

2000

# Motivational factors among Japanese F-1 deaf and hard-of-hearing students

Hideyuki Monoi  
*San Jose State University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd\\_theses](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses)

---

## Recommended Citation

Monoi, Hideyuki, "Motivational factors among Japanese F-1 deaf and hard-of-hearing students" (2000). *Master's Theses*. 2057.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.hwdy-r2xt>  
[https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd\\_theses/2057](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/2057)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@sjsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@sjsu.edu).

## **INFORMATION TO USERS**

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**UMI<sup>®</sup>**

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA  
800-521-0600**



# **MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS AMONG JAPANESE F-1 DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS**

**A Thesis**

**Presented to**

**The Faculty of the Division of  
Special Education & Rehabilitative Services  
Deaf Education Program  
San Jose State University**

**In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts**

**by**

**Hideyuki Monoi**

**August 2000**

**UMI Number: 1400670**

**UMI<sup>®</sup>**

---

**UMI Microform 1400670**

**Copyright 2000 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.**

**All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against  
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

---


**Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346**

© 2000

Hideyuki Monoi

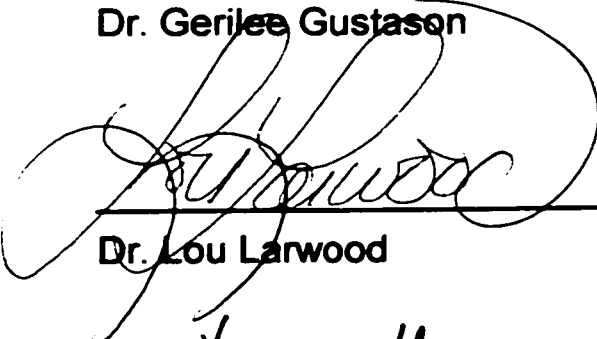
**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

**APPROVED FOR THE DIVISION OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION & REHABILITATIVE  
SERVICES**



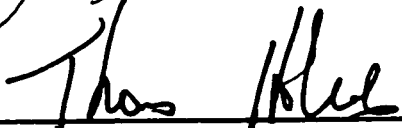
---

**Dr. Gerilee Gustason**



---

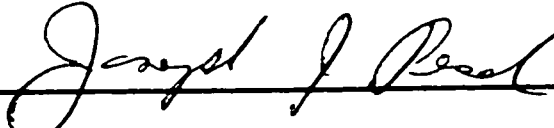
**Dr. Lou Larwood**



---

**Dr. Thomas Holcomb, Ohlone College**

**APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY**



---

## **ABSTRACT**

**A small but steady number of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (H/H) students from overseas have come to the United States with unique experiences and cultures. Due to their limited hearing, usually they master American Sign Language (ASL) before or simultaneously with learning to read and write English. Despite such a demanding task, most of them satisfy their goals of achieving a satisfactory level of English comprehension in a comparatively short period of time.**

**The research conducted was qualitative; it was composed of opinion surveys and interviews given to six Deaf and H/H students from Japan. Its primary purpose was to find motivational factors which contributed to these students' learning of English. Once data were collected, their responses were correlated with each other and analyzed in depth.**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**This study is just a beginning, a small first step. To make this small but firm step, I was fortunate to have great people who assisted me in divers ways. Thanks to my wife, Akiko Monoi, who supported me spiritually from the start, even before my admission to San Jose State University; Dr. Thomas K. Holcomb who provided me clear and specific advice and guided my research path; Prof. Leslie S. Colon who generously shared enormous time and energy with me to work as not only an editor, but also a mentor; Dr. Madoka Kanemoto who illuminated my research path; Dr. Lou Larwood who watched me directly and indirectly and advised me in difficult times; Sue Owen who counseled me on my writing styles; Dr. Theodore J. Montemurro who helped me to cope with my research frustrations and aided me in my comprehension of APA style; and Dr. Lewis Aptekar who suggested how to design and conduct my research. Most of all I would like to thank Dr. Gerilee Gustason for admitting me into the Deaf Education program, which provided a great opportunity to analyze my deafness and also my life's journey so far. My sincere thanks go to the six people who were willing to be interview subjects. Without a doubt, this study could not have been done without their help. After all, I would like to dedicate my work to my parents, Mr. Hidebumi and the late Mrs. Teruko Okayasu, who must have been shocked upon learning that I had become deaf, and whose strict discipline gave me the opportunity to compete successfully in the hearing world.**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>Problem Statement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Research Questions</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Delimitation</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Definition of Terms</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	
<b>Brief Overview on Historical Background</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>F-1 Deaf and H/H Students</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>F-1 Deaf and H/H Students and Motivational Factors</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</b>	
<b>Aim of This Study</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Subjects</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Procedure</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Review of Research Design</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA</b>	
<b>Background of F-1 Deaf and H/H students</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>What motivated the F-1 Deaf and H/H students to learn English?</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>What factors account for the F-1 Deaf and H/H student's persistence in learning English?</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>How future goals set by the F-1 Deaf and H/H students interact with their motivation?</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS</b>	
<b>Implications</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Suggestions for further studies</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Closing</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Problem Statement**

**Ohlone College draws its students from around the Bay Area bounded by San Francisco to the north and San Jose to the south. This college provides a unique program for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (H/H) high school graduates and community members; approximately 400 Deaf and H/H students are admitted annually. This program is called the Deaf Preparatory Program - an independently designed program which is managed by a Deaf dean. According to the Ohlone College 1999 - 2000 Catalog, "Ohlone College has one of the largest and most comprehensive programs in California designed to meet the academic and vocational needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students" (p.11). Of the 400 admitted annually, roughly 150 or more Deaf and H/H students were receiving educational services in this two-year educational institute during the spring semester 2000. Some of them were placed into its mainstream classes with special support services to meet their needs, such as sign language interpreters, real time captioners, and tutoring.**

**As of April 2000, of those 150 students, approximately 45 were foreign-born, according to the Research and Planning office of Ohlone College. Their diverse backgrounds vary widely from adults from migrant families, to individuals adopted by American families, to F-1 visa status students. These F-1 visa status students (hereafter, termed as "F-1 student(s)" throughout this study) are classified by the Immigration and Naturalization Service as non-immigrants who are lawfully staying in the United States for a restricted period of time with their purpose of pursuing academic goals. Ohlone College maintains a comparatively stable**

annual enrollment of foreign-born Deaf and H/H students and has adopted a state approved vocational rehabilitation course exclusively designed for Deaf and H/H migrants.

In order to clarify what problem faces the foreign-born Deaf and H/H students at Ohlone College, some basic information on the relationship between Deaf people and English is provided. The communication mode of the Deaf is visual-gestural. Since information conveyed by sound is useless to Deaf people, spoken English is an essentially alien language for those whose natural language is sign language that is performed in a non-sound mode using hand movements and facial expressions (Battison, 1980; Bellugi, 1980; Baker, 1980; and Padden & Humphries, 1988). Deaf individuals acquire their reading and writing skills through connecting visual concepts to printed English words and phrases; whereas hearing individuals become skilled in reading and writing skills through connecting meaningful sounds to printed words. In this view, Deaf individuals would have to develop their skills in ways suited to their visual channel. The process of learning written English connected with spoken English occurs in several possible scenarios. Two examples are: 1) learning English as a second language, as in the case of beginning to learn English after having mastered sign language; and 2) learning English through a bilingual approach of being exposed early in life to written English as well as sign language. No matter which approach they take in learning English, this process of language acquisition demands on extended period of time of painstaking work.

Because of the above mentioned fact, in the field of education it is not uncommon to hear that many Deaf children are struggling to learn English while others achieve the same reading skill level as hearing children do. Deaf

children's struggle with English cannot be attributed solely to one cause. After numerous studies, teachers of Deaf children have also been struggling to know the reason why and are still groping to find solutions.

The Deaf and H/H students of Ohlone College are no exception. According to the English instructional staff of the Deaf Preparatory Program department, DEAF172B & 173B of the Deaf department is designed for its students to achieve reading and writing ability at the "high intermediate to advanced" level (see Appendix). Reviewing the Deaf and H/H students' academic records computed by the Research and Planning office, only 150 students out of 3,000 at a rough estimate cleared the hurdle of DEAF172B & 173B since 1984. Some of the 150 students advanced to higher levels of English such as the mainstream ENGL101A and above. ENG101A is accepted for credit to enter the California State University and the University of California campuses. The number of 150 Deaf and H/H students also included approximately 60 foreign-born Deaf and H/H students who cleared that hurdle. These 60 foreign-born Deaf and H/H students included 15 F-1 Deaf and H/H students.

It is amazing to see that such F-1 Deaf and H/H students, who were accepted to the community college with below post-secondary level English skills, successfully cleared the hurdle within three or four years, depending on the individual.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to delineate motivational factors that contributed to F-1 Deaf and H/H students' achievement of English skills in a short period of time. As many studies have indicated, language acquisition is a cumulative

process which occurs over time. It can be hypothesized that humans could accomplish a desirable reading skill level depending on how long they take to achieve it. It is optimistic to say that this accomplishment can be completed in a year, or on the other hand, it could take a lifetime. In reality, it is considered average for a hearing person to take between 15 and 17 years from birth to achieve the level which makes it possible to survive in a society where spoken and written English is dominant. The reading level of the DEAF173B of the Deaf program at Ohlone College is designed to meet "high intermediate to advanced" level students equal to the level of hearing adolescent's 11th or 12th grade in the current education system. This level of reading English skills at the upper secondary school ages is assumed to be sufficient to survive in the real world. In order to achieve the DEAF173B level, in theory, a general population of Deaf and H/H students must have gone through at least 15 years since birth to develop their ability to adeptly manage English.

Once an F-1 Deaf and H/H student arrives in the United States, the amount of time spent in acquiring sufficient skills is influenced by the age of the individual and by the length of time staying in this country. The older the student is upon arriving and the shorter time the student has been exposed to English, the longer it takes to acquire the necessary skills. The F-1 Deaf and H/H student could have taken at least two years to reach the level of comprehensive reading skills because Ohlone College is a junior college providing a two-year education. Most F-1 Deaf and H/H students take from two to five years to achieve that level. It is fascinating to see how quickly they are able to achieve college level reading skills.

Hopefully this study will provide educators some clue to help them work better with native-born Deaf children who have difficulty learning English in schools such as at the California School for the Deaf in Fremont and in other Deaf programs at regular schools around the Bay Area and across the nation.

### The Research Questions

1. What motivated the F-1 Deaf and H/H students to learn English?
2. What factors account for the F-1 Deaf and H/H students' persistence in learning English?
3. How a future goal set by the F-1 Deaf and H/H students interacts with their motivation?

