

Voices of Japanese Brazilian Youths in Japan: Identity Development and Language in  
Transcultural Environment

by

Mika Matsuura  
B.A, Doshisha University, 2013

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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## Abstract

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This thesis explores the relations between Japanese Brazilian youths' identity development and language use in their transcultural environment. After the amendment of *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* in 1990, a number of *Nikkei*-foreign nationals of Japanese ancestry- came to Japan to work as blue-collar laborers. The majority of those *Nikkei* were from Brazil since they had suffered an economic collapse since the early 1980s. Japanese Brazilian families are often called as “transcultural/transnational community” by researchers of Japanese Brazilians as they are frequently forced to move around cities in Japan or between Japan and Brazil in order to find new employment. Applying the theoretical framework of narrative and qualitative content analysis, this thesis listens to the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan who have accompanied their sojourner parents. Examining how Japanese Brazilian youths who were raised in Japan developed their sense of belongingness and identity both in the host and immigrant societies is crucial since they have the potential to play an important role in the future of globalization by taking advantage of their multiple language ability and their transcultural background. The voices of Japanese Brazilian youths in this study reveal five main themes related to their transcultural experiences.

*Keywords:* Japanese Brazilian youths, transcultural environment, identity, language

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Japan was once considered to be a very homogeneous nation but, since the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* was amended in 1990, the number of foreign residents from different cultural backgrounds has dramatically increased. One such identifiable group that has emerged as a result of these changing policies is the Japanese Brazilian community. The Japanese Brazilian community in Japan is considered to be both transcultural and transnational. Generally speaking, the term “transcultural” is used to acknowledge the challenges that migrants continue to face as they strive to adapt their own inherited value systems to that of the new culture in which they find themselves living (Berg & Eigartaigh, 2010). The Japanese Brazilian community is also a “transnational community” to the extent that it is characterized by continuous immigration patterns circulating between Japan and Brazil, and even between cities within Japan. What makes the community unique for the interest of this thesis is the large number of Japanese Brazilian youths who have accompanied their parents on their sojourns between the two countries. This thesis examines the relations between Japanese Brazilian youths’ identity development and language use in their transcultural environment.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will examine Japanese Brazilian youths who are in young adulthood, particularly late adolescence to early twenties,<sup>1</sup> who came with their

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<sup>1</sup> I define “youth” as being adolescents between the ages of 14 – 19 based on Erik Erikson’s (1994) theory of the stages of psychological development. See also: Erikson (1963, 1968, 1974, 1994)

parents to Japan from Brazil when they were school aged children. Japanese Brazilian youths have experienced and continue to experience emotional and social problems associated with growing up in the transcultural environment between Japan and Brazil. They also have gone and continue to go through transcultural experiences between host and immigrant societies in Japan. A host society is a majority community that receives ethnic minorities whereas an immigrant society is created by minority groups who came to a country to live there. Japanese Brazilian youths are involved in a host society by attending Japanese public schools and participating in community events while having contact with their family, Brazilian peers and coworkers. This thesis is an exploration of individuals and the ways in which Japanese Brazilian youths develop and recognize their belongingness.

The increased number of Japanese Brazilians in Japan was the result of changes to the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act*. This amendment enabled *Nikkei*- second and third generation foreign nationals of Japanese ancestry- and their spouses and children to work and stay legally in Japan. The reason for this new immigration law was because of the serious labor shortage in small and medium-sized enterprises in Japan during the Bubble Period<sup>2</sup>. At the time, this policy reform attracted many Japanese Brazilians because in the 1980s Brazil had suffered an economic collapse. The conditions were dire with many people losing their jobs and businesses, and a large segment of the educated class was unable to find employment (Nishijima & Koike, 2011). Many Japanese Brazilian individuals and families that came to Japan after 1990

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<sup>2</sup> The Bubble Period in Japan lasted from December 1986 until February 1992 (Komine, 2010). It reflected by the booming economy and excessive rise of asset prices such as share of stock and real estate.

were attracted by an average wage more than ten times higher than Brazil. As a result, even bank officers, teachers and doctors who were so-called “well-paid workers” in Brazil came to Japan to work as blue-collar workers and take advantage of the wage gap (Sekiguchi, 2003). As of December 2008, the Ministry of Justice has reported that 312,582 Japanese Brazilians have lived and worked in Japan. Despite the economic and natural disasters suffered by Japan in recent years, there are still 177,953 Japanese Brazilians living and working in the country (according to statistics published by the Ministry of Justice in June, 2014).

Japanese Brazilians who take advantage of the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* come to Japan to work blue-collar jobs in factories, in the construction trade, as well as in places like hospitals and nursing homes as cleaners. In these sorts of jobs Japanese language skills are not necessarily required as there is not a need to communicate with other Japanese workers. Maeyama (2001) uses the term 3K to describe the working conditions of these immigrants; they work long hours (*kitsui*), under hard, dirty (*kitanai*) and dangerous (*kiken*) conditions.

Shibayama (2005) argues that since Japanese Brazilians were born and raised in Brazil, their social customs, values and language are more Brazilian even though they are of Japanese origins. In fact, most Japanese descendants have lived in South America for two or three generations, and they are mostly assimilated into Latin American societies. While some are able to speak Japanese, most of them have never visited Japan (Buzicky, 2002). Regardless of their individual language ability or links to Japan, Sekiguchi (2003) argues that Japanese officials tend to assume that their Japanese blood and cultural understanding help them fit into society because their Japanese extraction



makes them more dependable, trustworthy and earnest. However, as Shibayama (2005) and Buzicky (2002) point out, Japanese Brazilians often encounter difficulties in Japan culturally and linguistically despite the Japanese government's expectation.

There are mainly three types of household composition among Japanese Brazilian *dekasegi*<sup>3</sup> (sojourner) workers. One is "male single household" which was most popular in the early 1990s and consists mostly of young men who tend to work for a short period of time and then return to Brazil accordingly. The second type is the "married couple household". It is composed of young couples that do not have children or those who have young children that they have left behind in Brazil in order to come to Japan for work. Most of them send for their children once they have settled into their life in Japan. The last type is the "family household" wherein all family members come to Japan together. There is overlap between the two latter types of composite households both of which have grown to become the more dominant household model in the years following the amendment to the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* (Sekiguchi, 2003).

The increase in numbers of Japanese Brazilian youths who accompany their parents has meant an increase in enrollment in Japanese public schools. As these youths study in the public school system and grow up in Japanese society, they learn the Japanese language, culture, and social customs, all of which has an affect on their ways of thinking, values, and identity formation. Depending on the situation and cultural

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<sup>3</sup> They have no intention to stay in Japan permanently but earn money as quickly as possible then go back home.

context, Japanese Brazilian youths switch between Japanese/ Brazilian customs, behaviors, and languages.

While Japanese Brazilian youths are steadily in the process of adapting themselves to Japanese society by attending Japanese public schools and getting involved in Japanese society, their parents who work under 3K conditions are not only unable to integrate into Japanese society but they also experience communication failures with their own children in terms of culture, language, social custom and value differences. Since sojourner parents are not able to speak Japanese, they gradually depend on their children to translate for them in places such as children's school, city hall and hospital. By this behavior, Sekiguchi (2003) draws an attention to the reversal of authority in relations between parents and children and it makes children disrespectful to their parents. Moreover, because their parents are unable to come back home until late at night, there is far less opportunity to use and speak Portuguese with their parents, which deteriorates the ability of their mother language. Shigematsu (2012) points out that the language use would take an important role of acknowledging their identities. From this perspective, many scholars such as Sekiguchi (2003) and Shibayama (2001) argue that family conditions and individual language use affects the formation of children's identity and personality.

According to Haino (2012), although Japanese Brazilian parents in Japan initially tend to choose Brazilian school for their children, this decision changes based on a number of factors, namely related to economic conditions, language ability and the difficulty of cultural adaptation. The tuition rates at the private Brazilian schools are expensive and Yamanouchi (2012) reports that Japanese Brazilian youths often transfer

to Japanese public school for financial reasons. In some cases it is the opposite, with Japanese Brazilian youths transferring from Japanese local schools to Brazilian schools in spite of the financial burden. Generally, this sort of transfer is as a result of the difficulty of following academic courses in Japanese or because they are bullied for being foreigners (Sekiguchi, 2003; Sugiura, 2008; and Tsuda, 2003). In addition, Brazilian schools only exist in regions where large populations of Japanese Brazilians reside. Moving to another city for employment often results in the transfer out of a Brazilian private school into the Japanese public school system, particularly in places where there is not the option to attend a Brazilian school.

Yano (2007) points out that many Japanese Brazilian families are frequently forced to move in order to find new employment and this instability in living situation has a direct affect on their children's development. For instance, they move from Brazil to Japan or vice versa and even between cities in Japan. In this situation, children are continually adjusting to their new school life, making new social networks and attempting to keep up with the academic courses in their new school. As a result, children's motivation for study decreases.

Most of the Japanese Brazilian families do not have a clear plan in place for returning to Brazil. They are not sure how long they may stay or if they will end up residing permanently in Japan. Since most of the Japanese Brazilian blue-collar workers are hired through temporary-employment agencies, laborers are easily terminated when the economy goes into decline. Since the economic disaster, Japanese enterprises have generally tried to cut labor costs and salaries. As a result, many Japanese Brazilian families have found it more difficult to achieve their financial goals as quickly as

originally planned and they have extended their stay in Japan indefinitely as they wait for the economic recovery. Moreover, because of Brazil's faltering economy, Japanese Brazilian families remain hesitant to return to Brazil since the job market is still very difficult. Being caught between two countries' unstable economic situations makes it difficult for Japanese Brazilian families to plan for their future.

