

British University Students Studying Abroad in Japan: L2 Japanese Learners' Multilingual Selves Captured by Language Portraits

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This study uses language portraits to deepen our understanding of how experiences during the first few transitional months of study abroad (SA) may change second language (L2) learners' linguistic identities and their senses of self. In contrast to linear methods of probing linguistic identities, such as interviews, language portraits holistically capture the entirety of individuals' perceptions of their linguistic repertoires and emotions related to language learning and use (Busch, 2012, 2018; Martin, 2012). They enable us to examine the nature of L2 learners' multilingual selves by revealing their attitudes and dispositions to each of their languages (their native language, L2 Japanese, and other languages), as well as the relationship between them. The study focuses on three students who majored in Japanese at a university in London, and compares their language portraits drawn before SA and about 5 months into SA. Their SA experiences led to changes in their perception of their multilingual selves, and the prominent aspects with regard to their L2 Japanese parallel the three components of the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), namely Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 Learning Experience. Notably, the language portraits also captured changes in how students perceived their other languages and how they related to their L2, suggesting the need to take into account L2 learners' other languages in order to understand their sense of L2 selves. The study also underscores the importance of emotive and affective dimensions with regard to language learning and use, which may not always be taken into consideration in language education.

本稿の調査では、言語ポートレートという方法を用い、英国から日本に留学したL2日本語話者の言語に関わるアイデンティティ・自己意識が留学前から留学中（日本に到着して4、5か月）の過渡的な時期にどのように変容したのかを探った。一般にインタビューなどの調査方法では、協力者の言語それぞれについて言語ごとに意識を聞くことになるため、それぞれを線状にしか探れないのに対し、身体の線画に自己の言語を描く言語ポートレートは、自己の言語資源・言語レパートリーと自己の関係性と、それぞれの言語の使用・学習にまつわる情意を全体観的に捉えることを可能にする(Busch, 2012, 2018; Martin, 2012)。従って、言語ポートレートをを用いることで、いわゆる「母語」、学習中の日本語、そのほかの言語それぞれへの思いや態度と共に、その関係性も見ることができ、L2話者の複数言語に関する自己意識、言語アイデンティティの全体像を明らかにできる。本研究では、ロンドンの大学で日本語を専攻していた学生3名に焦点を当て、留学前と日本に到着してから4、5か月経った留学中に描いた言語ポートレートに加え、その言語ポートレートに関わる語りを比較した。その結果、数ヶ月の留学経験で、3名の言語に関わる自己意識が大きく変容したことがわかった。その変容は、Dörnyei (2005, 2009)の提唱した動機付けモデルである「L2セルフシステム」で示されている理想自己、義務自己、学習経験に関わるセルフの変容であった。また、3名の言語ポートレートも言語ポートレートについての語りも、留学経験で目標言語である日本語や母語だけではなく、自分のほかの言語資源に関する意識も変わっていたことを示していた。このことから、L2話者のセルフを理解するためには、L2話者の目標言語と母語だけではなく、そのほかの言語資源についても注意を払う必要があることを説いた。さらに、言語教育において言語学習・言語使用をめぐる情意的側面も考慮する重要性を示唆した。

Keywords

multilingual users, language portraits, study abroad, L2 self, emotion

キーワード

マルチリンガリズム、言語ポートレート、留学、L2セルフ、情意

Many people who study a second language (L2)¹ cherish the opportunity to study abroad (SA) in a country where the target language is used by the majority. This can be a turning point or a time of transition—not only in their L2 learning but also in their sense of self. However, not all students thrive during their SA. Some do not improve their L2 proficiency (see, for example, an extensive review by Kinginger, 2009); some may affirm fixed national identities, failing to develop their intercultural understanding (e.g.,

Kinginger, 2011). Such variable outcomes may be attributed, at least in part, to the students' differing experiences and subjectivities *during* SA.

At British universities, students majoring in language spend a year abroad to study and/or use the target language as a compulsory part of their curriculum. In this paper, I report on three students majoring in Japanese at a university in London who spent the third year of their undergraduate programme in Japan. Much of past SA research has focused on changes between before SA (pre-SA) and after SA (post-SA), especially in terms of language proficiency, and less attention has been paid to changes observed *during* SA (see, for example, a review by Iwasaki, 2019). Hence, this study focuses on changes observed between pre-SA and 4–5 months into SA in terms of the students' sense of their linguistic repertoires (i.e., their attitudes and emotions to their L2 Japanese and other languages) as revealed by language portraits. Students' variable outcomes at times puzzle L2 teachers and administrators, who send them abroad; they would benefit from gaining insights as to how students' perceptions of their sense of self in relation to their languages change during SA.

Emotion and the Construction of Self during SA

During SA, some students experience insecurity and anxiety (Allen & Herron, 2003; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005). Allen and Herron (2003) examined both linguistic and affective outcomes for 25 US-based university students who studied French in France for 6 weeks. In terms of affective outcomes, the researchers focused on language anxiety and integrative motivation. They found that the students significantly improved in oral proficiency (assessed by performance in picture description and role-play) and listening (assessed by multiple-choice questions about 3 segments of a TV drama). The students' language anxiety, measured by 3 questionnaires, namely, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), French Use Anxiety Scale (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995), and a 3-item questionnaire on the oral and listening tasks, decreased after SA, while they showed the same level of integrative motivation as before. However, qualitative data such as interviews revealed that many of the students experienced anxiety due to cultural differences and linguistic incompetence during SA.

