

IDENTITY AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING:  
LOCAL JAPANESE LEARNING JAPANESE IN HAWAI'I

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## **ABSTRACT**

This is an ethnographic case study of four Japanese American university students studying the Japanese language in Hawai‘i. Drawing on Rampton’s (1990) concepts of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation, this study investigates the role of the Japanese language in the construction of the students’ identities. Moving beyond Rampton’s discussion, the careful examination of the relationship between the individual students and their study of Japanese provides a more accurate understanding of these concepts. The findings reveal that the students’ language inheritance and affiliation, which are understood as their “continuity” with other Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i and their “connection” to the language and culture in Japan respectively, have different significance for each student. It is suggested that, by paying sufficient attention to these two aspects, which are both important factors in the construction of the students’ identities, teachers can integrate the National Standards for Japanese into their classroom more successfully.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the relationship between learning a heritage language and the construction of learners' identity by conducting an ethnographic case study of four Japanese American students enrolled in Japanese language courses at a university in Hawai'i. In this study, I will not look at the Japanese language as merely one of the foreign languages taught at the university, but I will seek to understand its significance for the focal students' identity construction, with reference to the history and culture of the Japanese people in Hawai'i. I am specifically concerned with such questions as "What does it mean to be able to speak Japanese for Japanese American students?", "What do they hope to gain from learning Japanese?", "What are their expectations in learning Japanese?", and "How is the study of Japanese related to their identity construction?" Since the ultimate goal of this study is to explore the role of Japanese in constructing learners' identity from an emic perspective, I will use a qualitative ethnographic approach, which will allow me to investigate the complex and changeable relationship between language, learners, and identity in naturally occurring settings over a period of time.

There are two main reasons why I personally became interested in this topic. First, the issue of language and ethnicity hardly attracts people's attention in my country, Japan. Having spent the most of my life in a country where people generally can equate Japanese ethnicity with the ability to speak Japanese (i.e., people expect that a person who is ethnically Japanese is also able to speak Japanese), I have had very few chances to encounter people who are ethnically Japanese but who do not speak the language, yet still

feel a strong tie with it. After learning that there are people outside Japan who maintain such ties to the Japanese language and culture without competency in the language, I became increasingly interested in what my native language means to those who are ethnically the same but linguistically and nationally different from me. The other reason I decided on this topic is a more personal one. Because I feel that one can only understand oneself by looking at him/herself from others' points of view, through learning about the Japanese Americans in Hawai'i and looking at my own language and culture from their perspectives, I hope to understand myself better.

As of 1995, Japanese was the most commonly taught Asian language in the United States, with an enrollment of over 44,000 students in Japanese language courses at the college level (Cook, Hijirida, & Tahara, 1997). One reason for the growing popularity of Japanese could be that, with the rise of the political and economic power of Japan, more people have started to recognize the necessity or the potential advantage of studying Japanese. In Hawai'i, for example, where thousands of Japanese tourists arrive every day, no one would deny that Japanese language ability could be one of the key factors for a successful career. On the other hand, one cannot neglect the presence of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i. In the early years, Hawai'i had a larger Japanese population than the continental U.S., and even today, nearly one-third of all Japanese Americans reside in Hawai'i (Spickard, 1996). Since the arrival of the first generation in the 1860's, Japanese Americans have not only linguistically but also culturally influenced life in Hawai'i, which has made Japanese one of the most prominent languages other than English there.

The question of why people want to learn a language has been studied in the area

of language learning motivation. Researchers in this area have generally been interested in how to categorize learners' reasons for studying a language. There have recently been claims, however, that traditional theories of language learning motivation, such as the Socio-Educational Model proposed by Gardner (1985), need to be re-examined (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). From the recognition that motivation is not a single construct, there has been an ongoing discussion that, in order to have a complete picture of the relationship between a language learner and the target language, it is necessary to take into consideration social, cultural, and historical factors, which have typically been neglected in previous studies (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Pierce, 1995; Syed, in press).

Second language learning occurs in a wide spectrum of institutional contexts. To date, researchers interested in the sociocultural<sup>1</sup> aspects of language learning (e.g., McKay & Wong, 1996; Pierce, 1995) have dealt mainly with ESL contexts where the learners are members of a minority group. These learners, while learning the target language, may be experiencing societal pressure to modify their attitude so as to be integrated into the mainstream culture. There are only a few studies, including Burnett and Syed (1999) and Duff (1995), which have looked at the sociocultural aspects of language learning in situations such as that found in Hawai'i, where learners are learning the target language as a foreign language (FL), and hence the ability to speak the target language is not essential to survive in the society.

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, I use the term "sociocultural" in the sense widely used by sociolinguists and ethnographers (e.g., Cohen, 1996; Duff, 1995; Gumperz, 1982) to refer to both society (as a group of people) and culture (as their values, beliefs, and ways of thinking and acting), which should be distinguished from the narrower use of the term "sociocultural theory of language learning" found in Vygotsky's studies.

Yet, even within FL contexts, it is important to note differences in terms of the social status of the target language and its impact on learners' motivation. In Japan, for example, English is taught as a favored foreign language, and its inclusion in the university entrance examination has had a profound effect not only on student motivation, but also on curriculum and methodology (McKay, 1992). Since competency in English is tested on the university entrance examination in Japan, many students have a high level of instrumental motivation (McKay, 1992). In the Hawai'i context, on the other hand, the Japanese language has historically and culturally played an important role in people's lives. It is thus assumed that the sociocultural status of Japanese in the local culture in Hawai'i may be closely related to students' motivation to study Japanese.

Given the important role of the Japanese language in the Hawai'i context, it is inaccurate to assume that Japanese is taught in Hawai'i in the same way that English is taught in Japan, or as other foreign languages are taught in other contexts. In order to understand the relationship between the Japanese language and its learners, I will use Rampton's (1990) notions of language expertise, loyalty, and affiliation. Rampton claims that the conventional categorization of languages by when, where, and how much they are learned and used - such as first, second, primary language, or mother tongue - do not fully describe the complex relationship between the language and its speakers.

In Chapter 2, I will present a historical overview of the Japanese Americans in Hawai'i, focusing on their ethnic identity and the role of the Japanese language in developing this identity. Rampton's (1990) notions of three different kinds of relationships between a language and its speakers will provide the framework for examining the status of the Japanese language in Hawai'i. The purpose of this chapter

is to illustrate the significant role that the Japanese language has played to date in shaping the history and the culture of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, and to show how this role has changed over time.

Chapter 3 begins with a review of previous studies on heritage language learning. This chapter then moves beyond the way that the relationship between language and learner has traditionally been treated in the field of language learning motivation, with an emphasis on the influence of sociocultural factors. In order to highlight the importance of such sociocultural factors that have been neglected in motivation studies, I will draw on recent analyses of identity and second language learning, in which the researchers view “the role of language as constitutive of and constituted by a language learner’s social identity” (Peirce, 1995, p. 13).

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, the main part of this thesis, will present an ethnographic study that I conducted with Japanese American students learning Japanese at a university in Hawai‘i. Four Japanese American students (Laura, Kenny, Stacy, and Brian), who were enrolled in JPN202 and JPN301 (fourth and fifth semester Japanese language courses) at the time of data collection, are the participants for this study. The data were obtained from January 1999 through May 1999 using various methods, including classroom observations, interviews, participants’ journals, and field work. Chapter 5 will first describe the context in which the focal students are situated, and give the introduction of each student. Chapter 6 will then focus on illustrating the relationship of the focal students to the Japanese language, with careful attention to their language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation. Based on the analysis in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 will discuss how the focal students’ expertise, inheritance, and affiliation are related to their

multiple identities, as well as to their study of Japanese. Finally, in the last chapter, I will conclude that, despite their similarities in terms of family background and Japanese proficiency, the four students have differing priorities with regard to their relationship to the Japanese language, particularly in terms of Rampton's (1990) notions of language inheritance and affiliation. Furthermore, even when these notions seem to have similar significance for the students, they are concerned with different aspects of their identity. I will also discuss implications for foreign language learning, and especially heritage language learning.

Throughout the study, the term "Japanese" is used to refer to the Japanese people or Japanese culture from Japan, as opposed to Japanese Americans and their culture in Hawai'i, unless otherwise specified.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I will present the historical background of this study. The main purpose here is to look at the role of the Japanese language in the lives of past generations of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, and how that role has changed since the first generation arrived. Rampton’s (1990) three notions of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation will be explained, then employed in the discussion.

#### 2.1 *Issei* and *Nisei* Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i

The first Japanese immigrants arrived in Hawai‘i in 1868. Since this was the first year of the Meiji Era of the Imperial government of Japan, these immigrants were called “Gannen Mono” (the People of the First Year) (Kimura, 1988). This first generation (*Issei*), most of whom were single young men, came to work as contract laborers in sugar plantations and had no intention of staying in Hawai‘i permanently. Their primary goal was “to accumulate a fortune in the quickest possible time and return to Japan” (Kitano, 1993, p. 138). This motive was not unusual around that time; most immigrants to the United States - including those from Italy, Greece, and the Balkan states - came with the same goal in mind (Spickard, 1996).

Most of the *Issei* came from the southwestern prefectures in Japan, such as Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Kumamoto, and Fukuoka (Tamura, 1994). These contract laborers were assigned to the poorest houses and were the lowest paid, and they served under Caucasian or Portuguese managers (called *luna*), who employed various methods of punishment to control them (Kitano, 1993). The working conditions were so severe

that some workers ran away from their plantation villages. Issei were often “frustrated” and “disheartened” (Tamura, 1994, p. 13) when they realized that it would be almost impossible to save enough money to go back to Japan within a few years. They started to consider remaining in Hawai‘i longer, and some single men went home to find brides. The majority, however, did not have enough time and money to return to Japan, and instead sent their pictures to their parents or relatives in Japan so that they could find marriage partners for them. This picture bride system expanded “naturally from ongoing Japanese practice, in which marriage was a family, not an individual, affair” (Tamura, 1994, p. 23).

The population of Japanese in Hawai‘i, only 153 in 1868, grew to over 6,000 by the turn of the century (Hawaiian Monarchial Government, cited by The Publication Committee, 1971), making the Japanese “the largest ethnic group in the islands” (p. 5). This number continued to increase until the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1924, which limited entry of Japanese immigrants to the United States. By Kimura’s (1988) definition, Issei are those Japanese immigrants who came to Hawai‘i up until this time, before July 1, 1924.

Similarly to other immigrant groups, Issei brought to the new land the values of their home culture. Issei tried to preserve their traditions and Japanese way of life by building Japanese temples, shrines and schools, opening up Japanese restaurants and stores, and pursuing such traditional Japanese activities as the *Bon* dance, flower arrangement, tea ceremony, and sports of various kinds (DeFrancis, 1973). Buddhism as well as Shintoism had expanded rapidly in Hawai‘i by 1920. Along with the Confucian concept of filial piety, “Buddhism gave Issei a feeling of spiritual contact with their

ancestors and strengthened the immigrants' bonds to their families and their home villages" (Tamura, 1994, p. 17).

Kitano (1993) points out that influences from their home country were much stronger in Hawai'i than on the continental U.S. for geographical reasons. Being confronted with an unfamiliar culture, Issei sought to overcome the conflicting pressures by retaining their loyalty to their home country. As in the case of other immigrant groups, as DeFrancis (1973) points out, this reaction resulted in an unselective acceptance and preservation of Japanese culture, which also included aspects that came to be outdated in the home country.

Yet, compared to later generations of Japanese immigrants, Kitano (1993) says that Issei were perhaps "the only Japanese group in America that was not confused about an ethnic identity" (p. 161): They were born in Japan and grew up with the Japanese culture, they were proud of their homeland, their knowledge of and ability in English was minimal, and they could not become U.S. citizens until late in their lives (Kitano, 1993). Their identification was reinforced by the dominant community, which viewed them as Japanese, or "Japs," and who walled them out of the mainstream by prejudice, discrimination, and segregation (Kitano, 1993).

Nevertheless, as Kitano (1993) maintains, the Japanese Americans in Hawai'i were much more fortunate than their peers on the continental U.S.; they were never the minority group, and they entered into a society where racial conflicts were less severe than in other parts of the world. While most Japanese Americans were constantly struggling with the decision about whether to remain "Japanese" or become "American," in Hawai'i, the Japanese language and culture were maintained so that Issei "could

identify with [their] Japanese background and heritage as one realistic alternative” (Kitano, 1993, p. 142).

In general, *Nisei*, the second generation, are the children of Issei who were born between 1910 and 1940 (Kitano, 1993). The average age of Nisei in 1933 was 12, and they comprised approximately 40% of the total number of Japanese Americans in the United States (Morimoto, 1997). The process through which they assimilated to American culture was fundamentally different from that of Issei. Opportunities for Nisei were greatly limited especially during World War II when there were constant discussions concerning the desirability of integration, assimilation, and pluralism (Kitano, 1993). The question of “whether to become American or to retain their ‘Japaneseness’ in the face of a hostile environment” (p. 7) was so crucial to their lives that their tie with Japan and a Japanese way of life was weakened, as their identification as American was strengthened.

## 2.2 The changing role of the Japanese language in Hawai‘i

For both Issei and Nisei, the Japanese language remained an important part of their Japanese identity. However, as Japanese Americans increased in number, their relationship to the Japanese language gradually changed.

The immigrants from Hiroshima prefecture and Yamaguchi prefecture made up the two largest groups among Issei in Hawai‘i. Because of their limited knowledge of English, these Issei used Japanese and, more specifically, their respective regional dialects for daily conversation at home and among friends (Kimura, 1988). Issei also generally subscribed to Japanese language newspapers. By obtaining information about

events in Japan as well as in the Japanese community in Hawai‘i, Issei were able to preserve ties with the old country and contribute to social cohesion in the new environment (Tamura, 1993). However, since most Issei spoke little English and most Nisei were not fluent in Japanese, communication between parents and children was often difficult (Tamura, 1993). While Issei were proud that their children could speak English like other Americans, they worried about the loss of their Japanese language skills (Morimoto, 1997).

As the gap between Issei and Nisei grew both linguistically and culturally, parents started to feel the necessity to encourage their children to learn about their own language and cultural heritage. Some parents sent their children back to Japan to stay with relatives and learn Japanese ways (Morimoto, 1997, p. 25). For those parents who could not afford to do so or were busy working, the solution was to create their own mother-tongue schools. The uncertainty that Issei felt about permanent residency in the United States was another factor in having their children learn Japanese. They tried their best to prepare their children as possible returnees by giving them supplementary education in Japanese. Just like other immigrant groups such as the Germans, who were seriously thinking about going back to their homeland, Issei felt that “the continuity of cultural and linguistic heritage was too precious to discard in one generation” (Morimoto, 1997, p. 6).

Hawai‘i was not only the first foreign land to which large numbers of Japanese people emigrated in modern times, but also the first place where education in the Japanese language in particular was raised as an important issue among the immigrant group (Morimoto, 1997). The first Japanese language school, according to Kimura (1988), was started in 1895 in Kohala on the island of Hawai‘i. Since the earliest

Japanese language schools were founded by Christians, most of the Buddhist parents were initially hesitant to send their children to those schools (Kimura, 1998). After it was understood that children were accepted regardless of their religious backgrounds, however, the number of students as well as schools increased dramatically. By 1900, there were 10 Japanese language schools with a total enrollment of approximately 1,500 students (the Publication Committee, 1971). Two decades later, 20,514 students, or 97.9% of children of Japanese ancestry, were studying Japanese in these schools (Usui, 1996). With the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan however, all the Japanese language schools in California and Hawai‘i were forced to close. During the war, many parents and teachers burned or discarded Japanese language books for fear of being suspected of being pro-Japanese nationalists when questioned by the FBI (Morimoto, 1997). In the spring of 1948, 15 Japanese schools reopened in Hawai‘i, with 45 teachers and about 3,000 students (Kimura, 1988).

Issei educators decided that Japanese language schools would teach reading, writing, grammar, and pronunciation, as well as Japanese history and geography (Spickard, 1996). The schools would also deal with moral education, or *shushin*, “one of the most important subjects of study in Meiji Japan” (Tamura, 1994, p. 154), in which such moral values as filial piety, duty, honesty, perseverance, industry, courtesy, cooperation and courage were emphasized (Tamura, 1994). It was expected that moral education would reflect the gist of the *Kyoiku Chokugo* (the Imperial Rescript on Education) (Morimoto, 1997). Most of the teachers, as well as the textbooks, were sent from Japan. The curriculum was designed based on that of the Japanese Ministry of Education, which was essentially grounded in loyalty to the Emperor. The students

“bowed to the Emperor’s picture, sang the Japanese national anthem, and studied the Imperial Rescript on Education” (Hawkins, 1978). The reading of the *Kyoiku Chokugo* was more like a religious ceremony in these schools (Morimoto, 1997). Such Japanese ideals as loyalty to the Emperor were sometimes the basis on which the language schools were criticized by the territorial government and the public. Such aspects were seen as indoctrination that hindered the Americanization of the children (Kimura, 1988).

Issei expected Japanese language schools to play a role in transmitting the cultural heritage of the *Yamato Minzoku* (the Japanese race) rather than simply teaching the Japanese language: They hoped that Japanese language schools would serve as “bridge[s] of understanding” (Morimoto, 1997, p. 67). To be sure, those schools in Hawai‘i provided Nisei with more substantial linguistic and cultural education than did those of any other immigrant country (Morimoto, 1997). Unfortunately, however, Nisei did not absorb this Japanese education as their parents had intended (Spickard, 1996).

[Issei] hoped that the new generation would do something constructive for both the United States and Japan at the dawn of the Pacific Era. For that to happen, Nisei should be bicultural and bilingual, an extremely difficult assignment for the majority of them. Born as citizens of the United States and educated in public schools, the Nisei acquired American culture and spoke English as native speakers. Yet the fact that they were born to Japanese parents and raised by them did not automatically guarantee that they had acquired Japanese culture and were fluent in Japanese.

(Morimoto, 1997, pp. 68-69)

By the late 1920’s, when Japanese language contests were frequently held for young people in the Japanese communities, Nisei began to feel that they were being forced to study Japanese. Tamura (1993) indicates that the Japanese language schools were generally unsuccessful in making their Nisei students fluent in Japanese, mainly because most Nisei youth in Hawai‘i were indifferent about mastering the language. The

majority of them attended those schools simply because they did not want to disappoint their parents. Furthermore, “[p]lenty of Japanese values were in fact passed on, but some were barely appreciated” (Spickard, 1996, p. 74). The differences between Issei, permanent aliens who were thus “ineligible for citizenship” (Kitano, 1993), and native-born American Nisei, amounted to a vast cultural gap. Some Nisei, not being able to understand exactly what difficulties their parents had overcome, “discount[ed] their parents’ achievement” and even “went to great lengths in their rejection of the Issei - and in turn, of the Japanese part of themselves” (Spickard, 1996, p. 78).

As the population of Nisei grew, the Japanese language lost its importance as the vehicle for communication between Issei and Nisei, as well as a tie to their home country, to where Issei parents had initially intended to go back. Nisei were American citizens but were looked upon as Japanese (Kitano, 1993). During World War II, when Japanese Americans were often linked with the enemy nation, it became particularly crucial for them to make an effort to be fully Americanized by speaking “good” English. Shigeo Yoshida, one of the members of the Emergency Service Committee at the time, stated,

I am naturally interested in the Americanization of all our people. I do not believe that the ability to use the English language is the only factor in one’s Americanism, but I do believe that it is a very important factor. It is the main tool with which one acquires the true meaning and appreciation of what America is and stands for... We think in the language we speak. I believe it is more important than ever that we in Hawai‘i not only speak but think in the language of America. (Yoshida, 1978, p. 329)

By the late 1960’s, *Sansei*, the third generation, had become college-age, and the use of Japanese was almost exclusively limited to older Issei. Japanese was understood but spoken scarcely by Nisei, and was virtually unknown to Sansei (Meredith, 1965). Sansei “began to view race and ethnicity quite differently than their counterparts had

done” (Takahashi, 1997, p. 1).

While Nisei were constantly faced with the choice of being American or Japanese, Sansei in Hawai‘i sought out another way to create their own culture in an effort to resist total Americanization. This was an important factor in the evolution of a local culture in Hawai‘i, where peoples from various cultures intermingle. An important part of this local culture is the Hawaiian value of *aloha kanaka*, “love for people,” which led people to social relationships that tried to avoid interpersonal conflict and social disharmony (Gallimore & Howard, 1969). While people in Hawai‘i strongly identify with their individual ethnic groups, their sense of being “local” is often more distinct than their identity as Americans (Yamanaka, 1993). Particularly, it has been claimed that Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i “recognize [to] their self-satisfaction that they are neither Americans of America nor Japanese of Japan - they are simply Japanese Americans of Hawai‘i” (Ogawa, 1973, p. 13).

In Meredith’s (1965) study of the acculturation of Sansei in Hawai‘i, Sansei are considered as bilinguals; however, Japanese is not one of their two languages. According to Meredith, Sansei spoke near-standard English in the classroom or to “haoles” (Caucasians), but “revert[ed]” to Pidgin (or Hawai‘i Creole English) with their family and peer group. The identity of Sansei was influenced both by the expectations of their parents, who still held Japanese traditional values such as parental obedience and respect for elders, and by the expectations from the peer group. Meredith argues that an important component of the influence of the peer group was a “strong in-group perception of being a ‘local’ island resident” (p. 44), which was built and supported by the “youth culture” through symbols such as clothing fads, hair styles, and use of Pidgin.

Therefore, it was Pidgin, not any other variety of English, which provided Sansei with the shared feeling of being local in Hawai‘i.

It should be noted, however, that the Japanese language, as well as other languages such as Hawaiian and Chinese, has played a crucial role in the development of Pidgin. Carr (1972) claims that the Japanese language has had “a far-reaching influence on Hawai‘i’s English speech” (p. 94). For instance, the Japanese names of material objects such as *shoyu* (soy sauce), *bento* (box lunch), and *arare* (rice crackers), as well as Japanese family names, were brought to Hawai‘i by Japanese and are now widely used throughout the islands. Carr (1972) also suggests that the phonological similarity between Hawaiian and Japanese is another factor which contributed to the extensive acceptance of Japanese words in Hawai‘i: In both languages, words end with vowel sounds (with some exceptions in Japanese), and neither language has consonant clusters.

### 2.3 Looking closely at Japanese Americans and the Japanese language in Hawai‘i

The above section has shown that the Japanese language has played an influential role in people’s history and culture in Hawai‘i. In educational settings in Hawai‘i today, Japanese is generally taught as a foreign language, which is commonly defined as a language that is spoken in a foreign country as a daily medium of communication. Given the sociocultural status of Japanese in Hawai‘i however, it is inaccurate to think that people - especially Japanese Americans - view Japanese simply as the native language or mother tongue of the people of Japan. In order to better understand the significance of the Japanese language in Hawai‘i, it is necessary to go beyond the conventional categories of mother tongue or first, second, native or foreign language.

The inadequacies of these terms have been discussed by Rampton (1990), who points out that using the term “native speaker” tends to cause people to erroneously equate the genetic or biological factor of one’s language ability with social or cultural factors. Based on the fact that “[t]he capacity for language itself may be genetically endowed, but particular languages are acquired in social settings” (pp. 97-98), Rampton claims that “using a language as an instrument of communication” does not mean that the person necessarily sees the language as “a symbol of social identification” (p. 98), and vice versa. Rampton suggests replacing the concepts *native speaker* and *mother tongue* with the three concepts, *language expertise*, *language inheritance*, and *language affiliation*. In his view, language expertise refers to how proficient people are in a language based on what is learned, and not what is fixed or innate; therefore, it focuses on “what you know” rather than “who you are” (p. 99).

With regard to the history of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, while most Issei tried to acquire the new language, they remained proficient Japanese speakers; in other words, they maintained Japanese language expertise in Rampton’s terms. Like other non-English speakers, Issei preferred newspapers in their native language due to their low proficiency in English, as well as due to the assurances such publications provided in their new environment (Tamura, 1993). Despite Issei’s wishes and efforts to maintain their homeland language, however, younger generations, such as Nisei and Sansei, gradually shifted from Japanese to English. Kasdon and Smith (1961) show that English language use by children, most of whom were Sansei, drastically increased between 1938 and 1958.

Together with the Japanese language, Issei brought from their home country the

Japanese way of life and cultural values. Even after they settled in the new land, they not only retained their Japanese proficiency but also their attachment to the Japanese language and culture. Rampton's definition of expertise does not cover this attachment to a language, a symbolic value of a language that he refers to as *language loyalty*, or *language allegiance*. This idea of language loyalty has two aspects, namely *affiliation* and *inheritance*. Language affiliation refers to "the attachment or identification [people] feel for a language, whether or not they nominally belong to the social group customarily associated with it" (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997, p. 555), whereas language inheritance refers to "the ways in which individuals can be born into a language tradition that is prominent within the family and community setting whether or not they claim expertise in or affiliation to that language" (p. 555). The crucial difference between the two, Rampton (1990) says, is that "affiliation refers to a connection between people and groups that are considered to be separate or different, whereas inheritance is concerned with the continuity between people and groups who are felt to be closely linked. Inheritance occurs *within* social boundaries, while affiliation takes place *across* them" (p. 99).

One of the merits of separating language inheritance and affiliation, Rampton (1990) argues, is that these terms "can be used to discuss the position of individuals as well as groups" (p. 100). Moreover, Rampton points out that when such terms as ethnic, national, or community language are used, "[t]here is a tendency to think only of inheritance," (Rampton, 1990, p. 100) but not of affiliation. By introducing another concept, language affiliation, Rampton claims that researchers can go beyond the conventional categorizations of language such as first, second, or mother tongue.

In his study of ESL students in England, Rampton and his colleagues provide some brief empirical evidence showing the significance of replacing the notion of native speaker with his three concepts (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997). However, although the examples introduce the application of the concepts of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation, they do little to explain the significance of these concepts for each student. Consequently, we are left with questions such as “How are these concepts related to the construction of these students’ multiple identities?” It is one of the goals of my study to explore how Rampton’s concepts can be used to fully understand the complex relationship between a language and its individual speakers.

Applying these concepts to the Issei, we can see that they strongly identified with being Japanese, and in Rampton’s terms had Japanese language expertise, Japanese language affiliation, and Japanese language inheritance. Issei parents, who initially intended to return to Japan, worried about their children’s loss of Japanese and sent them to Japanese language school to have them learn not only the language but the traditions and cultural values as well. Being so proud of their language and ethnicity, Issei strongly believed that their mother tongue, along with their traditions and culture, should be inherited and maintained by their descendants.

While Issei strongly identified themselves as Japanese, Nisei were always in search of an identity (Kitano, 1993): They were American citizens but were considered Japanese because of their appearance. Similarly to their parents, Nisei were constantly faced with prejudice, discrimination, and segregation. Although they were inspired by the promise of freedom and the American dream, as Kitano says, “they encountered a racist society where visibility was more important than desire and ability” (p. 162). Most

Nisei did not learn much at the Japanese language schools, and sometimes had difficulties in communicating with their Issei parents (Tamura, 1994). Thus, the only effect the Japanese language schools seemed to have on Nisei was that, at best, it “drew them closer to their parents” (Morimoto, 1997, p. 96). Being taught to be good Japanese, Nisei still believed Japanese traditional values to be desirable, even if they were not competent in the language. Many of these Nisei also proved their loyalty to the United States during World War II in part by developing their expertise in English. This suggests that Japanese language inheritance and affiliation were actually more important to them than Japanese language expertise.

It has been claimed that Sansei and succeeding generations no longer appear as Japanese (Kitano, 1993). At the same time, Sansei and *Yonsei* (fourth) generations have “begun to seriously question the values of their home cultures in relation to the expectations of the dominant White society in which they live” (Adler, 1998, p. 29). In Adler’s (1998) study of Midwestern Sansei and Yonsei Japanese American women, the participants were asked to rate themselves on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high) with regard to ethnicity, based on their personal feelings and interpretation of “Japaneseness.” The findings show that those who rated themselves a 5, or who considered their Japanese ethnicity to be neither very high nor very low, express pride in their heritage but feel disconnected from Japanese culture. Sansei in the Midwest and in Hawai‘i are similar in that neither group as a whole succeeded in becoming fluent speakers of Japanese (Albert, 1980). Although no similar study has been conducted in Hawai‘i, it is plausible to assume that language inheritance is an important factor for Sansei in Hawai‘i in their identification as Japanese American.

Kitano (1993) observes a generational stratification in the identity of Japanese Americans: Issei, primarily Japan-oriented; Nisei, acculturated but with bicultural tendencies; and Sansei, primarily American in orientation. With succeeding generations, such as Yonsei and *Gosei* (fifth), he further claims, “generational meanings may be fading so that an overall term, the word ‘Nikkei’ (Japanese American) has come into use describing all Japanese born in the United States” (Kitano, 1993, p. 8). Kitano’s observations lead us to hypothesize another generational stratification concerning Japanese language in Rampton’s terms: Japanese language expertise, affiliation, and inheritance were all held by Issei; most Nisei lost language expertise but maintained affiliation and inheritance; and Sansei held little language expertise and affiliation but still retained language inheritance. While this claim may give us some idea of the general picture of Japanese Americans and the Japanese language in Hawai‘i, this study will investigate the individual Japanese American’s relationship to the Japanese language in depth. Furthermore, I will focus on young Japanese Americans, mostly Yonsei, who would supposedly have different ethnic and historical experiences from those of the preceding generations, and consequently, a different attitude toward the Japanese language. Concerning the uniqueness of Yonsei, Ogawa (1973) makes a pertinent argument:

Unlike the Nisei whose grandparents lived in Japan, and the Sansei whose grandparents spoke little English, the Yonsei will be the first Japanese American generation to have grandparents with whom they can communicate.  
(p. 48)

Based on the assumption that “family” plays an important role in Japanese American culture, Ogawa poses a question as to what changes “the emergence of a grandparent

relationship” will bring about to the culture of Japanese Americans. With this in mind, my study will also consider the role of the participants’ grandparents in their learning Japanese, and at the same time, forming their ethnic identity.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The above discussion has examined the changing nature of Japanese society in Hawai‘i in light of its history and the identity of Japanese Americans, particularly Issei, Nisei and Sansei. The focus was on the role that the Japanese language played in their lives, with reference to Rampton’s (1990) notions of the relationship between a language and its speakers. As language expertise decreased with each generation, language loyalty – both affiliation and inheritance – seems to have assumed greater importance. In this chapter, I will review the previous research in relevant fields that will frame my study of the role of heritage language in the construction of its speakers’ identity.

