Using Community-based Instruction to Promote Language Affiliation: Findings from Japanese Language Learners[1]

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Abstract

A major challenge of the foreign language context, and teaching less commonly taught languages in specific, is engaging learners in the target culture and promoting meaningful use of the foreign language. This study demonstrates how community-based instruction, in the form of ethnographic observations and interviews and service learning, can promote learner's language affiliation — a sense of identification with the target culture and language. As a result of interactions with the local target language community made possible by the community-based assignments, university-level Japanese language learners gained an understanding of the target culture based on their individual experiences. By engaging with a community of Japanese speakers, learners saw how Japanese language skills and an understanding of Japanese culture are relevant to their lives. Heritage learners felt a strengthened sense of belonging to the wider Japanese community.

Keywords: community-based instruction, learner as ethnographer, service learning, language affiliation, Japanese as a foreign language.

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1. Introduction

Engaging foreign language (FL) learners in the target culture (TC) and promoting their meaningful use of the target language (TL) outside of the classroom is a challenge for FL instructors. FL learners' with high *language affiliation*, that is, "the attachment or identification they feel for a language whether or not they nominally belong to the social group customarily associated with it" (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997, p. 555), have exhibited a higher quantity (Black, 2005; Fukunaga, 2006) and a wider variety of TL use (Ohara, 2011), higher motivation (Black, 2005; Fukunaga, 2006; Inaba, 2012), and a better understanding of sociolinguistic norms and language variation (Ohara, 2011) than learners with lower levels of language affiliation. These findings indicate that promoting FL learners' language affiliation can facilitate learner engagement in the TC and meaningful TL use. However, little research has been done to determine if instruction can play a role in increasing learners' language affiliation.

The current study posits that instruction can facilitate increases in FL learners' language affiliation and that *community-based instruction* is effective in doing so. Community-based instruction not only contextualizes language use, but has the potential to provide learners with opportunities to engage with the TL and the TC as participants in *situated* interactions, embedded in social practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where learners can see the lived reality of TL speakers (Leeman, Rabin & Roman-Mendoza, 2011; Robinson-Stuart & Noçon, 1996) and imagine ways in which the TL and the TC are relevant to themselves. These realizations affect the shaping of learners' identities. The current study uses Wenger's (1998) conceptualization of *identity* as a self which is negotiated through experiences of participation, membership in multiple communities, and movement along a *learning trajectory*— a continuous narrative of one's experiences of participation, which constitute one's learning and shapes one's identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). The study engages university Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) learners in community-based instruction which includes an observation, an

ethnographic interview, and a five-hour service-learning (SL) experience.

1.1 A new conceptualization of language affiliation

Previous research (Black, 2005; Fukunaga, 2006; Inaba, 2012; Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997; Ohara, 2011; Rampton, 1990; Sugita, 2000) has presented TL learners statically as either having or lacking language affiliation. In order to take participatory experiences into account, we must develop a valid, reliably measurable construct of language affiliation that accounts for the situated and dynamic nature of learners' changing attitudes. With this goal, I draw on Wenger-Trayner's[2] (Wenger, 2010; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) work on identity construction to operationalize the concept of language affiliation. Learning is conceptualized as *participation* in a practice which shapes one's identity (Wenger, 1998).

To describe the factors which guide the path of one's learning trajectory, Wenger-Trayner defined three *modes of identification*[3]*: engagement, imagination,* and *alignment*. Wenger-Trayner describes *engagement* as, "active involvement in the mutual processes of negotiation of meaning", *imagination* as, "creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experiences", and *alignment* as, "coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises" (Wenger, 1998, p.173). In my analysis, I will use these modes of identification to identify evidence of language affiliation in learner discourse (pre-/post-tests, journals, and focus groups) to determine how learners characterize their experiences, how their language affiliation is built on such experiences, and how their expressions of language affiliation change as a result of community-based instruction. Building on Rampton's (1990) original concept, I propose an alternate definition of language affiliation: the process by which learners come to identify with the TC and the

[2] Previously Wenger.

