**Diverging outcomes: The impact of study abroad on two Japanese learners of English**

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Study abroad is often seen as way for second language learners to gain authentic, immersive contact with the target language, providing gains in language acquisition. However, many studies reporting on the outcomes of study abroad programs have shown that while some learners seem to flourish, others experience negative consequences (Kinginger, 2013). Indeed, exposure to the unfamiliar linguistic, cultural and social situations encountered during study abroad can have far-reaching impacts for a learner’s sense of self and their relationship with the target language (Block 2007).

This presentation will contrast the experiences of two Japanese high school students who participated in a short-term study abroad program in England and had vastly different learning outcomes. The students completed daily journals while in the host country and were interviewed both before and after the program. Extracts from this data will be presented to highlight critical experiences the students encountered and how they attempted to resolve them, resulting in changes to their cultural and second language identities. This presentation will also demonstrate how individual differences, including social histories and motivations for participating in the program, contributed to the way their relationship to English evolved during and directly after the program. Examination of these experiences help us to better understand how some participants in study abroad programs can struggle and fail to make gains in the target language.

**Keywords:** Study Abroad, Identity, SLA, Japanese

**References**

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