#### 3.1 Studies on heritage language learning

##### 3.1.1 Historical background

Researchers involved in bilingual education in North America were probably the first to introduce the term “heritage language.” According to Cummins (1989), the term “heritage languages” in Canada refers to “minority languages other than French (an official language) and the languages of the aboriginal peoples of Canada [Indian and Inuit or Eskimo]” (p. 24). In the first half of this century, minority students in North America were often labelled as “deficient” or “disadvantaged” in educational settings, and the only way for these students to live in the mainstream society was to give up their own languages and cultures (see Cummins, 1984). The concept of cultural diversity, then, shifted from “Americanizing” or “Canadianizing” those minority students to empowering them by considering their home languages and cultures as “resources” that are

indispensable to the achievement of multiculturalism. Students' home language and culture were termed "heritage," and the aim of heritage language teaching was "to promote the continued vitality of ethnic cultures and to enrich children's educational experience" (Cummins, 1989, p. 88).

More recently, the term "heritage language" has often been used interchangeably with "ancestral language" which refers to the language of forefathers. Yet, it is important to differentiate a language of "inheritance" in Rampton's (1990) terms from a "heritage language" or an "ancestral language." While language inheritance is concerned particularly with the symbolic value of a language, or the attachment the speaker feels toward the language, which does not consider the communicative aspect, the term "heritage language" does not necessarily have this implication.

### 3.1.2 Heritage language maintenance

As described in the previous chapter, Japanese Americans in Hawai'i have maintained their heritage language with its symbolic and communicative value to varying degrees, for over a hundred years. Although each generation has held a different stance toward their heritage, Japanese language schools have played an important role in the maintenance of both the Japanese language and culture. While Edwards (1984) writes of the difference between the communicative and symbolic value of language, Morimoto (1997) expresses a similar difference in terms of the "heritage maintenance" and "language maintenance" (p. 15) of Japanese Americans, saying that the Japanese language schools played a greater role for the former, "heritage maintenance," during and after the World War II. "Heritage maintenance" in Morimoto's (1997) terms is

concerned with “language of [the] past in which tradition and culture are expressed” (Edwards, 1984, p. 289) or “associated language” (Eastman, 1984, p. 259), and “language maintenance” is concerned with language as a medium of communication. Here, we see a distinction similar to that which Rampton (1990) makes between “language expertise” and “language loyalty,” “language expertise” referring to how proficient people are in a language, with “language loyalty” describing the attachment people feel for a language.

While claiming that these two aspects are separable, Edwards (1984) suggests, “it is possible for the symbolic [value] to remain in the absence of the communicative” (p. 289). This phenomenon corresponds to the previous discussion of the history of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, where Issei maintained language expertise, affiliation, and inheritance in Rampton’s (1990) terms, Nisei retained both affiliation and inheritance, and Sansei mainly held inheritance. Although younger generations gradually lost their language expertise, which in Edwards’ terms would correspond to the communicative value of a language, they still maintained the symbolic value of Japanese, especially language inheritance in Rampton’s (1990) terms.

### 3.1.3 Recent studies on Heritage Language (HL) teaching/learning

It has been pointed out that many HL learners in the United States “‘shift’ to English and begin to lose their home language altogether,” even if their family members speak their heritage language (McQuillan, 1996, p. 57). Increased observations of this tendency have led to the expansion in the field of SLA of concerns with the bilingual ability of minority students in their heritage language and English.

Hakuta and D'Andrea (1992), for example, studied the maintenance and loss of Spanish and English by high school students with Mexican background. Their study sought to identify the predictors for the students' language proficiency, language behavior, and language attitude by means of a questionnaire and several different kinds of measurements. Their findings suggested that although attitudinal orientation did not predict students' proficiency in Spanish, attitude did affect their language choice.

McQuillan (1996), in criticizing traditional grammar and skills instruction, examined the effectiveness of a ten-week language program designed to promote heritage language literacy in a university course, Spanish for Native Spanish. He suggests that an alternative approach, which encourages students to learn the target language through self-selected reading, or "free voluntary reading," leads to the HL learners' improved vocabulary, more positive attitudes toward reading, and more reading in the long term.

Studies such as Hakuta and D'Andrea's (1992) and McQuillan's (1996) stem from researchers' concerns that heritage language learners should develop their proficiency in the heritage language. Here, a successful HL learner is considered to be one who acquires adequate literacy, proficiency, and knowledge in the target language. The main focus is on the learners' proficiency, or language expertise in Rampton's (1990) terms [or the communicative value of language in Edwards' (1984) and Morimoto's (1997) terms], which is quantifiable and measurable. Although these studies do take into account sociopsychological dimensions of language learning, which encompass learners' interest in or attitudes toward their cultural heritage, it should be noted that these dimensions are typically treated as "factors" or "predictors" for successful language learning, not as qualities that constitute the value of a language per

se to the learners. In other words, the focus of these studies is limited to what Rampton (1990) defines as language expertise, whereas in my view sufficient attention is not given to language loyalty, namely language affiliation and inheritance. Furthermore, these researchers assume that the sociopsychological dimensions, which are defined as “factors” or “predictors,” are causes, not outcomes, of the learners’ proficiency in the target language, and the students’ language learning process is fixed and stable. However, other studies such as Peirce’s (1995) have revealed that the relationship between language and learner is a complex, ongoing phenomenon, in which the role of language must be understood as “constitutive of and constituted by a language learner’s social identity” (p. 13). In this view, it is possible that the students’ language behavior and language attitude toward Spanish in Hakuta and D’Andrea’s (1992) study are the outcomes, not the causes, of their proficiency.

There have recently been studies on heritage language learning that focus on the symbolic value of a language as well as the communicative value, and recognize the language learning process as complex and not fixed. Burnett and Syed’s (1999) study of Filipino immigrant students who were enrolled in Ilokano or Tagalog classes in Hawai‘i, for example, is based on the assumption that “education for immigrants should involve the development of first language skills and heritage cultural identity” (p. 105). These studies, primarily taking a qualitative approach, aim to understand the complex learning process with reference to the learners’ emerging identities from their own perspectives.

Although a similar approach will be employed in my study, it should be mentioned that there is a fundamental difference between Burnett and Syed’s (1999)

study and my own in terms of the social status of the target language and culture. The fact that “[t]he Filipino cultures and languages are generally not well accepted in Hawai‘i” (p. 112) was sometimes a hindrance that discouraged Filipino immigrant students in Burnett and Syed’s (1999) study from identifying positively with as Filipinos. Some of the students “made a conscious effort not to be mistaken as immigrant Filipinos but rather as Filipino-Americans” (p. 114) because of the negative image of the former group.

A similar case in which people’s perception of the language was a great factor in shaping learners’ attitudes toward their heritage language was seen in Stephan’s (1992) comparable study on the Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i and the Hispanic Americans in New Mexico. This study found that “claiming an identity as Japanese confers higher status in Hawai‘i than claiming an identity as Hispanic does in New Mexico” (p. 55) due to the fact that the Japanese are considered to be a high-status group in Hawai‘i. Therefore, in discussing the identity of heritage language learners, it is crucial to carefully look at how the target language and culture are perceived in the society. As Burnett and Syed acknowledge, rejecting or distancing oneself from one’s heritage language can be a major factor in developing identity.

“Heritage” is used in Burnett and Syed’s (1999) study to refer to “the wealth of resources” (p. 105) that minority students are expected to bring to educational settings. Yet, the term “heritage” here needs to be examined in order to clarify the difference between Rampton’s (1990) “language loyalty” and Burnett and Syed’s “learners’ heritage.” Rampton’s discussion of language loyalty shows how we need to go beyond the concept of symbolic value of a language, which is separated from the communicative

value or language expertise. As we saw in section 2.3 above, Rampton further distinguishes between two types of language loyalty: Language inheritance, which maintains continuity between a closely linked group of people, and language affiliation, which connects groups that are otherwise diverse. If we follow this distinction between inheritance and affiliation, it appears that most studies conducted on heritage language learning in the U.S. to date are only concerned with language inheritance and do not examine language affiliation.

When we apply these definitions to the case of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, affiliation can be understood as the attachment that Japanese Americans may feel toward Japan and its people, while inheritance can be understood as “the continuity of traditional culture” (Morimoto, 1997, p. 12) between different generations among Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i. Nevertheless, there is some confusion in Rampton’s definition of language affiliation. That is, while he states that “affiliation refers to a connection between people and groups that are considered to be *separate* or *different* [italics added]” (Rampton, 1990, p. 99), in his later study, it means “the attachment or identification [people] feel for a language *whether or not* [italics added] they nominally belong to the social group customarily associated with it” (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997, p. 555). In short, Rampton refined his definition seemingly to indicate that language affiliation can take place not only across social boundaries but also within them, which as a result made the difference between inheritance and affiliation ambiguous. For this reason, I will use the term in its original meaning: That is, on the assumption that Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i and Japanese in Japan belong to different social groups, language

affiliation refers to the attachment Japanese Americans feel for Japanese people and culture in Japan.

I will employ Rampton's view of language loyalty in its entirety, looking at both language affiliation and inheritance. To be more exact, I will examine Japanese heritage language learners' "connection" to Japan, its people, and its culture, as well as their "continuity" of culture with other Japanese Americans in Hawai'i. The role of the Japanese language will be examined not merely from the viewpoint of the continuity of traditional Japanese culture in Hawai'i, but also as it relates to the tie between the two different groups - Japanese Americans in Hawai'i and the people of Japan. Some of the learners in Burnett and Syed's (1999) study do have a "connection" to the Philippines, in fact, but the connection with the Filipino language and culture was mostly limited to their relationship with their grandparents or other relatives living in Philippines. Language affiliation needs to be examined in my study more precisely, on the other hand, because young Japanese Americans who are learning Japanese in Hawai'i receive information about the Japanese language not only from their parents or grandparents, but also from TV, music, magazines, and Japanese tourists or friends from Japan, which continuously provide them with information about contemporary Japanese culture.

### 3.2 Language and identity

#### 3.2.1 From motivation to identity

The previous section has shown that the relationship between language and language learner must be understood to be a dynamic and complex process. Yet, this relationship has traditionally been studied in the field of language motivation. Studies on

language motivation often address questions such as “What are the reasons for learners’ learning the language?” and “What variables contribute to successful language learning?” The classical theory of language learning motivation proposed by Gardner (1985), which has dominated the field for two decades, entails two constructs: “instrumental” orientation and “integrative” orientation. The former involves learning the target language for an instrumental or practical purpose, such as getting a better job or entering a better school. The latter stems from a desire to be accepted by or integrated into the community in which the target language is used as a main medium of communication. Since this theory, the Socio-Educational Model of L2 learning, hypothesizes that learning languages involves learning aspects of behavior of the target culture, it has been assumed that attitudes toward the target language community partially determine success in language learning.

In recent years, however, it has been argued that motivation to learn a language is “far too complex to be explained through just one dichotomy” (Brown, 1991, p. 246), and a new research agenda has been called for (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Previous theories, as Peirce (1995) argues, “have not adequately addressed why it is that a learner may sometimes be motivated, extroverted, and confident and sometimes unmotivated, introverted, and anxious” (p. 11). From the recognition of the multifaceted nature of motivation, researchers have become more aware of the need for considering cultural, psychological and social aspects of language learning (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Pierce, 1995; Syed, in press).

In response to these claims, Gardner himself attempted to expand his theory by distinguishing between two motivational constructs: *motivational behavior* and

*motivational antecedents*. Motivational behavior refers to “the characteristics of an individual that can be perceived by an observer” (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995, p. 506) while motivational antecedents comprise the variables that influence motivational behavior. Among motivational antecedents are *valence*, *self-efficacy*, and *self-confidence*. Valence, in this theory, is used to describe the subjective value that an individual associates with a particular outcome, or, simply put, as the attractiveness of the task. Self-efficacy is defined as “an individual’s beliefs that he or she has the capability to reach a certain level of performance or achievement” (p. 507). Self-confidence differs from self-efficacy in terms of the inclusion of an anxiety component: It is “more closely tied to the level of performance that an individual believes he or she could achieve at some point in the future” (p. 507).

Kondo (1999) examined bilingual and semibilingual Japanese American university students’ motivation based on Tremblay and Gardner’s (1995) recent motivation constructs. Her findings suggested that valence and self-efficacy are critical in predicting persistence in studying Japanese, while self-confidence influences the students’ use of Japanese for verbal communication outside the classroom. Furthermore, it was revealed that most of the students do not have specific short-term goals other than passing Japanese courses with good grades, although many do have nonspecific long-term goals that influence their active learning of spoken Japanese, but not reading and writing.

These findings came from a larger study, which includes case studies of six bilingual and semibilingual Japanese American students (Kondo, 1998). Using a qualitative approach, Kondo investigated these students’ Japanese language learning,

academic achievement and identity, and suggested that the students' Japanese mothers are the primary social agents for the students' Japanese language maintenance. The fundamental difference between Kondo's study and my study is that Kondo's participants are all Shin Nisei, or new second generation Japanese, who have at least one Japanese parent. Therefore, Japanese was spoken in the home to varying degrees. Furthermore, the participants all have relatives in Japan, and have all lived or visited Japan before.

On the other hand, among the four participants in my study, only Kenny can be categorized in the Shin Nisei group; the other three participants do not have anybody in their family who speaks Japanese as their native language. Moreover, Kenny and Stacy have been to Japan, but Laura and Brian have not. Since my study aims to investigate the focal students' relationships with the Japanese language in terms of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation in Rampton's (1990) terms, it is important that the participants have various experiences with and attitudes toward the Japanese language and culture. As I will suggest in the following sections, identity is constructed through interactions using the target language, thus, learners' different experiences must indicate multiple aspects of Japanese American students' identity. In particular, I believe my study will provide good evidence that helps us understand the difference between language inheritance and affiliation.

### 3.2.2 Language and identity construction

As was seen in the previous section, in the field of language learning motivation, the focus has been shifted to individual learners. Consequently, there arose the need to investigate cultural, psychological and social aspects of language learning. By

integrating these aspects, recent studies of second language learning have looked into learner's identity (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; McKay & Wong, 1996; Pierce, 1995; Syed, in press).

In discussing language and identity, a helpful starting point is with theories in which the relationship between language and meaning is understood as constitutive rather than descriptive. Among those theories, Saussure's "structural" theory presumes that language exists as a pre-given fixed structure, and the role of language is "not to create a material phonic means for expressing ideas, but to serve as a link between thought and sound" (Saussure, 1959, p. 112). In this theory, language consists of chains of signs, in which two components, a *signifier* (sound or written image) and a *signified* (meaning), are related to each other in an arbitrary way. There is no natural link between object and word, in other words, each sign has no intrinsic meaning, and meaning of a certain sign is only determined in relation to other signs in the system. The meaning of "woman," for example, is not intrinsic but is given from its difference from other signs, such as "man" or "female." Saussure's principle, therefore, is that meaning is produced within language, not reflected by language. Following this principle, Weedon (1987) argues,

Experience is not something which language reflects. In so far as it is meaningful experience is constituted in language. Language offers a range of ways of interpreting our lives which imply different versions of experience. In the process of interacting with the world, we give meaning to things by learning the linguistic processes of thought and speech, drawing on the ways of understanding the world to which we have access. (p. 85)

Using a feminist perspective, Weedon (1987) claims that by "speaking out as women" (p. 81), "biological females" become "social agents" whose experiences are "not innate but [are] determined by a range of forms of power relation" (p. 82). In this regard,

Saussure's principle is applied to make language "truly social" and "a site of political struggle" (Weedon, 1987, p. 23).

In theories such as Weedon's, the self is viewed as multifaceted, as comprised of components that sometimes conflict, contradict, and change. Drawing on Weedon's (1987) concept of subjectivity, which is seen as a process, Peirce (1995) presents three defining characteristics of social identity: the multiple nature of identity, identity as a site of struggle, and identity as changing over time. "Social identity" in Peirce's (1993, 1995) work refers to "the relationship between the individual and the larger social world, as mediated through institutions such as families, school, workplaces, social services, and law courts" (Norton, 1997, p. 420). (Peirce later changed her name to Norton.)

Peirce separates "social identity" from "cultural identity," which she defines as "the relationship between individuals and members of a group who share a common history, a common language, and similar ways of understanding the world" (Norton, 1997, p. 420). "Heritage identity," on the other hand, is often considered to entail "those attributes of the self that are linked with one's race, language, religion, and ethnicity" (Syed, in press, p. 5). In my study, both "cultural identity" and "heritage identity" are understood as types of "social identity." In fact, as Syed indicates, it is almost impossible to draw a clear line between these terms, since there are areas that overlap in one person's identity, and a single person can reveal more than one identity. Following this position, while my study will primarily look at the social identity of Japanese American learners of Japanese, some aspects of their identity that may be better understood as "cultural identity" or "heritage identity" are also considered, given the fact that the cultural or historical factors are too important to be ignored in the construction of identity of

Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i.

### 3.2.3 Social constructionist perspective in second language studies

It has already been discussed that language is the site where the speaker creates his/her identity in relation to the social world. Yet, in the field of SLA, Peirce (1995) points out the lack of “a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context” (p. 12). From the recognition that language learners are not simply gaining their skills in the target language but also are constantly positioning, negotiating, and redefining themselves using the language in the social world, Peirce (1995) particularly draws on the concept of “social identity.” In fact, other researchers have argued that a study that seeks to look into the individual learner needs to pay careful attention to the surrounding environment (McKay & Wong, 1996; Peirce, 1995; Syed, in press). In the study of Chinese adolescent immigrants in California, McKay and Wong (1996) employed “a contextualist perspective,” which refers to a way of looking at language learners’ identity that “takes as axiomatic the need to examine interconnections of discourse and power in the language learning setting” (p. 578).

In my study, I will adopt “the social constructionist framework” as promoted by Holmes (1997) and Ochs (1993). This approach allows the researcher to look at language as the site of creating, negotiating, and redefining one’s identity, and speakers as “*agents* in the production of their own and others’ social selves” (Ochs, 1993, p. 296). Consequently, a speaker’s identity is viewed as “an inferential *outcome* of linguistically encoded acts and stances” (p. 295) as opposed to a “*priori-social fact*” (p. 296).

In a similar way, Holmes' (1997) use of cultural category "gender" rather than a biological category "sex," also focuses on the fact that a person's identity is not naturally given but "socially constructed from the roles, norms and expectations of the community in which they participate" (p. 203). While the social constructionist framework corresponds to the approaches of Peirce (1995) and McKay and Wong (1996) in its premise that identity, unlike linguistic knowledge, is a social fact (Eastman, 1984), this perspective gives more authority to the speaker for enacting his/her identity.

The position that identity is a social fact is exemplified by the history of Japanese Americans in Hawai'i, in which the identity of Issei, Nisei, and Sansei has largely and constantly been shaped by social change. As was described in Chapter 2, Japanese language schools in Hawai'i were originally built because a gap was emerging, both linguistically and culturally, between Issei parents and their Nisei children, which eventually led Nisei to form a different identity from that of their Issei parents. It cannot be ignored that there was a strong societal expectation underlying this phenomenon - the Americanization and the self-Americanization of Nisei. During World War II, the question of "whether to become American or to retain their 'Japaneseness'" (Kitano, 1993, p. 7) became particularly crucial in the lives of Nisei, and strengthened their identification as American.

### 3.3 Situating my study

The previous studies and theories discussed above have provided the framework for my study. Below, I will first present two perspectives that are particularly of central importance, and will also address the specificity of the Hawai'i context.

### 3.3.1 Multiple nature of identity

In their study of adolescent Chinese-immigrant students in California, McKay and Wong (1996) identified “multiple discourses,” in which the students socially situated themselves and negotiated their agency as well as their multiple identities. Discourse in this study is defined as

[A] set of historically grounded statements that exhibit regularities in presuppositions, thematic, choices, values, etc; that delimit what can be said about something, by whom, when, where, and how; and that are underwritten by some form of institutional authority (p. 579)

Five different discourses were identified: Colonialist/racialized discourse, model-minority discourse, Chinese cultural nationalist discourse, social and academic school discourse, and gender discourse. Based on the data obtained from informal interviews as well as writing samples from the four students, McKay and Wong carefully examined how the students managed their multiple identities while positioning themselves in each discourse. For example, the colonialist/racialized discourses embodied by two teachers put one of the focal students, Brad, in “a powerless position” (p. 598). Because the teachers did not highly value students’ native-language literacy, Brad’s use of a common coping strategy among newcomers was interpreted as “a sign of moral dishonesty” (p. 598), and his pre-immigration achievement in his home country was counted for naught. The only discourse in which Brad could position himself favorably was Chinese cultural nationalist discourse, “where his status as a mainlander allowed him to make derogatory remarks about the Taiwanese” (p. 598). By differentiating five discourses, McKay and Wong highlighted the fact that identity is not an absolute but a relative construct, which is

created in relation to its surrounding context. Consequently, the identity of one person in one discourse would change to a different identity in another discourse, making it possible for a single person to exhibit multiple identities.

Siegal (1996), also advocating this position, focused her study on the subjectivity of a Caucasian woman learning Japanese in Japan. In examining different speech activities in which the learner demonstrated her sociolinguistic competence, it was shown that she sometimes had to deal with conflicting needs, such as the need to speak the language properly, the need to get things done, and the need to maintain face that is placed on her within the society.

With regard to my study, unlike McKay and Wong (1996) and Siegal (1996) who looked at linguistic details of speaker's interactions, a large portion of the data comes from interviews and journal entries, which are the focal students' "reports" of the discourses or speech activities in which they participate. Therefore, I will seek to explore different situations and relationships in which their multiple identities, and possibly their conflicting needs, are manifested by their language choice, rather than language use.

### 3.3.2 Speaker as human agent

It is emphasized in Holmes' (1997) "doing gender" and Weedon's (1987) "speaking out as women" that speakers play an active role in creating their gendered identity. A similar point of view is found in such concepts as Archer's (1999) "acting out identity," McKay and Wong's (1996) "human agency," and Peirce's (1995) idea of "investment" as opposed to "motivation." These terms highlight the fact that, while identity is socially constructed through interactions in the surrounding context, it is

ultimately the individual speaker that has the control in the production of his/her identities by using the language at different levels.

In the analysis of conversational interactions between two females, Holmes (1997) identified those linguistic features such as phonological variants and pragmatic particles, with which one of the speakers constructed her identity as a good mother and daughter, and sometimes used to construct the identity of her small daughter as well. Furthermore, from a dialogue between two New Zealander males, Holmes found that particular features, such as distinctive prosody and syntax of sports commentary, use of pragmatic tag *eh*, repetition, and use of another voice, contributed to “a brash, overtly self-confident, belligerent young male identity” (p. 212). Meyerhoff’s (1994) study on Maori speakers also suggests that the tag *eh* functions as “an in-group marker among Maori speakers” (p. 376). More specifically, it entails “positive politeness function, identifying and reinforcing common ground or speakers’ shared values and beliefs” (p. 377).

In my study, on the other hand, the participants’ linguistic choices and variation, particularly their use of Japanese, Pidgin, and other varieties of English, might illustrate their “doing Japanese identity,” “doing local identity,” or “doing Japanese American identity” (e.g., “A Dividing Line,” 1995). Unlike such extensive studies on New Zealand English as Holmes’ (1997) and Meyerhoff’s (1994), little work has been done regarding the linguistic variation in the use of Pidgin in Hawai‘i, and its role in creating the speaker’s identity: that is, what linguistic features of Pidgin are linked to what identity – local, American, or Japanese American? The tag *yea*, which is often observed among speakers of Pidgin across gender and age groups, may be one feature, as it seems to be

similar to the tag *eh* in New Zealand English in speakers' expression of identity.

It has already been hypothesized that the participants for my study would adopt multiple identities – as descendents of Issei immigrants, locals in Hawai'i, Japanese Americans in Hawai'i versus their counterparts on the continental U.S., Japanese from Hawai'i versus Japanese from Japan, university students, and learners of Japanese. If the participants actually hold multiple identities, then what makes them disclose a particular identity over others? As stated earlier in this section, I will look at those factors and contexts that contribute to the establishment of identity of four Japanese American university students, who will be seen as “active agents,” and the role played by the Japanese language in the formation of their multiple identities.

### 3.3.3 The specificity of the Hawai'i context

In addition to the different sources of data, it should be noted that many of the studies related to language and identity, such as Peirce's (1995) and McKay and Wong's (1996), have been conducted in contexts where learners are learning the target language (generally English) as a second language. In ESL contexts, there is often an issue of power relations between the dominant society and the language learner, who in many cases is a minority immigrant. In fact, as Peirce (1995) acknowledges in her study, “power relations play a very crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers” (p. 3). To be more exact, the issue of power relations is one of the great factors that relate to the characteristic of identity as “a site of struggle” (p. 15). In Peirce's (1995) study, for example, despite the fact that all the participants were highly motivated learners, they were uncomfortable and remained silent under

particular social conditions, which “may constitute forms of resistance to inequitable social forces” (p. 20).

In contrast, the language learners in my study are studying Japanese in a foreign language (FL) context, where the acquisition of the target language does not necessarily equate with learners’ gaining or being denied access to social networks wherein opportunities for speaking are created (Heller, 1987); therefore, it can be assumed that factors other than power relations may have a great impact on the construction of learners’ social identity. For this reason, in addition to the relationship between the learners (focal students) and the surrounding context (the society and culture in Hawai‘i), it is particularly important for my study to attend to learners’ attitude toward and relationship to the target language along with the culture (the Japanese language and culture). The stance Japanese American learners may take toward the Japanese language and culture in Japan can be understood as Rampton’s (1990) language affiliation. “Language affiliation” will be used in my study to refer to the attachment or connection that Japanese American students feel toward the people and culture in Japan, whereas “language inheritance” concerns the tie between different generations of Japanese Americans.

I suggest that language affiliation also entails the learner’s desire to gain membership in the target society, in which the target language is customarily spoken. Eastman (1985), considering language use as an aspect of social identity, claims that one becomes a member of a particular society and learns to share that group’s social identity by acquiring the language that is used by its in-group members, namely “group talk.” Put another way, an outsider who demonstrates inappropriate language use cannot share the

social identity of the target group. In order to look closely at the acquisition of this “group talk,” Eastman identified the three major components which play a significant role in gaining membership in Haidaville, a southeast Alaskan island community: 1) a culture loaded vocabulary set, 2) specific topics using that vocabulary, and 3) shared attitudes with respect to the group-specific topics (p. 16). In my study, if a Japanese American student demonstrates strong affiliation with the Japanese language and culture, then s/he may be willing to acquire this “group talk” in order to be considered a member of the Japanese society. Thus, by looking at what aspects of Japanese group talk a learner is particularly motivated to learn, we may gain some insight into his/her affiliation with the Japanese language in more depth.

Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration in a study that deals with FL contexts is the social status of the target language in the community in which the learners are situated. Since the acquisition of the target language in an FL context is not as much of a necessity compared to SL contexts, it is likely that the way society perceives the language has a greater influence on learners’ motivation to learn the language, and on the role of the language in the construction of their identity. Social status and people’s perception of the target language can also be important in helping a learner to develop a feeling of “ownership” (Norton, 1997) with regard to the language. In summarizing her study of immigrant women and their investment in learning English in Canada, Norton discusses the identity of learners of English from the viewpoint of the ownership of English internationally. Her position is that whether or not learners can claim ownership of the target language plays a critical role in promoting their positive self-identities.

I argue that Japanese American learners of Japanese in Hawai‘i would claim their

ownership of the Japanese language with less difficulty than those participants in Norton's (1997) study for two reasons. First, regardless of language, heritage language learners would supposedly feel the ownership of the target language more strongly than second or other foreign language learners, presumably because, as Archer (1999) observes, it is "the language of their forefathers" (p. 98). Many Japanese American learners of Japanese, for instance, have Japanese family names and middle names, and the majority of them, if not all, still maintain aspects of the Japanese culture and tradition in their families, even if they do not speak the language. Second, as illustrated earlier, the Japanese language in Hawai'i in particular has had a great impact on people's lives both culturally and historically. Accordingly, it has raised people's consciousness and enhanced their understanding of the Japanese language. Being in a context in which people in general already have a superficial familiarity with the target language, Japanese American learners in Hawai'i would not have much difficulty "owning" the Japanese language. On the contrary, it might be that Japanese American learners in other areas, such as on the continental U.S., might have to struggle to attain ownership of the language, along with positive identity as Japanese Americans, especially when they are a minority group in the society. In fact, studies show that Japanese Americans in Hawai'i are more comfortable with their ethnicity than their counterparts on the Mainland (Kitano, 1993).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE STUDY

#### 4.1 Research questions

In light of the historical background of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, the discussion of the sociocultural status of the Japanese language from Rampton’s (1990) perspective on the relationships between a language and its speakers, and theories which analyze language learning in terms of identity construction and negotiation, my study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the focal students and the Japanese language? How is this relationship realized in their study of Japanese?
2. How are the Japanese language and its study related to multiple identities of the focal students?

