

[研究論文]

Language Learning and Identity Formation In-between Cultures Among Youth from Military Families

A Case Study from a Military Educational Institution in Japan

文化の狭間で生きる子どもの言語学習と アイデンティティ形成

在日アメリカ軍基地の学校におけるケーススタディ

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Abstract: The study observed English as a Second Language (ESL) teens in a military institution in Japan. The focus is on identity formation of these teens, such as being *in-between*, referring to the extent the students feel as being part of several different cultures and communities. This will be examined by looking at the link between family relationships, pathways, emotions, and language learning. The research method used was a long-term participant observation and in depth interviews to contextualize and understand the participants' view on their identity formation. The study found that family members have the most impact on the identity formation among these youths.

言語とアイデンティティは密接に関わっている。本研究は、文化やコミュニティの狭間で生きることと言語学習との関係性を明らかにすることを目的とし、在日アメリカ軍の学校の ESL（第二言語としての英語）クラスで学んだ生徒を対象として、研究を行った。親の仕事のために様々な国を移動している彼らに対してエスノグラフィーの方法論を用いたインタビュー調査を行った結果、不安定な家族との関係性が言語学習に対する意欲に大きな影響を及ぼしていること、さらに狭間で生きる不安定さの特徴が明らかになった。

Keywords: identity formation, language learning, military families

アイデンティティの確立、言語学習、米軍家族

*at the moment of submission, 投稿時点

1 Introduction

This research focuses on identity formation of English as a Second Language (ESL) teens in the military base (“military teens”) and tries to demonstrate how military teens invest in their identity formation through language learning. With globalization, more and more people are mobile. Military teens are one example of this trend. Currently, there are 500 U.S. bases around the world (MacLean & Elder, 2007). There were about 1.3 million active-duty US military personnel in 2016 (Macmahon, Kurtz-Phelan, and Rose 2020). Out of those, 15% of them have lived overseas (Macmahon, Kurtz-Phelan, and Rose 2020). By region, Asia has the highest number of US troops with 74,131 as of 2016, with a total of 38,818 in Japan, while 61,710 are stationed in Europe with 34,602 stationed in Germany (MacLean & Elder, 2007). However, these numbers only include the Department of Defense’s four military branches: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. The national guards, coast guards, and reserve and civilian personnel are not included, which holds nearly half of the total force. Therefore, the number is expected to be more than the data shown.

From September 2017 to June 2019, I volunteered as an assistant in Japanese and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at a U.S. military base in Japan. Most of the students are children of military personnel. ESL students often lack conversational fluency and literacy. Currently, the schools inside the American military bases support over 7,000 ESL students every year from elementary to high school (MacLean & Elder, 2007). These students have diverse backgrounds and feel displaced by turbulent family relationships and having limited opportunities are stemming from a lack of English proficiency.

As a student at one of the American bases myself, I encountered multicultural teens in my Japanese and ESL classes and noticed the same is true today. Many of the students who took Japanese classes also took ESL classes and had diverse backgrounds. I became interested in their language learning process as I worked with children who could succeed in the ESL class, as well as those having difficulties learning English. ESL students within a military base have a complex cultural and

linguistic background and are vulnerable to experience a unique identity formation due to their circumstances. This was shown during my experience in the Japanese and ESL classrooms. For example, there were high rate of parent absence, cultural value differences among family members and different life pathways such as their constant location changes. This is why teens who succeeded in learning English were more confident in their future. Therefore, they are bound to question their own identity and their sense of belonging in society (Shimoji, 2018). This experience has made me question how language acquisition affects their confidence and future opportunities.

I interviewed military teens to learn how they felt when learning a second language. The research question is:

How do military teens invest in their identity formation through language learning?

I will approach the research question through the following three sub-research questions.

1. How do military teens' relationships with family, pathways, emotions, and language learning affect identity formation?
2. How do their emotional triggers affect language usage?
3. How does language learning experience affect in-between identity?

This study examines whether they feel successful in their language learning processes and how they construct their idea of *in-betweenness* (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). According to Azevedo (2010), *in-betweenness* is a state of identity experienced by many socially mobile individuals who feel trapped between assimilation and resistance. The in-betweens experience “the cultural complexity of individual interaction” with the world (Guilherme & Dietz, 2015, p.10). This occurs especially during the language learning process. This study seeks to understand how their perceived successes and failures in language learning affect confidence and future opportunities.

2 Theoretical Framework on Identities, Emotions, and Language Learning

2.1 Evolution of Identity

The post-structuralist theory of language refers to the discourse which looks into the social meaning of the language and does not consider language only as a tool. This study adopts a constructivist view of identity in which identity is not a fixed phenomenon but it changes by outside forces such as language. Language is integral to the formation of an individual and makes them become self-aware. In specific communities, people struggle to engage themselves, in reference to ‘a chain’ (Bakhtin, 1986) which is an ongoing conversation to try to join a community. By expressing themselves adequately and participating in society through language, people gain assets and opportunities, which place value on the person that is projected onto them by others. Language learning and proficiency create one’s confidence for the future and satisfy their worth (Miura, 2015; Norton, 2001). On an additional note, McWhorter (2018) states that people view the world the same but bilinguals use language to express different emotions, and make shifts in attitudes when switching languages which includes the languages’ social and cultural meanings and values that are linked to the language. In keeping with this theoretical framework, my study clearly demonstrates that identity, emotions, and experience are all constructed through the use of language.