Decreased anxiety after SA may be related to increased enjoyment during SA. Hardison (2014) examined linguistic development and changes in affective profiles among 24 US-based university students who studied German for 6 weeks in Germany. The comparison between pre-SA and post-SA questionnaires showed increased enjoyment and confidence in speaking, and greater enjoyment in participating in social activities that involved communication in German.

Anxiety often arises when a student cannot express their "true" self because of the limited expression they can communicate in their target language (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 31). Pellegrino Aveni (2005) looked at US-based university students studying Russian in Russia for either 4 months or an academic year, focusing on 6 students who provided information through narrative journals, interviews and questionnaires. She found that each student's self and sense of security were closely linked to their language use. Many students experienced anxiety triggered especially by threats to their self-presentation, which arose from both learner-internal sources (e.g., their own belief about and attitudes towards self) and external, social-environmental cues (e.g., insulting vs. complimentary feedback from interlocutors). It was enhanced internal security that enabled them to participate more actively in interactions.

Yoshida (2016, p. 100) adopted Pajares and Schunk's (2005, p. 15) definition of "self-concept" as "a psychological construct that comprises a self-description judgment that includes an evaluation of competence and the feelings of self-worth associated with the judgment in question in a specific domain", and argued that the development of positive self-concept is how L2 learners can overcome anxiety. Utilizing diaries, interviews, and classroom observa-

tion, the author examined an Australian learner of Japanese as L2, Sandra, who underwent two transitions—first from a vocational school (one-to-one tutorials) to a university, and then to studying abroad for one academic year. Sandra overcame her anxiety about speaking in the university class by persistent practice, but during SA her perception of the gap between her ideal L2 self and real L2 self caused her anxiety about speaking outside the class—until she encountered a critical experience in which she realized that she could speak better than her peers. Yoshida’s study demonstrated non-linear, context-dependent change in the student’s anxiety.

The development of L2 learner’s identities has been the subject of an increasing number of studies, including in SA research (e.g., Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2012), but the studies are mostly concerned with the social rather than psychological dimension, as Miyahara (2015) contends. Psychological dimensions of identities are, however, pertinent in motivation research today. Importantly, psychological dimensions, such as motivation, are susceptible to the surrounding social contexts; hence, students’ senses of self are undoubtedly affected by their experience during SA.

Self-and-Identity Perspective of Motivation

In recent years, motivation research has undergone a paradigmatic shift and the construct of “motivation” has been reconceptualized. Motivation is now construed as being fluid and dynamic, and change in motivation is reported to be non-linear, adaptive and unpredictable (Dörnyei, 2014). Researchers theorizing L2 motivation push for “contemporary notions of self and identity to be brought to the core of this re-theorising” (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009)—as in Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System model, which Boo, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) contend is the current dominant model.

Unlike previously dominant motivation research in which individuals’ traits were treated as measurable variables in quantitative methodology, individuals as “persons” are focused on and they are often analysed qualitatively. Many researchers “examine how L2 motivation relates to self and identity” (Ushioda, 2009, p. 216). In her “Person-in-Context relational view”, Ushioda argues for a “situated” approach to exploring the dynamic complexity of each person’s interpretation of and reaction to their environments.

L2 learners’ emotions, such as anxiety and enjoyment, are tied to their concepts of self and identity. In previous studies on L2 self, students’ emotions have primarily been examined in relation to their L2 language. However, how L2 speakers feel about their L2 must also be related to how they feel about their other languages, including their L1, as shown by Lau (2016), who utilized language portraits in which students drew their languages on a line drawing of a body silhouette. For instance, one of her participants, Janette, was born in Quebec to Francophone parents but received English schooling. She felt that English schooling caused her written French to suffer. On her language portrait, she depicted her fear of losing her L1 French and her “hostility” to L2 English by drawing “clawed English” invading her body. In fact, SA students use multiple languages during SA; they often socialize with other international students in the target country, and they report using English as a lingua franca as well as using (and learning) other languages. For example, English-speaking students studying French in France engage in English-French bilingual practice (McManus, Mitchell, & Tracy-Ventura, 2015).

Needless to say, L2 learners’ motivation during SA is expected to affect their L2 development. The current study utilizes language portraits to uncover L2 Japanese students’ sense of self and their emotions related to each of their languages 4–5 months into a year-long SA—an important phase in their development of L2 self as well as in their development of L2.

Language Portraits

Language portraits were originally used to assess children's perception of their linguistic repertoires and found to be effective; recently they have often been used to examine adults as well. When drawing language portraits, participants often use body metaphors and colours on language portraits, both of which facilitate the expression of emotions that are linked to language (e.g., Busch, 2010).

Krumm (2001) used language portraits to assess migrant children's "subjective representations of linguistic identity" (Krumm, 2013, p. 103), rather than their linguistic proficiency. Krumm (2013, p. 120) argues that to understand such children's identity change during the migration process, a language-based biographical approach (using language portraits and biographical interviews) is necessary "to find out how languages support or endanger the development of self-concepts".

