the number of students occur as the level of the course increases? It is conceivable that the number of sections that can be offered in each course could be capped for administrative reasons. Thus, some students might not be able to take an upper-level course even if they want to. Lemke (1993) investigated why students who studied French, German, or Spanish in Grades 7 through 12 in the Grand Blanc Community School District (Michigan) for at least one year had discontinued their foreign language study. According to this research, the top five reasons why high school students stopped learning a foreign language are: they lost interest, they had to take another class, work was too hard, they had already met the high school/college language requirements, and they did not have a good relationship with their language teacher. According to a literature review in this field done by Wesely (2010), there are four main factors that affect foreign language student attrition: instruction, academic success, anxiety, and motivation.

In the context of Japanese language education, Saito-Abbott and Samimy (1997) investigated factors that cause a decline in enrollment in Japanese language classes at the university level in the United States. Their study revealed that learner's final grades and the strength of their motivation were the important factors for students' drop-off. What is notable about their study is that they point out different types of motivation affect learner attrition differently depending on learner's language level, saying, "Beginning students with low integrative motivation were less likely to continue, while intermediate students with lower levels of instrumental motivation were less likely to continue" (p. 45)

Oshima and Harvey (2017a, 2017b) focus on whether Japanese language learning is continued in the transition from secondary to tertiary education in New Zealand. They consider it is important to maintain learners' motivation to learn Japanese for their continued learning at the tertiary level. Besides, they argue that it is necessary to review the curriculum and provide information on the expected study hours in the Japanese language program and how studying

Japanese at the university level relates to previous studies so that students do not find it impossible to combine Japanese language classes with their major.

Though students' motivation to learn their target language is considered one factor that affects students' attrition in foreign language programs, how can a language teacher motivate his/her students to keep their L2 learning for a longer period of time? Answering this question seems very important to maintain and scale up foreign language programs. Also, it has been discussed that if language learners want to acquire well-rounded communicative proficiency, they have to make efforts to learn and use their target language outside of the classroom. The learning progress of those who learn their target language only in the classroom is limited (Benson & Reinders 2011). It is of significant importance for language learners to become motivated and independent learners for successful language learning. Then, what can language teachers do to motivate their students so that students will study outside the classroom and study over a more extended period of time?

The primary purpose of this thesis is to design an intermediate Japanese language course that can motivate L2 learners and examine the effect of the course on students who took it. The hypothesis is that learners will construct a positive image of themselves as L2 users when they get to know about successful L2 users and engage in video tasks in which they perform using the target language while modeling successful L2 users. This positive image of themselves as L2 users will motivate learners to study their target language.

### **The Organization of the Thesis**

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows: the next chapter reviews the literature on L2 motivation research and the identity approach in SLA. Based on the previous research, this thesis conceives of L2 learners as people who 1) visualize themselves using their second language in their imagined community, 2) are trying to close the gap between their actual self and their future ideal self, and 3) are struggling with power imbalance and social inequalities which prevent them from obtaining access to and membership in their imagined community as their imagined identities are constituted and reconstituted in the process. In the third chapter of this thesis, an overview of an intermediate Japanese language course designed to incorporate self-modeling and learners' self-assessment to empower learners and construct their ideal selves will be presented. In the course, students are exposed to several successful L2 users of Japanese and work on video-making tasks modeled after them. The fourth chapter reports the data collected from learners'

student information sheet in which students were asked to answer questions regarding, for example, their purpose of studying Japanese and how they would like to use Japanese in the future. The data from two essays and one presentation on the same theme, “This is the kind of person I want to be” will also be indicated. The data will be analyzed in terms of students’ purpose of learning Japanese and their ideal self, and the effect of the intervention will be discussed. In the end, it will be pointed out that getting to know about successful L2 users and working on video making tasks modeled after them could have influenced the learners’ ideal selves.

### **Research Questions**

The study attempted to address the following research questions:

1. Do students have an L2 user of Japanese that they respect? Did L2 users of Japanese who had been showcased in class as models for video-making assignments or as providers of topics for group conversations appear in students’ essays and presentations as people whom they respect?
2. Is there any relationship between students’ purpose of learning Japanese and people whom they look up to?
3. Do getting exposed to successful L2 users of Japanese and working on video-making assignments modeled after some of them help students to find their L2 role models and construct their future image as a Japanese language user?”

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, first, the motivation research and the identity approach in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) are to be introduced with a special focus on discussions of *the L2 Motivational Self System* and the concepts of *investment*, *imagined community*, and *communities of practice*. Then, L2 learners will be discussed as those who 1) visualize themselves using their second language in their imagined community, 2) are trying to close the gap between their actual self and their future ideal self, and 3) are struggling with power imbalance and social inequalities which prevent them from obtaining access to and membership in their imagined community as their imagined identities are constituted and reconstituted in the process. Then, self-modeling and self-assessment will be discussed as means for empowering L2 learners and constructing and strengthening their ideal self as an L2 user.

### A Short History of Motivation Research

#### Gardner and Lambert's Theory

The motivation research in the field of SLA had been dominated by Gardner and Lambert until the 1990s. Two concepts that have long been influential in the field are integrative motivation and instrumental motivation, and Gardner and Lambert (1959) was the first study to measure these two types of motivation. According to them, learners who have integrative motivation are considered as those who study for the purpose of learning about the language community and of meeting more and different people. They are willing to become like the community members who speak their target language. In the instrumental orientation, on the other hand, the reasons why people study a particular foreign language is explained by utilitarian motives. It was reported from their research on Montreal high school students who studied French as a second language in Canada that students who have integrative motivation were generally more successful in acquiring French than those who have instrumental motivation. Gardner and Lambert's approach and arguments were so powerful and dominant in the field that "alternative concepts have not been seriously considered" (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p. 501).

## **New Approaches to Motivation**

In the 1990s, however, Gardner and Lambert's approach started being questioned by some scholars (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). According to Dörnyei (1994), what is lacking in the Gardner and Lambert model is a more pragmatic, education-centered approach, for the focus of their model is on "general motivational components grounded in the social milieu rather than in the foreign language classroom" (p. 273). Since Gardner and Lambert were engaged in macro-level analysis with a focus on the overall language disposition, it was not clear what kind of influence motivation has on language learning behaviors and achievement in particular contexts such as language classroom (Dörnyei 1994; Dörnyei, MacIntyre and Henry, 2014). Furthermore, Gardner did not provide a clear link between his model and cognitive aspects of motivation which were being investigated in the field of psychology in those days (Dörnyei 1994, 2009).

One of the new concepts introduced by Dörnyei (1994) into the SLA motivation research in an attempt to extend the Gardenerian model is intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, which had already been developed in the field of psychology (e.g., Deci, 1975). We can say a person is extrinsically motivated when he or she does something expecting to receive some extrinsic reward or by trying to avoid punishment. On the other hand, an intrinsically motivated person does something because he or she finds the action itself is fun. In other words, the essence of intrinsic motivation is the enjoyment learners find in language learning. (Ortega, 2009).

Although the 1990s saw emancipation from the concept of integrativeness, which was prevailing in the motivation research, this was not the only change that occurred in SLA motivation research. Another significant shift that occurred in the 1990s was a transition from a static understanding of the nature of motivation to a dynamic one. Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) criticized then existing models by claiming that they treat motivation as a static concept and lack an understanding that motivation changes over time. Thus, they define motivation as:

the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out. (p. 64)

In the Dörnyei and Ottó model of L2 motivation, there are three stages: the Preactional Stage, where motivation is generated, the Actional Stage, where the generated motivation is maintained,



and the Postactional Stage, where learners reflect on how things went, which is necessary for determining future activities learners will be motivated to do. This was when motivation research which tries to conceptualize motivation as dynamic and fluid started.

### **Possible Selves and Ideal Selves**

In 2005, Dörnyei (2005) developed his framework by incorporating the concept of “possible selves” from Markus and Murius (1986) and self-discrepancy theory from Higgins (1987) and formulated the L2 Motivational Self System. According to Markus and Nurius (1986), possible selves represent:

individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming, and thus provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation. (p. 954)

Marcus and Murius argue that possible selves are essential concepts because possible selves provide people with incentives to either get close to or avoid becoming them. The more vivid the image of possible selves becomes, the more powerfully they function as a motivational self-mechanism (Dörnyei, 2005). However, it is worth mentioning that not all possible selves function as self-guides. The three types of possible selves, “what they might become,” “what they would like to become,” and “what they are afraid of becoming,” mean the default scenarios, the best case, and the worst case, respectively (Dörnyei, 2009). Of the three “what they might become,” in particular, is not a self-guide and does not have a motivating function.

In his self-discrepancy theory, Higgins (1987) indicates four self-directive standards (ideal/own, ideal/other, ought/own, and ought/other) and argues that those standards play the role of motivators, and individuals try to match their self-concept (actual self) with the self-directive standards. The *actual self* is “your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) believes you actually possess” (p. 320), the *ideal self* is “your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) would like you, ideally, to possess” (p. 320), and the *ought self* is “your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) believes you should or ought to possess” (p. 321). When there is a gap between one’s actual self and ideal/ought selves, people have the desire to close the gap.

## L2 Motivational Self System

Based on these understandings, the L2 Motivational Self System is made up of three dimensions: 1) *Ideal L2 Self*, 2) *Ought-to L2 Self*, and 3) *L2 Learning Experience*. If L2 learners find somebody who speaks the L2 that they want to emulate, the person becomes a model of their *Ideal L2 Self*. This *Ideal L2 Self* will be a motivator in learning the L2 because L2 learners can notice a gap between their actual selves and the *Ideal L2 Self* and try to reduce the discrepancy. Also, L2 learners try to avoid possible adverse outcomes by meeting people's expectations, such as duties, obligations, and responsibilities. Lastly, L2 Learning Experience "concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106). For some learners, self-images are not what generate the initial motivation for learning a foreign language, but good experiences in the language classroom are. Good learning experiences include, for example, learners' finding out that the teacher and classmates are good people or that learners are good at their target language (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Simply put, learners' motivation stems from three sources: learners' future visions as a successful L2 speaker, social pressure to become a specific kind of person, and positive and successful learning experiences (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Higgins' distinction between *ideal self* and *ought self* should not be forgotten. Though both *ideal self* and *ought self* have something to do with the realization of one's desirable states, Higgins (1998) differentiates the two concepts clearly.

The promotion focus is concerned with accomplishments, hopes, and aspirations. It regulates the presence and absence of positive outcomes. Ideal self-guides, therefore, have a promotion focus. The prevention focus is concerned with safety, responsibilities, and obligations. It regulates the absence and presence of negative outcomes. Ought self-guides, therefore, have a prevention focus. (p. 16)

The L2 Motivational Self System is compatible with the traditional concepts related to motivation. Integrative motivation and instrumental motivation can be associated with promotion and the Ideal L2 Self. Integratively or instrumentally motivated L2 learners also try to reduce the gap between their current selves and their ideal L2 selves when they study their target languages. Since the focus of this thesis is on achievements, hopes and aspirations with which learners try to approach their ideal selves, not on responsibilities and obligations which make learners try to avoid their dreadful possible selves, the remainder of this thesis will primarily deal with ideal L2 selves.

## Identity Approach in SLA

### The Origin of the Identity Approach

When discussing L2 motivation, it is vital to introduce so-called the identity approach in SLA, for this approach shows us what motivation research overlooks. Much research has been carried out on the issue of identities in SLA (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2003; Block, 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2011). Although SLA had long been preoccupied with a psycholinguistic approach, the 1980s and 1990s saw a new trend of focusing on the social orientation to language in SLA research, which is called its “social turn” (Block, 2003). Some scholars started dealing with the issue of identities in SLA and discussing “the relationship between the language learner and the larger social world” (Norton, 2011, p. 318). *The Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* was established in 2002, and the area of language and identity has “become a research area in its own right” (Zuengler & Miller, 2006, p. 43).