The tendency for Japanese Brazilian families to move frequently back and forth between Brazil and Japan as well as within Japan itself in order to find employment opportunities has a negative impact on the development of identity among Japanese Brazilian youth. According to Shigematsu (2012) and Maeyama (2001), moving frequently not only disrupts their children's education but prevents them from settling down in either Japan or Brazil. Sekiguchi (2003) argues that it is important to settle down in one place for a certain period of time in order for Japanese Brazilian youths to focus on their studies and develop their language and identity. As many scholars such as Tsuda (2003) and Shigematsu (2012) discuss, this unsettled lifestyle negatively affects the process of understanding the academic courses in school and acquiring an ability in academic language in both Japanese and Portuguese.

There is also a proven correlation between moving frequently and low education continuance rates. Maekawa (2001) reports that Japanese Brazilian youths who experience frequent transnational/ transcultural movement between Japanese and Brazilian social-cultural systems have difficulty delineating a picture of their future and easily drop out of school because of their bad grades and a low motivation for their studies. Shigematsu (2012) reports that in cases where Japanese Brazilian students were

given the opportunity to study for long periods of time in one school they were more likely to go on to high schools and universities compared with those who moved frequently between the two countries and within Japan.

One of the main hindrances to advancing education among Japanese Brazilian youth is the language barrier. In fact, Yano (2007) argues that since most of the students' Japanese language ability is inadequate to learn academic courses in school, it is very hard for them to enroll in a Japanese public high school or university in Japan. An elementary school principal in Toyota city stated that those who cannot use Japanese sufficiently have feelings of inferiority and it makes them turn away from their studies (Sugiura, 2008).

The language barrier and vulnerable employment status of Japanese Brazilian parents is another factor that negatively impacts their children's education in various ways. There is generally little communication between Japanese Brazilian parents and Japanese school administrators. Often parents and educators are unable to communicate in a shared language and must rely on the children to convey information. Shigematsu (2012) also notes that even though school educators may ask parents to come to school to discuss their children's academic achievements and problems, it is very hard for them to take time off from their temporary-employment companies. They would risk losing their job if they were to take a day off. If they lose their job, any future prospects for employment would probably be even less favorable and result in more instability in their children's lives.

As discussed above, there are many disruptive factors at play that result in high drop out rates among Japanese Brazilian youths at either the junior high or high school

level. In fact, Maekawa (2001) argues that there are an increasing number of Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japanese society with language deficits in both Japanese and Portuguese. According to the survey conducted by *Business Japanese Proficiency Test* (2012), it is emphasized that Japanese companies value the foreign students' ability in Japanese language in recruiting. Research by Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (2006) also shows that most companies in Japan state international students' Japanese language ability as the decisive factor in employment. Therefore, insufficient Japanese language ability limits Japanese Brazilian youths' potential for their future employment in Japan.

### **An Outline of my study**

This paper examines transcultural experiences of Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan with regards to their language use, their sense of belongingness, and their life struggles as they exist between the two physical and social spaces of Japan and Brazil. As the number of foreign nationals residing in Japan has increased especially since the passing of the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* in 1990, Japan has been confronted with how to deal with those youths who came to Japan with their parents when they were school aged and have been raised in Japanese local communities. This thesis focuses on Japanese Brazilian youths because they compose the largest single group among migrant workers' children in Japan. Their own voices will be heard and themes that emerge out of these conversations will be discussed within the framework of content analysis.

## **Purpose of the study**

The objective of this thesis is to explore the Japanese Brazilian youths' voices in the form of personal narratives. The individual narrative approach seeks to understand the social context such as culture and custom by looking closely at important recurrent themes. The voices of Japanese Brazilian youths as globally minded human resources<sup>4</sup> offer a contribution to the recent globalization movement in Japan. According to *Russell Reynolds Associates* (2012), the abilities of globally-minded human resources can be divided into two categories which are: 1) the ability of transcultural understanding and 2) the ability of communicating with transcultural people. And those who have the ability of accomplishing a work together with globally minded people in the transcultural environment are urgently needed in the recent globalized world. Hence, examining how Japanese Brazilian youths raised in Japan who developed their sense of belongingness and identity both in the host and immigrant societies is crucial since they have the potential to play an important role in the future of globalization by taking advantage of their multiple language ability and their transcultural experience. Looking into Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan and how they position themselves in transcultural environments from a perspective of language use and identity development also has significance for Japanese society as it seeks the possibility of a more globalized community.

## **Methodology**

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<sup>4</sup> Globally minded human resources are persons who accept the differences of others in their transcultural environment

To investigate to what extent transcultural experiences and language use shape identities of Japanese Brazilian youths, I will conduct inductive content analysis. By listening to the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths in three short YouTube personal account videos, a transcribed lecture and two articles, some of the key themes which individuals experience emerge. The subjects of this study are four Japanese Brazilian youths who came to Japan with their parents when they were young and were subsequently raised in Japan. One of the YouTube videos is an interview with an anonymous male Japanese Brazilian youth. The interview was conducted in Portuguese with Japanese subtitles. Another video is of a Japanese Brazilian youth named Joao Paulo conducted in Portuguese with English subtitle. A third video, conducted entirely in English, is of a Japanese Brazilian youth named Patricia. I will also be analyzing a transcribed lecture and two articles by Flavia Chiemi Yanase, who is another Japanese Brazilian youth, written in Japanese. The summary of all collected data is addressed in chapter three.

### **Results and discussion (brief summary)**

This thesis, through its exploration of listening to the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths, discusses to what extent language use and identities relate in a transcultural environment. Using the videos, transcribed lecture, and articles, this thesis examines the key themes that emerge from the comments of Japanese Brazilian youths. These selected themes are: Japanese language ability, life struggles, identity conflict, transnational movement, and reward.



**Organization of the thesis**

This thesis has four chapters, including the introductory chapter. In chapter 2, I summarize the conceptualization of transculturality associated with third-culture kids and intercultural identity, as well as family dynamics. Then, I review theories of second-language acquisition.

Chapter 3 details the methods by which I collected data for this research. I report my methodology for categorizing themes and how the data is analyzed.

In chapter 4, I summarize the data in narrative form and categorize it based on the themes that emerge. Then, I discuss my interpretation of these themes as they relate to one another, showing how they interact in individuals' experiences with language use and identity development in a transcultural environment. Lastly, I epitomize the discussion and illustrate its contribution to current discourse and potential for further studies.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review consists of two sections that are relevant to the study of Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan. They are: 1) conceptualization of transculturality that is the overall theme of this thesis and 2) theories of second-language acquisition.

As reported by Sekiguchi (2003), the number of Japanese Brazilian youths who came to Japan when they were school age with their parents dramatically increased in Japanese society after the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* was reformed in 1990. As a result, those Japanese Brazilian youths often experience a transcultural/ transnational move between countries due to their parents' employment situation. Hence, children who grow up experiencing two cultures in their everyday life have gradually come to the fore in the discourse surrounding the future of cultural globalization. Tsuda (1999) also discusses the residence of Japanese local people with foreign nationals who possess different cultures and languages in Japanese local community and educational institutions today.

### 1. Conceptualization of Transculturality

According to Buchanan (2010), transculturality is defined as “the movement of ideas, influences, practices, and beliefs between cultures and the fusions that result when the ideas, influences, practices, and beliefs of different cultures come together in a specific place, text, or contact zone” (474). Welsch (1999) explains the term “transculturality” as the complex interconnections that bind different cultures together today. He discusses that “this contemporary condition of interconnectivity is a

consequence of three distinct developments: the internal complexity of contemporary societies, the external networking in which they engage to build and develop links with other societies, and the tendency in all cultures today to be hybrid, as a result of increased mobility and communications technologies” (Berg & Eigartaigh, 2010:10). The term “transcultural”, according to Berg & Eigartaigh (2010), is “an acknowledgement of the challenge that migrants continue to face as they strive to adapt their own inherited value systems to that of the new culture in which they now find themselves living” (12). In his personal account of growing up in migrated county by experiencing more than one culture, Wall (1999) argues that “transculturalism involves not only the ability to live between different cultures, but more crucially the willingness to actively engage with and question the values and assumptions on which these cultures are based” (Berg & Eigartaigh, 2010:12). Thus, Japanese Brazilian youths who are covered in this thesis are constantly linked to different cultures, customs, values, faiths and societies as they live in the transcultural settings between Japan and Brazil.

There are different kinds of ethnic groups residing in local communities across Japan. Generally, these groups have come from other Asian countries such as China and Korea, and from Latin American countries like the Republic of Peru and Brazil. They all have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Yamamoto (2007) classifies these foreign families into two types. They are: 1) those who possess two languages and cultures among family members that is often a result of international marriage; and 2) those who only have a singular culture and language in their family that is different from their host society. Japanese Brazilian families living in Japan fall into the latter category.

They therefore experience two cultures and languages across their family and their host society.

