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Journal Editorial Board

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Acknowledgments

Editorial Foreword

This year continues to be a challenging one for many people in Japan because of the devastating earthquake and tsunami in the Tohoku region on March 11th, as well as the subsequent nuclear meltdowns. Every sector of society has been affected and many people in education have made efforts for reconstruction and solidarity. This applies to many members of JALT and our own GALE members overwhelmingly agreed to give a financial donation to the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning who delivered relief supplies to midwives working day and night to care for women, mothers and babies in the affected area.

Many GALE members were deeply affected by the natural calamites. Laurel Kamada experienced hardships first hand as she lives in Sendai, one of the areas most badly affected by the natural disasters and we are very appreciative of the fact that Laurel continued to make a sterling contribution to this year's volume in spite of all the upheaval she and family members experienced earlier in the year.

In this volume of the journal, a pedagogical theme runs through our three articles that explore various aspects of gender issues in language education sites. Our feature paper by Reiko Yoshihara presents survey data findings on the attitudes of learners and instructors towards gender issues. How do attitudes change for more controversial issues such as domestic violence or LGBT rights? Yoshihara's findings and reflections provide stimulating reading for gender-aware teachers, activists, and theorists.

Gender issues in the classroom are also explored by Jhana Bach who describes a project to analyse metaphors and gendered expressions that have come to prominence in mass media communication. Much can be learned from careful analysis of these signifiers and from the ways in which learners engage critically with these signifiers. A final perspectives paper that can enrich understandings of gender praxis is found in Ronald Schmidt-Fajlik who discusses interpersonal competence in EFL classrooms. The author points to research data that suggests that most women have more highly developed skills in this area than most men. If this is the case, what are the implications for language classrooms where communicative activities that require interpersonal competence predominate? Should language education take account of a gender gap of interpersonal competence and, if so, how could this be done? The author's innovative approach produces some surprising answers to these questions.

We are pleased to include three reviews of recently published books authored by GALE members. The first is an appraisal of Andrea Simon-Maeda's autoethnographic account of being and becoming a speaker of Japanese. The work is relevant for all of us who negotiate our subject positions within speech communities in Japan. These negotiations are particularly complex and challenging for foreign women who have Japanese as a target language and Simon-Maeda's rich qualitative data will have particular resonance for many female readers.

Another fascinating review is found for Roselyn Appleby's work *ELT, Gender and International Development: Myths of Progress in a Neocolonial World*. Many GALE members will remember reading Roselyn's lucid accounts of gender policing in zones of international development in an earlier volume (GALE Journal Vol. 2, 2009). The book format allows for in-depth exploration of many of the key issues outlined in the earlier article and will be of particular interest to those who problematize the imbrications of globalized economies, neocolonial power structures and gendered inequalities.

Along with all the prose work of this volume, a final book review offers some poetry in the latest collection of poems from Jane Noritz-Nakagawa's *incidental music*. As the

reviewer notes, this poetry often employs a contemporary style within a traditional form to powerful effect. This power has nothing to do with the language of machismo in hegemonic masculinity - a language of marginalizing metaphor and dominating effect. In contrast, a language of relationality and transcendence best expressed in poetic form, points us all toward the ideal of fully human communication.

As always we would like to thank the editorial board for donating their time and expertise to help make this journal a professional success. Their attention to detail, thoughtful suggestions and level of expertise is a wonderful gift that they share with the authors. We would also like to acknowledge the authors for choosing our journal to host their research and ideas and for furthering the scholarship in gender studies in Japan. We wish you enjoyable reading!

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Robert Ó'Móchain
Salem K. Hicks

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Robert O'Mochain is an Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Language & Culture at Osaka University. He has been a member of GALE for the past decade and served as Program Chair for two years. His book on gender and sexuality issues in education in Japan was published last year.

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Learning and Teaching Gender and Sexuality Issues in the EFL classroom: Where Students and Teachers Stand

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Abstract

This paper explores the gap between teachers and Japanese students' attitudes toward learning about domestic violence (DV) and gay/lesbian issues in the EFL classroom. This study was conducted in the 2009 and 2010 academic years at one Japanese private university. Data included item questionnaires on a 6-point Likert scale, open-ended questionnaires, and interviews. Ninety-seven students and 37 EFL college instructors participated. Results indicated that students had positive feelings toward learning about gender issues such as domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues, whereas college instructors were hesitant or disliked teaching gender and sexuality issues. In general, students had an interest in these issues because they had an intellectual curiosity toward new topics and expected personal growth even in a language classroom. While many instructors acknowledged the importance of teaching gender and sexuality issues in ESL/EFL classrooms, they also showed a lack of confidence or anxiety about discussing gender and sexuality issues in their classrooms. A few instructors disagreed with teaching sociopolitical, gender issues, or sexuality issues in EFL classes because they believed that EFL teaching should provide students exclusively with language information and skills.

要旨

本論文はEFLの教室でドメスティック・バイオレンス(DV)とゲイ／レズビアン・イッシュー(GLI)について学ぶことに対する学生と教師間の意識の違いを探究したものである。この研究は2009年度と2010年度に日本のある私立大学で行われた。データ収集の方法は項目式アンケート、記述式アンケート、インタビューで、被験者は97人の学生と37人の大学教員である。結果は、学生はDVやGLIを学ぶことにポジティヴであったのに対し、教師はこのようなトピックをあまり取り上げたくない／好きではないという反応を示した。学生は語学の授業であっても新しいトピックに対する知的好奇心をもっていて自己成長を期待しているという理由から、このようなトピックに興味を示した。一方、教師はESL/EFLの授業でジェンダーやセクシュアリティの問題を教えることの大切さを認識しながらも、これらの問題を教えることに対する自信の欠如や不安を露にした。また、数名の教師は英語を教えることは専ら言語的スキルを学生に与えることだと信じ、社会政治的問題やジェンダーやセクシュアリティの問題を教えることには反対した。

Introduction

Many would acknowledge that addressing gender and sexuality issues as matters of human rights is important. Since the mid-1990s, the TESOL field has paid attention to the impact of gender on ESL/EFL learning and teaching (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004). Several studies on learning and teaching gender issues have been conducted in either ESL or EFL classrooms (for a detailed discussion in ESL, see Benesch, 1998; Nelson, 1999, 2004; Vandrick, 1995; for EFL, see O'Mochain, 2006; Saft & Ohara, 2004; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Summerhawk, 1998; Yoshihara, 2010). Some ESL/EFL texts address a narrow range of gender issues such as wages, legal principles, and sexist language. However, research on teaching more controversial gender and sexuality issues such as violence against women and gay/lesbian issues is rare in the TESOL field, and few ESL/EFL texts address these issues. Some teachers hesitate or resist addressing gender and sexuality issues in their ESL/EFL classes because they believe that teaching such difficult issues is too political (Benesch, 1998; Yoshihara, 2006). Furthermore, as accusations of indoctrination or brainwashing are sometimes leveled against feminist or gender-conscious language teachers, language teachers who incorporate these difficult issues into their class content may face criticism

However, is criticism or the threat of criticism sufficient reason for teachers to avoid teaching challenging gender and sexuality issues in their ESL/EFL classrooms? I believe that one of the teacher's roles is to teach gender equality and justice for a better world, even in the language classroom. In any educational institution, teachers should not tolerate gender-biased language or discriminatory attitudes toward women and sexual minorities. Avoiding teaching gender and sexuality issues deprives students of an opportunity to learn about important topics of social justice. In addition, in my teaching experience, students seem to enjoy learning about gender and sexuality issues, even in the language classroom.

During the 2009 and 2010 academic years, I instructed my students on six topics including English learning, domestic violence, global warming, gay/lesbian issues, the rights of the child, and corporate social responsibility. In this study, I first compare the degree to which my students liked to learn about these six topics and how much EFL instructors want to teach these topics. By specifying gender and sexuality issues such as domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues, I attempt to find out whether there is a gap between students' attitudes toward learning about domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues and instructors' attitudes toward teaching these same issues. I also explore what both students and instructors think of learning/teaching gender issues in an EFL classroom. I hope this study can encourage ESL/EFL instructors to discuss these and other vital gender and sexuality issues in their own classroom.

Gender and Sexuality issues in ESL/EFL education

Recently, research- and practice-based studies on teaching environmental issues, poverty in developing countries, children's rights, and gender and sexuality issues in ESL/EFL programs have been reported (for global issues, see Cates, 2002; Cunningham, 1991; Peaty, 2004; for gender issues, see Benesch, 1998, 2001; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Vandrick, 1995, 1998, 2009, Yoshihara, 2005, 2010; for queer issues, see Nelson, 1999, 2004; O'Mochain, 2006; Summerhawk, 1998). However, there is still very little research- or practice-based studies on teaching gender and sexuality issues in either the ESL or the EFL context. One reason for this conspicuous absence is that TESOL, with its foundations in the scientific

traditions of applied linguistics, has historically emphasized linguistic goals over sociopolitical concerns (Benesch, 1998; Casanave, 2004). Focusing on the grammar, vocabulary, and rhetorical forms in a language classroom and fitting students into academic settings have been given priority over inquiry into sociopolitical issues within ESL/EFL courses (Allison, 1994; Reid, 1989; Santos, 1992, 2001; Smith, 1997). One prominent advocate of this prioritization is Santos (2001), who argued that ESL/EFL courses should "be primarily concerned with helping students achieve these goals [the norms and standards of academic writing]" (p. 188) and it was the responsibility of ESL/EFL teachers to "focus on preparing students as quickly and effectively as possible for their immediate, or imminent, academic needs" (p. 188). She also asserted that English should be a neutral language and an ESL/EFL classroom should be a neutral site (Santos, 1992, 2001). Therefore, ESL/EFL instructors taking this position avoid using sociopolitical issues, including gender and sexuality issues in their language classrooms and posit a neutral stance.

Another reason for the absence of gender and sexuality issues in the ESL/EFL classroom is that some language instructors may hesitate or dislike using such issues in their classroom because they do not feel confident in teaching gender and sexuality issues. For example, I presented how to teach domestic violence in a language classroom in an English teachers' conference. One Japanese female teacher whom I met at the conference confessed that she was not confident in teaching domestic violence in her language classroom because she was not a specialist on gender issues (Yoshihara, 2006). One of the male attendants at the same conference asked me if it was appropriate for him to teach such gender issues because he was a man (Yoshihara, 2006). Their comments highlighted that teachers might be concerned about the appropriateness of such topics and they may fear that they lack the training, knowledge and resources to teach about gender and sexuality issues.

As for gender and sexuality topics, domestic violence, sexual harassment, gay/lesbian issues, and sexual minority issues are rarely seen in ESL/EFL texts. Vandrick (1995) asserted that it was important to include not only women's wages and legal principles but also violence against women, sexual harassment, and the influence of religion on the roles of women. As she has pointed out, ESL/EFL texts are increasingly addressing "safe" gender issues such as equal wages for equal work, work and family, and language and gender. In her other works (1997a, 1997b, 2011), Vandrick discussed the benefits of teaching about challenging gender and sexuality issues in ESL classes. She argued that teaching about gender and sexuality issues benefited female students from non-western countries and sexual minority students because it gave them more opportunities to have their voices heard and raise their self-esteem (1997a, 1997b). She also suggested that teaching about gender and sexuality issues benefited privileged male students and male students who felt no particular connection to such issues because it provided an opportunity to question their assumptions and change their perceptions (1997a, 1997b).

One important study that looked at topic preferences among students was conducted by O'Mochain and Perkins (2010). They examined topic preferences among 200 EFL college students in Japanese universities. They collated topics from ESL/EFL textbooks, reports on Japan from human rights organizations, and *The Japan Times*. They found that students preferred discussing interpersonal and intrapersonal topics such as hobbies, favorite things, shopping, travel, eating out, careers, and movies to critical sociocultural topics such as environmental issues, HIV/AIDS, racism, LGBT issues, domestic violence, minorities in Japan, and critical Japanese history. They concluded that there was a mismatch between the concerns of critical pedagogues and the expectations of EFL college students in some educational institutions in Japan. However, in my teaching experience, college students have

been very receptive to sociopolitical topics including gender and sexuality issues, and have made comments that they were glad to learn women's issues in the language classrooms and that it was good to learn social issues through English. Similarly, some feminist teacher-researchers received positive comments from their students and found students became interested and engaged in gender and sexuality issues in their classes (Benesch, 2001; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Vandrick, 1995). Discussing sociopolitical issues including gender and sexuality issues might raise students' intellectual curiosity even if they were not interested in these issues before.

In this study, I investigated how much students liked to learn about the topics I provided and how much instructors wanted to teach these same topics through an item-questionnaire with a 6-point Likert scale. Then I narrowed the topics down to gender and sexuality issues such as domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues and attempted to find out if there were gaps between students' attitudes toward learning about these gender and sexuality issues and instructors' attitudes toward teaching these same issues. I also analyzed what both students and instructors thought of learning and teaching about gender and sexuality issues in an EFL college classroom in Japan through open-ended questionnaires and interviews.

