

A Tale of Two Trilingual Princes: Exploring the Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Non-Japanese University Students

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Abstract: Non-Japanese trilingual students who grew up in Japan and are studying full-time at Japanese universities represent a linguistically privileged yet socially marginalized sliver of the EFL student population in Japan. Although English has been criticized as a weapon used by western imperialists to colonize and subjugate non-western peoples, in this particular sociolinguistic ecological context it is used to empower the marginalized. As an additive agent in self-identity development, this case study argues that English can aid EFL learners in battling linguistic imperialism by equipping them with a powerful voice that can be heard by a more inclusive global audience beyond local, monolingual borders. The investigation explores the cross-cultural perceptions of this extraordinary group as well as the implications for TESOL advocates of social justice, multicultural diversity education, and World Englishes, and how these intertwine and weave conceptions of EFL literacy and learner identity.

Keywords: Multicultural education, English as an International Language, World Englishes

要約

日本で育ち日本の大学に通っている多言語話者である非日本人学生は、言語の上ではある種の特権を有しているようにみられるが、日本において外国語として英語を学ぶ学生（EFL: English as a Foreign Language）の数の多さからすると社会的には軽んじられているのが実情である。英語は西洋の帝国主義者たちが非西洋の人々を植民地化し服従させる一つの武器であるとして批判されてきたが、前述の文脈における軽んじられている学生たちに対しては力を与えるものといえる。この論文においては、英語を外国語として学ぶ者に対して英語がなしうことを示すが、それはある地域や単一言語の領域を超えてより多くの人々に届く力強い声により言語帝国主義に抗うことを意味する。この研究では、TESOL (Teaching English to speakers of other language: 他言語話者に英語を教えること) が唱えている社会正義や文化の多様性教育や World Englishes に言及するだけでなく、英語を外国語として学ぶ者の異文化理解についても触れている。そしてこれらがどのように英語を外国語として学ぶ者の読み書き能力やアイデンティティという概念を作り上げているのかについても検討する。

キーワード: 多文化教育、共通語としての英語、世界的な英語

Introduction

It has been said that intellectual honesty often requires biting the hand that feeds it. Whether done willfully or reluctantly, for TESOL professionals aware of the powerful influence the English language asserts upon its users and non-users worldwide, the quest for an intellectually honest discourse surrounding its proliferation and usage must be addressed in an ethical, transparent manner. As Japanese universities internationalize to compete for government funding and climb the world

rankings ladder (see “Universities get yen for ranking,” 2014), English becomes an even more valuable commodity. The following counter-stories of two non-Japanese, trilingual males studying as full-time university students in Japan provide insight into the cross-cultural perceptions of an emerging group of linguistically privileged yet socially marginalized individuals. It is hoped that the issues unearthed in this case study will motivate university administrators, instructors, and students to engage in meaningful dialogue about the impact historical, sociolinguistic, and cultural forces have had and continue to exert upon non-Japanese students in Japan.

Literature Review

On Being Pure Japanese

The widely held view by many Japanese people of what it means to be pure Japanese is that an individual has Japanese nationality under the law, has Japanese blood lineage, and has internalized Japanese culture (Fukuoka, 2000). This refers to people who are native speakers of Japanese, who hold Japanese citizenship, who adhere to Japanese cultural behaviors, and whose ancestors were Japanese (Hammond, 2006). According to the 2010 census, the population of foreign residents in Japan stood at 1.28% of Japan’s total population of approximately 128 million people (Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan, 2011). Ethnic minority groups in Japan include the indigenous Ainu of Hokkaido (Uchida et al., 1994), the Uchinanchu people of the former Ryukyu Kingdom of Okinawa (Keyso, 2000), the ethnic Korean population in Japan (Hirasawa, 1991), the Chinese communities of Japan (Maher, 1995), and recent South American immigrants of Japanese descent (Hirataka et al., 2001). Lie (2001) concludes that these minority populations in Japan are very difficult to account for because neither governmental nor sociological surveys incorporate ethnic diversity. Moreover, minority groups such as ethnic Koreans may try to blend in as mainstream Japanese to avoid discrimination (Hicks, 1997).