### **1.1 Third-Culture Kids**

According to Pollock & Van Reken (2009), “third-culture kids” are those who share the experience of growing up in a cross-cultural environment. The term “third-culture kids” has been used to portray “children who accompany their parents into another society” (Useem & Cottrell, 1996:24). According to Selmer & Lam (2004), they have been described as “individuals who, having spent a significant part of their adolescence years in cultures other than the culture of their parents, develop a sense of relationship to all of the cultures they have been exposed to while, at the same time, not claiming full ownership to any one of them” (432). This means that their belongingness can be seen in a group of people who have lived in a cross-cultural environment that is neither a host culture nor a mother culture. Thus, Japanese Brazilian youths are categorized as “third-culture kids”.

Selmer & Lam (2004) also argue that these individuals are adolescents who have lived in more than one country. Hence they have been exposed to more than one culture for a period of time (Useem & Cottrell, 1996). This cultural exposure, together with the third-culture kids’ highly impressionable adolescent state of development make them absorb cultural and behavioral norms and establish a frame of references different from, but influenced by, all the cultures that they have been exposed to (Selmer & Lam, 2004). Consequently, third-culture kids may become less attached to any one culture in particular, developing a third culture of their own (Stonequist, 1935; Useem, 2001). On

the one hand, third-culture kids typically feel comfortable everywhere they go, but on the other hand, they may feel that home is nowhere (Iwama, 1990; Schaetti, 2000). Selmer & Lam (2004) suggest that not having a sense of home prevents third-culture kids from becoming associated with any single culture.

## **1.2 Intercultural Identity**

Young Yun Kim (2005, 2008, 2015), the renowned intercultural communication scholar, argues that cultural identity is built not only by what people think in their mind but by daily communication, conversation, and interaction with others, and the language that they use. Although, identity and its boundaries had been fixed and clear historically, Kim (2001) proposes a revolutionary new perspective on identity formation that foregrounds an “intercultural identity” by shifting the focus from the question of “who we are” to the question of “whom we may yet become.”(9). Kim (2001) postulates that intercultural identity development is closely linked with intercultural communication activities such as face-to-face interaction. Therefore, in transcultural environments, transcultural identity is fluid and changes depending on the situation.

Kim (2005) discusses that “cultural identity, as well as related concepts such as national, ethnic, ethnolinguistic, racial, and group identity, has received significant attention among intercultural communication researchers, coinciding with the rising interest in critical analysis of ethnic minorities” (561). Collier and Thomas (1988) argues identity negotiation as a key to intercultural communication competence. Hence, Kim (2005) argues “that an individual’s identity can evolve from a monocultural identity to an

increasingly intercultural identity” (562) as it is emphasized the importance of identity flexibility in intercultural situations.

### **1.3 Family Dynamics**

According to Grey (2013), “family dynamics are the interaction between family members as well as the varying relationships that can exist within a family”. Dynamics are affected by many factors, such as family's culture and value. It is the patterns of relation and interaction between family members. *Jesuit Social Services*<sup>5</sup> discusses that “family dynamics often have a strong influence on the way young people see themselves, others, and the world, and influence their relationships, behaviors, and their wellbeing”.

Noro (2009) argues that the family unit should be viewed not as a static site of harmony, but as a site of relational transactions between family members, where a child's ethnic identification must be constantly negotiated. When children are young, this negotiation takes place between the parents but as children reach adolescence, they too become involved in negotiating their own ethnic identities within the family unit (Noro, 2009:5). The concept of “dynamics” is reflective of both structural characteristics that shape the larger political, cultural, or economic structure of society as well as more specific norms, beliefs, and patterns of interaction that impact the internal world of families (Peterson & Steinmetz, 2000).

### **1.4 Assimilation Education**

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<sup>5</sup> Jesuit Social Services. Family Dynamics. Retrieved from <http://www.strongbonds.jss.org.au/workers/families/dynamics.html> (Accessed 2015 February 15)

Phillips (2014) discusses that “assimilation is a subtractive process in which immigrants lose ethnic/national characteristics in order to be absorbed into the dominant mainstream culture” (62). Park (1928), who is one of the first researchers of immigrant communities in the United States in the 1920s, maintains that immigrants who are called marginal people often find themselves between two cultures. According to Lewin (1943), marginal man is defined as those who intervene in the borders between several social and cultural groups that they participate in, but do not fully belong to any particular group. Zhou (2012) also argues that the host society consists of a mainstream that is dominated by a majority group and that migration leads to the marginal man, where a member of an ethnic minority group is pulled in the direction of the host culture.

According to Castro-Vazquez (2011), Japan is considered unfriendly to immigrants because of the racial homogeneity that has sustained its nationalism, and because it has the lowest rates of foreign residents among industrialized nations. Since the education in Japanese public schools is based on the assimilation principal, the notion of “becoming the same as Japanese students” (Sekiguchi, 2003) is forced on foreign students. It brings problems such as losing their mother tongue and identity, and causes communication failures both culturally and linguistically between parents and children as they attempt to navigate in the transcultural environment between the host and immigrant societies. Assimilation education leads to a gradual loss in the ability to speak their mother language and a shift away from their original value systems and identity under the host society.

## 2. Theories of Second-Language Acquisition

There are various approaches to the study of bilingualism. This section focuses on the level of acquisition, language ability, and domain. In regard to the level of language skill, Baetens Beardsmore (1982) uses the term ambilingualism to refer to the condition of a person who has perfectly mastered two languages in all fields of linguistic activity with no traces of interference on phonological, morphological or syntactic features to either language. Grosjean (2008), who is one of the leading authorities of bilingualism, explains the “real” bilingual as follows:

The “real” bilingual has long been seen as the one who is equally and fully fluent in two languages, and he or she is the “ideal”, the “true”, the “balanced”, the “perfect” bilingual. All the others (in fact, the vast majority of people who use two languages in their everyday life) are “not really” bilingual or are “special types” of bilinguals; hence the numerous qualifiers found in the literature: “dominant”, “unbalanced”, “semilingual”, “alingual” etc” (11).

Edwards (1994) argues that “semilingualism is defined as a condition of people who lack “complete fluency in either language” (58). The characteristics of semilingual generally consist of three following parts in both languages: having a small vocabulary with incorrect grammar usage, thinking about language production consciously, and having difficulty in expressing emotions in either language (Baker, 2001). Interestingly, Grosjean (1985) contends that “because the needs and uses of the two languages are usually quite different, the bilingual is rarely equally or completely fluent in the two languages” (471). Grosjean (2008) argues “the level of language fluency will depend on the need for that language and will be extremely domain specific, hence the “fossilized” competencies of many bilinguals in each of their two languages” (14).



Grosjean's ideas about the nature of bilingualism fit well with the theory of second-language acquisition presented by Cummins (1981, 2000) who is known as an expert in language and literacy development of learners of English as a second language. Cummins (1981) introduced the distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Cummins (2008) claims educators' attention to the timelines and challenges that second language learners encounter as they try to follow their classmates in academic aspects of the school language. According to Cummins (2000), "BICS refers to conversational fluency in the language while CALP refers to students' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school" (211). Cummins (2008) argues that "CALP or academic language proficiency develops through social interaction from birth but becomes differentiated from BICS after the early stages of schooling to reflect primarily the language the children acquire in school and which they need to use effectively if they are to progress successfully through the grades" (488).

Freeman & Freeman (2002) explains that "reading a picture postcard from a friend could be an instance of conversational language while listening to an academic lecture would involve academic language" (35). For example, Cummins (2000) discusses that "oral classroom discussions do not involve reading and writing directly, but they do reflect the degree of students' access to and command of literate or academic registers of language" (70). In this regard, Cummins (2000) argues that CALP (cognitive, academic language proficiency) can be defined as expertise in understanding and using literacy-related aspects of language (70).

Cummins (2013) discusses that his researches (1980, 1984) also revealed that foreign students in Canada frequently performed poorly on English academic tasks within the classroom as well as the verbal scales of the cognitive ability test administered as part of the psychological assessment. Many students who had been in Canada between 1-3 years were designated as having language or communication disabilities. Cummins (2013) argues that educators should realize that there is a gap of several years, on average, between the attainment of peer-appropriate fluency in English and the attainment of grade norms in academic aspects of English. It is important to note that “conversational aspects of proficiency reached peer-appropriate levels usually within about 2 years of exposure to English but a period of 5 to 7 years is required, on average, for immigrant students to approach grade norms in academic aspects of English” (Cummins, 2013, p.11). Leung (2007) also argues that “in general, ESL students tend to acquire BICS relatively easily, whereas the development of CALP used in decontextualized situations is a more complex and long-term process” (253). In this regard, the theoretical framework in this research project is based on the theory and conceptualization of second-language acquisition by Cummins (1981, 2000, 2008, 2013).

## Chapter 3: Methodology

Having described some of the broader concepts for understanding Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan in the previous chapter, the current chapter details the methods by which I approached my research subjects.

I determined that the target of this research would be Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan. Many of the existing research has thus far targeted school-aged Japanese Brazilian children. This research, however, is aimed at Japanese Brazilian youths who are in their early twenties. Data was collected from sources such as YouTube videos, a transcribed lecture and articles from magazines. Prior research on the Japanese Brazilian community in Japan has tended to focus on face-to-face interviews and questionnaire-based research. However, this thesis uses pre-existing videos and transcribed lecture and articles made by Japanese Brazilian youths in order to get a better sense of their own voices. There are two female subjects, Flavia Chiemi Yanase and Patricia, and two male subjects, Joao Paulo and an unnamed subject who for the purpose of this thesis will be referred to as Anonymous. This study examines the challenges and achievements in their unique stories as individuals that have lived a transcultural existence.

