

# The Motivational Journey of Japanese Foreign Language Learners

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## Abstract

Japanese is ranked as one of the hardest languages to learn, especially for English native speakers (U.S. Department of State, 2009). Despite the challenges involved in learning Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL), Japanese remains a popular choice among foreign language learners around the world for various reasons including interest in Japanese culture and the language itself (Fukasaku, 2016). In this qualitative study, four international students who participated in a summer JFL program at a private university in Japan were surveyed and interviewed about their motivation of learning Japanese prior to coming to Japan, during their two-month stay in Japan, and after their return to the United States or Canada. The international students' motivational journeys were analyzed using Dörnyei et al.'s (2015) directed motivational currents (DMCs) model, which exemplifies how surges in motivation could assist foreign language learners in achieving their, past, immediate, and future goals of mastering a foreign language. DMCs were most apparent during their stay in Japan and immediately after returning to the United States or Canada. Their surge in motivation was due to the interactions they had with host family members, their peers who were highly motivated to learn Japanese, and Japanese students. Upon returning the United States or Canada, the students discovered ways to interact with Japanese native speakers to sustain their motivation to learn Japanese. Although many of the international students did not clearly specify how they would be using Japanese in their future, they all had hopes of returning to Japan.

Keywords: Japanese as a Foreign Language, motivation, journey, goals, international students

## 要旨

日本語は特に英語のネイティブスピーカーにとって習得するのが最も難しい言語の一つとされる(U.S. Department of State, 2009)。外国語としての日本語(JFL)の習得は困難だが、日本文化や言語自体への関心など多様な理由から、世界中の外国語学習者の中で日本語人気は依然高い(Fukasaku, 2016)。この質的研究では、日本の私立大学の夏期JFLプログラムに参加した4人に対し、来日前・二か月間の日本滞在中・およびアメリカ・カナダへの帰国後に日本語学習のモチベーションについての調査とインタビューを実施した。海外留学生の学習意欲の遷移の分析には、モチベーションの高まりが外国語学習の過去・現在・未来の目標達成に役立つことを例証した、Dörnyeiら(2015)の提唱する"directed motivational currents" (DMCs)モデルを用いた。DMCが最も顕著だったのは日本滞在中および帰国直後で、ホストファミリーや日本語への高い学習意欲を持つ仲間、日本の大学生との交流に起因していた。帰国後も学生たちは日本語のネイティブスピーカーと交流して学習意欲を維持した。多くは将来的な日本語の用途について明確に決めていなかったが、全員が日本を再訪することを希望した。

## 1 Literature Review

There were more than 3.85 million people in 142 countries and regions who were studying Japanese, according to Japan Foundation's (2018) most recent report on Japanese-language education abroad. The motivation of these learners of Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) has been researched in various contexts including Australia (Aoki, 2012; Imura, 2018; Kato et al., 2007; Sakeda & Kurata, 2016), Canada (McEown et al., 2014), China (Huang & Feng, 2019; Wang & Zheng, 2021), Hong Kong (Humphreys & Spratt, 2008), Indonesia (Djafri & Wahidati, 2020; Yean et al., 2022), Lithuania (Naudžiūnas, 2017), New Zealand (de Burgh-Hirabe, 2019; de Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok, 2013), Slovenia (Škof, 2018), Sri Lanka (de Silva, 2015), Taiwan (Huang et al., 2015; Lee & Feng, 2017; Okamoto, 2011), Thailand (Croker et al., 2018; Matsuoka & Anuyahong, 2017), the United Kingdom (Wu, 2014), the United States (Fukasaku, 2016, Kato, 2016; Kato et al., 2007, Mori & Calder, 2015; Nunn, 2011; Osumi, 2019; Xu, 2020), and Vietnam (Nguyen, 2021). Among these studies, there has been a growing focus on the phenomenon of Asian students' motivation for learning Japanese at universities in Australia (Aoki, 2012), the United Kingdom (Wu, 2014), and the United States (Xu, 2020). The focus on international students in English-speaking countries is not surprising given that international students from Asia pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees from universities in inner circle native English-speaking countries (Kachru, 2005) to become equipped with intercultural experiences and skills that would make them global human resources (Wu, 2014). Moreover, for many Chinese international students, studying Japanese gives them an immediate advantage, given their existing knowledge of Chinese characters used in the Japanese language (Xu, 2020). As JFL classrooms in native English-speaking countries become more culturally diverse, it is becoming increasingly important to investigate issues of motivation of certain groups of learners such as international students from Asia who may have specific motivations for learning Japanese (Aoki, 2012; Wu, 2014; Xu, 2020).