[3] Previously *modes of belonging* in Wenger (1998).

TL as self-reported in talking/writing about their experiences, lived or imagined, with the TC and/or TL.

1.2 Boundary encounters in a landscape of practice

A *community of practice* (hereafter CoP) is formed through peoples' participation in practice over time (Lave & Wenger, 1991)[4]. In order to recognize, not only the individual's participation within a CoP, but also their entire learning trajectory, Wenger-Trayner (Wenger, 2010; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) expanded his framework to describe a *landscape of practice*, "consisting of a complex system of communities of practice and the boundaries between them" (p. 13).

This concept of a landscape of practice is relevant to this study because it encompasses FL learners' participating experiences both within CoPs and at their *boundaries* —sites where connections can form between the members and non-members (Wenger, 1998). The community-based instruction in this study gave learners opportunities to experience *boundary encounters* in the form of participation in valued practice, which shaped both their future learning trajectory and their conceptualization of their past trajectory.

2. Review of previous research

Below is a review of pedagogical studies which have investigated the forms of community-based instruction used in the current study— ethnography and service learning. Ethnography is a methodology in which researchers study a group's social and cultural practices by participating in those practices in order to get an inside perspective. In a language learner as ethnographer approach teachers direct learners as they collect data about the TL and TC (Bardovi-

[4] The notion of CoP first introduced in Lave and Wenger (1991) was further developed in Wenger (1998) to refer to a group formed through *mutual engagement* in practice, a *negotiated joint enterprise*, and *shared repertoire* which has developed through that engagement and negotiation. CoPs are created, organized and develop through continued engagement and negotiation: the *practice* of members.

Harlig, 1996). Before beginning their ethnographic investigation, learners need to have a basic understanding of ethnographic data collection and interview techniques (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001; Robinson-Stuart & Noçon, 1996). Several studies involving university FL learners have used ethnographic interviews (Bateman, 2002; Du, 2008; Roberts, et al., 2001; Robinson-Stuart & Noçon, 1996), cultural portfolios, filled with gathered artifacts (Abrams, 2002; Allen, 2004), or a combination of the two (Byon, 2007). The results show that learners are able to see the TC in a less stereotypic way, while gaining valuable insights into their own culture (Abrams, 2002; Allen, 2004; Byon, 2007; Robinson-Stuart & Noçon, 1996).

In service learning (SL), learners use their skills to interact with the local community for the community's benefit (McPherson, 1996 as cited in Grim, 2010) promoting civic engagement in a context which is mutually beneficial for learners and the community(ies) they serve (Caldwell, 2007). Studies on SL have shown that SL can increase learners' positive attitudes towards the TL and the TC (Caldwell, 2007; Leeman, Rabin & Roman-Mendoza, 2011; Zapata, 2011) and increase their willingness to communicate (Pellettieri, 2011). Grim's (2010) study of an exclusively SL university French foreign language class showed that through teaching French to elementary school students, learners improved their own French language skills and fostered an interest in French culture and language in their students. While the studies mentioned above research the effects of community-based instruction in the form of ethnographic investigation and service learning on various factors, the current study is the first to look at its potential to promote language affiliation.

3. Research question

What effects does community-based instruction (ethnographic investigation and SL experience) have on learners' affiliation with Japanese language and culture as measured by evidence of modes of identification when describing Japanese language and culture?

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

The participants in this study are university JFL learners from a university on the Pacific Rim. Learners from six intact Japanese language classes (two second-semester, two third-semester, two fourth-semester) were recruited for the study. A control group and a pedagogical intervention (PI) group were created from one class of each level. See Table 1 for information about the participant groups' Japanese language background.[5]

Table 1: *Mean Years of High School Japanese Instruction*

	Semester		
Group	2nd	3rd	4th
Control (n=15)	1 (n=2)	5 (n=11)	1.5 (n=2)
PI (n=20)	3 (n=8)	5 (n=9)	5 (n=3)

4.2 Procedure

4.2.1 Pre- and Post-tests

The written pre-/post-test consisted of: a) a questionnaire, b) a mind-map task and c) a ranking task. (See Appendix A.) In addition to the post-tests, six PI learners volunteered to participate in a follow-up focus group interview. The primary purpose of the pre-/post-test was to determine the presence of an experimental effect of the PIs by comparing the control and PI groups.