If we take the view that to Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i the Japanese language is not simply a foreign language that is typically defined as a major medium of communication for Japanese people in Japan, how can we describe the relationship between Japanese Americans and the Japanese language today? From Rampton’s (1990) ideas of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation, what is the significance of a different kind of link to language for Japanese American learners of Japanese, and how are these links related to their multiple identities? What does it mean for Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i to learn Japanese?

#### 4.2 Site and participants

The participants for this study are four Japanese American students for whom I use the pseudonyms Laura, Kenny, Stacy, and Brian. With the exception of Kenny,

whose mother is from Okinawa, Japan, they are Yonsei Japanese American university students. By Kondo's (1998) definition, Kenny can be categorized as Shin Nisei (new second generation Japanese). All of the participants were born and raised in Hawai'i. At the time of data collection, Stacy and Brian were enrolled in fourth semester Japanese (JPN202), the last class required to fulfill the undergraduate language requirement; and Laura and Kenny were in fifth semester Japanese (JPN301), or the first half of third year Japanese.

The reason why these two particular classes were chosen as the site for this study was because I had known both of the two teachers prior to this study, with whom I had already established a rapport. The teacher of JPN202 is a Korean American woman who emigrated from Korea at an early age and grew up in Hawai'i, and the teacher of JPN301 is a female, native speaker of Japanese. However, since the teacher of JPN202 left for Japan for a teaching position in the middle of the semester, another female teacher from the continental U.S. took over. A preliminary questionnaire was given to all the students in both classes at the beginning of the semester in order to understand their general background. Based on their ethnicity and willingness to participate in this study, four students were then selected as the participants.

#### 4.3 Data collection

Data were collected over four months (January to May 1999) by the following means: (a) Students questionnaires, (b) Weekly retrospective journal entries by the participants, (c) Audiotaped (and videotaped) classroom observations for fourteen weeks (five times per week), (d) Field notes collected by volunteering at a Japanese organization

and attending cultural events, (e) Weekly informal interviews with the participants, (f) Informal interviews with other students and the teachers, (g) A review of instructional/institutional materials relevant to the students' study of Japanese, and (h) A review of newspapers and magazines related to Japanese American culture in Hawai'i.

In the initial questionnaire, students were asked about their self-perceived ethnicity, use of Japanese in their family, reasons for studying Japanese, and willingness to continue to study Japanese in the following semesters. For the journal entries, I asked the four participants to keep a weekly journal. For the first few entries, in order to make the purpose of the journal clearer, I asked them to write about the contexts (when, where, and with whom) in which they used Japanese outside of classroom and how they felt about their use of the language. However, I also told them that the topic could be anything. Peirce (1995), in her study of immigrant women in Canada, obtained data from the participants' diaries. One of her participants, in the diary, frequently referred to herself as "stupid" and "inferior" because of her inability to speak English, but she refused to be silenced. In referring to social identity as "nonunitary" and "contradictory," Peirce suggests that the multiple sites of identity formation explain the surprises in her data. In my journal study, I was concerned with circumstances where the participants exhibit their multiple identities in their use of Japanese: as learners of Japanese, as Japanese Americans, and as local residents of Hawai'i.

I audio and videotaped the language class because I was interested to see how they participated in class, what the classroom culture was like, and how the teacher taught Japanese. However, this source of data did not turn out to be very helpful in the study. Due to the way the classes were taught, primarily teacher-centered, the students'

classroom participation was minimal. From my experiences at local Japanese events and organizations, I gathered any information that seemed to be related to the sociocultural status of the Japanese language in Hawai'i, especially among Japanese American communities in Hawai'i. I also participated in social events or activities that were held by those communities and tried to gain an understanding of people's perception of the Japanese language.

Furthermore, I met the participants individually once a week for informal interviews throughout the semester. I asked them to talk freely about things that were not included in their journals: how they felt about their study of Japanese, how they viewed the Japanese culture and people including myself, and what they wanted to know about Japan. These informal interviews also served as occasions where I developed rapport with the participants. I also conducted interviews with the teachers, where I asked them how they usually teach Japanese in the classroom, what their concerns are, and whether and how they notice ethnic differences among their students in their study of Japanese. Unlike Peirce's (1995), McKay and Wong's (1996), and Holmes' (1997) studies, my study had no access to firsthand identity work by the focal students and the data came from their reflection of their experiences. A possible weakness of the data obtained from interviews is that how the participants present themselves could be greatly influenced by the researcher's mere presence or what the researcher asks them. However, people's tendency to change their ways of presenting themselves is more or less true with any type of human interaction. In the Japanese culture, for example, people usually behave differently "according to the dichotomy of *uchi* and *soto*" (Lebra, 1976, p. 112): *Uchi* means "inside" or "private," whereas *soto* means "outside" or "public." As Lebra (1976)

argues, this distinction perhaps characterizes human culture in general (p. 112). With regard to Japanese American culture, however, it is not certain to what degree the dichotomy of *uchi* and *soto* is significant.

To supplement these data, I looked at the textbooks and the materials that were used by the participants for their study of Japanese. I also collected other materials that had relevant information about the Japanese language program at the university. Finally, I gathered newspaper and magazine articles that reflected the Japanese influence on the local culture in Hawai'i. I was particularly concerned with such questions as: To what extent is Japanese language TV, radio, and newspaper focused on maintaining Japanese values, attitudes and language? How is the Japanese culture in Japan introduced in these documents and media?

My role in this study was that of participant-observer and interviewer, but I also developed friendship with the participants and provided them with tutorial assistance whenever they wanted me to. I observed and audiotaped the two classes everyday, and videotaped each class seven times in total. When I was observing the class, I was always sitting with the students and helping them. Since I was the only native speaker of Japanese except for the teacher of JPN302, in both classes I was sometimes asked to demonstrate a dialogue in the textbook, or to give my opinion. It is interesting to note that one female student in JPN302 always called me *sensei* (teacher), the way the students usually addressed the teacher in class, although I did not introduce myself as a teacher. However, I sometimes took over the teacher's role to some degree. One day, when the teacher of JPN302 was sick, I was asked to take care of the class, although the students were supposed to have group discussion and my role was only to watch and lead

the discussion. At interviews as well as in other interactions with the focal students, I was often asked how to say things in Japanese, or about Japanese culture in Japan. When they had oral tests, I sometimes helped them prepare for the tests as well.

All the interviews with the participants were transcribed. The data were analyzed in a recursive, triangulated manner with reference to the discussion in the previous chapters.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS

#### 5.1 The Japanese language and culture in Hawai‘i

In Chapter 2, we saw the historical background of the Japanese language and the Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i. The significance of Japanese, the language that had a great impact on the lives of Issei, Nisei, and Sansei, was explored from Rampton’s (1990) perspectives of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation. Before answering the research questions about the focal students’ reasons for studying Japanese and its consequent effect on the construction of their identity, we need some understanding as to the contemporary local culture in Hawai‘i that still has a strong relationship with the Japanese language and culture. In this section, I will provide some contextualization for the study of the four focal students by looking at a number of ways in which Japanese language and culture have had an impact in Hawai‘i today.

##### 5.1.1 Japanese language schools and media in Hawai‘i

As of 1996, there were twelve Japanese language schools remaining on the island of O‘ahu (Usui, 1996), where this study was conducted. There are also two TV cable channels that broadcast some Japanese programs everyday - KIKU and NGN – and two Japanese radio stations, KZOO 1210AM and KJPN 940AM (Usui, 1996). Among the many Japanese TV programs, I found that “*Soko ga shiritai*” on KIKU is very popular across ethnic groups, gender, and generations. It is a documentary broadcasted almost everyday which introduces aspects of people’s lives from contemporary Japanese culture, such as food, clothing, housing, education, and entertainment. Many of the students I

interviewed named this program when I asked them if they had ever watched Japanese TV programs. In addition to Japanese TV programs, newspapers are an important resource that provides people with a lot of information about contemporary Japanese culture. There are two major Japanese newspapers, Hawai‘i Hochi and The Hawai‘i Herald, and other minor papers such as Hawai‘i Pacific Press and the East-West Journal (Usui, 1996). The latest news about *sumo* (Japanese traditional wrestling) often comes out on the front page of not only Japanese newspapers but the local English newspapers as well (e.g., “Isle Sumotori,” 2000; “Scandal Shakes,” 2000).

#### 5.1.2 Japanese organizations and cultural events in Hawai‘i

The Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai‘i (JCCH) was founded in 1987 in order to perpetuate “the cultural heritage we inherited from our Issei forefathers into the lifestyles and values of our children’s children” (cited from the homepage of the JCCH).

The Mission Statement says,

The mission of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai‘i is to preserve and promote the Japanese culture in Hawai‘i to present and future generations and create a unified bridge of understanding and respect between cultures. It will be the focal point in the state for public access to information, resources and activities relative to the learning, appreciation and perpetuation of the cultural heritage and legacy of the Japanese in Hawai‘i.

(cited from a pamphlet issued by the JCCH)

A number of educational and cultural activities on Japanese customs and traditions are held by the JCCH, such as *taiko* (Japanese drumming), *kendo* (Japanese fencing), *kimono* dressing, and the New Year’s Festival. The JCCH also has a historical gallery, which has both a permanent exhibit and a special exhibit. The permanent exhibit is titled “*Okage sama de*: I am what I am because of you,” a Japanese phrase routinely used to express

one's contentment with an achievement. In Japanese, if somebody praises another person's success, the person who is praised often says "*Okage sama de* (It is thanks to you)" instead of "Thank you" (as in accepting the compliment), even if the outcome was not necessarily made possible because of other people's help. This implies that it is considered very important for every Japanese American to remember that their success and wealth today would not have been possible without the efforts and sacrifice that previous generations have made in the past. The highlighting of this compliment response in the title of the JCCH permanent exhibit shows that modesty and gratitude, which are two important elements of Japanese culture, are also highly valued in Japanese American culture in Hawai'i. Other core ethical values of Japanese culture can also be found on the statues called "value markers" at the entrance of the gallery, such as "*sekinin*" (responsibility), "*ch\_gi*" (loyalty), "*kansha*" (gratitude), and "*on*" (a debt of gratitude).

During the period of data collection, there were a number of events in Hawai'i that were related to Japanese culture, such as the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Cherry Blossom Festival and the Japanese Heritage Fair. Among them, the Cherry Blossom Festival had large advertisements and articles in English in local newspapers about the Queen contest that was held as part of the festival. The contest for this year was different, because for the first time in the Festival's 47 year history, it was decided that women who were not 100 percent ethnically Japanese and did not have a Japanese surname would still be allowed to participate in the contest ("Changing Face," 1999). According to the president of the Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce, the contest changes reflect the nature of the Japanese community today, which is becoming more and more multi-ethnic.

### 5.1.3 Nisei Japanese Americans today

While doing volunteer work at the JCCH, I sometimes encountered evidence that illustrates aspects of the lives of the older generations in Hawai‘i. One day, my job was to input all the names of people who had paid the annual membership fee for the year. Obviously, the majority of the members have Japanese last names, and many of them were married couples. What I found interesting was that, among these couples, while there were many cases in which the husband had an English first name and the wife had a Japanese first name, I scarcely found the opposite case, with the husband having a Japanese name and the wife having an English name. I asked one of the employees who assigned me this work what could be the reason for this tendency. She told me that it was either because there are simply many Japanese women who married local men in Hawai‘i, or because those people on the list are of older generations, presumably Nisei or Sansei. What she meant by the latter was that, around the time these people were born, when “Americanization” was a critical issue for the lives of Japanese Americans, many parents gave English names to their sons. However, they often gave Japanese names to their daughters due to the lower social status and expectations of women compared to men.

I observed that other volunteers at the JCCH, most of whom were seemingly Nisei, were very familiar with the Japanese language, if not fluent, and often mixed English and Japanese when they spoke to each other. This was very surprising because many of them stated that they had never been to Japan. It seemed that they used Japanese because they liked to speak in Japanese, rather than that they needed to, especially when

they were with other Japanese people who understood the language to a certain degree. One reason for their frequent use of Japanese might have been that speaking in Japanese served to unite these people as having a common language background.

These Nisei people were also very knowledgeable about traditional Japanese customs and culture, including those which are not commonly practiced among Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, such as *kanreki*, the special celebration of one’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, and the Japanese traditional names of the months of the year. Volunteer work sometimes included identifying artifacts donated to the historical gallery, such as giving an explanation for certain items or determining how and why people would use them in the past. Since these artifacts were passed down from previous generations, they were sometimes related to Japanese customs that are no longer maintained by Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i. One example was a red apron that Japanese people wear when they celebrate *kanreki* in Japan. Since red represents luck in the Japanese culture, it is often used on a special occasion. In spite of the fact that *kanreki* is not customarily celebrated among Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, those Nisei had an extensive understanding about the practice.

I also sometimes worked with one older Japanese American man who had a Japanese first name. He is retired, seemingly in his 70’s, and has been volunteering at the JCCH for six years. When I asked him what generation he was, he said “two and a half,” because his father was Issei but his mother was Nisei. He was born in Hilo on the island of Hawai‘i and moved to O‘ahu in 1933. This man told me that he acquired Japanese in a natural setting in his childhood. Although he had formal language education at a Japanese language school until seventh grade, where he said he learned only the

language, and not the culture, he improved his Japanese rather naturally mainly because his parents spoke only Japanese. In explaining how he got to learn the language, he brought up a Japanese proverb, “*Monzen no kozou narawanu kyou wo yomu*” (A boy outside a temple recites a sutra which he has never been taught). This proverb is used in Japan when one talks about somebody, in most cases a child, who learns something without instruction.

Regarding the Japanese proficiency of this man, he said he can speak and understand a little, but is not good at reading and writing. Furthermore, he sometimes watches Japanese programs on TV, such as “*Soko ga shiritai*” and period dramas that have *samurai*, but cannot understand them without English subtitles. He likes Japanese *enka*, or traditional style Japanese pop songs, and almost never listens to American music. When I asked him about the difficulty he had when using Japanese, he said it is confusing for him to change the way of speaking depending on whom he talks to. This corresponds to Tamura’s (1994) observation of Japanese proficiency of Nisei in the 1920’s and 1930’s, where they “often failed to use the proper honorific expressions appropriate to different occasions” (p. 156). This man further explained that he was not supposed to speak to me in the same way as to the Emperor. It was interesting that he referred to the Japanese Emperor in his example, because if a Japanese person talks about the use of honorific forms in the Japanese language, s/he is more likely to use “a teacher” or “an older/elderly person,” rather than “the Emperor,” as an example of who to use those honorific forms with. The Emperor is nowadays more of a figurehead in Japan, and it is not likely that people would refer to him in daily conversation unless s/he particularly intends to talk about the Emperor or the royal family. Considering the fact that it was a

common practice at Japanese language schools for students to “sing the Japanese National Anthem and bow very reverently before the picture of the Japanese emperor and empress” (Tamura, 1994, p. 154), it stands to reason that the majestic image of the Emperor still remains vivid in this Nisei man’s mind.

This man said that his parents raised him based primarily on Japanese values and customs. One example is that, when he was little, he was taught by his parents to hold a rice bowl with his left hand when eating, which is a common practice in Japan. In Japan, it is generally considered polite to pick up food with chopsticks in one’s right hand while lifting up the rice bowl with the left hand, because the right hand is traditionally regarded as better than the left hand in the Japanese culture. This idea was strongly held especially in old times, but still remains in Japan today; when a child is left-handed, some parents still train him/her to use the right hand instead. Thus, at meals, the rice bowl is usually placed on the person’s left hand side and the soup bowl on the right hand side. While not all left-handed people are forced to use their right hand for using chopsticks nowadays, this arrangement of rice bowl and soup bowl is strictly maintained at almost all places in Japan when Japanese food is served.

#### 5.1.4 Japanese culture in Hawai‘i vs. Japanese culture in Japan

It is noteworthy that the Nisei man pointed out that Japanese restaurants in Hawai‘i serve *miso* soup before the main dish comes, which is based on the Western style of eating. He said that the wait staff might take the soup away if you do not drink it right away. Knowing that miso soup is usually enjoyed concurrently with other dishes in Japan, he said, “That [The way miso soup is served in Hawai‘i] is not the right way from

Japan.” As far as I observed, there are mainly two types of Japanese restaurants in Hawai‘i: One is those owned by and targeted for American (either Japanese or non-Japanese) people who like Japanese food, and the other is those owned by and targeted for Japanese people from Japan. The first kind of restaurant often has menus with Japanese names of dishes written in *romaji*, or Romanized letters, and the waiters usually speak in English. The second type of restaurant has Japanese with English translations on the menus, and the waiters basically use Japanese when they take orders.

Interestingly, I noticed that even restaurants of the latter type often serve miso soup in the Western way - they bring miso soup before the main dish, expecting the customers to finish the soup first. Furthermore, the rice bowl is put on the customer’s right side in some restaurants, which Japanese people might think is improper. This might suggest that there are two types of so-called “Japanese culture” in Hawai‘i; the one formed and maintained mainly by Japanese Americans, and the other by Japanese people from Japan. However, even the second type of Japanese culture is not entirely identical to that of Japan, as a result of the influence of Western culture. The fact that the food is not served in the same way as it is in Japan at Japanese restaurants in Hawai‘i is comparable to the fact that one is supposed to tip when eating at a Japanese restaurant in Hawai‘i, although tipping is not a common practice in Japan.

Another way in which Japanese culture in Hawai‘i differs from that in Japan is the use of *koinobori*, or carp streamers, which people put up to celebrate Children’s Day on May 5<sup>th</sup>. I noticed that people in Hawai‘i who put up *koinobori* on their roofs leave them for several weeks or sometimes more than a month after Children’s Day has passed, whereas in Japan this would be rare. Another difference is *kanreki*, the special

celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Many Japanese American people whom I talked with were not familiar with *kanreki*, but instead, traditionally have a very big celebration for *yakudoshi*, which originated from Shinto tradition.

According to Shinto tradition, there were certain climacteric or bad luck years in a person's life which the Japanese call *yakudoshi*. *Yaku* means calamity, *doshi* means years, thus the years in a person's life when bad luck or disaster will strike. (Clarke, 1994, p. 35)

While only a certain number of people visit a Shinto shrine to dispel the bad luck for their *yakudoshi* in Japan, Japanese Americans in Hawai'i traditionally have a party called "The Yakudoshi," in which family and friends gather together so that they may share in the celebrant's bad luck (Clarke, 1994, p. 35). It is also a tradition among Japanese Americans in Hawai'i to fold 1,001 paper cranes for a couple who is getting married.

The bride traditionally folds all the cranes, symbolically displaying her patience. Today she will usually enlist the assistance of her bridal party, friends and relatives in the task of folding them or she may purchase pre-folded cranes. According to local custom, the bride must fold at least one herself for good luck. (p. 45)

In Japan, on the other hand, people make 1,000 paper cranes called *senba zuru* for someone who is sick in bed, hoping that s/he will recover soon. In any case, cranes are used because they "are believed to live 1,000 years and thus symbolize a long and noble life" (Clarke, 1994, p. 45) in the Japanese culture.

There are also some Japanese traditions and customs that are still maintained in Hawai'i but are no longer seen in Japan. A good example is the custom of *mochi* pounding on New Year's Day. Laura and Kenny's Japanese teacher one day told the students that people in Japan usually do not pound *mochi* these days; they simply buy it from stores. Later, Laura told me that it was very surprising to her, since it is such an

important event for her family. Another example is *hibachi*, a Japanese traditional heating appliance, which is rarely seen in Japan today. At an interview with Laura, I saw something that looked just like a *hibachi* in one of the pictures that she showed me. She confirmed that it was called a *hibachi*, and that it is a cooking appliance (rather than a heating appliance). She said that her aunt's family often uses it for having a barbecue.

With reference to the linguistic aspect of Japanese culture in Hawai'i, while a number of Japanese words and phrases are generally used in Hawai'i, some are used differently from the way they are used in Japan. A good example is *musubi*, or rice ball. *Musubi* is widely used by local people in Hawai'i, such as in the expression *spam musubi*, which is a local food in Hawai'i that is not found in Japan. Some older people in Japan might call it *omusubi*, a slightly more polite version of *musubi*; however, young people are most likely to use a different term, *onigiri*, instead.

Another example is "*bachi*," which originally comes from "*batsu*," or "punishment." In Japanese, "*bachi*" is used when someone does something bad, and as a result, another bad thing happens to that person. For instance, if I eat the chocolate that my sister has kept for herself, and on the next day, I get a stomachache because the chocolate was actually too old; my sister would say, "*Hora, bachi ga attata!*" (See, you got punished!). The meaning of "*bachi*" here is exactly the same as that of the original term, "*batsu*" (punishment), except that "*bachi*" is usually used in the idiomatic expression "*bachi ga ataru*" (get punished). On the other hand, people in Hawai'i would use just the word "*bachi*" in such a case, saying something like "See, *bachi*, you ate my stuff!" Furthermore, it is also used in other situations. A friend of mine who is a local in Hawai'i gave me examples which included situations such as, saying "It never rains when

I go to the beach,” and then it rains when I actually go, or saying “Professor X never gives pop quizzes,” and that professor gives one the next day. Therefore, the term “*bachī*” as it is used in Hawai‘i is not necessarily connected with “bad conduct,” whereas “*bachī*” in Japanese is.

It should be remembered that there are indeed some Japanese words whose use in Hawai‘i is identical to that in Japanese. “*Omiyage*” (souvenir) is “a souvenir or item native to a particular region” that a traveler buys for his/her family or friends, and “*senbestu*” is “the gift of money to a departing traveler which is often used to purchase *omiyage* for the giver” (Clarke, 1994, p. 31). The difference between “souvenir” and “*omiyage*” in Pidgin, according to a local Japanese American man, is that a souvenir is more of a gift that one buys as a memento of the trip whereas *omiyage* is more of a repayment. Clarke explains that in regard to *omiyage* there is the underlying concept, *giri*, which is “the Japanese term applied to gift giving and the idea of reciprocity or paying back what one receives” (p. 31), which is held by Chinese and Koreans as well.

#### 5.1.5 Family in the Japanese American culture in Hawai‘i

Ogawa (1973) states that, “In practically all circumstances, the Japanese American identifies primarily with his family” (p. 36). This statement was supported by interviews with Laura, which revealed that family plays a very important part in helping her maintain the Japanese part of her identity (to be discussed in Chapter 6 and 7). Laura’s strong belief that Japanese Americans should maintain and pass down the Japanese heritage also comes from her family traditions, which include pounding mochi on New Year’s Day and practicing Buddhist rituals.

Ogawa (1973) argues that “filial piety” and “shame” are the key features for the Japanese American family in Hawai‘i. While acting according to your own conscience regardless of what others think is the American way of maintaining good conduct, in Japanese culture, the matter of “shame” helps keep both parents and children in compliance with the ideal of the “good” family (pp. 44-45). Therefore, it is the idea of “how shame fo’ da family” (p. 44) that serves to control the individual’s behavior among many Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i. Ogawa further says that the idea of keeping a good family image has resulted in the creation of Japanese American community often referred to as a “model” or the “most successful” community in the United States (at least at the time of his study, nearly three decades ago), which has “the lowest divorce rate, lowest crime rate, lowest juvenile delinquency rate, lowest illegitimate birth rate and highest indices of educational achievement” (p. 40). To preserve this family image, it is necessary for the children to date and eventually marry a good Japanese American (Ogawa, 1973, p. 39). We will see this family value in Laura’s case, in that her father is not happy with her choice of boyfriend, as he is not ethnically 100% Japanese.

#### 5.1.6 Conclusion

This section illustrated the continuing influence of Japanese culture that underlies various aspects of the present local culture in Hawai‘i. The main purpose here was to place the sociocultural status of the Japanese language in the broader context in which this study is situated. Having been living in Hawai‘i for two and a half years myself, I have always felt the strong connection between the local culture in Hawai‘i and the Japanese culture. At the same time, interacting with young Japanese American people

sometimes allowed me to perceive an attitude toward Japanese culture that differs from that of members of the older generations.

As an example, in spite of the large scale of advertising for the Japanese cultural festivals and events, some young Japanese American people I talked with did not seem very familiar with these events, or with the various Japanese organizations in Hawai‘i. I also noticed that at the cultural events, there were quite a few older generation people but not very many young people in the audience of any ethnicity watching the performances. One of the participants in this study, Brian, said he has never been to any kind of cultural event, although his grandparents often go. Kenny knows of the existence of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai‘i, which is situated about a mile from his college campus, but he has neither been there nor knows exactly what it is. He further stated that there is an Okinawan Cultural Center very close to his house, but his mother, who is from Okinawa, never visits the center nor goes to any Japanese cultural festivals.

This may suggest that although the Japanese cultural events that are held to celebrate the Japanese traditions and culture show some aspects of people’s interest in Japan, they do not necessarily reflect the attitude of the whole population of Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i. There are certainly people who are not very familiar with these events or the Japanese organizations, yet feeling a strong tie to the Japanese language and culture. Considering the fact that cultural events and Japanese organizations are mostly restricted to older generations, younger generations who might have more opportunities to encounter more modern Japanese culture may have a different perspective with regard to Japan.

In fact, it appears that many young people in Hawai‘i, not only Japanese

Americans, know a lot about aspects of modern Japanese culture that their grandparents may not be aware of, mainly due to easy access to things from Japan. It is not unusual in Hawai‘i to find a “J-Pop section” at some music shops, where one can find the latest CDs that are imported from Japan. There are bookstores that carry Japanese books and magazines as well. While they might be targeted at Japanese people temporarily staying in Hawai‘i, such as international students and tourists, I found that many local young people purchase CDs or books at these shops, too. Kenny, for example, is quite knowledgeable about new songs that are popular in Japan, and he sometimes sings them at karaoke. Stacy mentioned that she sometimes buys Japanese fashion magazines, although the main purpose is not to “read” them but to “look at” the clothes.

## 5.2 Introducing the four focal students

The above overview has pointed to the strong presence of Japanese language and customs in Hawai‘i, and to some of the ways in which they have developed differently from Japan. It was also suggested that, in the Hawai‘i context, the role of the Japanese language and culture in Japanese American people’s lives has been changing since the first generation arrived roughly a century ago. Accordingly, the attitude that Japanese Americans have toward the Japanese may vary across generations.

The main focus of my study is on the perspectives of young Japanese Americans who are learning the Japanese language at a university in Hawai‘i. It is important to keep in mind that the way in which Yonsei or Gosei generations view the Japanese language and culture is unlikely to be the same as that of old generations. Below, I will describe four focal students’ (Laura, Kenny, Stacy, and Brian) family background and

other important information. At the time of the study, Laura and Kenny were in JPN301, while Stacy and Brian were in JPN202. At their university, all undergraduate students are required to complete second level study of a foreign language (from 101 up to 202) before graduation. Stacy and Brian thus were taking JPN202 to fulfill the language requirement, whereas Kenny was not. Japanese major students, including Laura, need to take Japanese language courses up to 407.

### 5.2.1 Laura

Laura, who turned 21 years old during this study, is a Yonsei Japanese American majoring in Japanese. She lives with her parents and younger sister in Kaneohe, a suburb of Honolulu about 30 minutes drive from her university. Most of the family members including her parents, sister, and cousins do not speak Japanese; unlike Laura, her sister is taking Spanish in high school. Nevertheless, the whole family enjoys watching the Japanese TV program, “*Soko ga shiritai*,” with English subtitles. Laura works part-time at a supermarket near her house, where she meets many Japanese tourists. The number of Japanese tourists seen in Kaneohe is small compared to that in Waikiki, but many tourists come to the supermarket because there is a famous amusement park nearby. Laura says she uses her Japanese “sometimes,” when she is asked something in Japanese.

Laura’s father runs his own business. He was born in Hawai‘i and does not speak Japanese, but he has a Japanese friend from Japan who is a businessman with a good command in English. Laura’s father and grandfather often play golf with this Japanese man when he comes to Hawai‘i. Laura’s father has a Japanese first name but no middle name, while all of his siblings have American first names. Laura explained that her father

was given his father's name because he was the first male son. However, because his mother was westernized, the other children were given American names. Laura's father is very concerned with Japanese ethnicity. Laura told me that her father is not happy with the relationship between her and her boyfriend, because he is not "full Japanese," having a full Japanese father but a mother who is half Japanese and half Filipino.

Laura's mother's side of the family, especially her grandfather, has a strong connection to Japan. Laura's maternal great grandmother, her grandfather's mother, came to Hawai'i after she gave birth to him in Hiroshima, Japan. She then "went back and forth to Japan" because she did not have enough money to raise her children in Hawai'i. Laura's grandfather "was the only one that she could raise in Hawai'i," and the rest of the children stayed in Japan and grew up there. Laura's grandmother (this grandfather's wife), who already passed away, grew up in Hawai'i as well. Both Laura's grandfather and grandmother have a lot of close friends in Japan, who still come to Hawai'i to visit. Whenever these friends come to Hawai'i, Laura's mother's side of the family gets together to have dinner with them. Her grandfather also travels to Japan "once in a while": During the time of this study, for example, he stayed in Japan for more than a month and visited his old friends and his sister. Because her grandparents' friends often come to visit, Laura knows some of them, whom her grandparents have known for thirty years. In her journal, Laura wrote that she was happy to receive a letter from them, which included the letter she had written to them in Japanese with some corrections on it. Laura has never been to Japan herself, but she hopes to go there sometime in the near future. Specifically, she says she is interested in going to Japan on the Japan Exchange & Teaching (JET) Program and teaching English there.