III. Methods
Participants

In two EFL writing classes during the 2009 academic year and two in the 2010 academic year, 97 students (62 male, 35 female) participated in this study. All student participants were majoring in business at a private Japanese university. The majority of them were 1st or 2nd year students, though a few were 3rd or 4th year students (49-1st year students, 44-2nd year students, 1-3rd year student, and 3-4th year students). While the course was elective, over two-thirds of the students took this course because it satisfied a general English requirement or because the meeting time was convenient for them. This meant that few students took this course because they were inherently interested in the subject. All student participants were similar in terms of English language learning background. They had studied English in junior and senior high school for six years. All of them had studied reading, grammar, and translation and had memorized a large quantity of vocabulary in preparation for the demanding Japanese university entrance examinations.

In terms of EFL college instructor participants, there were 33 (9 male, 24 female) teaching in the Kanto area. They were Japanese college English professors and instructors between the ages of 36 and 75. They had been teaching English at the college level for no less than five years; one had been teaching English for over forty years. Their educational backgrounds varied considerably. For instance, some had a TESOL (Applied Linguistics) background, while others had backgrounds in English and American Literature, Cultural Studies, and Linguistics.

Materials and Procedures

As a teacher-researcher, I taught four EFL writing classes at the college (two in 2009 and two in 2010). The course was comprised of six topics in theme-based language instruction: English learning, domestic violence, global warming, gay/lesbian issues, the rights of the child, and corporate social responsibility. The class met once a week for 90 minutes for 26 weeks during each academic year. All students used the same materials and received the same instruction. In each topic unit, I provided students with reading materials, explained

grammar points, showed videos related to the topic, promoted group discussion, and taught students how to write an essay about the topic. The classes were taught in English and Japanese. Students were allowed to speak Japanese in discussions. Students were required to write an essay in English on each of the six topics. Students wrote first drafts, did peer-reading with classmates, received teacher's feedback and error correction, and produced final essays for evaluation.

To investigate students' preferences on topics and what students think of gender and sexuality issues in EFL classrooms, a combination of three types of data were collected; an item questionnaire, an open-ended questionnaire, and interviews. I made an 11-item questionnaire with a 6-point Likert scale, analyzing only 6 items (see Appendix 1). I also made a 4-item open-ended questionnaire, analyzing only 3 items (see Appendix 1). Other items on both questionnaires evaluated students' attitudes and feelings toward theme-based language instruction, so I excluded them from this study. I provided students with the questionnaires in the last class of each academic year. Then, I chose 12 students for interviews. Follow-up interviews were conducted by e-mail.

To investigate instructors' preferences on topics and what they thought of gender and sexuality issues in the EFL classroom, I made an 8-item questionnaire with a 6-point Likert scale, analyzing only 6 of the items (see Appendix 2). I also made a 3-item open-ended questionnaire, analyzing only 2 of the items (see Appendix 2). Other items on both questionnaires evaluated teachers' attitudes and feelings toward theme-based language instruction, so I excluded them from this study. I distributed the questionnaires in 2009 and 2010—first to the instructors at the university that student participants attended. However, when I received back only 27 of the 75 I had distributed. I asked 10 more college EFL instructors in the Kanto area whom I knew through professional connections to complete the questionnaire as well. All were native Japanese speakers, though it was not my intention to limit the study to this population. After I received all questionnaires and analyzed the data, I chose 5 instructor participants for e-mail or telephone interviews, which were conducted in 2009 and 2010. These 5 instructors were the participants who accepted the follow-up interviews. Two of them were at the school with the students and three were not.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows students' and instructors' preferences on topics. I also conducted a one-way analysis of variance statistical model ANOVA to explore if there was any significant difference between students and instructors. I used ANOVA to analyze the data because t-tests are just a single ANOVA, while analyzing the means of two groups with two separate t-test yields the same result as one ANOVA.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviation, and One-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) on Topics: Students versus Instructors

Topics	Students (N=97)		Instructors (N=33)		ANOVA	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F(1,128)*	*η2*
English Learning	4.38	1.40	3.76	1.35	4.97	.04
Domestic Violence	4.85	1.16	3.18	1.29	48.03*	.27
Global Warming	4.66	1.23	3.91	1.33	8.77*	.06
Gay/Lesbian Issues	4.57	1.35	3.21	1.43	24.18*	.16
The Rights of the Child	4.92	1.07	4.09	1.28	13.29*	.09
Corporate Social Responsibility	4.96	1.28	4.24	1.37	7.42*	.06

Note. *η2*= effect size.
*$p < .01$.

Statistical comparison of students' and instructors' preferences on topics

Students' and instructors' preferences on topics refers to how much students like to learn about these six topics and how much instructors want to teach these same topics (see Appendix 1 and 2). Regarding students' preferences on topics, the mean scores were quite high, with social corporate responsibility at the top (4.96), the rights of the child second (4.92), domestic violence third (4.85), global warming fourth (4.66), gay/lesbian issues fifth (4.57), and English learning sixth (4.38). Regarding instructors' preferences on topics, the mean scores were not as high, with social corporate responsibility at the top (4.24), the rights of the child second (4.09), global warming third (3.91), English learning fourth (3.76), gay/lesbian issues fifth (3.21), and domestic violence sixth (3.18). The ANOVA shows that there were significant differences between students and instructors on English learning ($p = .028$), domestic violence ($p = .000$), global warming ($p = .004$), gay/lesbian Issues ($p = .000$), the rights of the child ($p = .000$), and corporate social responsibility ($p = .007$). However, the most significant mean differences were between students and instructors on domestic violence (1.67, $p < .005$) and gay/lesbian issues (1.36, $p < .005$).

I also conducted the ANOVA to find if there were significant gender differences among students toward topic preferences. There was a significant gender difference on only one topic, corporate social responsibility (male $M = 4.73$, female $M = 5.34$, $F (1, 95) = 5.97$, $p = .02$). However, there were no significant gender differences on other topics. Regarding the way male and female instructors felt about the topics, there were no significant gender differences.

Students' perceptions toward learning about gender and sexuality issues

To investigate what students think of learning gender and sexuality issues, I used open-ended questionnaires and interviews. In general, many students had positive feelings toward learning about gender and sexuality issues and thought that learning about gender and sexuality issues was important, even in an EFL classroom setting. Several students showed

intellectual curiosity and awareness about domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues. One student explained learning about domestic violence as follows:

> I think that we have very few opportunities to learn about domestic violence, so many students may not know about this issue. So, it was good to learn these women's issues in this class. (From an open-ended questionnaire)

Like her, several students showed some kind of appreciation about learning women's issues. Students who chose gay/lesbian issues as the most interesting topic also commented that they had no opportunity to learn about gay/lesbian issues in other regular classes, so they were glad to learn about this issue even in an English course.

One male student analyzed his own attitudes toward women's issues, in particular domestic violence, as follows:

> I'm a man, so I first thought that women's issues had nothing to do with me. But by learning about domestic violence, I realized that it was a man's issue too. I was very glad to learn this issue because I could have a chance to think this issue deeply which I had not ever thought. (From an open-ended questionnaire)

His realization that domestic violence is not only a woman's issue but also a man's issue seemed to touch on one feminist perspective toward domestic violence. This student was able to think about a subject he had never thought about before and this stimulated his curiosity about domestic violence.

Even in interviews, several students said that one reason they liked learning about domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues was that these topics were really new to them. Some of them mentioned that domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues were not discussed in high school textbooks, so they had not learned about these issues before. One male student mentioned that he wanted to learn about something new and interesting and that he wanted to educate himself by learning about sociopolitical issues and gender issues (from an interview). Thus, some students expressed intellectual curiosity toward new or unknown topics.

Also, learning gender and sexuality issues seemed to raise students' social awareness. As for domestic violence, several students held misconceptions and seemed to have adopted victim-blaming attitudes. They thought that domestic violence occurs in only low-income families, that battered women might be at fault because they stayed in a violent relationship, and that domestic violence is very rare. However, after they learned about domestic violence, they seemed to understand the misconceptions and change their attitudes toward those who were/had been battered. One student who had these misconceptions and changed her attitudes toward domestic violence stated:

> I like the topic "domestic violence" because I learned something that I did not know. I assumed that domestic violence occurred in only a low-income family or an uneducated family before I learned about it. But in fact domestic violence occurs in every society and culture, and might happen to anyone. (From an open-ended questionnaire)

She seemed to understand that domestic violence is not a low-income, uneducated family issue but rather had to do with power over women by mentioning that "domestic violence occurs in every society and culture."

Another student seemed to have victim-blaming attitudes. However, she understood the reasons why a battered woman stayed in an abusive relationship with her partner and expressed her opinion by suggesting the necessity of shelters for the battered as follows:

> Before I learned about domestic violence in this class, I wondered why a battered woman did not escape from her abusive husband. After I learned this issue, I knew that they were unable to escape because they financially depended on their husband and they had children. Therefore, Japanese society needs to make places (shelters) for the battered to go. (From an open-ended questionnaire)

Such changes in students' awareness and attitudes appeared in the comments of students who chose gay/lesbian issues as the most interesting topic. The following two students showed some degree of awareness as follows:

> I liked learning about gay/lesbian issues. By learning about gay/lesbian issues, I changed my perception toward gays and lesbians. This topic had a strong impact on me. (From an open-ended questionnaire)

> I had a prejudice against gays and lesbians before. But I learned about gay/lesbian issues in this class by reading materials and watching videos, and wanted to understand them more than before. (From an open-ended questionnaire)

These students seemed to be interested and engaged in the topic and were more aware of their own prejudice against gays/lesbians. Awareness and changing perception might lead to the understanding of marginalization of sexual minorities. They might also lead to personal growth, liberation, and consciousness-raising, as self-awareness is one explicit goal of feminist pedagogy (Crabtree, Sapp, & Lincona, 2009).

However, there were a few negative comments about domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues as well. One male student mentioned that he felt that he was being blamed when he was learning about domestic violence because he is a man. Their resistance might originate in discourses of homophobia and of hegemonic masculinity. Another male student showed some resistance toward gay/lesbian issues by mentioning, "I am not gay. I'm not interested in gay issues" (From an open-ended questionnaire). These students seemed to take these issues personally on the basis of their own gender and were not able to regard domestic violence as power over women and gay/lesbian issues as power over sexual minorities. Another student mentioned that he did not understand why they studied gender issues in an EFL classroom. However, comments from students were mainly positive

As for students' topic preferences, the question of why the results of my study differed from O'Mochain and Perkins (2010) demands consideration. One possible reason is that students might change their preferences after they have learned about sociopolitical matters including gender issues. In O'Mochain and Perkins' (2010) study, students were asked about their preferences regardless of which topics they had previously discussed in class. Students might not show much interest in sociopolitical matters and gender issues before they have been exposed to them, but during or after their first exposure to them in class, they might show increased curiosity and interest and may change their topic preferences. Polling students about sociopolitical matters and gender issues before they have had any exposure to them might produce a different result than doing so after they have learned about them. Moreover, as O'Mochain and Perkins noted the category label "Japanese university student"

is not monolithic. Individual differences such as gender, age, social class, and experience of institutionalized education will lead to diverse and complex findings.

An example of complex findings in research data can be found with reference to attitudes towards domestic violence. In both open-ended questionnaire and interviews, some of the male students commented that, as a man, the guy who beat up his girlfriend was disgusting. This positive comment may, however, also imply a hidden message that women are weak, so men should protect them. It signifies that the students may unwillingly advance the discourse of hegemonic masculinity of straight men. Also, some of the male and female students mentioned that they felt sympathy for gays/lesbians. This sympathetic attitude seems to show unconscious privilege of heterosexuality by straight men and women.

Instructors' perception toward teaching gender and sexuality issues

On the other hand, what do EFL instructors think of teaching sociopolitical issues and gender and sexuality issues in their classrooms? According to the responses to open-ended questionnaires, many were positive about using social, cultural, and global issues as topics in an EFL class. One instructor commented that she wanted students to learn about other countries and cultures in her EFL class. Another instructor mentioned that social and cultural issues should be introduced in an EFL classroom to enrich students' education and perspective. However, one female instructor, while acknowledging that it is important to introduce social, human rights, and global issues, expressed anxiety about teaching them:

> I think it is important to introduce social issues and global issues. It is important for students to express their opinions about these issues. However, we should be neutral about these issues. We try not to indoctrinate students and should be careful about introducing these issues. (From an open-ended questionnaire)

This comment brought to mind the argument between Benesch (1993, 2001) and Santos (1992, 2001). Whereas Benesch asserted that there was no neutral place in English itself or in the English learning/teaching environment and that teaching was inseparable from politics, Santos argued that English teaching should be neutral and language teachers should not impose a political agenda or indoctrinate students. Her comment reflects the "discourse of neutrality" (Pennycook, 1997, p. 257) in which English is seen as a neutral language; an ESL/EFL classroom is a neutral place rather than a site for debating sociopolitical issues.