Language portraits are also utilized in pre-service language teacher education (Coffey, 2015 in the United Kingdom; Lau, 2016 in Canada). Coffey (2015), for example, problematized the reliance on the structure and competence-based formats for measuring proficiency, and demonstrated how language autobiographies, utilizing language portraits, could illustrate the teachers' own language-learning history through metaphors that were both embodied and emotional. He argued for the importance of reflexivity in language teacher education, as a way of helping teachers to consider how individuals relate to and personally invest in languages.

Originally used in schools and educational settings, language portraits are now also employed as a research tool. They have been extensively used to examine individuals' linguistic repertoires (e.g., Busch, 2012). Multilingual speakers are understood to have a repertoire consisting of various cultural and linguistic resources, rather than being considered to possess multiple "languages" that are each construed as a "bounded entity". Multilingual speakers mobilize any of these resources whenever needed, resulting in practice such as those previously referred to as "code-switching", for example. This reconceptualization of multilingual speakers' language competence is significant in language education (e.g., Busch, 2012; Otsuji, 2016).

Busch (2018) critically examines language portraits as a research tool and discusses their theoretical bases. The use of language portraits involves two modes of symbolization: language (linguistic-discursive) and image (pictorial-presentational). Language (such as a narrative) requires linear, successive ordering, while image enables simultaneous presentations of multiple elements and directs one's view both to the whole and to the relationship of elements. For this reason, Busch (2018: 11) argues that the language portrait is particularly useful for exploring individuals' linguistic repertoires "beyond discursively produced categories and dichotomies, such as those between first and second language". She further notes that the reference to the body that the silhouette provides evokes the "bodily-emotional dimension of languages" and is configured by means of metaphors.

The language portrait, then, is a promising tool to uncover the L2 self, or multilingual self of students. Furthermore, Dörnyei and Chan (2013) found that two constituents of the motivation system Dörnyei (2005) proposed, the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self, are strongly correlated with L2 learners' capacity for generating visual imagery. Hence, the visualization of one's languages on a body silhouette may have potential for displaying one's Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self as well.

Current Study

The goal of this study is to deepen our understanding with regard to whether and how students' sense of self, dispositions, attitudes and emotions in relation to their L2 and other lan-

guages change *during* SA by examining students' language portraits and their narratives about the portraits.

Earlier SA research tended to focus on the linguistic development of groups of students by quantitatively examining their pre-SA and post-SA knowledge, skills, and proficiency, but recent SA research underscores the importance of examining individual students' dispositions and experiences *during* SA (see, for example, Kinginger, 2009 and Iwasaki, 2019). Hence, the current study explores the change observed in the transition period: a period between a couple of months before SA and during SA (4–5 months into SA).

Methods

Participants

The current study was conducted along with a larger collaborative project at a university in the United Kingdom. In order to recruit participants for the project, an announcement about the project was made to all second-year students majoring in Japanese. The project objective was described generally as “understanding students' development during SA”. Out of about 50 second year students, 12 students participated.

For the current research, the participants drew their language portraits and provided explanations/narratives about them before, during, and after their year abroad. Prior to SA, they completed 2 years of university Japanese language instruction (8–10 contact hours per week for 22 weeks in each year). SA is a required component in the curriculum, and Japanese majors all went to Japan for one academic year in their third year to satisfy the requirement. Based on their preferences and qualifications, each student was sent to one of the universities with which their home institution had an exchange agreement in place.

Changes to their sense of self in relation to their languages were evident in about half of the students' language portraits in the ways they depicted their linguistic repertoires in terms of weights (sizes of areas of the body depicting languages), where they were located on the body, and colours. Some students, such as those who had travelled to or studied in Japan before, drew similar portraits at 3 different times, with only relatively minor changes. Among those whose language portraits clearly changed, one student's change in her cultural identities was linked to her Japanese heritage, as reported in Iwasaki (2018)². Three students whose portraits depicted salient but very different changes are focused on here—Gray (female), Hazel (female), and Kiririn (male) (all pseudonyms chosen by the students themselves). This is to understand the dynamic changes of L2 self that emerge in response to the new environment during SA.

All three were born in England. Gray, born to Irish parents, was a Japanese and Economics combined degree student. She was 24 years old when she studied abroad. She had visited Japan three times before on holiday and for homestay, for a total of about one month. Hazel, born to Turkish parents, was also a combined degree student, studying Japanese and Linguistics. She started studying Japanese at university, and SA was her first time in the country though she had spent about five years of her childhood in the US. She was 21 years old when she studied abroad. Kiririn had Ugandan heritage from one of his parents. He was a single major BA Japanese student. He was 22 years old when he left for a year abroad in Japan. He had not lived abroad and had not visited Japan before. The three students studied at three different universities located in Tokyo. Table 1 below summarises their backgrounds. It is perhaps worth noting that of the 12 participants, only two were associated only with English heritage, reflecting diverse profiles of students at the university.

Table 1. Profile of the selected participants

	Age	Gender	Heritage background	Major(s)
Gray	23	F	Irish	Japanese & Economics
Hazel	20	F	Turkish	Japanese & Linguistics
Kiririn	22	M	Ugandan	Japanese

I was a lecturer in the Department of Linguistics at the students' university. I had once taught Hazel in a discipline course (psycholinguistics), but had met the other two only for the purpose of SA research. None of the students expected to enrol on any further courses that I taught after SA.

Procedures

The students voluntarily participated a total of four times (approximately three months before SA, approximately five months into SA, approximately two to three months after SA, and about 10 months after SA). The current paper is based on the first two data sets and examines the students' changes in sense of self in relation to their languages during the transition to SA. The students were not shown their own language portraits from earlier sessions until after they had completed their third portraits in the third session.