2.2 Dual Personality vs. Emotions

Pavlenko (2008) characterizes bilingualism as a form of dual personality that creates identity rather than a linguistic skill. Previous research shows that bilinguals feel they are a different people when they speak a different language (Pavlenko, 2006). Therefore, emotions should be considered when understanding the process of language learning and fulfillment toward learners’ language acquisition. Pavlenko (2006) studies bilingual minds to understand the influences of bilinguals’ perceptions and their relationship between language and themselves. She states that bilinguals have different perceptions when languages are switched both verbally and non-

verbally (Pavlenko, 2006). The bilinguals stated the duality of identities emerge through the use of different languages associated with the cultures of the language. It is important to consider that emotions are culturally constructed and can aid or hold back certain language learners.

2.3 Identity Formation of Military Teens

Military teens can be considered Third Culture Kids (TCK) “who [have] spent a significant part of [their] developmental years outside their parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any” (Limberg & Lambie, 2011, p.45). However, military children often feel stressed by their family’s absence, lack of support, and constant movement, impacting academic performance and well-being (Gewirtz & Youssef, 2016; Blaisure et al., 2012). Additionally, Darwin and Norton (2015) claim that perception of language affects perception of identity.

The concept of investment was introduced by Pierce (1995) as it “signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (p.17). This can be understood by using Bourdieu’s idea of cultural capital. According to Bourdieu (1977), “cultural capital” refers to “the knowledge and modes of thought that characterize different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms” (Norton, 2010, p.10). Bourdieu (1977) argues that, depending on the community, the cultural capital may differ and exchange values other than one’s knowledge. Consequently, Darwin and Norton (2017) claim that if a learner invests in a second language, “they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (p.3). The investment is an exchange of information using language and it is a way to create oneself and to relate to the language and the community. Darwin and Norton (2015) claims, therefore, that an investment in their language learning is an investment in their identity, which is recreated through time and space. From Norton’s idea of investment, I created this following scheme which implies the

investment in identity formation of military teens studying English in a military institution (Figure 1). Figure 1 displays this investment through language learning, resulting from military teen learners' investment into their relationship with their family, emotions, and life pathways. By focusing on military teens, the study examines how military families experience this unique lifestyle. It is also important to consider that emotions constitute an essential part of every human being and can aid or hold back certain language learners, which teachers need to be aware of and address in their daily practice. More research effort on this aspect of language learning is needed by the researchers. These three interdependent investments assist identity formation through language learning.

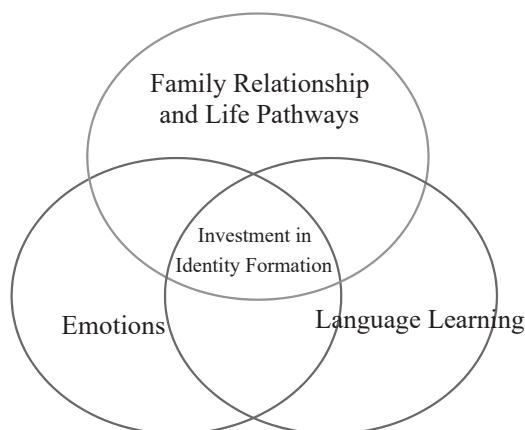


Figure 1 Investment in Identity Formation among Military Teens

3 Research Methodology

This research is based on a long-term commitment through participant observation as an assistant and in-depth interviews. My field practice at the military base school's Japanese class consisted of checking for errors in assignments from students and providing guidance to those interested in attending universities, especially Japanese universities. During the two years of fieldwork, which were between 2017 to 2019, as an assistant of the Japanese class, I met a group of students

who talked about their in-between identity affecting their language ability. From there, the observation of the ESL class began from February 2019 to November 2019 to understand the environment. The class was held for an hour and a half every Friday in the afternoon, and I would interact with students and assist those who were behind for 7 months. While I was doing field work, surveys were conducted to find interviewees.

The data were analyzed using directed content analysis, which attempts to prove or extend conceptually theoretical framework or theory (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The process began by identifying key concepts of the coding categories including emotions, in-between identity, and the language learning process. These categories were identified through field work and themes that emerged from the data.

4 Research Results and Analysis

4.1 Participants’ Description

The participants were high school students in different stages of their life who took ESL class in a U.S. military base school. Chart 1 outlines their demographic data.

Chart 1 Description of the Interviewees

Interviewee Description	Gender	First Language	Place of Origin	Age
A	F	Japanese	Japan	24
B	F	Japanese and Tagalog	Japan, Philippines, and US	22
C	F	Tagalog	Philippines	20
D	M	Polish	Poland	21
E	F	Vietnamese	Vietnam	25
F	M	Japanese	Japan and US	17
G	M	Italian	Japan and Sicilian	23
H	F	Korean	Korea	19

Next, the symbols used for understanding the transcription are presented in Table 1 below. The interviewees are distinguished by letters.

Table 1 Transcription Symbols (based on Jefferson, 2004)

Symbols	Meaning
()	Included by the researcher to clarify the intended message, thought, idea, or translation of a foreign word other than English expressed by the interviewee
...	Non-measured pause
haha	Laugh, chuckle
IN	The spoken words of the interviewer
A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H	The spoken words of the interviewee by letters
?	Question mark indicates rising intonation
Underline	Keywords for analyzing purposes
“ ”	Interviewees' thoughts within the response
*	Detailed definition of a word or phrase

In the following sections, the data will be analyzed firstly according to the linkage of the themes, which are English learning, emotion, and family relationships, all creating a sense of identity. Secondly, the relationship between specific emotions and specific language will be analyzed. Lastly, their perception of in-between identity will be explored.

