

## **Conference Abstract**

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### **A Review of the Impact of Homestay on Language Learners and Language Learning**

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One of the most popular beliefs about foreign or second language (L2) learning is that living in a country in which the language is used in daily life is the best way to learn the language. In particular, “homestay”, staying with a local family, is often regarded as an ideal L2 learning environment. In fact, studying abroad to learn an L2 has become increasingly popular in the past decades and most of the students in a study-abroad context experience homestay. A popular assumption is that homestay provides a lot of opportunities to speak to native speakers in natural settings and as a result homestay brings about a remarkable gain in L2 proficiency. But does it really happen?

Based on the qualitative data collected by the semi-structured interviews and the diaries, this study considers how Japanese students, who had studied at private language schools in Auckland, New Zealand, for 12 weeks, perceived their homestay experience. In addition, this study investigates the effects of homestay on L2 learning, comparing the English test scores of Japanese students who experienced homestay with the test scores of Japanese students who stayed in a student dormitory for the entire period of 12 weeks.

Japanese students account for the large proportion in international students, particularly at language schools in English-speaking countries. Therefore, this study will provide a valuable insight for language teachers and educational institutions which deal with international students, thus improving the quality of study-abroad environment.