Although several minority populations exist in Japan, a lingering attitude prevails that Japan is a country of one culture, one language, one race, and one ethnicity (Uchida et al., 1994) with no significant problems facing minorities (Fukuoka, 2000). Summarizing the work of various scholars, Noguchi (2001) notes that this rigid, monolithic image of one Japan was concocted by the emperor of the Meiji period (1868-1912) in an effort to standardize Japanese education and language with the aim of raising national pride in the face of more technologically advanced western nations. In conjunction with the creation myth of the Japanese as an elite race of people descended from Shinto gods, this nationalism was bred to unite the Japanese people and justify their racial and cultural superiority (Noguchi, 2001). The homogeneity construct also helped to further justify the assimilation of all other ethnic groups by stripping them of their languages and cultures until their very histories and identities were overwritten (Noguchi, 2001).

Internationalization in Japan

The Japanese term *kokusaika* (internationalization) was coined in the 1980s and refers to westernization or Americanization with a focus on learning English while championing Japanese culture (Schneer, 2007). To many Japanese people, speaking English is synonymous with being an internationally-minded, middle-class citizen (Kubota, 2002). However, in a study of the effect of globalization upon the local linguistic ecology of a rural Japanese community, Kubota (2009) debunks the myth that English is the lingua franca of choice in most international contexts. She also discovered that some Japanese participants felt that dealing with non-westerners in Japan was a superficial, unnecessary form of *kokusaika* that did not contribute to true internationalization (Kubota, 2009). Unlike native English-speakers, uninvited foreigners (e.g., non-English speaking migrant workers) are expected to assimilate into monolingual Japanese society, suggesting that many Japanese people therefore value an exclusive bilingualism involving fluency in Japanese and English, but not other languages (Kubota, 2009).

Despite their perceived superiority, many Japanese have a deep admiration for western countries, in particular North America and Europe (Lie, 2001). Hammond (2006) reports hearing Japanese people say they have a racial inferiority complex to Caucasians but not to other foreigners. In the Japanese media, the fair-skinned Caucasian with blonde hair and blue eyes is the stereotypical symbol of Japanese internationalization (Simon-Maeda, 2004), and whites are overwhelmingly featured in TV commercials endorsing Japanese products (Nakanishi, 2002). Kubota (1998, 2002) argues that Japanese students have been subconsciously influenced by the social, cultural, and historical backdrops that reflect symbolic colonialism and the superiority of English, whiteness, and British or Anglo-American culture. In a study of Japanese university students, Chiba, Matsuura, and Yamamoto (1995) discovered that positive descriptors such as friendly, elegant, and skilled were used more often for white speakers from the United Kingdom and the United States than for non-white English speakers from countries such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Japan.

Racism and Multicultural Education in TESOL

Race and racism are controversial topics that inevitably surface in the worldwide practice of teaching English. Hammond (2006) defines racism as a construct that perpetuates unequal relations of power through inferiorization, a process in which the other is rendered inferior to the self. Scheurich (1997) identifies epistemological racism as based on the knowledge and practices that privilege white European modernist civilization. The world's most influential philosophers, social scientists, and educators have been predominantly white males, and the world epistemologies that influence the ways in which we think, analyze, socialize, and educate have been largely developed within this racial and cultural framework (Scheurich, 1997). Epistemological racism is ingrained in North American textbooks and affects a spectrum of academic disciplines ranging from biology to history to English,

constructing and perpetuating the racial stereotypes and white hegemony stemming from western imperialism (Willinsky, 1998).

Institutionalized racism has particular significance for TESOL's role in the global spread of English when constructing the norm with regard to what is legitimate linguistic and cultural knowledge (Matsuda, 2002). Kubota (2006) argues that institutional or structural racism is ubiquitous and shapes social relations, practices, and institutional structures in which ideas of equal rights, universalism, humanism, and democracy were not necessarily extended to non-favored groups (Kubota & Lin, 2006). Holliday & Aboshiha (2009) identify the contradictions within the contemporary European dilemma of an imagined creed of universalism, equal treatment, and humanism that nevertheless segregates humanity into a hierarchy of races and cultures. Collins (1998) censures the hypocritical paradox of white descendants of colonizers who publicly claim to be advocates for the marginalized through an outward promotion of equality, yet justify their own privileged status in the racial hierarchy. Lin (2004) argues that whiteness exerts its power as an invisible and unmarked norm against which all others are racially and culturally defined, labeled, and made inferior. A familiar example of institutionalized racism in TESOL is the worldwide practice of hiring predominantly white English teachers. Racial stereotypes that reinforce the superiority of white native English speakers may also prevent L2 learners from communicating with others in foreign languages other than English (Chiba, Matsuura & Yamamoto, 1995).