4.2 The Interconnectedness of English Learning, Emotion, Family Relationship, and the Sense of Identity

The interconnectedness of the four components will be explored. The military families not only move between different countries, but the families are oftentimes absent due to deployment. Military teens lack communication with their families and desire to connect with them.

4.2.1 Creating a Bond with a Family Member through English Learning

Many students indicated that English creates a bond between their family members. In Excerpt 1, Interviewee F talks about his English ability affecting the way he sees himself. His native language is Japanese, and he uses both Japanese and English throughout the interview. His father was gone until he was 10. The underlines

show the interviewee's desire to connect with his father. The following conversation with the interviewee began with "Do you think learning a new language changes your sense of yourself?"

Excerpt 1

F: Yes...In everything. Haha everything changes, yeah.

IN: Could you give me an example?

F: I feel like I have more. I feel good that I have more. Like I own part of myself.

IN: How do you feel like you own part of yourself?

F: I see myself through my dad. I feel close to my dad and more connected with him now.

IN: So your relationship with your dad has impacted a sense of yourself and feeling like you gained yourself?

F: Yeah, I feel close to myself by being close with my dad. When I started learning English, I ask more question to him about school, basketball, all that stuff and 自然とね (gradually). I learn about my dad and how cool he is and hardworking and makes me want to learn English too.

This conversation exemplifies how language learners try to connect strongly to the family member who speaks English, who is often remote due to their job; therefore, the longing is felt. In the case of Interviewee F, his language learning is linked to the connection with his family, especially his dad, which makes him feel complete. These three components of family relationship, language learning, and identity are interlinked.

A virtuous cycle is inherent in his usage of language and the linkage of these three components. Throughout Excerpt 1, the interviewee speaks mostly English, showing English is spoken mostly about positive subjects, instead of Japanese.

In Excerpt 2, Interviewee H states that she felt urgency in learning a language

when she met her stepfather, who started baby-sitting her while her mother was working. Interviewee H is Korean and has lived in Korea and Japan. Her mother remarried when she was in 9th grade.

Excerpt 2

IN: When did you feel that you needed to know your language?

H: When my (step) dad came into my life, I was like how am I going to communicate with this guy. I wanted to bond with him because ...he knows a lot of stuff ...but I recognized there is a language barrier. I wanted to tell him how my day was and was natural and it was a bond I created internally.

...

IN: You recently thought that having two or more languages were beneficial for you, when do you think you were happiest being able to learn a language?

H: I think it's more personal for me, the fact that I was able to translate between my dad and my grandma. I think not because it's useful, because they wanted to talk, but they had a language barrier. And I was glad that I knew both languages so I can help my family and get together and have that bond.

She points out the language barrier she felt, and the language barrier she saw between her stepfather and her grandmother. She was happy when she broke the language barrier. Language learners feel validated by using the language they have learned which bonds them as a family. In Excerpt 2, the language learning is seen positively and has made her feel good, which is connected to a positive identity.

4.2.2 Lack of Fulfillment in Language Learning Due to the Absence of the Family

Family member absence due to deployment causes teens to feel unfulfilled in their language learning. Environmental changes impact their motivation toward

learning languages and other subjects. In Excerpt 3, Interviewee G is Italian American and speaks both English and Japanese. He was born in California and moved to Sicily, then to different bases within Japan. He did well in elementary school, but gradually lost interest in learning at school.

Excerpt 3

IN: Do you have a moment when you didn't want to come to class?

G: When I was in elementary, I was at the top of my class, それでも (hard to believe). I think once I came into high school, there is more kids, and you're not at the top of the class. I guess that really dropped my motivation and I didn't care anymore. 今まで適当に、やらなくてもナンバー1だったけど、今は頑張らないってというのがね。親もいなかったし。 (Before I would do things half-hearted and would still be number 1, but now, I have to work hard. Also, my parents were not home.)

IN: When was that?

G: At the end of seventh grade. Whenever I noticed that people don't notice anymore.

You are not in the spotlight.

IN: Were you in the spotlight?

G: Oh, yeah. Teacher loved me all the time. I wasn't a teacher's pet, but you know. I had good personality, I had leadership skills, all that kind of stuff and I was the center of attention. That was a big hit for me (not receiving the attention).

IN: Was that because of (name of the certain base)? Or other bases as well? Or just the high school and many kids?

G: Yeah, (name of the certain base) is one. but also, 今までは (before), it was one teacher one class. Once it became like high school you get a schedule like A day B day. And classes are different depending on the subject. You didn't have one teacher looking at you. You didn't have attention, because

it's just how it was. I felt like no unity.

IN: Did you feel the unity before (before starting high school)?

G: Haha that's a funny question I think the parents are like "everywhere we go it's the same."

But it's not. The base is the same, but the atmosphere is different, the feel is different.

When he moved to another base, he had to adjust to a different curriculum, which is one of the reasons why he felt less motivated, but he also stopped receiving as much attention from his teachers and his parents. His father was gone for 3 months, 3 times a year, and he would come back for only a week and a half every time. He feels disconnected and lonely due to his new environment and his family being absent.

The connection between language learning and family relationship is apparent in Excerpt 3. His studying is half-hearted despite being number 1, which indicates that he does not feel deserving of being number 1. His parents were not home, and the school did not make him feel like he belonged, so he feels incomplete. Thus, the linkage of family relationship and language learning can affect identity formation, since there is a constant movement and the lack of family members' presence, which makes him lose motivation. The validation that he longs for is absent. His need to feel connected and apathy toward learning affects his self-perception.