Around June 2015, the students came to the author's university office in London. They were given a line drawing of a body (Figure 1 below) and a set of coloured pens, and they were instructed to think of colours suitable for their languages and position their languages on the drawing). The line drawing shown in Figure 1 is now made available in Himeta (2016, p. 77)³ together with instructions to give to students.

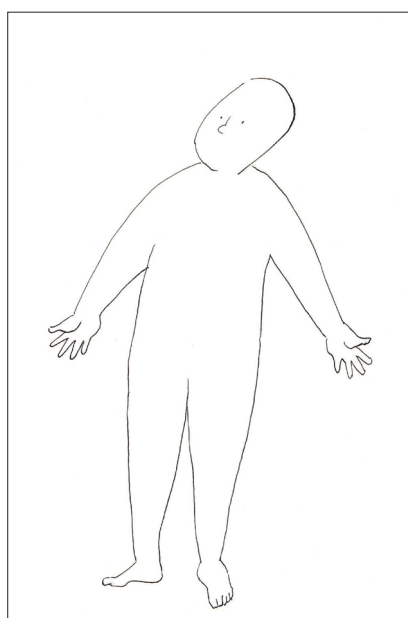


Figure 1. Line-drawing for language portraits (Himeta, 2016).

The students were also told that they could write comments on their portraits. They were not given any time limit for drawing the portraits. They typically spent a few minutes. None of the students expressed reluctance in drawing the portraits.

Once they had completed the language portrait, they were asked to explain the portrait in

whichever language they preferred to use: English, Japanese, or a mix of the two. The students also responded to questions for clarification and/or requests for elaboration. Narratives in this study were not elicited through (semi-)structured interviews; rather, they are primarily students' voluntary explanations about their portraits and responses to the researcher's clarification questions. This was audio-recorded and later transcribed.

In January to February 2016, the students came to see me in a university office in Tokyo where I was a visiting researcher for a month. I did not have any specific role in relation to the students' SA (e.g., coordinator); I was in Japan as a researcher and my research purpose included seeing the SA students. The procedure was identical to the earlier session; the students were provided with the same line drawing and the same set of coloured pens. The students' narratives were also audio-recorded and transcribed.

Method of Analysis

The language portrait image was primarily analysed in terms of metaphors, referring to Coffey (2015), who based his metaphorical analyses on Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The linguistic identities illustrated and narrated were then also considered in the light of the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), which has three components: Ideal L2 Self (the L2-specific facet of one's "ideal self"), Ought-to L2 Self (one's belief that one ought to possess given attributes to meet expectations and avoid possible negative outcomes), and L2 Learning Experience (situated motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience).

Findings

There were some commonalities among the three students. They were very passionate about studying Japanese, which is not surprising among students who choose to major in the language at university level (though Hazel's passion was a bit more nuanced than Gray's and Kiririn's, as discussed below). They were also interested in different languages and cultures. Prior to SA, all three students' language portraits highlighted their multilingualism. During SA, however, their language portraits focused on their primary languages, mainly English and Japanese, but for very different reasons. The three students' L2 selves differed greatly in their responses to the SA environments. Below, the students' changes are illustrated by showing their language portraits and by quoting their comments that are the most relevant to the changes.

Gray

Gray first got interested in Japanese and Japan when her family hosted a Japanese girl at home when she was a secondary school pupil. She studied Japanese for about five years in secondary school, though not in depth. She first enrolled at another institution to study fashion, but she missed studying Japanese. She transferred to the university in London in order to study Japanese and Economics.

Figure 2 shows her language portrait before SA, and Figure 3 during SA. Gray chose to speak in English in the pre-SA session (28 minutes) and shared her passion for using different languages. On her torso are two hearts, one large and the other small, and her gut. Her narrative started with the explanation of these main parts as below. (Please note that in the quotes below, the parentheses with dots inside indicate that parts in between are omitted.)

I start with my heart, which I think is kind of split between English and Japanese—obviously English because it's my first language but Japanese because I really enjoy it. I chose to learn it and

I'm learning it. And down here, it's kind of like my gut. So it's mainly English because it is my first language so it's where it goes to first. That is very deeply rooted in me because of that. (...) I think of it as red and a reason I added the black is because it's so so deep and dark.

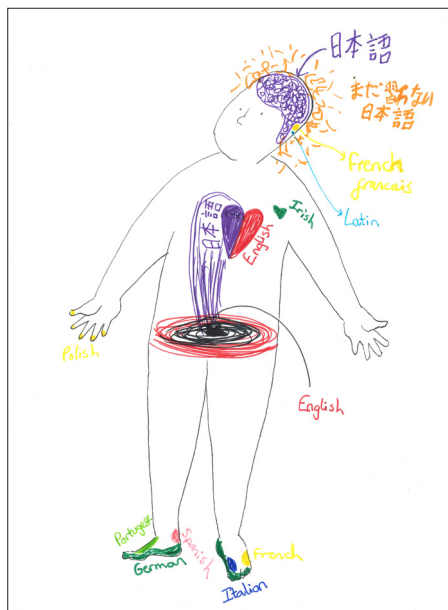


Figure 2. Gray before SA.



Figure 3. Gray during SA.