### Investment

One of the characteristics of the identity approach in SLA is that it focuses on the relationship between L2 learners and society. Influenced by Weedon (1987), who has had a major impact on theorizing identity in language learning, Norton (2000), who is the central figure in the identity approach, discusses that a learner’s identity is not a single entity, but a site of struggle, and constantly changing over time. L2 learners “are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world (Norton, 2000, p.11).”

The concept of *investment* (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000), which is one of the key concepts in language education research on identity, helps us to understand this dynamic and complex learner identity and language learning. It is easy to understand this concept as an analogy to economic activity: L2 learners invest in the target language in the hope of getting something in return. Norton holds that learners invest in their target language, understanding that “they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (Norton, 2000, p. 10). In the context of language learning, expected returns on the investment can be gaining access to the L2 community and gaining the right to speak (Pittaway 2004).

This point can lead us to another feature of the identity approach: its attention to power imbalances that L2 learners face. At first glance, *instrumental motivation* and *investment* sound like the same argument in terms of seeking entry into the L2 community. However, the perspective of inequalities distinguishes *investment* from *instrumental motivation*. In Norton's study (2000) of immigrant women living in Canada, the subjects experienced discriminations based on gender and ethnicity, and power inequities in communication with native speakers. If learners' investment is hampered by these discriminations and prejudices, it may lead L2 learners to stop investing in their target language. In contrast, in instrumental motivation, the impact of social inequities on language learning is not taken into account. This is because motivation is a fundamentally psychological construct, not sociological. (Norton, 2011). The concept of *investment* is complementary to the concept of *instrumental motivation* and shows us what the perspective of *instrumental motivation* overlooks.

What is interesting about the concept of *investment* is that it allows us to understand language teachers and learners as brokers and investors, respectively (Pittaway 2004). The long distance to achieve access to the L2 community in return for the investment, and the inequalities faced in the pursuit of access, may cause learners to stop investing in the target language. Teachers, just like real brokers, play a role in clarifying the path to the distant and invisible goal and in making the return on investment visible. Teachers also encourage learners to establish an empowered identity to fight against social inequities, thus helping them to get a return on their investment. It is important for instructors as a broker to "provide a safe environment in the classroom to allow for the expression of investment goals" (Pittaway 2004, p. 206).

Also, Norton (2000) discusses that the concept of *investment* signals an ambivalent desire to learn and practice target languages. Learners invest in their target language for a return. If learners find that the language class which they attend do not help them achieve access to the target L2 community, or that discriminations and inequalities exist in the class, they may decide to stop attending the language class. It is also possible that they will not participate in certain classroom activities that do not contribute to getting their return. Even when language learners are highly motivated to learn the target language, those who do not invest in classroom practices are labeled as unmotivated (Norton, 2000; Norton, 2011).

## Imagined Community

While the concept of *investment* plays a vital role in the identity approach, we should not forget the concept of *imagined community*, which is also used in the identity approach. (e.g., Norton, 2001; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Dagenais, 2003; Norton & Kamal, 2003; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). *Imagined community* is a term coined by a political scientist, Benedict Anderson, in 1983. Anderson argues that a nation is an imagined political community in that “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). By imagining the bonds with people across space, we can establish a sense of *we*-feeling with those we have not met.

## Communities of Practice

The function of imagination is also discussed by Wenger (1998), who is one of the central figures in the discussion of *communities of practice*. When he discusses the communities of practice, Wenger distinguishes three different modes of belonging: *engagement*, *imagination*, and *alignment*.

1. *engagement* - active involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning
2. *imagination* - creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience
3. *alignment* - coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises (pp. 173-174)

Wenger introduces an interesting example to clarify the function of imagination. Two stonecutters are on the same engagement level; that is, both of them are doing the same work of cutting stones. When they are asked what they are doing, one answers “I am cutting this stone in a perfectly square shape.” However, the other stonecutter responds, “I am building a cathedral.” Their understanding of the meaning of what they are doing and who they are (stonecutter or cathedral builder) is not the same. What makes this difference possible is imagination, which has a function of “expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (p.176). The latter stonecutter transcends time and space, visualizing the unfinished cathedral and connecting his stonecutting to the work of putting up the cathedral in which he is not directly involved. It is a function of alignment that transforms images triggered by

imagination into actions. Wenger argues that we can see a combination of three modes of belonging in most practices we do, and these three modes in different proportions constitute a community.

In addition to the function of imagination, what is essential in Wenger's argument is that he considers that learning and identity are deeply connected. Learning occurs through participation and non-participation in the community practice and that learning "transforms who we are and what we can do" (Wenger, 1998, p. 215) in the increasingly centripetal process that "Newcomers become oldtimers" (Lave, 1991, p. 68) in the community. Learning is not a mere process of accumulating information and skills. Rather, it is understood as a process of making us into a certain person or avoiding becoming one (Wenger, 1998).

### **Implication for L2 Learners**

Though it is intriguing that learning stems from engaging in the community practice, communities which were discussed in this framework are often face-to-face communities, for example, workplaces (Hayes & Walsham 2001; Hara & Schwen 2006) and schools (Eckert & Wenger 1994; Eckert, Goldman & Wenger 1996). However, it is not easy for foreign language learners to have an opportunity to engage in immediately accessible communities where their target language is spoken. There are cases where communities do not actually exist because they are only imagined by language learners. For example, Kanno & Norton (2003) introduces a case of Rui, a Japanese teenager who spent two thirds of his life in English-speaking countries. Rui never neglected his efforts to maintain his Japanese proficiency in order not to lose his inner Japaneseness. However, he became disappointed when he realized that the Japan he had idealized was far removed from the actual Japan, leading him to declare that he does not want to be Japanese anymore. Though Rui's idealized Japan was imagined, not real and did not actually exist, the image of it affected Rui's efforts to keep his Japanese proficiency. In this way, imagined communities and community members can have an impact on learners' investment in their target language (Norton 2001; Kanno & Norton 2003; Pavlenko & Norton 2007).

It is plausible to hold the view that there are various types of imagined communities which language learners would like themselves to be in. For example, a Thai undergraduate student of international relations starts to learn English and visualizes him/herself standing in front of world-famous scholars at an international conference and delivering a speech all in English. This

undergraduate student imagines he or she is also a prominent, well-known scholar in the academic community. Alternatively, an American adult who lives in Japan starts attending a local Japanese language class for foreign people and visualizes him/herself participating in the Japanese discussion at work or a Japanese conversation with their neighbors and, sometimes, not being helped by, but helping coworkers and neighbors all in Japanese. This American adult visualizes him/herself as an active participant in the business community and the local neighborhood community. In this sense, learning, which transforms learner's identity and ability, can be interpreted as a process in which learners try to obtain memberships in various imagined communities as their second language identity changes.

What implications does this line of thinking have for language teachers? When learners attend a language class, they not only learn a language with their classmates and teacher in the classroom but also visualize an imagined community beyond the four walls of the classroom (Norton, 2001). In other words, it is because they want to have access to imagined communities that language learners invest in their target languages. Therefore, it seems essential for language educators to understand that learning is not “a simple accumulation of skills and knowledge” (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007: p. 590). Language teachers also need to understand that L2 learners might not invest in classroom activities if these activities are not related to their access to their imagined communities. It is also important for teachers to create a safe space in their classrooms where learners can speak freely without being inhibited by anyone in terms of access to the target L2 community, which is the return on investment in their target language.

### **Factors Which Hinder L2 Learners' Investment and Imagination**

As was already mentioned, according to Norton (2000), factors that inhibit learners' investment and access to their imagined L2 community include racial and gender discrimination and power imbalances between native and non-native speakers. Although imagination is considered vital for foreign language learners to feel a connection with their target community, if imagination is limited and their imagined identity is denied by power imbalance and social inequalities that learners might face in learning and using their target language, they might stop investing in their foreign language learning. In this section, we will discuss these factors briefly.

## **Native/Non-native Distinction**

The most important inequality that exists in language education would be the binary categorization between native speakers and non-native speakers. There is an oversimplified stereotype between native speakers and non-native speakers. Native speakers are idealized speakers and what they produce is a standard, model, and goal for foreign language learners. In contrast, non-native speakers are viewed as a defective communicator and subordinate to native speakers (Firth & Wagner 1997; Cook 1999, 2016; Holliday 2006). This fixed binary understanding of native speakers and non-native speakers leaves no opportunity for non-native speakers to acquire a native status. They will be labeled as semi-native no matter how much they improve their target language proficiency level. If particular jobs are available only to native speakers, this means that language learners' access to those jobs is completely denied.

## **Language Ownership and Racism**

The argument about the native/non-native dichotomy leads us to the issue of language ownership. If we accept the idea that only native speakers are given language ownership and considered as legitimate users of the language, foreign language learners will be labeled as non-legitimate speakers of the language. This might mean they will never be able to become full participants of the community where the language is spoken. They are treated as outsiders and isolated from mainstream social networks. If non-native speakers are not treated as legitimate speakers, they lose the right to speak and tend to be silenced. It seems essential for language educators to empower language learners and help them overcome the discourse which views native speakers as superior and non-natives as dependents so that they can establish an identity as their target language user.

In the context of English education, it is argued that the English ownership is associated with specific races and ethnicities. For example, Pavlenko & Norton (2007) points out that the English ownership of Asian Americans is more likely to be challenged than that of white immigrants. It is also reported that English learners are apt to prefer white English teachers to non-white English teachers (Amin 2004; Kubota & Lin 2006). It is important to not only focus on the native/non-native dichotomy but also take the perspective of ethnicities and races into consideration when discussing language ownership. The issue of racism can also prevent L2 learners from gaining



access to their L2 community and establishing identity as a legitimate speaker of their target language.

## **Gender**

Inequalities and restrictions are not limited to the issue of native/non-native distinction and racism. Gender is another area where inequalities are observed in our society. In language education, language textbooks are often analyzed in terms of gender bias, and it is reported that language textbooks and materials are gendered in many cases (Hartman & Judd, 1978; Hellinger, 1980; Barton and Sakwa, 2012; Lee, 2018). However, it is worth mentioning that some scholars argue that whether textbooks are gendered is not very important. Even when gendered textbooks are used in the classroom, teachers can deal with the contents critically. What matters is how they teach, not what is in the textbook (Jones, Kitetu & Sunderland, 1997; Sunderland, Cowley, Rahim, Leontzakou & Shattuck, 2001). Therefore, there will be no problem if teachers have supportive attitudes toward learners' investment and desire to belong to their particular target L2 community, regardless of gender. However, learners might feel their purpose of learning their target language is denied if the class is taught by sexist instructors who tend to think of certain jobs as being tied to a particular gender. Learner access to their target L2 community will also be affected by gender bias that exists in the community.

## **Synthesis of the Motivation Research and the Identity Approach**

In the previous sections, the literature on motivation and identity approach was briefly discussed. In addition, possible factors which might prevent L2 learners from participating in their target L2 community were indicated. What is common among motivation research and the identity approach is that they have something to do with imagination. Dörnyei (2005) believes that Norton's discussion of imagined L2 communities can be linked to his discussion on motivation by claiming, "[o]ur idealized L2-speaking self can be seen as a member of an imagined L2 community" (p. 102). Following Dörnyei's argument, the present author combines these perspectives and conceive of L2 learners as people who

- 1) visualize themselves using their second language in their imagined community,
- 2) are trying to close the gap between their actual self and their future ideal self, and

- 3) are struggling with power imbalance and social inequalities which prevent them from obtaining access to and membership in their imagined community as their imagined identities are constituted and reconstituted in the process.