This research is guided by a theoretical framework of narrative and content analyses in order to listen to the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths. According to Moerman (1988), “the purpose of qualitative research is to yield a richer understanding of the mechanisms by which people conceive of the world and their lives in it” (10). As Polanyi (1995) argues, “there is an urgent need to listen to an individual’s unique voice and to acknowledge his or her lived experience as it is “tailored to, by and for that individual””(287). Hence, exploring the interviews and articles of Japanese Brazilian

youths as being a tool contributes to better understanding how they conceive their world by their transcultural experiences.

### **Narrative Approach**

To listen to the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths, I rely on the narrative approach. Oda (2010), who is one of the leading researchers of the Japanese Brazilian community, claims that research on Japanese Brazilians has incorporated some narrative insights by stressing the relevance of narrative frames associated with the historical background of Japanese Brazilians. The individual narrative approach seeks to understand circumstances surrounding the social context of various aspects of culture, custom, and religion. According to Shacklock (2005), “empirical material for life histories can come from a range of sources but often an oral history or a story of a particular experience told in an interview will become the primary source of data” (157). In this study, Japanese Brazilian youths’ experiences reported in their interviews and articles are explored as a source of primary data in order to find recurrent themes.

According to Zhang & Wildemuth (2009), “the goal of qualitative content analysis is to identify important themes, patterns and categories within a body of content, and to provide a rich description of the social reality created by those themes and categories as they are lived out in a particular setting” (11). Content analysis does not only count words, but themes and patterns may become manifest in a particular text. Zhang & Wildemuth (2009) discuss that “qualitative content analysis allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner” (1). Therefore, this thesis examines the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths to see their social reality

emerged from the recurrent themes. As reported by Hsieh & Shannon (2005), qualitative content analysis uses “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (1278). In the process of a group classification, these themes will be categorized by a coding scheme<sup>6</sup>. As Lincoln & Guba (1985) argues, the categories in the coding scheme will be defined in a way that they are internally as homogeneous as possible and externally as heterogeneous as possible.

Zhang & Wildemuth (2009) argue that “qualitative content analysis is most often used to analyze interview transcripts in order to reveal or model people’s information related behaviors and thoughts” (3). In applying Zhang & Wildemuth’s ideas to my project on Japanese Brazilian youths, I compared each of the subject’s data summaries in order to find instances of overlap and recurring themes that were consistent across all of the data. From the content analysis, I classified five main themes that emerged: 1) Japanese language ability; 2) life struggles; 3) identity conflict; 4) transnational movement; and 5) reward. The findings from each theme will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

## **Procedure**

Approximately 20 personal account YouTube videos were selected in order to get a sense of the various voices of Japanese Brazilian youth; the criteria for selection was based on content and duration of the videos. I chose videos that were relatively the

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<sup>6</sup> According to Brankovic, Ljiljana, et al. (2010), a coding scheme is “a classification of key themes used to categorize the observed data into the expected thematic areas for qualitative data analysis” (519).

same length in duration and whose content focused on Japanese Brazilian individuals telling their own personal stories. Careful attention was given to choosing personal account videos of approximately 4-5 minutes in length because if they were longer, it would contain too much data information to process. The written texts of Flavia were also selected as in-depth stories. For well-balanced personal accounts, materials with positive and negative contents were chosen to illustrate the contrast of light and shadow of Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan. YouTube videos are focused on their emotional aspects, whereas written texts provide detailed descriptions of Flavia's transcultural experiences and environment, as well as the process of her growth.

Analysis was conducted in accordance with the procedures proposed by Mayring (2000) and Zhang & Wildemuth (2009). Then, recurrent themes were categorized into different groups. As a result, narratives closely relevant to the recurrent themes were highlighted.

### **Limitation of this Study**

For analysis, the YouTube video of Anonymous and the transcribed lecture and articles by Flavia were translated into English from the original Japanese. While careful treatment was given to the translation of the materials in order to maintain their tone and modes of expressions, it must be acknowledged that they may be subject to my interpretation and limitations as the translator.

This chapter has described the collection and analysis methods, as well as materials used in this research. The study relies primarily on the viewpoints, experiences,

and statements of Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan. The next chapter will discuss the process by which the materials in this section were interpreted, and detail the themes subsequently identified by this analysis.

## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

### Voices of Four Japanese Brazilian Youths

The voices of four Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan are summarized in this chapter using data from three YouTube videos, a transcribed lecture and two articles. The youths came to Japan with their parents when they were children and were subsequently raised in Japan. Two of the YouTube videos were interviews conducted in Portuguese. Of these two videos, the one with the one titled Anonymous (Case 1) has Japanese subtitles and the video of Joao Paulo (Case 2) has English subtitles. The video interview of Patricia (Case 3) was conducted in English. The transcribed lecture and two articles by Flavia Chiemi Yanase (Case 4) were written in Japanese. All four of the selected Japanese Brazilian youths are transnational and have had transcultural experiences living in both Brazil and Japan.

#### Case 1: Anonymous

Video title: DEKASEGI –デカセギ–

Organization/ interviewer: Shizuoka Association for International Relations/ Roberto Maxwell

Published on: Jan. 29, 2009

Source: YouTube

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqPsTrHzooA>



This is a personal account video uploaded to YouTube on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2009. It was originally made by Roberto Maxwell, a Brazilian auteur, and was edited by the Shizuoka Association for International Relations.

This video is an interview of a Japanese Brazilian youth who is currently working as a factory worker in Japan. He came to Japan 10 years ago with his parents to help contribute to his family's income after his father lost his job in Brazil. He didn't know anything about Japan and he could only understand the simple Japanese that his parents spoke. Because of his low language ability, he had difficulty making friends.

After living in Japan, he feels much more connected to Brazilian culture and music. He explains that in Brazil, the *Nikkei* community regards themselves as Japanese and others are Brazilian. In contrast, he points out that people in Japan regard Japanese Brazilians as foreigners. This fact has led to his identity confusion. At the end of this interview, he says "although we are regarded as Japanese in Brazil and as Brazilian in Japan, I am Brazilian because I was born in Brazil and have lived in the multicultural society with multicultural people." Hence, by going through the transcultural experiences between Japan and Brazil, and identity confusion as being regarded that he doesn't belong to anywhere, he finally came to the conclusion that he is Brazilian as he explained.

## **Case 2: Joao Paulo**

Video title: Joao Paulo: A Young Brazilian in Japan

Organization/ interviewer: Temple University Japan Campus/ Lucas Tokuda

Published on: Aug. 8, 2013

Website: YouTube

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHTRG2vrIIw>

This is a personal account video uploaded to YouTube on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2013. It was directed by Lucas Tokuda.

This video clip is an interview of Joao Paulo, a Japanese Brazilian youth living in Japan. He was born in Brazil and came to Japan when he was 10 years old with his parents who work in an auto parts factory. He notes that he did not have much choice about coming to Japan with his parents.

While living in Japan, he faced many problems adapting to Japanese society, culture, language, and customs. He returned to Brazil after high school to try getting into a university but he found that he could not readapt to life in Brazil either after having spent a few years in Japan. Ultimately, he had to return to his family in Japan. After his return, he suffered from depression for 2 years.

Joao Paulo is now working in a factory in Japan with his parents. He confesses that “it’s not truly what I want for my life but I will do it until I can save some money to pay for a university elsewhere.” His desire is to study abroad somewhere such as in the U.S., Canada, or Europe. He would like to be anywhere but Brazil or Japan. In discussing his desire to go elsewhere, he states: “I have a history with both countries but I wanted it to change. I wanted to follow a different path.”

### **Case 3: Patricia**

Video title: My Mixed Story – Patricia

Organization/ interviewer: Team Mixed Show

Published on: Oct. 15, 2012

Website: YouTube

URL: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17\\_5jn0SDRw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17_5jn0SDRw)

This is a personal account video uploaded to YouTube on 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2012 and directed by Team Mixed Show.

This video clip is an interview of Patricia, a Japanese Brazilian youth living in Japan and working as a model. She was born in Brazil to a Japanese Brazilian father and Brazilian mother. When she was 5, her father moved back to Japan for work for financial reasons. After a year, her mother, Patricia, and her younger sister moved to Japan to be with her father. Patricia tells that she had to get used to growing up with her family living in Japan while her relatives have been in Brazil ever since she was very young.

Patricia describes living in Japan as challenging because foreign people are frequently bullied. Even in the local supermarket, people regarded her family as different even though they look Japanese. She regards herself as Brazilian and has never compared herself too much with anyone in Brazil because she believes that everyone is different; everybody comes from different countries and has different roots. Interestingly, people in Brazil treated her differently as well. She says:

“In Brazil, if somebody asks:

Person 1: “Do you know Patty (Patricia)?”

Person 2: “Who?”

Person 1: “The Japanese one”

Person 2: “Ah! (I got it)””

Despite the fact that Brazilian society regards her as Japanese, people in Japan see her as a Brazilian or a foreigner. Hence, she also had issues with her identity and feels

that she does not belong anywhere. Patricia shows her conflict by asking questions like: “Where do I fit in?” and “I don’t belong to anywhere, what am I?” When asked the question: “Where do you love the most?”, her response is that after living in Japan she is “fine anywhere.” She says that ever since she was little she has learned to embrace everything.