### Delimitation

To simplify the process of analyzing and of interpreting raw data, three limitations were designed. First, this study limited its focus to F-1 Deaf and H/H students associated with Ohlone College. The study excluded hearing individuals due to discrepancy between F-1 Deaf and H/H students and F-1 hearing students, despite both them being labeled the same category "F-1."

Secondly, the study also excluded native-born Deaf and H/H students as well as all categories of foreign-born Deaf and H/H students other than F-1 Deaf and H/H students. As seen in the attached organization chart of Ohlone College, the Deaf Preparation Program was comprised of five major categories: 1) ESL (English as Second Language), 2) College preparatory, 3) Workability III, 4) Literacy, and 5) IUPP (Intensive University Preparatory Program) (Appendix). However, workability III category was newly established as a safety net for Deaf

and H/H immigrants to provide pre-vocational training for them while taking advantage of federal funds designated for that purpose. Although these Deaf and H/H immigrants fell into the "foreign-born" category, they were completely different from the students in actual college level. According to a counselor at Ohlone College, those workability III students were denied education in their native countries resulting in their attainment of only minimal language skills. Due to such an uneven contextual premise of "foreign-born Deaf and H/H students" at Ohlone College, this study excluded all foreign-born Deaf and H/H students other than F-1 Deaf and H/H students. Its outcome was anticipated to have implications which apply to both native-born Deaf and H/H students and that foreign-born Deaf and H/H students.

Thirdly, only F-1 Deaf and H/H students from Japan were subjected for this study to make cultural analysis specific and the research findings clear. The author of the study is himself an F-1 native Japanese Deaf student. This person is intimately familiar with the culture of Japan and how to distinguish between the Japanese point of view and American point of view; as a result, he was qualified to be an investigator. Throughout this study, he avoided having any bias and stayed neutral in his role.

This study focused solely on the reading skills of F-1 Deaf and H/H students. Whether the person stood at the level of DEAF171B and above was set as a measurement of the individual's comprehension of English reading skills.



## Definition of Terms

### **Foreign-born Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (H/H) individuals:**

This term is used to describe both immigrants and non-immigrants who are Deaf and H/H. Grown-ups of migrant families, persons adopted by U.S. families (generated by the Korean war, the Vietnam war, and very recently the Bosnian war), and F-1 students are examples of individuals in this category. Varying with the nature of the circumstances of each individual's arrival in the United States, English is the student's second or third language to be learned simultaneously with or sequentially with American Sign Language (ASL). Some individuals come to the United States with no language, and their learning of English becomes even more challenging.

### **F-1 visa status students (F-1 students):**

As defined in the web site of *the United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Visa Services* (1998), the Immigration and Nationality Act specifies two nonimmigrant visa categories for persons wishing to study in the United States, "A nonimmigrant class of admission, an alien coming temporarily to the United States to pursue a full course of study in an approved program in either an academic (college, university, seminary, conservatory, academic high school, elementary school, other institution, or language training program) or a vocational or other recognized nonacademic institution." The "F" visa is for academic studies, and the "M" visa is for vocational or nonacademic studies.

### **"Deaf (with capital D)" and "deaf (with lower case d)":**

The term "Deaf" is used here and there throughout this study. "Deaf" defines a category of people, whose process of hearing and voicing is done in a different way from that of hearing people. From a "pathological" perspective those people

are "deaf" not "Deaf." This is similar to labeling a group of people whose nationality is European or North American as "Occidental" and another group of people who originated from the Far East countries as "Oriental." For the Deaf community, the word "Deaf" embraces the community's identity, values, dignity, destiny, culture and so on; as described by Padden (1980):

... the capitalized "Deaf" is used when referring to cultural aspects, as in the culture of Deaf people. The lower-case "deaf," on the other hand, refers to non-cultural aspects such as the audiological condition of deafness (p.90).

### **Ohlone College:**

A community college "to serve the Fremont-Newark community by providing a center for learning, cultural development, and career education" (catalog p.5), established in 1967.

### **F-1 Deaf and H/H students' English comprehension skills:**

Throughout this study, meeting the criteria to be placed in DEAF170B & 171B of the Deaf Preparatory Program department is used as a measure of F-1 Deaf and H/H students' English comprehension skills. As seen in the appendix, DEAF170B & 171B are at the "intermediate" English comprehension level and are pre-requisites for DEAF172A & 173A at the "high intermediate" level. DEAF172A & 173A are pre-requisites for DEAF172B & 173B which are equivalent to ENGL151 at Ohlone College. ENGL151 students are mostly high school graduates whose English skills are at the "high intermediate to advanced" level. All F-1 Deaf and H/H students take placement tests immediately after arrival at the United States, in order to assess which level of English class is appropriate for the first semester at Ohlone College.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

To draw a clear picture of foreign-born Deaf and H/H students on which to base this study, historical information was discussed relevant to some points from Cummins' work on the "unacknowledged relationship between bilingualism and special education" (Cummins, 1984); Akamatsu, Cheng, Christensen, and Garcia's scholastic articles in "Multicultural Issues in Deafness" (Christensen & Delgado, 1993); Delgado's informative article related to linguistic minority Deaf and H/H children; Cohen, Fischgrund, and Redding's joint study; and MacNeil's empirical study.

Considering that F-1 Deaf and H/H students as one group in the foreign-born Deaf and H/H category, they were discussed by borrowing some ideas from Morton, Lemieux, Diffey, and Awender's report.

### **Brief Overview on Historical Background**

The United States has been a land whose majority language is English going back to the 1700's, and no one contests that. Educators have put assessment and pedagogical practices in place within that "English only" framework and have kept them fundamentally unchanged over the years. This educational tradition underwent no disruption, even though policies and systems were sometimes modified due to educational and political issues. Naturally they saw students who could not speak English as defective and problematic. They often put students who were unable to speak English in a category needing "special treatment" and placed them in special education classrooms. Cummins termed those students, "minority language children [students]" and discussed the relationship between

bilingualism and special education in his book, "Bilingualism and Special Education: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy" (Cummins, 1984). Christensen (1993) referred to such students as a "linguistic minority" in another way, citing the term stated by the U.S. government, "*linguistic minority* ... individuals who are not functional in English" (p.18).

The perspective of special education associated with a minority language shifted slightly from the idea of giving special treatment to children who could not speak English to that of providing special services to these children adequate for a smooth adaptation to society. Special educators modified their general perspective from the idea of "fixing" problems of children with special needs to that of offsetting the nature of the handicapping condition in order to let them gain access to society. This was part of the social trend toward "full inclusion" which remains a debatable topic among educators, professors, and politicians.

In addition to the perspective change, the population shift in the United States in recent years has forced educators to review their perspective on minority language children as well. MacNeil (1990) stated, "Four states in which Anglo pupils are now a minority include California (49%), New Mexico (47%), Mississippi (44%), and Hawaii (23%)" (p.76). She also cited Cohen's statement, "Immigration has affected the ethnic fabric of public school education" (Cohen cited in MacNeil, 1987, p.76 ).

That perspective change was reflected in a changed concept of "minority language." The idea of acquiring English through bilingual (or multilingual) and English as a second language (ESL) approaches became widely accepted. The term "linguistic minority" referred to individuals such as:

- 1) "students who have learned the dominant language of the society as a second

language" (Cummins, 1984, p.18); e.g. native-born individuals who come from non-English speaking home environments;

- 2) "ESL students, i.e. those who have learned English as a second language" (Cummins, 1984, p.18); e.g. immigrant children and adults, and F-1 students.

While the concept of the minority language users, a group later termed "linguistic minority," included hearing individuals only, Deaf and H/H linguistic minority individuals increasingly attracted the attention of educators due to these demographic shifts. Delgado (1981) assumed that "... these population shifts have occurred also in schools and programs for hearing-impaired children" (p.118). According to data reported in the 1997-1998 Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children and Youth, the national ethnic profile of Deaf children was:

Anglo-American	55.9%
African-American	16.9%
Hispanic	19.5%
Native American	0.8%
Asian/Pacific Island	4.1%
Other	1.6%
Multi ethnic	1.2%

(Gallaudet Research Institute, revised in 1999).

Garcia (1993) cited the information provided by Cohen, Fischgrund and Redding, "In California, the percentage of multicultural Deaf students increased from 38 percent in 1978-1979 to 61 percent in 1988-1989" (p.70). According to MacNeil (1990); the linguistic minority Deaf and H/H were reportedly categorized as mainly African-American, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander. Corresponding

to the demographic shifts, Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders were noticeably fast-growing groups among the Deaf population. Major Hispanic groups included Puerto Ricans, Latinos, Mexican Americans, Dominicans, Columbians, Cubans, and Central Americans. Asian/Pacific Islanders included Hmong, Laotian, Chinese, Cambodian, Khmer, Vietnamese, Samoan, Hawaiian, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Indian, and others, according to MacNeil (1990), Cheng (1993), and Akamatsu (1993).

Educators struggled to cope with educational approaches to accommodate the influx of linguistic minority Deaf and H/H individuals, paralleling their efforts to improve native-born Deaf children's English language instruction. Oralism, Signing Exact English (SEE), and the Bilingual-Bicultural approach (Bi-bi) were attempts to teach English to native-born Deaf and H/H children. A multitude of studies tackled the challenge of teaching English to linguistic minority Deaf and H/H individuals, who required an approach different from that used for instructing native-born Deaf and H/H children. Christensen (1993) stated:

The environment of Deaf individuals from African American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian/Pacific Islander families must be viewed from a trilingual and tricultural perspective. This view includes the home language and culture, the school language and culture, and the natural, visual language and culture of the Deaf community (p.21).

Having no idea how important it was to acknowledge the nature of cultural diversity, educators in the Deaf field failed to assess the linguistic minority Deaf and H/H students, make appropriate placement, establish adequate expectations, design adaptive curricula, and educate themselves and other faculty members; and it made the students' academic learning unsuccessful to an extent. MacNeil,

based on her empirical evidence, pointed out that the faculty were not acknowledging the character of ethnic diversity to meet the educational needs of students from minority background groups. In her article she cited suggestions of another author of related articles:

... educators of the deaf are not responding to the specialized educational needs of hearing-impaired students from diverse cultural backgrounds. They have proposed that a prevalent philosophy in deaf education sees deafness as precluding minority group membership and, instead, assigns secondary importance to any other minority value systems or cultural values (MacNeil, 1990, p.76 ).

The term *the linguistic minority Deaf and H/H* meant a *minority* of the minority in both the view of the Deaf community and of the general linguistic minority including hearing individuals, i.e. "*linguistic minority* in the Deaf community" as well as "*linguistic minority* in the general linguistic minority."

