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Abstract

The impact of Japanese university students' overseas experience for study (OE) on their motivation for learning a second language (L2) is a topic that has not been extensively researched. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the impact of an OE on the motivation for foreign language (FL) learning from a group of 51 Japanese university students. Namely, how their pre-OE motivational status encouraged by various cultural factors was compared to that of their post-OE status. The results indicated that their OE enhanced their L2 proficiency. There were significant improvements in their language ability post-OE as almost all moved to a higher CEFR-level rating. In addition, the initial non-preferred factors, such as "Listening to songs", "Reading books, journals, and newspapers" and "Writing an essay" were more increasingly preferred by the participants for L2 learning as opposed to other factors, namely "Talking to foreigners" and "Watching movies or TV programs (entertainment)", even though these placed higher points on verbal communication than that of literacy. Conclusively, the results showed students' remarkable progress in L2 acquisition after OE. In addition, their motivation for L2 learning cultural factors related to listening, reading and writing, was remarkably enhanced after OE for entertainment and speaking, whereas the participants assume their progress in verbal communication increased. Therefore, a participant might have made an unconscious but greater effort to improve literacy skills using reading and writing during their overseas study.

論文要旨

日本人大学生の海外留学経験が第二言語習得の動機付けに与える影響については十分に解明されていない。したがって、本研究は外国語習得への動機付けに与える学生の留学経験の影響を明らかにするために、様々な文化的要因で高められた動機付けのレベルを留学経験前後で比較した。51名の留学経験者が多肢選択とリカルドスケールを用いた設問によるアンケート調査に参加した。その結果、海外留学経験は言語習得を強く促進した。すなわち、学生は留学後にCEFRレベルが統計上有意に向上した。さらに、参加者はリテラシーよりも会話コミュニケーションの進歩に高い評価を与えていたが、雑誌、書籍、新聞の閲覧（リーディング）、作文（ライティング）のような当初優先されていなかった要因は、会話（スピーキング）および映画・テレビ視聴（娯楽）のような優先されていた要因にくらべて参加者の第二言語習得のための動機付けを留学後により高めた。結論として、留学経験後に学生の第二言語習得で顕著な進歩がみられた。さらに、参加者は高評価を与えていたが、リスニング、リーディング、ライティングに関わる文化的要因がスピーキングより顕著に動機付けを高めた。海外留学中に参加者はリーディング、ライティングを利用したリテラシーに無意識であっても相当な努力をしていたことが示唆された。

Key words : Motivation, Second Language Learning, Overseas Experience, Japanese Students

キーワード : 動機付け、第二言語習得、海外留学経験、日本人学生

1. Introduction

The study of a second language (L2) is an essential skill for those who wish to be involved in international activities. Therefore, educational authorities in most countries require school students to learn at least one foreign language (FL) as a compulsory subject no later than the secondary stage of education (ages 11+) (Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010, p 336; Ushioda, 2013, p 8). Even for proficient students, the acquisition of a language requires a tremendous and constant effort that consumes a large portion of their educational lives. When trying to attain proficiency in a language, motivation has been considered by some researches as a key influential issue in FL acquisition (Chang, 2002; Mahadi & Jafari, 2012; Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015). Therefore, over the years there have been various surveys and research projects conducted around this topic (Root, 1999; Matsumoto, 2009; Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

According to Gardner's theory, language learning motivation can be strongly influenced as a "*result of an interaction with the L2 culture*" (Guerrero, 2015, p 98). Intercultural contact with foreigners has played a significant role in affecting L2 students' motivation compared to that of students without such an experience (Ushioda, 2013, p 3; Aubrey & Nowlan, 2013). Other researchers found that there was a positive correlation between an overseas experience for study (herein referred to as OE) and students' motivation for L2 learning (Anderson & Lawton, 2015). However, these studies showed that specified measures were not implemented to assess how an OE impacts Japanese students' attitudes related to their motivation of learning an L2. Various types and levels of motivation have been examined (Root, 1999, p 5), and research relevant to L2 motivation appears to be complex. Consequently, there is a need to investigate more specific features of motivation and narrow the focus onto particular aspects which could better illustrate the Japanese context, such as an individual's foreign cultural interests, target jobs and attention to their language skills. The study's examination focus will be on motivational changes through OEs and how it influences L2 learning after the Japanese students' exposure to a foreign culture, and their opinions post-study abroad.