#### **Case 4: Flavia Chiemi Yanase**

Document titles:

1. Yanase, Flavia Chiemi. “Personal Experience and Identity as Nikkei Japanese Brazilian.” *Aichi Prefectural University Cultural Symbiosis Research Institute 2* (2008):1-7.
2. Wada, Hideko. “Nihon to Bokoku no “Kakehashi” toshite Ookiku Habataku Nikkei Latina Tachi (Nikkei Latinas who make the big leap forward as “Kakehashi” between Japan and their Home Country).” *Immigrants 3* (2010): 6-9.
3. Yanase, Flavia Chiemi. (2008). “Daitouryou ni Tsutaetakatta Koto (Things I wanted to tell to a President).” *International Christian University*, 2009. [http://subsite.icu.ac.jp/prc/mail\\_magazine/contents/080925/01.html](http://subsite.icu.ac.jp/prc/mail_magazine/contents/080925/01.html) (Accessed June, 2014)

Flavia came to Japan when she was 9 years old with her mother and younger sister in 1997. Her father had been there alone since 1990 when the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* was first revised. At that time, Japanese companies were

recruiting those who could take advantage of the new immigration law. After moving to Japan, her parents worked as blue-collar laborers in factories.

Although her father is a second generation Japanese Brazilian, she could not understand any Japanese when she first came to Japan because her family did not use Japanese at all in Brazil. Therefore, when she entered the Japanese local public elementary school, she couldn't communicate with anyone. Moreover, she was bullied for being a foreigner and for not understanding Japanese culture, language, and customs. She was the only Brazilian in her elementary school. At school her name was written in *Katakana* (the characters that are used for foreign words) because her nationality was Brazilian whereas all of her Japanese classmates had their names written in *Kanji* (Chinese characters that all Japanese people have for their names). Since everyone would immediately recognize that she is a foreigner by how she writes her name, she created a *Kanji* name for herself as a way to better fit in with her classmates.

In junior high school, there were a few other Brazilian students and she became friends with them. At this point in her life she states that: "I had a conflict inside whether I should be Japanese or Brazilian." In the end, she befriended the other Brazilian students who were regarded by most as delinquents. Since her Japanese classmates had discriminated against her in elementary school, she felt that she could not trust them. When she was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the other Brazilian students started looking for jobs in factories. She remarks that "working in a factory after the junior high school was our only choice". However, Flavia's parents were strongly against her working in a factory after the graduation and they encouraged her to go on to high school.

Right after entering high school, she met a group of students that would become her best friends. They were Filipino, Chinese, and Australian. She says that none of them could speak perfect Japanese but they helped each other all the time. She attended English Conversation Club in her high school and met a supportive teacher who also has a transcultural life experience. Being encouraged by her teacher to participate in a speech contest, Flavia received awards in a prefectural tournament. Through this experience, she began to gain her self-confidence.

When she was in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, she was transferred to an advanced class because teachers acknowledged her effort and academic achievements. She notes that: “I was an invisible person both in elementary and junior high school. However, in high school, my classmates gradually started seeing me as a rival (because of her academic achievement) and it made me feel a part of them.” She finally found the place where she belonged. Her parents and teachers also supported and encouraged her to enroll in a university in Japan.

After getting into a university, she started living in an international dormitory and has taken on a central role in providing guidance for foreign students who have difficulties transitioning to life in Japan. She hopes to help them because she knows from personal experience how they feel adapting to the language and customs of a new culture.

Flavia now feels that it would be difficult to live in Brazil because she has not been there for so long. That said, she does not necessarily mean that there is no possibility of going back. However, for now her plan is to base her life in another country such as Canada where she is planning to study for her Master’s degree.

## **Discussion**

This thesis explores the recurrent themes that emerge from the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan. It examines their transcultural experience as Japanese Brazilians living in Japan, as well as their relationship with the local Japanese community and their immigrant society. Basing my analysis on the concept of transculturalism and third-culture kids, five themes emerged from the collected data: language ability, life struggles, identity conflict, transnational movement, and reward. Each of these themes is related to and overlaps with the others. The connection between these themes is deeply relevant to this study because it illustrates the complexities of the individuals who share their thoughts and feelings in their interviews. By listening carefully to the voices of the Japanese Brazilian youths, their struggles related to transcultural experience and identity emerge. The next section will describe and summarize each of the key themes listed above.

## **Key Themes**

### **1. Japanese Language Ability**

As previous studies show, Japanese Brazilian laborers work mostly in manufacturing factories in Japan as blue-collar workers that do not require Japanese language skills. Generally, they do not have to communicate with Japanese workers as their duties are in the production line. In fact, most Japanese descendants have lived in South America for several generations, and they are mostly assimilated into Latin American societies. Therefore, only a few are able to speak Japanese or are familiar with

Japanese culture. Most Japanese Brazilians have never even visited Japan (Buzicky, 2002). As the children of Japanese Brazilian factory workers, the Japanese Brazilian youths in this thesis also had no Japanese language ability when they came to Japan with their parents.

According to Kawaguchi (2012), although most of the Japanese Brazilian families originally planned to go back to Brazil after a few years of labor in Japan, they tended to extend their stay for a longer period of time, mainly because of the Japanese economic deterioration. As they extended their stay in Japan, their children have accordingly remained enrolled in Japanese public schools. This has led to a new situation in Japanese public schools where there is an increase in the enrollment of foreign students whose first language is not Japanese. An important finding in recent research is that foreign students in Japan's public schools can barely follow the academic curriculum taught in Japanese. As Saito and Mise (2005) argue, "in order to fully understand the academic courses in Japan's schools, students must be fluent in both conversational and academic Japanese" (32).

In the interview, Joao says: "I had some problems adapting to a language I couldn't speak". Flavia also notes: "Although my father is a second generation of Japanese Brazilian, I couldn't speak Japanese at all because we didn't use Japanese in Brazil". Likewise, in the interview with Anonymous, he states that: "even though I could understand the very simple Japanese that my parents were speaking, it wasn't helpful in Japan and I didn't know anything about Japan". In the case of Joao, he says, "I want to try studying. I want to study abroad (...) Anywhere but Brazil or Japan". It can be seen that his language ability is one of the major reasons that he is not able to choose Japan as



a country for his higher education. Flavia and anonymous youth explain that they couldn't make any friends in Japan because of the language barrier, their different appearance, and their different cultural behavior. Their comments show the essential necessity of speaking Japanese in order to survive life in Japan, and how their difficulties with the language were a "life struggle" which will be discussed in the following theme.

## **2. Life Struggles**

According to previous research, education continuance rates among Japanese Brazilian youths remain low in comparison with Japanese students in Japan. There are numerous factors that contribute to this statement. From the perspective of life struggles, there are three common themes that emerge among Japanese Brazilian youths: 1) discrimination from Japanese students in the school system and from Japanese society at large, 2) difficulty with second-language acquisition and 3) limited future prospect.

### **2.1 Discrimination towards Japanese Brazilian Students in Japanese School**

Prior research points out that the majority of Japanese Brazilian youths have suffered from discrimination in Japanese schools. The voices in this thesis also show that not only Flavia and Patricia but their siblings as well have also experienced inequality. For example: "I saw my sister suffered (Patricia)" and "I think my sister has been done almost the same thing (Flavia)". Moreover, Patricia expresses that "even people at the supermarket looked at us differently even though we had a Japanese face." This reveals that because they speak a different language, and have a different appearance and behavior, they stand out to the Japanese public. The sense of alienation these Japanese

Brazilian youths feel stems from what Castro-Vazquez (2011) claims is Japan's unfriendliness towards (im)migrants. According to Castro-Vazquez (2011), the racial homogeneity that has sustained Japanese nationalism is the root of the problem and as the industrialized nation with the lowest rate of foreign residents, Japan has little experience with outsiders.

Interestingly, Flavia who was discriminated against in school because her name was only written in *Katakana* (the script used for foreign words and names), created her own *Kanji* (Chinese character) for her name in order to be seen as the same as her classmates. Her Japanese classmates could not accept her differences in terms of her name, looks, and behavior. Flavia is not alone in her experience at Japanese public school. Sugiura (2008) argues that schools in Japan force Japanese Brazilian students to assimilate. And if they cannot fit into the culture and customs, there is a high possibility that they will be bullied and discriminated against by their peers. Castro-Vazquez, (2011) notes that "the distinction between nationals and foreigners in Japanese public schools remains alive, and those foreign children that attend public schools are largely expected to assimilate with Japanese society" (224). The voices of the Japanese Brazilian students' as they discuss their life struggles bear witness to this fact and illustrate how they must hide their true identities in their daily life in Japan in order to blend into society.

As Castro-Vazquez (2011) argues, "education in Japan is regarded as a process of acculturation in which foreign students are expected to renounce their ethnic backgrounds in order to 'become' mainstream Japanese individuals" (224). Consequently, as Japanese Brazilian youths attend Japanese schools, they increasingly distance themselves from people who possess Brazilian culture in order to blend into

their schools and make friends in Japanese society. This behavior shows that they try to become Japanese to be accepted in their schools by denying being Brazilian. The internalization of assimilation education is evident in their behavior.