#### F-1 Deaf and H/H Students

For the past few years, foreign-born Deaf and H/H children and adults have been under the spotlight in the field of special education. Foreign-born Deaf and H/H, whose origins are geographically diverse, are categorized as immigrant children and adults, orphans adopted by American families, and F-1 Deaf and H/H students.

Among these categories, the F-1 Deaf and H/H student has no choice but to be subjected to the toughest circumstances. To achieve the same goal, i.e. a satisfactory level of English skills, the first two groups have no time limit for achievement, while the F-1 Deaf and H/H students are allowed by law to stay in

the United States for a maximum of 5 years. They can extend their time here for another 5 years only with good reason. In recent years due to the current political climate and attitudes toward immigrants, the Immigration and Naturalization Service has not renewed as many visas as they had done in the past. F-1 Deaf and H/H students are not allowed to get a job off campus except in special cases. This means they heavily rely on their savings and limited financial resources; additional stress results from the limited amount of time they are allotted to study in the United States.

When discussing these F-1 students who are Deaf and H/H, it must be remembered that the criteria for their admission differs from F-1 students who are hearing. In general any one who seeks admission to a post-secondary institution, even for vocational purposes, such as an auto-mechanic academy to obtain an ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certificate, or a computer programming training institute, must meet admission requirements which include passing the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language).

Each institution establishes its own TOEFL score requirement. The test has a maximum score of 600 points, and it is designed to measure three major achievement areas: reading, written, and verbal skills. At higher ranked institutions such as Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley in the Bay Area, a higher TOEFL score is mandatory. When F-1 hearing students are enrolling in high ranked institutions, they are supposed to have a high level of English at the time they apply for admission knowing that "academic success is contingent upon language proficiency" (Coleman, 1997, 9th paragraph).



Since the difficulty of the verbal part of TOEFL is a barrier to Deaf and H/H individuals who seek admission to institutions by passing the test, they have no way to be admitted to any institution in the United States. Actually, the requirement is often not enforced although it remains. It is surprising to see that the United States government allows them admission to community colleges. Ohlone College in Fremont and Golden West College in Los Angeles are two examples that have admitted F-1 students who are Deaf and H/H.

A Deaf and H/H individual is also able to enroll directly in a university or an institute of higher learning without the TOEFL score. However, comparatively higher-ranked institutions establish assessments of their own design to determine fluency in English including an interview before admission; the standards for English competence are rather high. Therefore, Deaf and H/H individuals do not have a chance to be admitted without having English skills acceptable to the intended institution. It can be assumed that an F-1 Deaf and H/H student's level of English competence is not at the level which is sufficient for enrollment and is far below that of an F-1 hearing student. It is rare to see an F-1 Deaf and H/H student who arrives in the United States with a level of English high enough for four-year college acceptance.

There is one explanation for why many F-1 hearing students have been granted admission to academic institutions in the United States. This has happened in response to the practicalities of doing business internationally, in which mastering more than the mother language is necessary to make a smooth and flawless business deal with the target country.

The idea of participating in foreign businesses is so irrelevant to the Deaf community that the necessity of mastering foreign languages had never been an

issue. Therefore, not as many Deaf and H/H individuals as hearing individuals have studied abroad unless there are exceptional circumstances: for example, a Deaf or H/H child of a company delegate who is staying in another country for some period of time, or a Deaf and H/H student majoring in international relations and the business field.

Recently, the social trend of globalization has caused an increasing number of Deaf and H/H individuals to be interested in seeking experiences in other countries. They feel encouraged to go abroad to go sight-seeing, to attend school, and to stay with a host family for a short time.

Despite the fact that F-1 Deaf and H/H students face difficulties, they are highly motivated and keep their spirits up while accomplishing their objectives of meeting their academic goals before returning to their mother country. Among the group of F-1 Deaf and H/H students, ways to motivate themselves vary widely. One would expect that the environment of the home country must have some affect on each student's motivation to learn English as a second language, which differs from the way native-born Deaf and H/H individuals learn.

#### **F-1 Deaf and H/H Students and Motivational Factors**

TIME magazine published an article on research by neuroscientists who have made a breathtaking discovery in recent years, which is interesting in relation to the F-1 Deaf and H/H issue. Recently the neuroscience society found that "the rhythmic firing of neurons is no longer assumed to be a by-product of building the brain but essential to the process, and it begins, well before birth" (p.50).

**Neuroscientists reported how the learning process is stimulated on a neurological level in the human brain. Based on these reports, the author illustrated how this finding connects to bilingual (or multilingual) language development:**

**The ability to learn a second language is highest between birth and the age of six, .... Many adults still manage to learn new languages, but usually only after great struggle (Nash, 1997, p.56).**

**This means that F-1 Deaf and H/H students, as well as other foreign-born individuals, face a great challenge. Their persistence in this struggle is assumed to be fueled by strong intra-personal factors such as the desire to learn, the persistence to achieve, and the setting and accomplishment of goals, together with external factors such as the influence of their surroundings.**

**Searching through available resources revealed a dearth of studies on motivational factors such as desire and persistence to learn English among F-1 Deaf and H/H students as well as other foreign-born Deaf and H/H individuals. To discuss motivational factors, an article jointly written by Morton, Lemieux, Diffey, and Awender (1999) was reviewed and then applied to the F-1 Deaf and H/H students.**

**That article researched hearing English-speaking middle school students in a French immersion program in Canada. The students used English on a daily basis, which is comparable to the situation of the F-1 Deaf and H/H students. Noticing the continuing number of withdrawals from the French immersion program of students entering high school, the authors studied the relationship between persistence and (1) achievement in French, (2) general achievement, (3) motivational attributes, (4) motivational characteristics, and (5) motivational**

attitudes of these 8th grade immersion students around southwestern Ontario to find rates of attrition and reasons for attrition (Morton et al., 1999, 30th paragraph). The "French immersion program is an optional program in Canada" (Morton et al., 1999, 3rd paragraph), a country where English and French are both official languages. Students' enrollment in the French immersion program is encouraged by parents who view a second language as a marketable skill for competition, and a means of fostering appreciation of French cultural roots. In addition, enrollment result from students' interests in second-language learning and preference to go along with their friends (Morton et al., 4th paragraph). The authors suggested in their discussion that students' attitudes toward learning French and locus of control were important variables affecting their persistence in second language learning.

The authors used Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) "to measure the typical independent variables associated with motivation in second language learning" (Morton et al., 1999, 36th paragraph). The AMTB showed scales which distinguish between persistent and nonpersistent students supporting the claim that "attitude is a critical variable in second language pursuits" (Morton et al., 44th paragraph). "The more negative attitude towards learning French" (Morton et al., 45th paragraph), the more the nonpersistent students tended to withdraw. The withdrawals' external locus of control, "which is more likely to attribute their success and failure to luck" (Morton et al., 1st paragraph), was confirmed as their fundamental characteristic. These students with a negative attitude towards learning French showed a more positive attitude towards European French, and there was no specific comment on it. The authors suggested that was "a function of the desires of the nonpersisting student" (Morton et al., 44th paragraph).

The authors indicated that cultural consideration should be given toward some students' lack of a positive attitude toward learning French since "the cultural context in which the study took place is mainly an English-speaking area" (Morton et al., 1999, 48th paragraph). But they did not discuss this at length. The cultural context was assumed to play a big role in affecting students' attitudes and motivation, as well as their persistence in learning.

Nevertheless, the authors did not put much effort into examining the effects of the cultural context and were a little doubtful about the validity of their findings. That is similar to the case of IQ tests given to African-Americans, which resulted in invalid assessments of their intelligence. The IQ tests were designed from an Anglo-American perspective, completely neglecting cultural context from the African-American perspective. From the article on the French immersion program, the subjects of the AMTB test might be assumed to be Anglo-Canadians who were living in English-speaking homes. The authors might view English and French from the perspective that these languages were "in the same league." This is a possible reason why the authors did not view the problems in the same way as other educators who were dealing with linguistic minority students in the United States, e.g. students who came from non-English speaking environments at home and were being educated in English speaking classrooms. There might be a cultural bias such as to say, "An Anglo-occidental person has less difficulty in learning another language of the Continent compared to a non-occidental person whose language does not belong to any Anglo-occidental country and who is learning English or an Anglo-occidental language"; it might result in neglecting analyzable cultural context.

The same issue can exist in discussion of F-1 Deaf and H/H students. It is obvious that the F-1 Deaf and H/H issue contains cultural factors. Even if the individuals were discussed in the same age, ethnic, gender, and social hierarchy groups, diverse cultural factors would serve as powerful motivating forces. Therefore, examination of these aspects from multiple perspectives is proposed as a way to find solutions.

The idea of attitude toward learning a foreign language discussed in the article on the French immersion program students can be applied to the case of F-1 Deaf and H/H students. A positive attitude results in strong motivation and persistence in learning English and the accomplishment of their goals in a short period of time.

### Summary

Ignorance is the number one enemy of all. Because of the social forces in the past, scholars were unaware of their misconception of what the linguistic minority was. The swift movement of social change urgently demanded re-classification and creation of new labels. A manifestation of misled classification was the category of "linguistic minority" delimiting a group of hearing individuals who did not function well in English during that time. Ethnic issues did not emerge yet. Later when the issue of ethnicity became "a hot topic" in society, ethnic minority hearing individuals were mixed into the "linguistic minority" category because almost all of them had trouble functioning in English. Then, native-born Deaf individuals who were ethnically majority group members were also labeled "linguistic minority" just because they could not speak English. This classification seemed a mismatch with the social reality. In the worst case, Deaf and H/H

immigrants who had not had formal education in their home country before arriving in the United States were mixed into a classroom with native-born Deaf children just because of their hearing status.

This problem in classification, which has been hindering the definition of linguistic minority issue as well as the special education issue, did not begin yesterday. By involving not only the Deaf and H/H issue but also the social trend of globalization, things have been even more complicated. More globalized, society becomes more diversified in many aspects.

When considering the foreign-born Deaf and H/H issue, the F-1 Deaf and H/H student is still a new subject with few studies done by scholars related to special education. Given the current social as well as global trend in the Deaf community, the number of such students is anticipated to continue to grow. For not only this study but also subsequent studies, analysis should be conducted acknowledging cultural diversity among linguistic minority individuals who are Deaf and H/H.