The concept of motivation within the field of second language acquisition (SLA) has evolved over time (Dörnyei, 2020). Omar and Harwood (2021) have divided the history of SLA into three periods. The socio-psychological period from 1959-1990 focused on the integrative motivation of foreign language learners' attitudes toward the target language and culture (Clément & Gardner, 2001). The cognitive-situation period revolved around real learning situations in the classrooms; curriculum development; teachers' role in guiding learning and providing feedback; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; and the changing identities of L2 (second language) learners. Finally, the process-oriented period centered on the language learner and their unique situations in a pre-actional goal-setting stage, actual stage of implementing goals, and post-actional stage of reviewing lessons learned (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998). Recent literature on motivation and SLA highlight unconscious elements (Dörnyei, 2020) and heightened motivational periods called directed motivational currents (DMCs) (Dörnyei et al., 2015). It is now thought that motivation in learning a second language is dynamic and fluctuating "from time to time and context to context" (Omar & Harwood, 2021, p. 90). Therefore, researchers of SLA should consider the multiple factors and the underlying currents (Dörnyei et al., 2015) that may influence motivation, depending on where learners are physically and mentally at in their foreign language learning process.

"A DMC is a unique phenomenon; individuals experiencing a DMC are often aware that they are functioning at a heightened state of productivity and are able to perform with increased intensity, over and above what they may have believed possible" (Dörnyei et al., 2015, p. 97). Although research in DMCs as it relates to JFL has been limited, some studies allude to collaborative activities that can help JFL students raise their motivation levels in a short period of time. Kato's (2016) study on integrative motivation demonstrates that collaborative three-week projects between American JFL learners and native Japanese students heightened the American learners' motivation in foreign language learning. Under normal circumstances, American JFL learners have few opportunities to interact with native Japanese speakers; it can be implied that their integrative motivation—or their positive attitudes towards Japanese native speakers and wanting to interact with them to become a valued member of that community (Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner, 2001)—may be low. However, when Kato's American JFL students communicated with the Japanese students via email prior to the three-week project, attended an orientation about what was required to complete the project successfully, and interacted with native Japanese speakers, the American students indicated that the project raised their desire to study abroad in Japan, continue their

correspondence and friendship with the Japanese students, and improve their Japanese skills. In other words, Kato's projects were considered beneficial for the American JFL learners who were able to interact with native Japanese students and feel that they could resume their studies in Japanese with a higher level of motivation than before.

Tomita's (2012) project at an Australian university also included activities for her JFL students to speak with native Japanese speakers. Her students said that despite studying Japanese for three years, they did not feel confident that they could use Japanese well enough in real life situations with native Japanese speakers. Intercultural incidents with native Japanese speakers who acted as mentors or tutors in Tomita's Japanese classes raised the motivation of her students as they were able to get feedback immediately from native Japanese speakers and engage in discussions about topics that they had chosen, such as whaling or using polite Japanese. The intercultural exchanges reduced learners' anxiety of using Japanese with native Japanese speakers and also impacted them by raising their linguistic knowledge and awareness of Japanese culture. This heightened intercultural awareness gave her students skills that would sustain their motivation in learning Japanese as lifelong learners of Japanese. Thus, it can be said that Tomita's intercultural project allowed her students to experience DMCs of heightened motivation to learn Japanese with native Japanese speakers, and that this experience could also have long-term effects on the motivation of these JFL learners.

Kato (2016) and Tomita's (2012) studies illustrate that inviting native Japanese speakers to the JFL classroom increases the motivation of learners who often do not have opportunities to interact with native Japanese speakers. In addition to studying the effects of having native speakers visit the classroom, there has been research on learner motivation in contexts where students are confined to learning Japanese in a classroom with non-native Japanese speakers. According to Sakeda and Kurata (2016), interactions with highly-motivated JFL learners positively influences motivation. Being surrounded by highly-motivated JFL learners inspires learners to develop a more concrete L2 self that can sustain the ebbs and flows of motivation when learning a foreign language. Moreover, visualizing a L2 self who can use Japanese in real situations, despite having chances to use Japanese in actual settings, can also ensure that motivation to learn JFL can be sustained even after the DMCs of heightened motivation subside (Sakeda & Kurata, 2016).