An interesting point is that although the Japanese government predicted that those who have the same Japanese ethnic roots would share the same culture and language, Japanese Brazilian youths that were born and raised in Brazil are distinct from Japanese. This makes life very difficult for Japanese Brazilians living in Japan. When Flavia states, “I need to be Japanese”, she implies that she cannot blend in with Japanese society or her Japanese classmates even though she is ethnically Japanese. Contrary to what the Japanese government had originally envisioned, Japanese Brazilian families face many adversities since these invisible differences behind the visible similarities cause problems in Japanese local communities, their work places, and public educational institutions (Shibayama, 2005).

In this unreceptive environment, Flavia met and became close to Brazilian students in her junior high school who also came to Japan with their parents who work as blue-collar laborers in factories under 3K<sup>7</sup> conditions. By protecting herself against the discrimination she felt from Japanese students and rejecting the pressure to assimilate, she got along with Brazilian friends. However, her Japanese language acquisition would suffer as they mainly use Portuguese. Furthermore, as Sekiguchi (2003) and Shibayama (2005) argue, Brazilian students rarely go on to high school due to their low academic result in junior high school that accompanies with their language barrier. By befriending

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<sup>7</sup> They work long hours (*kitsui*), under hard, dirty (*kitanai*) and dangerous (*kiken*) conditions.

other Brazilian students, the following themes emerged: 1) difficulty of second language acquisition and 2) Purpose of Japanese Brazilian youths working in a factory.

## **2.2 Difficulty of Second-Language Acquisition**

With regards to academic development, Flavia's comment that "working in a factory after junior high school was our only choice", suggests, that for most Japanese Brazilian youths, going on to higher education in Japan is not an easily available option. Flavia expresses just how difficult it is to acquire the level of Japanese language skills necessary to follow along with academic classes. This language deficit is one of the considerable reasons pointed out by the previous research that makes it very difficult for foreign students to follow academic courses. As a result, they cannot pass the high schools' entrance exam. Yamanouchi (2012) and Shibayama (2005) argue that even though Japanese Brazilian youths acquire the ability of daily conversation, they still struggle to follow academic courses because they lack Cognitive/ Academic Language Proficiency (Cummins, 1979). According to Cummins (2000), they need to acquire Cognitive/ Academic Language Proficiency to fully understand course content. Such a high level of language acquisition is a process that takes approximately 5-7 years. However, since school educators have little knowledge about foreign students' second-language acquisition, its duration or process, Japanese Brazilian youths are easily dismissed as low-performing students.

Sekiguchi (2003) points out that many of the Japanese Brazilian youths start refusing to go to junior high school or barely enroll in a high school because of their language skills and academic standings. This is a result of the lack of support from both

their school educators and their parents who have little knowledge about the lengthy process of learning academic Japanese (CALP). There are only few programs in the schools to accommodate Japanese Brazilian youths in developing their Japanese language skills and, as many scholars have reported, Japanese Brazilian parents do not notice the difficulties that their children encounter in their school such as language acquisition and bullying problems because they are preoccupied with earning a living wage under difficult 3K working conditions. Cummins (1979, 1981, and 2008) concludes that educators and Japanese Brazilian parents need to take a long-term view of Japanese language development and academic achievement, considering the required amount of time needed to acquire CALP.

In Sugiura's research (2008), we are introduced to Carina, a Japanese Brazilian youth that came to Japan with her sojourner parents when she was 8 years old. Like other Japanese Brazilian youths, she had difficulty attaining an academic level of Japanese language (CALP), even though her daily conversation seemed to have no problem. Sekiguchi (2003) argues that even those students that do not have any problem with their daily conversation will begin to encounter abstract Japanese words that they would rarely use in their daily life as they advance to the upper grades at school. Carina started refusing to go to school because she could not keep up with the academic course content at junior high. As a result, her language acquisition suffered; she did not advance in Japanese and her Portuguese remained at a level that would be spoken at home between a parent and child. It was because her parents were too busy working in factories under 3K work environment, they could not spend time to teach her academic courses in Portuguese. As a result, she was not able to acquire an academic level of Portuguese

language (CALP) either. She is what Grosjean (2008) categorizes as “semi-lingual” or “double limited”, in reference to language disability. Someone that is semi-lingual has difficulty following academic courses in both their mother tongue and a second language. Even today, Carina’s Japanese and Portuguese abilities are inadequate in terms of reading and writing.

Sugiura (2008) reports that, aside from language fluency, there are a number of other factors that contribute to lower academic standings among Japanese Brazilian youths. When Japanese Brazilian youths receive an education in Japanese public school, most of them encounter difficulty with regards to the foundational knowledge needed to study each subject. They also experience discrimination in the Japanese public school system but have few opportunities to distance themselves from the situation and find an alternative education. Since their parents work under 3K conditions, they cannot afford to send them to private schools in Japan. If they cannot pass the entrance exam of Japanese public school, Japanese Brazilian youths have little choice but to find work in a factory.

Due to their precarious position as 3K laborers, Japanese Brazilian parents are unable to spend the necessary time with their children to develop their academic skills. They are unable to consider alternative supports for their study and language acquisition in either Japanese or Portuguese. Parents are largely absent from the home because they work long hours and as such even the native language abilities of Japanese Brazilian youths suffers as a result. Ishii (2007) points out that as their stay in Japan becomes longer, children’s language tends to shift into Japanese in combination with their household environment. They start answering in Japanese to the questions their parents ask them in Portuguese. It makes for language inconsistency between parents and their

children. Maeyama (2001) argues that in the case of foreign youths living in Japan who are still in the process of developing identities and languages, there is a possibility that acquiring Japanese language would prompt communication failure between parents and children since they possess different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, foreign youths who have adapted themselves into Japanese society often have a deficit in their mother language, cultural customs and values. Furthermore, 3K working condition aggravates the situation as parents do not have the time to share with their children that would allow them to pass on their language, share their culture and value system.

Thus far, this theme explored the life struggles of discrimination and the difficulty of second-language acquisition that Japanese Brazilian youths face in Japanese schools. These adversities keep Japanese Brazilian youths from advancing academically and feed the cycle of working in factories instead of going on to higher education. The next theme seeks another aspect of the life struggle that results in Japanese Brazilian youths choosing to work in factories.

### **2.3 Limited Future Prospect for Japanese Brazilian Youths**

As discussed above, the major reason that Japanese Brazilian youths chose to work in factories instead of going on to higher education is because their academic results and achievements are not enough to pass the entrance exams of Japanese high school due to their Japanese language inadequacy. On top of this adversity, the assimilation education in Japan imposes a heavy burden on Japanese Brazilian youths to assimilate in terms of cultural and social customs, language, and behavior. As a result of assimilation, Castro-Vazquez (2011) discusses that “the education of foreign students is still

inadequately addressed and foreigners are not considered to have the same obligation as Japanese to send their children to school” (226). In addition, Japanese Brazilian parents assume they will return home someday and would prefer their children to maintain their own cultural customs, values, language, and identity. Therefore, Japanese Brazilian youths tend to leave school in order to work instead of going on to the higher education in Japan with a huge amount of difficulties such as acquiring Japanese language skill, cultural barriers, and bullying. Japanese Brazilian parents and youth try to save money as much as they can while working in Japan in order to enroll in higher education institutes in Brazil.

Previous studies show that there are large numbers of Japanese Brazilian youths who work in a factory in Japan in order to save money for their university in Brazil. Joao also currently works in a factory to save money to attend university elsewhere. Moreover, there are only a few families that wish their children to enroll in high school or university in Japan (Shigematsu, 2005). One of the major reasons is that it is not guaranteed that the Japanese academic qualifications can be properly used or approved by the Brazilian education system. However, Yano (2007) argues that although working in a factory allows them to save enough money for university in Brazil, it can also undermine their intentions to continue on with higher education. As they come in contact with other Japanese Brazilian youths in the factories that do not have a plan to return to higher education, they witness the appealing aspects of life as a factory worker such as getting married or buying a house and car etc. Resultantly, their main purpose of working in a factory to save money to go to university in Brazil becomes weaker and blurred in this



environment and they gradually give up their dreams of academic achievement (Yano, 2007).

### **3. Identity Conflict**

This theme covers an identity conflict that Japanese Brazilian youths often encounter living in a transcultural environment. According to Gunji (2005), identity is based on a positive attitude toward nationality and cultural groups such as “Japanese” or “(Japanese) Brazilian”, and the sense of belonging to a particular group such as school, family, peer, neighborhood, immigrant or host community. Koga (1998) argues that identity also closely relates with cultural measurements such as language, cultural and social customs, behavior, taste in food, ritual, etc. However, above all these factors, Shigematsu (2012) and Maeyama (2001) point out that a shared language is one of the major factors in acknowledging ones identity. Therefore, language plays an important role in identity formation. An ability to understand and make full use of language(s) sustains foreign residents’ self-recognition. It becomes the foundation for their self-esteem and ethnic identity (Shibayama, 2002).

In the research of Shibayama (2012), Koji, who is a Japanese Brazilian youth who spent his adolescence in Japan, is introduced. In his interview, he states that he sees himself as Japanese because Japanese language is his preferable language compared with Portuguese. It implies that language use is the essential factor in acknowledgement of his identity. In addition, Koji also mentioned that he would probably identify himself as both Brazilian and Japanese if he could acquire the ability of Portuguese language. Hence, the

ability of understanding Japanese sustains his self-recognition and he makes it as a foundation of his self-esteem and ethnic identity.