### **What Can Teachers Do to Help L2 Learners Establish Their Ideal Self**

In the previous sections, the importance of visualizing and imagining an ideal future self to get motivated was indicated. Learners try to close the gap between their actual self and ideal self and try to gain access to their target L2 community. However, there are social factors which hinder learners' access to their imagined community. In this last section of this chapter, literature on how to help L2 learners establish and strengthen their ideal self will be introduced.

### **Imagery and Sport Psychology**

The field in which imagery has been investigated considerably would be sport psychology. According to White & Hardy (1998), "Imagery is an experience that mimics real experience. We can be aware of 'seeing' an image, feeling movements as an image, or experiencing an image of smell, tastes, or sounds without actually experiencing the real thing" (p. 389). There is sufficient evidence that imagery can effectively enhance performance (Weinberg 2008). Imagery is often employed by top athletes such as those who perform in Olympics (Calmels, d'Arippe-Longueville, Fournier, & Soulard 2003; Salmon, Hall, & Haslam 1994; Orlick & Partington 1988; Gould, Tammen, Murphy, & May 1989). It is common to integrate imagery as a tool to improve performance in sports. Athletes visualize themselves performing successfully in a real setting with details, and they continue to do so until what they visualize becomes a reality.

### **Imagery and Language Learning**

Imagery has been integrated into language learning as well. Dörnyei & Kubanyiova (2014) consider that imagery can be applied to language learning as well and discuss that L2 learners need "tasters" to establish a vivid image of their future self. By tasters, they mean "sensory glimpses of the bigger picture to which our efforts could eventually lead us" (p. 46). One way to taste our future self is to have role models, as was discussed previously. According to Lockwood and Kunda (1997), superstars can become role models to affect one's self-views. When one considers

superstars are relevant and one's success like that of superstars seems attainable, superstars as role models can provoke one's self-enhancement and inspiration. The more relevant role models are and the more attainable superstars' success looks, the more likely role models affect one's self-view.

Similar arguments were made by other researchers as well. For example, Bandura (1997) states "seeing or visualizing people similar to oneself perform successfully typically raises efficacy beliefs in observers that they themselves possess the capabilities to master comparable activities" (p. 87). Brown and Inouye (1978) consider that "observing a model of comparable ability achieve success would create success expectations in observers and thus enhance their task motivation" (p. 901). Murphey and Arao (2001) employ near peer role models (NPRMs) in their study. NPRMs are "peers who are close to our social, professional, and/or age level who for some reason we may respect and admire" (Murphey, 1996, p. 21). By observing peers, one believes that certain successes represented by peers are possible. Classmates and upper-level students who perform well in their L2 can be considered good role models in L2 classrooms. These discussions resonate with Cook (1999), who argues that we should have "a positive image of L2 users" and should not consider L2 users as "failed native speakers." If we consider native speakers to be the only models for L2 learners, it would create "an unattainable goal for L2 learners" (p. 185). Successful L2 learners who share the same status with other L2 learners are more likely to affect one's self-view.

### **Video Self-modeling**

Once L2 learners set their role models, it is time to create and strengthen L2 learners' ideal future self. Dörnyei & Kubanyiova (2014) introduces several teaching methods to enhance L2 learners' vision for their future. One of them is video self-modeling (VSM). Self-modeling is an intervention procedure and has been defined as "the behavioral change that results from the repeated observation of oneself on videotapes that show only desired target behaviors" (Dowrick & Dove, 1980, p.51). The videos are usually 2-4 minutes long. Observers are required to observe themselves on the video to learn skills or adjust to challenging contexts (Dowrick, 1999). One of the important characteristics of VSM is that one observes oneself demonstrating. Viewing a self-model lets viewers recognize their potential to attain a desired success (Dowrick, 2012). It is reported that a more vivid image can be created when observing a self-model than observing others (Rymal & Ste-Marie, 2009).

There are two subcategories within self-modeling: positive self-review (PSR) and feedforward. In PSR, errors and distracting footages are edited out to produce “images of adaptive behavior as fine-tuned examples of the best the individual has been able to produce thus far” (Dowrick, 1999, p. 25). For example, athletes who are in a slump watch their past successful performance on video. By contrast, in the feedforward method, skills which an individual has not acquired yet or which an individual has not performed in challenging environments are depicted. For instance, a gymnast can learn a new floor routine by watching a video in which a new floor routine is described by restructuring components available in his/her repertoire. In other words, “PSR reconstructs an achieved, exemplary behavior, presumably in need of strengthening. Feedforward constructs a previously unachieved but possible future, or target, behavior” (p. 26).

### **Other Forms of Self-modeling**

Though self-modeling is often associated with a video format, it is not limited to the use of video. For example, Dowrick (2012) introduces audio self-modeling and biblio self-modeling, among other things. What is advantageous about audio self-modeling is that, unlike video self-modeling, obtaining permission is not required even when other students are involved (Blum et al., 1998). Biblio self-modeling is a print version of self-modeling. Someone else sets a particular person as the main character of a story and describes his/her target behavior in the story. The person then reads the story. In other words, the story is written from the reader’s point of view. By reading the story, the reader can visualize what has not yet been accomplished. Individuals can also create an original story on their own in which their own successful behavior is described.

This idea of biblio self-modeling seems to have two implications in this thesis. Firstly, biblio self-modeling can lead us to narrative approaches. According to narrative approaches, human beings interpret their life as ongoing stories, and their identity and behavior are shaped through their life stories (McAdams and Pals, 2006). Howard (1991) argues,

We are in the process of creating value in our lives—of finding the meaning of our lives. A life becomes meaningful when one sees himself or herself as an actor within the context of a story—be it a cultural tale, a religious narrative, a family saga, the march of science, a political movement, and so forth. (p. 196)

Furthermore, in her study, Whitty (2002) concludes that the story-writing method is more effective than interviews and questionnaires in revealing ideal selves and discusses that this

method can elucidate “the complexity of people’s dreams” (p. 225). Thus, biblio self-modeling, that is, writing a story in which the reader is the central figure, helps the reader make his/her life meaningful, clarify his/her ideal selves, and establish his/her identity as well as visualize his/her own future successful behavior.

The other implication which biblio self-modeling has in terms of L2 learners is that it relies on writing as a tool for self-modeling. As was discussed previously, L2 learners might face inequalities when they try to obtain access to and membership in their imagined community. Their status as L2 users might be denied due to their ethnicity and race, or their foreign accents. However, it is less likely that L2 users’ ownership of their target language is challenged in writing than in speaking. Voice cannot be hidden even in academic articles (Matsuda & Tardy 2007). However, Pavlenko & Norton (2007) discuss,

The written medium is ideal for this discursive battle over legitimate ownership: while in spoken interactions, opinions of some L2 users may be discounted by others due to their physical appearance or traces of accent in their speech, published texts constitute excellent equalizers and unique arenas where accents are erased and voices imbued with sufficient authority. (p. 597)

Expressing oneself through writing in one’s target language can be effective because it allows L2 learners to describe their ideal future self more freely.

In line with activities that entail writing, there are several possible teaching practices that can be incorporated into language classrooms to help L2 users establish their L2 identity and ideal selves. For example, there are reports of new identities constructed by English language learners as they run websites, chat with visitors, post stories on online platforms, and interact with readers (Lam, 2000; 2004; Black 2006). Incorporating an activity in which learners write a story in the target language, post it on the class’s online platform, and receive comments from their classmates may be effective in building their identity as L2 users.

## **Self-assessment**

Before concluding this chapter, self-assessment should be briefly discussed. According to Oscarson (1989) who provides an overview of the self-assessment research in language learning, there are several rationales for the use of self-assessment. For instance, by engaging in self-assessment, students can train themselves in evaluation, be more aware of assessment principles rather than the mere results of their performance, and become more goal-oriented. Besides, as a

long-term effect, self-assessment can encourage autonomous language learning after a language course is over.

Eckert, Goldman, & Wenger (1996) discuss the importance of self-assessment for engaged learning to occur. They consider that “self-assessment and the assessment of others is a normal everyday part of human interaction” (p. 10) and people learn things by tracking their own progress. Students might lose control over their learning and abandon responsibility if assessments are ultimately conducted by teachers. From these discussions, to promote learning and empower and help learners become autonomous and engaged learners, it seems important to provide opportunities for learners to engage in self-assessment. It can be effective to combine teacher assessment with learner self-assessment.

In this chapter, the motivation research and the identity approach in SLA were briefly reviewed. In so doing, L2 learners were discussed as people who 1) visualize themselves using their second language in their imagined community, 2) are trying to close the gap between their actual self and their future ideal self, and 3) are struggling with power imbalance and social inequalities which prevent them from obtaining access to and membership in their imagined community as their imagined identities are constituted and reconstituted in the process. Then, some methods that can be effective in helping L2 learners construct their ideal L2 self were shown. In the following chapter, the details of an intermediate Japanese course designed based on the previous research will be presented.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHOD**

In the previous chapter, earlier studies on L2 motivation and L2 identity, particularly Dörnyei and Norton's works, were introduced to provide a theoretical basis for this thesis to stand on. It was indicated that learners need to establish their ideal L2 selves for their motivation. At the same time, it was also shown that the imagination of L2 learners to visualize themselves playing an active role in the community they want to belong to in their future could be challenged by factors such as their non-native status and racism. Then, several in-class practices to help L2 learners construct their ideal L2 selves and L2 user identity were introduced. In this chapter, the course structure of JPNS 30100, which was designed with the above-mentioned discussions in mind, is to be introduced. Changes from the original plan will also be explained as necessary.

### **Purdue University**

The newly crafted course based on the previous studies is a JPNS 30100 (Japanese Level V) course offered at Purdue University in Fall 2020. Purdue University is located in the state of Indiana and is a large public university whose West Lafayette campus saw a total fall enrollment of 45,869 students in the academic year of 2020-2021 (Purdue University, 2020). Purdue University hosts many students from abroad. According to the Office of International Students and Scholars (2020), the total student body includes 4,246 international undergraduate students (12.2% of the total undergraduate body) and 3,912 international graduate professional students (35.7% of the total graduate and professional body). Foreign language courses are offered by the School of Languages and Cultures, and Arabic, American sign language, Ancient Greek, Chinese, Classics, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish are available.

### **Participants**

Data were obtained from 31 students who completed the JPNS 30100 course in Fall 2020. Table 2 is a list of students in the course and shows their basic information. Student names are all pseudonyms. The breakdown by year in school was 4 Freshman students, 4 Sophomore students, 13 Junior students, and 10 Senior students. There were a wide variety of students whose majors

include Animation, Biology, Computer Science, Creative Writing, Cybersecurity, Economics, Engineering, Global Studies, Linguistics, Physics, and Statistics among others. As was already mentioned above, many international students study at Purdue University. The JPNS 30100 course also had international students, and 13 out of 31 students self-reported that their native country is not the United States but China, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, and Thailand. Students from the U.S. are the largest group with 18 students, accounting for about half of the class (58.06%). The second largest group of students is from China. They accounted for about a quarter of the participants (22.58%). Some of the students have roots in Japan or are learning Japanese as a heritage language. The course had more male students than female students (22 male students and 9 female students).