When Laura says “my family,” in most cases she is referring to her mother’s side, who are Buddhists. She explains that her family is “close,” “pretty family-oriented,” and places importance on preserving the Japanese culture: “My mom’s side of the family is full of culture [and] traditions. It is important to my mom’s family to pass down every bit of culture to our children.” Laura told me that all the family members get together on New Year’s Day, make *mochi*, and play games, and on Christmas Day, they have “annual picture taking in front of the tree,” which she happily says is “pretty fun.” It is also customary in Laura’s family to “go through the traditional Buddhist funeral and visit 49 days after” when a family member dies. Her family also celebrated her father’s *yakudoshi* when he turned 41 years old.

Laura’s father’s side of the family, on the other hand, has few ties to Japan, although her father is concerned with the Japanese ethnicity.

It is interesting to me how my mom’s side of my family [and] my dad’s side of my family are total [and]complete opposites. The only similarity that they share other than their nationality is the tradition of making “ozoni” on the first day of the new year.

Laura sometimes mentions her paternal grandmother who is “totally westernized” and has no interest in her Japanese heritage.

She has no desires about learning her culture, traditions,[and] the language. A lot of it is due to her Christian beliefs. My grandma feels that following [and] engaging in Japanese tradition is similar to following Buddhist rituals. Part of it is true, however, it is those rituals [and] traditions that make up the Japanese culture. Unlike my grandma I [feel] as though you can be a good Christian [and] still hold on to family [and] cultural traditions. [It’s] sad to see my grandma’s attitude about her ancestry because there are so many questions that I have about our family that only she can answer but she can’t.

Laura has been given many opportunities to enjoy the Japanese culture since she

was small. As a child, she would go to Bon dance festivals with her family every year, wearing the traditional Japanese *yukata*, a kind of summer *kimono*. After she grew up, however, they stopped going to those festivals. Recently, Laura has become increasingly interested in learning *taiko*, or Japanese drumming. Despite her interest in the traditional aspects of Japanese culture, she enjoys Korean pop music, which she said her younger sister introduced to her, more than Japanese music. She also mentioned that she is taken as a Korean more often than as a Japanese, which she says is probably because of her makeup.

Laura has a close male friend, who is part Japanese and majoring in Japanese at her university. She says she often studies or practices her Japanese with him. On the other hand, Laura does not have many people around her who speak Japanese as their native language except for her cousins in Japan, whom she does not have contact with. She further commented that she has no contact with the international students from Japan at her university as they always stick together on campus.

Laura strongly believes that women should be equal to men, and is satisfied with the role that her mother plays in her family. She stated that her father, who “washes the clothes” and “cooks a lot of times,” and her mother, who “cleans the bathroom,” are “pretty much equal.” When I talked about my parents in Japan, both of whom are working, Laura said, “Yeah, that’s how I think it should be.” Furthermore, when I asked her whether she would expect her future husband do the housework, she firmly said, “Of course! Of course!”

In spite of her disappointment toward her grandmother who has little interest in her cultural heritage, she sometimes made positive remarks about her father’s side of the

family when the topic shifted to the equality of men and women. Laura often compared her mother's side and her father's side, the former being "traditional" and the latter being "westernized," emphasizing the fact that her mother's side's way of thinking is deeply rooted in the Japanese culture. She stated that her maternal grandmother used to do everything for her grandfather, such as "get his medicine ready," "cook dinner," or "clean." So, when Laura's grandmother passed away, her grandfather was "lost" because he "didn't know where everything was." On the contrary, her paternal grandparents were "modernized" and "westernized"; her grandmother is Christian, both were working, and her grandfather attended the same university as Laura is currently, which was rare for Nisei Japanese Americans around that time.

### 5.2.2 Kenny

Kenny, who is 24 years old, is a senior majoring in Asian Studies. He lives with his father, a third generation Japanese American, his mother, who grew up in Okinawa, Japan, and his brother, who is five years younger than Kenny. In Okinawa, the number of people who speak the Okinawan language is decreasing nowadays, and most people around Kenny's mother's age speak Japanese as their native language with some knowledge of the Okinawan language. Kenny's mother has been working at a travel agency in Waikīkē for over twenty years, where she uses Japanese with tourists from Japan. She usually cooks American food at home, but still maintains some aspects of Okinawan culture including traditional Okinawan style dishes for New Year's Day. When Kenny was little, his mother wanted him to be familiar with the Japanese language and culture. She sent Kenny to a Japanese language school and had him learn *karate*,

none of which interested him after all. As Kenny recalls, he was not happy with seeing his mother using Japanese, because he did not have any friends around him who spoke Japanese. As Kenny grew up, his mother became less concerned with immersing Kenny and his brother in the Japanese language and culture. Although she would always speak Japanese when her children were little, now, “[m]ost of the times she speaks English” except when she “gets angry.”

Kenny’s father is a local Japanese American who speaks some Japanese. He spent several years at a military base in Okinawa, where he met and married Kenny’s mother. Kenny says that they conversed mainly in Japanese at that time because his mother knew almost no English. After they moved to Hawai‘i and his mother learned English, they came to use “half Japanese and half English.”

Most of Kenny’s relatives on his mother’s side, such as his grandparents and cousins, reside in Okinawa. At the time of the study, Kenny had been to Japan, including Okinawa and Tokyo, three times with his mother. Two years prior to this study, Kenny and his younger brother accompanied his mother to Okinawa, which he reports was the reason for a drastic change in his attitude toward learning Japanese. In Okinawa, Kenny had a great time with his cousins who are around his age. Despite the fact that they spoke little English and Kenny knew little Japanese, he said he felt very comfortable with them: “I tried to speak with them but had a hard time,” he continued, “But, I thought it’s still... I still had fun.” After his visit, Kenny and his cousins became close. He started to study Japanese seriously, hoping to be able to communicate with them better the next time he sees them. After graduation, he said he would like to go back to Japan on the JET Program. Kenny’s brother, however, still shows little interest in the Japanese culture and

the study of Japanese, even after the same trip.

After returning from the trip, Kenny decided to apply for an exchange program at his university, which sends a certain number of students to Japan every year to study at a university for nine months while staying with a host family. To save money, Kenny gave up living in an apartment close to his university and moved back home, and started working hard. He works at a snowboard shop in Waikiki, where the majority of the customers are Japanese tourists. He often speaks to them in Japanese, and sometimes exchanges names and addresses so that he can visit them in Japan. During the time of data collection, Kenny learned that he was accepted to the exchange program, which made his motivation to improve his Japanese proficiency even stronger.

Through the interviews, I noticed that Kenny talked much more about his mother than about his father. This might be because he was aware that the main purpose of the interviews was to elicit his ideas relating to Japan and to Japanese. However, it may also be due to the fact that, as he told me, Kenny feels closer to his mother's side of the family in Okinawa than to his father's side. Kenny repeatedly talked about the hardship that his mother experienced because of her lack of English proficiency when she first came to Hawai'i. He showed that he understood how getting married to a Japanese American man dramatically changed her life. Further evidence of his thoughtful concern for his mother came from his discussion of asking his mother questions about his homework for Japanese class. Kenny talked about this as "bothering her" because "she's always busy."

### 5.2.3 Stacy

Stacy, a 19-year-old fourth generation Japanese American, is a sophomore

enrolled in JPN202. She grew up with her family in Honolulu, but was living with her friends at the time of this study. Stacy mentioned that she was initially thinking about majoring in Japanese, but she decided to choose Travel Industry Management (TIM) instead, because some people told her that majoring in Japanese would be too hard unless she wanted to be a Japanese teacher. Yet, Stacy thinks it is still beneficial if she can speak Japanese in the travel industry. She is interested in applying for the JET Program and teaching English in Japan after finishing her undergraduate study.

Stacy is knowledgeable about and very interested in her family history. She knows that her maternal great-grandmother originally emigrated from Hiroshima prefecture, and that one of her great grandmothers was a picture bride. She made a family tree for her Japanese class before, which increased her knowledge and curiosity about her family. Both of Stacy's Nisei grandmothers are bilingual in English and Japanese. Her maternal grandmother, who is residing on the island of Hawai'i, learned Japanese naturally from her Issei parents, and would always sing Japanese songs when she was young.

Stacy's interest in her family background is so strong that she often asks her maternal grandmother about her past experiences: "I ask her about the past, like, plantation life, how the Asians came [to Hawai'i]." Stacy says it is "interesting" to learn "about what went on" in the lives of old people. Her grandmother once told her that her husband, while working at the plantation, ran away from his overseer because he was treated very badly: "I guess he ran away, and I was like, 'Wow!'" During the period of this study, Stacy also heard that one of her great grandmother's brothers died in Hiroshima because of the atomic bomb: "That was kind of a tragic event, even more so,

since a family member died from it.” Stacy also shows sympathy for the “hard life” that her grandparents led in the past. She told me about the hardship that they went through – their house had “just dirt floor,” and “they would have to walk to school” without wearing slippers: “That’s a really big hardship compared to us.”

Japanese customs and traditions are not customarily practiced in Stacy’s family. Her mother cooks mainly American food except for *ozoni*, the special Japanese dish for New Year’s Day. Different from Laura, whose family celebrated her father’s 41<sup>st</sup> birthday, or *yakudoshi*, Stacy does not seem to be familiar with the tradition. She simply heard from her father that there is a certain age at which “they’re suppose[d] to be vulnerable to bad luck,” and Japanese American people usually have a big birthday party.

While Stacy’s father speaks no Japanese, her mother is quite familiar with the Japanese language. She attended the same university as Stacy does, took some Japanese classes, and still speaks Japanese, although not fluently. In addition to the Japanese classes she took at her university, Stacy’s mother learned some Japanese from her mother. When Stacy was little, her mother was working at “an international booth,” or “little kiosks or TV stands” in Waikiki, where she interacted with many Japanese tourists. There, “her company provided her with a pamphlet on different [Japanese] phrases which would be useful in greeting the tourists.”

Stacy has a Japanese middle name, which she got from her mother. She also remembers that her mother would call her “Stacy-chan” in her childhood. Putting “chan” after a first name is a common way of addressing a little girl, or possibly a little boy as well, in Japanese, and represents one’s affection toward the child. (It is sometimes possible to use it for women, when one is same age or older than the woman who is

called “-chan”.) Since she has grown up, Stacy and her mother “rarely” talk with each other in Japanese, although they both know Japanese. She tries her Japanese “only for fun” when she wants to practice, but says, “I wish we’d do it more often.” Stacy’s younger brother, on the other hand, speaks better Japanese than she does and sometimes talks with his mother in Japanese.

While Stacy’s grandmothers are both Buddhist, her mother is Christian. Stacy said her father’s friends are Jehovah’s Witness, but “he doesn’t really practice” and he accompanies her mother when she goes to church. When I asked her about herself, she stated that she is more Christian than Buddhist, although she is “not religious” and does not usually go to church.

Stacy said she is close to her mother and comfortable about talking with her about her feelings, such as when she has a boyfriend. At the time of the study, Stacy was living with her friends. She said she and her mother often emailed each other: “It’s easier to put in words, like, feelings.” One of the reasons why she can talk a lot about herself, she said, is that her parents are “open” about who she goes out with, especially with regard to his ethnicity. Stacy mentioned some parents of her Japanese American friends, who will never allow their daughter to go out with “a certain ethnicity.” She continued, “Some of my friends, like, can’t even tell their parents about...[their boyfriends]. They’re really Japanese-Japanese, yeah?” Stacy’s parents are more liberal about this issue. She feels “it’s easier to open up to” them, because she knows that “they wouldn’t judge them [her boyfriends] or anything.”

Stacy has two part time jobs; one at a longboard shop and one at a Thai restaurant. At both work places, she meets many Japanese tourists, mostly young people,

and tries to speak to them in Japanese. Stacy's boss at the longboard shop is a 48-year-old Japanese man, who usually calls Stacy by her Japanese middle name using the diminutive "-chan" suffix. She says her boss is willing to help her with her Japanese studies; he answers questions that she asks about her homework, gives her Japanese magazines, and tells her and her co-workers about Japan. He tells Stacy that she "should take advantage of" her situation in which there are many Japanese people around her who she can use Japanese with. She writes in her journal that she realized that working at the shop "really gives me the opportunity to practice my Japanese with my boss!"

When Stacy was a senior in high school, she went to Japan on a program that was sponsored by a group called "Interact Club." She and her friend stayed with a Japanese family for a week. They stayed in Kyoto and Osaka, where they enjoyed many different activities related to the Japanese culture, such as visiting temples, making handkerchiefs, and taking part in a tea ceremony. She also said that they did not have to use much Japanese because their host family spoke good English. Nevertheless, her trip provided Stacy with a clearer picture of Japan and the Japanese people. In her journal, she mentions that the trip made her "a lot more interested" in the Japanese culture and people's lifestyles.

Stacy enjoys learning about the contemporary culture and people's lives in Japan by watching Japanese TV programs such as "*Soko ga shiritai*" and reading Japanese fashion magazines. She also likes interacting with Japanese tourists whom she meets at both of her work places. She is seriously considering going to Japan on the JET Program and teaching English after graduation. Yet, at the same time, she shows her uncertainty about living in Japan for a long time, because she thinks the life would be "totally

different.”

#### 5.2.4 Brian

Brian, a 20-year-old Japanese American, is a very quiet, seemingly shy guy. He does not speak out in his Japanese class often, and at our interviews, he rarely tells me more than what I ask him. Compared to the other three participants, he did not seem confident about being interviewed and recorded, especially for the first few sessions. For this reason, the interviews that I had with him were somewhat more formal than those with the other participants. With his weekly journal, Brian preferred emailing to writing. It seemed he felt most comfortable talking about himself in email. In each entry, he wrote a considerable amount, and he was almost never late in submitting his journal. Like Stacy, he was taking JPN202 at the time of this study, which is the last required course for the language requirement. While Stacy is already determined to major in Travel Industry Management (TIM), Brian said that he has “no idea” about his major. He has been to California and Washington, but had never been to any foreign country including Japan prior to this study.

Brian is not sure what generation he is, but says he is “probably” fourth generation. He lives in Mililani, a considerable distance from his university, with his mother, his stepfather, his younger brother in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and his younger sister in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. He usually leaves school right after he finishes class, as it takes him two hours to get home by bus. Therefore, all the interviews with Brian were conducted before his Japanese class, while I usually met with the other three participants after school when they had relatively more time. Brian mentioned that he is not happy with the fact that he

needs to come to school everyday due to the fact that his Japanese class met daily Monday through Friday. When I asked Brian whether he was planning to take JPN301 next semester, he said that it depended on his schedule; language classes are usually offered everyday, and this was a big concern for Brian because he did not like making the long commute everyday.

Brian's Nisei grandparents speak good Japanese and use it very often: They talk in Japanese, they watch Japanese TV, and they listen to Japanese music – they do “all kinda stuff” in Japanese, he says. In addition, they often speak in Japanese to Japanese tourists they see at a shopping mall and sometimes befriend them. They write letters to their friends in Japanese, and have visited them several times in Japan. Their friends have also visited Hawai'i to see Brian's grandparents before. Brian's family traditionally has family gatherings, such as for somebody's birthday party, at his grandparents' house. His grandparents taught him some basic Japanese expressions when he was little, he says, so he already knew some Japanese when he was first taught Japanese formally in elementary school. Even after Brian grew up, his grandparents would sometimes use Japanese when conversing with him, but “not a lot” because they understand that he is not very fluent.

Brian told me that his grandparents mastered the Japanese language without any formal instruction, perhaps because their Issei parents spoke only Japanese: “I don't think they went to school or anything like that.” Although Brian does not seem very interested in his family history, he told me that his grandfather worked as a translator and went to Japan during World War II. Brian's grandparents, especially his grandmother, still maintain Japanese culture by practicing Japanese traditions and customs, such as

pounding *mochi* on New Year's Day and putting up *koinobori* on Boy's Day. They sometimes go to Japanese cultural festivals that are held in Hawai'i, whereas Brian has never been to any of them. Similarly, Brian does not socialize with Japanese people from Japan. Unlike Kenny and Stacy, Brian almost never speaks to Japanese tourists. One of the major reasons is that he is not confident in his speaking ability, and he also is not sure whether those tourists would be happy about being spoken to by a stranger while they are on vacation.

Brian's parents also know some Japanese, but he says that he is more fluent than they are. Brian's father took some Japanese courses in college, but he does not use it anymore. Surprisingly, however, he still keeps the old Japanese textbooks that he used in college. Brian's girlfriend, whose mother is a Japanese from Japan, used to live in Japan until seventh grade. Like Brian, she is studying Japanese at a community college in Hawai'i. When I asked him which of them knows more Japanese, he answered that his girlfriend can speak better than him, but "I know more stuff," meaning that he is better at "grammar" than she is. Brian sometimes practices his Japanese with his girlfriend, or helps her do the assignments from her Japanese classes, such as having a conversation in Japanese and recording it. During the time of data collection, Brian's girlfriend, her mother, and her brother went to Kyushu, Japan, to see their relatives and friends. Brian sometimes goes to a Japanese department store with his girlfriend, which is located in a big shopping mall. He says that his girlfriend likes to look around the section where she can find snacks imported from Japan.

Unlike his grandparents, Brian's family does not customarily practice Japanese traditions and customs. His stepfather, who takes care of preparing meals, rarely cooks

Japanese food. His family eats rice at every meal, however, which is a common custom among local people in Hawai‘i. When I asked him whether his family enjoys *ozoni*, or traditional Japanese soup, for New Year’s Day, Brian did not know what it was. Yet, some Japanese dishes, such as *tendon*, or *tempura* on rice, and *sushi*, are Brian’s favorite food. He stated that he has come to enjoy Japanese food more recently, especially because his girlfriend likes it. Of the four participants for this study, Brian is the only person who does not have a Japanese middle name. None of the children in Brian’s family has a Japanese middle name, although his parents as well as his grandparents do. He told me that his “real dad” gave him his middle name, which is an English name.

Brian’s first contact with Japanese, he says, was when he was in the third grade. He attended a private elementary school, where he learned basic Japanese, such as *hiragana*, or the primary Japanese alphabet letters, and Japanese songs. Brian explained that such Japanese classes can commonly be found at private elementary schools in Hawai‘i. Public schools, on the other hand, usually have Japanese classes “after school,” and are offered mainly to those students whose parents want them to study Japanese, not to all students. Although Brian did not receive formal instruction in Japanese until he was in the third grade, he had received a lot of Japanese input in his childhood. At one of the interviews, Brian brought some children’s books from home that he used to read, some of which were written in Japanese and others which were in English. They were books about a Japanese TV character called *Urutoraman* (Ultraman), which was very popular in Japan several decades ago, and thus, which every Japanese adult would be familiar with. At first, Brian was not certain where and how he got those books, but later on, he heard from his parents that they had gotten them from their

friends. It is apparent that Brian understood almost no Japanese in his childhood; however, it is noteworthy that those Japanese books with English translation were available in Hawai‘i around that time. In fact, in addition to the books, Japanese TV programs in English were available as well. An interview with another student in Brian’s Japanese class, who is Chinese American, revealed that he would always watch Japanese TV programs in his childhood, such as Japanese animation, which he said eventually motivated him to study Japanese.

In addition to his understanding of the Japanese language, Brian possesses significant knowledge about both modern and traditional aspects of Japan. With regard to the former, he gets a lot of information through his hobbies and interests, such as video games, animation, and wrestling. Of the things Brian likes from Japan, he is particularly familiar with Japanese video games. Brian also likes watching both American and Japanese wrestling matches on TV, and is quite knowledgeable about Japanese wrestlers. He checks a certain wrestling website “at least once everyday,” which is created in Canada but also includes information about the wrestling scenes in the United States and Japan. A famous Japanese wrestler passed away during the period of data collection, which was not widely reported in Hawai‘i. Brian told me that he came to know about this wrestler and his death through this website. Another example of Brian’s awareness of current Japanese trends is that he knows that currently female high school students in Japan wear short skirts, which sometimes causes controversy.

Moreover, I was impressed by his knowledge about how certain things in Hawai‘i are influenced by Japanese culture. He mentioned that many of the American TV shows for children that are enjoyed across ethnicities in Hawai‘i, such as “Power Rangers,” were originally adapted from Japanese shows. Since a particular TV station was playing those shows with other Japanese programs, Brian figured out that those programs

originally came from Japan, although the actors spoke English: However, he added, “If you’re not smart, you wouldn’t know, ‘cause they don’t say anything [about their origins].”

As for Brian’s understanding of traditional aspects of Japanese culture, he is familiar with Girl’s Day (or the Doll Festival) and Boy’s Day (or Children’s Day) in Japan, although he was not certain when these days are. Brian’s grandparents display the *hina ningyou* (special dolls) and *kabuto* (the war helmet) for these cultural events.

Although his immediate family is unconcerned about these cultural events, I found that Brian is attentive to aspects of Japanese culture that are prominent in Hawai‘i. At an interview, when Boy’s Day was approaching, he mentioned the war helmet that he saw at the Japanese department store that he often goes to with his girlfriend. He also remembered that the store sold the dolls for Girl’s Day several months earlier.

Due to his lack of experience of actually going to Japan, however, there are other things that Brian was not aware of concerning the culture and customs in Japan. Brian did not know, for example, that Japanese people do not usually have middle names, or that *mochi* pounding is not commonly practiced any more in Japan. Also, he seemed surprised when I told him that *spam musubi* is very different from other *musubi* (or *onigiri*, to be more exact) in Japan; unlike *spam musubi* in Hawai‘i, it is less common in Japan to make *musubi* out of meat.

## CHAPTER 6

### ANALYSIS – REASONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Based on the viewpoint that language learners are constantly negotiating and redefining their identity in relation to the social context, as was reviewed in Chapter 3, previous sections closely looked at the environment in which the four focal students are situated. I have described the historical background of the Hawai‘i context with a focus on the shifting role of the Japanese language (Chapter 2), the theoretical framework of this study (Chapter 3), and the present status of the Japanese language and culture in Hawai‘i (Chapter 5.1). The four focal students’ family backgrounds and other personal information have also been introduced (Chapter 5.2). These students may all be categorized as young Japanese Americans learning Japanese as a heritage language in Hawai‘i. However, a closer examination needs to be made of the individual differences between these students in order to give a better picture of the relationship between them and the Japanese language, and so that we can adequately answer the research questions, namely:

1. What is the relationship between the focal students and the Japanese language? How is this relationship realized in their study of Japanese?
2. How are the Japanese language and learning the Japanese language related to multiple identities of the focal students?

In this section, I will examine the relationship between each of the four focal students and the Japanese language, using Rampton’s (1990) three concepts of language expertise, affiliation, and inheritance. The significance of drawing on Rampton’s theory is that these concepts “help us to think about individual cases” (p. 100) more clearly than do other concepts of the relationship between language and speaker, such as *native*

*speaker and mother tongue*. The aim of this section is to answer such questions as, “Why do they study Japanese?”, “What do they hope to gain studying Japanese?”, and “What role do language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation play in their learning of Japanese?” While the four students are all concerned with developing expertise in Japanese, detailed examination will show how they have differing balances of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation.

In the following sections, I will first discuss each student’s reasons and motivation for learning Japanese. Then, I will move on to the examination of their language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation, which also entails the discussion of their expectations from learning Japanese. It is important to note the distinction between learners’ “reasons” or “motivations” and their “expectations” in their learning of the language. In this study, motivation (or reason) is understood as the cause(s) underlying the students’ decision to learn Japanese, while expectation is seen as their perceived outcomes from the same experience, or what they want from learning Japanese.

At the time of this study, Stacy and Brian were taking JPN202, which is the last course to fulfill the language requirement. Laura and Kenny were in JPN301, which is a required course for Japanese major students like Laura, but not for Kenny. The data on which the discussion is based was obtained mainly from interviews and journal entries, but other supporting evidence will also be presented where it is relevant.

## 6.1 Laura

### 6.1.1 Laura’s reasons for studying Japanese

At the time of data collection, Laura, as well as Kenny, was enrolled in JPN301, which is not a core course that students need to take in order to fulfill the language

requirement at her university. However, Japanese major students, including Laura, are required to take Japanese courses up to JPN407.

In the questionnaire that I distributed in her class at the beginning of the semester, Laura wrote, “To get to know culture better, to learn to speak another language,” as her main reason for studying Japanese. However, Laura’s interviews and journal entries revealed that the Japanese language means a lot more to her than simply “another language.” The fundamental idea that underlies Laura’s motivation to study Japanese is that all Japanese Americans should maintain their heritage. She repeatedly emphasizes in her journal how important it is for her family, especially her mother’s side, to cherish their Japanese cultural heritage, with comments such as “It is important to my mom’s family to pass down every bit of culture to our children.” For Laura, learning the Japanese language is a central part of maintaining her heritage. Therefore, it is very natural for her to learn Japanese because it is an important part of the Japanese culture which she believes she, as a Japanese American, should preserve.

Laura seems to perceive that the study of Japanese is getting more and more difficult. In the early period of this study, she sometimes voiced her fear that “Japanese will be too hard for me to handle,” and mentioned the possibility of changing her major to Asian Studies. Yet, she was undecided due to the fact that Japanese cannot be a minor at her university. Although it is a hard subject, Laura still wanted to keep learning about the Japanese language and culture, either as her major or minor. Near the end of the semester, she told me she had decided to take higher Japanese classes in subsequent semesters, although she still seemed worried about the difficulty level of those classes.

I have decided to take Japanese 302 during the summer and 401 next fall.

I am pretty nervous about how I'm going to do, but hopefully I'll know people in my class that can help me.

### 6.1.2 Laura's expertise, inheritance, and affiliation

#### *Expertise*

Laura's belief that studying Japanese is an important part of maintaining her Japanese heritage causes her to be concerned about gaining fluency and knowledge, or expertise, in the language: "My goal is to be fluent in speaking, [knowledgeable] in kanji, [and] able to get around by myself in Japan." Laura took Japanese courses for four years in high school, where the main focus was on grammar and vocabulary. Prior to high school, she had never attended any kind of Japanese school. She writes, "Now I kind of wish that my parents sent me to Japanese school. I think it would've helped a lot while taking *nihongo* [the Japanese language, written in *kanji* in original text] courses in *koukou* [high school, written in *kanji* in original text]." At her university, Laura often practices her Japanese with a male friend, whose ancestry is a mixture of Japanese, German, and Hawaiian. He is also a Japanese major like Laura, but was taking a higher class, JPN401, at the time of the study. He is interested in Japanese pop culture and very knowledgeable about Japanese music and singers, which he sometimes tells Laura about. Laura describes him as a learner of Japanese studying in a similar environment as herself, in terms of major, the amount of Japanese language experience, and family background. She also said that they were planning to visit Japan together in the near future.

In spite of her high motivation to improve her Japanese language skills, Laura does not seem very confident about her proficiency. Early in the semester, Laura

sometimes mentioned that the students were nervous about the gap between JPN202 and higher classes. Laura's teacher also told me that, since JPN301 and higher classes are mainly for students in Japanese or other related majors, there is a preconception among students that the difficulty of the class would increase substantially after JPN301. When I asked Laura how she was feeling about the level of JPN301, she said that the "oral part" was more difficult than reading and writing for her, "especially 'cause I haven't been there [to Japan]." In fact, Laura often expresses her anxiety about her oral skills, especially her speaking ability.

I have a hard time speaking smoothly [and] fluently. It is easier for me to write things down on paper [and] make things more organized. When I try to speak, my mind gets confused [and] jumbles the sentence structures, making it hard for me to get my point across.

Laura intends to continue to study Japanese after graduating from university. She says, "I want to go to Japan [in the future] and hopefully become more fluent." Laura is also interested in teaching English in Japan on the JET Program, because she has heard from many people that the salary is very good. At this time, however, Laura has mixed feelings about living in Japan due to her lack of confidence in her proficiency. In her journal, she writes, "I'm not quite sure if I'm going to try for the exchange program" which Kenny applied for. She told me that she was "kinda like scared" to live in Japan, and it might only be possible after she has learned more vocabulary and *kanji*. Yet, Laura has another plan for her future career, which will enable her to utilize her knowledge of Japanese. She wants to work for a particular "jewelry/tourist attraction" that she heard about from a woman who came to the supermarket where Laura works. The woman told Laura that "benefits were good," and Laura also thinks that working at the place "would

be good to practice interaction with actual Japanese people.” Despite the fact that her parents are not very happy about the plan because they “want [her] to do something better than that,” Laura says that it will be a good “opportunity to enhance my Japanese speaking skills.”

### *Inheritance*

As we saw above, Laura believes in the importance of maintaining the Japanese culture, which suggests her strong feeling of Japanese language inheritance. Her journal entry, below, shows how important it is for her mother’s side of the family to keep Japanese traditions:

My mom’s side of the family is full of [Japanese] culture [and] traditions. It is important to my mom’s family to pass down every bit of culture to our children. My family keeps shrines in their homes with picture[s] of our deceased family members around it. When a family members dies we go through the traditional Buddhist funeral [and] visit 49 days after. At the beginning of the new year we get together to make mochi, both ang [sic] [and] shogatsu [New Year’s Day] mochi. Also every New Year’s morning we make about 2 dozen rows of sushi that we give to family [and] friends. Making ozoni [Japanese traditional soup] is a traditional favorite, too.