In the questionnaire item that asked what they think of introducing gender and sexuality issues, many instructors agreed that it would be important to bring these issues to an ESL/EFL classroom but expressed some hesitation and dislike toward domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues. Some of them mentioned that they did not have enough knowledge about domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues, so they preferred not to introduce these issues in their classrooms. In a telephone interview, one female instructor also said that she did not have enough materials about gay/lesbian issues, so she was not confident in teaching these issues. On the other hand, another female EFL instructor who was very positive about teaching domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues said that she had sufficient information about these topics, so she was confident in discussing them with students (from an e-mail communication). Thus, it seems that teacher knowledge and information about the topic affects the decision-making process regarding teaching gender and sexuality issues.

Another point that prevents instructors from introducing gender and sexuality issues is anxiety about students' reception of these topics. On the open-ended questionnaires, some

instructors expressed anxiety. Comments included "domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues were very delicate" and "I was worried about violating students' privacy" (From an open-ended questionnaire). In e-mail communications, one male instructor had expressed a similar anxiety:

> I avoid discussing gay/lesbian issues in a public sphere such as a classroom because sexual orientation was a private matter. It might be required to disclose students' and my sexual orientation in a classroom, which I would like to avoid. Society still turns an inquisitive eye toward sexual minorities. On the other hand, in fact I think the issues might be hot topics for students. (From an e-mail communication)

His anxiety is rooted in a concern about the violation of privacy and the disclosure of sexual orientation in his classroom. He may also be worried about the appropriateness of using gay/lesbian issues in the EFL college classroom. In a telephone interview, another female instructor said that if her student confessed he/she was gay/lesbian, she would not know how to deal with it. Thus, teachers seemed to worry about appropriateness and had anxiety about the unexpected consequences of discussing delicate topics in their classrooms.

On the other hand, a few instructors commented that students would not be interested in domestic violence or gay/lesbian issues, so they would not introduce these issues in their class. Even though she were not asking what students wanted, one of the instructors mentioned that students wanted to learn useful English for communication. One male instructor fundamentally disagreed with the use of social, gender and sexuality issues in the EFL class because he believed that English teaching should be limited to teaching vocabulary, grammar, expressions, language use, and useful skills. He commented, "We are language teachers, not teachers of social studies. We should teach useful and practical English" (From an open-ended questionnaire). His comment seems to share an "accommodationist ideology" (Benesch, 1993, p. 711) in which the goal of ESL/EFL teaching is to fit students into existing academic and social structures, not to encourage students to question the status quo.

As for instructors' attitudes toward gender and sexuality issues, many in this study acknowledged the importance of sociopolitical issues, gender issues and sexuality issues. However, some instructors were worried about indoctrinating students and advocating a narrow political agenda. Others were not confident in teaching domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues because they did not have background knowledge or information about methods and materials on these issues or had anxiety over unexpected consequences that might cause problems in their classrooms. These findings indicate that we are lacking information about methods and materials to teach these difficult issues in Japan.

V. Limitations and Conclusion

In this study, I attempted to investigate students' and instructors' attitudes toward topic preferences in an EFL classroom in a Japanese university. Many of these students seem to have positive feelings toward gender and sexuality issues such as domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues, even in a language classroom where they are usually expected to only learn grammar, vocabulary, and rhetorical forms. They had intellectual curiosity and interest in these issues and expected personal growth through studying them. If we ignore these

gender and sexuality issues in our classrooms, we are missing an important opportunity to raise students' intellectual curiosity and interest in broader issues.

There are limitations to this study however, and some issues arose that demand more research. One limitation was the sample size. More participants, both students and instructors, are needed to verify the results of the study. Moreover, it would have been beneficial to hear from non-Japanese teachers of English, whose perspectives would have undoubtedly added texture to the results. Their exclusion was not intentional; rather it was the result of their limited number at the institution where this study was conducted, and among my own professional network. Another limitation is topic selection. Gender and sexuality topics in this study were limited to domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues, and a greater variety of gender related-topics might affect students' and instructors' topic preferences.

There is also a need for qualitative research on topic preferences among students. There were individual differences on students' topic preferences and motivations in this study. Narrative or ethnographic research will allow for a deeper understanding of students' topic preferences and motivations. Similar qualitative research to investigate instructors' concerns is also needed. Narrative inquiry on instructors may explore how teachers' beliefs reflect their teaching practices. Another issue that demands more research is feminist pedagogy in a variety of ESL/EFL classes. To promote feminist teaching, we need more classroom-based research on feminist teaching practices. We also need a teaching community in which EFL college instructors can discuss how to teach gender and sexuality issues and where feminist instructors are encouraged. Feminist pedagogy is not only teaching gender issues but also how topics are studied. According to Luke and Gore (1992), poststructural feminist pedagogues pay attention to "power," "voice," "democratic freedoms," and "the class, race, gender triplet" (p. 4). How are these signifiers analyzed in the TESOL field? How do these signifiers reflect the classroom practices? Research on feminist pedagogy in the TESOL field is still not well reported, so more research on this is needed.

In conclusion, this study revealed the gaps between students and teachers regarding their attitudes toward learning about and teaching gender and sexuality issues in an EFL classroom. While students were interested in learning about gender and sexuality issues, EFL instructors were less keen to use gender and sexuality topics in their language classrooms. For EFL instructors, teaching gender and sexuality issues such as domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues is fairly challenging and they may feel anxiety about covering these topics in their courses. However, it is important that EFL instructors are conscious of and engage with gender equality and social justice in their classrooms because what happens in the classroom is not separated from what happens in our society. Teaching about domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues in the language classroom benefits all female students— whether or not they are a victim of abuse in a relationship –sexual minority students, and male students who feel no particular connection to these gender issues for the same reasons Vandrick (1997a, 1997b) mentioned. Teaching about gender and sexuality issues evokes insights, enriches students, and changes students' lives. Using these topics also gives teachers and students an opportunity to work together for gender equality and social justice. It may lead to personal and social change. The language classroom should not be regarded as an apolitical site, but rather a site for consciousness-raising and personal and social change.

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Acknowledgment

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Appendix 1

Item-Questionnaires for EFL students

	テーマ重視型英語授業の意識調査 (Theme-based language instruction)	強くそう思う←-→全くそう思わない Strongly Agree ←-----→Strongly Disagree
1	テーマ重視型英語授業は言語中心英語授業よりもよいと思う。 I liked theme-based language instruction better than skill-based language instruction.	6 5 4 3 2 1
2	授業中に読んだReading Materialsはテーマの内容を把握するのに役立ったと思う。 Reading materials provided in class helped understand the topics.	6 5 4 3 2 1
3	授業中に観たビデオはテーマの内容を把握するのに役立ったと思う。 Videos provided in class helped understand the topics.	6 5 4 3 2 1
4	授業中に行ったディスカッションはテーマの内容を把握するのに役立ったと思う。 Discussions in class helped understand the topics.	6 5 4 3 2 1
5	授業外に書いた英語／日本語のReflective WritingはFinal Essayに役立ったと思う。 Reflective writings (English/Japanese) written outside the classroom helped produce final essays.	6 5 4 3 2 1
6	テーマとして「English Learning」はよかった。 I liked the topic "English Learning."	6 5 4 3 2 1
7	テーマとして「Domestic Violence」はよかった。 I liked the topic "Domestic Violence."	6 5 4 3 2 1
8	テーマとして「Global Warming」はよかった。 I liked the topic "Global Warming."	6 5 4 3 2 1
9	テーマとして「Gay/Lesbian Issues」はよかった。 I liked the topic "Gay/Lesbian Issues.	6 5 4 3 2 1
10	テーマとして「The Rights of the Child」はよかった。 I liked the topic "The Rights of the Child."	6 5 4 3 2 1
11	テーマとして「Corporate Social Responsibility」はよかった。 I liked the topic "Corporate Social Responsibility."	6 5 4 3 2 1

Open-Ended Questionnaires for EFL students

Ｑ１テーマ重視型英語授業（１つのテーマについて４回の授業を費やす授業）について、あなたはどう思いますか？あなたの感想を述べてください。
What do you think of theme-based language teaching?

Ｑ２あなたは６つのテーマのうち、どのテーマが一番おもしろかったと思いますか。その理由も書いてください。
Which topic in this course were you interested in? Why?

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Ｑ３あなたは６つのテーマのうち、どのテーマが一番おもしろくなかったと思います
か。その理由も書いてください。
Which topic in this course were you uninterested in? Why?

Q4テーマの中にドメスティック・バイオレンスやゲイ／レズビアン問題のようなジェ
ンダー問題がありました。このようなテーマを英語の授業で取りあげることについ
てあなたはどう思いますか？
In this course, there were gender topics such as domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues.
What do you think of learning these topics in an EFL class?

Appendix 2

Item-Questionnaires for EFL instructors

	テーマ重視型英語授業の意識調査 (Theme-based language instruction)	強くそう思う/全くそう思わない Strongly Agree ←--- ----→Strongly Disagree
1	テーマ重視型英語授業を実践している／実践したことがある。 I have used theme-based instruction (TBI) in my EFL classroom.	Yes No
2	テーマ重視型英語授業を実践してみたい／今後も続けたいと思う I would like to use/continue to use TBI.	6 5 4 3 2 1
3	テーマとして "English Learning"をとりあげてみたい。 I would like to use the topic "English Learning."	6 5 4 3 2 1
4	テーマとして "Domestic Violence"をとりあげてみたい。 I would like to use the topic "Domestic Violence."	6 5 4 3 2 1
5	テーマとして "Global Warming"をとりあげてみたい。 I would like to use the topic "Global Warming."	6 5 4 3 2 1
6	テーマとして "Gay/Lesbian Issues"をとりあげてみたい。 I would like to use the topic "Gay/Lesbian Issues."	6 5 4 3 2 1
7	テーマとして "The Rights of the Child"をとりあげてみたい。 I would like to use "The Rights of the Child."	6 5 4 3 2 1
8	テーマとして "Corporate Social Responsibility"をとりあげてみたい I would like to use the topic "Corporate Social Responsibility."	6 5 4 3 2 1

＊テーマ重視型英語授業（Theme-based language instruction）とは３〜４回同じテーマに
ついて授業をする。

Open-ended questionnaires for EFL instructors
Ｑ１テーマ重視型英語授業（１つのテーマについて４回の授業を費やす授業）につ
いてどう思いますか。共通テキストや共通シラバスがない場合、自分の担当する英
語の授業に取り入れてみたいと思いますか。取り入れてみたい／取り入れてみたく
ない理由も教えてください。
What do you think of theme-base language instruction? If there are neither required textbooks
nor required syllabus, would you like to do theme-based language teaching? Please describe
the reasons why you would like to do or not.

Q２英語の授業はスキルをベースとした言語教育に徹するべきだという意見があります。一方、英語の授業でも社会政治的な問題を取り入れるべきだという意見もあります。あなたは社会問題、環境問題、人権問題、グローバル問題などのテーマを英語の授業で取りあげることについてどう思いますか。賛成ですか、反対ですか。その理由も書いてください。
Some educators argue that English teaching should focus on language skills. On the other had, others argue that we should use sociopolitical issues as topics of an ESL/EFL class. What do you think of social issues, environmental issues, global issues, etc.? Do you agree or disagree? Please explain why.

Q３テーマの中にDomestic ViolenceやGay/Lesbian Issuesのようなジェンダー問題を取りあげることについてあなたはどう思いますか？　賛成ですか、反対ですか？　その理由も書いてください。
What do you think of using gender issues such as domestic violence and gay/lesbian issues as topics of an EFL class? Do you agree or disagree? Please explain why.

From Boxed-In Daughters to Carnivore Women: Using Gender Metaphors in the Classroom

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Abstract

In the Japanese culture industry there is a fascination with people who are pushing the gender envelope. A hybridization of femininities and masculinities has spurred the coinage of new terms, or the widely recognized rebranding of established metaphors, from "carnivore women" to "demon wives." Examining these new gender types and the language used to describe them can provide a way to locate inquiry in the Japanese context, thereby deflecting criticism that feminism and gender equity are irrelevant Western imports. The metaphors can also provide EFL, media studies, or gender studies students with a method of meaningful inquiry into gender assumptions, socialization, policing, performance, and perhaps even transcendence. This paper discusses media mechanisms in Japan, summarizes some of these new gender terms, and presents a college-level metaphor analysis project.