Table 2. Basic Information of Students in JPNS 30100 Fall 2020

Student Name (Pseudonym)	Year in school	Native Country	Native Language	Gender	Major	Minor
Alexander	Senior	USA	English	male	Plant Genetics, Breeding and Biotechnology	Japanese
Amelia	Senior	USA	English	female	Computer and Information Technology	Japanese
Ava	Sophomore	Japan	English, Japanese	female	Applied Mathematics	
Charlotte	Junior	USA	English	female	Biology	Japanese
Daniel	Senior	China	Chinese	male	Animation	
Dylan	Junior	China	Chinese	male	Computer Science	
Elijah	Senior	USA	English	male	Cybersecurity	
Emma	Freshman	USA	English	female	Pre-Veterinary	
Ethan	Junior	China	Chinese	male	Economics	Japanese
Isabella	Sophomore	USA	English	female	Microbiology	Japanese
Jackson	Junior	USA	English	male	Actuarial Science, Statistics	Management
Jacob	Sophomore	South Korea	Korean	male	Global Studies	
James	Junior	Malaysia	English, Chinese	male	Creative Writing	
John	Freshman	USA	English, Japanese	male	Biochemistry	Japanese
Joseph	Freshman	USA	English	male	Physics	Japanese

Table 2. continued

Student Name (Pseudonym)	Year in school	Native Country	Native Language	Gender	Major	Minor
Liam	Junior	USA	English	male	Linguistics	Political Science
Logan	Senior	Thailand	Thai	male	Visual Communication Design	
Lucas	Junior	China	Chinese	male	Electrical Engineering	
Luna	Senior	China	Chinese	female	Biology	
Mason	Junior	USA	English	male	Computer Science	Japanese
Mateo	Freshman	Japna	Japanese	male	Computer Science	
Mia	Junior	USA	English	female	Computer Engineering, Japanese	
Michael	Junior	USA	English	male	Electrical Engineering	
Noah	Senior	South Korea	Korean	male	Biology	
Oliver	Sophomore	China	Chinese	male	Physics, Japanese	
Olivia	Junior	USA	English	female	Creative Writing, Japanese	
Samuel	Senior	USA	English	male	Robot Engineering	Japanese
Sebastian	Junior	USA	English	male	Computer Engineering	Mathematics
Sophia	Senior	China	Chinese	female	Visual Communication Design	
William	Senior	USA	English	male	Linguistics, French	Japanese
Wyatt	Junior	USA	English	male	Computer Networking and Information Technology	Japanese

## JPNS 30100 Fall 2020

### General Course Information

The JPNS 30100 is intermediate-level and is a three-credit course designed for students who have completed JPNS 20200 or a course of the equivalent level. Two sections were offered in Fall 2020, and the maximum enrollment in each section is 16. In total, 31 students actually completed the course in Fall 2020.

*Quartet: Intermediate Japanese Across the Four Language Skills I* was adopted as the course textbook. This textbook is a brand new textbook that was published in July 2019. This textbook attempts to cultivate four skills of language in a balanced manner. As this is a new textbook, it includes readings on relatively new topics such as iPS cells. It also has content such as Japan as seen by international students and includes the perspectives and opinions of Japanese language learners. Table 3 shows the writing topics prepared in each chapter of *Quartet*. Though details will be provided later, students were supposed to produce essays and presentations on people who they want to be like and they respect to discern their ideal future self. The writing topic for Chapter 1 in *Quartet* is “The famous person I respect.” Thus, if *Quartet* is used, there is no need to ask learners to write essays on a topic unrelated to the textbook for the sake of research. The use of *Quartet* makes it possible to assign writing tasks in a natural flow in the JPNS 30100 course.

Table 3. Writing Topics in *Quartet I*

Chapter 1	私が尊敬する有名人 (The famous person I respect)
Chapter 2	お礼の手紙 (Thank-you letter)
Chapter 3	私の好きな町 (My favorite town)
Chapter 4	座談会の記事 (Round-table discussion report)
Chapter 5	私のおすすめ料理 (My food recommendation)
Chapter 6	投書文を書く (Letter to the editor)

There were 15 weeks of instruction in the Fall 2020 semester. The course started on August 24th, 2020, and ended on December 5th, 2020. The class meetings were held every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Due to an outbreak of COVID-19, classes were taught in a hybrid way.

For example, the class met in person on Monday, and a synchronous Zoom meeting was held on Wednesday. Each session was 50 minutes long.

Figure 1 indicates the overall course structure of JPNS 30100. What is noteworthy about JPNS 30100 Fall 2020 is that it incorporated students' self-assessment and original grading criteria development as an attempt to empower students, promote them to monitor their learning, and provide with them an opportunity to think about their ideal self as a Japanese speaker. Table 4 shows the breakdown of the evaluation system. The students' own assessment determined 32.5% of the total grade. In addition to this, there are five central components, which will be explained in detail in the following sections: Interview Exam, Video Making, Story Writing, Group Project, and Essays and Final Project. The details of self-assessments are to be explained as needed in each section.

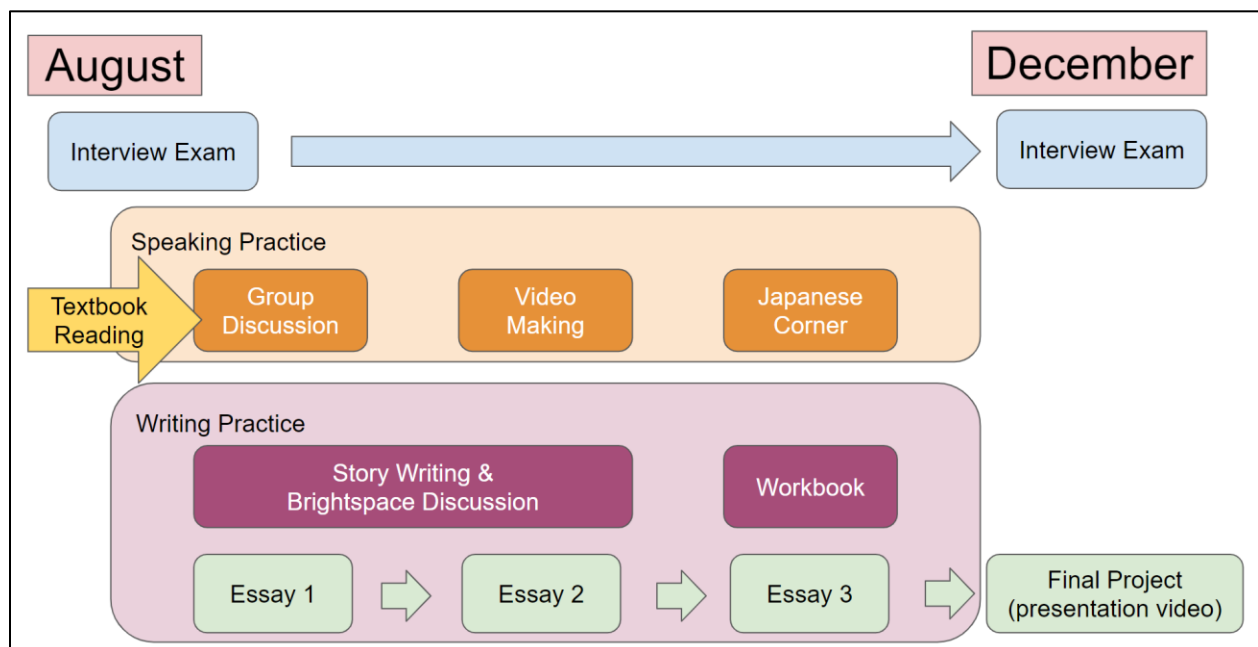


Figure 1. Overall Course Structure of JPNS 30100 Fall 2020

Table 4. The Breakdown of the Evaluation System in JPNS 30100 Fall 2020

Component	Weight (%)	
	Instructor's evaluation	Student's self-assessment
Homework	20	0
Quiz	10	0
Brightspace Discussion	10	0
Essay	7.5	7.5
Video	7.5	7.5
Group Project	5	5
Individual Project	7.5	7.5
Interview Exam	0	5
Total	67.5	32.5

The original plan was to cover six chapters throughout the semester. However, the schedule was changed in the middle of the semester, and Chapter 6 was not covered in JPNS 30100. The reason for this change was that the quality of the assignments submitted by the students was declining. It seemed that students were becoming fatigued due to a variety of factors, including COVID-19. In order to reduce the burden on students and improve the quality of their assignments, the days that were to be used for Chapter 6 were reallocated to the other chapters.

### **Student Information Sheet**

As the first assignment of the semester, students were asked to fill out and submit a student information sheet. In addition to basic questions about their major, hometown, first language, and so on, students were asked to answer questions about what they like about Japanese culture and society, their purpose of studying Japanese, and how they would like to use Japanese in the future. See Appendix A for all questions on the student information sheet.

### **Interview Exam and Student's Self-made Grading Criteria**

In JPNS 30100, students had two Interview Exams. The first one was conducted at the beginning of the semester, and the second one was held at the end of the semester. In both exams, students made a two-minute speech whose topic was their family, followed by a three-minute Q&A session in which the course instructor asked several questions. One of the main purposes of this

oral test is that students will compare the results of the two tests and recognize their improvement in their speaking skills throughout the semester.

The exams were administered via Zoom. Zoom meetings were recorded so that students could watch their performance after the interview test was finished. After the oral test, students had to watch their video and complete their self-assessment sheet. Table 5 is the rubric on the self-assessment sheet for the first interview test. Not only this rubric but also other rubrics used in JPNS 30100 Fall 2020 were created with reference to Sandrock (2010) and Ohio University Department of Education (2020). Figure 2 is a part of the self-assessment sheet. In this assignment, students graded their performance based on the rubric and input the score for each grading criterion from 0 to 5.5. Since the self-assessment sheet is an Excel sheet with formulas already built in, students' scores are automatically calculated. The scores which students put in the sheet were used in the grade book as they were.

Table 5. Rubric for the First Interview Exam

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations (5.5)	Meets Expectations		Does Not Meet Expectations (0-3)
		Strong (5)	Minimal (4)	
Speech Part				
Organization	Speech is well-organized or sequenced, with strong cohesion and transitions.	Speech is mostly organized, with cohesion and transitions.	Speech is somewhat organized or has some transitions.	More organization, cohesion, or transitions needed.
Comprehensibility		Listening does not require much effort.	Listening requires some effort.	Listening requires much effort.
Length		1.5-2 minutes		0-1.5 or 2 minutes or longer
Q&A Part				
Language Control	Appropriate responses using strings of sentences and some longer discourse.  (Full sentences)	Appropriate responses using strings of simple and connected sentences.  (Occasionally not full sentences)	Appropriate responses using simple and compound sentences.  (Occasionally not full sentences)	Appropriate responses using simple sentences, phrases, and words.
Fluency	Speaks at a steady speed without hesitation.	Speaks with some hesitation.	Speaks too fast or too slowly with some hesitation.	Often stops speaking. (2-3) Can say almost nothing. (1) Can say nothing. (0)
Asking for clarification		Can understand all the questions. or Can ask the interlocutor to repeat or slow down.		Says “ えっ ? ” or uses gestures and facial expressions to show confusion. (3)  No efforts (0)

	Sample 1	Sample 2	Your assessment
Organization	5	3	
Comprehensibility	5	5	
Length	5	5	
Language Control	5	4	
Fluency	5	4	
Asking for Clarification	5	3	
Your point (0-31.5)	30	24	0

Figure 2. Self-assessment Sheet for the First Interview Exam

Creating an opportunity to watch their performance and reflect on what went well and what did not is essential when students monitor their progress. However, the course did not stop there. Students were asked to develop their original grading criteria in addition to the rubric prepared by the instructor. First, students identified two weak points in their performance: one in the speech

part and the other in the Q&A part. They wrote down specific features of their performances as they were. Then, they came up with what kind of performance would be ideal for the second interview test. Finally, they set three levels of improved performance as Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations Strong, and Meets Expectations Minimal. Students analyzed their current performance observed in the first test and created their original grading criteria for the second interview test so that learners could set their own goals for the course.