4.2.3 Validation of One's Identity Sought from Family Roots and Life Pathways

Military teens have expressed their affirmation of their identity by understanding their family roots and experiences of going abroad. In Excerpt 4, Interviewee G was asked about how his relocation to Italy impacted his self-image. His lack of unity or sense of home is expressed in Excerpt 4, as well as his understanding of his roots as an Italian American.

Excerpt 4

IN: Do you think this time (your experience) in Italy has any impact on you?

G: Yeah. Cuz (because), that's when we found out that we were Italian American and not just white American. My dad didn't know until we decided to move to Sicily and all of a sudden my grandma said oh yeah, 実は (by the way) I'm adopted and my birthplace was Sicily. And we always thought she was American. But who knew? She was born in Sicily, which we are going to, and was brought to the states. I felt something special for a second...It's nice to know, I wouldn't call myself Italian, but Italian American since Americans is a mix, but I know why I have black hair, beard and not light color hair.

IN: Did you compare yourself?

G: Yeah, people would stare on the train or look at me wherever because I was 濃い、毛深い (dark and hairy) and it's everyone is 薄い (light, fair) everywhere.

IN: Do you think that experience living in Sicily is important to you?

G: I can say I've been there, experienced it although I don't remember, but I can tell people I know that place that I'm from I guess. Wish I could speak the language, but yeah, I need to learn Spanish, so...

He claims that the only reason he thinks he learned of his Italian American heritage was because of his father's relocation to Sicily. He believes that this experience has also shaped him to tell others about the place because he has been there. Despite his different appearance, he never felt he had to question his sense of belonging because of his heritage.

In Excerpt 4, he feels positive about himself because of his new discovery of heritage. His recognition of being Italian American has provided him an understanding of why he looks different. His lifepath of going to the base in Sicily is also a positive investment into his identity.

Language learners feel that their experience of going to different locations impacts the way they see themselves. These military teens feel the need to describe their identity depending on the experiences of physically being at the location. His lifepath has created a sense of in-between identity that has given him a secured identity. His understanding of his roots as Italian has created a positive outlook on who he is. Also, his loneliness of not being connected with his surroundings has changed to a positive feeling. People who are moving in greater geographical range often face social isolation, feeling the desire to have a wider connection (Affleck & Steed, 2001). The constant movement for the military teens, such as Interviewee G, has created a sense of isolation.

4.2.4 Limited Ability of the Language and the Difficulty of Developing One's Identity

Some military teens claimed how their lack of proficiency in their native language affected their creation of identity. In Excerpt 5, Interviewee H states her family and language ability impacting her career path. Her Korean level is conversational, and she studies grade 6 level Korean in a language school weekly. She also volunteers as a translator to practice her Korean. Her main language is English, and she speaks English throughout the interview.

Excerpt 5

IN: How important is it for you to succeed in English?

H: It's important for me because I can support myself.

IN: Would you recommend others to join the military?

H: I wouldn't recommend anyone to join the military unless they don't have anything. They don't have no aspiration, no goal, they have no idea what they want to do. If you have even a slight goal, I want to be a doctor, do that. I'm so glad I joined the military now because I had no idea what I wanted to do and I had zero plans. I also didn't want to cause trouble to my

dad. I can travel, I would have a job, I have medical so it gave me all the choices I needed. But then college was something I wish I could have gone to.

IN: Why didn't you?

H: Because I didn't think I was good enough. I barely spoke both languages well.

IN: Do you think the more Korean you know, you have a sense of yourself? Or you would have gone to college?

H: It would be satisfying to know more, because it's really frustrating. I'm Korean and it's sad that I don't know the language.

IN: You consider yourself Korean?

H: Yeah, well my blood is Korean even though I'm American citizen, so I can pretty much I can say, I'm both, but I know Korean, but I can't read difficult books or don't know difficult words and I feel like I should have studied more and improve more.

IN: So, you feel like if you know the language more you would be complete?

H: Yeah, I do. It's really frustrating, I keep taking that test that I told you earlier, the DLPT (the test to become a translator) and my scores are barely changing.

The interviewee believes that to be Korean, she must read, write, and speak Korean and pass the translator's test. She also feels she must know both Korean and English to be satisfied; currently, she is frustrated. She also did not go to college because she felt she lacked the language skills and was uncomfortable asking for financial support from her father.

As in Excerpt 2, she claims her motivation toward learning English as a positive feeling because of her sense of belonging, of feeling helpful within her family, and studying hard to learn English. However, she believes that she is deficient in Korean, citing inability to read books. This is also connected to her future choices to not trouble (her) dad and to support herself. She desires independence. In the previous

section, Figure 1 shows that family relationship, emotions, and language learning all affect identity formation. In the case of Interviewee H, her English learning and emotions are linked and made her feel negatively about her language ability. This has an impact on her career choice because of her perception of English ability and her relationship with her father. She dismisses her desire to go to college.

One of the main investments of identity is also an investment in language learning. By investing in language learning, students feel a sense of themselves. In Excerpt 6 Interviewee C is explaining how her perceived language ability affects how she sees herself in her environment. Interviewee C is Filipino, and her native language is Tagalog. Her parents have joined the military as nurses to take care of the children. In Excerpt 6, the language learner speaks about her motivation of knowing a language and how that affects her presence in the military.

Excerpt 6

IN: You want to be better in the language?

C: Yes. I want to be in the military. Haha

IN: You said you want to be helpful.

C: Yes.

IN: Because you moved a lot?

C: Yes. I want to be helpful, or people don't want you.

IN: I see. Do you feel more belonged by being helpful?

C: Yes. I don't think I belong if I have less English. So I am happy I have survival English.