要旨

日本の文化産業では、伝統的なジェンダーの「規則」に従わない人々がおもしろおかしく取り上げられている。「女らしさ」と「男らしさ」の融合の結果、日本では「鬼嫁」から「肉食系女子」に至るまで、さまざまなメタファーが新たに作られ、広く認知されるようになった。このような新たなジェンダータイプとそれらを表す用語を検証することにより、我々のジェンダー研究手法を日本社会に適用することが可能となり、その結果、日本におけるフェミニズムと男女同権が西洋からの単なる借用物であるといった論に異を唱えることができるであろう。また、このようなメタファーは、英語教育，メディア研究，ジェンダー論を学ぶ学生たちに、(1)「女性は感情的すぎて兵士には向かない」とか「男性は繊細さに欠けているので看護師には向かない」といったジェンダーに関する偏見や(2)そのような偏見がどのように社会で教え広められていくか、(3)ジェンダーの「規則」を破る者たちを社会がどのように扱うか、(4)人々がジェンダーの「規則」をどう守るか、あるいは(5)ジェンダーの束縛からどう脱却していけるかといった諸問題に関して有意義な研究方法を提示することにもなるだろう。この論文では、日本メディアのメカニズムを論じ、上に挙げたようなジェンダーに関する用語をまとめ、大学レベルでのメタファー分析プロジェクトについて説明する。

Background and Researcher Position

The goal of this paper is to facilitate the use of gender and language as an EFL classroom topic. The focus is on a university seminar project in which students collected popular Japanese gender metaphors, wrote and conducted their own surveys, and analyzed and presented their findings. I developed the project for a 2-year Women's Studies seminar course in the English department at a private women's university.

I was inspired by Kittredge Cherry's (1987) book *Womansword: What the Japanese Language Says about Women* and the work of Lakoff (1973) to create a unit which focused on language analysis. In her study on interview discourse on Japanese television, Tanaka (2004) underlines the necessity of evaluating gendered language as part of a transformative process that leads to increased gender equality. I created this survey-and-analysis project as a type of action research in response to my students' expressed beliefs about the natural immutability of gender roles. Fujimura-Fanselow (2011, p.xiii) has observed that a generation after the "era of women," the struggle for gender parity has actually lost ground, and conservative backlash against gender equality policies has encouraged the entrenchment of gender stereotypes and bias.

The notion that gender equality is an American import is sometimes used by conservative groups and politicians to deliberately suppress efforts to promote equality. The so-called perils of Western influence have been blamed for Japanese women's "abandonment" of family life, with conservative politicians going so far as to advocate revoking Article 24 of the Japanese constitution, which guarantees women the right to own property and to divorce. In 2009, the UN's Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee expressed concern over State backlash against equity efforts and the persistence of stereotypes that undermine women's human rights. The key to raising students' consciousness therefore seemed to lie not only in deconstructing gender stereotypes and assumptions, noticing changes in gender structure which would thereby allow them to begin "undoing" gender (Butler, 2004, as cited in Risman, 2009), but to do so by examining Japanese language and cultural material. In my own classroom, students used media-borne gender metaphors to critically examine gender assumptions and the way they impose limitations on women and men. My hope was that the use of local material in the classroom would help students better realize that diversity issues have a place in Japanese society.

Cherry (1987) provides a way to root the analysis of gender in Japanese culture and to frame it in a way that is both more accessible and less easy to dismiss as a Western import. Originally published in 1987, *Womansword* offers analyses of hundreds of gendered terms based on *kanji* meanings and etymology as well as former and current connotations. Cherry's essay on *onna*, 女 or "woman," provides an excellent departure point for critical classroom discussion of sexist language in Japanese, and kanji add a visual component to language analysis. The character for "noisy," for example, *kashimashii* (姦しい), is built by repeating "woman" three times, reflecting the belief that women talk more than men.

The terms in *Womansword* paint a progression of images that help expand the narrowly delineated "box" that students may have about gender. Just a generation ago, for example, the term "Christmas cake" was a common, if pejorative, term for a woman who was perceived to be past marriageable age. Women, like the traditional strawberry cake that is best eaten by Christmas Eve, were considered spoiled after age 25. In the last generation, however, the average marriage age of women in Japan has increased to 29 (Gender Equality Bureau, 2010)

and the term seems to have fallen out of use. Of 29 students aged 20-21 in my two Women's Studies seminars in 2010, none were familiar with it.

Particularly when terms have become obsolete, the changeable nature of language, as well as the evolution of a society's ideas about gender, is exposed. In Japan, there is often a strong pressure to conform and avoid standing out from the group. This contributes to the policing of nonstandard behaviors, including gender performance. When students can see changes in their own language and culture, however, gender studies begins to take on a more personal meaning. Students come to understand that many if not most ideas about women and men are flexible, widely varying from one culture or generation to the next, and constantly evolving. Finally, they demonstrate that gender is largely socially constructed and therefore negotiable.

Gender, Society, and the Japanese Media

Gender performance in Japan can include a range of behaviors, from covering one's mouth when laughing or the choice of pronoun used to address a loved one (Tanaka, 2004) to the social acceptability of eating dessert (Kanno, 2007) and which sex bears the burden of serving tea at work. Even the cross-gender use of expressions or mannerisms for effect demonstrates the perceived separation between feminine and masculine roles and rules. Nakamura and Matsuo (2003) suggest that one reason for the popularity of Takarazuka theater and "boys' love" *manga* is that these genres offer respite from the heavy pressure to perform gender according to accepted norms.

As women have advanced economically and "career woman" has eclipsed "office lady" in the collective consciousness, a fascination with people who don't conform to gender stereotypes has arisen in popular culture industries. In Japan, interlocking media systems have an amazing capacity to disseminate hot topics in popular culture. In *Fragile Resistance, Signs of Status*, Rosenberger describes this commodification: "Market researchers ultrasensitive to the latest trends are quick to standardize social changes into new market niches, reducing social movements to a system of commodities" (1996, p. 24). It is common for a term to be coined in a marketing article, spread through newspapers and TV talk shows, spawn a TV or comic series, start online clubs or government initiatives, or even become vogue word of the year. In *An Introduction to Japanese Society*, sociology professor Sugimoto (2003) says:

> The centralized organization of mass media in general, and television in particular, makes it easy for central image-makers to capture the nation's curiosity. This contributes to Japan's frequent nationwide crazes ... In all of these cases of fads and mass hysteria, the media, and especially television, has played a major role in stirring up feelings of insecurity and inciting a sense of national panic (p. 247).

With such a wide reach, these media processes have enormous power to both reflect change and to spur it on. Japanese social commentators also have a tendency to write in a normative way that emphasizes classification and categorization (Ackermann, 2004). Over the last decade, a number of new metaphors about gender have entered the vernacular. In a society that stresses conformity, emerging groups are defined from within and without into concrete, distinct niches or tribes. The range of what is acceptable and held up for emulation in today's culture industries has expanded greatly from that of the past, with increasingly smaller niche markets contributing to intensely specified categorization (Miller, 2004). This diversity of tribes and subcultures seems to have arisen in part out of a refusal to conform to "traditional"

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models of masculinity and femininity (Miller, 2004). Even as they serve to keep the status quo in line, the very existence of these new tribes, and their dissemination in society create friction that erodes traditional ideas. Reality is reshaped, and suddenly it becomes socially acceptable for men to like dessert.

New Gender Metaphors

The terms discussed in this paper correspond mostly to a person's interests and habits. All are ostensibly heterosexual. Six apply to females: boxed-in daughters (箱入り娘*hakoiri musume*), carnivore women (肉食女子*nikushoku joshi*), dried-fish women (干物女*himono onna*), history girls (歴女*rekijo*), loser dogs (負け犬*make inu),* and demon wives（鬼嫁 *oniyome*). Three apply to males: herbivore men (草食男子*soushoku danshi*), childcare men; 'Mr. Moms' (育メン *ikumen*), and girly guys (乙男*otomen*). Though their origins and connotations vary, and the people they represent are held up as deviations from the norm, taken together they demonstrate how gender perceptions in Japan are evolving.

As long ago as the late 1880s, feminist activist Toshiko Kishida wrote of *hakoiri musume*, "boxed-in daughters," whom she compared to stunted, manicured bonsai trees (Mackie, 2003). She described them as "girls who cannot act, cannot talk, cannot even move their hands and feet, as if they were trapped in a box" (Cherry, 1987, p.42). It is likely her opinion would have gone against the mainstream in Meiji-era Japan, and change remained slow from that time onwards; in the 1980s, it was still, ostensibly, a compliment to call a young woman a boxed-in daughter, as this showed she had been raised correctly and had been sheltered from undesirable influences (Cherry, 1987). Now the term is more often associated with a girl who is spoiled, passive, and unable to do anything for herself. For this paper, I took "boxed-in daughters," the focal image on the cover of *Womansword,* as a benchmark against which newer feminine metaphors could be measured.

One of the most widely-known gender metaphors is the recently rebranded *soushoku danshi or* "grass-eating man." In 2004, writer Maki Fukasawa coined the term "herbivorous or grass-eating male" in an article about marketing to this newly emerging type. In Japanese, one term for sexual intercourse is "relationship in flesh"; thus people who are aggressive in pursuing sex are referred to as carnivores. According to Fukasawa, these grass-eating men prefer to focus on fashion, hobbies, and/or making and eating dessert rather than the vigorous pursuit of career advancement, high-status goods, and sexual relationships like the generation before them. Connotations of rabbit-like timidity and associations with traditionally feminine activities seem to imply that this term has a slightly comic aspect in a normative, patriarchal society. However, the increasing numbers of grass-eating men may be starting to command respect. In 2009, Lifenet, a Japanese life-insurance company, found that "of the 1,000 single men in their 20s and 30s polled, 75 percent described themselves as grass-eating males" (Harney, 2009, para. 4). Fukasawa's series of articles became a book, which in turn spawned TV shows, magazines, and dozens of websites where self-identifying herbivore men share cooking and fashion tips, and give advice to women who want to date an herbivore. This seminal gender metaphor is key to understanding many of the terms that have come since.

The shift in masculinity made famous by grass-eating men seems to have given rise to a corresponding shift in femininity, engendering "carnivore females," women who are straightforward about getting what they want. While there are many ideas about what constitutes a grass-eating male visually (a tendency to be thin, lacking muscle, well-coifed, precisely dressed and perhaps wearing cosmetics), flesh-eating females seem to be identified only by their assertiveness. This powerful image, evocative of the English term "cougar,"

contrasts sharply with that of a boxed-in daughter. A carnivore woman pursues whatever she wants like a predator, whether it is sex or career success. In a 2011 episode of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation's drama *Shukujo* (*Holiday Women*), footage of a woman inviting herself into a man's apartment, pinning him against the wall, throwing him bodily to the ground, and straddling him against his will is interspersed with clips of a lion chasing a zebra, catching it by the throat, pulling it down, and devouring it, an obvious allusion to her "carnivore" nature. Many of the instances of carnivore women are rendered in over-the-top, almost grotesque ways that police women's sexuality even as they show expanded notions of female behavior, which lends itself well to classroom analysis.

The new metaphor *otomen* was created by *manga* artist Aya Kanno. The title of the her comic series is a pun constructed from the Japanese word *otome* (乙女), meaning "young lady" or "mistress," and the English word "men," and can be roughly translated as "girly guy" or "lady man" (Kanno, 56). In the series, Asuka, a high-school star athlete comically struggles to conceal his "effeminate" desires: reading romance *manga*, cooking and baking, and knitting and sewing toys and dolls. In one scene, Asuka's desire to be more "manly" comes into conflict with his desire for sweets at a bakery:

> Shop girl: "What would you like to order?"
>
> Asuka: [Looking at the delicious baked goods, he leans on the counter and sweats with the effort to resist the temptation to make a "feminine" order.] *Apple pie, maple pudding, gateau chocolat, banana millefeuille, blueberry tart...* "Coffee…" *strawberry frappuccino, caramel macchiato…* "Black." (Kanno, 76)

Asuka feels pressure to hide his real interests because his father abandoned the family in order to have a sex change and pursue life as a woman. While the *manga* overall is humorous, there remains the implication that indulging in feminine interests is a sign of a man's trans-sexuality that, if allowed to run loose, can damage society. As a result, the metaphor is useful in two ways: as an easy entrée into discussing surface gender roles, and a way to illuminate deeper biases and tropes in the culture industry.

Ikumen is another new coinage. It can be translated roughly as Mr. Moms, or men who participate in childrearing. The Japanese government, harnessing the power of these media-generated metaphors, recently launched an *ikumen* PR project designed to "raise awareness in men that child rearing is not only for women," as well as "create a family where men and women can work and also have a family" (Kakuchi, 2010, para. 6). Currently, less than 2% of men take paternity leave (Gender Equality Bureau, 2010).

Graph 1 illustrates one student's data from her survey on *ikumen*. The vertical axis shows the number of respondents (27 women in total), while the horizontal axis shows age groups.