The present author regards it as the ultimate goal of instruction to promote students to find an image of their ideal self and strengthen its vividness. To have learners develop their original grading criteria is considered quite effective to encourage them to think about their ideal self as a Japanese speaker. This is because in order to create their own evaluation criteria that promote their improvement like the ones explained above, they need to visualize themselves in the future as more advanced than they are now. By being involved in the process of setting their own goals and analyzing their own achievement as a Japanese speaker, learners can take responsibility for their own learning and, at the same time, control their image of themselves as a Japanese speaker.

Figure 3 is a part of the self-assessment sheet used for the second interview test. The difference between the first and second sheets is that the second one has two more categories that are students' original. The second difference is that the second sheet has space to fill in with the first interview test score. The scores of the first and second oral exams can be compared, making it easier to see their improvement over the course of the semester. After they submitted their self-assessment sheet, students attended an individual meeting and received feedback on the interview test based on the self-assessment sheet from the course instructor.

	Sample 1	Sample 2	Your IE1 assessment	Your IE 2 assessment
Organization	5	3		
Comprehensibility	5	5		
Length	5	5		
Language Control	5	4		
Fluency	5	4		
Asking for Clarification	5	3		
Your point (0-31.5)	30	24	0	0
			(0-31.5)	(0-42.5)

Figure 3. Self-assessment Sheet for the Second Interview Exam



## Video Making Assignments

After chapters 2, 3, and 5, students created a video in which they performed in Japanese. The video creation task was positioned as a summary of each chapter and required students to give a specific performance using the expressions they learned in the textbook. To explain the details of each assignment, two sample videos were prepared. One is a sample performance by the instructor, and the other is a video of an L2 user of Japanese actually performing the target behavior. The purpose of preparing a video of an L2 user of Japanese was to present a goal that students should aim for. Observing a non-native speaker of Japanese performing the target behavior in Japanese would make students believe that the performance was feasible. Using others as models, students practice until they are able to perform in a manner similar to that of the models. Then, when this is accomplished, students will be able to capture their best performance, refined by practice, on video and be able to watch the performance over and over again. By viewing their successful performance through self-assessment, students' own self-image might replace the image of the models.

Video-making assignments were incorporated with reference to Video Self-Modeling, which was introduced in the previous chapter. One of the advantages of doing the video assignment is that students can observe their level of achievement because they have a clear image of themselves speaking Japanese in the completed video. Also, by seeing themselves speaking Japanese in the video from a third person's perspective, students may be able to strengthen their image as a Japanese speaker. In addition, unlike in-class performance, students are able to practice until they are satisfied with their performance. In other words, they can create as many videos as they want so that they can submit their optimal video in which their performance is close to that of the model. This setup was expected to encourage students to practice outside the classroom on their own, resulting in high standard videos.

The topic of Chapter 2 is *Orei no tegami* (Thank-you letter). In the video assignment students needed to make a video message of gratitude to their previous Japanese teachers or people who understand Japanese who have helped them in the past. When the new chapter started, a message video by L2 users of Japanese who once studied at a Japanese university was played, and the basic requirements for the video was detailed. It was up to students whether or not they send the message video they made to the recipients.

*Watashi no sukina machi* (My favorite town) is the topic of Chapter 3. Students were asked to make a video introducing the attractions of their hometown as if they were guides talking to Japanese tourists visiting their hometown. At the beginning of this chapter, a video of a Chinese working in Japan as a national government licensed guide interpreter was played. The video making was done in Zoom, and students were instructed to use the virtual background feature to set the place they wanted to introduce as the video background to make the video a little more real.

The topic of Chapter 5 is *Watashi no osusume ryouri* (My food recommendation). As the summative practice of this chapter, students created a cooking video in which they cooked their favorite dishes. As a sample video of a fluent L2 speaker of Japanese, a video of an Austrian who is an idol in Japan was played. In the video, she explained what she was going to cook, described the ingredients and the cooking process, and finally ate the food she made and reported on its taste. Following this idol's sample video, students were asked to include the same components in their video. Students who did not have access to kitchen due to COVID-19 were assigned recipe writing as an alternative assignment.

The videos were graded in terms of content, fluency, organization, language control, comprehensibility, and length, as Table 6 indicates. After they submitted their videos, students completed their self-assessment.

Table 6. Rubric for the Video-making Assignment for Chapter 2

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations (5.5)	Meets Expectations		Does Not Meet Expectations (0-3)
		Strong (5)	Minimal (4)	
Content		Can include everything listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 humble forms</li> <li>• 3 honorific forms</li> <li>• recipient name</li> <li>• seasonal greeting</li> <li>• what s/he did for you</li> <li>• gratitude</li> </ul>		Can partially include what's listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 humble forms</li> <li>• 3 honorific forms</li> <li>• recipient name</li> <li>• seasonal greeting</li> <li>• what s/he did for you</li> <li>• gratitude</li> </ul>
Fluency	Speaks at a steady speed without hesitation.	Speaks with some hesitation.	Speaks too fast or too slowly with some hesitation.	Often stops speaking. (2-3) Can say almost nothing. (1) Can say nothing. (0)
Organization	Video is well-organized or sequenced, with strong cohesion and transitions.	Video is mostly organized, with cohesion and transitions.	Video is somewhat organized or has some transitions.	More organization, cohesion, or transitions needed.
Language Control	Incorporates 10 or more new expressions and idioms from Chapter 2.	Incorporates 8-9 new expressions and idioms from Chapter 2.	Incorporates 6-7 new expressions and idioms from Chapter 2.	Incorporates 0-5 new expressions and idioms from Chapter 2.
Comprehensibility		Listening does not require much effort.	Listening requires some effort.	Listening requires much effort.
Length		1-3 minutes	3-4 minutes	0-1 or 4 minutes or longer

## Story Writing Assignments

Throughout the semester, students were required to write one original, unique, entertaining and interesting story. The story had to be at least 200 characters, and the requirement was to use at least five newly learned grammar in one chapter of the textbook. After each chapter was over, four students wrote their original story. They submitted it on the Discussion Board available in Brightspace, Purdue's online learning platform. Classmates had to read one story assigned to them and leave comments and questions within three days after the story was posted. They were required to not only leave their positive comments on the story assigned to them, but also give constructive feedback, analyze grammar usages, and ask questions regarding the story. The whole purpose of this activity was to improve the story and modify incorrect grammar usages collaboratively.

This writing activity was based on the previous research by Lam (2000; 2004) and Black (2006) who were mentioned in Chapter 2. As writer-students interact with their classmates about the stories they wrote all in Japanese, it was hoped that they would build their identities as authors and as Japanese language users. After online discussion, writer-students revised their stories based

on the feedback they received and posted a revised version on the Discussion Board. In order to keep students' identity as an author of their story, however, it was left up to the writer-students to decide whether they incorporate feedback from classmates.

### **Group Project**

On the last day of class in the fifteenth week, students had a group project presentation. One group consisted of three or four students, and they had to say the actual lines to the mouths of anime characters while an anime video clip was played on mute. The video clip was approximately 5 minutes long and was retrieved from Japanese anime titled *Shirokuma Cafe* (Polar Bear Cafe). The scene was an interview for a part-time job at the cafe. There were several characters, all of whom were animals except for one person. This was precisely the reason why this scene was chosen. Since there are more characters in the video than students, some students had to play more than one character. They needed to change their voices and tones depending on the characters, which was considered challenging and entertaining. Furthermore, superficial gender differences were thought to be less visible because most of the characters were animals.

Before students started working on this project, they watched videos of two professional anime voice actors, who studied Japanese as a foreign language and are currently working in Japan. One is Jenya from Russia, and the other one is Ryu Seira from China. The two voice actors were used as role models to show that it is possible for non-native speakers of Japanese to work as anime voice actors in Japan. The most important thing in this group project was to let students experience the same things that the role models do. The detail of the project was announced a month before the presentation was to take place. The script for the video clip was transcribed in advance by the instructor. Outside the classroom, the students were instructed to check the readings of the kanji and read the script together in groups. After the presentation, students were told to complete their self-assessment sheet.

### **Essays and Final Project**

After chapters 1, 4, and 6, essay-writing assignments were prepared as a summative practice of each chapter. The essay topic "This is the kind of person I want to be" was the same for all three essays. It was expected that students would improve the quality of their essays by working on the

same topic three times and incorporate more and more newly learned words and grammar patterns from the textbook. As Table 7 shows, students were instructed to include the name of the person they respect, what the person does, the person's personality, and why they respect the person. Students were allowed to change whom they describe for each essay.

Table 7. Rubric for the First Essay Writing Assignment

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations (5.5)	Meets Expectations		Does Not Meet Expectations (0-3)
		Strong (5)	Minimal (4)	
Content		Can include everything listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of the person you respect</li> <li>• What s/he does</li> <li>• Personality</li> <li>• Why you respect</li> </ul>		Can partially include what's listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of the person you respect</li> <li>• What s/he does</li> <li>• Personality</li> <li>• Why you respect</li> </ul>
Organization	Speech is well-organized or sequenced, with strong cohesion and transitions.	Speech is mostly organized, with cohesion and transitions.	Speech is somewhat organized or has some transitions.	More organization, cohesion, or transitions needed.
Language Control	Incorporates 10 or more new expressions and idioms from the current unit.	Incorporates 8-9 new expressions and idioms from the current unit.	Incorporates 6-7 new expressions and idioms from the current unit.	Incorporates 0-5 new expressions and idioms from the current unit.
Comprehensibility		Reading does not require much effort.	Reading requires some effort.	Reading requires much effort.
Length		350-450 characters	325-349 or 451-475 characters	0-324 or 476 or more characters

The first essay was 350 to 450 characters long. For the second essay, the length of the essay was changed from 350-450 characters to 350-500 characters. This is because some students, when they wrote their first essay, had to cut out some information in order to keep their essay within 450 characters. Students were supposed to work on the third essay in the original plan. However, due to the schedule change, which was mentioned previously, the third essay was not assigned. After submitting each essay, students needed to complete a self-assessment sheet as well. Figure 4 is a part of the self-assessment sheet used for essay-writing assignments. Unlike the grading criteria used for oral tests and video-making assignments, fluency is excluded for essay-writing assignments.

	Sample 1	Sample 2	Your assessment
Content	5	3	
Organization	4	5	
Language Control	5	5.5	
Comprehensibility	3	4	
Length	5	3	
Your point (0-26)	22	20.5	0

Figure 4. Self-assessment Sheet for the Essay Writing Assignment

Based on the two essays which they produced throughout the course, students worked on their final project. As a final project, students submitted their presentation video on people they want to be like. They could describe the same person whom they had depicted in the previous essays or talk about somebody new. Table 8 is a rubric used for grading students' final project. The required length of their presentation was 6-8 minutes long. What was new is the category of impact. Since this is a presentation project, students were expected to create their presentation with their audience in mind. When they completed their self-assessment sheet (Figure 5), they were asked to describe their effort to maintain audience interest as well as answer what went well and what they still need to work on.