2. Background

In the field of foreign language learning, the word "motivation" refers to "*the effort learners put into an L2 (second language) as a result of their desire or need to learn it*" (Ellis, 1997, p 141). It is a key element which has the potential to directly influence a student's result in their learning activities when trying to acquire their L2 or develop specific language skills (p 141). To tackle their acquisition of L2 skills, learners have to create strategies that help them successfully realize their goals. In order to examine learners' psychological aspects, various surveys have been conducted by other researchers that have observed different types of motivation for studying an FL (Nayan et al., 2014; Kusaba, 2017). However, the role that motivation plays in maintaining a university students' interest or determining the consequences after studying their L2 abroad in a country where it is natively spoken is not completely clear.

Motivation for learning an L2 has been surveyed since the 1960s (Guerrero, 2015) where the

effects of “*integrative*” and “*instrumental*” motivation were the main focus of several studies (Root, 1999; Mahadi & Jafari, 2012; Yung, 2013). Although both motivational types have related outcomes, integrative motivation is, more so, referred to as relevant towards the arousal and maintenance of curiosity, and is involved in “*a learner’s particular interest in a specific culture*” (Root, 1999, p 2). This results in a person’s favorable attitude toward the target language community and their wish to integrate or adapt to the new culture (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). On the other hand, instrumental motivation is derived from the influence of an external factor or reason, such as a job promotion or entry into a university (Ellis, 1997, p 75).

While very informative, these orientations did not provide a sufficient explanation on how to measure a learner’s influence on their attitudes towards L2 acquisition. Meanwhile, those concepts of motivation were extended to other models, such as resultative motivation and intrinsic motivation (Root, 1999; Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010). The former is described as the learner’s attitude changing after experiencing something. In other words, success in communication with foreigners can promote further effort to improve a person’s FL capability (Vicente et al., 2010). In the latter motivation type, learners were only intrinsically motivated without any distinctive purposes or tasks (Ellis, 1997, p 76). As previously mentioned, multiple investigation that have taken place have predominantly focused on the effects of integrative and instrumental types on learners (Dörnyei, 1998; Root, 1999).

The “*Self-Determination Theory*” (Ryan & Deci, 2000 a; Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015) suggests, psychologically, that “*people’s inherent growth tendency and innate psychological needs are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration*” (Ryan & Deci, 2000 a, p 68). It tries to estimate their strength of self-determination in relation to learning strategies, performance and persistence (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006, p 19). In this theory, the former (intrinsic) was fundamentally a more prominently self-determinant factor than the latter (extrinsic). The former was defined as “*the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions*” (Ryan & Deci, 2000 b, p 56), and the latter as “*a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done to attain some separable outcome*” (Ryan & Deci, 2000 b, p 60).

Aside from the language levels of integrative and instrumental motivation, Dörnyei (2007) set up the additional components of FL learning motivation as the “*Learner Level*” and the “*Learning Situation Level*” (Root, 1999; Matsumoto, 2009). The learner level contains necessity for achievement and self-confidence, whereas the other was subdivided as components of course-specific, teacher-specific and group-specific, “*which take into account specific motivational factors connected with course, the teacher, and the group of language learners with which an individual interacts*” (Root, 1999, p 4). However, those factors could be regarded as “*complimentary rather than distinct*” (Vicente et al., 2010) and it might be difficult to separately evaluate the effects they have on learner’s motivation. For example, cultural interest relates to both integrative and intrinsic motivational types. Therefore, there is a need to investigate influential factors on motivation, by focusing on the specific aspect or the phenomenon relevant to an individual’s foreign cultural interest, target job and attention to language skills to avoid confusion caused by these complex types or levels of motivation.

It is presumed that a student’s successful OE will have a positive effect on their desire to improve