Laura also states that maintaining Japanese culture and traditions makes her feel “complete,” as she says, “[l]earning about all these things [Japanese culture] keeps me satisfied like I know all I need to know about my people, my family’s past, and myself.” Whereas the maintenance of Japanese culture helps Laura feel “complete,” she states, “[t]he closest thing to feeling ‘incomplete’ is not quite mastering the Japanese language.”

In Laura’s family, it is important not only to maintain Japanese traditions but also to “pass down everything we know to our children.” Following her family’s hope, Laura is indeed concerned with passing down the Japanese culture to the younger generation:

“No matter what nationality man I marry, I hope to pass down traditions to my children [and] even send them to Japanese school.”

With the strong belief that Japanese Americans should maintain and pass down their heritage, Laura says that it is very disappointing that her paternal grandmother, who is “westernized,” places no importance on her Japanese heritage.

She has no desire about learning her culture, traditions, [and] the language. A lot of it is due to her Christian beliefs. My grandma feels that following [and] engaging in Japanese tradition is similar to following Buddhist rituals.

Laura’s eagerness to learn more about her heritage can be seen in her good understanding of and patent curiosity about Japanese names as well. She knows not only the meaning of the *kanji* for her last name, which even her grandfather did not know, but also the fact that it is a relatively uncommon name, as she did not find so many in the phone book. She also knows that her father’s first name is usually recognized and used as a female name in Japan. Being interested in her family history, Laura once asked her grandmother about the origin of their family name and where the family came from. However, “Of course she didn’t know where my grandpa’s family came from,” which she says troubles her a little. Laura asked me various questions about Japanese names, such as the way people in Japan get their last names, the origin of her good friends’ and boyfriend’s last names, and the meaning of her grandfather’s middle name. I also noticed that she consistently wrote her last name in *kanji* in class. She told me that her high school teacher had taught her the *kanji*; her family members, especially her father’s side, “are not positive” about how to write it.

### *Affiliation*

Laura says that she really likes her current Japanese class and the teacher, compared to the Japanese classes in high school, which particularly emphasized grammar instruction. In every class, Laura's teacher in JPN 301 spent a large portion of time talking about the Japanese culture that lies behind the language. She sometimes talked about the differences between Japanese customs in Hawai'i and in Japan as well. One day, Laura's teacher told the class that the custom of *mochi* pounding on New Year's Day is disappearing nowadays in Japan. Later on, Laura told me that she was "pretty surprised" that *mochi* pounding is not practiced in Japan any more, because her family never fails to do it every year. Learning different customs between Japan and Hawai'i seemed to have made Laura clearer about some differences between the two cultures, although she says that it is hard for her to compare "because I haven't been to Japan yet."

As far as the difference between JA [Japanese Americans] in Hawai'i and *nihonjin* [the Japanese, written in *kanji* in original text] are concerned I think there is somewhat of a difference. For example, Hawai'i's culture and Japan's culture are totally different. Hawai'i's culture is a mixture of all sorts of cultures and traditions, some Japanese, some Hawaiian and some Chinese. Although some of the Japanese traditions are passed down here it doesn't necessarily mean that the same traditions are passed down in Japan. For instance, making *mochi* on New Year's is a tradition practiced in Hawai'i but it is less common in Japan.

The more she knows about the differences between Japanese people and Japanese Americans in Hawai'i, the more she becomes aware of the distance between the two peoples. Laura's distinction of two terms for Japanese, "JA in Hawai'i" and "*nihonjin*," written in English and in *kanji* respectively, also indicates this distinction.

Laura says the reason why she does not have Japanese friends from Japan on campus is because Japanese students from Japan generally do not socialize with non-

Japanese students. Obviously, she sees some kind of boundary between herself and the Japanese students from Japan. Rather, she feels more associated with local students, especially those who are studying Japanese but do not have many experiences with the language just like her. When she describes her close male friend whom she often studies Japanese with, she says their situations are very similar in that “Both of us are majoring in Japanese, we haven’t been to Japan yet, [and] none of our families speak Japanese as their native language.” This may suggest that, while Laura is seeing a gap between herself and the Japanese people, in a narrower sense, the gap also exists when she sees other learners of Japanese whose learning environments appear more advantageous than hers. Kenny, for example, has a mother who speaks Japanese and has been to Japan several times before, and Laura feels some kind of difference between Kenny and herself.

However, by utilizing what she learns in her Japanese class in actual settings, Laura gains some sense of affiliation to the people of Japan. Among her family members, Laura’s maternal grandfather is one of the people who have influenced her attitude toward Japan and the Japanese people in a significant way. Although Laura has never been to Japan herself, she hears a lot of stories from her grandfather about his trips to Japan and his friends there. Laura’s grandfather also buys her souvenirs, such as Japanese magazines, Japanese language workbooks, or cosmetic items, whenever he visits Japan. Laura often writes letters in Japanese to an old Japanese couple whom her grandfather has known for more than thirty years. They came to Hawai‘i to visit Laura and her grandfather during the period of this study, and she said she had a good time with them.

Laura has a Japanese middle name that is based on her mother’s middle name.

She said she uses her middle name when she communicates with her grandfather's friends from Japan. While she stated that this is the only time people call her by her Japanese name, I noticed that on her cellular phone, Laura put a sticker that had her middle name on it. This may suggest that Laura manifests her identity as Japanese even when she is not involved in studying the Japanese language.

Although Laura does not consider herself as a member of Japanese society in Japan, she shows her affiliation toward other Japanese immigrants to some degree. It is interesting to note that while she almost never talked about Japanese Americans on the Mainland, she once referred to Japanese Brazilians in Brazil. One day, all of a sudden, Laura said to me, "Do you have any relatives that live in Brazil?" She mentioned that she did not know Brazil has the second largest Japanese population outside Japan following Hawai'i, and asked, "How come?" I was rather surprised because we had never talked about Japanese Brazilians or any other groups of Japanese immigrants before. It seemed that this information caught Laura's eye because she considers Japanese Brazilians as counterparts to Japanese Americans in the United States. I told her that I was not very familiar with the situations in South America, but I did know that the president of Peru, President Fujimori, is of Japanese ancestry. She seemed surprised at this fact, too, and showed further interest, asking, "Is he full Japanese or half?" Laura's interests in Japanese immigrants in other parts of the world may indicate that she feels ties with them, who might have the similar historical backgrounds similar to that of the Japanese Americans in Hawai'i.

### 6.1.3 Summary

Japanese language inheritance, which centers on the maintenance of the Japanese culture, forms the major part of Laura's motivation for as well as her goal in studying Japanese. It seems that Laura finds the significance of studying Japanese in the *process* rather than the *product*. Although she is not a proficient Japanese speaker, the fact that she is learning the language and gaining expertise in Japanese contributes to Laura's feeling of "being complete" as a Japanese American. Her major goal is not to achieve native-like Japanese language ability, but is rather to be a model Japanese American by fulfilling her duty.

Furthermore, increasing language expertise does not serve to increase Laura's affiliation with Japan and its people in a significant way. Rather, knowing more about the Japanese language and culture sometimes makes Laura more aware of the differences and distance between the two cultures. This also prevents Laura from associating with Japanese people from Japan, such as the international students from Japan at her university, as they appear different to her.

In spite of her eagerness to develop her Japanese language ability and her growing interest in the Japanese culture, Laura says she feels "scared" to live in Japan, mainly due to her lack of confidence in her language proficiency. Because mastering Japanese is so important to Laura, she might be afraid of having to admit that her Japanese language ability is far from satisfactory. Her Japanese language ability, or expertise, instead serves as a tie, or "continuity," between Laura and her family. Furthermore, it makes her feel affiliated, not with Japan in general, but with those specific Japanese people and aspects of Japanese culture which she sees through the eyes of her grandfather.

## 6.2 Kenny

### 6.2.1 Kenny's reasons for studying Japanese

Kenny entered university six years prior to this study, and has been “off and on” since then, skipping one semester or two. He said he was “*gorogoro shiteta*” (idling) and “just relaxed” until he decided to major in Asian Studies. When he was five or six years old, Kenny's mother sent him to a Japanese language school that he said was too hard for him. He studied at the school for only several years, and did not really learn any Japanese until he entered university.

Kenny first started taking Japanese “because I was required” for the language requirement. However, his passion for mastering Japanese was sparked two years ago when he visited his relatives in Okinawa. Before that happened, Kenny showed no interest in, and even had an aversion to, the Japanese language. At an interview, he recalled that when he was younger he did not like to hear his mother speak Japanese, especially when he was with his friends who did not speak Japanese.

K: When I was younger, I didn't care anything for it, nothing, you know.

I didn't wanna hear, I didn't wanna hear my mom speak... Every time she watched a Japanese program, I would change the station.

I: Oh, really? Why?

K: I didn't like .... none of my friends were Japanese, it was difficult, yea?

I: You just didn't think it's necessary.

K: Yeah, not necessary. After I went to college, then, I changed, yea?

I: Oh, after you went to college...

K: That's why I think it's more, I think it's more interesting now.

(I = Interviewer, K = Kenny)

Note that Kenny frequently uses ‘yea,’ which is a Pidgin feature. Different from Laura, whose attitude toward the study of Japanese has been shaped by the practice of

Japanese traditions in her family, Kenny's motivation is specifically derived from his strong desire to become closer to his relatives, especially his cousins, in Okinawa. In his journal, he talked about how and why his attitudes changed after his visit to Okinawa two years ago.

It began, after I met my cousins in Okinawa two yrs ago. I couldn't speak much Japanese, so I became frustrated. I would always rely on my mom or the dictionary for help. My cousins, aunties [and] uncles, and grandma were so nice and kind to me. I felt bad because I couldn't communicate with them. After coming home from the trip I told myself that I would try and learn more about the Japanese language and culture. So I took my Japanese language classes with the intent to use it in the future. I began watching more Japanese television and tried to speak with my mom sometimes.

Kenny mentioned that, after he became aware of himself as getting more and more determined to acquire Japanese, he was sometimes surprised that those expressions that he used to hear as a child suddenly made sense to him. "A lot of the stuff I heard before... like, it's coming back in my mind," he says. This made his study of Japanese more meaningful and challenging for Kenny.

The relationship with his cousins in Okinawa increased Kenny's interest in the Japanese culture and people, and further, motivated him to apply for an exchange program through his university that will allow him to attend a university in Kobe, Japan, for nine months. Similar to Laura and Stacy, Kenny is interested in teaching English on the JET Program after graduation. Kenny's desire to live in Japan is so strong that, in order to save money, he gave up living with his friends and went back to his parents' house even before he was accepted into the exchange program. Kenny also started working almost everyday at a snowboard shop in Waikiki. He enjoys interacting with the customers, the majority of who are tourists from Japan.

The best thing that happened to me was working at my job at Island Snow. There, I was able to meet so many Japanese people, that I sometimes felt like I was in Japan.

Working at the shop was very beneficial to Kenny in that he could use his Japanese with Japanese people while making money. The shop has a small stand, or “kiosk,” located a short distance away from the main store. Kenny sometimes had to work there, which he said was “so boring” because there were not many Japanese customers there.

During the period of this study, Kenny found out that he had been accepted to the exchange program. After his acceptance, he often expressed excitement about going to Japan: “The countdown is beginning; I only have 5 more months in Hawai‘i. I’m trying to meet as much people<sup>2</sup> as I can that live in the Kansai area, so that I have friends to do things with.” As Kenny’s goal of studying Japanese became more evident, he became more concerned about what he should do before leaving. In addition to his questions regarding how to say certain things in Japanese, Kenny started asking me more practical questions, such as what kind of clothes he would need for the cold season, when university students usually have breaks in Japan, and how to get along with his host family. Also, Kenny started to work even harder than before. When I asked him why he would need a lot of money while in Japan, he said, “I wanna have fun.” He told me that he was planning to take a snowboard to Japan, so that he could try snowboarding for the first time in his life.

### 6.2.2 Kenny’s expertise, inheritance, and affiliation

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<sup>2</sup> Note that here Kenny is using a Pidgin grammatical structure of placing the uncountable term “much” with the countable term “people.”

### *Expertise*

At the time of this study, Kenny was taking JPN 301, which is an intermediate class taught primarily in Japanese, with only minimal English use. Although Kenny's Japanese language ability, or expertise, was not exceptional among the students in his class, Kenny knew a lot of words and expressions not only from class, but also from what he heard or learned from his friends and mother. The fact that he has received a considerable amount of linguistic input from his mother since childhood, and that he usually tries hard to learn as many useful expressions as possible from the Japanese people he meets, are two major factors that contributed to Kenny's extensive knowledge about the Japanese language. Kenny also has a good understanding of Japanese people's life and customs, which he learns from his Japanese university friends or from Japanese tourists he meets at his work place. For example, in his journal, he writes about a Japanese woman who had retainers: "When I first talked with her I noticed her mouth because she had on retainers, which I think is very unusual because I thought that most Japanese do not fix their teeth." Some time later, Kenny talked to another Japanese woman who was a dental assistant and asked her why most Japanese people (he says, "including my mother") have bad teeth. He writes, "She told me yes that is true, because there is no health or dental insurance."

Kenny thinks that, if one does not have a Japanese parent or any Japanese friends, it would be much harder to study Japanese. In addition to speaking with his mother in Japanese, he says, "I usually try hard" to speak to and make friends with Japanese people. While he admits that he comes from an environment that is advantageous to his study of

Japanese, Kenny does not seem to have much confidence in his Japanese language ability, especially his speaking skills.

Because, actually, I think, it's actually you get used to saying certain words and it sounds more natural. But I think when I read sometimes, I get stuck. And it didn't sound natural, it sounds, like, chop, chop, chop... It happens, usually, when I don't know one word, I mean, you have to stop and then you get confused. And it doesn't sound natural.

At the first few interviews, he seemed hesitant to use Japanese in front of me. He mentioned that he did not like to speak Japanese when he felt the other person was fluent in English.

I feel more comfortable speaking with Japanese, someone that doesn't know that much English. Then, I don't feel as... like... I don't feel as ... not dumb, but... you know what I mean?

Initially, Kenny's uncertainty about his proficiency and hesitance to try his Japanese discouraged him from asking me questions. However, he eventually became less worried about making mistakes or feeling inferior, and he started to ask me how to say certain expressions in Japanese. The following interaction is taken from an interview with Kenny, when he talked about the transformation that he has undergone in the past few years.

K: The more you learn, the more...

I: = You find it

K: = interesting. We learned that pattern. *Narau* <learn>...

I: *Naraeba naruhodo* <the more you learn>...

K: Wait, wait, let me just say that. Wait, *naraeba narauhodo* <the more you learn>...

I: *Naraeba narauhodo* <the more you learn>, or *shireba shiruhodo* <the more you know>

K: *Shireba* <as you know>?

I: *Shireba* <as you know>, the more you know

K: Oh, *shiru* <to know>, oh, OK, OK, *shiru* <to know>, *shiru* <to know>.

I: *Shiru* <to know>, *shireba shiruhodo* <the more you know>

K: *Shireba shiruhodo* <the more you know>

I: *Omoshiroi* <interesting>

K: *Omoshiroi* <interesting>, yea, yea, yea. So as I got to understand more, it makes more sense when I see stuff, yea?

After a certain point, Kenny became frank about asking me how to say certain things in Japanese. One of the reasons for his eagerness to know the Japanese equivalents was that he was actually leaving for Japan several months after the data collection was completed. Kenny also states that he wants to improve his communicative skills since his relatives are all expecting him to come back to Okinawa: “So, when I go back, I wanna be able to speak, yea?” Thus, for Kenny, it was not simply for academic purposes but for a personal goal to improve his Japanese language skill as soon as possible. Several months after Kenny left for Japan, which was seven months after the data collection was finished, I had a chance to see him in Japan during a winter break. I was impressed that Kenny’s speaking ability was so improved that we did not have to use any English for our conversation, and he was still eager to learn more new expressions.

### *Inheritance/Affiliation*

Unlike the other participants, Kenny’s language inheritance and affiliation cannot be separated because his mother plays an influential role in both his language inheritance and affiliation. Kenny’s Japanese language inheritance mainly comes from the fact that his mother speaks Japanese as her native language, while his affiliation has been strengthened through the interaction with his maternal relatives in Okinawa. For this reason, these two factors will be combined in the discussion.

Different from Laura, Kenny does not seem to relate learning Japanese to maintaining his Japanese heritage. In talking about the reason for his study of Japanese,

he never used terms such as “heritage,” “maintain,” or “pass down,” which were often found in Laura’s statements. This may suggest that Kenny perceives little value in passing down the Japanese culture. For Kenny, whether or not Japanese Americans study the Japanese language is an individual or personal issue rather than an ethnic issue. In other words, he does not regard learning Japanese as “continuity” among Japanese Americans. His younger brother, for example, shows no interest in studying the language. Kenny says he is not sure why his brother does not find learning Japanese necessary, but does not seem to be dissatisfied with that fact. This contrasts with Laura’s comments that it is sad to see her grandmother with no desire to learn about her Japanese heritage. Considering the fact that Kenny himself used to be indifferent to the Japanese language and culture, it stands to reason that he sees the choice of studying Japanese as a personal decision.

While family expectations drive Laura to study Japanese harder, the fact that Japanese is his mother’s native language is not a direct cause for Kenny’s enthusiasm for mastering Japanese. However, Kenny’s mother plays a significant role in providing him with an opportunity to increase his affiliation toward his relatives in Okinawa, and at the same time, his Japanese language inheritance.

Kenny’s mother’s side of the family resides mostly in Okinawa, while his father’s side is in Hawai‘i. In spite of the physical closeness and the same language background, however, Kenny is not close to his relatives in Hawai‘i, which is partly because his father’s side is a big family: “We’re not that close. Everyone lives like far, far apart.” In contrast, he states that he feels “closer” and “more family” with his mother’s side in Okinawa: “That’s just weird. Even though I met them, not that often, but I feel closer to them.” As discussed above, Kenny is not concerned with maintaining his Japanese heritage by learning the Japanese language, which is the primary reason for Laura’s study of Japanese. Yet, Kenny’s statement that he feels “more family” with his

relatives in Okinawan may suggest that his language inheritance was gained through studying Japanese, the language that all of his mother's side of the family speak as their native language.

One of the factors that led to Kenny favoring his relatives in Okinawa is the unpleasant impression that he had held about his paternal grandmother, who lives on the island of Hawai'i. Kenny's grandmother was not in favor of his parents' marriage, and, even after they got married and moved to Hawai'i, he says, "She would treat my mom real bad." Since Kenny's mother and grandmother did not get along, his parents decided to move to O'ahu, where Kenny was born. As a small child, he felt that "my grandma didn't give us credit," which is why, he says, he did not like her very much. Thus, when Kenny visited his maternal family in Okinawa two years ago, he already did not have a good impression of his paternal family. In addition, Kenny was touched by the warm welcome and hospitality he received from his relatives during his stay in Okinawa, which heightened his motivation to study Japanese and his interest in the Japanese culture.

The significant change in Kenny's attitude toward studying Japanese since then has given him a strong sense of affiliation with Japanese people. Initially, Kenny's primary goal in mastering the Japanese language was to fit in with his relatives in Okinawa, especially his cousins. Then, his goal expanded to the point where he wanted to learn more about Japanese young people around his age. For example, Kenny is interested in learning slang and casual expressions that young Japanese people normally use, which was referred to before as "group talk." From observing Japanese people's language use, Kenny noticed that young people talk differently. Whenever he encounters new expressions, he says he usually asks their meanings to some of his co-workers who are proficient in Japanese. Following Eastman (1985), Kenny's interest in Japanese slang suggests that he is hoping to become part of the Japanese society and share the social identity of the Japanese.

Apparently, Kenny enjoys interacting with Japanese tourists at work. In his journal, he writes, “I still meet a lot of [Japanese] people everytime I work, which is the fun thing about going to work.” He further states that, while interacting with many Japanese people, “I sometimes felt like I was in Japan.” As Kenny gained competency in Japanese, he explained that he came to pay more attention to the Japanese people. Kenny particularly mentioned that he “began to find Japanese girls attractive,” which he found “strange,” because he had never seen them in that way before. Interestingly, all the singers and actresses that he named as his “favorite” were Japanese, and he never talked about American singers or actresses. All of these examples indicate that Kenny does not simply enjoy the Japanese culture, but perceives the contemporary Japanese culture similarly to the way Japanese youths do. This may suggest that he feels some kind of affinity for young Japanese people, language affiliation that Rampton (1990) defines as “the attachment or identification people feel for a language” which can take place “*across* social boundaries” (p. 99).

### 6.2.3 Summary

Kenny’s trip to Okinawa changed his life in various and significant ways, particularly with respect to his attitude about learning Japanese. First, it clarified his purpose and area of study. At the time of the study, Kenny had been enrolled in his university for more than five years. He said he was just relaxing without any specific goal, skipping one or two semesters in the first few years. After his visit to Okinawa, however, he came back to school, declared his major in Asian Studies, and started studying Japanese very seriously. Second, Kenny’s desire to go to Japan grew strong

enough for him to apply for an exchange program. In order to save money, he gave up living with his roommates and went back to his parents' house. Kenny also chose to work at a snowboard shop in Waikiki, where he could interact with a lot of Japanese customers. Working with his co-workers, many of who are studying Japanese like Kenny, also reinforced his desire to learn about the Japanese culture and people. Third, the trip to Okinawa changed Kenny's attitude toward the use of Japanese at home. When Kenny was a child, he was resistant to his mother's use of Japanese. After he started studying Japanese seriously, however, Kenny would often ask his mother for help with his studies. Kenny also enjoys watching Japanese TV programs and knows a lot of Japanese singers and actors, which is completely different from his behavior as a child. He also sings Japanese songs when he goes to karaoke with his co-workers from the snowboard shop.

What makes Kenny's learning situation different from the other three participants' is that he has an immediate, and very clear goal in studying Japanese. In order to achieve his goal, Kenny makes every effort to gain his expertise by speaking to Japanese people he meets and learning new words and phrases that he hears from Japanese friends. Gaining expertise benefits Kenny in two ways. First, by becoming linguistically more competent, Kenny will be able to communicate with Japanese people more easily. Second, by widening his knowledge about aspects of the Japanese language, such as "group talk," he will be able to share the social identity of the Japanese people to some extent, as Eastman (1985) argues. The fact that Kenny was actually leaving for Japan several months after the interviews and that he had particular people whom he wished to communicate with in Japanese made him more concerned with the *product* of

his learning Japanese, rather than its *process*, which is different from Laura's case. It has also been seen, however, that the process of learning Japanese led to an increase in Kenny's feelings of both language inheritance and affiliation.

## 6.3 Stacy

### 6.3.1 Stacy's reasons for studying Japanese

Prior to this study, Stacy had taken Japanese for four years in high school and one year at university. She said that most of her classmates in high school took Japanese regardless of their ethnic background, because they were often told "that being bilingual – especially in Japanese - will be an asset for an individual planning to live in Hawai'i". In answer to the question "What is your main reason for studying Japanese?" from the questionnaire that I distributed at the beginning of the study, she wrote, "I want to become fluent in the language for maybe my career," and "Become more well rounded." Stacy says in her journal that studying Japanese is a "challenge": It is "a tough language to acquire and like everything else in life, you want to reach the top."

Being fluent is my goal and no matter how long it takes me – I want to eventually make it happen. And having that edge of being bilingual, it'll help me for my future career maybe? I intend to work in the tourism industry, so hopefully the economy gets better and I'll be able to use Japanese while living in Hawai'i.

The fact that Stacy is determined to major in Travel Industry Management (TIM) suggests that she is fully aware that being able to speak Japanese would be economically advantageous in Hawai'i. All of Stacy's statements indicate that the major part of her motivation to study Japanese is "instrumental," as defined in Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model. To support this claim, it should be mentioned that while developing

her Japanese language ability, Stacy makes other efforts to plan for her future. During the period of data collection, for example, Stacy was attending a weekly program offered by one of the biggest airline companies in Hawai‘i. Stacy told me that it was a special program designed to teach high school and university students interested in the tourism industry about “aspects of airlines,” such as familiarity with terms like “flight attendant,” “pilot,” or “ticket.”

Yet, there is another important factor that encourages Stacy’s study of Japanese, which was not revealed in her answers to the questionnaire. In her journal, she said, “definitely being a Japanese American makes a difference” in her attitude toward the Japanese language: “I think that being that I am Japanese American [emphasis in original text], I feel I should be able to speak the language.” Stacy further said that it is disappointing that “Some Japanese people are not able to utter a single word.... One should at least make an attempt to know some words and some information regarding their heritage and ethnicity.”

Stacy told me that her motivation to study Japanese has increased considerably since she graduated from high school. When I asked her if she was interested in talking to Japanese people when she was a high school student, she said, “No, not at all.” In fact, there was a Japanese female student from Japan in Stacy’s high school class, who would often bring “different kinds of Japanese stuff” to school. Stacy says the Japanese student was very nice, but she only talked with her in class and did not “hang around with her.” After entering university, Stacy improved her speaking ability, which she explains changed her perception of Japanese people: In particular, “the way I see my interaction with Japanese people” has been changed. In high school, Stacy was capable of “just

talking with them [Japanese people] and having fun,” or “just saying ‘*konnichiwa* [hello]’.” In college, however, Stacy now feels that she is “learning” about the Japanese people “in Japanese.” Here, Stacy’s improved “speaking ability” is an important factor that increased her motivation for her study and interest in the Japanese culture. The fact that she can exchange ideas with and learn about Japanese people makes it more interesting and meaningful to study Japanese.

### 6.3.2 Stacy’s language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation

#### *Expertise*

As can be seen in her statement “Being fluent is my goal,” Stacy is very enthusiastic about mastering Japanese. She never attended any language school when she was younger, but says, “I wish I was able to go” so that she could have learned Japanese from a young age. Stacy tries to utilize every opportunity available to improve her Japanese language skills, or expertise. She once mentioned in her journal that she tried to write down the lyrics of the Japanese CDs that I had lent her, although she found it was “not easy at all.” She also tries to talk in Japanese to Japanese tourists she meets at work or in town. One reason for Stacy’s eagerness to improve her language expertise is her perception of the advantage of being able to speak a language other than her native language. In her journal, she wrote about the day when she went hiking with her friend, who does not speak Japanese. Stacy befriended a young Japanese couple that she had asked to take a picture of her and her friend. Since the couple did not have a car, Stacy offered them a ride and to have lunch together.

We started talking to them and found out a lot of information about their

background! It's so helpful to be bilingual in Japanese! My friend couldn't really ask them too many questions, so I was very fortunate! But when I spoke in [Japanese], I had to say the English so she wouldn't feel left out and completely lost!

As it can be seen from her comments that being bilingual in Japanese is “helpful” and “fortunate,” gaining language expertise results in Stacy's perception of herself as having communicative advantages. Since most situations in which she uses her Japanese outside class take place when she talks with Japanese people, language expertise, in Stacy's case, is identical to speaking ability. Here, Stacy sees the ability to speak Japanese solely as a means of communication - “instrument” in Gardner's (1985) terms - that has little connection to her Japanese ethnic background.

Stacy makes every effort to improve her language expertise in Japanese. She has two part-time jobs – at a Thai restaurant near her university, and at a longboard shop in Waikiki, both places giving her the opportunity to interact with many Japanese tourists. In particular, she says that the longboard shop, where she has a Japanese boss and the majority of the customers are Japanese tourists, is “the only place that I really talk Japanese.” Stacy repeatedly mentions that it is very helpful to talk with her boss in Japanese, and says, “I wish he'd talk more.”

I realized that working at CHANS really gives me the opportunity to practice my Japanese with my boss! I try to have communications with him and he helps me out when I'm stuck on a sentence. The sad thing is that I only work there 2 times/wk, since I just started this Aloha Airlines explorer program (every Tuesdays) – which was my work day at CHANS. But I'll try to make the best of my 2 days there!

Not only concerned with developing her speaking ability, Stacy also exhibited an interest in learning useful expressions. She stated that, through writing a journal for this study and reflecting on the experiences in her daily life, she realized “how much I wasn't using

my Japanese” outside of class. Stacy’s desire to utilize her existing knowledge about Japanese was evident in her eagerness to learn “restaurant language.” When she works at the Thai restaurant, she often tries to use Japanese expressions that she has learned in class, but she says she is not sure if they are appropriate for the situation. One of Stacy’s co-workers at the Thai restaurant, who used to live in Japan, sometimes corrects her Japanese when she erroneously uses certain expressions with Japanese customers. For example, when Stacy was trying to ask her customers how they were doing, she first said, “*Daijoubu desuka?*” (Are you OK?), which was not pragmatically correct in this kind of situation. Instead, her co-worker told her that she should say “*Ikaga desuka?*” (Is everything OK?), which was more appropriate when asking customers whether they are finding things without any problem.

Stacy’s concern for learning useful Japanese was observed inside of class as well. In the middle of the semester when the data collection was still being carried out, Stacy’s Japanese teacher left for Japan for a teaching position. This teacher had strictly focused on learning new *kanji*. She had also encouraged the students to talk about their actual experiences in Japanese by asking questions such as “*Shumatsu wa nani wo shimashitaka?*” (What did you do on the weekend?). However, due to their low proficiency, the students often found it too difficult to express whatever they wanted to say in Japanese. The new teacher, on the other hand, usually gave a handout with example sentences, and had the students interact with each other using those sentences, while explicitly explaining their grammatical structures. Stacy said that the new teacher’s way of teaching was “so much better” for her; she had often felt that she was not learning anything when the first teacher focused mainly on *kanji* and did not give enough

explanation about the grammar.