Table 8. Rubric for the Final Project

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations (5.5)	Meets Expectations		Does Not Meet Expectations (0-3)
		Strong (5)	Minimal (4)	
Content		Can include everything listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of the person you respect</li> <li>What s/he does</li> <li>Personality</li> <li>Why you respect</li> <li>Additional information</li> </ul>	Can include everything listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of the person you respect</li> <li>What s/he does</li> <li>Personality</li> <li>Why you respect</li> </ul>	Can partially include what's listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of the person you respect</li> <li>What s/he does</li> <li>Personality</li> <li>Why you respect</li> </ul>
Fluency		Speaks at a steady speed without hesitation.	Speaks with some hesitation.	Speaks slowly. (2)  Speaks too fast or too slowly with some hesitation. (1)  Often stops speaking. (0)
Organization		Presentation is well-organized or sequenced, with strong cohesion and transitions.	Presentation is mostly organized, with cohesion and transitions.	Presentation is somewhat organized or has some transitions. (2-3)  More organization, cohesion, or transitions needed. (0-1)
Language Control	Incorporates 30 new expressions and idioms from JPNS 301.	Incorporates 20-29 new expressions and idioms from JPNS 301.	Incorporates 15-19 new expressions and idioms from JPNS 301.	Incorporates 0-14 new expressions and idioms from JPNS 301.
Comprehensibility		Listening requires no effort.	Listening does not require much effort.	Listening requires some effort. (2-3)  Listening requires much effort. (0-1)
Impact		Audience interest is consistently maintained through originality, visuals, technology, content, voice, humor, or emotions.	Audience interest is mostly maintained.	Audience interest is somewhat maintained. (2-3)  Audience interest is minimally maintained. (0-1)
Length		6-8 minutes	8-9 minutes	0-6 or 9 minutes or longer

	Sample 1	Sample 2	Your assessment
Content	5	3	
Fluency	4	5	
Organization	5	3	
Language Control	5.5	4	
Comprehensibility	5	4	
Impact	4	3	
Length	5	3	
Your point (0-35.5)	33.5	25	0

Figure 5. Self-assessment Sheet for the Final Project

### Additional Exposure to Successful L2 Users of Japanese

To increase students' exposure to L2 users of Japanese, various videos were played in class before each lesson started. Initially, several videos of non-native speakers of Japanese singing Japanese songs were played. However, there arose a problem. When we had a meeting via Zoom, students usually joined the meeting room a minute before a class started or right at the start of class. Not everybody was able to watch the videos if they were played before classes. Therefore, a warm-up conversation practice was prepared at the beginning of each lesson, and to create a topic for the conversation, various videos featuring L2 users of Japanese were played. For example, in one video, an American who studied economics at an American university, then studied medicine in Japan, and works as a doctor in Japan now was introduced. Videos of a German manga artist working in Japan, a person from the UK working as a Coordinator for International Relations through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, and an American working at a Japanese sake brewery were also played, among many other videos. Based on what they saw in videos, students discussed many topics including "Do you think it is possible to work in a completely different field than your current major at Purdue?" and "Since you have studied Japanese for more than two years, do you feel you are turning Japanese?"

### Procedure

Data collection took place between August 2020 and December 2020, the last month in the Fall 2020 semester. The current author was the course instructor of both sections of the JPNS 30100 course. 31 undergraduate students became participants in this study by virtue of their enrollment. Therefore, no recruitment was necessary. The data used in this thesis was retrieved



from students' course assignments: student information sheets, essays, and presentations. Students submitted these assignments according to the due dates indicated in Table 9.

Table 9. Assignments from which data were retrieved and their due dates

Assignments	Due dates
Student Inforamtion Sheet	August 27, 2020
Essay 1	September 13, 2020
Essay 2	November 3, 2020
Final Project Presentation	December 9, 2020

### **Data Analysis**

At the beginning of the semester, students filled out a student information sheet with some questions. Their answers to two questions, “Why are you taking Japanese?” and “After you learn Japanese, what do you want to do in the future?” were analyzed to check their purpose of learning Japanese and whether they already had a future image as a Japanese language user. Throughout the course, students produced two essays on the same topic “This is the kind of person I want to be.” Also, at the end of the semester, they created a presentation video on the people they want to emulate. The essays and presentations were analyzed to discern what kind of role models students have. In these assignments, students were allowed to write about whoever they want to be like. This is because putting conditions on the selection of people could lead students to choose certain types of people whom the present author wants to see. Freedom was considered necessary to describe the kind of people students really want to be.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter, the JPNS 30100 course, which was designed for Fall 2020 with reference to literature on L2 motivation and identities, was introduced. This thesis aims to develop a course that encourages students to construct their future ideal selves as an L2 user of Japanese. Throughout the course, students learned about and saw Japanese language users who learned Japanese as an additional language, and they imitated the performances of some of the successful L2 users. The remainder of this chapter will report on the results of data analysis. In the analysis, the relationship between the students' reasons to learn Japanese and the kind of people they emulate, and the effectiveness of the intervention administered during the JPNS 30100 course were examined. Specifically, the analysis was set out to address the following research questions:

1. Do students have an L2 user of Japanese that they respect? Did L2 users of Japanese who had been showcased in class as models for video-making assignments or as providers of topics for group conversations appear in students' essays and presentations as people whom they respect?
2. Is there any relationship between students' purpose of learning Japanese and people whom they look up to?
3. Do getting exposed to successful L2 users of Japanese and working on video-making assignments modeled after some of them help students to find their L2 role models and construct their future image as a Japanese language user?"

### Results

Table 10 shows a summary of the data collected from the participants. The leftmost column indicates students' names. Students' names are all pseudonyms. The second column is the answers to the two information sheet questions. The third and fourth columns are the content of the first and second essays, respectively. The content of the presentation is shown in the rightmost column.

Table 10. Summary of Students' Information Sheet and Assignment Contents

Student Name (Pseudonym)	Information Sheet	Essay 1	Essay 2	Presentation
	Why are you taking Japanese? After you learn Japanese, what do you want to do in the future?	This is the person I want to be	This is the person I want to be	This is the person I want to be
Alexander	Work as a plant breeder	Edward Elric (anime character)	Father	Father
Amelia	Travel to Japan, Use Japanese at work	Father	Father	Father
Ava	Talk with Mother	Little sister	Friend	Little sister
Charlotte	Travel to Japan, Use Japanese at work	Elder sister	Elder sister	Elder sister, Friend
Daniel	Work in an anime industry	Someone who can draw well	TOMATO (illustrator)	TOMATO
Dylan	Work in Japan	Shinji Ikari (anime character)	Akira Sendo (anime character)	Iskandar (anime character)
Elijah	Use Japanese at work	Friend	Someone with ambition	Shouhei Otani (baseball player) Someone with ambition
Emma	Work as a Coordinator for International Relations through JET Program	William Clark (professor of zoology)	Jenna Marbles (YouTuber)	Jenna Marbles
Ethan	Travel to Japan, Understand Japanese culture	Qigong (artist)	Hajime Isayama (manga artist)	Youhei Akiyama (influencer)
Isabella	Travel to Japan, Talk with family, Use Japanese at work	Grand father	Jackie Chan (actor)	Jackie Chan
Jackson	Use Japanese at work	Adam Young (musician)	Mother	Adam Young, Mother
Jacob	Work as an English teacher in Japan or as a Japanese teacher in the US Use Japanese at work	Father	Son Heung-min (soccer player)	Father, Son Heung-min
James	Understand manga and anime in Japanese, Talk with local people	Leo Tolstoy (writer)	Cousin	Junji Ito (manga artist)
John	Work in a medical field in Japan, Work as a translator	Sayuri (musician)	Vaundy (musician)	Sayuri, Vaundy
Joseph	Teach at a university in Japan	Masato Hayakawa (singer)	Takashi Masuzaki (guitarist)	Masato Hayakawa

Table 10. continued

Student Name (Pseudonym)	Information Sheet	Essay 1	Essay 2	Presentation
	Why are you taking Japanese? After you learn Japanese, what do you want to do in the future?	This is the person I want to be	This is the person I want to be	This is the person I want to be
Liam	N/A	Kind and generous person	High school teacher	Grand mother
Logan	Read novels, Play games, Use Japanese at work	Hero	Hero	Shirou Emiya (anime character)
Lucas	Work at a manufacturing company in Japan	Takashi Murakami (artist)	Mitchel Cave (vocalist)	Mitchel Cave
Luna	Travel to Japan, Stay in Japan	Yuzuru Hanyu (figure skater)	Yuzuru Hanyu	Yuzuru Hanyu
Mason	Talk with girl friend	Father	Father	Father
Mateo	Return to Japan	Friend	Friend	Friend
Mia	Work at a Japanese software company	Joan of Arc (historical figure)	Joan of Arc	Joan of Arc
Michael	Use Japanese at work	Nikola Tesla (inventor)	Nikola Tesla	Nikola Tesla
Noah	Understand Japanese songs and books, Travel to Japan	Alfons Mucha (painter)	Sylvester Stallone (actor)	Alfons Mucha, Sylvester Stallone
Oliver	Make friends in Japan, Attend a graduate school in Japan	Richard Feynman (physicist)	Richard Feynman	Richard Feynman
Olivia	Teach in Japan, Work as a translator	Iron man	Mother	Mother
Samuel	Read Japanese literature, Work in Japan	Arnold Schwarzenegger (actor)	Father	Father
Sebastian	Stay in Japan for a year	High school Japanese teacher	High school teacher	Friend
Sophia	Work with a designer from Japan	Takashi Murakami (artist)	Zhang Yunlei (comedian)	Zhang Yunlei
William	Work as an assistant language teacher through JET Program	Mother	Ichiro (baseball player)	Ichiro
Wyatt	Work as a language teacher Do an internship in Japan	Father	Father	Father

## Discussion

### Information Sheet

Students' answers in the information sheet revealed that some students already had a concrete image of a work/professional situation in which they would use Japanese in the future. For example, both Emma and William have specific visions of working in Japan through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program. Jackson is also thinking about visiting Japan and becoming an English language teacher there or becoming a Japanese teacher for English speaking people. Lucas and Mia show interest in working at a Japanese company in the future. Also, Sophia thinks learning Japanese is necessary for when she works and communicates with a Japanese designer. Daniel is interested in learning about Japanese animation production and visualizes himself working in the animation industry after graduation. In addition to these learners, there are learners who want to go to Japan to work in the medical or educational fields. From these answers, we can confirm that there were students who had a clear purpose of studying Japanese even at the beginning of the semester.

There are also learners who are vaguely interested in using Japanese at work. Eight students answered that they would like to use Japanese at work. Four students mentioned that they were interested in working or doing an internship in Japan. Two students expressed their interest in staying in Japan. Their answers are vague, and we cannot know what kind of work they specifically want to do using Japanese. It is also hard to see what they want to do during their stay in Japan. However, there is no doubt that they at least want to use Japanese at work or during their stay in Japan.

Students' reasons for learning Japanese are not limited to work. Some students are thinking about the use of Japanese in their daily lives. For example, Ava, Isabella, and Mason want to improve their Japanese skills to communicate with somebody close to them. Oliver considers it is essential to improve his Japanese skills because he wants to attend a graduate school in Japan. Some students answered that Japanese skills are necessary for their hobbies. They are studying Japanese to understand Japanese cultural works, such as novels, anime, manga, and songs. Several students want to travel to Japan in the future and intend to use Japanese for that purpose. There are a wide variety of situations in which students visualize themselves using Japanese in the future.

From the students' responses on the information sheet, we were able to confirm that there are various situations in which they want to use Japanese in their future. This confirmation comes with an important caveat, however. The question did not ask for a specific response. Therefore, it is possible that some students described what they want to do in their future in a vague way and did not provide a specific answer. It cannot be denied that they might have actually had a clear vision; just that they did not write it down specifically. Of course, it is also possible that they still have only a vague idea of what they want to do after learning Japanese. We cannot tell whether those students really did not have a concrete image of using Japanese in their future. However, even if they do not have a specific image of their future yet, at least we can discern that they are thinking of incorporating Japanese within their future career. Considering that this question was not a multiple-choice question but a free-text question, as far as those who provided a concrete answer are concerned, we can assume that the answers reveal what the students really thought at the beginning of the semester.