IN: You said you didn't like going to ESL, but you felt like you needed it. When did you start feeling that way? What made you want to study English, even though you don't like English?

C: Mom and dad. They told me to work hard. They left the Philippines to take care of me. They say I...uhhh... "magindapat" (deserve) and love me. Let me look it up. But yes, I owe my life to the military.

Her desire to be helpful is from her desire to belong. She feels that the military has been a great place for her as she is needed despite her lack of English. Also, she believes her family came to the U.S. for a better life, and she owes her life to the military. Her motivation for studying in ESL was to work as hard as her parents, and the interviewee “magindapat (deserves)” a better life than her parents. If she did not have the ability to speak her survival English, she would feel less worthy and she would not feel that her current environment is where she belongs. Therefore, she perceived language learning as an asset that leads to better success in her career and being a helpful soldier, which is connected to her self-worth.

From Excerpts 1 to 6, Figure 2, a modified version of Figure 1, was created. Figure 2 shows that the family relationship and pathways are a major influence on the military teens’ identity formation, and additionally, the military is influencing and affecting the identity of these youths. The military children’s family relationships, emotions, and language learning are influencing one another. Therefore, the overlap is more clustered closely and merged. Also, the family relationship and life pathways circle is largest to indicate the heavy impact on their identity formation.

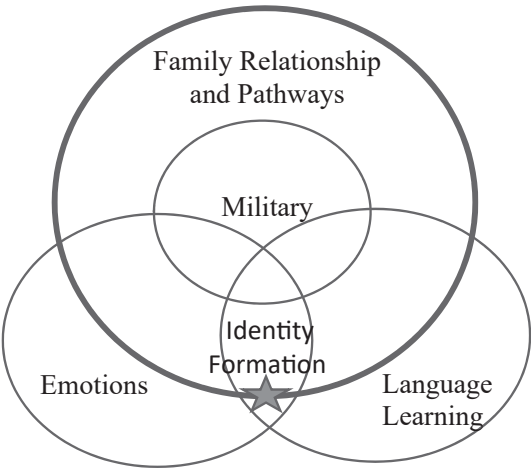


Figure 2 Modified Version of Investment in Identity Formation among Military Teens

4.3 The Linkage of Specific Emotions to Specific Languages

In Section 4.3, the linkage between specific languages and emotions will be discussed. English and each participant's native language were linked to different emotions.

In Excerpt 7, Interviewee F reports that he distinguishes language usage depending on the emotions linked to the topic he is talking about so that he is able to express his emotions in a way natural to him.

Excerpt 7

IN: Do you feel like you adapt yourself to each language?

F: I think it's different, yeah.

IN: How different?

F: How? English, is... It's different. When I speak Japanese I sound more nice, but in English I sound rude. 日本語でなんか言うとなんか弱くなることもある。(In Japanese, I sound weak.)

IN: 感情によって変わったりする？ (Does your language change depending on the feelings?)

F: あー悲しい時は、英語が多い (When I am sad, it is English). 音楽とか聞いていると (When listening to like music), I think music changes the language I use inside my brain.

The lyrics makes me sad and I just get into the moment. But 嬉しい時は、英語日本語両方 (when I am happy, it's both English and Japanese).

IN: 恥ずかしい時は？ (How about when you are embarrassed?)

F: 恥ずかしい時は、頭が日本語になってしまう。(When I am embarrassed, my brain becomes Japanese). When you get nervous or present something to the class, I can't talk like this.

The interviewee is aware that his language is context dependent; he adopts a more brash persona when speaking in English and submissive demeanor when

speaking Japanese. Additionally, language usage is determined by his own internal states as well: English is spoken when sad and both English and Japanese when happy. Language learners perceive linguistic expressions as a locus where language system, emotion, and identity meet, and in this sense motivations for language usage are all interconnected, as shown in Figure 1 earlier in the paper.

Excerpt 7 shows that the positive feelings are expressed in both English and Japanese. His ideal expression is a mix of English and Japanese. Specifically, nice, weak, and embarrassed feelings are expressed in Japanese, and rude feeling is expressed in English. In this case his close relationship with his father could be an influence. The rudeness could be the perception of being in the military, by the influence of the father, who he feels close to. The influence of military ideology may have an impact on his perception of English. Since Interviewee F's father has experienced deployment, the identity of his father presenting and emphasizing his strong, stiff persona, rather than a vulnerable side, could make the child internalize this perception into the English language itself, which is expressed as the word rude.

While observing and interviewing the military teens, the students used languages depending on their emotions. I became interested in their emotional triggers and their use of language and asked questions related to their emotions and their language usage. Excerpt 8 is a conversation with Interviewee C who explains her usage of Tagalog when she gets surprised. It was an incident at work, in which her boss told her to only use English even if it is not work related. The interviewer asks how the interviewee feels about her boss repressing her to only express her reactions in English; she accepts it and believes that she wants to be helpful.

Excerpt 8

IN: Do you speak different languages depending on your emotions?

C: Yes. Even at work. When I am surprise(d), I speak Tagalog. My boss told me not to do it.

But I still do. My boss is nice, he just thinks it's important to have unity.

My sister said he is...masama (evil or bad) What is it, let me see.

IN: Oh okay. Evil, bad... mean?

C: Yes. Grrr. (mean looking face)

IN: I am not sure if I will understand. I will be sad. Why do you think you understand?

C: I want to be helpful. I want to be better.