### **3.1 Belongingness in Transcultural Environment and Experience**

As previous research implies, most of the Japanese Brazilian youths came to Japan as school aged children with their parents. This theme explores to what extent the identities of those third-culture kids were affected by living in a transcultural setting in Japan during their adolescence. The recurrent theme that appeared frequently in the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths was the concept that “I am Brazilian in Japan and Japanese in Brazil”. As Sekiguchi (2003) discusses, Japanese Brazilian youths who grow up in Japanese society are categorized as “third-culture kids”. Anonymous interviewee (YouTube video case 1) says that “Brazilian *Nikkei* society and families regard themselves as Japanese and others are foreigner. However, in Japan, we are regarded as a foreigner”. As Tsuda (2003) points out, Japanese Brazilian families possess a “Japanese” identity in Brazil. However, through the experience of working in Japan, they realize that they are not recognized as Japanese but as foreigners in Japanese society. Hence, this experience makes the identity of those who are sojourner workers and their children ambiguous. Furthermore, Yano (2007) discusses an interesting aspect that since most of the Japanese Brazilians know very little Japanese, they only have few interactions with local Japanese people. It makes them deeply conscious of their being Brazilian, and increases their feelings of alienation while they are in Japan, as can be seen in the case of Anonymous. Moreover, they often experience reverse culture shock when they return to Brazil. Even though they rediscovered that they are Brazilian rather than Japanese

through the experience of laboring in Japan, *Nikkei* community and people in Brazil still regard them as Japanese. Therefore, it affects and shakes the foundation of their identity and belongingness.

Shigematsu (2012) and Tsuda (2003) report that this oscillating identity implies the confusion of their self-identities through the transnational/ transcultural experiences and the discrimination by Japanese people while living in Japan. Therefore, identity appears to be acknowledged through relationship with others and the degree of recognition granted by individuals and societies. Flavia shows her ambivalence over whether she can publically declare that she is Brazilian since she came to Japan when she was young and raised in Japanese society. Nonetheless, she is hesitant to say that she is Japanese due to the experience of being discriminated against for being a foreigner in her Japanese public school. Sekiguchi (2003) argues that as Japanese Brazilian youths become involved in their host society, their identities are likely to oscillate between Japanese and Brazilian. Their identities are fluid and dependent on their present environment.

An interview of Anonymous who also experienced reverse culture shock in Japan is noteworthy. He explains that he came to understand Brazilian culture and customs, and feels closer to them after having lived in Japan. Even though he is more likely to be alternately defined as Japanese or Brazilian depending on which country he is currently residing in, as a transnational person, he expresses that he belongs to Brazil.

In the case of Patricia, she says: “we all are Brazilian people” in the beginning of the interview. However, she is faced to the dilemma whenever someone calls her “Japanese one” in Brazil. She is also regarded as a transnational/ transcultural person in

both countries. In the end of the interview, she says “I’m fine anywhere” because it can be seen that her identity transformed from individual into transcultural through the experience of living in two countries. Shigematsu (2012) discusses that the background of conditional self-identity evaluation such as “I am Brazilian in Japan” often involves an identity conflict because of discrimination and the unequal treatment by Japanese people and society. Sugiura (2008) and Tsuda (2000) also argue that through the experience of working and living in Japan, they would encounter ethnic identity confusion because they are not regarded as Japanese in Japan anymore even though they had possessed the Japanese identity for a long time in Brazil. Interestingly, Wall (1999) discusses as follows:

“Immigrants’ identities will never again be a taken-for-granted birthright as it would have had they stayed in their home countries. Instead, they will have to construct a new, hybrid identity for themselves that will reflect their transcultural status” (46).

Flavia, who has wondered whether she should acknowledge herself as Brazilian in public or whether she should say that she is Japanese, shows the struggle to find a place where she can fit in a transcultural environment. She acknowledges that it would mean breaking from the Brazilian community in her school if she were to choose to be Japanese. In the same way, if she decides to be Brazilian, it means that she would not blend into school life in Japan and her host society. The issue of allegiance implies that there is a possibility of dropping out of her school due to discrimination. Therefore, it shows the double bind conflict of finding a place where she can belong in a transcultural environment between host and immigrant societies. Iwama (1990) and Schaetti (2002) point out that third-culture kids often feel that home is nowhere. This feeling of lacking a home country or society can be seen in the Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan. The

next theme looks at the transnational movement that is a common pattern among Japanese Brazilian.

#### **4. Transnational Movement**

Previous studies have discussed how many Japanese Brazilians are forced to move around frequently from one place to another. They have a tendency not only to move back and forth between Japan and Brazil but also from city to city in Japan as well. Transnationalism in this thesis is framed around the concept as it is defined by Yamanouchi (2012). According to Yamanouchi (2012), the transnationalism of Japanese Brazilians is “the condition that people move frequently between their country and migrated country, and keep the connection with their national origin and then make the new nation in the emigrated country” (159). Berg & Eigartaigh (2010) argue that “the term “transcultural” is an acknowledgement of the challenge that migrants continue to face as they strive to adapt their own inherit value system to that of the new culture in which they now find themselves living” (12). Japanese Brazilian youths, in this discussion, were born in Brazil and came to Japan with their parents for financial reasons. This theme focuses on the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths who experienced transnational movement.

In Joao’s interview he discusses this common pattern of “coming back and forth, back and forth” between Brazil and Japan. Patricia also describes how she has had to get used to life with family living in different countries. Interestingly, when asked what country she prefers, she answers that “[She is] fine anywhere”. It implies her confidence

gained through learning to accept her transnational situation. As Iwama (1990) and Schaetti (2002) argue, third-culture kids typically feel comfortable everywhere they go. In the case of Flavia, she considers the choice of living in Canada where she is planning to study in the near future. It seems that she has a vision to expand the field for her future in Canada as a third country after living in Brazil and Japan, and receiving her bachelor degree in Japan. Therefore, she also has a choice of transnational life and movement. There is a similarity between Flavia and Patricia who share the belief of “I’m fine anywhere”.

On the other hand, Joao, who could not understand Japanese and who could not get used to the culture and customs in Japan, returned to Brazil after high school and was supposed to enter university there. However, after spending his adolescence in Japan, he encountered reverse culture shock; it was difficult to return to Brazilian culture and customs. Shortly after returning, he began to suffer from depression. As a result, he began to move “back and forth, and back and forth” between Japan and Brazil which is the common migration pattern that can frequently be identified in Japanese Brazilian families in Japan. Now he is working in a factory like his parents although “it’s not truly what I want for life”; Joao states that he works in a factory to save money for university elsewhere.

#### **4.1 Struggle in Transnational Move**

Many scholars such as Sekiguchi (2003) and Yano (2007) point out that Japanese Brazilian youths who experienced frequent transnational movement tend to struggle with settling down in either of the countries. Consequently, they discontinue

their education, a decision that leads to stunted language development and problems with cultural adaptation as is evident in Joao's case. After all, he could not get used to the life, cultures and customs in either of the countries, and now he is working in a factory even though it is not truly what he wants in life. Sugiura (2008) introduces Richard, an 18-year-old Japanese Brazilian who moved frequently in cities in Japan every time his mother who was working in a factory as a blue-collar laborer was laid off. As a result of this frequent moving, he changed schools a number of times. He also started refusing to go to school since he could not follow his classes. As many scholars have argued, this is a common pattern among Japanese Brazilian youths. It can be seen as a common consequence of frequent transnational movement; the pattern results in low education continuance rates and confusion about cultural and social customs and languages.

The next theme examines how Flavia overcame the discrimination and life struggles in school life in Japan. It also explores what she experienced in her high school and how her parents and teachers involvement in her academic development changed her future.

## **5. Reward**

This theme looks closely at the case of Flavia and examines the environment and condition in her high school that encouraged her to go on to university in Japan, as well as gave her the confidence and motivation for her future endeavors.

## **5.1 Meeting Peers and Teachers: Academic Achievement and Prize in English Speech Contest**

In her transcribed lecture, Flavia describes how she met her first best friends in high school. Interestingly, they were not Japanese but rather Filipino, Chinese and Australian students. The bond that Flavia developed with her friends implies that she can easily reach out to those who have also experienced transcultural struggles in their own lives. Moreover, she came in contact with a supportive teacher who was in charge of the English conversation club that Flavia belonged to. It must also be noted that the English teacher that helped Flavia had a transcultural background and had experience life outside of Japan. These two examples of positive influences and experiences in Flavia's life illustrate that those who experience life struggles by living in transcultural environment feel more secure with others who have shared the transcultural experience in some way.

Flavia's homeroom teacher also encouraged her study. As a result, she did well in her classes unlike when she was in junior high school where there was no one who believed in her. By this time, she had been living and studying in Japan for almost 7 years, the necessary amount of time needed for acquiring academic language skills (CALP) according to the research of Cummins (2008). Ultimately, her academic achievement led to her acceptance by fellow Japanese classmates because they began to see her as an academic rival and not just a foreigner. It is interesting to note that she described herself as "invisible person" before she received a good result in her class. As it can be recognized, her motivation for study became higher after being accepted by her Japanese classmates who looked up to her with respect. Shibayama (2005) argues that



being accepted by Japanese classmates, school educators and society brings confidence and motivation for their study and future.