## 2 Research Design

This is a holistic qualitative study of collecting data from various sources and analyzing the data by identifying recurring themes and patterns to gain a deeper understanding of international students in Japan, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes (Nassaji, 2015, p. 129-130). The motivational journey of each student was situated within Dörnyei et al.'s (2015) DMC model. According to Dörnyei et al. (2015), studying abroad can be a period of a prolonged DMC, where regular routines are set in place so that study abroad students can achieve sub goals that can assist them in envisioning how they may use the target language in the future.

The international students in this study spent two months in the summer of 2022 studying Japanese in an intensive JFL program at a private university in the Kansai region of Japan. The international students were recruited by the author after she had given a lecture in English on diversity issues in Japan to approximately 30 students in the program. After her lecture, she asked the students in the program if they would like to visit her classes and speak to her Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Although approximately 20 international students showed an interest in the intercultural activity, she chose the first four students who responded to her invitation to join the activity and who later agreed to be a part of this study. The participants included a Canadian female university student, an American female university student, a South Korean female university student from the United States, and a Chinese male university student from Canada. The inclusion of Chinese and Korean JFL students in this study is aligned with past research that focuses on the motivations of Asian students studying Japanese in native English-speaking countries (Aoki, 2012; Wu, 2014; Xu, 2020).

The intercultural in-class activity lasted 60 minutes, where the international students and Japanese EFL students exchanged ideas about various topics of interest such as music, food, foreign language learning, sports, and blood types. After the students returned to the United States and Canada, they filled out a survey about their motivation to learn Japanese and their study abroad experience (see Appendix 1). The students also participated in a one-hour Zoom interview that was intended for them to expand on their

written responses in the survey. Prior to the interview, the international students reviewed the consent form and interview questions (see Appendix 2). At the beginning of the interview, the consent statement was reiterated, and the interviewees were told that the Zoom session would be recorded. Immediately after the interview, notes from the interviews were emailed to each student, who confirmed the accuracy and validity of the content. The students received 1500 yen for their participation in the intercultural activity and 20 USD or 26 CAD for filling out surveys and being interviewed.

The objective of this study was to investigate the motivational journey of four international students who were enrolled in an intensive summer JFL program at a private university in Japan.

The research questions were as follows:

- (1) Why did the international students choose to study Japanese?
- (2) How did they feel about their stay in Japan?
- (3) How do they envision using Japanese in their future?

### 3 Findings

The findings from this study were analyzed and interpreted using Dörnyei et al.'s (2015) DMCs model, which exemplifies how surges in motivation could assist foreign language learners in achieving their goals of mastering the target language. DMCs are known to involve “a prolonged process of engagement in a series of tasks that are rewarding primarily because they transport the individual towards a highly valued end” (Dörnyei et al., 2015, p. 98). A DMC requires setting sub goals throughout the learning process so that learners can identify and reflect on these goals that may impact their motivation to learn a foreign language.

#### *(1) Underlying Motivational Currents of Learning Japanese*

The international students in this study became interested in learning Japanese for various reasons, including a fascination for Japanese anime (animation) and manga (comics); exposure to Japanese food from a young age; sports such as baseball; and the positive influence of parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends who appreciated Japanese culture. The American student said that her initial contact with Japanese culture was through anime such as *Fruits Basket* and *Fairy Tail* when she was 12 or 13 years old. Her twin sister was the first person around her to watch anime, and later she started to watch anime and read manga with her twin. In high school, she spent time with friends who had similar interest in Japanese anime or manga and thought that Japanese culture was cool. The Chinese student from Canada was also interested in anime such as *Slam Dunk* and *Bleach* from a young age. His father, who had studied in Japan about 30 years ago, shared many of his positive experiences and impressions of Japan with him. The South Korean student from the United States said that it was very easy for her to learn about Japanese culture through food and manga when she was living in South Korea. She enjoyed watching *Crayon Shin-chan*, *Detective Conan*, and *Pokemon*, eating Japanese food, and traveling to Japan with her family members from a very young age. Her motivation to learn Japanese peaked when she wanted to understand what her favorite Japanese baseball player was saying in Japanese. For three out of four of the international students, having family members who were interested in Japanese culture and being exposed to Japanese anime from an early age were the underlying motivational currents of learning Japanese. The impact of Japanese anime and manga has been documented in Osumi's study (2019) that explores motivation for learning Japanese as a foreign language over time. According to Osumi (2019), although the catalyst for learning Japanese for many American university students was Japanese pop culture, anime, and manga, they began to shift their interest towards other areas of Japanese culture as they delved deeper into studying Japanese. This was not found to be necessarily true for the Chinese and American students who did expand their interests towards other areas of Japanese culture such as food and architecture but kept their interest in Japanese anime, especially for its benefits of learning Japanese and about Japanese culture.