their L2 proficiency. In short, their willingness to go abroad closely relates to both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation because of their attitudes towards the target language community and job promotion (Yashima, 2013, p 39). This was demonstrated by a study in Palestine where it was found that students study English only as an educational tool and career advancement, while still holding unfavorable views of western countries (Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010, p 345). Generally, integrative motivation was evaluated to “*be the stronger predictor of successful learning than instrumental motivation*” (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p 87). For example, immigrants are usually extremely interested in their new community and have strong desire to communicate with residents. Consequently, they can obtain a substantial insight into their new community and culture by learning the language. On the other side, learner motivation derived from job promotion or work-related incentives are not easily sustainable after learner goals are achieved. Within many Japanese universities, students have to endure tough educational systems of “*grammar-focused English*” demotivating them throughout their elementary and secondary school life, bringing them to a stage where they are reluctant to verbally communicate, instead preferring written communication (Ushioda, 2013, p 5). They may also lose their will for learning an L2 or avoid communication with communities speaking it. Furthermore, students may be confused due to the discrepancy between their grammar, reading and vocabulary-oriented secondary education, and the sudden shift to a communication-oriented higher education. In relation to the educational circumstances of first-year university students, Aubrey & Nowlan (2013) noted that “*intercultural contact played a significant role in affecting students’ motivation at an international university but not for a non-international university*” (p 145). If a study abroad experience could encourage their targeted intercultural communication and inspire L2 learners to their interests in international affairs, they could show some potential to reach their goals with their L2 acquisition and subsequent proficiency. In other words, it is anticipated that an OE may encourage them to achieve a greater level of L2 acquisition.

Data was collected via questionnaires to investigate the relationship between a phenomenon and its characteristics (Dörnyei, 2007, p 34). Before the implementation of surveys, the sample size, population representativeness and characteristics, such as gender, age, individual attitude towards teachers, experiences of exposure to FL and initial level of FL, had to be considered. Conclusively, this research project could be potentially directed towards implementation of a combination of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. However, a quantitative approach was prioritized to oversee the general phenomena of an OE influence on students’ motivation via data collection from numerous participants.

3. Research Questions

After examining previous studies, the following questions are prominently related to the overseas study influence on motivation for learning an L2.

- (1) Did the overseas study experience of Japanese university students have a positive impact on their motivation for learning an L2?

In other words, was their motivation for L2 learning before overseas study enhanced after returning to Japan?

(2) What language skills were the participants most interested in?

Or were any significant changes elucidated in the four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing between the subjects pre- and post- study abroad?

(3) What factor strongly influenced them to learn an L2 and study abroad?

For example, did encouragement originate from friends and families, music and entertainment, or research interests that inspired their learning of an L2?

4. Data Collection Procedures

A survey was prioritized using questionnaires to investigate the comprehensive feature of student OE on their L2 learning motivation in this study due to limitations with human resources and time constraints. A total of 72 questionnaires were delivered to students at the university with overseas experience as a convenience sample (46 English-major, 21 Korean-major, 5 other language-major). 21 papers were returned incomplete leaving the final total comprising of 51 participants including 29 English, 17 Korean and 5 other language majors. Despite their different affiliations, the questionnaire style was exactly the same for all, except for initial terms relevant to their target languages, visiting countries and language proficiency tests (Appendix). All participants had studied abroad within the last 18 months at the time of data collection, meaning that their experiences and thoughts were relatively recent with many currently in the process of searching for post-graduation employment. For statistical analysis, a Chi-squared test was used to compare language proficiency, against the CEFR scale, and ratings were presented as a Likert scale about the participant's impact of cultural factors that inspired their motivation before and after their OE. No covert data was collected, and to ensure anonymity no data that could lead to participant identification was included in the question (see appendix), and the study was explained to all participants and they were asked for approval prior to distribution (Polio & Friedman, 2017, p 188-189).

5. Results

The initial and the current language levels of the subjects were summarized in Table 1 indicating the participants' improvement in language proficiency during their university career with a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.01$). Table 2 displays the duration of the respondent's OE in which students with one-year experience accounted for two thirds, whereas those with short-term experience numbered at 7 people. Students citing speaking as the most important skill were most predominant followed by listening, whereas many respondents considered writing or reading as less important (Table 3). Additionally, many respondents showed preference for target jobs in the hospitality and airline industries where they might regard verbal communication as a more useful tool (Table 4).

Table 1: The initial and current level of participants in FL proficiency (P=3.3 x 10⁻⁸ **)

	Pre-A 1	A 1	A 2	B 1	B 2	C 1
Initial	13	13	12	9	2	1
Current		4	4	7	8	27

** : P < 0.01 Statistically Significant; the first row indicated the students' language proficiency levels in accordance with the standard of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). For English major students, the levels from Pre-A 1 to C 1 refer to those from Class 1 to ACE, respectively. The second and the third rows showed the distribution of the students' language levels at the start of their academic carrier and the present. They progressed significantly during their university career.

Table 2: Study Abroad Experience of the subjects

4 weeks>	1 semester	2 semesters	> 1 year
7	10	33	1

The first row indicated the length of time studying overseas. 4 weeks>: short-term study; 1 semester - OE of a semester (half year); 2 semesters - OE of 2 semesters (one year); > 1 year: OE exceeding one year - the second line showed students' distribution.