4.2.2 PI/Community-based instruction

[5] All learners had only taken Japanese at the university level at their current university.

The PI consisted of three assignments: an observation of Japanese culture and language use in a community setting, an ethnographic interview with a Japanese-speaking informant, and a participatory SL experience. These assignments were detailed on an assignment sheet created by the researcher that students received at the beginning of the semester. (See Appendix B.) The study was approved by an institutional review board and all participants signed an informed consent form agreeing to join the study. Before conducting the ethnographic interview, students received in-class training in ethnographic interview techniques from the researcher with readings from Robinson (1985) and a viewing of excerpts from Robinson's video *From the Inside: Ethnographic Interviews for Foreign Language Learners* (National Language Resource Center, 1997)[6]. After each assignment, PI learners wrote a reflective journal entry.

4.2.3 Analytical methods

Pre-/post-test data, journal entries, and transcripts of focus-group interviews were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Questionnaire answers were grouped by category and tabulated, and the specific content of responses was also examined. Participant ranking tasks were used to make overall rankings which were analyzed. The terms used in the mind-maps were analyzed qualitatively for evidence of language affiliation defined by the presence of the modes of identification: engagement, imagination, or alignment. All learner journals and focus group transcripts were coded for modes of identification by the researcher and an additional coder. The modes of identification were defined using Wenger's (1998) sub-categories shown in Figure 1.

[6] Available at LARC Labs' youtube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9RVIsVC-2o

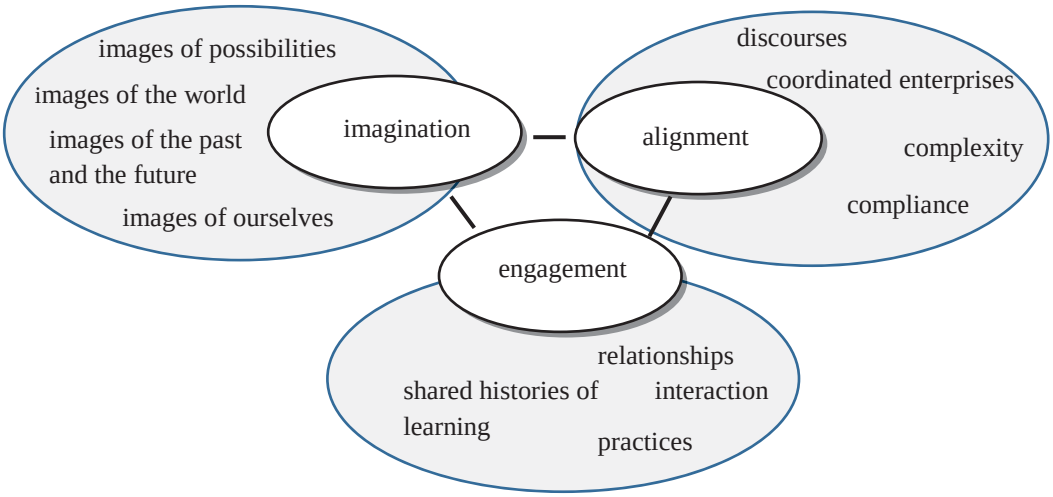


Figure 1. Sub-categories of the modes of identification (Wenger, 1998, p. 174).

5. Results

5.1 Pre-/post-test learner questionnaires

In the pre-test learner questionnaire, to describe their opportunities to engage with Japanese language and culture, students included: their Japanese language class, part-time jobs, and occasional conversations in Japanese with Japanese-speaking friends or family members in their responses (See Table 2.)