Multiculturalism is a set of beliefs through which education, the media, government policy and other institutions deal with an influx of people from different nations and cultural backgrounds (Holliday & Aboshiha, 2009). Kubota (2004) characterizes normative multiculturalist education as a non-offensive, egalitarian approach that glosses over the real issue of white privilege by focusing on superficial differences among diverse cultures and peoples and perpetuating familiar stereotypes of the exotic and romanticized other. Kumaravadivelu (2007) condemns normative multiculturalism for its patronizing oversimplification of complex identities through its superficial focus on food, clothing, festivals, and ceremonies. A familiar illustration would be western tourists who view the non-western world as a place to experience and collect culture as an exotic commodity (Jordan & Weedon, 1995). Spears (1999) exposes the normative approach to multiculturalism as neoracist due to its rationalization of the oppressive hierarchies that blame the lower achievement of minority groups on dysfunctional attitudes, values, and orientations that do not measure up to the white norm. Moreover, the normative approach focuses primarily on blatant forms of racism, thus allowing favored groups to deny harboring any racist attitudes and to evade responsibility for eradicating social injustice (van Dijk, 1993).

At the other end of the spectrum, Hammond (2006) defines critical multicultural education as an approach that promotes social justice and equality through an intense scrutiny of the power and politics that dominate and maintain subordination in various dimensions of local and global society. Teachers

and students are challenged to identify and analyze the hidden, biased discourses that mold the social structures and worldviews that privilege dominant white American and European cultures and deeply imbue the fabric of English curricula and instruction (Hammond, 2006). A familiar example within America's diverse population is affirmative action, pitting members of the privileged white middle-class majority who may condemn it as an unfair policy versus their minority counterparts who may view it as a step forward in rectifying the racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic inequalities in the United States.

World Englishes and English as an International Language

Kachru (1985) identifies the use of English worldwide in terms of the inner-circle variety used by native speakers from Anglophone countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland; the outer-circle of former British colonies scattered throughout Asia and Africa (e.g., India, Nigeria); and the expanding-circle of other countries in which English is learned as a foreign language (e.g., Japan, Brazil). The English language has splintered into countless regional varieties, and although American or British English still dominate as pure or authentic norm-providers for English usage worldwide (Matsuda, 2002), their grip has weakened as countries of the outer-circle have diverged linguistically (Kachru, 2005).

Fairclough (2006) defines globalization as the international system of networks and interconnections, including the flow of people, goods, money, intergovernmental networks, and discourses. In contrast, globalism is the process by which the United States and its allies seek to extend their power across the globe through the imposition of neoliberal market economics, whether through hard power (i.e., military intervention in the affairs of sovereign states) or soft power (i.e., language, cultural or religious practices) (Fairclough, 2006). The teaching of English in the globalization discourse is inextricably linked to its worldwide spread; its changes in forms, functions, and users; the politics associated with the language; its coexistence with indigenous languages; its use as the medium of education or language of law; and its function in international communication (Phillipson, 1992). In South Korea, Shin (2006) contends that English is commonly constructed as the international language of an elite global community of educated, privileged citizens from the United States and other wealthy inner-circle countries. The association between English speakers and transnational educated elite stems from the worldwide belief that a mastery of English enables one to work in international contexts (Shin, 2006). In Japan, English is similarly viewed as a gateway to parts of the world that would otherwise not be accessible to most Japanese people (Matsuda, 2002).

The teaching of English as an International Language (EIL) versus the dominant inner-circle model transpires an inevitable debate about the way English is portrayed, perceived, and taught in countries where it is neither an official language nor the native language of the majority. Kubota (1998) points out that TESOL in Japan has centered on inner-circle forms of English and promulgated western

perspectives at the expense of other global sociolinguistic viewpoints. Matsuda (2002) discovered that nearly all of the introductory textbooks approved by the Japanese Ministry of Education were based exclusively on American or British English with hardly any representations of English speakers from the outer- or expanding-circles. Matsuda (2003) argues that the Anglocentric view of English is prevalent among Japanese students, and English teaching in Japan is a raced practice with preference for white native speakers as teachers. Simon-Maeda (2004) points out how native English speaking teachers from western countries are revered by the Japanese as “sacred dispensers of standard English” (p. 422) “entrusted with teaching subject matter of considerable sociopolitical value” (p. 419). Pennycook (2007), however, questions the assumption of native-speaker authority that underlies teaching inner-circle varieties of English, which relegates speakers from other circles to an inferior position and undermines their ability to empower themselves with English.

