

Abstract

Motivation for Brazilians living in Japan to learn Japanese -In an environment where they can live in their native language-

The Graduate School of Global Studies at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
Master's Program in Japan Studies
Recurrent Course in Japanese Language Education

Yuki Uchiyama

5320102

16. Jul. 2012

In this study, I conducted a qualitative study of the motivations of Brazilians living in Japan to learn Japanese based on the life stories of four Brazilians.

The research themes were the following two points. (1) To clarify the motivations of Brazilians to learn Japanese despite living in an environment in which they are not required to use Japanese, as well as having time constraints due to work. (2) To understand the reasons why other Brazilians around them are not learning Japanese. By clarifying these two points, it is possible to know what Brazilians living in Japan think of Japanese society. It also presents an opportunity to review whether the various Japanese language learning support measures that Hamamatsu City, the host society, has been working on so far, are appropriate.

For the analysis, the mini-theory of "organic integration theory" that constitutes the self-determination theory in motivation was used, and it was classified into a total of six stages: non-motivation, four stages of extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation. The factors in their motivation, in particular, how it relates to sociocultural factors was also considered.

It became clear that there were various motivations for learning Japanese in the lives of the four people. I was also able to clarify the factors behind their motivations. Commonly seen motivational factors were "family," "good work and life," and "fondness for Japan (people, culture)," and it was shown that these factors motivated students to learn Japanese. The "family" motivation suggested that Brazilian life stages are changing in Japan. It could be considered that "Fondness for Japan (people, culture)" indicates there is little social and psychological distance, suggesting that

sociocultural factors have an impact on their motivation for learning. One of the four interviewees was a Brazilian born and raised in Japan. Based on the study of this person, it was inferred that the socio-cultural factor of "ethnic identity" influenced their motivation to learn Japanese.

It was also suggested that the motivation to learn Japanese may be hindered. It was shown that sociocultural factors such as "social class", "negative contact with target language speakers", and "ethnic identity" may have an impact as obstacles.

The reason of not having the time to study Japanese due to being busy with work is often thought to be personal circumstances, but based on these interviews, I found that due to the indirect employment system, they are forced into an unstable living environment. In other words, there are situations where they want to learn Japanese but cannot.

The interviewees also talked about work environments that do not require Japanese. These situations suggest that the sociocultural factor "social class" may be discouraging Brazilians from learning Japanese.

It was also shown that "negative contact with the target language speaker" hinders their motivation to learn Japanese. An interviewee revealed that he had been ridiculed for speaking in Japanese. It was also suggested that the socio-cultural factor "ethnic identity" influences their motivation for learning Japanese. From this analysis, we need to consider what is effective in stimulating the motivation to learn the local language, Japanese, without denying the native language and culture that underpins their identity.

In addition, it was indirectly shown that some Brazilians are not motivated to learn Japanese. These factors were socio-cultural factors such as "social class", "no contact with the target language", and the "language policy of Hamamatsu". From the factors of "social class" and "no contact with the target language", the current situation suggests that social structures did not change even after the significant impact of the Lehman shock, which led to Brazilians not having any motivation to learn Japanese as they continued to live in Japan.

The interviewee also mentioned the Portuguese interpreting service provided by the City Hall. It was suggested that the Portuguese interpreting service, which has been provided as one of the measures to promote multicultural co-existence, may be a factor that does not motivate Brazilians to learn Japanese in some cases.