Table 2: *Opportunities to Engage with Japanese Language and Culture: Pre-test Responses*

Group	Japanese language class	Part-time job	Conversations in Japanese with friends of family
Control (n=15)	9	6	7
PI (n=20)	9	5	8

In the post-test learner questionnaires, the types of opportunities remained the same. The PI group responses showed more of an increase than the control group in the number of opportunities learners have to use Japanese both on an occasional and on a usual basis (over the course of the past two weeks), however, due to high standard deviation, particularly in usual usage, these differences are inconclusive. (See Table 3.)

Table 3: *Mean Number of Opportunities to Use Japanese*

	Occasionally				Usually			
Group	Pre-test	(S.D.)	Post-test	(S.D.)	Pre-test	(S.D.)	Post-test	(S.D.)
Control (n=15)	1.33	(1.29)	1.47	(1.46)	6.47	(5.14)	8.13	(4.90)
PI (n=20)	1	(0.92)	2.05	(1.50)	4.35	(4.81)	8.25	(6.63)

More noticeable than the increase in the number of opportunities to use Japanese, was an increase in the amount of Japanese used in those interactions. This means that although participants mainly had the same type and number of opportunities to engage in Japanese language and culture as before the PI, the quality of these interactions changed, with some PI participants indicating that they were using Japanese more often. For example, PI participants reported trying to speak Japanese more i) at their part-time jobs (6 students), ii) with classmates (2 students), and iii) with Japanese acquaintances (7 students).

In the pre-test learner questionnaire, the responses to the question of how students would like to use their Japanese are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: How Participants Would Like to Use Japanese: Pre-test Responses

	Uses of Japanese						
Group	Work	Speaking	Reading	Culture	Visit Japan	Study Abroad	Live in Japan
Control (n=15)	10	8	1	0	2	1	1
PI (n=20)	10	7	4	2	6	1	2

The post-test answers of the control group were similar to those given in the pre-test, with the only changes being that two learners reported wanting to become semi-fluent in Japanese, and two learners reported that they wanted to use Japanese in social situations with family and friends. In contrast, the PI post-tests showed evidence of learners' new *images* of *themselves*, of *the world*, and of *future possibilities* (sub-categories of imagination (Wenger, 1998)).

Participants reported wanting to use Japanese in their daily life by "remembering it beyond school", "taking it past the (language) requirement", "using culture and traditions in my life", and "making friends" (direct quotes from PI learner post-tests).[7]

5.2 Pre-/post-test learner ranking tasks

Similar to the above pre-/post-test measures, the learner ranking tasks also showed increased learner affiliation of the PI group over the Control group. Table 5 shows the results of the pre-/post-test learner ranking tasks.

Table 5: *Pre-/post-test Learner Ranking Tasks Ranks*

	Control Group (*n*=15)		PI Group (*n*=20)	
Rank	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	*katakana, hiragana, kanji* (80%)	school (87%)	*katakana, hiragana, kanji* (75%)	family (75%)
2	friends (73%)	*katakana, hiragana, kanji* (80%)	family (65%)	cultural awareness (85%)
3	travel (93%)	travel (87%)	school (75%)	speaking (75%)
4	school (73%)	friends (73%)	work (55%)	school (75%)
5	work (60%)	family (60%)	history (75%)	experience (70%)
6	family (53%)	Tokyo (73%)	friends (65%)	*katakana, hiragana, kanji* (65%)

[7] Although these quotes show learners' desires to increase their Japanese usage, measurements of students' Japanese usage are beyond the scope of this study, which focus is on promoting language affiliation, rather than the effects of language affiliation on learner production.

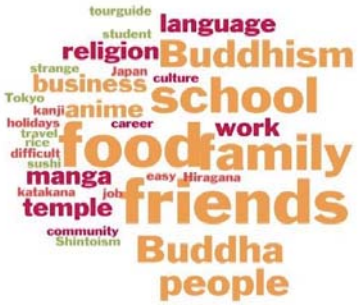
7	*anime* (53%)	career (53%)	travel (65%)	study abroad (65%)
8	meet new people (73%)	*sushi* (73%)	festivals (55%)	job (50%)
9	*sushi* (40%)	*manga* (47%)	meet new people (65%)	community (60%)
10	money (40%)	*anime* (75%)	money (35%)	interesting (55%)

Note.: Values enclosed in parentheses represent the percentage of participants ranking the term as ten or higher.

