

Timothy Coleman



When and where did you start studying Japanese?

My first exposure to Japanese was when I was ten years old, and my father took a job opportunity in Japan. I learned through immersion in a small city in Hokkaido, attending Japanese elementary school. We returned to New Zealand when I was twelve, and I only took up Japanese again at 7th form level, studying the language formally for the first time.

Why did you choose to study Japanese?

I enjoyed my time in Japan greatly (as a child) and wanted to return - to do that, I knew I wanted to keep up my Japanese.

What aspect of your Japanese studies did you look forward to/ enjoy most?

I've always enjoyed the opportunity to learn anything new - new words, new ways of expressing myself in Japanese.

What tertiary education provider did you attend, and what did you study?

I graduated from the University of Otago with a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Japanese and English literature, and later a Postgraduate Diploma in Japanese Studies. Further postgraduate study was undertaken abroad - I have a Masters of Arts in Applied Japanese Linguistics from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and another Masters of Arts in Comparative Literature from the University of Tokyo.

Why did you choose to study Japanese at tertiary level?

At first I studied a range of subjects at university, as I was unsure what I wanted to specialise in. More or less, it was my desire to return to Japan and the fact that it was my best subject that made me decide on Japanese. I also have a background in literature and a deep interest in linguistics, and these led me to choose those aspects of Japanese at postgraduate level.

How has studying Japanese helped with your career?

My career rests entirely upon the fact that I can speak and write two languages. Without Japanese, my career would have been very different.

What past jobs/career opportunities have you had that used your Japanese skills?

I have had a range of freelance or part-time jobs that have used Japanese: teaching, both privately and in Japanese schools; translation of academic, technical, literary and historical

texts etc.

What are you doing now?

At the moment I work for a major Japanese video game developer as a Localisation Project Manager. Essentially my job is to take a Japanese video game, and translate, adjust and repackage it for the Western market. This process is referred to as "localisation". However, I don't deal with any technical aspects of the game - I am involved in the text, the sound (voice) and any interfaces the consumer will have with the final product.

Do you have any plans for the future?

I plan to continue working in a field that uses my language skills, whatever that may be. I have always enjoyed translating, so I would like to continue in a field that allows me to do more of that in the future.