### **Essays and Presentations**

In their essays and presentations, students introduced a number of people whom they admire and want to be like. Two students mentioned L2 users of Japanese as people they look up to. For example, Daniel wrote about TOMATO, a Chinese illustrator who lives in Japan. The other student who introduced an L2 user of Japanese is Sebastian. Sebastian wants to be like his high school Japanese language teacher. Emma mentioned a non-Japanese language learner who is very famous in Japan, William Clark, an American professor of zoology who taught at a university in Japan. Many Japanese people also appeared in students' essays and presentations as people students want to emulate, such as Ichiro, Takashi Murakami, and Yuzuru Hanyu, to name a few. Many people who the students are close to but have mostly no direct connection to Japan or the Japanese language also appeared in students' essays and presentations. For example, twelve students mentioned their family members, and five students listed their friends. Also, there was one student who mentioned that he did not want to be anybody and just answered that he respected people with ambition.

## **Response to Research Question 1**

This section answers research question 1, “Do students have an L2 user of Japanese that they respect? Did L2 users of Japanese who had been showcased in class as models for video-making assignments or as providers of topics for group conversations appear in students’ essays and presentations as people whom they respect?” As was already mentioned, a variety of successful L2 users of Japanese were showcased throughout the semester as an intervention. The hypothesis was that getting exposed to these L2 users of Japanese would influence students, but it turned out that none of the people introduced in class had appeared in the learners’ essays and presentations on the theme “This is the kind of person”. However, two students, Daniel and Sebastian, mentioned L2 users of Japanese as people they look up to. No L2 users of Japanese appeared in the essays or presentations of the remaining 29 students as people they respect. In other words, there is nobody that learned Japanese as an additional language among people whom students respect.

## **Response to Research Question 2**

As can be seen above, a variety of role models appeared in the student data. In the following paragraphs, to answer research question 2, “Is there any relationship between students’ purpose of learning Japanese and people whom they look up to?” the data will be analyzed in terms of the relationship between the two. This relationship is very important because if the two factors are related closely, getting closer to the people students admire is considered achieving their goal of learning Japanese, and vice versa.

The student data can be divided into three groups based on the relationship between students’ purpose of learning Japanese and the people they look up to. Specifically, the relationship of the two factors were classified according to the following cases: congruent, partially congruent, and unrelated.

### ***Congruent Cases***

The first group includes the data of students whose purpose of learning Japanese is closely related to the people they admire. A good example of this category is Daniel. Daniel wrote about TOMATO, a Chinese illustrator who lives in Japan. Daniel respects TOMATO because TOMATO has been trying to become an animator for a long time. In the information sheet, Daniel answered

that his major is animation and wants to work in the animation industry after learning Japanese. As he studied his major, Daniel realized that becoming an animator was not easy in the field. Not all illustrators can become animators. Daniel is impressed with TOMATO's never-give-up attitude. TOMATO is a good role model for Daniel, as TOMATO is an L2 user of Japanese who is active in the field where Daniel wants to work in the future. This is an example that what students want to do with Japanese in the future matches what their role model is actually doing with Japanese now.

Sebastian also mentioned an L2 user of Japanese in one of his essays. Sebastian wants to be like his high school Japanese language teacher. The teacher shared his experiences abroad with his students, and this sparked Sebastian's interest in the world outside of the United States. Sebastian came to feel like going out into the world and sharing his story with others. He mentioned that he wants to stay in Japan after learning Japanese in the information sheet. Unlike the TOMATO-Daniel relationship, his teacher is not exactly Sebastian's work-oriented role model, for Sebastian does not think he will be a Japanese language teacher in the future. However, his desire to stay in Japan after studying Japanese can be said to have been influenced by his teacher. It is clear that the teacher serves as a role model, as Sebastian would like to spend time abroad like the teacher. In this case, this student wants to have a similar experience to what his role model once had, not what the role model is doing now in his occupation.

Isabella is also a good example in this category. One of the reasons why she studies Japanese is to talk with her family. She is a heritage learner of Japanese and wants to communicate with her family better. In her first essay, she wrote about her grandfather who lives in Japan. For Isabella, her grandfather is a good role model because he puts his family before himself and can think of others' feelings. Isabella wants to be able to behave in a mature manner like him. In her essay, she describes going to see him from time to time. In the cases of Daniel and Sebastian, studying Japanese was necessary to become an animator or to live in Japan. In Isabella's case, Japanese is not necessarily required in becoming who she wants to be. Learning Japanese can be considered necessary for her to facilitate communication with her grandfather, who embodies the characteristics she wants to acquire.

The last example in this group is Ethan. Ethan admires a Japanese influencer named Youhei Akiyama, who can speak as many as ten languages despite his lack of experience studying abroad. Though this was not mentioned in his information sheet, in his presentation, he stated that his



hobby is language learning, and that he started learning Japanese because he wanted to be able to understand Japanese anime better. Ethan says in his presentation that he was encouraged by Akiyama's words that natural talent has nothing to do with learning foreign languages. Akiyama, who is fluent in foreign languages, is the ideal model for Ethan and the one he aspires to be like. This is because acquiring foreign language skills like Akiyama will contribute to his goal of being able to understand anime better.

### ***Partially Congruent Cases***

In the second group, the purpose of learning Japanese is indirectly related to the people they respect, and the Japanese language works as a tool that enables learners to participate in the communities they want to join in the future. The student who best fits into this category is Oliver. He wrote about Richard Feynman, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist, as the person he respects in both of his two essays and end-of-semester presentation. Oliver's major is physics, and he decided to major in physics after reading a book written by Feynman. The book explained difficult physics contents in a way that is easy for anyone to understand, and Oliver said that the more he read that book, the more he understood physics. Influenced by Feynman, Oliver came to believe that the job of a scientist is to explain and teach advanced technology to the general public in a way that is easy to understand. Feynman was a scientist who put this into practice, and like Feynman, Oliver wants to teach physics to people in an easy-to-understand way and increase the number of people who love physics. According to the information sheet, he is thinking of attending a graduate school in Japan after learning Japanese. Although learning Japanese is not directly related to whom Oliver wants to be in the future, studying Japanese will allow him to go on to graduate school in Japan and further his expertise in physics, which in turn will bring him one step closer to becoming a scientist like Feynman.

The next student that fits into this category is William. As was mentioned previously, he wants to teach English in Japan as an Assistant Language Teacher through a program called JET (Japan Exchange Teaching). In his case, learning Japanese is considered as something that makes it easier to work and live in Japan. Studying Japanese is thought to bring him closer to the state of working in the Japanese community. William already has a concrete vision of what he wants to do after studying Japanese at a university, but the purpose of learning Japanese is not directly related to the people he admires. Though William wrote about his mother and Ichiro, a Japanese

professional baseball player, neither of them has anything to do with language education and Japanese language learning. William respects Ichiro because of his famous career, self-discipline, and hard work. In his presentation, William said that the more he studies Japanese, the more information he will be able to get about Ichiro's activities in Japan. In his case, studying Japanese is not only a tool to get closer to the community he wants to join, but also a tool to learn more about the person he admires.

Emma's data also show partial connection between the reasons for learning Japanese and the people she admires. Like William, Emma has a specific vision of working in Japan after learning Japanese. She wants to work as Coordinator for International Relations in Japan through the JET program. People in this position are mainly assigned to a Japanese local government and are engaged in international exchange activities. Due to the nature of their duties, applicants are required to have a high level of Japanese language skills. Thus, in her case, studying Japanese is seen as a way to participate in Japanese society and to gain access to a job as a CIR. Dr. Clark, whom Emma mentioned in her first essay, was a person who had nothing to do with language education or learning Japanese. He did, however, teach at a Japanese university, so there is some connection between Emma's dream and Dr. Clark in terms of working in Japan. In her essay, it is somewhat vague and difficult to understand why she admires Dr. Clark. However, it is quite possible that he serves as a role model for Emma, as a non-Japanese who worked in Japan.

### *Unrelated Cases*

In the third group, the purpose of learning Japanese is not related to the people they respect. All students who have not been referred to so far fit into this category. This group had the largest number of students among those from whom data was collected. These students include both those who were able to concretely imagine future situations in which they would use Japanese and those who answered only vaguely. An example of the former case is, for instance, Jackson, who wants to work as an actuary in Japan, which is his major, or wants to teach English in Japan or Japanese to English speaking people in the future. Learning Japanese is important for his access to Japan and for his future jobs. However, none of the people he described in his essays and presentation have anything to do with his dreams or learning foreign languages.

So far, the data of students were organized into three groups in terms of the relationship between their purpose of learning Japanese and the people they want to be. What needs to be considered next is the effectiveness of the intervention administered in the classroom.

### **Response to Research Question 3**

This section answers research question 3, “Do getting exposed to successful L2 users of Japanese and working on video-making assignments modeled after some of them help students to find their L2 role models and construct their future image as a Japanese language user?” None of the successful L2 learners who were introduced in class appeared in students’ essays and presentations. However, the interesting results in the current data are the cases where the purpose of learning Japanese and the people students respect match completely or partially. In particular, Daniel’s and Sebastian’s cases are noteworthy because they cite L2 users of Japanese as people they look up to. Daniel has a dream of working in the animation industry in the future, and in his first essay, he wrote that he just admires people who can draw well, without giving specific names of people. However, in his second essay, a specific illustrator named TOMATO appeared, and he also made a presentation about TOMATO at the end of the semester. What seems important is to consider why TOMATO did not appear in the first essay, but appeared in the second. This is something that can be understood by interviewing Daniel himself. However, as he saw and heard about many successful L2 users of Japanese who are active in various fields throughout the course, he might have looked for L2 users of Japanese who are active in his field. In Sebastian’s case, too, there is no denying the possibility that seeing and hearing about L2 users of Japanese brought back memories of his high school Japanese language teacher. Of course, this interpretation also needs to be supported by interviews and other means. Several learners were also found to have some degree of relationship between their purpose of studying Japanese and the people they admire. It cannot be denied that the intervention may have been effective for these learners. It may be possible to clarify the effects of the intervention by collecting additional data from students by interviewing them.

In this chapter, the data retrieved from students were presented. Students’ purposes of Japanese language learning were indicated in three groups: those who want to use Japanese for a specific job, those who want to use Japanese for work although they do not have a clear image of it, and those who want to use Japanese in a context unrelated to work. Though no L2 users of

Japanese who were showcased in class appeared in students' assignments, two students out of 31 mentioned role models that speak Japanese as an additional language. The data from essays and presentations were organized in terms of the relationship between the people whom students admire and students' purpose of learning Japanese. Several cases were identified where there is a relationship between the purpose of learning Japanese and the people they respect. It seems possible to demonstrate the influence of successful L2 users of Japanese on Japanese language learners when combined with methods such as interviews.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **Summary of Findings**

To examine the impacts of the JPNS 30100 Fall 2020 on students who took it, data was collected from the student information sheet and two essays and one presentation on the theme “This is the kind of person I want to be.” The results showed that some students have a clear future image related to Japanese. Though none of the L2 users of Japanese who were showcased in class appeared in students’ assignments, two students, Daniel and Sebastian, cited an L2 user of Japanese as the person they want to emulate. As for the relationships between the students’ purpose of learning Japanese and their ideal self, three categories were identified: congruent, partial congruent, and unrelated. Though students in congruence and partial congruence groups may have benefited from the intervention, strong statements cannot be made regarding the effectiveness of the course based on the collected data alone. Supplementary data collection, such as interviews, may show the effectiveness of the course more clearly.