The more she studied Japanese, the more Japanese was “kind of sucked in to [her] gut”, she said. Japanese was her main foreign language, and whenever she was abroad she ended up using Japanese “almost as if it was a gut reaction because it’s the only foreign language [she] know[s]”, even when she was supposed to use another language in that particular foreign context. Gray continued:

That’s another reason why I drew it kind of coming into my gut. Next I drew a little green heart because I don’t know that much Irish but I know some words because my family is Irish so it’s sort of like there’s always going to be a place in my heart for Irish.

The brain mostly consisted of Japanese drawn in purple and bits of French and Latin. These were languages she studied in formal education. She linked her favourite colour, purple, to Japanese, the language she likes. Three years of French and one year of Latin were compulsory, but she no longer remembered much of those languages. French was in yellow because it was “fading” and Latin was a tiny dot in light blue, the colour that came to her mind when she thought of it.

[Japanese] takes more of my mind because it’s not my first language—you have to think about it more, so I think it just fills up my brain really. And those little orange kind of bits and sparks coming off are Japanese I haven’t learnt yet.

She placed several languages (German, Italian, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) on the feet because “these are all the languages that [she] know[s] a tiny amount” of, such as words and phrases she picked up and would use on holiday. The reason she put them on her feet was that they were related to travelling. She chose to travel to villages rather than cities because she wanted to be integrated, but in a small village in southern France local people “got really angry” at her when she asked them if they could speak English. She found the French village unwelcoming and had no desire to resume learning French thereafter. She added Polish on her fingertips because she knew many Polish people and was familiar with Polish signs in the

neighbourhood. Prior to SA, Gray placed Japanese on the main parts (heart, brain, torso) that form the core (e.g., Coffey, 2015).

Five months into SA, she drew a very different language portrait. She chose to speak in Japanese and explained her language portrait for about eight minutes. Japanese was drawn in red in order to indicate that it was important (“*daiji na koto o shimesu tame ni*”). She outlined her entire body with red because she heard, saw, wrote, and read Japanese every day. She also said that because she studied Japanese every day, her stomach was full of Japanese (though she did not draw this on the portrait). She drew big red ears for the purpose of emphasis. The mouth, however, was half Japanese and half English because she used English in the international student dormitory where she lived.

Her heart was now filled with English because that was the language she used when speaking with her family. Her favourite colour, purple, was used for English because she missed her family, London, and her university (“*natsukashii kara*”). She still had a green heart for Irish, but it was much smaller. German, French, and Spanish seemed distant and it did not matter to her which colour she used for them. Small dots representing these languages (to the left of the heart) were hardly visible.

Gray’s first language portrait showed her interest in language, but her portrait during SA indicated her L2 Learning Experience (immersion experience and constant use of the language in every way) and her genuine enjoyment thereof. The immersion experience motivated her to use Japanese, which appeared to have led her to use Japanese in the language portrait session as well. Her motivation also led her to read a highly technical Japanese economics newspaper on a daily basis.

Hazel

Hazel is a Turkish–British Muslim. She is an aspiring writer (she writes short stories in English) who is very articulate and eloquent when speaking English. She became interested in Japanese because of her interest in linguistics. She preferred to speak English (with an American accent) when explaining her language portraits. She spoke for about 25 minutes before SA and for 18 minutes during SA. Figure 4 shows her language portrait before SA, and Figure 5 her langu

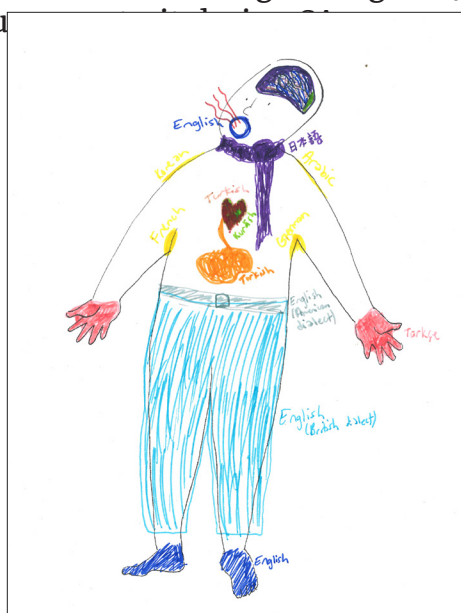


Figure 4. Hazel before SA.

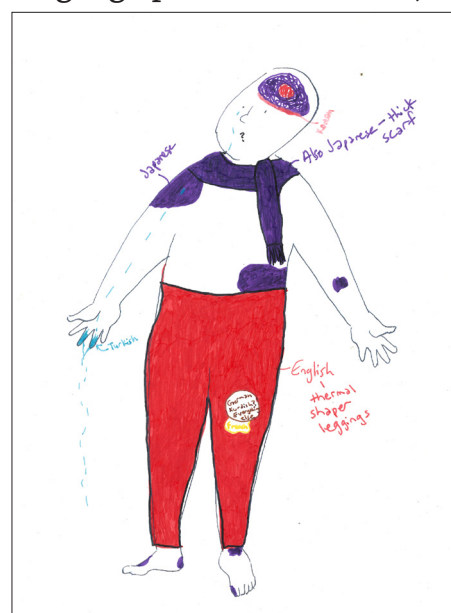


Figure 5. Hazel during SA.