To conduct this study, motivational factors from cultural perspectives were to be analyzed in depth. At this point, an expectation was established. The F-1 Deaf and H/H students' attitude towards learning English and the way they motivate themselves and persist in their learning may be unique (or unexpectedly the same) as the way native-born Deaf and H/H individuals do this. These factors should be based on not only internal influences, such as each individual F-1 Deaf and H/H student's personality that becomes the student's strength or weakness, desire to learn English, and goal setting; but also external factors such as family values, and social forces and standards. Acknowledging cultural diversity is a step to acknowledging each individual as a separate entity.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

How to keep F-1 Deaf and H/H students motivated in learning English, still remains undiscovered. Unlike F-1 students who are hearing, the F-1 Deaf and H/H students are admitted mostly to community colleges in the United States with a level of English competence which is far below that of the F-1 hearing students who attend those same colleges. Some F-1 Deaf and H/H students enter college with fluency in the primary language alone whether signed or read/written or both. This means that they face a great deal of difficulty in learning English as a second language while at the same time learning ASL (American Sign Language). Besides, because of the law, usually they are allowed to stay in the United States for a maximum of five years to pursue their education. Despite limitations, most of the successful F-1 Deaf and H/H students achieve an acceptable level of reading English skills, equivalent to secondary level native-born hearing students; it is amazing to see this process occur.

### **Aim of This Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to discover what factors contribute to F-1 Deaf and H/H students' motivation and persistence in learning English. The findings were expected to explain how different factors impact the students' attitudes toward learning English and their ability to accomplish this in a short period of time. Those factors were synthesized into three analyzable variables: social forces, external factors, and intra-personal factors which were anticipated to lead to the hypothesis, "All three variables have a synergistic effect in



motivating F-1 Deaf and H/H students.” The discussion of social forces included the unique cultural backgrounds that the students were products of as well.

### **Subjects**

Subjects for this study were six people from Japan ranging in age from in their 30's to 70's; they were associated with Ohlone College. The six Japanese included: 1) three students who are currently attending Ohlone College, 2) one former Ohlone College student who completed a certificate program, and 3) two former Ohlone College students who obtained the Associate of Arts degree.

### **Procedure**

#### **Step one**

A survey sheet containing the questionnaire below was distributed to each individual student. The purpose behind the design of this questionnaire was to collect general information on the student's background before the individual interview.

#### **Definition of student:**

1. What gender is the student?
2. As the student recalls, which of the three types of deafness is he/she: pre-, para-, or post-lingual deaf in connection to the “three-year-old wall”?
3. At what age was the student's first exposure to English or did he/she begin to learn English?
4. How long has the student been in the United States?
5. How did the student become competent in his/her native language, whether read/written or signed?

6. What was the student's educational background in his/her native country?
7. What was the student's reading comprehension English skill level at his/her admission to Ohlone College? (In which class level was the student placed?)

**Family dynamism:**

8. Is the student a Deaf child from a Deaf family or a hearing family?
9. What kind of parenthood describes the student's family: biological parents, adoptive parents, single parent, step parent and so on?
10. What is the communication mode used between the student and his/her parent(s)?
11. Does the student have any sibling(s)? If yes, is the sibling Deaf, H/H, or hearing?
12. What is the communication mode used between the student and his/her sibling(s)?
13. Has the parent(s) supported the student's language development, financially and educationally?

**Factors to success:**

14. What triggered the student to desire to learn English?
15. What keeps the student's spirit up while struggling through a difficult time in his/her English language development?

**Step two**

For subjects in groups one and two, an interview was conducted individually at a place where the interviewee felt comfortable. Two interviews were taken in video tape. The review of the video tapes tracked the communication during the interview for accuracy in order to avoid misinterpretation. Follow-up interviews were arranged when necessary and circumstances allowed.

Some interviewees wanted to speak freely in Japanese Sign Language (JSL) and Japanese. The author of this study was responsible for translating their comments from JSL and Japanese to ASL and English without any personal bias.

The author himself is a native-born Japanese who has been staying in the United States for more than eight years and has a satisfactory understanding of the cultures of both Japan and the United States. He has achieved sufficient skill in ASL to communicate with members of the Deaf community as well as written English skill sufficient to qualify him to do the translation with little aid. Written Japanese is his primary language and JSL is his second language. Furthermore, he disengaged himself from the Deaf community after he completely lost his hearing at the age of three and remained in the hearing world until 19 years old. Therefore, he has been exposed to and is fully aware of cultural diversity which inter-weaves not only with ethnic diversity between Japan and the United States but also with "pathological" diversity between the hearing way and the Deaf way.

At that time, it was considered to hire an interpreter who was fluent in JSL, Japanese, ASL, and English. It would be ideal to hire a third completely neutral person. However, only two people were located who were qualified. Both of them were hearing and were not available because of their schedules. One of them was in Maryland attending Western Maryland College (with experience of staying in the States for around five years) and another was in Los Angeles working for a travel agency (with experience of staying in the States for around 10 years).

For subjects in group three, the interviewee communicated through the Internet and facsimile transmission in order to solve the geographical problem since some former Ohlone F-1 students had gone back to Japan. Exchanging E-mails and

fax messages was of great advantage. Real-time talking through the instant message function was successfully attempted for a while at the start but later phased out. Compared with the face-to-face interview, using this communication via the Internet and the facsimile transmission took a longer time to collect satisfactory information.

### Review of Research Design

#### Strength

The core of this study is an interview the purpose of which was the collection of information. This is a qualitative research design, using in depth analysis. It was assumed in most cases that the analysis would successfully uncover at least some factor that provides analyzable implications leading to the hypothesis, "All three variables whose combined effect must be presented to motivate the F-1 Deaf and H/H students."

The interview proceeded first with questions that were asked to gather general information related to individual student's backgrounds. During this part of the survey, the interviewer formulated new questions spontaneously in order to expand the breadth and depth of the information. In the end, the interview narrowed its focus to the areas relating directly to the hypothesis. During the interview, the interviewer, by consciously keeping his neutral attitude, attempted to avoid manipulating or influencing his interviewee.

The interviewees were limited to F-1 Deaf and H/H students from Japan. Naturally the study touches areas of cultural sensitivity; the author of this study was considered to be acceptable to analyze this issue. Because of the

background of the author, the analysis of the information was intended to be well-balanced.

### Weakness

The limited number of subjects was the chief weakness of this research method. Due to the limited number, it was too early to mention that the findings from this study would be applicable to all F-1 students from Japan and also from other countries unless further studies were to prove this to be true. This study was also limited to one location, Ohlone College. A larger number of subjects from diverse regions would improve the quality of the data and the validity of the findings. When a geographically and statistically extended research is conducted combining both qualitative and quantitative research designs, the synergistic effects of these research approaches can be projected to be huge.

Therefore, the findings from this study should be considered a cornerstone for further investigation.

## **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA**

### **Background of F-1 Deaf and H/H students**

Six Deaf and H/H Japanese were the subjects of this study. Survey sheets were distributed, then interviews were conducted separately using different methods. Some interviews were done in face-to-face meetings. To bridge the geographical gap between Japan and the United States, other interviews were conducted through the Internet and facsimile transmission.

Interviews were done in written Japanese and Japanese Sign Language (JSL) sometimes with American Sign Language (ASL) mixed in according to individual preferences. The information in written Japanese was examined carefully before being translated into English. Questions were re-worded to clarify ambiguous words and ideas to confirm what nuances were intended. Messages conveyed in sign language and non-verbal information such as facial expressions and behavior during an interview were noted and analyzed as well. Throughout the task of translation, every effort was made to translate each word and the context of the original Japanese message as faithfully as possible to the original meaning, while making the translation readable.

For the purpose of securing each individual's privacy, which some interviewees requested, female interviewees are called FA, FB, FC, and FD, and male interviewees are called MA and MB respectively. The three female interviewees were former Ohlone College students. Two of the three were Ohlone graduates who obtained an Associate of Arts degree, and the other earned a certificate in her major. One female and two male interviewees were

currently attending Ohlone College. Four were in their 30's, one in her 50's, and one in her 70's.

### Status of hearing loss

All six interviewees had a bilateral hearing loss at the time of interview; their hearing disabilities varied from profound sensoryneural hearing loss to mild conductive hearing loss. Five had a profound hearing loss, and one had hearing difficulty. Causes of hearing loss were not available.

The age of onset of hearing loss varied. Three among the five with profound hearing loss believed they were born deaf. Another one of the five with profound hearing loss remembered that he could hear between three and five years old. His hearing loss was diagnosed as a profound hearing loss at the time of the interview even though he was the only one who used a hearing aid among the six interviewees. The last of the five lost her hearing on the right side at four years old and suffered a progressive hearing loss on the left side beginning at age 20. She tried surgery which was successful immediately afterwards but later failed, becoming deaf at age of 25. One interviewee who was hard-of-hearing remembered that it became difficult for her to hear before the age of three and that her hearing declined further as she aged.

The "three-year-old wall" is a determination that measures which category a person falls into: 1) pre-lingual, 2) para-lingual, or 3) post-lingual hearing-loss according to the designations of pathologists and audiologists. Three of the five who had a profound hearing loss fell into the pre-lingual category. Because of the time of the onset of their hearing loss, the three had no way to develop spoken Japanese before losing their hearing. One of the five and the hard-of-

hearing interviewees fell into the para-lingual category. The last one fell into the post-lingual hearing loss group.

### Family background

Caretakers of all six interviewees were their biological parents. Four interviewees claimed that they had no foreign blood in their family lineage. Apparently this was also true for the other two interviewees although they did not state this fact explicitly. This means that all the interviewees had no exposure to cultures outside of Japan.

Two among the six came from deaf families who strongly identified with the Deaf community (Deaf). Both had deaf parents. These two appeared to be second generation Deaf. Neither of them knew of any history of hearing disability in previous generations. One has a deaf brother, and another, a hearing brother.

The other four of the six came from hearing families. Three among the four were the only deaf members of their families. These families also appeared to have no heritage of hearing disability. The last one had four sisters the oldest of whom also happened to be deaf.

### Language and communication mode

When asked what was the first language they acquired, four of the six interviewees were not sure how to define "language" as opposed to communication mode. Some thought that lip-reading and speaking, ways of receiving and expressing information, were equivalent to language. Two answered "Traditional Japanese Sign Language" and "Spoken Japanese" respectively. This "traditional JSL" is equivalent to ASL.

Communication modes of which each interviewee used at the time of interviewee were as follows:



- 1) Spoken Japanese, and lip-reading;
- 2) Traditional JSL, spoken Japanese, the use of residual hearing, lip-reading, and JSL corresponding to spoken Japanese;
- 3) Mouthing, lip-reading, and JSL corresponding to spoken Japanese;
- 4) JSL corresponding to spoken Japanese, mouthing, and lip-reading;
- 5) Traditional JSL, JSL corresponding to spoken Japanese, mouthing, and lip-reading;
- 6) JSL corresponding to spoken Japanese, mouthing, and lip-reading.

(This “JSL corresponding to spoken Japanese” is roughly comparable to Pidgin Sign English). These communication modes listed in the order in which the interviews were conducted follow the chronological age at which they were acquired.