In this study, there were only a few students who majored in Japanese among the participants, and 11 students were studying Japanese as a minor. Some students did not major or minor in Japanese. For those students who do not study Japanese as a minor or major, they may not have a particular image to do something with Japanese in the future in the first place. If learning Japanese is positioned as a mere add-on to their university studies, it may be unlikely that their future image and the people they respect will be linked to Japanese. However, there are students who have a concrete image of using Japanese in the future, even though Japanese is neither their major nor their minor, like Daniel, Emma, and Jackson. It seems worth conducting interviews with students who have a clear Japanese-related future image but do not major or minor in Japanese to ask them what led them to have such dreams.

### **Limitations**

Although we can say that getting to know about successful L2 users of Japanese might impact L2 learners, the number of cases where there may have been an impact is limited in the current data. Several issues regarding the intervention and the data collection became apparent, which are to be discussed in this section.

In the present data, L2 users of Japanese rarely appeared in students' essays and presentations. However, perhaps this was not a strange result. As is clear from the data retrieved from students' information sheets, some learners already had a concrete image of their future. Getting to know about successful L2 users who are using Japanese in a context different from the context in which students want to use Japanese in the future is not likely to be of great significance or interest to them. It goes along with the discussion of the possibility that students are not interested in classroom practices that are not related to their target L2 community, which was elaborated when the concept of *investment* was introduced in Chapter 2.

However, even those who vaguely answered that they want to use Japanese in their future work did not mention L2 users of Japanese, either. One of the reasons for this may be limited exposure to L2 users of Japanese. The number of L2 users of Japanese that can be showcased in one semester is limited, making it difficult to provide students with sufficient exposure. Besides, even if students do not have a specific image for their future, it is almost impossible to introduce L2 users of Japanese that will interest all the students because different students have specific and different majors, backgrounds and interests.

In addition to this, it is important to consider the fact that even some of those who have a concrete image of using Japanese did not include in their essays and presentations any L2 users of Japanese or anyone who had any connection to their future dreams. Why is this? One interpretation can be that they do not know much about L2 users of Japanese or Japanese people who are active in their field in the first place. Another interpretation is that just because a person has a Japanese-related dream for the future, it does not mean that people whom L2 learners look up to are always people who are related to L2 learners' dreams. People live their lives while belonging to various communities, such as family, local, school, and workplace. The situations in which Japanese is used are only a part of people's lives, not all of it. This is true not just for now but for the future as well. It is not always the case that the people whom Japanese language learners admire now or in the future are Japanese-related people. It is also likely that there will be more than one person to look up to as well as multiple communities to which individuals (will) belong. When we think about it this way, we have to say that this study's assumption was unreasonable. No matter how much learners get exposed to L2 users of Japanese, it does not necessarily mean that L2 users of Japanese will appear as people learners respect in their essays and presentations. This seems to imply two things. Firstly, it is necessary to devise a way to limit people whom students respect to

those in communities where Japanese is spoken. Secondly, it may suggest that the learners who have their purpose of learning Japanese related to the people they admire are highly motivated to learn Japanese. Among the various respected people that may appear, the fact that people related to the purpose of learning Japanese appeared is considered quite significant.

Another problem that arose during this data analysis was that many of the data were not concrete. For example, most answers in the student information sheet lacked specificity. As was already mentioned briefly, students were not instructed to answer specifically about what they want to do with Japanese in their future. Without specific answers, however, it is challenging to analyze their future outlooks. As a matter of fact, there were two forms available, PDF and Word, and students could choose one they wanted to fill out. When the Word file was chosen, the entry fields could be expanded freely. In contrast, with the PDF form, students could not make such changes and had to answer within the allotted space. This might have affected the length and specificity of the students' answers.

The problem of the lack of specificity is not limited to information sheets. Essays and presentations also had the same problem. Unlike the information sheet, there was a minimum number of words that had to be written, so essays of a certain length could be collected from all students. However, although the essays were of similar length, there were significant differences in the amount of information in the essays, depending on factors such as the students' Japanese language ability. Some students were able to write much specific information, while others were not. This lack of specificity made it difficult to analyze the data in several cases. For example, several Japanese people and Japanese anime characters appeared as people students admire in their essays and presentations. However, the relationship between these people and students' purpose of learning Japanese was sometimes obscure. Without concrete explanations in students' essays and presentations, the relationship between the two needed to be judged as irrelevant.

In line with this point, the way the essays and presentations were assigned also turned out to be problematic. Essays and presentations were supposed to include the name of the people students admire, what they have done, what kind of people they are, and why students admire them. The requirements did not include writing about how students came to know people they look up to. As Daniel did in his second essay, when students mentioned an L2 user of Japanese who did not appear in the previous assignments, there is no knowing how they came to know and respect the person. Without concrete answers, it is difficult to understand exactly what happened and the

effectiveness of the intervention. Furthermore, it is essential to supplement the information through interviews and other means.

The research design was also considered problematic. In the previous section, students' data were categorized and analyzed in terms of the relationship between students' purpose of learning Japanese and the people they respect. The premise of this thesis was the idea that the people whom students look up to might change as a result of getting exposed to successful L2 users of Japanese. That is why students were asked to submit two essays and one presentation throughout the semester. In contrast, the purpose of learning Japanese is assumed to be fixed in this research design. As for the purpose of learning Japanese, students only answered the question once on the information sheet at the beginning of the semester and never had a chance to answer it after that. It is conceivable that the purpose of learning Japanese may have changed after getting to know many L2 users of Japanese. This was a flaw in the research design, as students should have been asked to answer multiple times throughout the semester, just like they did for the people they respect.

In addition, the fundamental idea of this thesis is that learners' L2 motivation and identities can change continuously and fluidly over time. Also, in this thesis, L2 learners are considered as people who struggle with power imbalance and social inequalities that hinder learners' access to their target L2 communities. However, this research was not designed well enough to look at changes in motivation and identities in detail, and data on L2 learners' experiences inside and outside the classroom were not collected this time. Incorporating how to track changes in L2 learners' motivation and identities more effectively and how to analyze the experiences of learners studying Japanese at American universities into the research is an issue for future research.

### **Future Direction**

In the previous section, some problems in the research design and data collection were identified. One problem is that getting exposed to successful L2 users of Japanese and having a Japanese-related dream do not necessarily mean that people whom students respect are L2 users of Japanese or people who have something to do with Japanese. It is expected that there will be more than one respected person, so L2 users of Japanese do not necessarily come up as people students look up to. Rather than asking far-fetched questions, it would be better to ask if they know anyone who is active in contexts where students would like to use Japanese in the future through the information sheet at the beginning of the semester.



The data analysis in the previous chapter revealed that even among learners who have studied Japanese up to the third year at university, some students were not able to answer the specific purpose of their Japanese language study and did not have a clear image of their future at the beginning of the semester. It seems necessary to prepare activities that give students a chance to specifically imagine themselves using Japanese in the future. Based on this idea, it might be a good idea to prepare an assignment to make students think about their future projections. Instructions for students will be as follows. Note that this teaching practice has been introduced by Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014), and these instructions have been revised by the current author. See Appendix B for the original instruction.

Write your 'back-to-the-future' learning history. What will your career and life be like in 10 years' time? Where will you live, and what will you be doing there? Imagine that you are in the future, leading a happy life. If your future has something to do with Japanese, visualize the future when you have succeeded in mastering Japanese and you are a competent Japanese speaker. You use Japanese in your daily life. Write an autobiographical story about how you have managed to achieve this. Start with the present situation and describe the progress towards the successful future state as realistically as possible, also describing how you overcame obstacles and how you found the energy to persist. Remember, this story is about you, and the more convincing it sounds, the better! Write the account in a retrospective manner (i.e., in the past tense) as personal history and include as much detail as possible.

In this task, students first need to identify the contexts. As is evident from the previous chapter, many students are not yet able to imagine specific contexts in which they want to use Japanese. For such learners, it may be useful to think about their own future in this assignment. This will be their first step in thinking about their future when they use Japanese. Also, what is good about this assignment is that students are required to be as specific as possible in writing about their individual future. Some students may imagine living in a particular place in Japan, while others may visualize working for a particular Japanese company in the US. Others may picture themselves in their own country, reading the works of a particular Japanese novelist every week. Even for those who already have a concrete image of their future, considering what is to come step by step will have the effect of making their image even clearer.

After imagining a context in which students will be using Japanese in the future, it may be worthwhile to ask them to do some research on the people who are active and famous in that context and their jobs and careers. Of course, we do not know if the people will become role

models for learners. As was shown in the second chapter, a superstar can be a role model if the superstar's success seems attainable to learners. It is up to learners to decide whether a person who is active in the context in which they want to use Japanese in the future will be a role model or not. However, by looking into the careers of famous people, it is possible to learn about their experiences they have encountered, which can have the effect of making the learner's vision of the future more realistic. This task may not only provide an opportunity for learners to create role models, but also be an effective educational practice for learners to think about their future in concrete terms.

Also, it was problematic that the data lacked specificity and was difficult to analyze. In this study, the emphasis was on seeing if the people who appear in students' essays and presentations as people students look up to would change as a result of students learning about successful L2 users. Therefore, a data collection method that could confirm this was used, and specific data could not be successfully extracted from students. The motivation of learners, the purpose of learning Japanese, and the people they respect are likely to change dynamically over time through exposure to various information and experiences. As a means to examine the dynamic transition of these factors, it may be interesting to incorporate the life-line interview method. The life-line interview method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and it was "developed purposively to study the subjective or self-organization of past and future behavior over the course of life" (Assink & Schroots, 2010, p. 2). The first step is to ask subjects to draw their life-line. For example, they will describe their motivational changes in learning Japanese by drawing a line. Then, in interviews, subjects are asked questions such as what happened when the line graph is at its peak or bottom, or when there is a change in the graph. In this way, a life story of subjects can be ascertained. Since motivation is dynamic and constantly changes over time, the life-line interview method is very suitable for tracking the changes in detail along with their causes. It will also be possible to identify various factors, such as positive and negative experiences inside and outside the classroom, which contribute to the rise and fall of learners' motivation. For a more comprehensive understanding of learner motivation, a complement to the life-line interview method could be the inclusion of quantitative questionnaire scales used in the previous literature, such as Dörnyei et al. (2006) and Taguchi et al. (2009).

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## APPENDIX A. STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department/School \_\_\_\_\_

Major \_\_\_\_\_ Minor \_\_\_\_\_

Year in school \_\_\_\_\_ Native country and city \_\_\_\_\_

Native language/s \_\_\_\_\_

Other language/s studied, used, or known \_\_\_\_\_

Hobby/ extra curricular activity \_\_\_\_\_

What are your favorite things regarding Japanese culture and society?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why are you taking Japanese?

\_\_\_\_\_

After you learn Japanese, what do you want to do in the future?

\_\_\_\_\_

Any other information or question/concern you would like to share with the instructor?

\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B. INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING 'BACK-TO-THE-FUTURE' LANGUAGE LEARNING HISTORY**

Imagine that you are in the future when you have finally succeeded in mastering the L2. You are a competent L2 speaker! Write an autobiographical story about how you have managed to achieve this. Start with the present situation and narrate the progress towards the successful future state as realistically as possible, also describing how you overcame obstacles and how you found the energy to persist. Remember, this story is about you, and the more convincing it sounds, the better! Write the account in a retrospective manner (i.e. in the past tense) as a personal history and include as much detail as possible. (Dörnyei and Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 59)