Life Trajectories, Identities, and Language Practices of American Students Studying and Interning in Japan

Proposal Abstract:

I am requesting the grant to support data collection on six students in the International Engineering Program at URI currently studying and interning in Japan. The findings from the data analysis will be published in journal articles, including “Life Trajectories and Sociopragmatic Awareness: Narratives of Six American Students Studying Abroad in Japan;” the article proposal was accepted for a special issue of Languages.

This study explores how language learners’ life trajectories and identities shape their language practices in the target language community. The data consists of a pre-departure survey, the students’ reflection logs during studying abroad, the students’ video-recorded interactions in Japan, and the student interviews at the end of studying abroad. The pre-departure survey and reflection logs help to understand the students’ backgrounds and perception of language use in Japan. In summer 2023, I will conduct interviews and video record the students’ interactions to examine how their life trajectories and identities relate to the similarities and differences in their language practices in Japan. Through the narrative analysis of reflection logs and interviews as well as microanalysis—moment-by-moment analysis—of the interactions, this study provides pedagogical guidance on a pre-departure individualized intervention to maximize the students’ learning outcomes while studying abroad.

Awarded: $10,000