Three Deaf interviewees communicated with their parents and family members by reading lip movements, mouthing words, writing words in the air, and writing sentences on paper. One Deaf interviewee used “home sign” with all of his Deaf family members. One H/H interviewee used traditional JSL to communicate with her Deaf parents and spoken Japanese to communicate with her hearing brother. One late-deafened interviewee spoke Japanese to express herself and used lip-reading to receive messages from her family members after she lost her hearing.

To evaluate competence in written Japanese, hand-written responses to all interview questions were obtained. All of the interviewees had achieved a sufficient level of written Japanese to allow them to participate in society.

#### Education and working career

Five of the six interviewees completed both compulsory education, from 1st

through 9th grades, and non-compulsory education, from 10th through 12th grades. The last of the six entered an occupational school after completing his compulsory education. Among the five, only one extended her academic career to include university. Three of the five went to professional schools. One of the five started her working career after high school graduation.

Occupations among interviewees were diverse. Examples of their job experience included: office clerk including typing in English at a trade company; civil servant; substitute teacher both for elementary school and for high school; office clerk for a company; entrepreneur of two different businesses run simultaneously; and frequent job switching.

#### First exposure to English

Among interviewees, first exposure to English occurred at different places and at different times. Four different scenarios were supplied.

Three of the six interviewees took their first English class between the 7th through 12th grades following the typical Japanese curriculum. None of these secondary school English classes made a significant impression on any of the three.

One interviewee made the acquaintance of a hearing American girl who later became a pen pal. The girl showed her some of the letters of the English alphabet. Later while taking an English class in 7th grade, she learnt the basics of English such as its grammatical structure, the letters of the alphabet, and how to read and write it. Unlike the three interviewees described above, she appeared to enjoy studying this foreign language in class.

Another interviewee was around three or four years old when his parent showed him the initials of his name. He did not remember whether they showed

this to him on paper or in the air, but he clearly recalled how he got a subconscious impression of the connection between the foreign letters and himself at that moment.

The fourth was a little child's memory. The interviewee was fascinated by foreign alphabets, which were mostly English and French, in media sources such as ads in newspapers and billboards. The way these English and French letters were drawn fascinated him. He saw them as simple and beautiful compared to the complicated-looking Chinese and Korean characters which he was used to.

#### Determination of admission to Ohlone College

Each interviewee chose Ohlone College for their own individual reasons. They appeared to be bonded with other interviewees by an invisible chain of destiny.

Following her retirement one interviewee was fated to meet a Deaf counselor from Ohlone College at a conference during her short stay in California. At that time she knew nothing about Deaf-related things including educational programs, even Gallaudet University, and settled on Ohlone College without any hesitation. After the completion of her studies at the community college, she returned to Japan and began teaching a private ASL class in Tokyo open to both Deaf or hearing students.

Three other interviewees separately took that private ASL class, and were informed about Ohlone College where naturally they decided to apply. They also considered Gallaudet University and California State University Northridge (CSUN) but chose the community college due to the lesser expense of a community college.

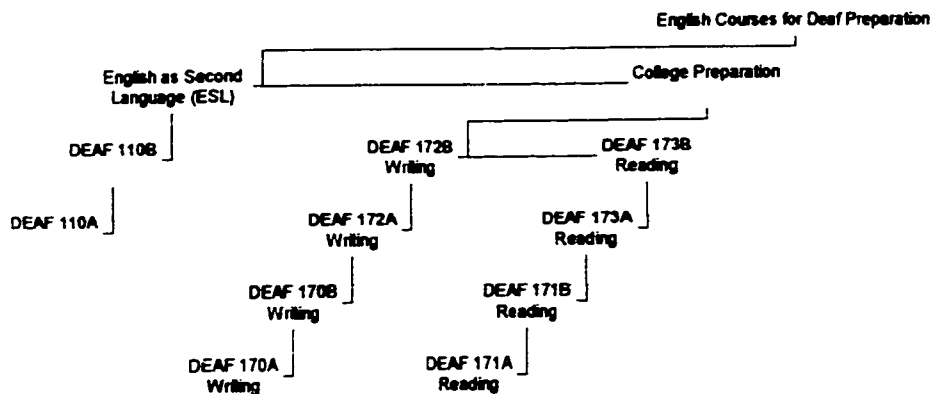
One other interviewee flew to the United States three times to visit wherever

she was interested in potential enrollment. When she arrived at the Ohlone campus during her third trip to the United States, she felt something drew her to Ohlone College. According to what she stated, faculty, atmosphere, and the surroundings of the community college perfectly fit her mental image of the environment prior to her arrival.

The last interviewee took a different private ASL class in Tokyo from the other three. A CSUN graduate substitute taught this ASL class. As a CSUN graduate, seeing his English competence, she encouraged him to go abroad to study in the United States and suggested Ohlone College or the ESL program at Gallaudet University. For the same reason as the other three interviewees had, he chose Ohlone College.

#### Reading competence

Before registering for the first semester at Ohlone College, all interviewees took placement tests to measure their English competence. For their first semester, five of the six interviewees enrolled in the first level of an English as Second Language (ESL) class. The ESL class was designated HI151A in 1986, DEAF151A in 1997, and DEAF110A in 1998. These classes were all equivalent, only code numbers were different. The code number change was a result of twice modifying the Deaf Preparatory Program. The final interviewee skipped ESL class and enrolled in DEAF155C for the first semester. According to what the English instructional staff of the Deaf Preparatory Program department explained, this DEAF155C emphasized English grammar practice. The interviewee who entered DEAF155C tested at the same English level as DEAF154B at that time which was equivalent to DEAF173B after 1997.



Three former Ohlone College students completed mainstream classes. Two of the three completed ENGL101A, a course transferable to the California State University campuses and the University of California campuses. The third completed ENGL151B, a requirement for the Associate of Arts degree. One of the three current Ohlone students was taking a mainstream class, ENGL151A; the other two students were at the DEAF171B level, and were expected to be at the DEAF173A or DEAF173B “high intermediate to advanced” level next semester.

### Experiences in the United States

The length of time attending Ohlone College varied among the six interviewees. One interviewee spent five and a half years at Ohlone College including five years of taking college classes and four months of practical job training. Another attended the college for four and a half years. Yet another

spent three and a half years at the college. Three others attended for two and a half years.

### **What motivated the F-1 Deaf and H/H students to learn English?**

Morton et al. (1999) stressed the central role of a student's attitude toward learning language. A positive attitude toward learning a foreign language strongly motivates learners and contributes to their ability to be competent. Each interviewee's answer to questions related to motivation to learn English was unique. Any similarity among interviewees was not apparent from interview data. However, they all revealed that the aesthetic aspect, the form or beauty of the English language, was not a major motivational factor.

FA did not provide specific answers, only some hints. She admired overseas places since she was a little child, although there was no comment on how this had come about and which particular country she admired most. As an adult, she married a hearing man. Her husband had the experience of going abroad to study in the United States, and English-speaking foreigners from different countries often visited him. Each time they had guests, she served the guests silently because she had no way to practice speaking English. She wished she could talk with them freely. However, she decided to focus on written English instead of speaking. While she was working as a civil servant, she studied English grammar books on her own over a period of years before going abroad to study in the United States. The more she immersed herself in a totally English environment, the more her fascination with the language grew. This fascination resulted in accumulating knowledge in a variety of content areas all of which was

presented in English.

English was not FB's major interest. Around the year of the historic "President Now!" incident at Gallaudet University, she accidentally watched on the air an interview with I. King Jordan, the new president of the university. At that moment her gut reaction was a yearning to learn ASL not English. It did not take long for her to find a private ASL class in Tokyo, Japan. After learning more about Deaf education in the United States, she thought more seriously about studying abroad. At the same time, she recognized the need to learn English in order to take Deaf education classes. She stated, "... I was capable of communicating with [native] ASL users during my trip to America, and this was how I benefited from learning ASL. While learning basic ASL in a private class [in Tokyo, Japan], I made smooth progress with little trouble. I wished to improve my ASL skills and believed that I could improve more if I were in an environment of native ASL users. So, while sightseeing, I visited Gallaudet University and CSUN. ... After talking with some faculty members and students at these schools, practicing my ASL in the process, my desire to study abroad [in the States] grew intense." Later she added, "[It had to be ASL] because Deaf education in the United States went far beyond that of Japan. I had no interest in Deaf education curricula provided by Japanese universities. The approach to Deaf education in America [was what I wanted to learn] not English. I didn't know about Sweden. I had heard about some situations in Sweden, but I didn't think Deaf education was advancing there as actually it was. I thought that it was impossible [to study Deaf education in America] without any knowledge of English. Knowing that Ohlone College provided a class that started at a very basic English, I thought that I could learn English through ASL since I had been

learning ASL in a private class for three years. ... I knew I couldn't pass classes with ASL alone. So, I figured English would be required, right? [In a sense,] ASL was my means to learning English?"

In FC's case, an American pen pal was the major impetus behind her desire to learn English. During her elementary school years, an American family lived in her neighborhood. The hearing daughter of the family happened to take the same private cultural class after school as she did, and they happened to become acquainted with each other. The daughter showed some of the letters of the English alphabet to FC. When it was time for the American family to return home, they gave FC some books written in English. The daughter of the American family became FC's pen pal, and they corresponded with each other over a span of years. After FC's graduation from a school for the Deaf, while working, she became interested in a culture other than her own and thought of attending a college or a university in the United States. She stated, "I was just curious about the cultural differences [between the United States and Japan] and wanted to go to a higher academic institution [in the United States]. ... Welfare [social and educational system] of the States was advanced [and it made me interested]. Also, I wondered how the place looked where my [pen] friend lived, and how she lived in those surroundings and what feelings she had. I wanted to see with my own eyes something called, 'culture.'"

FD loved traveling overseas. Wherever and whenever she went, she experienced the same scenarios which made her feel the need to know English. She admitted that she always got frustrated with her inability to communicate in these situations. She said, "I clearly remember my first trip overseas with my hearing friends during my 20's. We stopped in Paris. There were four of us. We



sat at a table in a nice restaurant, and a waiter came up to serve us. Not all of my hearing friends were fluent in French, and all of them in turn tried to order. After all of their attempts failed, I tried to use my Deaf voice for fun. I tried to speak as if I were using English instead of French, because although I knew no French, I did know some Japa-lish. I thought that English was widely used throughout the world, so this waiter might understand my Japa-lish which sounded like English, too. What happened? ... The waiter seemed to comprehend some of my words. To my surprise, what he brought us were the drinks I had tried to order. At that moment, I thought that I might be able to master English. I now know the famous phrase, 'Deaf can do it,' and as I recall this is exactly what I felt at that moment."