The inner-circle-based curriculum has also been criticized for its failure to critically examine the history and politics of the English language worldwide. Phillipson (1992) warns of the devastating effects of Linguistic Imperialism, which takes place when English supplants other languages, resulting in users of English accumulating linguistic capital while non-English users are dispossessed of their languages and their territories. Phillipson (2009) argues that exercising the choice of whether one should learn English or not is a luxury that the world's underprivileged do not enjoy. Rubagumya (2004) bleakly articulates the African perspective, in which the neoliberal capitalist market has replaced imperial armies in the new global village run by a few almighty chiefs who reign economically and militarily over masses of powerless villagers, giving false hopes that everyone can have equal access to English. Moreover, a lack of awareness of the potential power struggles associated with English learning and usage may cause learners to internalize a colonialistic view of the world (Pennycook, 1998) and devalue their own status in international communication due to their irreversible, peripheral position (Phillipson, 1992). Pennycook (2007) further criticizes the World English model for its unquestioning deference to the inner-circle as the norm-providing default position, rendering non-standard varieties of English illegitimate or useless. International understanding is often emphasized as an essential element of English language teaching, yet the symbolic colonialism behind English teaching coupled with the perceived illegitimacy of World Englishes may prevent EFL learners from fully affirming linguistic and cultural diversity (Kubota & McKay, 2009).

In contrast, an EIL-based curriculum is designed to address the colonial past, the postcolonial present, and the power inequality associated with its history (Phillipson, 1992). Morgan (1998) contends that language is used to put people in their place, and people use language to change where they have been placed. As the foreign wave continues to spread across Japan and more Japanese people experience living abroad (Noguchi, 2001), ethnic minorities in Japan have become increasingly vocal (Mannan & Befu, 1991). Kubota (1998) adds that a critical awareness of the power of English along with communicative skills in English can enable marginalized individuals to

transform their psychological biases through using “English as a weapon for social transformation” (p. 304). Simon-Maeda (2004) shares the example of a 2nd generation Korean-Japanese EFL teacher who studied abroad in the United States in order to become fluent in English as a way to fight Japanese discrimination by mastering the language of the people whom the Japanese admire.

Methodology

Data Collection

To gain insight into the cross-cultural perceptions of non-Japanese trilingual students who grew up in Japan and are studying as full-time students at Japanese universities, the interviewer used the method of counter-storytelling (Delgado, 2000). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define the counter-story as a method of telling the stories of people (e.g., minorities) who may be suffering from marginalization, whose voices are seldom heard and experiences not often shared. It is also a tool for analyzing, challenging, and exposing hidden forms of racism in everyday interactions with those who are racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically privileged (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Simon-Maeda (2004) suggests that storytelling analysis has been used to observe how speakers use narratives to display a particular version of self and to understand their everyday worlds. Ochs and Capps (2001) identify storytelling not only as a social exchange in which interlocutors build an account of life events but also as a tool for collaboratively reflecting upon specific situations and their place in the life histories of the storytellers.

Phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 2006) was the method used for acquiring the counter-stories for this investigation. This method examines the life history of participants with the goal of having them reconstruct and re-examine their experiences in the context of their lives in order to acquire meaning. A total of 27 interview questions were arranged into three categories: life history, contemporary experience, and reflection on meaning. The interview questions were phrased intentionally in an open-ended fashion in order to safeguard the researcher from inadvertently biasing the participants' responses (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

Due to space limitations, the two most compelling counter-stories will be explored for the purposes of this investigation. The participants agreed to volunteer for the study after informed consent was obtained and it was clearly understood that pseudonyms would be used to protect their identities. Because the interviewer understood that the interview process could lead participants to divulge information they may later regret having shared (Kirsch, 1999), they were informed explicitly, both verbally and in writing, that they may choose not to answer any question or even discontinue the interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable or uneasy (see Appendix). By mutual consent, the investigator also agreed not to record the interview but instead took notes for later transcription. This was done to ensure the safest, most confidential environment possible for the participants to openly

share their cross-cultural experiences and their views on language learning without the fear of being gossiped about or judged. The interviews were conducted entirely in English in the privacy of the researcher's office during regular university hours. The participants were informed in advance that the interview would last approximately 45 minutes. However, once the interviews began, each participant got into such a verbal flow that each interview was extended to approximately two hours apiece.