Despite her good impression of the new teacher, Stacy was not entirely satisfied with her Japanese class at school. During the period of data collection, Stacy was enrolled in JPN202, which was the last class that she needed to take for the language requirement. Stacy told me that she was not sure whether to continue to take Japanese after she finished JPN202, because she was not feeling that the university Japanese classes helped to improve her Japanese efficiently. When I told her about English language education in Japan, where it is not unusual for most learners to fail to become fluent, even after spending so many years of study, Stacy said, “That’s how I feel [about my Japanese].” Stacy also mentioned that, no matter how much language experience she had in the classroom, she wondered if she would ever be able to “speak fluently.” Instead of taking a class, she said she would rather study on her own, such as by living with a Japanese person and using the language in everyday life. Stacy’s comments suggest that she is strictly concerned with learning the type of Japanese that she can utilize for practical purposes, such as communication and future career, rather than for academic purposes.

### *Inheritance*

As was discussed in the previous section, Stacy thinks that as a Japanese American, she should be able to speak the Japanese language, and it is disappointing to her if one does not know any thing regarding his/her heritage and ethnicity. In her journal, she writes:

Yes, definitely being Japanese American makes a difference in my attitude

towards Jap [Japanese language and culture]. In general, I mean, if I was Filipino, I might not give a rip about how the Japanese life style is and their traditions, etc.

The fact that all of Stacy's family members except her father are able to speak Japanese to a certain degree, and that Stacy's middle name was passed down from her mother and her brother's from her father, indicates that her family, like Laura's family, is also aware of the significance of maintaining and passing down their heritage to the younger generations. Interestingly, however, Stacy continues,

But it all depends on the person and their interests. Filipinos, Haoles, Koreans, or whatever ethnicity you are – Jap may be the center of their world so it all depends!

Stacy's view of the Japanese heritage and study of Japanese contrasts with Laura's in several ways. First, Laura considers it a duty for "every" Japanese American to maintain and pass down their culture, whereas Stacy thinks that it depends on the individual. In other words, learning the Japanese language that is a core part of the culture and passing it down to the younger generations is important for Laura, because it is an issue of "continuity" of the Japanese ethnicity. Stacy, on the other hand, never refers to the importance of "passing down" the Japanese heritage, although her Japanese ethnicity is closely linked with her "personal" life and study of Japanese. Second, having experienced going to Japan and talking to many young Japanese people, Stacy is more knowledgeable than Laura about contemporary Japanese culture, and accordingly, more aware of the differences between traditional and modern Japanese culture. Laura's belief in the significance of studying Japanese to maintain her cultural heritage is solely linked with the traditional part of Japanese culture. On the contrary, while language inheritance influences Stacy's study of Japanese in some ways, other factors that can be linked with

modern Japanese culture also contribute to Stacy's motivation for studying Japanese - communicating with different people, getting a better job, and "becom[ing] more well-rounded," all of which are more practical than Laura's reasons of studying Japanese.

### *Affiliation*

One of Stacy's journal entries describes a Japanese young man who has recently lost his sister in an accident.

Now this I wasn't ready for – he, out of the blue, mentioned that last week his sister passed away! I was like "what!?" I tried to express some sympathy, but I wish I knew how to say it humbly. I could only say, "sumimasen" [I'm sorry]. He had 2 older sisters, I think it was his middle sister who passed on. He tried to explain that she was riding a motorcycle and I think a car hit her. She was riding with a friend. He was wearing a silver pendant with [an] "M" on it in remembrance of her. That really touched my heart!

By saying "*Sumimasen*," Stacy meant to express her sympathy to this Japanese man.

Stacy further stated that she did not know how to comfort this Japanese man after hearing about his sister's death.<sup>3</sup>

I just wanted to console him, maybe give him a hug, but I didn't know how to. I guess that's the drawbacks of being from different countries. And the setting (pool hall) didn't seem too appropriate for that kind of conversation.

In the Japanese culture, in this kind of situation, it would almost never happen that one person hugs another person of the other gender who s/he has just met for the first time.

However, Stacy's comments indicated her ignorance of this fact. She mentioned that she wondered why this man suddenly told her about his sister's death, since she had only met

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<sup>3</sup> It can be assumed that Stacy felt she was using the Japanese translation for "I'm sorry." However, in Japanese, "*sumimasen*" only applies to situations in which one is apologizing for something s/he has done; thus, it is not always possible to use "*sumimasen*" in the same way as "I'm sorry" is used in English.

him for the first time on that day: “How do Japanese people go about this when a crisis like this occurs? Why would he tell me this?” I assume that a Japanese person in the same situation would also wonder the same thing, as talking about a personal matter to a stranger is even more unusual in Japanese culture. Thus, I would argue that what happened in this incident was not typical of Japanese ways of interacting, but was due to this particular Japanese man’s personality. However, it confused Stacy because she interpreted it as a cultural difference, supposing that in this regard the Japanese culture is dissimilar to her own culture, which she expresses in her remark “I guess that’s the drawbacks of being from different countries.”

Different from Kenny, who presents a strong affiliation with the Japanese people, Stacy sees a gap between herself and people in Japan. After her trip to Japan a year prior to this study, Stacy became more aware of the differences between the two cultures which, as a result, made her more interested in learning about the Japanese way of life.

I think my trip to Japan made me a lot more interested in the culture and how they live their lives. They are so different from us and I’m sure our ways of thinking isn’t [sic] alike, so it’s interesting to learn more about them.

It should be noted, however, that Stacy’s curiosity about a different culture was also observed in her comments about topics other than the Japanese culture. For example, working at a Thai restaurant, she is also interested in Thai culture. When I told her that I had taken a trip to Thailand before, she looked very surprised and fascinated. She asked me questions about the people, their lives, and my experiences.

Nevertheless, on many occasions, Stacy showed her strong interest in Japanese life in Japan by asking me many questions. Examples include, “What kinds of local food

do they have up there?”, “What is the percentage of people that get into university?”, “How much is the tuition for university?”, “What do you folks do for New Year’s Day or birthdays?”, “Do you folks have horoscopes?”, “Do you go to concerts in Japan?”, “Do you have bars?”, and many more. Mostly, these were the questions that she came across in her personal life, hobbies, and interests. One day, Stacy showed me a note, which was included in her journal entry, with many questions that she had wanted to ask me about Japan and Japanese people. These questions included: “Do you keep up with the Japan news – or Hawai‘i?”, “Isn’t Viagra pretty hot up in Japan?”, “Ghost stories? Myths, legends, superstitions, psychic readings?”, “Are children discipline[d] in schools – swearing?”, “Heard that school girls skirts are so short – why is that?”, etc.

Stacy often observes and comments on the Japanese tourists that she encounters in Hawai‘i. Stacy talks favorably about Japanese people she meets, with terms such as “humble,” “kind hearted,” and “polite.” When Stacy and her friend went hiking and met the Japanese couple, she took them to a shop where they could try shave ice. In writing about this couple in her journal, she described them as “humble” and “expressive.”

I notice that Japanese people are so humble and kind hearted [emphasis in the original text]. It must be part of their culture! But when they were trying the different flavors of the Shave Ice and our flavors too, they would say that it tastes like this or that... very expressive!

At the same time, however, she sometimes shows her negative feeling toward certain groups of Japanese tourists.

I really wonder about Japanese girls... A lot of them go out with men twice their age! Crazy as it sounds, a lot of them come into CHANS with older men and it looks weird.

Stacy also mentioned some young Japanese women, who carry a lot of shopping bags

with expensive brand names in the shopping malls. Although she does not make critical remarks herself, she implied that some local people might think them funny. In fact, Stacy is aware that some Japanese tourists have a bad reputation among the local people in general, but she says it is probably because “the things that they do” are different: “I guess we see that strange, but they [Japanese people] probably laugh at us, ‘cause our customs are different.” As described earlier, Stacy’s view of Japanese people is different from Kenny’s in that she clearly draws a line between herself and the Japanese culture, allowing minimal affiliation with Japan and the people living there.

### 6.3.3 Summary

Although Japanese ethnicity is one of the influential factors in Stacy’s choice to study Japanese, she is very concerned about improving her language expertise, particularly in spoken Japanese. Developing her oral skills is important for Stacy’s study of Japanese, because she has many chances where she feels it is helpful to be able to speak the language with Japanese people. However, having interactions with Japanese people is not the only reason for her eagerness to improve her language skills. Stacy is fully aware that Japanese language ability will bring her economic advantages in the future. These aspects of Stacy’s motivation to study Japanese can be understood as “instrumental motivation” in Gardner’s (1985) theory.

Stacy’s feelings of language inheritance are different from Laura’s in that the role of Japanese language in the maintenance of Japanese culture is more of a personal issue than an ethnic one for Stacy. While Laura often pointed out the importance of passing down her Japanese heritage to the younger generations, Stacy does not seem to

see it as being as important a matter as it is for Laura. Learning Japanese contributes to the “continuity” of the Japanese culture for Laura, but for Stacy, it serves as a “connection” to the Japanese people and culture in the sense that it enables her to learn about a different culture. This also contrasts with Kenny’s perception of the Japanese language. Learning Japanese language serves as a “connection” for Kenny as well, but in a different sense in that it strongly binds him to his relatives in Japan. Unlike Kenny, Stacy’s perception of the Japanese people as “different” and “foreign” allows her minimal affiliation with the Japanese language.

#### 6.4 Brian

##### 6.4.1 Brian’s reasons for studying Japanese

As was described earlier, Brian started studying Japanese relatively early - when he was in elementary school. In high school, where he had only two choices for the language requirement, either Spanish or Japanese, he continued to take Japanese classes. In addition, as he writes in the questionnaire, Brian likes “Japanese things” such as food, TV programs, videogames, models, animation and wrestling, which provide him with many opportunities to utilize his Japanese language skills. With all this exposure to the Japanese language and culture, Brian had no question in choosing Japanese from among the other foreign languages for the language requirement at his university. On the questionnaire, he says, “I think this [Japanese] is the best language for me to take.”

Brian often encounters the Japanese language and uses his language skills outside the classroom, mainly with his hobbies and interests. For example, he likes playing Japanese video games and assembling models, both of whose instructions are

written in Japanese. He says, “Although I don’t really know everything that is written, I can make out what is being said.” Brian sometimes watches “*Soko ga shiritai*,” one of the most popular Japanese TV programs in Hawai‘i. He mentioned that he is able to understand the main idea of such Japanese TV programs without looking at the English subtitles. Although Brian was rarely talkative in the interviews, on one occasion he became very animated, when telling me about an “interesting” episode of “*Soko ga shiritai*.” He enthusiastically explained the details of the show - what the people were doing, what was interesting for him, and how he felt about the content of the program. Brian also says that his Japanese class helps him better understand the *kanji* that he sees in town. At shopping malls or in Waikiki, for example, a lot of *kanji* is used for signs and menus because of the large number of Japanese tourists who visit these places. Being able to understand Japanese therefore allows Brian access to a wide range of information.

Brian is a motivated, very diligent learner. Both of the teachers in JPN 202 gave *kanji* quizzes at the beginning of every class, for which the students were supposed to learn approximately ten new *kanji*. Unlike many students who mentioned that they easily forget the *kanji* in spite of the quiz, Brian said that he usually studies hard and remembers all the *kanji* he has learned.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that, unlike Stacy, Brian has no concern with the potential advantages that his Japanese language ability may bring to his future. When I asked him if he was thinking of finding a job where he could make use of his Japanese skills, he firmly said, “I don’t think so. Not planning to.” He added that he had no idea as to what direction he was headed in his future career.

Brian has a girlfriend, who has a Japanese mother and who lived in Japan in her

childhood. She is a learner of Japanese just as Brian is. I was wondering if his girlfriend's close relation to Japan might have some impact on his reasons for studying Japanese. However, Brian answered that her influence was limited to his preference in Japanese food: "Just that she got me to eat sushi and now I like it, but not studying." He started studying Japanese a long time before they met, and the relationship with his girlfriend has not added to or change his attitude toward studying Japanese in a significant way.

In fact, Brian acknowledges that, as long as he maintains his Japanese language ability, the consequences are always beneficial to his life. Yet, what is different from Stacy is that he apparently does not *intend* to improve his proficiency in Japanese so that he can eventually take advantage of it. Having little contact with Japanese people from Japan, along with a slightly negative image of Japanese tourists in Hawai'i, Brian has no desire to be part of the Japanese society, which contrasts with Kenny's strong feeling of affiliation. Therefore, Brian seems to have no "integrative" and minimal "instrumental" orientation, in Gardner's (1985) terms. Furthermore, unlike Laura, Japanese ethnicity does not seem to play a significant role in Brian's choice to study Japanese as opposed to the many other foreign languages offered. Even though Brian gave "I am Japanese" as one of the main reasons for studying Japanese in the questionnaire, his journal clearly states that his Japanese ethnicity has little influence on his expectation for studying Japanese: "[T]here really isn't any kind of ethnic pride for me, what I [mean] is the fact that I know some Japanese doesn't really make me feel any prouder to be Japanese or anything like that" (Brian's identity will be discussed in the following chapter).

As suggested above, Brian's study of Japanese cannot be explained in terms of either Gardner's (1985) view of motivation or Brian's Japanese ethnicity. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that he is a very motivated learner, who makes a great effort to develop his language skills. Then, what makes the Japanese language learning worth pursuing for Brian? For one thing, Brian sees studying Japanese as a big challenge rather than as a project related to maintaining cultural heritage, which lies at the center of Laura's motivation and expectation for studying Japanese. He states that the best thing about being able to understand Japanese is that "I feel good because I can see the progress that I have made." In comparing his Japanese class with other classes that he is taking, he also states that Japanese is "something new" for him:

I do feel good that I have learned what I have learned because in a lot of my other class[es] I don't really feel like I am learning anything new. But every semester I know that I will learn something in Japanese because it is something new for me. It also pose[s] a challenge to me because it is something new.

A strong sense of accomplishment seems to construct Brian's positive attitude toward his study of Japanese. Also, he is content with his Japanese class at university, he says, because the classes are very fast-paced. In other courses he is currently taking, such as chemistry and history, he feels that everything is a repetition of what he did in high school. However, "Japanese is different," Brian says. He was happy that his Japanese class in his very first semester at his university covered more than what he had learned in two years of high school study.

In addition to the perception of learning Japanese as a big challenge, getting good grades as a university student is an essential issue for Brian. While he stated that taking Japanese classes after the semester is dependent on his class schedule, he also said that he

is uncertain about the difficulty of the upper level classes: “I don’t wanna get a bad grade, that’s why.” Brian also mentioned that his previous teacher was very strict about grades. Most students in the class including Brian once got Bs and Cs on an oral test, but he got an A for the final grade: “I was happy about that.”

#### 6.4.2 Brian’s language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation

##### *Expertise*

Similar to the other participants, Brian repeatedly mentions that his speaking ability is not sufficient. In his first journal entry, Brian wrote about his problems when using Japanese:

The main problem that I think I have is the fact that I don’t know a lot of vocabulary or I am not very quick with what I know so I have problems using what I know in “speaking” situations. Which, brings me to my second problem of having problems with listening and speaking. I contribute [sic] this to the fact that I don’t use Japanese enough outside of class to really learn it. The fact that I don’t put in a lot of time studying doesn’t exactly help me either.

Brian’s comment suggests that he is aware of his lack of effort to utilize or practice his Japanese in speaking situations. Among the four participants, Brian is the only person who never used Japanese, not even one word, at the interviews throughout the semester. This does not necessarily mean that he has no confidence in his speaking ability in Japanese. Considering the fact that he often uses his Japanese with his brother and his girlfriend, it can perhaps be assumed that Brian does not feel comfortable using Japanese with a native Japanese speaker or with someone whom he does not know well. It should also be mentioned that, despite Brian’s perception of his listening ability as a “problem,” as indicated in his journal, he is actually able to understand Japanese TV programs

without looking at subtitles.

Although Brian seems hesitant to use Japanese with people who know Japanese well, he exhibits confidence in his Japanese language ability in front of people who do not speak Japanese. The following excerpt, taken from his journal entry, describes an interaction between Brian and his younger brother. Brian's brother, who does not speak Japanese, had been looking at his father's old Japanese textbook that was written in *romaji* (Romanized form), and trying to say certain Japanese expressions.

During various times throughout the week I have been telling my brother to do things for me in Japanese. For example I would tell him to get me a drink or some food (in Japanese because he has been looking at a Japanese book and trying to tell me things in Japanese because he thinks he can say things and I won't understand. But everytime I prove to him that I know what he is saying, which I am very proud of because it shows me that I am actually learning the language).

It is noteworthy that Brian says that he is "very proud" of the fact that he can understand what his brother was saying. As the previous section described, knowing Japanese does not make Brian feel proud as a Japanese American, which is totally the opposite of Laura's case. However, the recognition of gaining knowledge, or expanding his expertise in Japanese, does add to his pride as a successful language learner.

As a successful learner, Brian is concerned with maintaining good academic standing. One of the interviews with Brian fell on the day when his class had an oral test. I first asked him if he would like to change the date, but he said he would like me to help him prepare for the test. Oral tests usually require the students to go to the classroom individually and talk to the teacher in Japanese. The teacher gives the student a certain situation, and the student is supposed to have a dialogue with the teacher, using the expressions that s/he thinks are appropriate for the particular situation. Although all the

students were informed in advance about the type of situation that would be presented (the students were supposed to apologize on this test), they had to decide how to respond depending on what the teacher said. For this oral test, Brian had prepared several different dialogues so that he could be ready for various prompts the teacher might give him. Using a Japanese language program that he says he downloaded with his computer, Brian had typed out all the possible sentences that the teacher might say, accompanied by the appropriate responses that he could give back. While I was helping him practice the dialogues, I found that Brian had memorized all the possible sentences and was able to respond to many different prompts.

In spite of his strong desire to be a successful language learner, Brian neither tries to interact with Japanese people to improve his speaking ability nor does he intend to utilize his knowledge of Japanese in his future career. This may suggest that, although gaining expertise leads to his positive attitude about his language learning, becoming an expert, or achieving native-like proficiency, is not the most important goal for Brian. In other words, he is more concerned with the process, as opposed to the product, of his learning experience.

### *Inheritance*

As described earlier, Brian has been exposed to the Japanese language and culture since he was young. This is primarily because of his grandparents, who place importance on maintaining their Japanese heritage by practicing Japanese traditions and using the language. Brian's grandparents also taught him some Japanese expressions and customs before his first formal Japanese language education in elementary school. All of these

experiences with his grandparents made it easier for Brian to decide to take Japanese courses in high school and university. Therefore, Japanese language inheritance plays an important role in Brian's choice to study Japanese.

On the other hand, he was raised in an environment in which his parents were not very eager to practice Japanese traditions. For example, his family does not usually eat Japanese food, although Brian likes Japanese food himself. The fact that all the children in his family do not have a Japanese middle name also indicates that passing down the Japanese heritage is not a high priority for his parents. In this regard, maintaining the Japanese heritage does not seem to be a major concern in Brian's study of Japanese.

Although Brian is not concerned with cherishing his Japanese heritage, he is quite knowledgeable about certain aspects of his ethnic background. For example, he knows the meaning of the *kanji* for his last name, while Stacy, who was in the same class as Brian, did not even know how to write her last name in *kanji*. Through writing a report in his English class, Brian learned that the *kanji* for his last name refers to a certain flower, which cannot be found in Hawai'i. He also mentioned that there is a restaurant near the university whose name is the English translation of that flower. Brian's good understanding of his Japanese last name may suggest that he has some interest in his roots. Yet, his interest in his background is fundamentally different from Laura's feeling of inheritance. As described already, learning Japanese makes Laura feel "more complete" as a Japanese American; as she says, "Learning about all these things [Japanese language and culture] keeps me satisfied like I know all I need to know about my people, my family's past, and myself." Brian, on the other hand, does not see the study of Japanese as something he, as a Japanese American, *needs to* do. Knowledge of

the Japanese language may make Brian more self-confident or increase his feeling of being intelligent as he is studying it, but it has little to do with his Japanese ethnicity.

### *Affiliation*

Unlike Kenny and Stacy, who often speak to Japanese tourists in Japanese on various occasions, Brian rarely goes out of his way to have contact with Japanese people. Brian has never been to Japan and does not have a part-time job where he encounters Japanese tourists, two of the main ways in which Japanese American students in Hawai‘i, such as Kenny, appear to develop affiliation with the Japanese language.

In one of his journal entries, Brian talks about a weekend when he stayed overnight in Waikīkī with his family and his girlfriend. Since it was in Waikiki, Brian “was around Japanese and Japanese people” for the entire weekend, but he did not talk to anybody in Japanese.

...I didn’t talk to anybody because it is kind of difficult for me because I am very bad at talking. Plus, I wonder if I should even talk to anybody because I don’t know if I would want somebody to bother me when I was on vacation so I haven’t really tried to talk to any tourists, yet.

As was seen earlier, Brian is hesitant about speaking with Japanese people in Japanese. In talking about Waikiki, where most Japanese tourists in Hawai‘i generally stay, Brian describes Japanese tourists in a slightly negative way: “To be blunt some of them seem to be very unaware of their surroundings.” He also expresses his feelings about Japanese people who only stay in Waikīkī and simply assume that what they see in Waikīkī is representative of everything in Hawai‘i: “[H]ow ignorant are these people? And to a lesser degree, people who think that Waikīkī is a clear representation of Hawai‘i sure

are missing a lot.” These comments indicate that Brian clearly distances himself from the Japanese people and culture, which is totally the opposite of what was seen in Kenny’s attitude.

#### 6.4.3 Summary

As I have suggested in the previous section, Brian’s Japanese language inheritance, predominantly developed through his experiences with his grandparents, plays an important role in his choice to study Japanese. In addition, he encounters the Japanese language outside class when he is involved in his hobbies and interests. Whether Brian intends it or not, he has been receiving a lot of Japanese input, which makes his study of Japanese more meaningful and beneficial.

Brian’s expectation in studying Japanese, on the other hand, is largely linked with language expertise. While he is eager to improve his competence, he has almost no desire to maintain the Japanese culture through learning the language, nor to utilize his ability in his future career, and he has little interest in interacting with Japanese people.

If we look at Brian’s language expertise more closely, we can see that his perception of his language expertise is affecting his attitude toward learning Japanese; while Brian’s increasing knowledge about the Japanese language and culture gives him self-confidence as a successful language learner, his uncertainty about his speaking ability may make it difficult for him to interact with Japanese people.

## 6.5 Conclusion

The above discussion has illustrated how the focal students are involved in their study of Japanese, with careful attention paid to Rampton's (1990) three notions of the relationship between a language and its speaker. As was emphasized in Chapter 3, a researcher interested in sociopsychological factors in second language learning must carefully look into what is happening in the surrounding context, if s/he believes that language learning is a socially constructed process.

What was observed among the four participants in this study was that gaining language expertise consistently plays an important part in their choice and their expectations of studying Japanese, while language inheritance and affiliation have varying degrees of relevance. For Laura, from the recognition that the Japanese language is the core part of the Japanese culture, the study of Japanese has great importance in terms of language inheritance. Improving her Japanese language expertise is one of the ways to maintain her heritage, but does not necessarily add to her affiliation with Japanese people. Kenny is trying to become fluent in Japanese so that he can be affiliated with his relatives in Japan, which also increases his feeling of language inheritance. Although he inherited the Japanese language traditions from his mother's side of the family, unlike Laura, he sees little significance in learning Japanese to maintain his Japanese heritage. Stacy says that becoming fluent in Japanese is her goal because it is a big challenge. Her Japanese ethnicity is another factor in her choice to study Japanese, but it does not lead to her affiliation with Japan. For Brian, language inheritance was an important factor in choosing to study Japanese. Gaining expertise

makes him confident about himself as a language learner, but it increases neither his feeling of inheritance nor his affiliation with the Japanese language.

What is more, for the focal students, gaining expertise is not identical to becoming an expert. This distinction is comparable to the difference between learners' perception of the *process* and the *product* of their language learning. Kenny and Stacy, who are more product-oriented, are interested in learning useful expressions, since their goal is to be able to communicate with Japanese people. Laura and Brian, on the other hand, are more process-oriented. Although acquiring proficiency gives them a sense of fulfillment, they do not have a definite goal as to how they will utilize their knowledge of Japanese. For Brian, it is the progress he makes that gives him self-confidence, even though his ability in Japanese is not reflected in actual communication. For Laura, even if her proficiency in Japanese is not like that of a native speaker, the process of learning Japanese gives her a sense of being "complete" as a Japanese American.

## CHAPTER 7

### ANALYSIS - IDENTITY

#### 7.1 Focal students' multiple identities

In Chapter 6, I investigated the focal students' reasons for and expectations of their study of Japanese with reference to Rampton's (1990) notions of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation. It was suggested that these factors, especially language inheritance and affiliation, have different significance in the students' study of Japanese. Going further than questions like "Why do they study Japanese?" or "What do they want to gain from studying Japanese?", this chapter seeks to find out the role that Japanese language learning plays in their identity construction. I will seek to address questions such as "What role does Laura's strong language inheritance play in the construction of her identity?", "What is the significance of Kenny presenting strong affiliation while Stacy presents little affiliation?", and "How is language inheritance related to Brian's identity when it plays an influential role in his decision to study Japanese but not in his expectations?"

As I have discussed in Chapter 3, my study adopts "a social constructionist framework" (Holmes, 1997, p. 202), in which speakers' identities are seen as negotiated and constructed, and not given and static. The crucial point is that identity is not an absolute but rather a relative and changeable construct that can only be understood in relation to the social world that surrounds the speaker. Holmes (1997), by using the term "doing gender," highlighted the fact that it is ultimately the speaker him/herself that has the determining voice in the presentation of his/her identity. Based on such a position,

McKay and Wong (1996) demonstrated that an individual presents multiple identities depending on the discourse in which s/he is situated.

I will discuss the focal students' demonstration of their multiple identities, or their different senses of who they are (Peirce, 1995). Given that the data were obtained mainly through interviews and journals, however, it is beyond the scope of this study to deal with all of the participants' identities. My major concern is to investigate how their study of Japanese is related to the construction of their various identities. Here, Rampton's (1990) perspectives of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation are essential to understanding the complex relationship between the Japanese language and the focal students' identity.

#### 7.1.1 Laura's identity

##### *Japanese American/Family member*

The previous chapter suggested that language inheritance is the most influential factor motivating Laura's study of Japanese. Growing up in an environment rich with Japanese traditions and customs, Laura's concerns with Japanese language inheritance as well as her identity as a Japanese American have been enhanced. Laura's belief that every Japanese American should make an effort to pass down Japanese traditions to the younger generations is so strong that it is disappointing to her that her paternal grandmother shows no desire to learn the Japanese culture and traditions.

While keeping Japanese traditions and customs binds the family members "close" and make them "family-oriented," Laura says that learning about the Japanese culture helps her to "feel more complete."

What I meant by feeling more complete is that learning your culture helps you to learn more about your background [and] in the end more about yourself. You can learn where your family came from, what they did to get where they are today, their obstacles [and] triumphs. Learning about all these things keeps me satisfied like I know all I need to know about my people, my family's past, [and] myself.

When I asked Laura if she had ever felt “incomplete,” she said she never had because she has “always been surrounded by culture and rich Japanese tradition ...[t]he closest thing to feeling ‘incomplete’ is not quite mastering the Japanese language.” For Laura, because the Japanese language is the core part of the Japanese culture, mastering the language is equivalent to meeting her ultimate goal of cherishing the culture. In other words, without learning the Japanese language, her identity as Japanese American would remain “incomplete.”

Laura's choice and usage of the Japanese language demonstrated her “doing Japanese American.” For example, she consistently wrote her last name in *kanji* in class, she used her Japanese middle name when communicating with some Japanese people, and she sometimes used Japanese words and expressions both at the interviews and in her journal entries. Laura exhibited the Japanese part of her identity in other situations as well. As an example, I noticed a sticker with her Japanese middle name on her cell phone. Considering the fact that using a cell phone is not necessarily associated with studying Japanese for Laura, her Japanese identity still remains evident when she is not directly involved in the Japanese language or traditions.

Family expectation is the most important component that shapes Laura's attitude toward her Japanese heritage. It is closely related to her identity as Japanese American as well as to her Japanese language inheritance. When I asked her thoughts about marriage,

for example, she stated that she would marry someone who is at least part Japanese and understands the culture.

I think...before, I was more concerned about what my babies would look like. That's why I kind of thought, told myself, oh, I would marry a white guy. You can have hapa [half] babies, you know? But then, then I was like thinking, it just seems more right with a full Japanese guy, like, someone who at least knows the culture, and knows...so that [he] can relate to you. I think that relationships like that might last longer, but, that's just how I feel... There's just more in common and there won't be so much conflicting, like – customs and traditions and the stuff, you know?

While Laura is aware of the advantages of marrying a Japanese man, however, she said she was “mixed about it.” What is most important for Laura is not the Japanese ethnicity but that her future husband accepts the Japanese culture so that they can pass it down to their children. Choosing a Japanese man, she added, would be “to make my parents happy,” because she knows that is what they expect of her. Laura writes in her journal that her parents “have no doubt in their mind” that she will pass down the family traditions to her children.