Like FB, English was not MA's major interest but a means to accomplish his dream. He stated, [his] "... major purpose of coming to the States is to run my own business. But, wealth isn't my main interest, so I'm not interested in how to make big money. Simply, I want to test my limits to see if my attempt to establish a business becomes successful in spite of my deafness. [I've established two successful businesses in Japan,] and how 'real McCoy' am I?" He provided further statements such as "I never thought that I'd need to know English in order to establish a business. Through running a business [here], I can expect many situations like someone complaining about something wrong and then bringing the complaint to a court. A [sign language] interpreter can be hired, but I don't want to do that. I can't trust that interpreter. I want to read the document myself, ..., and see what the issue is all about. In this way, I can make my own decision. So, [that's why] I feel the great need to excel in English. [It's] important to know English, and that's the reason why I'm studying English."

MB began with an answer typical of many other Japanese. Skill in English would help his communication with people and enrich his experiences during his trips overseas, he answered. He was another person among the interviewees who loved to travel, but his preference of countries to visit was different from FD's who loved to go everywhere. As he often said; America, Canada, France, and Italy were his favorites. He answered, "definitely No," when asked if he also might want to go to Far East countries, Spain, and South American countries. A wish to appear competent in communicating with English-speakers was his primary intention to learn English.

MB then admitted that he was Gay. He said, "For a long time I've been suffering with who I am. ... I suspected that I was Gay when I was 15 years old. ... In spite of my sensing myself as Gay, I've been denying myself and betraying my ex-girl friend [who was straight]." He also admitted a possibility of connecting his being Gay with his motivation to learn English, "... when I was four or five years old ... As far as I remember, at a harbor town [Yokohama] ... maybe? I was with my mother, and we were taking a pleasant walk in the warm sunshine. I spotted the well-built body of a man with blonde hair and blue eyes. I asked my mother something about him, and she answered me, 'He came from far, very far away, a country across the Pacific Ocean. The country with the name of A-m-e-r-i-c-a.' Getting back home, she brought over a globe and pointed out the location of America. At that moment, I was not sure what it was, but I felt some kind of sensation inside my body. Maybe, [we] can call it sexual sensation or whatever ... I'm still not sure what that was. This experience can partly give reason behind why I wanted to go to America in order to learn English."

It was clear that a fascination with the English language was not a motivating

factor for interviewees even though they acknowledged the need to master the syntax of English and to acquire a sufficiently large vocabulary to be fluent. Almost all interviewees view English as a tool to accomplish something other than acquiring the comprehension of and skill in using English as an end in itself. In a sense, if circumstances had allowed, the language that they were learning would not have had to be English but whatever language is used in whatever country they happened to be in.

### **What factors account for the F-1 Deaf and H/H student's persistence in learning English?**

No one particular factor explaining interviewees' persistence was derived from the data. Five interviewees were optimistic about their English learning process despite many struggles they experienced in developing their reading and writing skills. Most of them said that third parties such as their parents, roommates, and friends supported them spiritually.

Three interviewees currently attending Ohlone College said that they might leave the college anytime for financial not academic reasons. This meant that obstacles in learning did not affect them at all. However, any specific comment on what offset their frustration when they had faced any obstacles was not provided.

FA was the only one who described how she struggled to learn English. She appeared to be the type of person who strictly disciplined herself, i.e. "... must do, or fail ...," unlike other interviewees. She, who achieved a high level of English competence, repeatedly described English competence as an "indispensable thing [to live in a full-English environment]." Also she repeated that she could not

be as she is today if many people had not revitalized her spirit, such as her English instructor, sign language interpreters, class peers, and sisters of the Catholic convent where she stayed. The existence of any other factors contributing to her persistence until graduation were not apparent.

FB's comments were somewhat self-contradictory. She stated, "I didn't attach importance to mastering English. ... ASL was a means to learn English. Then, ASL and English were, to me, a means to learn about Deaf education. Most people acquire satisfactory English skills before going to America, so my circumstances may sound like putting the cart before the horse. I thought, 'I can go home if I don't make progress with my study of English.' My objective was to attain graduate school level English." She added, "I never thought of like, 'Let's quit at that level' [until I'm going to a graduate school]. ... But, I knew that it was time to go home when I realized that I had lost my motivation, and still was a long way from reaching my intended level. ... I couldn't find any way to advance after reaching a plateau, and to me, it was sad." There was no specific comment on how she successfully coped with her struggles prior to hitting the plateau. She said, "... I was frustrated many times, it's true. But, it was kind of exciting to feel as if I were solving math problems one by one."

FC did not provide any more specifics about her persistence in learning English. She described herself a kind of optimist saying, "I'm not the kind of person who gets frustrated when I cannot read and write. I never used to feel frustrated." It was possible that she might have misunderstood the question or tried to cover up her true feelings. However, any answers to further questions related to her persistence were not available.

FD did not explain much about how she coped with her frustration in learning

and what supported her materially and spiritually. She simply stated, "... language achievement is a matter of time. I know how long it took to master my [written] Japanese. It was not easy, neither is learning English. ... Someday I may be able to fluently read and write English, and I'm hoping for that." Later she pointed out that her sisters and other family members sometimes sent words of encouragement, and this was helpful to her especially when her spirit dipped low. She also shared some interesting comments, "... I was aware that Ohlone College was a community college when I was applying for admission. If I were an American, it would take two years to graduate. I thought I might add one or two more years to this amount in order to practice [develop] English. So, it might take three or four years to finish. ... While attending Ohlone [College], I saw often many students quit in the middle of a semester, and wondered why. ... Maybe, that [withdrawal] is part of American culture?"

MA had an unique attitude toward learning English; at the same time, he was optimistic about his learning process. He seemed to have already "intuitively" established a time-frame for attending school before arriving in the United States, which had changed by the time of the interview. He stated, "I was aware that Ohlone [College] is a two-year college. Because of that fact, [when I arrived in the United States,] I thought I should finish every required course within that two year period. According to my Japanese mind, 'two-year college' meant a two-year system, so I had to finish within two years. I found out, Americans seem not to think the same way we do. After seeing them, I stopped caring about whether I'm going to finish within two years or not. I'm just taking my time." He added, "When applying for my I-20 visa, I noticed that the U.S. government allowed me to stay in the States for up to five years. This five years limit does not affect me

now, either. If I don't finish in five years, I know that I can renew my visa to get another five-year extension."

The following was how MA explained coping with his learning process. "I like challenge. I'm interested in the result. I don't feel the need to prepare for a test. ... Preparation is to me a kind of cheating. The result of a test simply shows where I stand at that moment, not how much I really know or understand. ... Prepare for the test and forget everything after the test, then what does a grade really mean to me? ... Everything is haphazard. I can't plan or design how to build my English skills. I just come [to class] and see what happens. Carrying this out in haphazard fashion is my policy [way]." He gave some keys to understanding what spiritually supported his persistence in learning. "My policy [definition] for 'Success' directly related to my English skills is to read a newspaper. I love reading newspapers. So, once I can read English newspapers easily, I would label that as a success. ... I want to read any newspapers written in English in the same way I read Japanese newspapers, and I can't wait for that to happen."

Like FC and FD, MB did not explain much. He said, "I don't think I could master English in a short period of time. If I could do that, then I should've been able to do the same thing with Japanese. ... I may take 10 years to comprehend that foreign language [English]." When asked what was behind his choice of the number "10", it was just a hunch, he said.

Observing those interviewees, it is clear that their optimism about the learning process contributed to their persistence. They also did not feel obligated to follow any system or rules, so that they had no reason to withdraw unless their financial situation were to demand that.

**How future goals set by the F-1 Deaf and H/H  
students interact with their motivation?**

Two interviewees provided a clear future vision incorporating their learning of English. The other four interviewees appeared to be unsure about how their study of English would relate to their future plans.

FA did not provide any clear vision of her future correlated with her studying of English. Actually she did not expect that she would graduate from Ohlone College when she attended class on the first day. She repeated in her description that the more she studied English while attending the college, the more she became intrigued with the language. She did not specify what aspect of the "language" fascinated her. Her comments can be interpreted as evidence of her interest in the "aesthetics" of the language, the process of her English skill development, the qualitatively and quantitatively increasing number of new vocabulary words she was acquiring, and the way people use English in speech and writing. Becoming fascinated by English, she wanted to transfer to a university. There was no comment to explain why she wanted to go and what major she planned to choose. According to her comments, she did not yearn to obtain a degree but to find herself enjoying college life somewhere at some institution of higher learning.

FB's future plan was to support Japanese Deaf and H/H children and their parents as well as to immerse herself in learning English after progressing in ASL. She had been upset by the very frustrating situation of Deaf education in Japan. Knowing that the United States acknowledges the Deaf community as a component of its cultural diversity, and that its system of Deaf education has achieved a high standard compared to other countries, she wanted to return to

Japan as an informant on American Deaf education. She believed that the information from the United States could influence people ignorant about Deaf culture as well as empower more people involved in that field in Japan including educators, scholars, parents, and hearing children of Deaf parents. She could use the information gained by studying in the United States to teach Deaf and H/H children. It was obvious that the interview with the first Deaf president of Gallaudet University on television inspired her and illuminated the road lying ahead.

FC did not articulate a vision of her future correlated with her learning English at Ohlone College. As mentioned previously, she wanted to see something called "culture" interwoven with her pen pal's life over a long period of time before going abroad to study. As a young child she might have set a long-term goal of attending an academic institution in the United States at the same time envisioning a reunion with her pen pal. She happened to choose to study at Ohlone College. Since coming to the United States, she talked with her pen pal through the Internet using her not yet fluent English and visited the pen pal a few times.

FD was one of the four who did not provide any clear vision. It seems that she did not have any self-expectation related to her English skill development before coming to the United States. She said, "I heard of and agreed with the idea of putting myself in an English-immersion environment as the best strategy for learning English. I had no idea how much I would be able to improve [my English skills] or how long it would take. I just wanted to come here and see how much I could improve my English skills. ... I'll leave [Ohlone College] anytime I face financial shortage or I realize that I'm a still long way from accomplishing the



English level required to obtain an Associate of Arts degree or a certificate.

When I get back to Japan, I'll go back to independent study in the same way I did before."