Graph 1

Do you want your husband to be "Ikumen?"
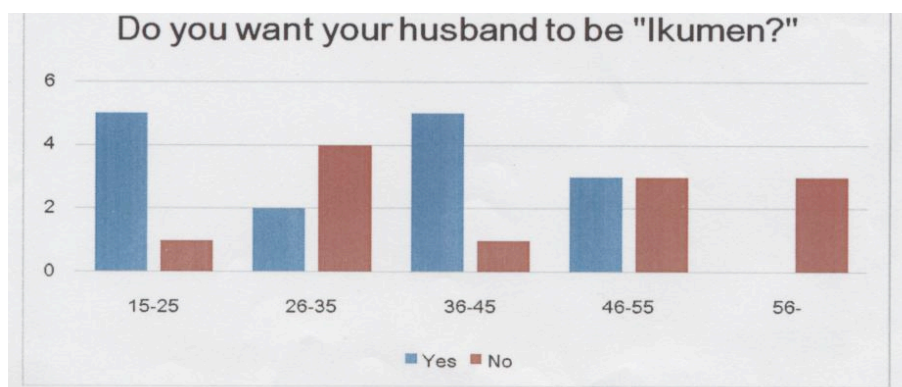
During her presentation, students commented on the difference in preference among age groups. Some hypothesized that women in their childbearing years were more likely to want an *ikumen* husband. While most of my 29 seminar students said during in-class discussion that they liked the idea of *ikumen*, two thirds said they would be against their future husband taking paternity leave upon the birth of their child. Whether this is because of fears that it would damage their husband's career, or because child care is still such a feminized task, is unclear. The topic of *ikumen* can be used to elicit ideas about a range of issues, from work division and the perceived and problematized erosion of masculinity to motherhood, day care, and family leave.

In 2007, Nihon Television broadcast the drama *Hotaru no Hikari*, or *Light of the Firefly*, whose main character was a "dried-fish woman." Dried-fish women usually prefer to spend weekends at home in sweatpants rather than go through the exhausting effort of looking perfect in order to meet and keep a boyfriend. They are rather humorously characterized as sitting at their heated *kotatsu* table surrounded by cell phone, TV remote, snacks, and beer (drunk out of the can), hair unkempt, with no makeup, wearing baggy, soiled clothes. "Dried-out" in this case connotes being worn out and unattractive, and it seems to be most often associated with new company recruits whose workload has taken such a heavy toll they can't be bothered to try to beautify themselves. This term is particularly useful in discussing asymmetry in gender images and society's focus on women's appearance, as no such term exists for men.

History girls, or *rekijo*, are young women who have developed what is seen as an unfeminine interest in historical figures. The fad began with the Sengoku Basara video game series which featured strong, handsome characters from the medieval period of civil wars. Interest spread beyond gamers and gave rise to a wave of women who read historical novels, idolize famous warriors like pop stars, make trips to sites of historical battles, and even dress up in warlord's clothing. Fans say they prefer these figures to the weak, grass-eating men of today and this trend is generally seen as a response to changing male roles (Kuhn, 2010). In fact, most of the new female types are widely attributed to the perceived decline in masculinity. This can provide a leaping off point for discussions of assumptions about interests and abilities, as well as backlash against change.

One metaphor for women that seems particularly loaded is *make inu*, or "loser dog." Originally the term referred to a person of either gender who was a loser, but in 2003 journalist Junko Sakai recast it in her book, *Howl of the Loser Dogs*, as a term for single women over 30. In 2004, the term was voted "vogue word" of the year (Yamaguchi, 2006). Even successful, attractive, independent women could be labeled loser dogs, unless their

career status eclipsed their lack of a husband and children. While Yamaguchi (2006) views the book as a feminist deconstruction of society's cult of motherhood and the constant pressure on women to find a husband, the national media attention ignored that aspect of the book, and as a result the term's connotation is overwhelmingly negative for most Japanese. Surprisingly, however, this is not the case in Taiwan. When the term migrated from Japan, it was recast as "loser dog queens," and made into a TV drama. The main character, a beautiful, intelligent, capable, and successful single woman, was so appealing that loser dog queens became a positively-identified marketing niche (Chen-Chun, 2010). The contrast between the two terms further illuminates for students the negotiability of gender roles, the importance of perspective, and the flexibility of meaning.

The Gender Metaphor Survey and Analysis Project

The participants in this project were thirteen juniors in the first year of a two-year Women's Studies seminar at a private women's university in Japan. The seminar meets for 90 minutes per week for 60 weeks, and culminates in an English thesis paper. The project that is the focus of this paper was conducted in 2010, in the first term of the seminar course, after a month-long introduction to gender studies and another month studying Japanese women in history.

The goals for the first term were to establish that gender is a construct, introduce students to language deconstruction, and have students conduct independent surveys and written analyses of current gender metaphors. The unit involved brainstorming and discussion of sexist language, such as 看護婦/看護師 *kangofu/kangoshi* ("nurse" written as female to "nurse" written without gender marking) and 男女平等 *danjyobyoudou* (gender equality, always written with "male" first), or the English terms "actor/actress" and "chairman/chairperson." Students then read two of the short essays in *Womansword*, and moved on to discussing asymmetry and nuance. To help uncover gender assumptions in language, students were asked to generate lists of words with the 女 *onna* radical, rate the terms as positive, negative, or neutral, and then apply the following filters discussed by Lakoff (1973):

    1) Does the reverse term exist? Is it symmetrical?
    2) Does the term make women's (or men's) participation invisible?
    3) Is order a concern?
    4) Is the term or situation active or passive?
    5) What is the connotation?

After much in-class discussion about connotations and assumptions, the language analysis unit culminated in each student drafting and conducting her own independent survey. Each student chose a current gender metaphor, wrote questions, and surveyed 50 people outside of class to ascertain how other Japanese people feel about the particular metaphor. Some students made paper questionnaires while others used a social networking blog to gather data. They were asked to balance their respondents according to gender and age. After tallying the results, they wrote an analysis paper, and presented their findings to the class. The nine gender metaphors described in this paper were collected from classroom discussion and students' survey projects.

While gender metaphors offer a rich source of material for the classroom, those not fluent in Japanese should be aware that translations are difficult. The television show *Shukujo* (祝女) or *Holiday Women*, for example, refers to a sexualized word for "woman" that is often used in pornography, but the producers have rewritten it in wholesome *kanji* as "holiday women" so that the overall effect is somewhat sarcastic. Depending on engagement and previous exposure to the term, students' analyses may not capture the full connotation. Also, because the terms are new, there may not be much information available in English, or the foreign press may have represented them differently than they are seen domestically.

In a year of Women's Studies assignments, the gender metaphor project was the overwhelming favorite (as indicated through an end-of-term survey in journal form), though it involved significant student work outside the classroom. Students participated more in discussion and showed engagement and enthusiasm about the topic. Below is an excerpt from one student's analysis paper:

> My term is 鬼嫁 *oniyome*, which I translate as 'demon wife'. When everyone hears this term, they feel frightened. However, if they hear the term after they understand the consideration based on my opinion, they will rethink about the meaning of demon wife.… *Oniyome* is a wife who is outrageous and selfish. This character came from a blog of a husband who has an *oniyome*, and a TV drama *Demon Wife Diaries* was put on the air. Consequently, the term *oniyome* became popular … I asked what image people had and there were overwhelmingly lots of negative opinions. However, there are some people who have both positive and negative opinions. These people think that women's advance into society has made women stronger than before. To my great surprise, these people were all women. I suspect that women think about their position more often than men do.

In her term-end journal the same student wrote, "I had no idea about gender and language until I learned about women's studies. This research was so intriguing for me to learn this field. It was clear women are conscious of the way women should be in society and at home." Another student was inspired by this project to analyze kanji with the *onna* radical for her year-long graduation thesis.

Conclusion

This project took its shape and inspiration from Cherry and Lakoff, and from the students in my seminar course. We cannot shed the constraints of gender assumptions until we understand what they are, and language is one of the most basic tools we have for interrogating and deconstructing gender. The integrated nature of the culture industry in Japan allows one person's blog, or one marketing article, to seed hundreds of other symbiotic media, widely disseminating a concept such as "carnivore women" or "Mr. Moms," and its implied ideology. Metaphors like these can shed light on hegemonic stereotypes and assumptions. They also represent in miniature current issues society is grappling with, from the enduring wage gap and the M-curve in women's employment to family leave policies and the declining birth rate. Deconstructing these metaphors can illuminate the kaleidoscope of possibilities that lie beyond entrenched stereotypes and restrictive assumptions.

The gender and language unit, and the language survey in particular, seemed to be an effective way to engage students and raise consciousness. The content and its accessibility allowed students to choose a term that interested them and investigate it outside the

classroom. As students tallied responses from 50 respondents and looked for trends and connotations, they acquired a sense of expertise, which instilled agency. Because earlier coursework had established that gender assumptions lead to a range of issues that affect students' lives, they also felt that their work was meaningful. And because the terms were culled from the forefront of popular culture, the material was timely and kept students interested in their peers' work as well. To teach this unit it is not necessary for instructors to have advanced Japanese skills: students generate content, explain meaning, and make connections. Perhaps best of all, both teacher and students embark on the discovery together. In my experience, the survey and analysis project was engaging, accessible, and useful in expanding students' notions of gender. As media and culture industries continue to seek out, sculpt, and commodify new gender types, this avenue of study stays perpetually fresh. Whether male or female, grass-eating or predatory, gender metaphors offer cultural enquirers a unique view on the evolution of gender perceptions in Japanese society.

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Gender and Interpersonal Competence in the
Foreign Language Classroom

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Abstract

Current foreign language teaching based on the communicative approach involves social interaction in the form of pair and group work activities. Gender differences in terms of interpersonal competence may play a role in determining the effectiveness of the communicative approach as well as in the utilization of foreign language skills. This article explores gender differences in interpersonal competence and how such differences may impact the foreign language classroom based on the communicative approach. Suggestions are given in addressing some of these issues so as to better understand gender differences in the foreign language learning classroom.

要旨

コミュニカティブ・アプローチに基づく現行の外国語教育には、ペアやグループワークという形態の社会的やりとりが含まれる。対人関係能力（interpersonal competence）における性差というものは外国語技能の活用におけると同様にコミュニカティブ・アプローチの有効性を決定する一つのパラメーターになるとみなされよう。本論文は、対人関係能力における性差とその性差がコミュニカティブ・アプローチに基づく外国語教育現場に与える影響を検証するものである。関連事象の論説を進める中で外国語学習現場における性差についての理解を更に深めるための提案がいくつかなされる。

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to investigate the possibility that women may have an edge over men in terms of their interpersonal skills and the significance this may have on pedagogy in foreign language studies. It is not my intention to categorize people of a particular gender as those who have interpersonal skills and those who do not. Clearly people have varying degrees of ability in their use of interpersonal skills as well as levels of confidence when interacting socially regardless of gender. Differences between individuals of a particular gender are as significant as the differences between genders in terms of ability and capacity (Cameron, 1994). Personality differences of extraversion or introversion, which may have a brain based biological correlation (Canli, 2006; Eysenck & Eysenck, 2006) regardless of gender, may also play a role in how individuals interact socially. Describing a particular gender in terms of demarcations of ability would be simplistic and such conclusions may

bring fears of unjust gender stereotyping, which often serve as a way of perpetuating and justifying inequality (Eitzen, 2007). We tend to be subjected to prevailing gender ideology which subject positions men and woman in terms of difference rather than similarity (Cameron, 2009). Although such ideology may be viewed as being the result of "*Nurture*" in terms of prevailing sociocultural expectations, it may be interesting to include questions raised by researchers who employ *Nature* vocabularies in the Nature/Nurture debate, (Pinker, 2002). I seek neither to take sides in the debate, nor to make deterministic conclusions regarding gender and interpersonal competence. I seek rather to provide a background of ideas based on a review of literature which may be considered in exploring the topic of interpersonal competence and gender in language learning. The factors which may be associated with gender differences in language studies are also investigated. Findings of an association between gender and interpersonal skills from a survey of Japanese university students are also explored so as to shape a fuller understanding of pedagogical implications.

Educators should be aware of the possibility of gender differences in interpersonal competence and the role that this may play in language learning. Whether such gender differences are based on Nature or Nurture, or a combination of both, the complexity of human beings compels educators to see students first and foremost as individuals to be treated equally and fairly, regardless of gender. Gender may one of many factors contributing to an individual's use of interpersonal skills.

Gender Differences and Discourses of Nature and Nurture

Gender differences in respect to interpersonal competence may be due to both nature and nurture in terms of biological and sociocultural influences (Sadker & Silber, 2007), as well as the interaction of these two factors (Andersen, 2006). This can be seen in research findings from a wide range of fields including neuroscience, psychosocial studies, and sociocultural studies.

