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Type: Practice-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation

“Third Hometown” as a Metaphor: Building Agency and Autonomy Through Farm Stays and Rural Engagement in Akita

Saturday 17 May 2025 12:30 (25 minutes)

TITLE

Building Agency and Autonomy Through Farm Stay in Rural Akita

RELEVANT SIG

Intercultural Communication in Language Education

FORMAT

Research-oriented Oral Face-to-face presentation (25 minutes, including Q&A)

Short English description

KEYWORDS

Farm Stay, Rural Engagement, Agency, Third Hometown Metaphor

First-time presenter?

ABSTRACT

This study explores the transformative potential of rural engagement programs, specifically farm stays in Akita Prefecture, as platforms for fostering agency and autonomy in language education. Framed by the metaphor of the “third hometown,” the research examines how short-term immersion experiences empower participants to construct a sense of belonging while navigating linguistic and cultural barriers. Data collected through participant reflections, host family interviews, and program observations were analyzed using thematic and metaphor analysis to understand how learners made personally meaningful choices during farm activities, such as farming, cooking, and storytelling. These choices, paired with action-oriented communication strategies, illustrate participants’ development of agency and linguistic autonomy in authentic contexts. Findings suggest that the “third hometown” metaphor encapsulates identity formation and community-building,

with mutual trust and collaboration between hosts and participants as key facilitators. Host families play a pivotal role in creating inclusive environments where learners feel empowered to take ownership of their language learning journeys. This research highlights the potential of rural engagement programs as dynamic, self-access learning environments and offers practical insights for designing programs that bridge the gap between language education and intercultural understanding.

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Session Classification: B8-112 SAT: ICLE & Critical Thinking; SUN: CT, Listening & ER

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