The Canadian female student who is fourth-generation Japanese was raised with elements of Japanese culture. Although she did read *Detective Conan* as a child, she admitted that she was not fond of anime because she thought that watching anime was similar to doing homework and would distract her from using her phone to do other things that she enjoyed more. Her uncle ran a sushi restaurant, and her family ate Japanese food frequently, so she felt that learning Japanese was not necessarily a big step for her, as

Japanese culture had always been an integral part of her upbringing. She started to learn Japanese after being invited by a friend to learn Japanese with her. Later, her grandfather became a source of motivation because he seemed pleased that she was learning a language that was a part of her and his heritage. Japanese heritage learners often have multiple identities and may feel inspired to study Japanese to feel connected to the target community (Mori & Calder, 2015). The Canadian student was able to juggle her multiple identities as a French and English native speaker and JFL speaker, while being connected to the Japanese-Canadian community in her hometown. Unlike the Japanese heritage learner in Nunn's (2011) study who experienced parental coercion and had little intrinsic motivation to study Japanese, the Canadian student in this study felt intrinsically motivated to study Japanese and did not battle with her Ought-to Self (Sakeda & Kurata, 2016)—to study Japanese to make her parents proud of her. It could be that if the Canadian student's family were second-generation Japanese heritage language speakers, her Ought-to Self may have been more pronounced, due to the pressure from first-generation parents to learn Japanese (Nunn, 2011; Sakeda & Kurata, 2016). Nonetheless, for the fourth-generation Japanese-Canadian student in this study, learning Japanese was a choice that was not impacted by obligations of her being a dutiful daughter.

## ***(2) Study Abroad and Heightened Motivation***

The international students decided to participate in the summer JFL program at a private university in Japan because they wanted to improve their Japanese skills, get course credit, and hoped to study abroad at one point in their college life but were feeling ambivalent about going abroad for a semester or a year. The private university was unable to offer the summer JFL program in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After a two-year hiatus, international students were welcomed back on campus in the summer of 2022. The international students mentioned that coming to Japan required going through bureaucratic red tape regarding visas, quarantine, and PCR tests. They appeared to be motivated from the onset as they realized that they were one of the few groups of foreign students who were able to study in Japan at a time when Japan's border security measures remained strict due to the spread of coronavirus around the world.

The two students from America were placed with host families, whereas the two students from Canada lived in student accommodation. The students who stayed with host families mentioned having positive experiences, particularly when their host family members shared Japanese culture with them, took them on excursions, and conversed with them in Japanese. They felt that being able to use the Japanese they learned in the JFL classroom with their host family members raised their motivation to learn Japanese. Kato (2016) argues that even when students go abroad, they tend to remain only with their instructors, program managers, and planned extracurricular excursions; studying abroad might not guarantee that students can immerse and integrate themselves in the local culture if they are bound by the limitations of the program. However, if students are given a choice to stay with host families as were the students from the United States in this study, they could interact with host family members on a regular basis and experience DMCs that may allow them to perform at higher levels of productivity than what they had ever imagined possible (Dörnyei et al., 2015).