Table 3: Language Skills emphasized by students with OE (multiple-choice question)

	Speaking	Listening	Writing	Reading
Most Important	41	17	4	3
Less important*	1	1	32	13

The first row indicated language skills. The second and the third rows showed distribution of the students expressing each skill as most important and less important one, respectively. *Some students choose not to designate a less important skill.

Table 4: Distribution of current target jobs (a multiple-choice question)

Hotel or Travel Industry	International Business	Banking or Finance	Tele-communication	Manufacturing industry	Education or Research	Emergency Service	Airliner or Transport Industry	Political Sector	Interpreting	others
25	8	1	1	2	8	3	14	3	6	6

The first and second lines indicate students' target jobs and their respective distribution.

The Participants' Motivational Ascending After Overseas Experiences

Figure 1 indicates the student distributions of recognition in L2 level changes. Even though most students stated that there was at least slight improvement in all language skills, the rates of remarkable progress were less in reading and writing skills than those in listening and speaking. This suggests that they did not acknowledge their improvement in literacy skills in comparison with verbal communication skills.

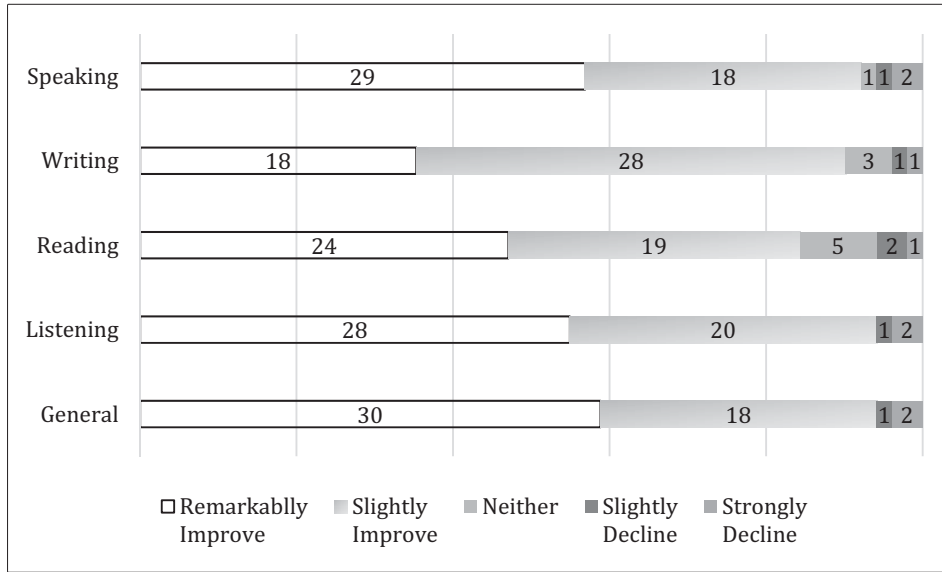


Figure. 1: Distribution of Student's Assessment about Changes in Language Levels per Language skill

The vertical axis indicates language skills with the bottom word “General” referring to comprehensive language skill. The figures inside the bars show the respondent numbers assigned to each category. Table 5 implied that foreign cultural issues increasingly affected the students’ motivation of learning an L2 after their OE. Specifically, they were increasingly inspired post-OE by “Listening to songs” (listening) and “Reading books, newspaper or magazines” (reading) of their motivation (P value = 0.015 and 0.047, respectively). In addition, the P value of “Writing an essay” (writing) towards the null hypothesis was 0.067 close to the critical point of 0.05 whereas “Talking with foreigners” (speaking) and “Watching movies or TV programs” (entertainment) indicated the P values of 0.57 and 0.23, respectively, suggesting no significant difference (Table 5). The two latter factors had already been an incentive for the respondents to learn an L2 before their departures. Consequently, these results suggested that their motivation for previously non-preferred skills, such as reading and writing, strengthened rather remarkably in contrast with their preferred skill of speaking during the OE.