Her conversation with her boss is mainly in English, but her language shifts when she is surprised. She is determined to continue to study English to be helpful to her coworkers. Although her family sees her boss as evil, she respects her boss and believes that unity is maintained by only speaking English. Although all of the interviewees believe that the military is diverse, this is questionable. The interviewee is expressing her emotions during her job which does not mean that it has an impact on the job's efficiency but still is told to speak in English to maintain unity. She believes that her purpose is to be helpful in the workplace and become better at English, so she is not bothered. From the analysis, the military teens may feel the need to express specific emotions using specific language, regardless of their level of language. Therefore, as Figure 1 shows, military teens have a strong link of specific emotions and language learning.

Unlike Excerpt 7, Excerpt 8 is expressing that the interviewee's natural expression is usually in Tagalog. Her emotions toward English are helpful and more intentional when speaking. The interviewee also has a feeling of respect toward her boss; therefore, her suppression is not perceived as a negative feeling, but a positive feeling. Hence, there is an attachment of emotion to the specific language, regardless of the person they are communicating with.

In Excerpt 9, the interviewee explained how her emotions change the language usage. The interviewee is Vietnamese and stayed in Vietnam until she was 16. She moved to Japan to be raised by a family friend who was in the military. She attended high school inside the base in Japan and Korea. She went back to Vietnam to attend college and moved to Washington State when she was 22.

Excerpt 9

IN: Do you use specific languages for specific emotion?

E: I think I get more aggressive in English and I have to be tough at work, so that personality comes to me. But when I am anxious, I think I feel like a mix of both languages. Vietnamese is used more when I express my feelings that are less logical. Haha, maybe that's why I should use English more for work, haha.

She has an aggressive attitude when she is speaking English naturally. However, when she is anxious, she speaks both languages. In her personal life, she tends to use Vietnamese to express her personal feelings that may be less logical and switch to English at work not only because it is the common language, but to stay logical and direct. Their image of language has an impact on the language use depending on the emotions, and affects their way of expression, creating an identity depending on the emotions. Similar to Excerpt 7 which states that English is rude, in Excerpt 9, English is also seen as aggressive and tough; this indicates her image of English as being related to the military. Her emotions are linked to the language use of Vietnamese as less logical and anxious. Her natural or ideal way of speaking is Vietnamese or a mix of Vietnamese and English. Therefore, as Figure 2 shows, specific emotions can trigger the usage of the language, impacting the language learning as well.

In Excerpt 5, the interviewee claims the personal reason of being able to bond with her father and be someone who can help connect the family members together as a motivation toward her language learning. The same positive feeling is felt by Interviewee H, in Excerpt 2, which is when she was able to connect her family members using her language skills. However, there is a negative emotion linked to language learning in the school environment for Interviewee H, which is shown in Excerpt 10. In Excerpt 10, Interviewee H speaks about her experience in ESL as inducing a negative feeling, which has pressed her to strive to learn English.

Excerpt 10

IN: Did you ever compare yourself when learning English?

H: Yeah, I did. In ESL, we had different levels and I tend to get competitive with school, and I was naturally like that. And in class, like oh he knows this much, I don't know this much. Why didn't I know that? I need to know that, so I had that mindset.

IN: Even in the same level? (ESL was divided into different level and not by grade)

H: Yeah, I think because we are close in level that I get more competitive, because other classes I felt competitive but not as much as ESL.

IN: What was your environment like in ESL class?

H: I felt embarrassed, because I was away from my classmates, and the feeling was intense.

But I was learning in that class so it was nice, but it was this feeling of rushing to learn. I don't feel comfortable being the girl who can't speak any language properly, especially when I have to speak against same Koreans who speak better English.

The interviewee was very competitive in the ESL class with her classmates who had the similar level as she, questioning why she did not know certain things that other students knew, and pushed herself to learn. She also felt embarrassed because she would take ESL class and she would be away from her classmates. She also speaks about how she decided her future due to her perceived language ability. As for her Korean identity, she explains her resistance to expressing herself in English in front of similar Korean background teens in the class. Therefore, she has an association with the Korean identity.

As Excerpt 2 shows, her motivation toward learning English was her bond that she was able to create through her English skills. In Excerpt 10, her motivation is rather negative. She feels competitive, embarrassed, and rush(ed) in the school

environment and is separated in her mind, when linked to her emotions that are associated with language learning. The contrast is apparent, and the linkage of the emotions is different in the context of school and family, as Figure 1 shows.

In Excerpt 11, Interviewee B feels that her motivation toward learning English was her security for the future. Interviewee B speaks both English and Japanese throughout the interview, but states that she feels more comfortable in Japanese.

Excerpt 11

- IN: Do you think learning a new language changes your sense of yourself?
- B: I think I don't change, but I feel comfortable around people.
- IN: Because you can communicate with them? Or... why do you feel comfortable?
- B: I think it's like the military. Security is big about military. Language is the same thing. Language is security, like an insurance.
- IN: So, do you feel safe learning the language?
- B: Yes, I feel safe. I am not good in English yet, but studying it makes me feel positive about my future. I feel like handicap without English.
- IN: What's your future plans?
- B: A hair dresser.
- IN: Do you want to work outside of Japan?
- B: No, I want to work inside the base, because I feel safe here. I don't think people want me with the level of English I have now.
- IN: How about Japan? You can just use Japanese?
- B: …もの足りないっていうか、なんのためにミリタリーブラットとして生まれてきたのかわからないなって思う。とか言ってほんとはやっぱ怖いかも。海外行くの。(I don't feel satisfied, like I don't know why I was born as a military brat* But then, the truth is I'm probably scared of going abroad.)
- IN: あんなに色々な国移動してるのに？ (Even though you have moved to

different countries?)