On the pre-SA language portrait, Hazel had difficulty deciding how to draw Japanese because of her mixed feelings about it.

Originally it was a set of squiggles and I was just sort of going to imply the neck area, but I thought it was, that was too, shall I say, theatrical? It was too much for what I was trying to explain, so I made it as more of a cosy scarf instead.

Though she first referred to the scarf as “cosy”, what it actually depicted was a “clamp” on her neck. Before this language portrait session, she had just finished her Japanese exam. She felt the pressure of studying, and because of her lack of confidence she felt very anxious. She said: “When I get anxious I lose my voice, so it sort of reminded me of a clamp.”

She drew most of her languages in her brain (blue English, purple Japanese, pink Turkish, green Kurdish) with lines and designated colours. Japanese was purple because it was a mixed colour to represent her “mixed feelings”. She explained:

It's a mixed colour, it's a secondary colour, um, like made using primary colours, red and blue, and I had, I think, I feel like I have in a way mixed feelings. I'm studying Japanese because I love the language, but the actual course, the actual task of educating yourself, um, took a bit of a toll on me.

She webbed her fingers with pink to represent Turkish, one of the languages she used at home, but she said she felt that she was “constantly trying to catch the words, like hands”. Hands were also related to housework and thus home, where she used the language. It was pink because it was a warm, homely colour.

English was on her feet because it was her foundation, using the metaphor that Coffey (2015) states is very common. She said it was the language she could “stand up on”. The blue trousers represented “British dialect of English”.

I feel like that's the majority of me at this point, so it covers the most of my body in this picture, um, I think, it's supposed to represent jeans in a way I suppose, like I see it as a westernized thing and maybe I'm trying to imply that it's not where I'm originally from (...) I feel most comfortable with this more western style, and then they are being held up by an American belt (...) because I feel like I have to, I'm always reminded of, um, my American accent and my Americanness.

English was blue, a cold colour, because it was “far away from her actual heritage”, but she could talk the best in that language and could make her friends laugh.

She represented a tiny bit of Kurdish on the heart. She stated that Kurdish was “technically” her mother tongue because her parents were Kurdish and she thought she “should know” her heritage language, but in reality she was more Turkish and loved the country⁴. At the same time, she could not ignore the fact that she was Kurdish. She expressed “regret” that she did not learn Kurdish.

She drew Arabic on the shoulder and back, and French and German on her armpits. She learned some Arabic at Sunday school to read the Quran. She learned French and German for about five years in school but she had mostly forgotten them and associated them with forgotten, “embarrassing parts of the body”.

On Hazel's portraits were various emotions towards her languages. She had nuanced feelings not only about Japanese but also about her other languages, including English. She hoped that her scarf (Japanese) would become more comfortable and no longer be “choking” her once she went to Japan. In a way, her pre-SA portraits predominantly showed her Ought-to L2 Self with regard not only to Japanese (which she needed to study well to successfully complete the degree) but also to her heritage languages, Turkish and Kurdish, which she felt she should know better.

About four and a half months into SA, the scarf was still present and it was thicker, as shown in Figure 5. Her narrative started with an explanation about Turkish, which she said she drew on the portrait first. She represented Turkish as tears falling down in light blue because her Turkish had “really gone down” in Japan. Her Japanese and Turkish were “battling with each other” for the space in her brain because she felt that the better her Japanese got, the worse her Turkish became. Her other languages occupied small places; she did not think about them any more even though, because of a French-speaking friend in her dormitory, she used more French in Japan than she had done in London.

Most importantly, her English was now the “red thermal shaper legging” (red, to contrast with blue Turkish). She always thought of how cold she was, and English kept her warm and was “the only thing that was keeping [her] together”. This was because her confidence in her Japanese was very “bad” despite her perception that her Japanese was slowly growing, indicated by purple blobs all over her body.

Hazel remembered that she had represented Japanese as a scarf before SA as well, and stated that it was still a scarf and a “weight on her shoulders” and around her neck, but one that had started to feel warm. She then started to talk about her anxiety, which she had also experienced before SA. She suffered from fear of failure and was scared of doing badly in her degree. Her anxiety “stops [her] from being able to perform well”. She had a thick filter of English, which also made it difficult for her to speak Japanese. She no longer drew a heart because she was “not at home and feel[s] very cold and shut off”. She did not think of her other heritage languages or any others any more, stating:

I've become very polarised. Like before I used to consider myself a mix of a lot of the different experiences I've had or all of the different little languages I've learned in the past, but now I feel like it's all been reduced.

She later added: “I feel like there is not much of me left.” Though Hazel stated that she had improved her language skills and had less anxiety—perhaps to reassure me, the researcher, who was concerned about her wellbeing—both her language portrait and her narrative clearly presented anxiety caused by the gap between her Ought-to L2 Self (she felt she ought to be Japanese user who performs well to complete her degree and to represent her capable self) and her perceived real self. She was fearful of speaking Japanese because she could not express herself; her L2 self that she could express in L2 Japanese was not her real self, unlike when she spoke in English.

Kiririn

Kiririn spoke mainly in English for 47 minutes before SA but used Japanese most of the time during SA (25 minutes). “Japanese has kind of been my life of the last six or seven years,” he said before SA. He started studying the language in secondary school. His original interest was linked to his “discovery” of Japanese anime. He was also a big fan of Japanese music, particularly one celebrity, and aspired to become a Japanese-English translator. In fact, he had been accepted for a part-time job as a translator just before he drew his first language portrait. Learning Japanese also “opened up [his] mind to other languages and cultures”. He had tried to learn Korean, which he believed was similar to Japanese, and Portuguese, his girlfriend’s L1.