Table 5: Distribution of Students Motivational Status Encouraged by Cultural Factors Before and After OE

	Before OE					After OE					P
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Songs	11	24	6	10		26	19	4	2		0.015*
Movies	20	21	7	3		31	16	3	1		0.23
Books	10	18	15	7	1	21	21	9			0.047*
Essays	5	23	14	8	1	14	23	14			0.067
Talking	29	13	5	3	1	34	14	3			0.57

The left and the right halves of the table showed ratings by the subject group students before and

after overseas experience, respectively. The first row indicated their rating criteria (Before OE: Before overseas experience; After OE: After overseas experience; P: P value = probability of null hypothesis happening). The second-sixth row expressed the distribution of student ratings relevant to listening to music, watching movies, reading books, writing essays and talking, respectively (*p: $p < 0.05$; Statistically Significant).

6. Evaluation of the Results

The impact of cultural factors inspiring their motivation was hypothesized to strengthen after their OE. As a null hypothesis, no discrepancy was assumed to exist between students' pre-OE and post-OE motivational status encouraged by cultural factors in a statistical analysis.

6.1 -Impact of the Students' OE on Their Motivation for a FL Learning

Students' OE had a strong impact on their motivation for L2 learning. For example, Table 5 indicated that listening was a significant encouraging factor towards L2 learning after OE ($P = 0.015$). Reading also increasingly motivated the participants for acquiring an L2 ($P = 0.047$). Writing was indicated to change their motivational status with a probability of 0.067 close to a critical level, whereas most students' motivational status was not changed by speaking and entertainment between pre- and post-OE. Namely, the initially preferred factors continuously motivated the participants for L2 learning. On the contrary, the respondents gave a higher rating of L2 progress to speaking and listening than reading and writing (Figure 1). These two contradictory results suggested students' intensive but unconscious efforts focused on their non-preferred skills such as reading and writing. In other words, they might change the attitude towards literacy of dealing with documents or contracts during OE. In addition, their motivation for preferred skills as speaking was continuously maintained during OE, provoking their assumption of progress in verbal communication (Figure 1). The participants significantly improved in language proficiency ($P < 0.01$) after OE (Table 1). This progress and their motivational changes proved that OE positively and unconsciously made impact on their attitudes towards L2 learning.

6.2 -The Participants' Important Language Skills

This study implied that their language interest was focused on a verbal communication rather than on literacy. For example, Table 4 indicated that speaking was regarded as the most important language skill followed by listening. This attitude might result in the participants' preference to jobs in the hospitality and airline industries in which they assumed that verbal communication would play a main role (Table 4). On the contrary, occupations requiring reading and writing skills such as international business, banking and finance, education, research, manufacturing industries, and interpretation and translation, did not attract most students' interest for future jobs. A similar tendency was found in their responses to questions about their favorable communication methods. Specifically, they more frequently used social network services, smartphone applications, or face-to-

face talk than web browsers and letters requiring longer messages (Table 6). This suggested the participants gave priority to verbal communication.

Table 6: Communication Methods (a multiple-choice question)

Social Network Services	Web Browser	Smartphone Application	The Telephone	Letter Writing	Face-to-Face Talk
38	13	32	0	3	25

The first row shows communication methods which the participants frequently used. The second row indicates their distribution (a multiple-choice question).

6.3 -The Influential Factor for the Students to Learn an L2

The students' cultural interests might profoundly affect their motivation for L2 learning. In addition to cultural interests, they were mainly motivated by focusing on entertainment, or their wish to communicate fluently with foreigners, whereas a limited number of students gave their attention to local events, research and future jobs (Table 7). They was less motivational influence by parents or schools than by friends. This tendency was coincident with students' motivational attitudes, showing their preference for speaking and entertainment throughout their academic careers (Table 5). Therefore, the results implied that entertainment, such as music or movies, and verbal communication more strongly motivated students for L2 learning as cultural factors.

Table 7: A Motivation Factor for a Foreign Language (a multiple question)

Parents or Family	Future Job	Friends	School	Media	Cultural Interest	Entertainment	Communication with Foreigners	Research	Local Event	Holidays to Foreign Countries	Personal Reasons
3	11	22	15	6	22	27	32	3	3	7	4

The first row shows the students' influential factors for motivating FL learning. The second row represented the choice they selected.