MA was the one with the strongest opinion among interviewees. He insisted that everybody who came to the United States for an academic purpose should have clear goals related to their study of English. Without a clear vision of why they were struggling to master English, they were just wasting time and should go back to Japan immediately. As stated earlier, his objective was to challenge his capacity to run a business in the United States. He stated, "I met many people who came back from America, and the first moment we were introduced to each other I asked them a simple question. It's a simple question that many people would ask, i.e. 'What was the purpose of your studies in America?' Often there was no spontaneous answer. They paused and took time to answer, '... maybe this, or maybe that ....' It seemed to me, their purpose didn't match their action. ... I saw many of them speaking "off the point," and it's obvious that they were just showing off the fact that they had the experience of being in America. They went to America, and that's all. For what? No point. ... If someone thinks, for example, 'I want to be famous, or want to open a business,' that person would say, 'I need English, so I come to America.' If someone feels like that, I would feel welcoming them." He went on further, "... when asked why they come, they answer, for example, 'Well, I'm going back home someday, and well then ...' If there's no purpose to their studies, then they're really wasting their time. I feel like saying, 'You'd better go back to Japan immediately and study there.'"

MB was another whose answer was unclear. He was interested in majoring in the graphic arts at the time he applied for admission to Ohlone College. He

stated, "... I was thinking of majoring in the graphic arts or computer graphics, and I believed this would be killing-two-birds-with-one-stone. After completing every course in my major, my English would be improved. How nice."

Nevertheless, he did not think this idea would work as well as he had expected at the time of the interview. As mentioned earlier, he thought it might take more time to get serious about his study of English than what he had previously expected. When asked if he had any notion of how his English skills would fit into his future plans, he paused and took a little time to respond. According to what he said, he believed that learning English would aid him in talking with English-speakers whoever and whenever he meets one and thus would expand his opportunities to interact with people wherever he might choose to travel in the future. He made no further comment on what he had in mind for his English.

Reviewing the interviewees' responses, "vision" appears to depend on the degree of intensity of each individual's personality and the relative value each placed on learning English. It also seemed evident for most of them that their thinking on how to utilize what they were learning had not yet solidified; therefore, they could not provide a clearly articulated vision at the time of the interview.

## Discussion

### Overview

Since only six people were the subjects of these interviews, it should be taken into account that the findings do not represent the entire population of Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students. A mosaic of unique scenarios was suggested by the interview data from which analyzable variables of social force, external factors, and intra-personal factors emerged. The interview data did not supply sufficient

information related to gender influence and family dynamics to be analyzed; the interviewees would likely decline to share this type of information in detail.

Furthermore, four of the six appeared unaware of what "Language" was and how much it meant to them.

Similarities in the data provided by the six F-1 Deaf and H/H students as a group were evident in their responses to two introductory questions: 1) Factors motivating them to learn English, and 2) Factors accounting for their persistence in learning English.

The interviewees powerfully motivated themselves in different situations and at different times. In spite of their varying circumstances, they viewed English as a means to something that they wanted. It was clear that they were not particularly fascinated by the aesthetics of the English language, and they could substitute some other foreign language for English if that were to fit their need. This finding is perhaps applicable to Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students other than the students who were interviewed for this study.

Few interviewees explicitly stated how they endured the challenging process of learning English and how they saw their future related to their achievement. "Being optimistic" was commonly stated. This being optimistic is perhaps one element that accounts for why they did not retreat from the challenge of their studies. However, further analysis of this psychological aspects of the language learning process remains to be done. Some of them motivated themselves with a clear vision of their future; others did not. However, it seems, they had a positive attitude toward a foreign community and learning its language regardless of their lack of clarity of purpose regarding their studies.

### Preliminary finding one

In Japan today the community continues to brand students who remain in the same grade for more than one year as “held-backs” or “repeaters,” and those who leave school as “drop-outs.” Students experience pressure to conform in both overt and subtle ways, dissuading them from becoming the “held-back” or the “drop-out.” Any students who are at risk for that dishonor would be alerted directly and indirectly by their teachers, parents, and class peers. In this way, students in both the compulsory education system and the high school system typically complete their education in the designated time frame of 12 years. Those students who are extending their academic career to a junior college or a university have internalized the message to complete their study within two years for a junior college, and four years for a university since the community still tends to withhold respect for any “held-back” or “drop-out” college student.

According to such a social phenomenon, it was expected that the six interviewees would have prepared themselves before entering Ohlone College in the same way that the general Japanese population does at the start of their college education. Since Ohlone College is a two-year institution, the interviewees might have “programmed themselves” to complete their study within two years, or three years including a preparatory year. While attending the college, they would have spurred themselves on toward accomplishing their goal within the designated period of years. Interviewees’ family members would have expected their completion of study within the same designated time as well, keeping in mind the expectation they could support them financially and spiritually in the process.

However, the research findings were contrary to the expectation. Four of the

six interviewees answered that they were aware that Ohlone College was a two-year institution. Two of the four admitted setting the "goal" of completing their study within two or three years but denied the connection between this thought and their motivation to learn English. Another of the four admitted that at one time he had the self-discipline to complete his study within two years, but that later he changed his mind and decided to take his time mastering English. Yet another of the four did not care whether she completed her study within two or three years despite her awareness of that time-frame. The last two of the six interviewees did not supply any comment.

It is likely that the age of the interviewees is the reason why the findings did not support the expectation. The youngest one was in her early 30's. All six interviewees were sufficiently mature to have had the real-world experiences of socializing, competing, or both with hearing people. They also had the awareness that the process of language acquisition could not be completed in a period of time as short as two or three years. Their family members also did not set any time-limit or expected level of proficiency related to their learning English. Most of their family members offered them such words as "... do what you want," or "... everything is up to you," when they were thinking of going abroad to study. It is obvious that whether they mastered English or how long it took were not of great concern to their family members.

It was noteworthy that four of the six interviewees were surprised or confused when they saw many native-born students withdraw or repeat the same classes for several semesters at Ohlone College. They were also surprised, confused, and even shocked by the very widespread practice of students changing their majors or leaving and later returning to an academic field. This social

phenomenon, commonly seen in the United States, is rare in Japan. Their surprise or confusion is evidence that they have been encultured in the same way as all Japanese students have been regardless of their being Deaf. They were aware that Ohlone College was a two-year institution, so they might subconsciously have "programmed themselves" that they would complete their study of English within two or three years. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, their real-world experiences showed them that the acquisition of any language was a time-consuming process which would take an unspecified period of time. As a result, they attached less importance to the number of years it might take to complete their study. Therefore, most interviewees described themselves as "being optimistic" about learning English. It might be assumed that this would be a different story if they were in 12th grade or below. Teens would motivate themselves by "spurring themselves" on due to the pressure of society's judgment as "a shame."

#### Preliminary finding two

English is still a minority language in Japan; the opportunity to use it remains limited. This means that the general population in Japan, including the Deaf and H/H, benefit little in any practical way from their learning English. Nevertheless, the six interviewees, representative of Deaf and H/H people in general, powerfully motivated themselves to learn English. Four of the six were motivated by something that did not seem to mesh with their vision. The following questions can be raised. Why did it have to be English, not some other language? For the interviewees, was English the most attractive means to accomplish their personal goals?

It was noteworthy to see how two interviewees spoke of their first exposure to

English. MA was fascinated by seeing his parent's drawing the initials of his name using letters of the alphabet. He said that this experience was kind of "cool" in the way that today's teenagers use this term in their daily conversation. MB was attracted to the beauty of the foreign letters of the alphabet of English and French he saw in the media. Referring to the letters, he stated, "Simple and beautiful." He did not like Chinese and Korean characters and even said, "... looked not smart." He also did not like them because "they demanded a lot work," according to what he explained. In addition to this, it was also noteworthy to see the interviewees' definition according to which English and French fell into the category of "foreign language" and the languages of the neighboring countries of Japan such as Chinese and Korean did not.

A cultural bias issue emerges this time. It is apparent that the interviewees subconsciously had a stereotype of "foreign" things including language and people. Based on the stereotype, they appeared to choose English or ASL as a means of inflating their image of themselves.

In fact all six interviewees were born before 1970. Following a period of great destruction, the two decades after Japan lost World War II in 1945 were a period of dramatic economic growth. For a couple of years after World War II, GHQ (General Headquarters of Allied Powers) temporarily governed Japan, and American things flooded into the country. Even after the GHQ left and Japan resumed independence, the nation continued to import American goods and aspire to become more Americanized. The nation hosted national-scale events such as the Olympic Games in 1964 and World Exposition in 1970. This series of major events further westernized the nation. The influx of affluent people from industrially advanced countries helped to rejuvenate the economy. Xenophilics

had feelings of fear mixed with awe toward those foreigners. Neighboring countries in the Far East such as China were breaking off their relationships with Japan at that time. Most of them lagged behind Japan in industrial development. Accordingly, fewer people came to Japan from these countries than from western countries.

During the next decade, the nation's western-oriented preference further intensified. The community set its eyes on not only American things but also on European things mostly from France. It was not uncommon for the media to broadcast and publish massive amounts of information related to "haute couture" for example. French cuisine was in fashion, and many people adopted the practice of enjoying luxury dishes in an imitation French three-star restaurant. The social trend of adopting western ways as well as western things was evident everywhere. Upper class families, mostly government officers, and for example, representatives of trading companies stationed overseas, often flew overseas; this going abroad became a status symbol. Commercial pilots and flight attendants were other examples of people held in high regard. These overseas jobs demanded foreign language competency, which the community viewed as connected to high intelligence and wealth.

Seeing such western things and people, Japanese society in general appeared to have adopted a biased attitude about "foreign" things and people. The term "foreign" meant to them "occidental" especially American and French. The term connoted something promising wealth and admiration to them as well. Mastering foreign languages was a way to "grab such gold." It was not surprising to see that English and French Departments were flooded by droves of female college students. Disappointing the aspirations of many, the glory of mastering



one of these foreign languages shone for only a handful of them due to the exhausting nature of the learning process. Only the masters gained high admiration from others, and the high status in the community that competence in these specific foreign languages afforded. This was how those western-oriented people transformed the art of mastering English into a means of self-conceit.

The bias in favor of things American and French described above was observable here and there throughout the study. Because both FA and FC were in Japan at the time of the interview, the Internet and facsimile transmission were the sole means of communicating with them. The communication which had been flowing smoothly throughout the interview changed abruptly when a direct inquiry was sent referring specifically to the relationship between their learning English and their feeling of superiority. After this inquiry, they never sent anything back. This seemed unusual in light of the ease of the previous communication flow, and it raises suspicion about the volatile nature of this topic.

FB and FD admitted that they might subconsciously view their learning as their means to gain a feeling of being "chosen." FB stated that using ASL as well as English was a way to refine her communication skills and that her self-admiration could become a sense of being above others. FD did not believe her purpose was to brag about her prospective English fluency. But, she admitted later that she might have subconsciously had this thought and also that her skill in English was possibly a way to feel a sense of superiority over people without such skill, whether Deaf or hearing.