It should be remembered, however, that Laura shows more interest in Korean pop culture than Japanese pop culture. She can choose whatever she wants for her hobbies, whether it is Korean culture or Japanese culture. This might suggest that Laura's identity as Japanese American becomes evident particularly when she is involved in the study of the Japanese language, traditions and customs, things that she believes she “needs” to or “should” maintain as Japanese American. At the same time, Laura believes that she has the responsibility of meeting her parents' expectations by maintaining and passing down her Japanese heritage. Therefore, when Laura's identity as Japanese American comes into play, her identity as a family member, or as the daughter of her

parents, also becomes evident. The close relationship between Laura's identity as a family member and as a Japanese American corresponds to Ogawa's (1973) statement that "the Japanese American identifies primarily with his family" (p. 36) in practically all circumstances.

Furthermore, Laura's interest in Japanese immigrants other than those in Hawai'i or in the U.S., such as Japanese Brazilians, also presents her Japanese American identity. While she clearly makes a distinction between herself and Japanese people in Japan, she shows some affiliation toward other Japanese immigrants, whose ancestors possibly experienced the same hardships as the Issei Japanese Americans in Hawai'i.

### *Local*

While Laura is very much determined to maintain the Japanese culture, she also takes great pride in being a local in Hawai'i. At one interview, Laura told me about an occasion on which she was mistaken for a tourist when she was walking in a shopping mall with her friend. Some young men suddenly spoke to them in Korean, and then in Japanese, which upset Laura.

...And we were like, 'Hello? We're probably more local than you!'. And then, so we didn't answer them, yea? So then, they said something like '*irasshaimase* [May I help you?]' or something like that. I guess they were trying to figure out what nationality we were.

Laura's statement that "We're probably more local than you" seems to imply that what disturbed her most was the fact that those men did not consider her as a local, rather than the fact that she was mistaken for a tourist, whether Korean or Japanese. This shows her strong identity as a local in Hawai'i, and at the same time, her lack of affiliation with

Japanese people. Similar to the other three participants, Laura's use of Pidgin, especially the frequent use of the tag *yea*, is another feature that marks her identity as a local in Hawai'i.

Further evidence indicating Laura's pride in being local was found in her Japanese class. One day, the teacher commented to the students that she was wondering why many university students in Hawai'i do not seem happy about living in Hawai'i. When she directed the question "*Hawai sukidesuka?*" (Do you like Hawai'i?) individually to the students, most of them, including Kenny, answered either that they are bored of living in Hawai'i or that they want to live somewhere else. The teacher, then, asked if there was anyone who liked living in Hawai'i. Interestingly, of the sixteen students, only Laura raised her hand confidently, while the other students seemed unsure.

#### *Learner of Japanese with limited experience*

Although Laura is a highly motivated learner majoring in Japanese, she often mentions that studying Japanese is very hard work. Toward the end of the semester, she decided to take JPN 302 during the summer and 401 in the following semester, which she said she was "pretty nervous about." She also shows her apprehension about her future study of Japanese: "Sometimes I think that Japanese will be too hard for me to handle. I hope that Japanese will not overwhelm me into changing majors." All of these comments may suggest that Laura perceives her language expertise as insufficient.

Laura thinks that the main reason for her difficulties in mastering Japanese is because she has never been to Japan. The sense of having limited experiences with the Japanese language makes her feel a boundary between herself and other learners who she

thinks come from a more advantageous environment, such as Kenny, whose mother is a native speaker of Japanese. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Laura has a close male friend whom she often practices her Japanese with. She once told me that the two of them were planning to go to Japan together if they ever got the chance. This male student was enrolled in a more advanced class than Laura's class at the time of the study, but Laura said that they got along with each other because they were learning Japanese in similar situations: "Both of us are majoring in Japanese, we haven't been to Japan yet, none of our families speak Japanese as their native language." It is suggested that Laura feels affiliated with her friend who also has limited experience with Japanese, which results in reducing her anxiety and worries about her own study of Japanese language.

### *Woman*

Laura is critical about the way women are treated unfairly in some societies, and strongly proclaims the equality of men and women. She often compares her mother's side of the family to her father's side, the former being "traditional" and the latter being more "westernized." As I have already discussed earlier, this comparison is usually made when she emphasizes how her mother's side has cherished their Japanese heritage while her father's side has not. Since Laura believes in the importance of maintaining her culture and traditions, she talks about her mother's side favorably and father's side critically. One example is her disappointment in her paternal grandmother, who has no desire to learn about the Japanese culture.

Interestingly, however, Laura makes the same comparison in a different manner when she stresses the equality of men and women. In spite of the disapproving

comments that Laura makes about her paternal grandmother's attitude toward her Japanese heritage, Laura is supportive of the life that she has led as a woman. She stated that both her paternal grandmother and grandfather were "westernized" and "modernized"; her grandfather attended a university, which was very rare among Nisei people around that time, and her grandmother was an independent woman with a job at a young age. On the other hand, although Laura respects the way her maternal grandparents have valued their heritage, she is totally dissatisfied with the role that her grandmother has played as a wife, doing "everything" for her husband such as "get[ting] his medicine ready," "cook[ing] dinner," and "clean[ing]." She compassionately recalls how her grandfather was when her grandmother passed away, being "lost" and knowing nothing about "where everything was." With regard to her parents, Laura's mother works and her father does the housework, such as washing clothes and cooking. She observes that her parents are "pretty much equal," which she seems happy about. When I asked her whether she would also expect her future husband to do the housework, she firmly said, "Of course, of course!"

It is noteworthy that part of Laura's identity as a woman overlaps with her identity as a Japanese American. During the time of data collection, Laura wrote a research paper for a class on the topic of the role of Japanese American women in passing down Japanese traditions. Having a solid opinion already about this issue, she said that it was very easy for her to finish the paper. In her discussion, Laura "placed women really high," as having "the privilege of knowing both Japanese and American culture." She claimed that it is the women, not the men, who play an important role in passing down the traditions and culture, an assertion which appears to be based on her own experiences

and observations of her family. In other words, Laura's strong feeling of Japanese language inheritance is closely related to her identity as a woman as well as a Japanese American.

### 7.1.2 Kenny's identity

#### *Japanese American*

Unlike Laura, Kenny's increased motivation for improving his Japanese language skills does not lead to an interest in Japanese traditions and heritage, or Japanese language inheritance, and therefore does not reinforce his identity as Japanese American. Some Japanese traditions are practiced in Kenny's family, but not habitually. For example, his mother, who is from Okinawa, "hardly" ever cooks Japanese food. She usually cooks American food except on a few special occasions such as New Year's Day, when she prepares Japanese soup, which he thinks is Okinawan-style traditional. She neither speaks Japanese – standard or Okinawan dialect – at home, nor does she go to any kind of Japanese cultural events. Similarly to his mother, Kenny has never been to any Japanese cultural events or festivals. The Okinawan Cultural Center is only "two minutes" from his home, yet he has never entered the building.

K: Yeah, I haven't been to anything over here, like...

I: Oh, really...

K: To, like, umm, have you been to, like, any, like, Japanese places in Hawai'i?

I: Hmm, Japanese places... I know there's gonna be a cultural festival in Ala Moana tomorrow. So I was thinking of going there...

K: = Oh, there's a festival?

I: Yeah, yeah.

K: See, I don't even, I don't know.

The cultural festival that I was referring to in the above dialogue is the Cherry Blossom Festival. It is one of the biggest annual events held by Japanese organizations in Hawai‘i, with large-scale advertisement such as posters and newspapers articles. Kenny’s statement, “See, I don’t even, I don’t know” may suggest that, for him, it is only natural that he is not familiar with these festivals.

It is interesting to note that, although his mother cooks the traditional Japanese soup on New Year’s Day, Kenny did not know the Japanese word for the soup, *ozoni*, while Laura and Stacy were familiar both with the custom and the term. Moreover, when I mentioned the dolls that are displayed on Girl’s Day, Kenny said, “We have something [similar to those dolls] in our house,” but did not know what exactly they were. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, language inheritance does not seem to play a major role in Kenny’s study of the Japanese language. Unlike Laura, the words “heritage” and “maintain” were almost never found in Kenny’s utterances. He neither uses his Japanese middle name nor knows its meaning or how to write it in *kanji*. This may suggest that Kenny sees those Japanese customs as traditions that are specific to his family, which are mainly rooted in his mother’s background culture, but not as aspects of his cultural heritage that many Japanese Americans, like Laura, attempt to maintain.

#### *Local/Asian in Hawai‘i*

While Kenny does not see himself as a Japanese American as much as Laura does, his local identity seems to be an essential component of his identity. As was commonly observed with all the participants, Kenny’s use of Pidgin, including the frequent use of the tag *yea*, marks his identity as a local in Hawai‘i. One day, while I

was interviewing Kenny, one of his friends whom he had not seen for a long time walked by. While they were talking, I noticed that Kenny's way of talking changed – his Pidgin accent became very distinct. Some time later, I asked him if he was aware of the change in his speech, and he answered he was: "I always change the way I speak to different people." Kenny went on, "It matters who I speak to," because if the other person starts speaking to him in Pidgin, then "[i]t'd sound weird if I speak to them different [from their way of speaking]." Also, speaking Pidgin makes him feel comfortable, and "makes it easier to speak, easier to communicate." On the other hand, Kenny implies that he perceives Pidgin as a somewhat inferior language when compared to other varieties of English. People in Californian speak "real clean English," he says, which he would call "the Standard English." He also told me about one of his Japanese friends in Hawai'i, who stayed in California and came back with a "clean accent." This shows that Kenny obviously distinguishes locals in Hawai'i from people on the continental U.S. Further evidence for Kenny's local identity was found in his comments about his paternal cousins on the mainland. In mentioning that he was not close to his father's side of the family, he pointed out that he feels "different" from his cousins on the mainland: "*Kangaekata chotto chigau*" (They have a slightly different way of thinking).

While Kenny shows a strong sense of being a local, "Asian" is another term with which he categorizes himself. Kenny sometimes talked about the differences between the Asian Americans in Hawai'i and those on the mainland U.S. Given that fact that Kenny has never been to the Mainland, however, his comments are based either on his observations of people from the Mainland, what he has heard from other people, or what he has learned as an Asian Studies major. Kenny once asked me whether I noticed a

difference between Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i and those on the mainland. He said that he thinks Japanese American people on the mainland “practice their culture more” than those in Hawai‘i, which he believes is true for any Asian group in the United States. Put another way, Kenny observes that Japanese Americans on the mainland are more concerned with Japanese language inheritance than those in Hawai‘i, including himself. This is because, as he explains, there are fewer “Asians or whatever” minority groups on the mainland, and thus, they find it more necessary to make an effort to maintain their culture. People in Hawai‘i, on the other hand, are generally “more open” to different cultures. Japanese Americans, for example, do not have to try to keep their culture as much, since their culture is already accepted in the mainstream community. Kenny says his mother is a good example; although she is Japanese, she is not Buddhist and “doesn’t go to too much [Japanese/Okinawan] events<sup>4</sup>.”

### *Japanese/Mother’s son*

Kenny’s interest in the Japanese language and culture became apparent within the past few years, and consequently, his language affiliation as well as his Japanese identity developed. As was seen in the previous discussion, his primary goal of mastering Japanese was initially to become closer to his relatives in Okinawa. As he continued to improve his proficiency in Japanese, however, his desire grew stronger and he became more concerned about understanding the Japanese people in general. Kenny’s interest in learning Japanese young people’s “group talk,” such as slang, illustrates his wish to share

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<sup>4</sup> Note Kenny’s use of the uncountable term “much” with the countable term “events,” as was seen on p. 96.

the social identity of the inner group people (Eastman, 1985). Kenny's remark that he feels closer to and "more family" with his maternal relatives in Japan than those in Hawai'i also supports the idea that his Japanese identity is stronger than his Japanese American identity.

It seems that his mother, who has served as a pathway to the Japanese language and culture for Kenny, plays an important part in his attitude and motivation for his study of Japanese. In this sense, language inheritance is another important aspect of the relationship between Kenny and Japanese, which makes his Japanese identity inseparable from his identity as a son of his mother.

Kenny expresses his affection and consideration for his mother in many ways. When he talks about his mother's help with his study of Japanese, he repeatedly mentions the fact that he is "always bother[ing] her" by asking her questions, since she is often busy. Kenny's mother has two older brothers in Okinawa. When one of them got divorced, he says, she used to take care of the daughters until she moved to Hawai'i.

K: She would take care of everything. She would, yea? So she used to watch my, um, my...oh, the old, her old brother's daughters.

I: Hmm.

K: So they felt like, like, she was like the mom =

I: = Mom.

K: Almost, yea? But then, she moved here, and then...

I: Yeah.

K: They were real sad, real sad, yea?

Again, Kenny is using "yea," which can frequently be found in Pidgin English in Hawai'i. He further says his mother is "different" from his father. In describing his father, Kenny uses the phrase "*monku tare*," a Japanese term with a slightly negative connotation for a person who always complains. Kenny states that this difference

between his parents is identical to the way women and men were treated in the old Japanese culture, where females were expected to be obedient to males: “She always laughs.... She always does everything. She goes to work, and then, she still cooks, and then, laundry. That’s *Nihon* [Japan].”

The inseparable relationship between Kenny’s identity as Japanese and as his mother’s son, however, sometimes results in conflicting needs, similar to what was observed in Siegal’s (1996) study. Kenny shows a strong interest in young Japanese females. He mentioned in his journal that he has started to find Japanese women “more attractive” than before, and that most of his favorite singers and actresses are Japanese. At one interview, we talked about the possible reaction from his family if he were to marry a Japanese woman from Japan. He said that his paternal grandmother is very much against the idea, “maybe because she had problems with my mom.” Kenny said that his mother thinks “it’s good... but then, she said... if I get married to somebody from Japan or something, then I might leave [Hawai‘i], yea?”. He continued that there would be no problem if he lived in Okinawa, because his relatives are there and his mother could also visit them.

#### *Learner of Japanese/Worker*

Similar to Laura, Kenny’s awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of his learning environment represents his identity as a learner of Japanese. He is also very observant when it comes to other people, such as his classmates, and sometimes showed curiosity about their language experiences, family background, and age. For example, Kenny thinks that Korean learners have greater advantages than other students. While we

were talking about a Korean student in his class, he said, “I find that Koreans can speak Japanese easily.” When I told him that Korean is considered linguistically closer to Japanese than English is, he was surprised and said, “No wonder [her Japanese is so good]!” He added, “So they [Korean learners of Japanese] have an easier time... easier time with their study habit, too, yea? Because they’re used to studying the *kanji*.”

Kenny perceives himself as a learner of Japanese with a unique Japanese language background: He received a lot of Japanese input from his mother in his childhood, but started studying Japanese from scratch after entering university. One day, while we were talking about the so-called *critical period* in the field of second language acquisition, he reflected on his own background and said it relates to his case.

That’s the thing about me. I don’t know if I can ever sound fluent, because I [didn’t acquire the language before the critical period] ... but I think I heard it all my, when I was, *akachan-no* [a baby], *akachan-no toki* [when I was a baby], I always heard it, yea? Although I didn’t speak it. So that’s the difference. So I’m not sure if I ever would be able to speak it.

Kenny is aware that, having a Japanese parent and many Japanese friends, which serves to increase his feeling of both language inheritance and affiliation, he is studying Japanese in a more advantageous environment than many other students have. If one does not have Japanese speaking parents or friends from Japan, he says, “to study above [JPN]200 is difficult.” At the same time, however, Kenny believes that he was not simply given those advantages. Although he acknowledges that his mother has been of great help for his study, he sees the primary reason for his improvement of Japanese lying in the fact that he “usually tr[ies] and practice[s].”

Kenny is working at a snowboard shop in Waikiki, where he says “eighty-five percent” of the customers are Japanese tourists. He meets a lot of Japanese people and

interacts with them in Japanese, which he says is the best thing about working there. The Japanese people he meets, however, are not always tourists. Many young Japanese people, such as students temporarily staying in Hawai‘i, also come to the shop. Because of their repeat visits to the shop, Kenny often befriends and sometimes goes out with them. In this way, he not only learns casual Japanese expressions, but also receives a lot of information about contemporary Japanese culture, which adds to his language affiliation. Therefore, Kenny’s relationship with young Japanese people is not always that of worker/customers, but sometimes that of learner/native speaker of Japanese.

While working at the snowboard shop has provided Kenny with many opportunities to practice his Japanese, it is also a place where he has to deal with various needs. He mentioned that he always tries to be careful not to offend the customers by abruptly speaking to them in Japanese. Kenny once talked about an occasion when he mistook Korean customers for Japanese. When he greeted them in Japanese, he says, they “got offended.” Since then, he has decided to start out in English “just to make sure” he does not upset customers. Considering the fact that Kenny is eager to practice his Japanese while working, but, he should not upset his customers by using Japanese, he has different needs that must be met while at work.

### *Expert in English*

As was seen above, Kenny’s feelings of Japanese language inheritance and affiliation are closely tied to his Japanese identity. The fact that Kenny inherited the Japanese language from his mother’s side of the family and the fact that he feels close to his relatives in Japan suggest that he has a strong *connection* to Japanese people in Japan.

However, despite his strong feelings of expertise, inheritance, and affiliation in Japanese, it is important to note that there is another factor separating Kenny from the Japanese people, which may be understood as his language expertise in English.

For example, Kenny's relationship to his mother often emerges as that of an expert in English and a learner of English. Kenny acknowledges that when his mother first came to Hawai'i and started working as a waitress on the Island of Hawai'i, she had a hard time due to her lack of proficiency in English. He says that his mother now speaks good English, but she sometimes makes mistakes and "you can still hear her accent." Since she cannot understand some TV programs, such as "a real comedy, like really American jokes," she rents videos with Japanese subtitles, or Kenny helps her by translating the English to Japanese.

In the same way, the relationship between Kenny and his Japanese friends, who usually teach him Japanese expressions, occasionally changes into that of an expert in English and learners of English. While for the most part Kenny learns casual expressions or various aspects of the youth culture in Japan from his Japanese friends, which increases his affiliation, at the same time he observes his friends' usage of English as well. For example, he once talked about some of his Japanese friends who could not pronounce "hippopotamus" and "orangutan," which he says was "just funny."

K: No, I was, I was just teasing, because they couldn't pronounce hippopotamus.

I: Hippopotamus?

K: Yeah.

I: They couldn't say that?

K: The pronunciation.

I: Oh, how did they say that? *Hippopo...*

K: *Hippopoto* (try to imitate)... like...

I: *Hipo poto ma...?*

K: Yeah. (laugh)

As I stated in the previous chapter, Kenny does not feel comfortable speaking Japanese in front of Japanese people who speak good English. He said, “I always feel like I would speak wrong,” which gives him some sense of inferiority to those people. The above interaction with his Japanese friends shows, however, that by teasing his friends about their inaccurate English pronunciation, Kenny achieves a sense of equality, which makes it easier for him to speak Japanese with them.

### 7.1.3 Stacy’s identity

#### *Japanese American*

Similar to Laura, whose language inheritance is closely tied to her motivation to study the Japanese language, Stacy’s sense of being Japanese American is also one of the factors motivating her to study Japanese. Some Japanese customs are actually practiced and passed down in Stacy’s family, such as making *ozoni* on New Year’s Day and keeping Japanese middle names. As she states in her journal, being Japanese American “definitely” makes a difference in her attitude toward the Japanese language and culture: “being that I am [emphasis in original] Japanese American, I feel I should be able to speak the language.” Stacy shows a strong interest in her family history. She often asks her grandmother about what happened in her life when she was younger.

In fact, Stacy’s recurrent use of “should” in her statements indicates that she finds it very natural not only to study Japanese but also to maintain her Japanese heritage. When I told her that the Japanese Cultural Center has a historical gallery, which she did not seem to be aware of, she said, “Then, I should go there.” Stacy also feels that it is disappointing that some Japanese Americans cannot even utter a word in Japanese, and

says, “One should at least make an attempt to know some words and some information regarding their heritage and ethnicity.”

Stacy’s boss at the longboard shop, who is Japanese, calls her by her middle name with the diminutive *-chan* ending attached. Although she does not really like her middle name and does not use it on other occasions, Stacy thinks Japanese Americans have Japanese middle names “because of their heritage,” which is true of other ethnic groups as well: “You know, ‘cause they’re part Hawaiian, so they put Hawaiian [names]. If you’re Chinese, so maybe...[they put Chinese names].”

As can be seen in Stacy’s comments about Japanese tourists as “polite” and “humble,” she thinks these concepts are important values in the Japanese culture. She has dated both Japanese American men and Caucasian men before, and feels Japanese American men are “more humble.” She also thinks that she has more in common with Japanese American men, because “the customs that we do” are similar.

S: I find, like, Japanese people, like, Japanese guys, some of them are more humble. Yeah, like, I guess you can really see how the, like, Caucasians are kinda more aggressive... their attitude, you know?

I: Self-centered?

S: Yeah, yeah, they are. He was, he was...

I: Oh, really?

S: And, so, that’s, that’s one thing I didn’t like... He was very... too proud.

And like, Japanese are more humble, yea?

I: Ah-ha.

S: Yeah, that’s what I like.

In describing her first boyfriend, who was Caucasian, she said, “He was like, haole-haole,” indicating that she did not like him because he was not very “humble” or “polite.”

The fact that Stacy feels more comfortable with Japanese American men, who have similar customs and traditions to hers, may also suggest that her Japanese language

inheritance leads to her strong identity as Japanese American.

### *Local*

Of the four participants, Stacy is probably the one whose “doing local” was the most discernible. She would sometime put a plumeria flower behind her ear when she came to class, for example, which is one of the typical local fashions favored by young girls in Hawai‘i. Another example is her use of many Hawaiian words and expressions, both in her journal and at interviews. Stacy demonstrates her knowledge of a variety of expressions, which she said she learned “naturally” as she grew up. She said that Hawaiian expressions are “ordinary,” “informal,” and “normal language with friends.” Examples include those expressions that are more “common,” such as “*pau*” (finished), “*ono*” (delicious), and “*akamai*” (smart), to less frequently used expressions such as “*mahu*” (gay), “*kapaa*” (burned), and “*Aloha Kakahiaka*” (good afternoon). In her journal, Stacy once wrote about a group of local men that came to eat at the Thai restaurant where she works.

Then they started busting out some Hawaiian! They must have just went to one of those luaus! I taught them Aloha Kakahiaka (good afternoon) and I heard them all saying Okole Meluna? My co-worker knew it, but I didn't!! (They were all holding their beer bottles up too! It meant Bottoms Up! Cool, huh! Okole is butt.)

Although not expressed explicitly, this paragraph suggests that Stacy wished she had known the Hawaiian expression that her co-worker was aware of, as can be seen in the sentence “Cool, huh!” It is assumed that there was some kind of implicit agreement among the people in this situation that the level of familiarity with Hawaiian is an indication of the degree of a person’s “localness.”

Stacy's local identity was evident in classes other than her Japanese class as well. At the time of data collection, Stacy was reading a book entitled *Growing Up Local* for her English class. The book is a collection of poems and short stories, some of which are written in Pidgin. Stacy referred to this book as "the best book I've ever read," because it is "very touching" and "very poetic." Her English class was mainly dealing with the definition of "being a local," she said, including those issues of the history of the Hawaiian language in Hawai'i, varieties of English, or "the way you talk." Although it is a required course, Stacy said she liked the class very much because "It's kinda good, 'cause I guess you can relate to it, like, a lot, being in Hawai'i."

As was described in the previous chapter, Stacy enjoys longboarding and works at a longboard shop in Waikiki. She explains that the longboard is very different from the shortboard in terms of not only its style but also the surfer's personality. According to Stacy, people who prefer the shortboard are "determined" and "aggressive," while people who prefer the longboard, including herself, are "traditional" primarily because longboarding dates back to long ago, and unlike shortboarding, does not involve many different styles. Interestingly, she self-analyzes and perceives herself as "laid-back," which is considered as one of the characteristics locals in Hawai'i ("Local Starts With," 1998).

In response to my own experience being mistaken as a tourist, Stacy told me that she is sometimes also taken as a tourist, a phenomenon that Laura experienced as well.

I: Sometimes, you know, people think I'm a tourist

S: So they talk to you?

I: Yeah, in Japanese, I mean at the...shop keepers, they, like, *'irasshaimase* [May I help you?].

S: Yeah. (laugh)

I: (laugh) But that's OK.  
 S: I feel like, when they told me, I'm like... 'What!?' (laugh)  
 I: Oh, sometimes.  
 S: Yeah, they do.  
 I: Really?  
 S: So I'm like, 'What!?'  
 I: Oh...  
 S: Yeah, it depends. Like, if you go to like a Waikīkī shop, they would think, oh, I'm a tourist.  
 I: Oh, really?  
 S: Kinda like...  
 I: What do you do? What language do you respond...  
 S: I'd say... (laugh) 'Hello' (laugh), and they start talking to me in English.  
 I: Oh...  
 S: Yeah, but first they were like, '*Konnichiwa*', and then, I would give them a look like (frown) (laugh)  
 I: Or, just try '*Konnichiwa* [Hello]'  
 S: Yeah, I know, sometimes I feel like try it and play it, you know, but most times, I just respond in English.  
 I: Oh...  
 S: It's funny, my friend teased me.  
 I: Is it a little upsetting for you?  
 S: Kind of, yeah, we joke around, like you know, 'Ah (sigh), what!? I don't look like a tourist'... Yeah, it is, sometimes. But it's just like funny, you know, I don't get like upset too much. (laugh)

In the above interaction, I started out by saying that I am sometimes mistaken for a tourist in the shopping centers. Stacy then responded, "I feel like, when they told me," with an emphasis on the word "me." This indicates that Stacy feels that it is even more inappropriate that she, who may look Japanese but has grown up in Hawai'i, is mistaken for a Japanese tourist. Her negative image of some young Japanese women may also lead to her statement that it is upsetting for her to be treated as one of them. Furthermore, the sentence "sometimes I feel like try it and play it..." may suggest that, although Stacy is in fact capable of responding in Japanese, her weak Japanese language affiliation prevents her from using Japanese and rather causes her to assert her local identity.

*American /Woman*

While Japanese language inheritance is an important factor in the construction of Stacy's identity as a Japanese American, language affiliation seems to be strongly associated with her American identity. In Kenny's case, strong language affiliation contributes to his Japanese identity. Stacy's weak affiliation, on the other hand, illustrates the gap she feels between Japanese people and herself, which reinforces her sense of being American.

For example, Stacy's trip to Japan made her clearer about the differences between Japanese people in Japan and people in Hawai'i, which led to her increased interest in the Japanese culture: "They [Japanese people in Japan] are so different from us and I'm sure our ways of thinking isn't [sic] alike, so it's interesting to learn more about them." When it comes to the differences between Japanese people and herself, Stacy tends to use "America" as opposed to "Hawai'i," implying that she considers herself more as an American than as a local in Hawai'i. In talking about her host family in Japan, for example, Stacy writes,

The daughters are obedient and look so goody goody compared to children/teenagers in America. Maybe it's the media/TV that stains youth in America. I don't remember watching violent programs in Japan – maybe they do have lots of action movies..., but it sure doesn't show in the actions of the teenagers! They are into school – (Cram School) and I'm sure that's why they excel over students in America. It seems that their school system is pretty strict and teaches them a lot of information. I wouldn't mind if I went and had the chance to visit one of their schools... and really see how their school system operates, how the students feel about school and life in Japan.

The differences Stacy observes between herself and the Japanese, however, do not always lead to a good impression of the Japanese people. For example, she talks about some young Japanese women in a slightly negative way, saying, "I really wonder about

Japanese girls,” who often “carry many shopping bags” in shopping malls or “go out with men twice their age.” While Stacy enjoys interacting with Japanese people she meets in town, it is likely that she has a fixed image toward a certain type of Japanese women. Stacy’s sense of being different from Japanese people, therefore, weakens her Japanese language affiliation, and at the same time, adds to her positive identity as an American.

As a Japanese American, Stacy values some aspects of Japanese culture, such as being “humble” and “polite.” At the same time, however, she is critical about some Japanese ways of thinking that she feels are too traditional and conservative. Stacy mentioned her Japanese American friend whose parents are from Japan and who are very strict when it comes to their daughter’s relationship with her boyfriend. It was very surprising to Stacy that her friend could not even tell her parents about the fact that she has a boyfriend at first. She continued by saying that the parents are “really Japanese-Japanese,” meaning that they are very conservative, which contrasts with her own parents.

Stacy’s identity as a woman becomes particularly evident when Stacy criticizes traditional aspects of Japanese culture, a position that was also observed in Laura’s identity. To be exact, Stacy seems to view herself more as an American woman, separating herself from the traditional type of Japanese American woman.

A good example is her statement about “*shogun-type*” fathers. In contrast to Stacy’s father, who does a lot of the housework in her family, the “*shogun-type*” husband “expects his wife to do everything” and does not do any household chores. Another example is “picture brides.” Stacy knows that one of her great grandmothers was a picture bride, which she finds “so disturbing.” In her journal, she wrote, “I’m glad that

isn't happening to me and I have a choice who I chose to marry.... Do they still have that going on in Japan today?" I responded at the next interview, telling her that arranged marriage, although slightly different from the picture bride and not as common nowadays, could still be found in Japan. I explained that an arranged marriage is similar to a picture bride in that a man and a woman first get to know each other through pictures, but is different in that they do not necessarily have to marry unless they like each other; a picture bride must marry the man regardless of her impression of him. Stacy seemed convinced with the idea that unlike a picture bride, a woman in an arranged marriage "ha[s] a say in it," implying that she believes women should be given the freedom to choose whom to marry. She stated that arranged marriage is even more understandable because it is almost same as getting to know somebody through a friend's pictures.