Discourses of Nature

Researchers advocating a nature perspective describe biological influences which may have an impact on the differences between males and females in the use of interpersonal competence. An example that they give is in terms of brain development. Most female brains mature earlier and more quickly than that of males, which may be one of the reasons why females acquire complex verbal skills earlier then boys (Gurian & Ballew, 2003). Other brain based factors which may play a role in interpersonal skills include brain lateralization, with male brains showing greater lateralization and specialization, while female brains show more symmetry and integration (Andersen, Garrison, & Andersen, 1979; Halpern, 1986). This may lead to women having more efficient communication between brain hemispheres "to produce greater intuition and social sensitivity" (Andersen, 2006, p. 121). This greater integration of women's brains may also be a source of increased intrapersonal sensitivity (Stacks & Andersen, 1989), which is an important factor in interpersonal communication as it may lead to greater empathy when communicating with someone. This may allow women to be able to use rapport more effectively by being able to empathize with the person with whom they are communicating. This may also be one of the reasons why a greater number of females take part in language studies, as they are better able to use intrapersonal skills in engaging with someone not only within their own culture, but also with people of different cultural backgrounds as well. Further biological influences on women's superior interpersonal skills

in terms of the ability to achieve rapport may be the result of the increased presence of oxytocin (Gurian & Ballew, 2003, p. 10).

According to Hall (1978), psychosocial differences between men and women may also have evolutionary roots. These evolutionary roots may explain women's greater confidence and ability in the area of interpersonal competence. The greater sensitivity of women to nonverbal clues might allow a woman to be better able to detect distress on part of her children as well as threatening behaviour from others. On the other hand, controlling emotions may have adaptive benefit for men when hunting, combating predators, or in competitive situations (Guerrero, Jones, & Reiter, 2006). Furthermore LaFrance and Henley (1994) conclude that females evolved greater emotional and nonverbal decoding ability as a way to compensate for their relative lack of power in comparison to men. Cameron (2009) however argues that some scientific and anthropological data regarding human behaviour lacks firm basis. In Cameron's view, questions regarding our ancestors' diet, tools, and visual art may be answered based on material evidence in the form of fossils and preserved artifacts. Questions regarding behaviour such as language use, sexual practices, parenting, as well as interpersonal communication are much more difficult to answer due to the lack of material traces. According to Cameron, conclusions regarding the evolutionary roots of behaviour are based on widely attested behaviour patterns in modern human populations which are then retroactively explained in terms of adaptive evolutionary behaviour. Although literature related to a nature perspective may seem essentialist, there is no indication that researchers investigating biological influences regarding interpersonal competence dismiss or disregard the role of nurture.

Discourses of Nurture

Researchers who take a social-constructivist approach to gender differences while acknowledging that biological differences exist between males and females, assert that there are more similarities than differences between males and females (Cameron, 2008). Those advocating a nurture model of gender differences take the position that gender differences are less the outcome of biology and more the result of social conditioning. Variations in sociocultural perceptions of interpersonal skills may be an example of how society may shape such skills in terms of nurture in that some cultures view men as having greater social skills than women. Cameron (2008, p. 34) gives as an example the case of Gapun, a remote village on the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea where "men pride themselves on their ability to express themselves indirectly, controlling their emotions and concealing their real opinions to avoid provoking conflict. Women on the other hand are uncooperative and belligerent." Cameron uses this, as well as an example of the differing gender roles in Madagascar as an example of the limited role that biology plays in establishing those particular characteristics of males and females in terms of interpersonal relations stating that,

> If male-female linguistic differences are rooted in biology, as so many contemporary scientists assert, why do different societies claim to observe diametrically opposed patterns of difference? Why are westerners convinced that women are more cooperative and more attentive to other's feelings than men, while in New Guinea and Madagascar people were equally convinced that the reverse is true? (p. 39)

In light of Cameron's cautionary view, both males and females should have equal opportunities to develop their interpersonal skills, regardless of sociocultural upbringing.

Cultural differences in interpersonal communication should also be considered. Such a perspective also sheds light on the possibility that interpersonal skills may be developed irrespective of gender biology. Although such exceptions should be acknowledged and give a new perspective to the sociocultural influences on gender relations and how males and females may be defined, most societies view females in terms of being nurturing and empathic.

Sociocultural influences on interpersonal competence are evident in Tannen's (2001) description of the differences in the way that boys and girls play games. Boys' games often involve hierarchical social structures and elaborate systems of rules. Boys also tend to boast about their skills and attempt to determine who is the most skilled. Girls' games on the other hand, often take place in smaller intimate groups, or pairs where everyone gets a turn and there are no winners or losers. When playing such games, girls are not expected to boast about their skills and usually do not give orders, but prefer to listen to suggestions. When interacting with their peers, boys may see friendly conversation as a training ground for verbal aggression, while girls may view such interaction as a training ground for cooperation in seeking a more egalitarian approach (Stewart et al., 2003). In this way boys attempt to demonstrate mastery, while girls focus on maintaining relationships when taking part in games. Such interactive styles may be socially conditioned responses which Coates (2004, p. 169) describes as being based on the expectations of parents and adults when responding to and interact with children of a particular gender from their own preconceptions, such as expecting female infants to be more verbal than males. Adults may talk differently to children depending on the gender of the child (e.g. adults are more likely to interrupt girls, and lisp more when talking to little girls). Adults may also respond differently to girls and boys using the same linguistic strategy (e.g. boys arguing or talking assertively are more likely to get a positive response than girls). According to Coates, social conditioning in terms of gender appropriate behaviour begins at an early age when, "Girls and boys learn during childhood to identify with either women or men. They demonstrate their membership of the group by their use of gender-appropriate behaviour (Coates, 2004, p. 148). Such gender appropriate behaviour may be defined in terms of women being depicted as having "communal personality traits" such as being compassionate and interpersonally sensitive (Fine, 2011, p. 3). On the other hand, men are often depicted through agentic descriptors such as being dominant, independent and individualistic which Fine describes as "the perfect traits for bending the world to your command, and earning a wage for it" (Fine, 2011, p. 4). Although Fine implies that such gendered definitions are advantageous to men, defining them in such a way may actually have negative consequences as a lack of interpersonal sensitivity may actually hamper males in terms of effectively interacting with others and in their emotional health (Clare, 2001). The contemporary workplace also promotes feminine qualities such as interpersonal skills and teamwork (Connell, 2005), which may place those who do not have such skills at a disadvantage.

Discourses of Nature and Nurture Conclusion

It is not always clear if researchers attribute gender differences to biological or to sociocultural factors. Certainly, discourses of Nature suggest that biological factors will play a key role in social dynamics and conversational interactions, while discourses of Nurture suggest that social conditioning is a primary factor. Strict divisions between influences as being entirely due to nature or due to nurture however may not be appropriate (Rutter, 2006). Whether biology or sociocultural conditioning has greater influence will continue to be hotly debated in academic contexts. In the end, the consensus between a biological and

sociocultural interpretation of the relationship between interpersonal skills and gender may be that in which a "neuroplastically informed view of culture and the brain implies a two-way street: the brain and genetics produce culture, but culture also shapes the brain" (Doidge, 2007, p. 287). Nature and nurture as well as a combination of both may have a role to play in gender development and have an influence on interpersonal skills, but ultimately it is a human being's ability to learn and adapt which allows for the possibility of further development of such skills in spite of the influences of nature or nurture. While there are biological differences between males and females which may contribute to differences in communication style, the ability of human beings to learn may override any biological or social influences contributing to these differences. The remarkable plasticity of the brain reveals a biology which is not fixed in terms of ability, but reveals a brain which is flexible and adaptive in new learning situations and life experiences (Doidge, 2007).

Gender Differences and Language Learning

An aspect of gender differences in language learning is reflected in the general tendency of women to dominate the field of language studies. Women are more often drawn to language studies (Court, 2001), with a greater proportion of females than males being involved in such studies both as students and eventually as teachers (Chavez, 2001). Some private schools in Japan have exploited and reinforced the attraction of women to language studies through the opening of international courses of study emphasizing English education as a way to attract female applicants (Churchill, 2009). Women also tend to outperform males in language studies in terms of better grades, higher placement results, and greater involvement in the language learning process (Chavez, 2001).

One reason given for this gender imbalance in language studies is that women typically have better verbal and linguistic abilities then men. This is often given as the primary reason why a larger number of women study foreign languages than men, even though some research findings indicate that there may be no difference in verbal ability between males and females (Pavlenko, Blackledge, Piller, & Teutsch, 2001). Women are also often depicted as talking more than men, but some research data indicates otherwise (Stewart, Cooper, Stewart, & Friedly, 2003). If women do not have superior verbal abilities to men, and are not more talkative then men, then the question remains as to why women seem to excel in foreign language studies. One reason may be that women enjoy interacting with others and place greater value on interpersonal relations compared to men. Women may also feel more confident in using their interpersonal skills, which is an important factor when developing and putting to use foreign language skills, particularly in a communicative classroom based on communicative methodology. In fact, the socially interactive aspect of the communicative approach involving pair and group work may lend itself better to the interpersonal tendencies of women. Women may be more adept at using their interpersonal skills when interacting with others to achieve the linguistic goals of a communicative based approach.

A further indication of an association between gender and interpersonal skills is the prevalence of 'hikikomori' or social withdrawal amongst males in Japanese society. A study supported by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare found that the gender ratio of hikikomori was 76.4% males and 22.9% females (Ito, Yoshida, & Kobayashi., 2003). This topic has been addressed in various newspaper feature articles, some of which reported on study data which found that men comprise about 80 percent of the total for social withdrawal, though female hikikomori may be undercounted (Jones, 2006). Arita (2001) relates that one factor in such social withdrawal may be insufficient communication skills.

Communicative language learning (CLL) places importance on the use of language as a means of communication where "learning activities are consequently selected according to how well they engage the learner in meaningful and authentic language use" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 161). Communicative language learning involves the use of activities that require interaction with others. These activities include the use of role plays, interviews, information gap, pair work, and group work. The approach often involves students taking part in pair and group work activities where the emphasis is "on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language" (Nunan, 1991, p. 279). Although CLL activities involve real or meaningful communication as a way to develop language skills (Widdowson, 1978; Littlewood, 1981; Nunan, 1991), such activities may not be sufficient for developing communicative competence if interpersonal skills are not addressed as well. Learners who do not have appropriate social or interpersonal skills, or who do not feel confident in using such skills, may not feel successful in interacting with others. This suggests that foreign language teaching methodology should not only concentrate on developing language skills for effective communication, but should also include the development of interpersonal skills, as communication takes place in a social context. If students lack interpersonal skills or lack confidence in using such skills, they will not be able to effectively use the language skills they have been studying. In other words, to become a competent communicator requires both language and interpersonal skills (Schmidt-Fajlik, 2011). Students who are able to use interpersonal skills effectively may therefore have an advantage in developing language skills and may be greater motivated in activities based on a communicative approach. Although all students should be given opportunities to develop interpersonal skills to become effective overall communicators, it is important to consider whether interpersonal skills related to gender play a role in the higher rates of foreign language learning success among women. The differences in how males and females use interpersonal competence may play a part in the way in which students communicate with each other as well as how effectively they communicate with each other in language classrooms.

Since the communicative approach involves interaction with other people, interpersonal competence may play an important role in the successful undertaking of a communicative task. As the success of a communicative task depends not only on the use of language, but also interpersonal skills, developing such skills in the language classroom is important if students are to become confident and effective communicators in the language they are studying. The following sections of this paper explore reported gender differences between men and women in the use of interpersonal skills and how this may impact on foreign language learning based on the communicative approach.

Research Survey: Interpersonal Competence and Gender Differences

Issues of gender and interpersonal competence were brought to my attention in the classroom when, on two separate occasions, a male student came up to me at the beginning of the year, one stating that he did not wish to work with others in pair work activities as he did not enjoy interacting with others, and the other that he did not have confidence interacting socially with others. Neither mentioned a lack of confidence in their English language skills. Further reading and reflection made me aware of the importance of developing the interpersonal skills of students along with that of their linguistic skills in the language classroom if they were to interact effectively during classroom activities, as well as when putting to use their language skills outside the classroom. In order to assess how students felt about their interpersonal skills, I conducted a self-report survey (Schmidt-Fajlik, 2010) which further led

to an investigation as to whether gender played a role in interpersonal communication as described in this article.

The survey was administered to 197 Japanese students at two different Japanese universities to explore how students felt about their interpersonal skills. The students ranged in age from 18 to 21. Women comprised 54% of the total. Survey results found that large percentages of participants answered "Yes" to the following questions on how students felt about their interpersonal skills: "Do you ever feel disappointed, or dissatisfied after speaking with someone?" (73.1%), "Do you feel nervous speaking with someone for the first time?" (60.4%). Fewer than half answered "Yes" to the question "Are you satisfied with your interpersonal skills?" (45.2%) (Schmidt-Fajlik, 2010).