As she was encouraged by her mentor in English conversation club to participate in a speech contest, she received an award in the prefectural tournament. Through this experience, even though she regarded herself as a “failure” in her life since she had moved to Japan, she gained the confidence and motivation for her future and study by being socially accepted. Moreover, having a person such as her mentor and fellow teammates to share the happiness and overcome the difficulties together through the speech contest gave her a place where she truly felt she belonged.

After getting into university in Japan, she began offering international students who live in an international dormitory of her university to come to her whenever they had trouble. Flavia explains that she extends this help because she has experience in transcultural environments and understands the difficulties that foreign students go through in Japan. Therefore, she hopes to help them by taking advantage of her background and experiences. She plays an important role in bridging cultures, people and communities as a person who is involved in transcultural experiences and environments.

This particular theme looked closely at Flavia’s gaining of confidence and her motivation for study and the future by the experiences of finding best friends and teachers that shared the transcultural struggles and experiences with her. The next theme explores her family’s involved in her education especially in her university admission.

## **5.2 Education Support from Her Parents**

This theme examines how Flavia's parents helped her accomplish her goals of finishing high school and going to university in Japan. As previous research points out, Japanese Brazilian parents who came to Japan for their work are not very keen to help develop their children's education because their main purpose of stay is to earn money as quickly as possible (Sekiguchi, 2003). Even though parents wish their children to receive the higher education while in Japan, for various reasons most of them are not equipped to support their children's education. It is discussed that parents' 3K working condition and the lack of Japanese language ability and the understanding of Japanese education system result in less successful outcomes for their children's education. Moreover, some parents have a belief that children would be better off working in a factory with their parents instead of attending schools while they are in Japan. They intend to provide for their children's education once they return to Brazil.

However, when Flavia asked her parents if she can work in a factory like her other Brazilian friends in junior high school, they strongly objected and kept convincing her to go on to high school. When she tried to get into a high-level university, they also encouraged her by saying "you never know if you don't try". It implies their understanding of the importance of education and of providing support for her studies. In fact, Flavia expresses that "if my parents didn't convince me to go to high school and university, I would have worked in a factory now. That changed my life". Hence, parental support and understanding of the importance of education, as well as the school's support, are crucial for promoting higher education especially among Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan.

## **Concluding Remarks**

This thesis aimed to investigate to what extent transcultural experiences relate Japanese Brazilian youths' identities and belongingness. This study was conducted by a theoretical framework of narrative and content analyses to understand the social context such as culture, custom and circumstances surrounding them. Through the exploration of listening to the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan, key themes emerged from their comments.

Due to the serious labor shortage in Japanese companies during the Bubble Period, the Japanese government amended *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* in 1990. This reform has permitted second and third generation foreign nationals of Japanese ancestry and their partners and children labor and stay in Japan legally. It was appealing to Japanese Brazilians because of the Brazilian economic crises in the early 1980s. Therefore, Japanese Brazilian sojourner workers and their children started moving to Japan after the revision. The subject of this amendment was only foreign nationals of Japanese ancestry called *Nikkei*. It was because Japanese government envisioned that those who have the same Japanese ethnic roots would share and understand the same culture and language so that they can live harmonically with Japanese local people in Japan. However, the fact that Japanese Brazilian were born and raised in Brazil makes the distance between Japanese and (Japanese) Brazilian. As Japanese Brazilian youths in this thesis expressed, most of the Japanese Brazilians don't speak Japanese and are not familiar with Japanese culture since they have lived in Brazil for two or three generations. Therefore, they encountered many adversities such as discrimination and

bullying for having different customs and behavior, as well as language and culture, in Japanese local communities, their work places and public educational institutions.

One of the interesting key themes was life struggles caused by an assimilation education principle in local Japanese public schools. Comments of Japanese Brazilian youths in this thesis showed the difficulties of getting involved in their class and classmates since the concept of Japanese public schools is to exclude differences and unify people under the same value and custom. Therefore, it came to see that Japanese Brazilian students who possess different culture, language and customs are easily discriminated by not only their classmates but also teachers because the school principle aims to unify students. In fact, Flavia and Patricia expressed that their siblings were also bullied because they were culturally and linguistically different in their schools. Voices of Japanese Brazilian youths in this thesis, as well as the previous studies, revealed that they didn't/ don't have friends because they couldn't/ cannot speak Japanese and were not familiar with Japanese culture and customs. It is also hard for Japanese students to accept their differences due to the assimilation education.

Another important key theme was the difficulty of second-language acquisition. Japanese Brazilian youths are easily labelled as academic failures because even though their Japanese daily conversation ability seems adequate to learn academic courses in Japanese, their performance is still very low. According to Cummins (2000), language learners need to acquire Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) to understand academic courses in second-language and it takes 5-7 years to gain the skill. However, since many of the educators in Japanese public schools are not aware of this difficulty, its duration or process of the acquisition, Japanese Brazilian youths are

regarded as failures as Flavia explained. And their poor performance motivates their low self-esteem. In this thesis, Japanese Brazilian youths expressed the struggles of following classes in Japanese for lack of CALP and showed their low self-assurance due to their academic result.

As Japanese Brazilian youths who came to Japan in their school age grow up in Japanese society, their identities often oscillate through the transcultural environments and experiences. Voices of Japanese Brazilian youths in this thesis revealed an oscillating identity as “I am Brazilian in Japan and Japanese in Brazil”. As Wall (1999) argues, “immigrants’ identities will never again be a taken-for granted birthright as it would have had they stayed in their home countries”. An interesting comment of Japanese Brazilian youths was that Japanese Brazilians in the *Nikkei* community in Brazil regard themselves as Japanese, but people in Japan regard them as Brazilian or foreigners due to their different cultural background, language and behavior. And it makes their identities oscillated and disruptive. However, through the experience of living in Japan as a third-culture kid, the anonymous youth expressed that he rediscovered that he is Brazilian because he was born and raised in Brazil. Other Japanese Brazilian youths in this thesis have also gone through the identity conflicts in their transcultural settings such as in schools, communities and work places.

Through the experience of studying in Canada for two years in Master’s program, I luckily didn’t have an identity conflict unlike Japanese Brazilian youths. It is mainly because I lived in Japan until the graduation of my university, my identity was based firmly in Japanese culture, language and customs. However, most of the Japanese Brazilian youths were brought to Japan when they were school aged children. It is

evident that their transcultural and transnational experiences in two countries in their adolescence affected their identity formation greatly.

Although I didn't have an identity conflict in my transnational and transcultural experiences, I have often faced the difficulty of acquiring cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in English (Cummins, 2000). Even though I have been studying English for almost 8 years by now, it is still difficult to write academically and fully understand the academic courses in English. By going through the difficulty of second-language acquisition that Japanese Brazilian youths also suffered, I would like to make a suggestion to Japanese education institutions. As many scholars such as Sekiguchi (2003) and Oda (2010) point out, Japanese school educators are not familiar with the process of foreign students' second-language acquisition and its steps and duration. Cummins (2000) claims that 5-7 years are required to acquire CALP, whereas BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) can be achieved by being exposed to the language of the host country for 1-3 years. The previous research of Japanese Brazilian children indicated that even when the Japanese Brazilian children did not seem to have any difficulty in daily conversation as well as following academic instruction in the class in Japanese, their test scores and academic achievements were very low. By the lack of school educators' understandings in the second-language acquisition, Japanese Brazilian youths are easily labelled as "failure". Therefore, there is an urgent need to raise the awareness and understandings of second-language acquisition especially for school educators in Japanese education institutions as numbers of foreign students who possess multiple ethnic backgrounds culturally and linguistically have been increasing in Japanese society in the recent globalization movement.

### **Further Study**

This thesis looked closely into the voices of four Japanese Brazilian youths living in Japan. Although there is a huge range of previous studies that have covered school age Japanese Brazilian children, this study targeted those who are in their early twenties that little research has addressed at this time. Their voices led to the recurrent themes that contributed to see their Japanese language ability, life struggles, difficulty of second-language acquisition and identity conflict after spending their adolescence in Japan. However, as of December 2014, the Ministry of Justice has reported that more than 20,000 Japanese Brazilian youths whose ages are 18 to 26 years old<sup>8</sup> are currently living in Japan (Ministry of Justice, 2014). Therefore, research for more numbers of Japanese Brazilian youths is required to see broader recurrent themes and social context. Families who have connections with multiple languages and cultures will increase in Japanese society in the near future as globalization expands. Hence, the comprehensive researches of transcultural families and youths are urgently needed.

This thesis examined the voices of Japanese Brazilian youths on YouTube videos and transcribed lecture and articles. As a limitation of this study, it is unclear what dates and years these interviews were conducted though uploaded dates of the videos are shown. Hence, it is uncertain whether they are still going through what they have expressed in their interviews even today. To investigate that, I would like to conduct a

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<sup>8</sup> According to Erick Erikson (1950, 1959, 1968), an adolescence is during 14-19 years old. This thesis defined Japanese Brazilian youths as those who are in their young adulthood especially late adolescence to early twenties.

face-to-face interview next time so that more detailed and up to date circumstances and psychological transitions can be appeared.



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