### *Learner of Japanese*

Developing Japanese language expertise, which is Stacy's main focus in studying the Japanese language, makes her identity more explicit as a learner of Japanese. Stacy's concern for language expertise comes primarily from her determination to make use of her Japanese language ability in her future career. This makes Stacy feel that she should learn useful expressions rather than a lot of vocabulary or many *kanji*. For this reason, Stacy liked the new teacher, who did a lot of pattern practice with clear explanations of the grammar.

Stacy is always concerned with how she can learn what she wants to learn about Japanese. As I have already described, Stacy was not sure about whether to continue to

take Japanese courses at her university. She was dubious about how effective taking another class would be, as she thought she could improve her proficiency by herself. This suggests that, unlike Brian, getting good grades is not as important for Stacy as mastering Japanese language skills. In other words, for Stacy, studying Japanese is associated more with her identity as a learner, rather than as a university student.

Being able to understand Japanese, Stacy enjoys interacting with Japanese people, mostly Japanese tourists she meets at work or in town. Unlike Laura and Brian, she often tries to communicate with them in Japanese, and becomes more aware of and interested in the differences between the two cultures as a result. While this allows her weak affiliation with the Japanese people, Stacy's view of Japanese language ability as an asset shows her positive identity as a successful learner of Japanese.

#### 7.1.4 Brian's identity

##### *Japanese American*

Brian, as well as his family, shows little concern with language inheritance, which is evidenced by their minimal interest in the practice and maintenance of Japanese traditions. When I first asked him about his family history, Brian answered that he has “no idea” as to where his ancestors originally came from or what generation he is. Of the four participants, Brian is the only one who does not have a Japanese middle name. In spite of the fact that his American middle name was passed down from his biological father, Brian says his middle name means “nothing” to him. When I asked him why many Japanese Americans have Japanese middle names, he mentioned some Japanese

teachers who call Japanese American students by their Japanese names: “But other than that, I don’t know.”

Even so, the Japanese part of Brian’s identity is apparent. In answer to the question which appeared on the questionnaire, asking the major reason for studying Japanese, he wrote, “I am Japanese, and I like Japanese things.” However, it is important to note that the “Japanese” in his answer essentially refers to Japanese Americans or Americans of Japanese ancestry; he shows minimal attachment to, or affiliation with, the Japanese people in Japan.

The most influential factor constructing Brian’s Japanese American identity is his Nisei grandparents’ attitude toward their Japanese heritage. Brian’s grandparents are not only proficient in Japanese but also eager to maintain their heritage; unlike Brian’s parents, they use Japanese on various occasions, habitually practice Japanese traditions, go to many cultural events, and still keep strong ties with their friends in Japan. Through the close relationship with his grandparents, Brian has gained familiarity with the Japanese language and culture since childhood. As we saw in Ogawa’s (1973) assumption, “the emergence of a grandparent relationship” is a great factor influencing some Yonsei Japanese Americans’ attitude toward the Japanese language and culture.

Nevertheless, Brian’s Japanese language inheritance may have caused him to choose to study Japanese, but not the other way around; that is, unlike Laura, Brian is not studying Japanese with the purpose of preserving language inheritance. In fact, Brian straightforwardly states that learning Japanese does not make him any prouder of himself as a Japanese American. This does not mean, however, that he has no respect for his Japanese heritage: “I just [mean] that knowing Japanese doesn’t really add to that [pride

as a Japanese American] in a significant way.” In other words, language expertise, which is the biggest concern for Brian’s expectation from learning Japanese, is not necessarily related to the Japanese part of Brian’s identity.

### *Local*

Growing up in Hawai‘i, where things from Japan are “pretty common” in the local culture, Brian thinks that he is more familiar with Japanese culture than people on the mainland. He mentioned that people in Hawai‘i all know what *samurai* is, for example, but it may not be the case on the Mainland. Similar to the little understanding that Brian feels people on the Mainland have about Japanese culture is their little awareness of life in Hawai‘i. In his journal, he critically wrote about those “ignorant” people on the Mainland, who mistakenly believe that “we (in Hawai‘i) live in grass huts and run around naked or with coconuts over our breasts [parenthesis in original text].”

By distancing himself both from Japan and from the continental U.S., Brian presents his strong local identity, which is expressed particularly in his critical judgment of tourists who visit Hawai‘i. This formation of Brian’s local identity relates to Okamura’s (1994) observation that “tourism development and Japanese investment have had the greatest impact on the maintenance of local identity” (pp. 1-2). The distance Brian feels between himself and Japanese tourists, coupled with his weak feeling of language affiliation, keeps him from interacting with Japanese people. This may be simply due to his lack of confidence in his oral skills, but Brian’s weak affiliation also creates a boundary between himself and people from Japan, which can be seen in his description of Japanese tourists, who he says “have absolutely no idea” and are “very

unaware of their surroundings.” He further explains that while he would like to help those tourists if they are in trouble, he does not want to “come across as trying to be ‘big headed’ and making them feel that I think they need my help.”

Even after spending all his life in Hawai‘i, Brian says, “I am not [too] familiar with everything in Waikiki.” He does not find Waikiki a comfortable place to spend his spare time, either, especially because he does not like the crowd of people. He continues,

people who think that Waikiki is a clear representation of Hawai‘i sure are missing a lot. I also can’t really understand how all the ‘hustle and bustle’ of Waikiki is viewed as relaxing, as opposed to some place like the North Shore which I think is very laid back and calming.

Again, Brian sees tourists negatively, as those who overgeneralize their image of Hawai‘i solely based on their experiences in Waikiki. At the same time, his description of North Shore as “very laid back” and “calming,” also shows Brian’s local identity.

Within the local culture in Hawai‘i, Brian discusses his position in relation to other local people, such as Caucasians. In talking about the use of the term “haole,” he says, “it doesn’t necessarily have a bad connotation, although it often does.” Brian thus can call his close friends “haole,” however, “I wouldn’t call every white person a haole just to be sure not to offend them,” he says.

#### *Learner of Japanese/Good student*

Brian often states that he feels good whenever he can see the progress he has made in his study of Japanese. This is consistent with the idea that, since language expertise is a great concern for Brian, the improvement of his Japanese proficiency allows him a sense of being a successful learner. As described earlier, Brian gains a

positive identity as a learner of Japanese in various situations outside of class as well - for example, when his younger brother asks him questions in Japanese and Brian understands them, when he is able to understand Japanese TV programs without English subtitles, and when he can figure out how to assemble models by reading instructions written in Japanese. Furthermore, Brian told me that his grandparents had taught him some basic Japanese expressions before he first had formal instruction in elementary school. One example is the formulaic expressions that Japanese people say before and after eating (*itadakimasu* and *gochisousama* respectively), as Brian's grandparents used to use them at each meal when he was a child. Although he does not explicitly say so, the knowledge that he had already gained before starting his formal study of Japanese may have also contributed to his positive identity as a learner of Japanese.

With regard to his study of Japanese at university, on the other hand, Brian's major concern is getting high grades. While he was interested in continuing to study Japanese in the subsequent semesters, for example, Brian was uncertain about whether to take higher classes because he did not want to get unsatisfactory grades. Another example is that, when I was helping him prepare for an oral test, although he had already typed down possible sentences to practice, Brian mentioned that he was still trying to come up with other sentences, because "I don't wanna copy what everybody says." Unlike Stacy and Kenny, who enjoy interacting with Japanese people both on and off campus, maintaining his good academic standing is a bigger concern for Brian, although he is aware that his knowledge of Japanese is beneficial in several ways. This may suggest that when Brian is involved in studying Japanese for his class, he perceives himself more as a university student than as a learner of Japanese specifically.

It should be remembered that getting high grades is Brian's primary concern for every subject. During the time of data collection, Brian was taking Sociology as well, in which the teacher gave twelve tests in total. He mentioned that he studied very hard for the tests, and got an A: "It's really hard. I read the whole textbook, and a study guide, that's over, like, it's like a thousand pages."

While he was growing up, Brian "was raised good" both at home and school: "I [had] to be good enough to get good grades," he says. He went to a private Christian school, which was "really strict" compared to public schools. When I asked him whether children at private schools are indeed better than those at public schools, Brian said, "Yeah, I would think so. At least they know what is acceptable and what is not."

As a hard-working university student, Brian sometimes demonstrates his broad range of knowledge:

B: (Talking about tests on the Bible in school) That's pretty much easy, I guess.

I: Hmm. So there are really serious Christians [in your school].

B: Oh, yeah.

I: Hmm.

B: (pause) It's the biggest world religion.

I: Yeah?

B: 1.9 billion people [are Christian]. Second is, Muslim.

I: Hmm, I didn't know that.

B: Yeah, I studied that.

I: How about Buddhism?

B: That's like third or fourth, I think.

During the above interaction, we were first talking about Bible classes and the Christian students at Brian's school. When I mentioned "Christian," he shifted the discussion by saying it is "the biggest world religion." Similarly, Brian often referred to what he studied in other classes. One day, at an interview, we talked about the local culture in Hawai'i. Some time later, Brian suggested that I should read a reading packet

that he got for his English class. When he brought the reading packet, he actually showed me on what page I could find relevant topics. This may suggest that having a broad knowledge about various topics gives Brian a strong identity as a good student, or as a hard worker, which may contradict his earlier remark that he does not feel like he is learning anything in classes other than Japanese.

## 7.2 Conclusion

This chapter investigated the focal students' multiple identities that emerged from the data, which were primarily obtained from interviews and journal entries. It was shown that studying the Japanese language plays a crucial role for all of the focal students' identity construction; however, Rampton's (1990) three notions - language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation - helped us to look deeper into the relationship between the focal students and the Japanese language. The findings suggested that these notions, particularly language inheritance and affiliation, have different significance for each student's identity construction.

For Laura, who believes that maintaining the Japanese heritage should be an essential focus for every Japanese American, language inheritance is the most important factor in learning Japanese. The study of Japanese not only increases Laura's language expertise, but also allows her to build a positive identity as a Japanese American. However, Laura's perceived limited language expertise, along with her lack of language experience, positions her as a learner of Japanese with limited experience. Laura's weak sense of affiliation toward the Japanese language, on the other hand, prevents her from interacting with Japanese people from Japan and, at the same time, serves to strengthen

her local identity. Laura's identity as woman also becomes evident particularly when she talks about the role of Japanese American women in passing down the Japanese culture.

Kenny's Japanese American identity is not as evident compared to other aspects such as his identity as a local Asian in Hawai'i. This is mainly due to his limited interest in Japanese traditions and customs. He perceives that Japanese Americans in Hawai'i are less concerned with Japanese language inheritance than those on the Mainland, which also reflects his local identity. Kenny's mother, who is Japanese, plays the most important role in developing his attitude toward the Japanese language in the sense that she serves to increase his language inheritance and affiliation. Kenny's increasing affiliation toward his mother's side of the family in Japan has resulted in his strong Japanese identity. His Japanese identity is thus inseparable from his identity as his mother's son. While Kenny displays strong affiliation with Japanese people, his language expertise in English leads to another identity, as that of an expert in English.

Similarly to Laura, as Japanese American, Stacy feels she should learn the Japanese language and culture. Her motivation to study Japanese is therefore mediated by her strong feeling of language inheritance. The more contact she has with Japanese people, the more she becomes aware of the differences between the two cultures, which allows her minimal affiliation. Although Stacy's Japanese American identity is evident, her minimal affiliation toward the Japanese relates to her strong identity as an American, and sometimes as a woman. As a learner of Japanese, Stacy displays a strong concern for gaining expertise, especially her interest in learning useful Japanese. This is primarily due to her recognition that interacting with Japanese people is always a discovery and that being able to use Japanese will lead to economic advantages in the future.

Finally, because of limited interest in his Japanese background, Brian seemingly has no concern for Japanese language inheritance. However, his learning environment, particularly his relationship with his grandparents, reveals that language inheritance is actually the most significant factor behind Brian's choice to study Japanese. Brian's minimal affiliation with either people in Japan or on the continental U.S. positions him as a local in Hawai'i. Although Brian presents his Japanese American identity in several ways, the study of Japanese does not serve to reinforce the Japanese part of his identity. Rather, gaining language expertise is more closely related to his positive identity as a hard-working university student.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

This study has examined the role of learning a heritage language in the construction of the language learner's identity by carrying out an ethnographic case study of Japanese American learners of Japanese in Hawai'i. The main purpose was to go beyond the traditional categories of language learning motivation that have typically been derived from learners' responses to questionnaires. By using Rampton's (1990) notions of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation, my study explored more deeply the relationship between the Japanese language and the four focal Japanese American students.

With a limited number of participants and the specificity of context, the discussion may not be generalizable to other situations; however, the findings in this study may serve as "working hypotheses" (Davis, 1992) for heritage language learners in other contexts as well as for other Japanese American learners of Japanese in Hawai'i.

#### 8.1 Summary and conclusion

Drawing on Rampton's (1990) notions of the relationship between a language and its speakers - language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation - my study aimed to answer two research questions.

1. What is the relationship between the Japanese language and the focal students? How is this relationship realized in their study of Japanese?

The first section of Chapter 5 provided some contextualization in order to better understand the focal students' learning environment. The findings pointed to the strong

presence of the Japanese language and culture in Hawai‘i, primarily based on observations of Japanese organizations, cultural events, and communities. It was observed that some Nisei Japanese Americans still possess a wide range of knowledge about the Japanese language and culture, regardless of their Japanese language proficiency. Despite the strong tie that Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i feel for Japanese traditions, however, it should be noted that the Japanese culture in Hawai‘i is not identical to that in Japan. Some of the Japanese traditions and customs that are still observed in Hawai‘i are no longer practiced in Japan, and some Japanese words are used differently from how they are used in Japan. This suggests that Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i have created their own culture over the past century, which is principally rooted in but is not equal to Japanese culture in Japan.

Similar to most of the Nisei that I met, the focal students also have a strong connection to the Japanese language and culture. However, a closer look at their relationship to the Japanese language by employing Rampton’s (1990) notions of language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation reveals that the four students have differing values for these factors, especially with respect to the latter two. Despite their similarities in family background and Japanese language proficiency, the four students vary in their reasons for and expectations of their study of Japanese.

Laura, for example, has a strong feeling of language inheritance, and believes in the importance of learning Japanese as a way of maintaining her Japanese heritage. However, as she increases Japanese language expertise through learning the language, she becomes more aware of the differences between Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i and people in Japan, which relates to her weak sense of language affiliation. For Kenny, on

the other hand, Japanese has become a language of both inheritance and affiliation through his relationship with his Japanese mother and relatives. By learning the Japanese language, he wants to further his affiliation with Japanese people in Japan. Language inheritance is also a major factor in Stacy's reason for studying Japanese, but she is particularly concerned with developing her language expertise in Japanese. Although she enjoys interacting with Japanese people in Japanese, she displays minimal affiliation with them. Similarly to Stacy, Brian's language inheritance makes it easier for him to choose Japanese from among the many foreign languages offered. However, gaining expertise in Japanese does not reinforce his feeling of either language inheritance or affiliation.

2. How are the Japanese language and learning the Japanese language related to multiple identities of the focal students?

By closely looking at the focal students' multiple identities, the complex relationship between the Japanese language and each of the students was revealed. Furthermore, even if Rampton's (1990) notions (language expertise, inheritance, and affiliation) seem to have similar significance for the students, they are concerned with different aspects of their identity.

Laura's belief that Japanese Americans should maintain and pass down the Japanese culture comes mainly from her family traditions. This strong feeling of language inheritance links her identity as a Japanese American inseparably with her identity as a family member. At the same time, Laura is aware that women play an important role in passing down the cultural heritage, which relates to her identity as a woman. Her weak affiliation with Japanese people contrasts with the strength of her local identity.

Kenny's minimal sense of language inheritance also reflects his minimal sense of being Japanese American. Learning Japanese, while increasing his language affiliation, also strengthens his Japanese identity. At the same time, because Kenny strongly identifies with his mother's side of the family, his Japanese identity cannot be separated from his identity as his mother's son. As a learner of Japanese, he often has contact with Japanese people, including the Japanese customers he meets at work. While Kenny's close relationship with these Japanese friends or his mother increases his language affiliation, this relationship sometimes changes to that of expert in English and learner of English.

Although Stacy's local identity is evident, her strong feeling of language inheritance contributes to her identity as Japanese American as well as motivates her to learn the Japanese language and culture. She enjoys interacting with Japanese people from Japan, but her awareness that Japanese people have a culture different from her own indicates her weak affiliation. While Laura's weak Japanese language affiliation reinforces her local identity, the gap Stacy feels between Japanese culture in Japan and that in Hawai'i is more closely linked to her American identity. The fact that Stacy is against the unequal balance of power between men and women, which she sees as prevalent in traditional Japanese culture, suggests that her American identity is closely related to her identity as woman. As a learner of Japanese, Stacy is especially concerned with improving her proficiency so that she can have advantages in the future and she can have more interactions with Japanese people.

Brian's relationship with his grandparents, which strengthened his feeling of language inheritance, is an important factor in his identity as Japanese American.

Nevertheless, the study of Japanese does not add to his pride as a Japanese American.

While Kenny increased his affiliation as he improved his expertise, for Brian, an increase in language expertise does not result in any increase in language affiliation. Rather, Brian gains self-esteem in his identity as a successful learner or a good university student by recognizing the progress that he has made in studying Japanese.

## 8.2 Emerging themes

In Peirce's (1995) study, the learner's opportunity to speak was sometimes restricted by power relations, and therefore his/her identity was often "a site of struggle" (p. 15). Since the data for my study came primarily from the students' own reflections on their experiences, and I had no access to firsthand identity construction by these students, there was not enough evidence to show this contradictory nature of identity. Yet, despite all the differences among the participants, some common themes emerged from the discussion. They are: identity as changing over time, the important role of family, and the distinction between motivation and expectation in second language learning.

### 8.2.1 Identity as changing over time

As demonstrated in Peirce's (1995) study, a language learner's identity is not given and static but changes over time and space, a phenomenon which was also observed in the nature of my participants' identities. Kenny, who initially started taking Japanese courses to satisfy the language requirement, definitely perceives other reasons to master the Japanese language. After it became certain during the time of data collection that he would go to Japan on an exchange program, Kenny's attitude toward

his study of Japanese as well as towards Japanese people and culture changed considerably. His affiliation with Japanese language and culture was strengthened, and he became more concerned with gaining expertise, particularly with learning more useful expressions.

Stacy mentioned that keeping the journal helped her to see how little she was using the knowledge about Japanese that she has. As a learner, her concerns about applying what she learns in class to other contexts developed over the semester. Although at first Stacy was uncertain about whether to continue to take Japanese courses, at the end of the data collection, she told me that she had decided to continue with higher level classes, as it would be a waste if she stopped studying Japanese. A similar change was observed in Brian's comments, too. Brian initially said he had "no idea" if he would take additional Japanese classes, since the fact that language classes are offered everyday was such a big issue for him. Like Stacy, however, Brian mentioned at a later time that he would register for the higher level class if there were any sections available to him, because he thought he would otherwise forget everything.

### 8.2.2 Important role of family

As has been repeatedly pointed out in recent studies on sociopsychological aspects of second language learning, the fact that researchers need to pay careful attention to the social context surrounding the learner cannot be over emphasized, because language learners are constantly positioning themselves in relation to the social world. In my study, it was suggested that family plays a large role in creating the focal students' learning environment, which eventually helps to construct their identities and attitudes

toward the Japanese language.

For example, Laura's belief that Japanese Americans should maintain and pass down their Japanese heritage is primarily based on her family practices, which value Japanese traditions and customs. Although she shows some interest in other cultures, such as Korean pop culture, Japanese language inheritance is so important to Laura that she says learning Japanese makes her feel "complete" as a Japanese American. In Kenny's case, his Japanese mother plays the key role in his attitude toward the Japanese language and culture. Kenny, as his mother's son, inherited the Japanese language traditions from her, and at the same time, he feels strongly affiliated with his relatives in Japan, which enhances his identity as Japanese.

Stacy's interest in her family history, which is linked with her language inheritance, is mainly developed through her relationship with her grandmother. Learning about the older generations' experiences and hardships makes her identity as Japanese American stronger. Brian's relationship with his grandparents also contributes to the significance of language inheritance in his choice of studying Japanese, although it does not strengthen his Japanese American identity. In this sense, Ogawa's (1973) perception of Yonsei as "the first Japanese American generation to have grandparents with whom they can communicate," as discussed in Chapter 3, is significant for the participants in this study, particularly with regard to their sense of language inheritance. All of the Yonsei students' (Laura, Stacy, and Brian) relationships with their grandparents seem to be an important factor affecting their attitudes toward the Japanese language.

### 8.2.3 Motivation as opposed to expectation in second language learning

In addition to the important role that the focal students' families play in their relationship with the Japanese language, it was found that the students' motivation to learn Japanese is not necessarily identical to their expectations that result from learning Japanese. In my study, motivation is understood as the cause(s) or reason(s) for the students' decision to study Japanese, and it is distinguished from expectation, which relates to their perceived outcomes from learning it. To be more exact, even though the focal students' major concern seems to be to gain language expertise in Japanese, a closer examination of their relationship to the Japanese language has revealed that language inheritance and affiliation play different roles in their motivation and expectations.

In Stacy's case, despite her expectation that being able to use Japanese will eventually bring her economic advantages, what is continually motivating her study of Japanese is the interactions with Japanese people that are happening concurrently with her study. Similarly, language inheritance is the most influential factor motivating Brian's study of Japanese, but studying Japanese does not result in an increase in his feeling of language inheritance. Rather, Brian's identity as a university student, which is constructed by gaining expertise, was more evident than his Japanese American identity. This seems to explain the contradiction between Brian's statement in the questionnaire that the major reason to study Japanese is because "I am Japanese," and his reflection that knowing Japanese does not add to his pride as a Japanese American. Without a qualitative inquiry, my study would not have been able to look further into Brian's answers in the questionnaire and accurately depict the complex relationship between him and the Japanese language.

### 8.3 Theoretical contribution of my study

While the distinction between the communicative aspect and the symbolic aspect of a language has been made by some researchers such as Edwards (1984) and Morimoto (1997), Rampton (1990) goes one step further by proposing two aspects of this symbolic value, namely language inheritance and affiliation. As Rampton says, these two concepts are particularly useful in discussing “the position of individuals as well as groups” (p. 100). In fact, by using the distinction between inheritance and affiliation to understand the focal students’ “connection” to the Japanese language and culture in Japan as well as their “continuity” with other Japanese Americans in Hawai‘i, my study successfully addressed the individual differences in terms of the students’ relationship to the Japanese language.

While claiming the importance of language inheritance and affiliation, however, Rampton does not give a full explanation for the significance of these concepts. By developing Rampton’s (1990) conceptualization, my study has shown that, while language expertise is commonly of great concern for the four focal students, language inheritance and affiliation have differing importance in their relationship to the Japanese language. Given the strong influence and presence of Japanese language and culture in Hawai‘i, language affiliation seems to play particularly a crucial role in the construction of the focal students’ multiple identities. For example, Kenny’s affiliation, reinforced by his relationship with his mother and his relatives (inheritance), is a strong factor in his identity as Japanese and as his mother’s son. On the contrary, Laura, Stacy, and Brian present weak language affiliation. The distance they feel between themselves and Japanese people is particularly linked with Laura’s identity as Japanese American and

local, Stacy's identity as American and woman, and Brian's identity as local in Hawai'i.

In short, how the focal students see the Japanese language and culture in Japan affects their positioning of themselves, and as a result, their sense of who they are. Therefore, in other heritage language contexts as well, I suggest that by looking at heritage language learners' affiliation more closely, researcher can gain a deeper understanding of their relationship to the target language.

#### 8.4 Implications

Throughout the discussion, I have suggested that, for Japanese American students in Hawai'i, Japanese is not equal to many other foreign languages that are taught at universities, but rather is a language of greater importance in their lives because of its historical and cultural meaning and its significant role in forming their multiple identities.

My study has some implications for the current debate regarding the foreign language requirement for undergraduate students at the University of Hawai'i. Some faculty have complained that the language requirement takes up too many credits, and that few students become fluent after taking the language for two years. They question the necessity of 16 credits of a language requirement, which "consumes a lot of students' time ... that would be better spent taking classes in their majors" ("Language Credit," 2000), especially in technical fields such as science, engineering, and nursing. On the other hand, other faculty members argue for the importance of second language learning as they feel it contributes to the understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity. In addition to the communicative merit of learning a foreign language, they emphasize the

psychological effects on the learner as well: Students can be “fully-realized” by learning a second language, because “language brings with it the study of another culture,” and “[h]aving to change your thinking opens you up to new experiences” (“Language Credit,” 2000).

However, my study has shown that there are other reasons why learning a second language is important for students. It was found that some Japanese American students see the significance of their study of Japanese in a slightly different way. That is, learning the Japanese language cannot be simply equated to “the study of another culture” or “new experiences” as described in the above statements. While the focal students are commonly concerned with developing their Japanese language expertise, language inheritance and affiliation are also of great importance to them. Obviously, the study of Japanese for these students means a lot more than merely to “get in touch with the culture of their grandparents” (“Second Language,” 2000). Furthermore, while it may be true that some Japanese American students, like Kenny, initially see the reason for studying Japanese as merely fulfilling the requirement, it should be remembered that their relationship to Japanese is never static. In Kenny’s case, for example, his attitude toward Japanese has greatly changed in the past few years, and consequently, language inheritance and affiliation have also become important factors in his study.

Additionally, it was seen that HL learners are sometimes more concerned with the process than the product of their learning. In the debate mentioned above, the criticism concentrates on the insufficient competency that students achieve through the two-years language requirement in the present situation, which can be seen as the product of their learning. However, we should not forget that some students may place a greater

importance on the symbolic value of the language, which is concerned more with the process of their learning. Given the fact that students are constantly constructing their identity in the process of learning the language, this symbolic aspect, involving both language inheritance and affiliation, should not be neglected.

Considering the fact that students' grades are decided primarily on their performance in the language, it stands to reason that language expertise is the greatest concern for many students. Yet, learning a heritage language also entails other factors, such as the development of the students' sense of inheritance and affiliation, which is closely tied to the construction of their identity. In discussing the necessity of the foreign language requirement, educators should not neglect the fact that in Hawai'i, there are a great number of heritage language learners for whom the target language is not merely a foreign language but a language to which they relate in differing degrees in terms of expertise, inheritance, and affiliation. To better meet heritage language learners' needs, the curriculum should reflect and attend to the students' needs of not only language expertise but of language inheritance and affiliation as well.

In 1996, the Standards for Foreign Language Learning were established to standardize the content and improve the quality of foreign language education in the U.S. The basic idea underlying these standards is that, while most teaching in foreign language classrooms have traditionally placed a greater importance on *how* (grammar) to say *what* (vocabulary), the emphasis of foreign language education should be to prepare students to be able to *communicate* in the target language. In order to provide the students with the knowledge of how, when, and why to say what to whom, the standards have five goal areas, or five C's - Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and

Communities – each of which is followed by several content standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996). In implementing the Standards for Foreign Language Learning, Hijirida, Ishida and Yamamoto (1999) provide Japanese National Standards so that Japanese language education can better meet the needs of its learners. These standards also include examples of possible activities that are designed to achieve the five C's, which Japanese language teachers may actually use in their classrooms.

While the national standards are important in creating general criteria for program development, educators also need a sufficient understanding of the context where the language learning is actually taking place, because, as was emphasized throughout the discussion, second language learners are not simply gaining linguistic knowledge but are also constructing their identity in relation to the social world through learning the target language. By looking at individual learners and investigating their relationship to the Japanese language for an extended period of time, my study has provided some evidence that addresses the specificity of the Hawai'i context. Without a qualitative inquiry, the students' actual needs and involvement with the Japanese language outside class but within the specific context would not have been revealed.

Turning to the five C's, we see that my study is particularly relevant to Comparisons and Communities, which are defined respectively in the Japanese National Standards as “to compare Japanese linguistic and cultural characteristics with one's own” and “to become involved in communities at home and around the world using the Japanese language” (Hijirida et al., 1999, p. 6). My study shows that Comparisons and Communities may be very important in some Japanese American students' study of

Japanese in Hawai‘i, particularly with regard to their Japanese language affiliation and inheritance. As an example, through learning the Japanese language and culture, Laura and Stacy are constantly “comparing” themselves with the Japanese people in Japan, which is closely linked with their affiliation. Similarly, Kenny’s language affiliation increased as he became more aware of the similarities between himself and the Japanese people. Laura also talked about going to the *Bon* dance with her family when she was little. Although she rarely goes to Japanese cultural festivals now, the sense of being part of the Japanese American “community” in Hawai‘i, which is maintained by practicing Japanese customs and traditions, is greatly related to her study of Japanese as well as to her identity as a Japanese American. Brian’s engagement in hobbies in which he uses Japanese can also be considered as an example of a way to achieve the fifth goal, Communities. To be more specific, one of the content standards placed under Communities in the Japanese National Standards states, “Students show evidence of becoming *life-long learners* [italics in original text] by using the Japanese language for personal enjoyment and enrichment,” which is exactly what Brian does outside of class.

Although this study could not explore the needs of all the students enrolled in Japanese language courses in Hawai‘i, the findings have provided some implications as to how Japanese language teachers might modify the curriculum to accommodate the students’ needs more sufficiently. As was repeatedly pointed out, students’ language affiliation and inheritance are particularly important in the construction of their identity. In order to successfully integrate the two goals of Comparisons and Communities into the classroom, teachers of Japanese should acknowledge the crucial role that both the Japanese language and its study play in the students’ identity construction, particularly

with regard to their feelings of affiliation to and inheritance of the Japanese language.

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