Target Population

Mike and Rob (pseudonyms) are freshmen attending a private, co-educational Japanese university located in one of western Japan's largest metropolitan areas. As Asian males, they blend in phenotypically with their Japanese peers but are among a hidden handful of trilingual, transnational students on campus. Unlike the typical international student who was born and raised in a foreign country and is studying Japanese as a foreign language at a Japanese university for a semester or a year, Mike and Rob are both classified as regular full-time students at the university. They became friends after meeting at an international conversation club where students can play English games and practice conversation with native English-speaking staff and other students. Both Mike and Rob identify English as their third language along with Japanese (their second language) and their respective heritage languages (Mandarin Chinese and Tagalog Filipino, respectively). Although their childhood experiences growing up in Japan bear striking similarities, the individual coping strategies they devised to resolve cross-cultural conflict provide a valuable lens for examining the perceptions of this intriguing group of non-traditional students emerging across Japanese university campuses.

Mike (Age 20, Chinese)

Mike is a first-year student from Shanghai, the most populous metropolitan city in the PRC (People's Republic of China), who first came to Japan as an 11-year old 6th grader. Tall and bearded, upon meeting him for the first time he seems much older than many of his undergraduate peers. When asked about how he first came to Japan, he recounts the story of how his father, a former chef at a four-star hotel restaurant in China, had brought his family over to Japan a year after he had relocated to start his own Chinese restaurant. Mike's father had decided to follow in the footsteps of a family friend who had come to Japan five years earlier and successfully managed to start her own business.

When asked about his childhood experiences growing up in China before he had come to Japan, Mike recalls a life of hardship as a student at a highly-competitive elementary school that was under the auspices of a prestigious university. He shares about the corporal punishment he had to endure from teachers who would hit him on the shoulder with a steel rod if he did not finish his assigned homework, which was always too much for any student to possibly complete. He recalls taking tests every weekend and having to write reports of 1,000 kanji (Chinese characters) as a primary school 5th-grader. He also describes in vivid detail the brutal one-hour commute to and from school every

day on an overcrowded bus with no air-conditioning that was so unbearably packed that he sometimes had to enter through a window and sit or stand wherever he could find room. These hardships led his parents, whom Mike describes as non-traditional by Chinese standards, to move to Japan in search of better opportunities for their family. In addition, he describes how the government had suppressed and banned nearly all local regional languages from Chinese public schools, including his family's native Shanghaiese, in favor of standard Beijing Mandarin, the lingua franca of the PRC.

Mike begins to open up candidly about the difficulties he faced as a 6th grader from China in his first year of elementary school in Japan, especially his struggles to acquire Japanese, a language he had never studied prior to his arrival. He remembers the initial kindness shown by his teacher and some of his classmates who helped him to learn Japanese. After some obvious hesitation, he describes in chilling detail his first incident with classmates who ganged up on him. It took place on an overnight excursion to a *rinkan gakko* ("school in the mountains") with his teachers and fellow classmates. He remembers oversleeping one morning, so in order to teach him a lesson, the other students kicked him mercilessly and locked him in the futon (mattress) closet. At another time during this field trip, while eating dried Chinese plums he spit the seeds out onto the grass, something he says is commonplace among kids in China. Unfortunately, this angered some of his classmates to the point where they began hitting him until he was left bloodied and unconscious. To add insult to injury, his teachers neither acknowledged the incidents nor punished the offenders. When asked why he did not tell his parents about what had happened to him on the excursion, he said he did not want them to worry about him because they were too busy running their new Chinese restaurant. This marked his initiation into the brutal world of the well-documented practice of Japanese bullying and harassment, which Mike had to endure on a daily basis until he reached junior high school. During this difficult period of his childhood, Mike confesses that he really missed China even though the harsh school life there was often unbearable.

Americans have a saying, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." After entering junior high school, Mike's Japanese improved dramatically and he used his newfound language skills to befriend the most powerful bully in the school. The head bully eventually accepted Mike into his gang of hoodlums who had found new targets (e.g., Korean students) to harass. While this may seem cowardly, it provided an emergency escape from the physical and mental torture Mike had to endure on a daily basis in elementary school the year before. Mike states that although the assimilation process in Japan eventually helped him to bury the nightmares from his past, he still feels taunted mentally whenever he hears Japanese people laughing in public. On a conscious level, he realizes that they are probably not laughing at him, but it still brings back the mental anguish and haunting memories of being ostracized and beaten up by his Japanese classmates, bullies who would mock him for being Chinese and therefore "like a child."