A statistical analysis of the data was conducted using Fisher's exact test at the α = 0.05 level to see whether there was an association between gender and student responses. Responses to the questions, "Do you enjoy speaking with other people?", "Do you generally feel comfortable in social situations?" and "Are you satisfied with your interpersonal skills?" were analyzed. A statistically significant association was found between how comfortable students felt in interpersonal situations and their enjoyment of speaking with others, with females generally feeling more comfortable and enjoying speaking more with others. However, no statistically significant association was found in response to the question, "Are you satisfied with your interpersonal skills?" Students of both genders indicated similar responses in terms of wishing to develop their interpersonal skills.

Survey results indicating an association between gender and how students felt about their interpersonal skills may be an indicator of why women may be more inclined to take part in activities which involve interpersonal skills such as foreign language learning. If this is the case, then this interpersonal aspect may play a factor in a language classroom based on the communicative approach, with women being more motivated to take part in such activities based on greater confidence in their interpersonal skills. The role of gender in the communicative approach may be an important aspect when determining the types of communicative tasks used in that "gender is an important influence in many settings in which social interaction or communication occurs" (Stewart et al., 2003).

Gender Issues in Conversation Analysis

Descriptions of native English speaker gender differences in terms of interpersonal conversation ability include factors such as the greater ability of women to initiate and maintain a conversation, the ability to better use and interpret nonverbal communication, and the ability to develop greater rapport. Many women also expend greater effort in beginning and maintaining conversations (Stewart et al., 2003). Other studies suggest that women typically rely on verbal communication more than men, such as in expressions of self-disclosure (Wood & Dindia, 1998), which aids in developing rapport through willingness to share personal information with others (Caputo, Hazel, & McMahon, 1997). Research indicates that men may actually inhibit conversations with women by not further elaborating or expanding on a topic or participating in a conversation by giving curt responses to topics introduced by women (Stewart et al., 2003). Women may demonstrate more proficient interpersonal skills then men in their ability to engage in conversations on a deeper level by asking questions, introducing topics, and making listening signals (Fishman, 1983; Tannen, 2001). Women may also be more proficient in using listening responses called 'minimal responses' or 'backchannels', which are important in developing rapport. Maltz and Borker (1982) found that women are more inclined to ask questions and that they use more listening responses. According to Furo (1999), Japanese use backchannels more often than Americans,

with Japanese females using more backchannels then men. Research on the gendered use of backchannels is "unanimous in showing that women use them more than men" (Coates, 2004, p. 87).

The use of self-disclosure is also an important aspect in establishing rapport. Females on average use more self-disclosure than males (Dindia & Allen, p. 1992). The greater use of self-disclosure by women assists in interpersonal communication by helping to create more intimacy leading to a "greater affective experience of connection" (Sadker & Silber, 2007, p. 43). Self-disclosure also builds relationships as it contributes to a reciprocal relationship of trust where people are more likely to share information in getting to know one another (Caputo, Hazel & McMahon, 1997). The less frequent use of self-disclosure by males may be a result of the view that self-disclosure is "unmasculine" (Sadker & Silber, 2007), thus contributing to a lack intimacy in male interpersonal relationships.

Women's more proficient use of interpersonal skills may also be demonstrated in the ability and willingness to take part in small talk "which is the exchange of information about everyday occurrences- the weather, sporting events, health, taxes, other people, and so forth" (Ratliffe & Hudson, 1988, p. 17). The use of small talk is an important interpersonal skill as it serves as a way to initiate a conversation. It also serves as a way to get to know someone and build rapport. Caputo et al. (1997) describes the importance of small talk as an interpersonal skill in that:

> Practicing small-talk is important and helpful for initiating and developing relationships. If small talk is unsuccessful, you will have difficulty developing relationships any further. If, however, the small talk is successful and you want the relationship to develop more interpersonally, you need to reduce uncertainty about each other. (p.107)

Tannen (2001) also explores different approaches to small talk:

> Many men think women are wasting time when they talk about their personal lives. Since men don't tend to do rapport-talk, they don't understand that such exchanges reinforce women's friendships or working relationships. At the same time, many women think men are wasting time exchanging impersonal information and displaying knowledge because they don't understand how report-talk exchanges negotiate men's friendships or working relationships. (p. 304)

This type of gender difference in small talk may disadvantage men in their ability to create openings in initiating a conversation and in developing rapport. These differences may put males at a disadvantage, particularly when engaging with someone of a different cultural background, as empathetic understanding is required. Both women and men should be aware of possible gender differences in the use of small talk. Understanding different communication strategies based on gender should help make one more understanding, appreciative, and adaptable in aligning oneself for communicative purposes.

Differences in how males and females interact socially may be found in the greater interconnectedness experienced by women when relating to others. According to Belenky (1997), when relating to others, men value distance and autonomy and tend to be more exclusionary, considering others as being either part of their group or outside it. Women on the other hand tend to be more inclusionary, and consider themselves more interdependent with others. Approaching others in such a way may give females an advantage in interpersonal relationships as they may see others as being less apart from themselves. They

may be more likely to engage others and establish rapport as interaction is viewed from an inclusionary perspective. This may lead women to have a more cooperative style of communication, in contrast to that of men whose communicative style tends to be more competitive (Weatherall, 1998), or by not giving sufficient support signals to sustain rapport. Davies' (2003, p. 18) study of group gender composition involving 183 fourteen-year-olds tends to support this claim regarding gender differences in how students interact with each other. The study involved discussion activities centred around Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*. Davies found that the girls "consistently produced friendly talk, comfortably fulfilling both social and educational work. The co-operative style required to achieve the tasks was easily accommodated by the girls and ran along congruent lines with their manner of forming friendships." On the other hand, she found that the boys were more involved in establishing social hierarchy in that "boys use talk to socially engineer, to police each others' behaviour and to establish a pecking order of masculinity." Such behaviour may be an example of masculine hegemony in social relations terms of "alliance, dominance, and subordination" (Connell, 2005, p. 37). Women also appear to be more socially sensitive and intuitive particularly in the area of nonverbal communication (Andersen, 2006) which is an important interpersonal skill, since a large part of communication consists of nonverbal messages (Ratliffe & Hudson, 1988).

Pedagogical Implications and Classroom Activities

The review of literature regarding gender differences in the use of interpersonal skills, the reasons behind such differences in terms of discourses of Nature and Nurture, as well as the correlation of survey results of Japanese university students indicate that many women have an edge over men in terms of their interpersonal skills such as in the ability to develop rapport, use nonverbal cues, and work collaboratively. This may give women a distinct advantage over males in learning a new language. This is of particular significance in a communicative based classroom involving pair and group work which rely to a large extent on interpersonal skills. This advantage may allow females to participate more actively, confidently, and enthusiastically in such activities. This could lead women to be more motivated in a language learning classroom based on communicative methodologies. This is possibly one of the reasons why women tend to achieve greater success in foreign language learning and why they are more attracted to foreign language studies. The greater interpersonal confidence of women may also allow them to be more motivated to use their language skills outside the classroom in real world situations. Their empathetic skills and greater nonverbal sensitivity may also allow them to use their language skills more successfully in intercultural situations.

If women demonstrate better interpersonal skills whether based on possible biological or sociocultural factors, or a combination of both, then men should be given more opportunities and encouraged to develop skills in this area, as the human potential to learn and develop skills based on brain plasticity may override any initial biological or socially conditioned factors. This may serve to better facilitate pair and group work often used in the communicative approach as well as develop such skills when communicating with others outside the language classroom. Classroom activities should be designed to give men the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills, such as listening skills, nonverbal communication, and rapport. This should be done in a manner that does not distinguish between genders. Both males and females should be given equal opportunity to develop and use such skills.

As Japanese students may not be aware of backchannels in English, they should be introduced to such words and be encouraged to use them during oral communication activities. That research indicates that females used backchannels with greater frequency then males (Coates, 2004), with Japanese females using such listening responses with greater frequency than that of either Japanese males or American females (Furo,1999), male Japanese students should be given opportunities to use backchannels such as *oh, really, that's interesting, uh-huh* and so on to show their partner that they are actively following what their partner is saying and that they are actively engaged in the topic in order to achieve better rapport. Males should also be encouraged to use more follow-up questions, particularly open-ended questions to engage their speaking partner as a way to increase rapport as well as encouraging the other person to speak more. This will also indicate to the other person that you are interested in what they are saying, which is an important factor in building interpersonal relationships.

In terms of classroom tasks, collaborative activities may assist in addressing the particular interpersonal approaches of each gender. Such collaborative activities should involve ways to incorporate the hierarchical, agentic, and mastery approaches favoured by many men as well as the cooperative tendencies of females. A combination of both agentic and collaborative approaches may therefore serve to develop not only gender specific interpersonal skills, but may also address the learning styles of males and females. Collaborative activities may include working on a project where each student has a role to play in achieving a common task, such as a group presentation based on a chosen country, social problem or global theme such as the environment. Agentic activities could entail an activity in which a particular goal is reached, such as finding the location of a place based on informative clues. These clues could involve further problem solving 'mastery' tasks such as having to match a definition based on previously learned vocabulary. The solving of these clues could be made interpersonally interactive by adding the requirement that the definitions required to solve the clues be requested from one or more others students in order to determine the sought location.

Concluding Reflections

A review of research literature regarding gender differences in interpersonal communication as well as possible reasons behind these differences spanning both a Nature and Nurture focus suggests that women demonstrate superiority in the use of interpersonal skills in their ability to develop rapport and work collaboratively. This ability may allow women to enjoy greater success in a foreign language learning classroom, particularly one based on communicative approaches which involve social interaction by way of pair and group work. Females may have an advantage over males when putting to use their linguistic skills in the real world due to their greater interpersonal orientation. The ability of women to develop rapport based on empathic understanding may be advantageous, also, in intercultural situations which requires understanding and empathizing with someone whose cultural viewpoint is different. These findings demonstrate the importance of considering the role that interpersonal skills have in the language classroom and the influence that gender differences may have on human interaction inside as well as outside the language classroom. Although research findings and the review of literature suggest that women may have an advantage in the use of interpersonal skills it would be unfair for an educator to categorize or stereotype a particular student as having greater interpersonal skills only based on gender. All speaking subjects regardless of gender have the potential and ability to develop and improve their social skills. General findings from the review of literature may, however, serve as a guide to

help understand differences, not as a basis for pigeonholing a person of a particular gender, but serving as a means of building awareness, allowing educators to address particular needs. The role of gender in interpersonal competence may be only one of many factors contributing to individual differences in the use of interpersonal skills. Certainly individuals have varying ability in demonstrating such skills. Culture may influence formation of interpersonal skills and the way that children are raised. These factors and personal life experiences may all contribute to how individuals feel about their interpersonal skills as well as how they implement such skills.

Interpersonal skills should not be simply categorized in terms of either femininity or masculinity, with women being viewed as being conciliatory or collaborative and men as autonomous and competitive as "this takes no account of the many sources of diversity and variation (such as age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and so on) which are relevant when comparing styles of interaction" (Holmes & Stubbe, 2005). There is also no gender difference yet discovered which applies to every single male and every single female as such generalizations are untrue about many individuals (Pinker, 2002). Both males and females, not only as being of a particular gender, but as individuals, should be given the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills alongside their language skills in the communicative classroom. This will assist them in developing and using their linguistic skills positively and effectively with each other during communicative activities. This will also allow students to use their foreign language skills confidently and effectively when communicating outside the foreign language classroom.

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Book Reviews

Being and Becoming a Speaker of Japanese: An Autoethnographic Account
Simon-Maeda, Andrea. Multilingual Matters, Ltd., 2011, 166pp. with 5 Appendices, References, Index)

Review by Laurel Kamada
Tohoku University

My first thought when I heard the title of Andrea Simon-Maeda's book was that it takes a lot of guts to write an academic book with oneself as the one and only participant. But at the same time, I found the concept intriguing, partly due to the fact that my favorite genre of pleasure reading has always been autobiography. While being well-written and carefully grounded in a sound theoretical and methodological framework, Simon-Maeda's narrative voice is lively and easily digestible, coming across as reader-friendly and biographic, but with the academic rigor of autoethnography.

As I began to read through the book, I realized how Simon-Maeda's personal journey offered a much broader view than just that of her own personal story. This was a journey that so many of us have experienced here as foreign women venturing to Japan in early adulthood and interacting in our numerous communities of practice over several decades contributing to our process of being and becoming speakers of Japanese.

The book is divided into two parts - an explanation of the theoretical framework discussed in Part 1 (Chapters 1 and 2), and the presentation and analysis of Simon-Maeda's autoethnograhpic data in Part 2 (Chapters 3 – 6). This is followed by a 'Closing Discussion.

Chapter 1 *Postmodern Basis of Autoethnography* details the theoretical and methodological framework. The book starts off with an examination of how postmodern notions of identities - as unfixed and contextually contingent - apply to autoethnographic methodology.

Chapter 2 *Narrative Inquiry in SLA and Applied Linguistics* looks at the academic research history of narrative inquiry in SLA and applied linguistics from a postmodernist point of view. Both of the first two chapters provide ample quotations and references to the works of others showing the interconnectedness between narrative inquiry in SLA, applied linguistics and identity.