Figure 6 is Kiririn’s language portrait before SA. He carried two bags, *Daigaku no kaban* (university bag) and *nichijō no kaban* (daily life bag). The former was fully Japanese, drawn in light blue, his favourite colour, which he said was *anshin no yoo na iro* (the colour of relief). The daily bag had various languages, including those that he learned outside university: Japanese (light blue), Korean (red), and Portuguese (yellow).



Figure 6. Kiririn before SA.

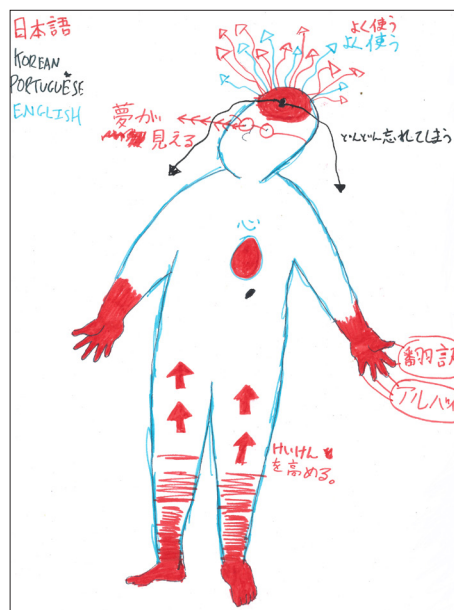


Figure 7. Kiririn during SA.

The light blue lines, which he called *wakaru sen* (understanding lines), ran all over the body, indicating that he had confidence and could use the language. He felt it “flowing through” him.

He also felt that he was “made up of English”, indicated in black because it was “the strong colour”. By studying other languages, he brought “more colours to [his] life”. Music was a big part of his life and his motivation to study Korean was his desire to understand the lyrics of K-pop music. He also mentioned his desire to learn other East Asian languages such as Mandarin and Cantonese. He wanted to add “understanding lines” for other languages.

Five months into SA, he stated that Japanese was what he needed for his future. His language portrait, shown in Figure 7, had even more emphasis on Japanese drawn in red, indicating its importance: “*ichiban daiji nanode akai*” (it is red because it is the most important). Being in Japan, he did not have opportunities to use Portuguese or Korean and kept forgetting them. He said that Japanese was coming into him (“*dondon haitte kuru*”) and he was improving. His glasses were red (Japanese) because he translated written Japanese texts to English. Both Japanese and English were shown going out of the brain; the arrows suggested that his translation (English) was being transmitted to other people. He had applied for part-time translator positions related to music in Japan, and he was thoroughly enjoying his job—though he was not enjoying the university classes.

His heart was filled with red, though it was covered by light blue (English). His legs, which typically indicate one’s foundation, were also red, albeit partially.

And living in Japan, so I think at the moment, erm, the reason I haven’t coloured the whole of the leg in, erm, it’s because I think I’m still, because I’m still madamada. Er, I can’t necessarily stand on my own two feet 100% confidently, just yet to have Japanese, but as I gain more experience, I think this red will grow, and I’ll be able to stand confidently.

He was forward-looking and his gaze was directed to the future, as his language portrait also indicated with his caption “*yume ga mieru*” (I can see my dream), but at the same time he already declared “*yume o ikite imasu*” (I am living my dream) in his narrative. It seemed that he had a clear image of Ideal L2 Self and was actively seeking ways to achieve it in the immediate environment (L2 Learning Experience).

Discussion

Despite the major differences between the three students in their interests, motives, and experiences, there were two commonalities in their changes. One was a reduction of their sense of multilingualism during SA. Language portraits have often been used in studies to illustrate and valorise the rich multilingual resources of a person's linguistic repertoire, and indeed the students' language portraits before SA showed their passion for languages and their multilingual, multicultural identities. During SA, however, all three students highlighted their L2 Japanese and L1 English—for very different reasons and with different emotions.

Gray's portrait depicted L2 Learning Experience during SA, namely her experience of immersing herself into the L2 Japanese environment, while she used her favourite colour, purple, to draw her heart filled with English because she missed her home. Kiririn's motivation was forward-looking to fulfil his dream of becoming a Japanese-English translator, his Ideal L2 Self. During SA, he was more focused than before on the languages required for the Japanese-English translation job, namely Japanese and English. He was enacting his Ideal L2 Self to an extent in Japan. However, Hazel felt that she was "polarised" and "reduced" due to anxiety caused by "fear of failure" in L2 Japanese and of not doing well academically. As a result, her L1 English was "the only thing that was keeping [her] together" because of her anxiety. In other words, she was anxious because she felt her L2 self diverged from her Ought-to L2 Self. The anxiety she experienced is similar to what has been reported in previous studies (Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Yoshida, 2016).

Second, common across the three students, their L2 selves were influenced by their dispositions towards their other languages and were influencing them in return, including both their L1s and other L2s. In other words, the findings suggest that L2 self needs to be considered in relation to other languages to understand the multilingual self. Gray, for example, had experience of learning and using other L2s, but during SA she marginalised her other L2s and regarded Japanese as the most important L2. Hazel experienced sadness (expressed as tears) during SA because her primary heritage language, Turkish, suffered when she spent more time learning and using L2 Japanese, and her other heritage language, Kurdish, was literally no longer in the picture.