In spite of the hardships he once faced as a young Chinese boy attending a Japanese public

school, Mike has managed to master the Japanese language to such a degree that one of his Japanese professors once praised him as the best student writer of Japanese he has taught in over 20 years. Mike boasts proudly about his ability to write reports in perfect Japanese that are 3,000 to 4,000 kanji long. He also brags that he would edit and correct the writing of an older Japanese ex-girlfriend who was a Ph.D. candidate. Having mastered the local regional dialect, he says that most Japanese people have no clue that he is actually Chinese when they first meet him. He admits that it still bothers him whenever he hears Japanese students making derogatory comments about China or Chinese people, so due to negative stereotyping he usually does not reveal his Chinese identity to others until he gets to know them fairly well.

With regards to his university life and career goals, Mike is studying business administration with dreams of becoming a venture capitalist. Following graduation from high school, with the support of his parents he took a year off in search of a reason why he should invest the time and money needed to attend a Japanese university because he really did not enjoy studying. Although he had been rejected by some of the more prestigious universities he had applied to, he feels that he made the right choice to attend his current university. He praises his favorite business professor who happens to be very knowledgeable about China. This professor believes that Chinese students differ from Japanese students in their strong desire to become successful and “reach for the sky.” Mike agrees that based on this characterization he is still very much Chinese and does not care so much anymore about what others think of him. He has become more vocal especially in his seminar class and states his opinions freely, in contrast to many of his apathetic Japanese peers who never dare to share their own opinions in class and do not seem to care at all about what the professor has to say.

When asked about what he would change about the Japanese education system if he were the prime minister, he says he would make university classes smaller and campuses more international. He speaks highly of a progressive new university in Tokyo with a small student population of approximately 400 students, half of whom are from foreign countries, yet boasts an outstanding international department in which Japanese and international students are required to live together to foster intercultural cooperation. He considers this institution to be the ideal model for the 21st century Japanese university given the fact that 100% of its graduates attain full-time employment before they even graduate. He states, however, that he would still recommend studying at a conventional Japanese university to other Chinese students, that they may experience the “real Japan” while pursuing their education. After graduation, Mike hopes to work for a mid-sized company in order to gain the experience he will need to start his own company.

In terms of language learning, Mike understands that mistakes are a necessary component of learning any foreign language so he takes this approach towards learning English. His short-term goal is to improve his TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) score, while his long-term goal is to become a near-native speaker of English. He feels that these are realistic personal goals

especially after witnessing a German teacher's impressive explanation to his class in perfect Japanese. He feels that his Chinese identity gives him an advantage in learning English because he is unafraid of making mistakes, in stark contrast to his Japanese peers who are so worried about using proper grammar that it ultimately hinders them from improving their English conversation skills. Whenever he overhears Japanese students making derogatory comments about his Chinese accented English, he thinks that they are just jealous of the fact that he speaks English so well. However, he does know of a few Japanese students who can speak English better than he does, so he worries that if he does not continue to improve his speaking skills, younger students will surpass him as he approaches his senior year. He hopes to study abroad for a year at an American university where his goal is to take regular courses with American students, not ESL classes with other international students.

Mike is also insightful when it comes to identifying various cross-cultural phenomena, including the Japanese concept of *seishin nenrei*, which may be translated as "mental age." He says that many Japanese people look down on the Chinese and other Asians, considering them to be lower in mental age (i.e., immature). He also sees the paternalistic parallels between the Japanese family and the Japanese company. For instance, the president of a Japanese company is analogous to the father of a Japanese family in that he is the unquestioned leader and provider for everyone under his authority. He also believes the Japanese value privacy more than the Chinese do.