Another source of motivation for the international students were their peers in the program who wanted to improve their Japanese. Sakeda and Kurata (2016) note that interactions with other highly-motivated JFL learners positively influences the motivation of other learners. Although the Chinese student from Canada mentioned feeling slightly overwhelmed by some of other students in his JFL classes, he felt that he was able to learn from them and participate in class on his own terms. The other three students wrote specific comments about how their peers motivated them. The American student indicated, "Being in an environment with people who wanted to improve their skills motivated me to want to learn Japanese. Being surrounded by those people made it very encouraging to practice, even if I made mistakes." The Canadian student wrote, "My peers did impact my motivation to learn Japanese, yes. If we were all excited to learn and encouraged each other then it was easy to want to study. If they did not and felt negative about it, then it was more difficult to find motivation." The student from South Korea commented that unlike her experience of studying in a high school in the United States and being discriminated against for not being a native English speaker, in the summer JFL program "the students and staff, as well as other friends in my program motivated me in a positive way to learn Japanese: to show appreciation, to communicate

better, to get to know better about one another, etc.” The comments from three international students demonstrate that motivation to learn a foreign language can become higher if the language learner feels that they are learning in an environment where everyone shares the same goal of trying to become better communicators of the target language (Sakeda & Kurata, 2016).

The international students were also proactive in communicating with the Japanese students on campus. At the private university’s self-access center (SAC), they met Japanese university students who worked as SAC assistants and were fluent in English. Some of the SAC assistants took the initiative to welcome the international students and show them around the Kansai region. Moreover, the international students were invited to participate in an intercultural in-class activity, where they discussed various topics of interest with Japanese EFL learners. After class, the students exchanged their contact information so that they could stay in touch with each other. The Canadian student said that she went to the nearby aquarium with some of the university students in one of the EFL classes she visited. The American student said that when she bumped into the EFL students at the SAC, they talked about their common interest—music—which they were not able to share when they were in class due to time constraints. The EFL students who had been deprived of on-campus interactions with World English speakers due to the COVID-19 pandemic mentioned that they felt very inspired by the international students who were invested in improving their Japanese skills and knowledge of Japanese culture. After class, one of the Japanese students asked her teacher (author) why the international students were so inquisitive, motivated, and interested in Japanese culture. Although the Japanese EFL students may have been flattered by the international students’ interest in Japanese language and culture, it could have also been that they were reflecting on their reasons for learning English and their level of motivation and curiosity regarding foreign languages and cultures. The synergy that was established between the international students and Japanese students can be summarized by the comments of the South Korean student from the United States who wrote, “There are so many geniuses (I am not sure if the plural form of genius is actually *genii*): even though they have not studied abroad, they speak English so well, and they are very confident and inclusive. They are not afraid to speak out about what they think.” Such positive comments about Japanese EFL learners may be surprising in light of the fact that Japanese learners frequently identify themselves as being shy and unable to express their opinions (Doyon, 2000; Goharimehr, 2018).

### ***(3) Reflection, Integration, and Future L2 Selves***

The international students reflected on their study abroad experience approximately one month after they had returned to the United States and Canada. All of them had positive impressions of Japan and were eager to return to Japan in the future. The Canadian student expanded on her personal goal of wanting to be good at Japanese because she wanted to return to Japan perhaps as a language teacher. The American student wrote, “I hope that one day I will be able to live and work in Japan for an extended period of time. I want to either work in a laboratory in the science field or teach English and reach out to students like me that want to study abroad.” The Chinese student from Canada said that he wanted to save his money and buy a flat in Japan. Fukasaku (2016) claims that with time JFL learners’ interest in culture and language can be replaced by personal goals, such as to become a language teacher, laboratory researcher, or property owner, as stipulated by the students in this study.

Prior to their sojourn in Japan, the international students did not have much interaction with native Japanese speakers although the students from Canada were connected through a friendship program of matching international students with Japanese students who provided pre-departure and ongoing support to international students during their stay in Japan. Upon returning to the United States and Canada, the students discovered how to connect with native Japanese speakers on campus or in the community to sustain their motivation to learn Japanese. For example, the American student met some Japanese exchange students at her university in Hawaii and tried to use Japanese with the exchange student community. She also decided to take a class on professional communication in Japanese with fluent Japanese speakers. Similarly, the South Korean student who is also studying at a university in Hawaii felt more confident about interacting with Japanese people upon her return. She met some exchange students from Japan and felt more motivated to speak in Japanese to her Japanese coworkers at her part-time job. The Canadian and Chinese student said that after they returned to Canada, they had opportunities to interact with the Japanese students who they met through the friendship program at the private university.

The Canadian student also said she was very happy when she could understand what the Japanese exchange students were saying when they were shopping at the store where she worked in downtown Victoria. All of the students in this study were able to find ways to integrate themselves within the target language community upon returning to Canada and the United States, due to their interest in developing their cultural knowledge and intercultural relations (McEown et al., 2014), maintaining their motivation to learn Japanese, and preserving their positive memories of their stay in Japan.