B: 変ですよ。でもやっぱりママとフィリピンにいたときと、ことじゃ全然違うじゃないですか。ここ（基地）は安定しかない。(It must sound weird. But comparing the time I was in the Philippines with my mom, the base is nothing but stability.)

IN: 日本は(どう思う) ? (How do you feel about Japan?)

B: (I am) Too Filipino! Safe country, but no one can compare it to the base.

* military brat is a term used to describe a child of a parent serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and their lifestyles

The interviewee considers learning a language as an insurance for a successful future, and is also motivated to learn in order to satisfy her identity of being a military brat, that is, someone who uses their international experience and multilingual abilities for social and financial gain. She describes her future outside of the military as insecure; while she would like to become a hair dresser, she does not believe she has the language abilities to work off-base in Japan, yet fears hardship in her mother's country of the Philippines.

The language learning and family relationship are linked. In the case of Interviewee B, the desire to learn the language can be clearly seen, which is rooted in her desire to feel secure. This security is linked to her stability that she desires to feel from her path of moving around and being in a financially unstable environment. Also, the idea of family and military cannot be separated and influences her motivation in language learning, as shown in Figure 2.

Furthermore, these military teens feel instability of constant movement and desire stability through the language ability and staying in the military base, knowing the benefits of being a military teen. Soldiers feel that they have a sense of calling, to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and self-sacrifice for the greater good and for the country, which is patriotism (Mankowski, et al., 2015). The way that their family members conceptualize patriotism has an influence on the military teen's

image of military. The military member perceives the military as embodiment of patriotism. From Excerpts 7 to 11, Figure 3 was created.

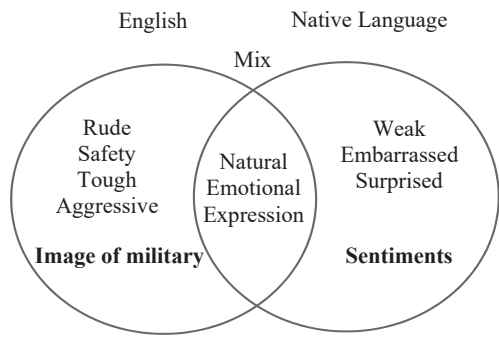


Figure 3 Emotions linked to Specific Languages

4.4 Their Perception of In-Between Identity

This section discusses how the research participants feel about their in-between identity and how that affects their English learning or their perception of languages. The interviewees were all shown a video (Wong Fu Productions, 2017) of what in-between identity as a youth is, what kind of emotions those youth feel and how they see themselves change over time. The video was shown to have the interviewees become aware of the issues concerning their self-awareness. The interviewees were then asked if they had felt the same way, and how the in-between identity affected their identity.

Interviewee A is Japanese and was raised in a Japanese environment until the 3rd grade. During the interview, she has difficulty saying certain words in Japanese and often switches back to English. She considers herself more fluent in English now and studies middle school level Japanese at night school. She states that language ability affects how she perceives herself as an in-between. Especially when she was in high school, she felt that she did not belong because of her perceived lack of language.

Excerpt 12

IN: When you think about in-betweenness, or in-between identity, what do you think?

A: I felt that when I was in Kansas, so high school だね. I felt that a lot. I didn't know where my home was. Because I wasn't perfect in either language. To me, it didn't matter first, until something triggered me.

IN: So, you felt in-between because of the language? Because you didn't know.

A: Yeah, like I didn't know 100% of either one. So I felt like I was like "oh my god I'm not fluent on any language." I am about to go to college so.

IN: Language is an important part of.

A: Definitely. Like what is my home? I don't know. Because I lived in both countries. If I go back to Japan, I felt like a foreigner and living in Kansas makes me a foreigner too. So, I felt the in-betweenness in high school. It bothered me a lot, and something triggered me in high school. It bothered me but I didn't discuss it or anything. I just felt like "Woah, I am lost like there is no home." I think senior year, I thought back to it, Junior year, I was busy. *

IN: Do you remember like what it was that triggered you? If you remember.

A: ...I don't remember, but I think it's because of (name of her older sister). Because she brought it up. I think she asked me a question like, "I don't feel home anywhere" and I think she asked me and if I felt the same way, and that when I thought like actually, "I feel home wherever my family is at." So it doesn't matter where, it's not about location, it's the people around me. Then, I didn't feel the in-betweenness.

IN: So, you don't feel it anymore?

A: Well, I don't think about it. Because I think now, "English is my main language now." So, I don't have that feeling anymore, but culture-wise, I feel like I'm in-between, but it doesn't make me feel anything about it.

IN: Do you consider in-between as a negative thing?

A: It affected me negatively at first. But then at the end, not really. Okay, well, this is me, Take it or don't take it. To me, it doesn't give me a negative or positive feeling. Okay, I figured it out myself. Wherever my family is at is wherever my home is. But whenever I was going through high school, it was tough.

*When the interviewee states "I was busy" she refers to her brain being busy, constantly feeling anxious about not feeling that she has a home.

While attending school in Kansas, she felt in-between due to a perception of not being fluent in either English or Japanese. However, a few years after graduating high school, she now feels that her home is where her family is and the people that she feels comfortable with. She further claims that she does not think about her in-betweenness anymore. However, her identity is not fully American, as she feels culturally neither American nor Japanese, but in-between. When she speaks about culture, she means the customs of each country. This description of in-betweenness of military teens is trying to explore the feelings and processes of their identity formation.