Mike now enjoys a carefree, happy life as a university student in Japan. He and his parents decided to legally change their Chinese names to Japanese after becoming naturalized Japanese citizens a few years ago. While he is proud of his new nationality and name, he still cannot erase the painful memories that stem from being a target of racial violence. When asked about the turbulent history between China and Japan, he states that while the image of Japan remains negative in most places around China, Chinese people from big cities like Shanghai do not hate the Japanese because they realize how important Japan is to both their local and national economies. On one hand, he despises the ubiquitous anti-Sinoism in Japanese society that is further fueled by negative coverage by the Japanese media. On the other hand, he patriotically supports the Japanese government on most political issues involving conflict with China. He blames the Chinese government for sensationalizing recent high-profile cases such as copyright violations, intellectual property infringement, the ongoing Senkaku Islands dispute, and the disturbing incident of a Chinese exchange student who was recently indicted in the murder of a Japanese company president who had allegedly bullied him. He says that the issue of identity is complicated to him because he desperately wishes to be recognized and treated as a bona fide Japanese citizen, yet will never be able to completely erase his Chinese past. Despite his ongoing identity crisis as a Chinese student studying at a Japanese university, he feels his Chinese identity getting stronger and feels compelled to mentor his Chinese *kohai* (younger classmates) to express themselves more "aggressively."

Rob (Age 19, Filipino)

Rob is a first-year student who was born in Manila, the capital of the Philippines. Tall and athletic with a slicked-back hairstyle reminiscent of James Dean, he strides into the office sporting his Beats© by Dr. Dre headphones. He projects an assured self-confidence not commonly seen among his Japanese peers. When Rob was still a 2-year old toddler, his father brought his family to Japan after accepting a position as a government ambassador of the Philippines. After a few years of living in Japan, Rob and his mother ventured to the United States to live with relatives in Los Angeles where he attended kindergarten. Rob is fondly reminiscent of his early childhood in the United States when he and his family got to travel to many of America's most famous cities including Las Vegas, Detroit, and New York City. He describes the United States as a "dream country." His father then decided to bring the family back to Japan when Rob was seven years old and they have been living in Japan ever since. Rob says his parents like Japan because it is much safer than the Philippines.

At the beginning of the interview, when asked about his childhood growing up in Japan, Rob initially states that he likes Japan and has never felt any type of culture shock even after his family moved back to Japan when he was a young boy. However, towards the very end of the interview Rob reluctantly confesses that he too was bullied in the 1st grade when he first entered his new Japanese elementary school. He remembers how he was labeled *gaijin* ("foreigner" in Japanese) by his classmates and excluded from participating in team sports such as baseball. On one occasion, he punched and knocked out a bigger Japanese boy who had picked a fight with him. The boy then ran home and reported the incident to his mother. Infuriated, the mother of the boy confronted Rob after school the next day and forced him to apologize to her son in the presence of their Japanese homeroom teacher. Rob adamantly refused and told the teacher that the other boy had instigated the fight. The mother insisted that her well-mannered son "is not like that" and would never start a fight with anyone. After listening to both sides of the argument, the teacher eventually sided with the hostile mother who maintained her son's innocence. Rob's refusal to back down to these false accusations led other bullies at school to take turns ganging up on him until they too eventually got beaten up. By the time he had reached the 2nd grade, Rob had developed a reputation as a "wild boy" by gaining the begrudging respect of his classmates who learned to leave him alone or suffer the consequences.

After attending this local Japanese elementary school until grade 6, Rob's parents decided to enroll him in an international school where he attended both junior and senior high school. He estimates that approximately 90% of his international school classmates were either Japanese *kikokushijo* ("returnees" who had lived abroad and then returned to Japan) or *sekiryugakusei* (international students of other nationalities including Chinese, Korean, German, Peruvian, Mexican, and American). He states that although Tagalog (the national language of the Philippines) is his mother tongue, he has now attained greater fluency in both Japanese and English. He also feels fortunate that he was able to grow up in a large cosmopolitan city that boasts one of Japan's most diverse foreign

populations. Like many of his peers, he also loves music and dancing, and is able to enjoy these activities at his local church.

While Rob insists he can speak Japanese as well as many of his Japanese peers, upon meeting him for the first time he admits that most Japanese people can automatically sense he is not Japanese because of his distinct facial features and darker complexion. He states that he is proud of this fact and it makes him feel good to be recognized as non-Japanese. In describing the Japanese people, Rob says that they are too shy and “negative” compared to most Filipinos or Americans. He declares his allegiance to his native country and says that every day he misses the friendly people of the Philippines, especially his grandmother. He says that Filipino people tend to smile a lot more than Japanese people who always seem to look tired.