Speaking, *experience,* and *community* show engagement as they refer to either practices or the environment in which engagement occurs. *Cultural awareness* shows learners' image of themselves as someone with knowledge of Japanese culture. The term *cultural awareness,* which was not present on the pre-test, was ranked second and was in the top ten for 85% of the PI participants.

5.3 Pre-/post-test learner mind-maps

The concepts that were produced for the post-test mind-maps indicate that the PI group showed stronger signs of affiliation than the control group by connecting Japanese with words like *connections* (n=2)*, cultural awareness* (n=3)*, community* (n=5)*,* and *experience* (n=3). By using these words that identify themselves with Japanese, learners show their alignment as well as their image of themselves as users of Japanese. They also show that Japanese is a significant part of their image of the world. The terms *connections, community,* and *experience* show the learners' engagement and *cultural awareness* shows their image of themselves as aware of Japanese culture. (See Figure 2.)



Control group (n = 224)	PI group (n = 356)

Figure 2. Post-test comparison of mind-maps of the control and PI group.

In addition to providing a snapshot of concepts commonly identified by each group, the mind-maps were also analyzed qualitatively to create an individualized portfolio generated uniquely by each learner. If learners identify "Japanese" with terms which show that the learner is engaged in activity using the TL or TC or that represent the learners, this shows that they have incorporated Japanese into their actions and their conceptualization of self.

Qualitative analysis of the mind-maps shows that as opposed to the control group, the PI groups showed more detailed concepts described in the nodes of their mind-maps and the concepts themselves showed higher affiliation towards Japanese language and culture. Specifically, while the control group simply used the term "language", the PI group used specific language related terms such as "reading Japanese", "writing", and "speaking", showing that they have a more concrete and nuanced image. By using verbs PI learners show that they do not view language as a static object, but rather as something that can be actively engaged with and utilized.

5.4 PI-learner journals and focus groups

Modes of identification where found in abundance (See Tables 6 and 7.) in learner discourse. Out of 146 excerpts, 209 instances of a mode of identification were found by at least one coder.

Table 6: Excerpts[8] Containing Modes of Identification

Modes of Identification (n=146)						
All 3 modes	Engagement & Imagination	Engagement & Alignment	Imagination & Alignment	Engagement only	Imagination only	Alignment only
13	15	27	3	23	62	3

[8] All episodes containing at least one mode of identification were defined as *excerpts* and each *instance* of one mode of identification was counted separately.

Table 7: Distribution of Instances of Modes of Identification (Percentage Agreement)

	Coder 1				
Coder 2	Engagement	Imagination	Alignment	Absent	Total
Engagement	75 (87%)	1	0	2	78
Imagination	2	67 (70.5%)	0	2	71
Alignment	0	3	19 (56%)	4	26
Absent	6	20	8	—	34
Total	83	91	27	8	209 (77%)

Note. Dashes indicate that the number was not measured. If a mode of identification was found by neither coder, the excerpt was not identified.

Engagement and imagination were the modes of identification most commonly found in the data with imagination being found more often in isolation and engagement being found in conjunction with other modes, usually imagination.

5.4.1 Examples of learner language affiliation

Analysis of learner journals revealed several examples of engagement, imagination, and alignment - the components of language affiliation. This section presents data from learner journals showing examples of their developing language affiliation as a result of the community-based instruction.

Steve[9], a learner in his second semester of Japanese, volunteered at the festival and was assigned to help pull the *Daijayama* float. Before the parade began, Steve noticed a smaller float in front of the one he would be pulling and went up to take a closer look:

> There were a group of elderly ladies practicing *taiko* drums getting ready for the parade. After waiting and listening for about five to six minutes I started tapping my fingers to the beat of the bass *taiko* drum. The lady playing looked at me and signaled me to come over; she then proceeded to put the drumsticks in my hand and started making motions with her hand to the beat. I started playing and it was so much fun. After I stopped, all the women in the small *Daijayama* started clapping and saying very good. I then told them thank you and that I enjoyed it.
>
> (Steve, SL Journal excerpt)

Steve is not a member of the *taiko* drum group from Japan, and without the community-based instruction, he would likely never have met or interacted with them. The *taiko* drummers' CoP, of which Steve is not a member, is formed by their mutually engaged practice. However, the community-based instruction afforded Steve the opportunity to experience a one-on-one boundary encounter where he was able to participate at the boundary of the *taiko* drummer's CoP.