7. Conclusion

To clarify the impact of OE on the student's motivation for L2 acquisition, 51 Japanese students who completed an OE participated in a survey using a questionnaire. Namely, their pre-OE motivational status encouraged by various cultural factors were compared to their post-OE one. At first, the results indicated that students' OE enhanced their L2 proficiency, linguistically there were significant improvements with them moving up into higher CEFR level bands after completing their OE. Secondly, "Listening to songs" (listening), and literary skills as "Reading books, journals and newspapers" (reading) and "Writing an essay" (writing) motivated the participants for L2 learning more so than verbal communication skills as "Talking to foreigners" (speaking) and "Watching movies or TV programs" (entertainment). On the other hand, the participants assigned higher marks to progress of verbal communication than that of literacy. These contradicting results suggested the students unconsciously put great efforts into L2 learning even in their non-preferred skills during

their OE. Thirdly, the students' cultural interests in music, movies, and verbal communication were basically influential in their motivation for L2 learning. This result might have related to their attitudes towards L2 learning showing the preference for verbal communication pre-OE.

In conclusion, the participants showed strong progress in language acquisition after their OE was completed. In addition, cultural factors related to literacy had greater impacts on their motivation for learning post-OE completion, more so than entertainment and speaking factors, whereas the participants more prominently assume their progress in the latter skills. Therefore, the participants might have made great, unconscious efforts to improve literacy skills. A possible future study across multiple Japanese universities could present a more detailed and clearer situation of OE and language learning motivation for Japanese students.

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Appendix

Please tick (☑) only one box for each question.
各質問に一つのボックスのみチェック (☑) して下さい。

Section 1: General Information

1. 性別

女性 男性

2. 学年

1年生 2年生 3年生 4年生

3. 年齢

20歳以下 21-22歳 23-24歳 25歳以上

4. 入学時の英語のレベル

Pre-A1 / (1) A1 / (2) A2 / (3) B1 / (4) B2 / (5) C1 / (ACE)

5. 現在の英語のレベル

Pre-A1 / (1) A1 / (2) A2 / (3) B1 / (4) B2 / (5) C1 / (ACE)

6. 短期旅行経験

英語を母語とする国に旅行経験はありますか。

未経験 短期旅行 (3日以内) 中期旅行 (4-6日間) 留学を除く長期旅行 (1週間以上)

7. 留学経験

英語を母語とする国に留学経験はありますか。

未経験 4週間以内 1-5カ月(1学期間) 1年(2学期間) 1年以上

8. 英語の最重要技法

英語を学ぶ上で最も大切な技法はなんですか。

Speaking Listening Writing Reading

9. 英語の重要でない技法

英語を学ぶ上で最も大切でない技法はなんですか。

Speaking Listening Writing Reading

10. 目標の職場

将来目標とする職場は何ですか。

ホテル、旅行 商社、ビジネス 銀行、金融 通信 製造業
教育、研究 警察、消防 航空、運輸 公務員 (警察・消防以外)
通訳 NPO 法人 その他 ()

Section 2: Change in language acquisition level

英語の在学中のレベルについて以下の問いにお答えください。

Questions 11 – 15: 一つの質問につき、5つの選択肢

1. 大いに向上した 2. やや向上した 3. 変わらない 4. やや下がった 5. 大いに下がった

Questions 11 – 15: Change in English Level

	1	2	3	4	5
例：英語のレベルがとて上ったと思う。	✓				
11. あなたの英語のレベルは在学中に変わりましたか。					
12. あなたのスピーキングレベルは在学中に変わりましたか。					
13. あなたのライティングレベルは在学中に変わりましたか。					
14. あなたのリスニングレベルは在学中に変わりましたか。					
15. あなたのリーディングレベルは在学中に変わりましたか。					

Section 3: Attitudes towards language learning and cultural interests

英語習得と文化への興味について以下の問いにお答えください。

Question 16-19 :複数回答選択

16. A Motivation Factor for Learning a Foreign Language

どんなことが外国語を学ぶ上でモチベーションを上げましたか。

- 両親・家族 将来の仕事 友人 学校 (先生・カリキュラム) メディア
 文化への興味 娯楽 (音楽・映画など) 外国人とコミュニケーション 研究
 地域の行事 外国への休暇旅行 その他の個人的な理由

17. Communication Methods:

コミュニケーション・ツールとして主に何を使いますか。

- SNS (フェイスブック等) インターネット 携帯アプリ (ライン等) 固定電話
 手紙、メッセージ 対話 その他 ()

18. Travel Interests

旅行しようという動機は何ですか。

- 史跡を訪ねる 未知の食べ物に挑戦する コンサートに行く くつろぐ
 ショッピング 国際的企業・組織の見学 その他 ()

19. Problems when traveling abroad

海外生活で大変なことは何ですか。

- 言葉の障壁 外国語に埋没 食べ物の違い くつろぎ 常識の違い その他