The second and much longer Part 2 of the book looks at Simon-Maeda's process of being and becoming a speaker of Japanese through her several life stages and her associations in various communities of practice (family, career, friendships). Chapter 3: *In the Beginning: Situating the Story*, shows Simon-Maeda's early Japanese language learning experiences through the examination of various transcripts of her spoken interactions with others. This is analyzed using both micro discourse analysis along with macro ethnographic analysis. In Chapter 3 – and also dispersed throughout the book – are numerous photos and other written texts which Simon-Maeda analyzes along with the spoken data.

Chapter 4: *In the middle: Love, Marriage, Family* similarly continues the narrative of the previous chapter, but moves on to the next stage of life and the types of language practices involved in love, marriage and family. We meet Simon-Maeda's boyfriend who later

becomes her husband as she takes us through the language stages of romance, love, and sexual talk. Relationships and language between family life, neighbors, language faux-pas, parenting, dealing with school, and even the language of marital spats is carefully discussed and analyzed.

Chapter 5: *Career discourse(s)* examines the language at work in the context of Japan for a foreign woman being and becoming a speaker of Japanese. Career discourses include the language between Simon-Maeda and her students and also with her colleagues and superiors in various contexts, including meetings and informal chats. Simon-Maeda stated that she fluctuates between feeling, "I'm a good speaker of Japanese" and "I'm not a good speaker of Japanese." Simon-Maeda addresses this point with honesty as she dissects her language identity process which is unfixed and changing within a postmodern perspective. I felt that it makes the story all the more interesting that Simon-Maeda does not perceive of herself as a perfect speaker/user of Japanese, but is still in the process of 'becoming'.

It can certainly be said that this book contains a lot of variety in the types of data and analysis that Simon-Maeda included. Chapter 6: *Where I am now: Two days in the life of an expatriate* is an ethnographic snapshot of Simon-Maeda's language interactions over two days based on her field notes, documents and photos. In her examination of her mundane everyday interactions, she provides us with rich clues to as to how she negotiates her worlds and communities on a daily basis.

The final section called *Closing Discussion* nicely draws Simon-Maeda's process of Japanese learning together with the theoretical framework of her unique niche study. She states:

> While not dismissing the importance of traditional analyses of second and additional language acquisition I contend that an autoethnographic approach can provide a more complete picture of language practices . . . I propose that SLA researchers need to widen their investigative lens through the use of alternative methodologies, such as autoethnography, in order to capture the multilayered nature of language learning and use. (p. 10)

Personally, I found my own life trajectory overlapping with Simon-Maeda's in uncannily numerous areas: our arrival in Japan in the same year and at the same age; our marriage to a Japanese man after several years there and the birth of one son; similarities in our Japanese abilities/proficiencies and the processes of acquisition; our initial lack of self-expectation in becoming a Japanese speaker; our eventual realization that relocating back to USA was no longer a viable life option; our comparable work worlds and language-related responsibilities; and our resembling struggles and triumphs. I feel that these similarities constitute more than mere coincidence: these parallels attest to the value of the universal aspect of well-conducted qualitative research, even where there is only one participant.

ELT, Gender and International Development: Myths of Progress in a Neocolonial World.
Roslyn Appleby. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters. 2010. 243pp.

Review by Kim Bradford-Watts
Kyoto Women's University

The serene white sands of the palm-fringed beach adorning the cover of this volume hold deeper significance than might first be assumed, and we discover through the descriptions and analyses in this book that teaching English in short-term UN-sponsored ELT projects in East Timor immediately following independence was not as simple as the reader may have at first imagined.

In this volume, Appleby attempts to situate her own "disorienting, challenging and exhilarating experiences" (p. 9) that "gave me a thirst for conversations with colleagues who had taught in similar circumstances" (p. 9). Interviews and correspondence with nine other white Australian women teachers serve to exemplify areas of tension Appleby identified in her journal, responses to student writing, and administrative documents.

The teachers arrived to a country being rebuilt after retaliation by Indonesian militia had destroyed much of the existing infrastructure. UN peacekeeping forces were charged with ensuring security in the region, but there were ongoing threats of violence. Other UN staff and development groups were involved in rebuilding infrastructure, with "various interests— local, national, and international—vying for influence" (p. 2). Although Portuguese had been declared the national language, the UN had:

> …adopted English as its official language [and] … aid agencies preferred to employ English-speaking local staff, often in junior positions, rather than attempt direct collaboration with local organizations[,] … reinforc[ing] a perception that English, as the new language of necessity, could provide access to economic and cultural rewards" (p. 85).

The differences in living and working conditions between the foreign development workers and Timorese were extreme, and teachers soon found that the curriculum and textbooks that they had prepared were inappropriate for the Timorese context:

> Constructing and modeling a dialogue '*about likes and dislikes, you know, and the dialogue was something like "how are you getting on in Dili?", "Fine, I love the restaurants"*', Helen came to realize that this was a spatial practice of the foreigner. (p. 165)

Within this context, Appleby notes that:

> … English language teaching projects in international development appear to be caught between conflicting demands, expectations and desires, shaped by an ambiguous mix of instrumental, centre-prescribed, modernising aims, combined with principles of 'bottom-up' empowerment and social transformation. Although there has recently been a shift in interest towards critical, political understandings in

this field … there appear to be few studies of how foreign English language teachers in periphery development projects negotiate these conflicting demands. The challenges of enacting critical, participatory pedagogies through the teaching of a dominant language, while meeting the instrumental demands of donor-funded projects, are rarely discussed. (p. 46-47)

The volume is divided into two parts. The first is entitled "Understanding English Language Teaching in Development" and is largely theoretical, explaining how Appleby understands English teaching in development. The chapters, *Models of development and English language teaching*, *Time and space in English language teaching, gender and development*, and *Spatial context: East Timor, Indonesia and Australia* provide background to:

- Approaches to and debates in the analysis of international development and English language teaching paradigms
- Gender in terms of international development and aid projects
- Metaphors of time and space that form the underlying framework for "discourses of modernization that assume a logical, developmental progress through the intervention of First World expertise and the application of certain 'universal' principles" (p. 49)
- "the intertwined colonial and linguistic history of East Timor and Indonesia, and … the geopolitical relationship between these nations and Australia" (p. 72), describing how
     … asymmetrical relations of economic, social and political power between the international and local communities in these contact zones of development produced a particular set of spatial configurations, and it is within this spatiality that we can read the experiences of Western teachers … (p. 86).

Part 2, *Teachers' Narrative Accounts* more fully explores the experiences of the teachers—"the way teachers perceived the context of their teaching, and their role within that context [both inside and outside the classroom, considering] … the ways in which social and spatial relations were mutually constituted" (p. 87). This section discusses how teachers' agency gradually resisted the masculinised environment, eventually developing "more complex relations to place, through spatial practices such as walking, listening, reflecting on local struggles inscribed in places traversed, and just being present in the moment" (p. 125), beginning "to connect with the palimpsest of interventions already inscribed in the landscape" (p. 125). Although "a sexualized identity was perceived to disappear once the women passed into the spaces established by the educational institution" (p. 182), teachers found themselves at the nexus of a number of paradoxes that were instrumental in shaping their experiences of the classroom. These included pedagogical authority/nurturance, gendered/pedagogical relations, gender/culture, and public/private space. Appleby concludes that "analysis of the teachers' narratives suggest that orthodox ELT principles and practices provide an inadequate basis for a critical engagement between language, gender and the development context" (p. 210).

This short review of the complex description and detailed analysis contained within *ELT, Gender and International Development* is unable to fully do the volume justice. Appleby has completed a huge undertaking in this volume describing "the intersection between the places we inhabit and the identities we assume" (Gilmartin, 2002, p. 39) with respect to the teachers, program, and context in post-independence East Timor. Although teachers are familiar with the concepts of "appropriate materials" and "appropriate methods and methodologies" for the contexts in which we work, issues of gender and gendering are often not considered, and

spatial issues even more rarely. Until we can adequately describe our contexts, appropriateness of materials and methods will be elusive. Given the groundbreaking approach used in this study, I sincerely hope that the consideration of these factors will become more common, aiding language educators in our understandings of our living and working contexts.

Reference
Gilmartin, M. (2002). Making space for personal journeys. In P. Moss (Ed.), *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell. Pp. 31-42.

incidental music.
Jane Joritz-Nakagawa. Buffalo, New York: BlazeVOX [books]. 2010. 107pp.

Review by Fiona Creaser
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Jane Joritz-Nakagawa originally from America now lives in Japan and as well as being a poet is a busy associate professor at a university in central Japan. *incidental music* is her fifth book of poetry to be published and her poems, essays, and interviews have appeared in numerous journals in the U.S., U.K., Australia, Canada, and Japan. Jane is also the founder of the Japan Writers Conference (http://www.japanwritersconference.org/) and co-founder of the Kyoto based group, The Japan International Poetry Society (http://www.ikutapress.com/jips.html) (http://www.jipsociety.wordpress.com/).
     The artwork on the cover of *incidental music* by Joanne G. Yoshida should give the reader a hint of what to expect when they open the book and begin to read the poetry within. A mixture of blues and greens a startling contrast to the vertical red line cutting the picture nearly in half, the yellow and orange lurking in the background wanting to be detected but remaining eclipsed. The poems, like the front cover, are a mixture of blues and greens conjuring up an image of nature struggling against a back drop of human waste and destruction, *SONNET BELOW HEAVEN* talks of 'bruised skys' (p.11), *POEM I* of a 'shrieking heaven' (p.13), *MESTIZO WALTZ* 'cleft finger of a tree' (p.26) and *SONG* simply states 'silent sky dying out' (p.82). Randomly juxtaposed are pockets of violence which erupt unexpectedly as in *ESSAYS*, 'bits with their brains bashed out of them who eat their trainers' (p.66), or in *A RONDEL OF WAR*:

          "your relatives dead on the floor
          a husband always hen-pecked?
          due to nuclear weapons we could never detect
          more of it in likely buckets behind a closed
                    door
                              blood"(p.86).

In spite of these sombre images the tempo of Jane's work does not lead one into misery or self-pity but like the yellow and orange on the front cover, rays of hope peek through the veiled fog of decay. Jane takes an almost humorous look at happiness in *THEORETICAL CONCERNS* and finishes the poem with, "in the poem I yet imagine writing, beautifying all humankind" (p.104).

In an interview with Joanne G Yoshida for *Yomimono* (2010), Jane says that unlike her previous book *The Meditations*, which is mostly free verse, she wanted to write more poems in form. The result is *incidental music*, which is a blend of free verse and traditional western forms of poetry such as the sonnet, the *pantoum, cinquain*, and the *villanelle* and Japanese forms of *senryu, haiku*, and *waka* poetry. The traditional forms of the poems powerfully contrast with the contemporary style they are written in; take for example *RONDEAU* and its almost sea shanty ditty like rhythm which makes you want to sing it rather than speak it and yet the words are very much in the present:

> "abstract void is rather shitty
> most discerning forms of pity
> now a generation of me
> a bleakness of" (p.40).

The free verse in the book such as MESTIZO WALTZ and ESSAYS, can leave the reader feeling overwhelmed and lost at times, almost as if one is falling through the spaces between the words rather than connecting with them. Rather than this being a criticism, I believe this is a reflection of the poet's voice, as the feeling of falling, being lost and overwhelmed imbues the poetry throughout. For example, a recurring theme throughout the book is encapsulated in the words from *SONNET I*:

> "To ease up from the womb like a
> Border of white canes you
> Can't pass
>
> Yet
> Falling through" (p.12)

Finally, my favourite poem in this collection is entitled *EULOGY* and although shorter than most of the free and formal poems in the book, I think it succinctly combines many of the themes the other poems represent, there is laughter (albeit dead laughter), there is despair, decay, violence and yet there is hope:

> "I heard a part of her survived. *Which part of her survived?*
> I heard the dead were laughing. *What were they laughing*
> *about?* I couldn't listen anymore. My throat closed. I
> stopped speaking. Food too became a distant memory.
> *Which part of me will die first?* I would like to give you
> just a finger, not my whole hand. In my hand a whole
> World sits. *Whose world was that? Why did it not stand?*
> *Was it really my finger?"* (p.17)

What attracted me to this poem were the constant contradictions between the two voices. The whole world sits in a hand but whose world and why shouldn't it stand? These are the

kind of questions children would ask. Innocence seems to be broken but whose innocence and which part survived? The questions voiced in the poem lead to a number of questions in one's own head which makes the reading of this poem exciting and invigorating.

For anyone interested in poetry *incidental music* is well worth investing in and I look forward to reading Jane's forthcoming book later this year entitled *notational* published by the Australian poetry publisher Otoliths (http://the-otolith.blogspot.com/). *notational* has been described by Trane DeVore as "timely, intelligent and beautiful."