Figure 1 has, in the central overlapping area, Investment of Identity Formation, which in the case of Excerpt 12, is the change of in-between identity. The interviewee changes her perspective on in-between identity over time, and this shift in identity is unique for each military teen. This shift is because of the impact of the three components, which are family relationship, language learning, and emotions. The family member is a reason to feel negatively toward in-between identity, but also has become a way to determine her own understanding of in-between identity. The interviewee's understanding of it in her home changes depending on her family. In addition, her quest for in-between identity begins with her sister's perspective, but it is also shaped by her constant movement. Therefore, her life pathways of living as a military child also has an impact on her identity formation. Lastly, her validation is also linked to her language ability, which affects her to think that she is not

completely herself because she is not fluent in both languages. This also linked to her language learning, as Figure 1 shows. They all lead to the teen's identity formation.

The process of how in-between identity is negatively perceived has been explained in this section. The video, about in-between identity, shown at the beginning of the interview may have affected the interviewees' point of view of in-between identity. However, all of the interviewees have expressed in-between identity as a source of negative feeling and experience. The root of the negative feeling came from the linkage to family, which has impacted their perception of their own English ability. This has created a vicious cycle, which has created a negative connotation of in-between identity. However, as the interviewees have grown and met people other than their family members, or people who do not have a similar background, they were able to put aside the negative feelings and have come to terms with their in-between identity.

5 Conclusion

The study observed ESL teens in a military institution in Japan. The focus is identity formation of these teens as they navigate through several different cultures and communities. From observing the data, we have seen how family relation and pathways, emotions and language learning are interlinked. Therefore, the investment toward the military teens' own identity is an investment in learning English, emotions, and family relationships.

The findings are the following:

1. The military teens perceive and are affected by the bond between their family members, which affects their emotions and language learning. Without successfully developing positive family bonds, their perceptions of language proficiency were not successful even when the language learning was successful or emotions were expressed positively.
2. The military ideology affects the interviewees' families, the way military teens perceive the notion of the language, and how they perceive their family members.

3. There is a strong association between language and language learning. Emotions are associated with English learning, and the use of English strongly affected their military perception. Many of the teens feel comfortable mixing native language and English when they are in their natural and relaxed state.
4. In-between identity is often understood negatively. Change in the perception of in-between identity occurs. The interviewees begin from their perspective of identity being influenced by their family members to later creating their own perspective.

From the findings, the sub-research questions and the research question can be answered as follows.

Sub-Research Question 1: How does the relationship with family, pathways, emotions, and language learning of military teens affect identity formation?

The patterns vary, but family relationships and life pathways have the greatest impact on military teens and on their language learning and emotions. The image of the military also influences their emotional connection to language, affecting their image of the language itself.

Sub-Research Question 2: How do their emotional triggers affect language usage?

The native language tends to reflect the sentiments of the user, and the English language reflects an image of the military that they have created. The natural state of military teens is the mix of their native language and English.

Sub-Research Question 3: How does language learning experience affect in-between identity?

The military teens feel negatively about their in-between identity. In Finding #4, by creating an identity that is different from their family member's

influence or their life journey, they have a different perception toward their identity. This in-betweenness is oftentimes felt as an unstable feeling of “where is my home?” However, later on, the military teens come to terms with the identity, by understanding their own perspective and learning a different perspective from a family member. However, over time, they create their own perception of in-between identity. Identity wise, they have not developed a strong or positive idea of identity.

Research Question: How do military teens invest in their identity formation through language learning?

Military teens invest in their identity formation by language learning. Many interviewees value their identity of the country of the language based on their level of language ability, such as how well they can communicate with their family members, and stay motivated in the ESL class, although they may have a negative feeling toward English or are not really interested. The opposite could be seen, as military teens feel the lack of family members or their support, it hinders their language learning which leads to their decrease in self worth. Secondly, military teens invest in their identity formation through emotions because emotions trigger their language usage. This means that military teens feel that they are expressing their emotions using language as a tool and connecting to the community that they once felt distant. Lastly, military teens invest in their identity through family relationships and life pathways by finding meaning in the bond and creating their own perspective of themselves. Some interviewees feel that they feel more connected with their family members or roots by learning about them, motivating them to create themselves.

To summarize, the results indicate that family relationship heavily affects military teens’ identity. The investment in emotions, family relationship and pathways, and language learning have made a strong impact on their creation of identity. Through their adaption to new environments and people, military teens

desire to be a part of the military community and use language as a way to cultivate their constant community and people. Their adaption to a community, not only implies their adaption to a certain language, but also emotions that connect to the language and their connection to society is also dropped or removed, creating their unique identity and embracing them depending on the language ability.

The strength of this study is the focus point on the military teens. Although there is previous research on the military family as a whole that documents their struggle, there is little research where children are the focus. Also, by observing their identity formation not only through family relationship and life pathways, but also through language learning and emotions, the influence and unique perception of the language and their emotions was revealed. For future study, it would be informative to compare this data with similar data from a parent's perspective, and it might provide a useful perspective on children's language learning, identity, and emotions. This will allow an in-depth study in understanding military teens.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Professor Yumi Sugihara, Professor Mamoru Fujita, and Professor Tiina Matikainen for their guidance and support throughout my research. I must also thank the interviewees for sharing their stories with me and the unwavering support from all of my teachers who I have been inspired by. Furthermore, I would like to thank Keio University Shonan-Fujisawa Campus for providing me with an environment and the resources to further my studies and publish my master thesis paper. Lastly, my deep and sincere gratitude for my family for their continuous love and support.

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[受付日 2020. 3. 30]

[採録日 2020. 11. 10]