The students were asked to think about their future L2 selves, which is known to fluctuate even within a short period of time (Sakeda & Kurata, 2016). Three out of four of the students in this study did not have a L2 self that they could describe in detail. The student from South Korea indicated, “I hope I get a chance to use Japanese daily, even if I do not end up in Japan. I want to be able to speak Japanese fluently, but I have not figured a way to teach myself yet.” The Chinese student said he wanted to be fluent in four languages—English, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Finally, the Canadian student wrote, “I imagine using Japanese in the future to speak to my friends I made at (private university) and also for when I hopefully return to Japan. I don’t fully know what I will be doing in the future still.” Having a L2 self does not necessarily enhance a learner’s motivation to change his/her behaviors in order to achieve goals set in place, but having a clear L2 self may be instrumental in sustaining motivation in times when learners may feel frustrated by the foreign language learning process (Sakeda & Kurata, 2016).

#### 4 Conclusion

This holistic qualitative study analyzed and interpreted four JFL students’ motivational journeys using Dörnyei et al.’s (2015) DMCs model. Some of the students mentioned that their initial contact with Japanese culture included anime or manga, which supports the findings of researchers who discovered that a common underlying current of learning Japanese among JFL learners was Japanese pop culture, anime, and manga (Djafri & Wahidati, 2020; Imura, 2018; Osumi, 2019). The students’ two-month stay in Japan gave them a greater appreciation of Japanese language and culture as a result of their encounters with their host family members, peers in the summer JFL program, and Japanese university students on campus. Upon returning to the United States and Canada, the students were able to accommodate their surge in motivation (Dörnyei et al., 2015) by finding opportunities to interact with native Japanese speakers in their daily life. Although all of the students wanted to return to Japan in the future, most were unclear about their future L2 self but had created enough “momentum to pursue an individually defined future goal/vision that is personally significant or emotionally satisfying” (Dörnyei et al., 2015, p. 103). Their reflections indicate that they were pleased with how their study abroad experience made them feel more positive about Japan, themselves, and their future. Their motivational journey will continue and may include more DMCs that will help them achieve goals that may have seemed impossible to achieve within their lifetime.

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## Appendix 1: Consent Form and Survey Questions

I give permission to (author) to collect data for this research project and write articles based on the data they collect. I understand that my real name will not be revealed in any way and that I have the right to refuse that any of my data be distributed.

(signed and dated)

1. What is your major at university?
2. Why did you choose this major?
3. When did you start learning Japanese?
4. Why did you decide to study Japanese?
5. Was this your first time coming to Japan? YES or NO If no, when did you come before?
6. Why did you decide to come to Japan on the summer program?
7. Why did you volunteer to speak to the author's students?
8. What did you learn (about Japanese students?) when visiting the author's classes?
9. Have you stayed in touch with the author's students even after your visit? YES or NO
10. What kind of activities/programs would you recommend so that Japanese students and international students have more opportunities to interact?
11. What were some of the most important things you learned during the summer program?
12. Did your peers in the summer program impact your motivation to learn Japanese? If yes, why? If no, why not?
13. Would you like to come to Japan again? Why or why not?
14. How do you imagine you using Japanese in the future?

## Appendix 2: Consent Form and Interview Questions

I give permission to (author) to collect data for this research project and write articles based on the data they collect. I understand that my real name will not be revealed in any way and that I have the right to refuse that any of my data be distributed.

(signed and dated)

1. When interacting with Japanese students (author's class, etc.), what did you find difficult, if anything?
2. When interacting with Japanese students (author's class, etc.), what did you find easy, if anything?
3. What do you think Japanese students need to learn the most when they are learning English as a foreign language? (grammar, speaking, pronunciation, etc.) Why?
4. What was your first point of contact with Japanese culture (*anime*, parents, travel, manga, Japanese music, food, etc.)?
5. How do you usually prefer to study/learn Japanese? Why?
6. How has your motivation to learn Japanese changed over time?
7. Do you have many opportunities to interact with Japanese people (students, people in the community) in Hawaii/Canada?
8. Complete the prompt with a metaphor. Learning Japanese is like..... Then explain your answer.
9. Did your image of Japan change after your visit to Japan? Why or why not?