MA criticized those Deaf and H/H people whom he met for bragging about their experience in the United States. According to what he stated, those people showed off their attending Gallaudet University or another academic institution,

and their knowledge of a foreign language and culture which other people had not yet experienced. He was disgusted with the attitudes of several arrogant people, who had flaunted their going abroad to study in the United States having only attended ESL summer class for a few weeks. Ironically, he even exhibited some indication of his own viewing of English as a means to impress others with his future accomplishments.

MB appeared to be panicked when he was asked directly if he had viewed English as a means of enhancing his self-image. He showed strange facial expressions and paused for a couple of minutes before answering. He denied this, "... never. I never see it that way." Contrary to the strong tone of his sentence, his sign and facial expressions assumed a somewhat weary tone, which was strange to see.

The interviewees did not state directly that their purpose for learning English was to be "superior," to be "above the masses." However, four of the six interviewees communicated both verbally and non-verbally their feeling of superiority over other people who had not yet learned English, ASL, or both; apparently this occurred on the subconscious level. Their study of English came to be, as a result of the circumstances in which the interviewees happened to be which let them believe English was the "right choice." Both cultural influences and psychological factors interacted together to form "force of circumstance," which motivated their learning of English.

## **CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Implications**

The primary purpose of this study was to find out what factors contributed to six Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students' motivation and persistence in learning English, and to what factors their rapid achievement can be attributed. Contrary to what was anticipated, the confluence of social forces, external factors, and intra-personal factors was highly idiosyncratic for each person studied. The analysis of the research data resulted in finding a few similarities among the interviewees. Two similarities emerged from analyzing the data; the F-1 Deaf and H/H students' view of their learning English as a tool to accomplish another goal, and their being optimistic about their learning process.

Through analyzing these preliminary findings gleaned from those similarities, a hazy picture of Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students was sketched. They appeared to have stereotyped attitudes toward the term "foreign" similar to the western-oriented Japanese community in general. The term "foreign" was synonymous with American things. Thus English became the "foreign" language which they admired, were fascinated by, and were willing to struggle to master. They were "hungry" to use English as a means to achieve their personal goals. At the subconscious level, their learning English may have helped them gain a feeling of superiority over other people who had not yet learned the language as well. The synergistic effect of these psychological aspects propelled them to achieve their intended levels of English reading skill. They were excited to see their improvement day by day and year by year. In this way, they progressed in their learning process in a relatively short period of time. They exhibited a

positive attitude toward learning English as well as ASL and toward the communities where the languages were dominant.

Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students could have substituted learning some other country's language for learning English. Among all the languages existent today, Swedish might be considered a potential substitute for them. Sweden with a large population of Deaf and H/H people is a country supportive of the Deaf community bearing comparison with the United States. Sweden is one of the "occidental" countries that meet the stereotyped preference for "foreign" held by the F-1 Deaf and H/H students. Accordingly, they could have favored learning Swedish, Swedish Sign Language, or both. This could have resulted in going abroad to study in that country. Contrary to this expectation, few Japanese Deaf and H/H students have gone to Sweden and many have chosen to come to the United States. This circumstance can be explained by the fact that Japan has not yet been subjected to Swedish cultural influence.

French is another substitute students might consider. Japan has westernized in many ways; concrete things and abstract ideas from France are abundant in the nation. According to the same logic that applies to Sweden, Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students could have engaged themselves in learning French, French Sign Language, or both. In reality, France appears not to be viewed as favorably as the United States and Sweden in Deaf related concerns, and this might be an important reason why few Japanese Deaf and H/H students have gone abroad to study in France.

To take a holistic view, it is clear that learning English in the United States was the product of the powerful cumulative influence of the circumstances in which the six Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students happened to have found

themselves. Their enculturation reflects national traits of Japan, some aspects of which differ from the United States. To determine precisely what factors explain the Deaf and H/H students' accelerated accomplishment requires further research and the replication of this study with a larger number.

#### **Suggestions for further studies**

As stated above, the number of research subjects is the major weakness of this study. There were six subjects, all of whom were associated with Ohlone College. They included no one younger than 30 years old. This fact made the data too limited to represent the entire group of F-1 Deaf and H/H students from Japan. If any research is designed to follow up this study or to attempt to replicate it, the survey must be broadened to include a larger number of subjects. Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students associated with academic institutes other than Ohlone College, such as California State University Northridge, Golden West Community College, and Seattle Community College on the west coast, and Gallaudet University and the Rochester Institute of Technology (including the National Technical Institute for the Deaf) on the east coast, are examples to be considered for inclusion in future follow-up studies. Larger numbers make the data more quantitative and qualitative; it enhances the quality of the results.

If a more ethnically diverse population of F-1 Deaf and H/H students is selected to explore the variables addressed in this study, a cross-cultural survey could be done including F-1 Deaf and H/H students from diverse countries; for example, not only from Japan but also from Hong Kong, Korea, Mexico, Taiwan, and the Ukraine. Students representing all of these countries are reportedly attending Ohlone College during spring semester 2000. In a culturally diverse

sample, the issue of sensitivity to cultural context must be given sufficient attention. For example, a huge distinction between the characteristics of F-1 Deaf and H/H students from Spanish-speaking countries such as Mexico and the characteristics of those from Japan can be expected since these countries are quite disparate in aspects such as language, cultural values, history, economic, and education-related perspectives. Even in the same region, Asia, there are clear distinctions between F-1 Deaf and H/H students from Chinese-speaking countries such as Hong Kong and Taiwan and those from Japan. For example, after having been under British influence for decades, it can be assumed that Hong Kong's exposure to western culture might have been markedly dissimilar to Japan's. Another example, it has been reported for F-1 hearing students in general, although not yet confirmed, that the phonological system of Chinese more closely approximates the phonology of English than does Japanese phonology. With this proposal, it is assumed that more Chinese learners might have aptitude for English fluency than Japanese learners. For Deaf and H/H individuals, this phonological similarity with English may affect Chinese F-1 Deaf and H/H students who tend to use mouthing simultaneously using sign language.

These examples show how characteristics of nationalities differ even within the same region; follow-up research remains to be done in this area. Clearly the quality of sensitivity to cultural context is a requirement for researchers conducting studies of this kind.

### Closing

As Morton et al. (1999) discussed, a factor influential in motivating learners is an attitude toward learning a particular language and toward a community whose

members use it. This study's findings concerning Japanese F-1 Deaf and H/H students support those of Morton et al. The development of strategies to encourage such a positive attitude toward English as well as ASL in the general population of Deaf and H/H students would be a practical application of this study for Deaf educators. To build the positive attitude, it is important to remember what circumstance to be ideal; how it motivates learners and how it hinders them in the process.

To consider a specific example close to home, it is possible to witness how this concept of attitude manifests itself among students of the California School for the Deaf, Fremont (CSDF). The environment of the school is wonderfully supportive of the students in many respects; no one doubts that. They feel comfortable in the same way hearing students do in regular classrooms. With all due respect, the environment of CSDF may be "too wonderful" for its students. In such a "too wonderful" environment, they may feel no need to view the learning of English as a means to achieve their personal goals as well as to inflate their self-concept, which the six subjects of this study indicated. Not only these psychological factors but also the environment of CSDF students may interact to render their English learning process dormant at some grade levels; for example, less competitiveness with English-speaking students, and less encouragement to aim at higher education institutions such as Stanford University and the University of California Berkeley in the Bay Area. It is understandable that CSDF students have negative attitudes toward learning English with some reasons. Due to the nature of the outcome of this study it is too early to discuss the validity of the above findings. Furthermore, this is a very sensitive topic to bring up as an issue.

## REFERENCES

Akamatsu, C.T. (1993). Teaching deaf asian and pacific island american children. In K. M. Christensen, & G. L. Delgado (Eds.), Multicultural issues in deafness (pp. 127-142). New York: Longman.

Battison, R. (1980). Signs have parts. In B. Charlotte, & B. Robbin (Eds.), Sign language and the deaf community (pp. 35-51). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf.

Bellugi, U. (1980). How signs express complex meanings. In B. Charlotte, & B. Robbin (Eds.), Sign language and the deaf community (pp. 53-74). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf.

Baker, C. (1980). Sentences in american sign language. In B. Charlotte, & B. Robbin (Eds.), Sign language and the deaf community (pp. 75-86). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf.

Cheng, L. L. (1993). Deafness: An asian/pacific island perspective. In K. M. Christensen, & G. L. Delgado (Eds.), Multicultural issues in deafness (pp. 113-126). New York: Longman.

Christensen, K. M. (1993). A multicultural approach to education of children who are deaf. In K. M. Christensen, & G. L. Delgado (Eds.), Multicultural issues in deafness (pp. 17-27). New York: Longman.

Cohen, O., Fischgrund, J., & Redding, R. (1990). Deaf children from ethnic, linguistic and racial minority backgrounds: An overview. American annals of the deaf, 135, 67-73.

Coleman S. (1997). International students in the classroom: A resource and an opportunity [On-line]. International education, 26, 52-61. Available: [http://vweb.hwwilsonweb.com/cgi-bin/webclien.../A.GT.&SP.URL.P=I\(F5Z7\)J\(0000793191\)](http://vweb.hwwilsonweb.com/cgi-bin/webclien.../A.GT.&SP.URL.P=I(F5Z7)J(0000793191))



Cummins, J. (1984). Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy. San Diego: College-Hill Press.

Delgado, G. L. (1981). Hearing-impaired children from non-native language homes. American annals of the deaf, 126, 118-121.

Garcia, B. G. de. (1993). Addressing the needs of hispanic deaf children. In K. M. Christensen, & G. L. Delgado (Eds.), Multicultural issues in deafness (pp. 69-90). New York: Longman.

Immigration and Naturalization Service. (1999). Immigration and nationality act [On-line]. Available: <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/indx.html>

MacNeil, B. (1990). Educational needs for multicultural hearing-impaired students in the public school system. American annals of the deaf, 135, 75-82.

Morton, L. L., Lemieux, C., Diffey, N. R., & Awender, M. A. (1999). Determinants of withdrawal from the bilingual career track when entering high school [On-line]. Guidance and counseling, 14 no3, 14-20. Available: <http://vweb.hwwilsonweb.com/cgi-bin/webspirs.cgi>

Nash, J. M. (1997). Fertile minds. Time, February 3, 1997, 49-56.

Padden, C. (1980). Culture of deaf people. In B. Charlotte, & B. Robbin (Eds.), Sign language and the deaf community (pp. 89-103). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf.

Padden, C., & Humphries, T. (1988). Deaf in america: Voices from a culture. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press.

1999 - 2000 Catalog, ohlone college [Catalogue]. (1999). Fremont, CA: Ohlone College.

# APPENDIX

## OHLONE COLLEGE DEAF STUDIES