Steve engaged fully in the *practice* of beating the drums as part of the group in the festival. He is engaged in *interacting* with the

[9] All names are pseudonyms.

fellow drummers with the *aligned coordinated enterprise* of producing a coherent rhythm; he is also engaged in building *relationships* by thanking the women for the experience. Steve is engaging in practice, engaging in interaction, and in engaging in building a relationship[10] (Wenger, 1998). The mode of identification of alignment is evidenced by Steve's coordinated enterprise with the rest of the parade participants.

Steve stated that he would definitely like to volunteer for the parade next year, showing his *imagination of the future*:

> One thing I really wasn't expecting before I was assigned to the *Daijayama* was how much community was involved into it. I initially thought that it would be done by very skilled professionals and performed by professionals. But that was not the case, everyone participated giving the whole group the impression of community and connectedness, which I enjoyed.
>
> (Steve: SL Journal excerpt)

From these comments we can see Steve's engagement in practice, interaction, and relationships and his alignment in coordinated enterprise. Contrary to his initial assumption that he would not be actively involved, he is participating with other volunteers to successfully perform in the parade together.

Sally, who was put in charge of running children's carnival games at the convention center, discusses working together with other volunteers from Japan.

> I was paired with four other Japanese girls who were all my age. [...] I was able to hold small conversations with them in Japanese which made me extremely happy. It was great to vaguely get to know girls my own age that were from a completely different world, yet we were brought together by

[10] These are all subcategories of engagement (See Figure 1.).

> Japanese language, and (this place), a perfect harmony coming together.
>
> (Sally, SL Journal entry)

Sally mentions coming together from different worlds; the boundary encounter that she experiences communicating with fellow volunteers was facilitated by the community-based instruction. It allowed her to engage in practice, interaction, and build relationships while aligning her discourse by speaking Japanese. The "coming together" that Sally mentions shows how she worked together with the Japanese volunteers on the coordinated enterprise of running the festival.

5.4.2 Learners who felt strengthened connections to their Japanese heritage

There were several heritage learners who participated in the study. Through engagement in boundary encounters facilitated by the community-based PIs, four learners (data from two learners are included below) commented on a strengthened alignment with the imagined community of "Japanese":

> Once the *Daijayama* float was in the parade, my view of the service project changed completely because I felt proud to help out with something that represented my culture. I felt like that because if I didn't do a good job, I would be letting my culture down because in my culture everyone gives their 100% in everything that they do. If people don't do their best in what they do in my culture, it's like they aren't representing their own family well.
>
> (Jessica, SL Journal excerpt)

Despite her initial dissatisfaction with the SL experience, Jessica describes the pride that she has in her Japanese heritage and how it encourages her to "do a good job" so as not to "let her culture down". Leslie had a similar experience, and identifies herself as Japanese and as such, wanting to portray Japanese culture positively:

> I don't know if I got the chance to make a difference, but being a Japanese person myself, I did try to be a positive participant with hope to be a positive reflection of the Japanese culture. The most valuable contribution, I believe, was just putting on a happy face while being in the parade. Like I said, I hoped to be a positive reflection of the Japanese culture, so I tried to be as focused and happy while the parade was in session. Being Japanese, I've always had a sort of pride in my Japanese background, but from this event I realized how memorable it is to actually be a part of it.
>
> (Leslie, SL Journal entry)

Leslie describes herself as "being Japanese", and having pride in her "Japanese culture". She shows this alignment by engaging in the practice as enthusiastically as possible, smiling and trying to give a good impression of Japanese culture to attendees of the festival. Through her image of herself as a member in the larger Japanese community, Leslie sees meaning in her actions and exhibits language affiliation.