The students' language portraits during SA revealed that a different component of the L2 Motivational Self System became prominent for each of the three students: Ideal L2 Self (in the case of Kiririn), Ought-to L2 Self (Hazel), and L2 Learning Experience (Gray). According to Dörnyei (2009), the Ideal L2 Self is particularly important, and it consistently correlates highly with students' intended effort (p. 30). With his L2 experience of using Japanese in translation, Kiririn likely maintains his motivation to learn Japanese for his dream career as a translator in the remainder of the SA. Gray's excitement in L2 immersion also likely maintains her motivation though her Ideal L2 Self is not apparent in her language portrait. In the case of Hazel, the portrait and her narrative suggested that she would need to find a way to counterbalance her feared self with her desired self.

What made the students experience such diverse changes? Among the three students, the change Hazel experienced seemed most pronounced, negatively affecting her motivation (to use L2 Japanese), sense of self, and linguistic identities. In a case study such as this, it is obviously not possible to pinpoint factors that potentially led to diverse changes among the students, especially because of various individual differences. Yet it is perhaps worth noting two attributes that distinguish Hazel from Gray, whose L2 Experience during SA is what many may expect as a desired SA experience. First, Hazel was 20 years old when commencing SA and was the youngest of the three participants. In fact, she reported her growth in independence and confidence after SA. In other words, when arriving in Japan she was in the early

phase of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2010), the time of life when “little about the future has been decided for certain” (Arnett, 2010, p. 469). On the other hand, Gray, who was 24 years old, was the most mature student. Having contemplated her future direction, she had changed her major and transferred from another university to the one in London to study Japanese. Second, Hazel had never been to Japan while Gray had been to Japan three times before SA, albeit for a short period each time. Gray’s confidence about her direction and the familiarity with the destination may have allowed her to enjoy her SA soon after arrival, while Hazel needed more time and adjustment.

In recent years, there has been a shift in SA research, from a primary focus on assessing changes in language proficiency to attention to changes in other dimensions such as identities, personhood and intercultural understanding (see, for example, Iwasaki, 2019). The current study revealed how students’ emotions regarding their languages changed and affected their perceptions of their linguistic repertoires.

Conclusion

With the use of language portraits, changes in the students’ L2 selves and linguistic identities have been revealed. Rather than comparing “before vs. after”, language portraits drawn before SA and four or five months into SA were compared. They showed that within these few transitional months of SA, the students’ attitudes and emotions towards L2 Japanese and towards their other languages changed. Interestingly, all students who showed rich multilingual repertoires before SA focused on a smaller number of languages during SA. The reasons for the change were not only related to their original dispositions (e.g., Kiririn’s aspiration to be a professional translator) but also to newly emerging L2 selves that were tied to their emotions towards L2 Japanese (e.g., excitement in engaging in translation work [Kiririn], happiness in being immersed in the language [Gray], anxiety due to inability to express her true self [Hazel]) that the students were experiencing during SA.

The prominent L2 selves during SA paralleled the components of the L2 Motivational Self System: namely L2 Learning Experience, or rather L2 Using Experience (genuine enjoyment of immersion experience in the case of Gray; happiness of lived experience of dream job in the case of Kiririn), future aspiration related to Ideal L2 Self (Kiririn) and anxiety caused by disparity between L2 Ought-to Self and perceived real self (Hazel). The L2 Motivational Self System helped to understand the students’ differing disposition during SA. At the same time, however, it became evident that it is essential to take into account the L2 users’ attitudes and emotions towards their other languages, cultures, and communities in forming their multilingual L2 selves.

The language portraits made it possible to capture the changes in the students’ language identities and emotions. Understanding of such changes *during* SA is crucial in helping students prepare to study abroad and in guiding and supporting those who are abroad. Future research is required to account for changes in L2 selves among multilingual speakers, and such research would benefit from the use of the language portrait. (Hazel, in retrospect, commented that drawing the portraits helped her understand herself.) Affective, emotive aspects of L2 learners are not always considered in language education but are important, not least in terms of affecting their motivation.

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Notes

1. The expression “L2” stands for “second language”, but L2 here refers to any language(s) acquired after the first language regardless of how many other languages a given speaker has learned before L2 Japanese, following the convention in applied linguistics.
2. A student with British–Japanese heritage, Hana (pseudonym), drew English and Japanese flags in two halves of the body before SA but placed both English and Japanese on her heart and illustrated tangled thought of blue (English) and red (Japanese) lines after SA. The study showed that her discursively constructed split halves (i.e., an imagined identity of a “half” individual) changed to a hybrid, merged whole: her ideal self.
3. Mariko Himeta has been actively promoting language portraits in Japan, especially in L2 French contexts (see Himeta, 2016). Other researchers often use the line drawing developed by Busch and colleagues, whose effectiveness is described by Busch (2018, p. 8–9). I found Himeta’s line drawing useful because the larger space on the torso invited my participants to depict nuanced attitude to each of their languages.
4. Kurdish people are a minority in Turkey as well as in Iraq and Iran. Conflicts between Kurdish and Turkish people in Turkey are often reported in the media.

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