

The Adaptation of NIKKEI to Japan
-The Case of Advanced Japanese Speaking Overseas Students-
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There has been an increase in the number of Japanese descent coming to Japan for work, and therefore an increase in the research surrounding these people. Most of the previous research has focused on people involved in manual labor. This paper focuses on overseas students. In particular, whether or not there is a relationship between the student's Japanese language ability and their adaptation to Japan. If the student has not adapted to Japan -why not ?

This research was conducted using Life History Interviews. The difference between this style of interview and a regular interview is that the subject talks freely about any topic. The discussion is not guided in a certain direction. In addition to transcriptions of the interviews, this research is supported by frameworks developed in previous research.

The subjects are 16 Japanese descents -NIKKEI- from South America, residing in Sapporo. Three of the subjects, R, E and N were studied in more detail. R is from Argentina, E is from Paraguay and N is from Brazil. R talks a little about many things, using knowledge from the mass media to talk in general about Japanese society, and not as much about personal experiences. E's discussion is based on interactions with Japanese people, in particular, Japanese customs surrounding interpersonal relations. As a child in Brazil, N developed a deep interest in Japanese dance, NIHON-BUYOU, and KENDO and has found Japan through these cultural activities. N seems to have acquired courtesies, manners and customs unique to Japan.

The common thread in these undirected interviews was "customs". However each person spoke on a different theme. In addition, N has had the best adjustment to Japan, and R is the least adjusted. E is in between. There appear to be three common reasons for this. By examining the Life History Interviews of the three people, it becomes clear, where each person's values are. However, it was impossible to determine whether or not there is a relationship between the subject's language ability and the adaptation to Japan. Nevertheless, it can be said that in the case studies, there is a need to focus on the learning process and environment. Specific reasons for lack of adaptation were not discovered. It may have something to do with length of time in Japan. These are areas for future research.

Interviews varied from subject to subject. It is important for the researcher to realize that subjects talk about things in the order of personal importance; most important things first. More attention needs to be paid to issues of importance to the subjects, and then this needs to be applied to Japanese language education.