Learners seem to be identifying with an imagined community of Japanese, either from Japan, or throughout the world which encompasses Japanese as well as those with Japanese ancestry. In the region where the study took place, Japanese are discursively categorized as *Japan Japanese* (first generation immigrants, sojourners, or short-term visitors to the US) or *locals*, those of Japanese ancestry who have lived there for several generations (Suzuki, 2009). Although the learners do not explicitly state which "Japanese" (from Japan or local) is "their culture" it seems that their participation in the festival reifies a Japan Japanese rather than a local identity, due to the fact that learners point it out explicitly. Although the learners' knew that they were Japanese, their experiences allowed them to contextualize their Japanese heritage and revealed an aspect of their identity that they rarely examined. The community-based instruction activated nascent identities connected with that heritage.

6. Discussion

Learners in the PI group showed more evidence of language affiliation than the control group in all post-test measures, showing that such evidence was due not only to their Japanese study, but specifically to the PIs. This shows that community-based instruction, as implemented in the study, is effective in promoting language affiliation. By looking specifically at the learners' modes of identification, we can describe their language affiliation dynamically indicating which of the modes are most salient in their experience. Through learners' participation in practices facilitated by boundary encounters, they engage in TC practices using the TL, they imagine themselves and their world as relevant to the TC and the TL, and they align themselves with larger entities related to the TC and the TL.

Analysis of learner discourse illuminates how learners took up opportunities for engagement afforded to them by the boundary encounters made available to them through the community-based instruction. Steve could have just pulled the float without interacting at all, or Sally could have silently conducted her volunteer duties, however, due to the boundary encounters that they experienced, they became more engaged in the practice through interaction, increasing their language affiliation. Boundary encounters with Japanese people strengthened Jessica and Leslie's connection to their Japanese heritage encouraging them to imagine themselves as representatives of their culture to the audience.

Community-based instruction has the potential to break down the perceived barriers of the FL classroom. By doing so, learners can see how the TL fits into their learning trajectory in a landscape of practice and how they fit into the TL community. Through this understanding, learners can increase their language affiliation, and become more deeply engaged in practice, and therefore engaged in learning. The majority of the PI learners agreed on the value of community-based instruction:

"Taking the learning experience outside of the classroom should be encouraged if not required as part of the curriculum

because it adds a global aspect to the overall foreign language learning experience that many students can benefit from."

(PI questionnaire response)

7. Pedagogical Implications

The most encouraging finding of this study is that when learners become involved in their learning and see it as applicable to their lives, interests, and needs, their language affiliation increases. Assignments such as observations, ethnographic interviews, and SL can be used to promote language affiliation. For instructional environments which do not have access to large communities of TL speakers, technology can be used to bring learners in contact with TL speakers and to learn about their culture through ethnographic investigation (Abrams, 2002; Allen, 2004; Byon, 2007). Potential SL projects for learners which do not have a local TL speaker community could be to support communities in need of services in countries which speak the TL, for example victims of natural disasters or marginalized groups. Development of networks in the community to facilitate community-based instruction is a challenge, however, through multiple iterations of such assignments, the effort required to make new contacts lessens. In addition to providing potential sites for learners to engage in community-based assignments, contacts in the community can be mutually beneficial for the community and the FL teaching institution. The community can benefit from student involvement and as evidenced by this study and others (Caldwell, 2007; Grim, 2010; Leeman, Rabin & Roman-Mendoza, 2011; Pellettieri, 2011; Zapata, 2011), learners can benefit in various ways. In addition to the benefits gained during FL instruction, connections made using their FL skills can benefit learners post-graduation and lead to potential future employment opportunities.

8. Conclusion

This study provides evidence that community-based instruction is fruitful in increasing language learners' affiliation. Through boundary encounters, provided by the community-based instruction, learners were able to negotiate their learning trajectory through a landscape of practice, dynamically shaping their identity. The benefits of community-based instruction are likely to increase with long-term development of relationships with the local community which strengthens ties between learners, community members, and educational institutions.

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