In discussing his life as a full-time student at a Japanese university, he admits that he is attending a Japanese university mainly because his mother felt that his English was “not good enough” to attend a university in the Philippines or the United States. He is studying information technology at his current university because he likes computers and feels that these skills are vital for thriving in the digital era. However, his true passion is graphic design because as a child he would enjoy drawing t-shirt designs. While he appreciates the fact that Japanese university students have a lot of free time, he disdains those who cut class because of the belief passed on from his parents that a student attends university in order to study, not to “goof off.” He categorizes his younger cousin, who is half-Japanese and half-Filipino, as a perfect example of the notoriously lazy Japanese college student who rarely attends class because the system tacitly allows him to pass anyway. However, he does mention finding a few new friends on campus, including Mike, who have “original” personalities and serious dreams for the future, unlike the majority of “cookie-cutter” Japanese students. Although he sometimes feels lonely because he does not quite “match” or fit-in with most of his Japanese peers at his university, in his free time he gets to hang out with his international friends from high school who now attend some of the most prestigious universities in western Japan and have non-traditional part-time jobs as chefs, dancers, etc. It is clear from his narrative that Rob highly values originality and American-style individuality, especially when it comes to making friends. Although his current university situation is less than ideal, he does not care what other students think of him, which affords him the personal time he needs to pursue his other interests.

When asked about his relationship with his professors, Rob exclaims that he has a great relationship with his foreign teachers but acknowledges that his Japanese professors treat him a bit differently perhaps because they know he is not Japanese. He enjoys the English class of one foreign teacher in particular who allows Rob to use his graphic design talent to design English posters using ©Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. He also likes the fact that this class has two other students with “original” personalities who ask a lot of questions, unlike the other Japanese students who do not contribute at all to class discussions. Overall, he absolutely prefers taking classes from

foreign instructors because his Japanese professors are “crazy boring.” In fact, he would love to take English classes at least four times a week, but because of his major, the university does not allow him to deviate from its pre-determined curriculum. He admits that while his English is obviously better than most of his Japanese peers at the university, he is nowhere near the level of his Japanese returnee friends who easily score in the 900 range on the TOEIC. Because most of his close friends are exceptionally proficient in English as well as the fact that he has Filipino-American relatives, he is accustomed to listening to American English and engaging in conversation with native English speakers. With regards to technology usage, he feels completely comfortable using his computer and smartphone entirely in English. His dream is to study both English and graphic design in either Los Angeles or New York City where he can bask in the avant-garde music, art, and entertainment scene. With his mother’s blessing, he hopes to study abroad in the United States within the next two years.

As for the historical relationship between the Philippines and Japan, Rob recalls his father telling him stories about how the Filipino people had suffered immensely at the hands of the Japanese Imperial Army, which had attacked and occupied their country during World War II. In contemporary times, though, Rob believes that the political relationship between the two countries has stabilized although it remains basically neutral, neither good nor bad. Moreover, he believes that most people in the Philippines are better off than they were 7 to 10 years ago thanks to the efforts of President Aquino who has really helped those suffering from poverty in the slums. He claims that many of the public streets in the Philippines are now even cleaner than those in Japan. He jokes that although he is a big fan of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, who developed his legendary pugilist skills in the dangerous slums of Manila, he does not think the boxer would make a very good president.

In terms of cross-cultural exchange, Rob says that he would probably not advise Filipino students to study at a Japanese university. On one hand, the universities in the Philippines are much harder academically and stricter attendance-wise than the stereotypically lenient university in Japan, and therefore, expectations may differ. His parents warned him that if university students ever miss a class in the Philippines they are automatically kicked out. On the other hand, he says that studying English in the Philippines could be beneficial to Japanese students because it is much cheaper than studying abroad in America or other more affluent western countries where English is spoken. In addition to solid English language programs, the Philippines offers fun activities for students outside of class such as scuba diving or relaxing at its many beautiful beaches. At the conclusion of the interview, Rob uses the term “destiny” to describe what it means to be a Filipino student studying full-time at a Japanese university since he grew up in Japan and is fluent in Japanese. Although he sometimes wonders if he might have been happier pursuing his education in the Philippines or in the United States, he accepts the fact that it was a decision that his parents felt would be best suited for their son in order to protect him from the dangers ever present in their native land.

Discussion

Patterns of Marginalization

Although space limitations prevent delving too deeply into any single facet of the participants' counter-stories, prevalent themes were unearthed that centered on being marginalized as outsiders by Japanese society. Suchet (2004) identifies several coping strategies used by members of non-favored groups such as feeling a sense of bonding with the favored group, trying to fit in with the favored group, or offering resistance. During each interview, a clear pattern of participants pinpointing a specific juncture or sequence of events in their early years marked a turning point in their self-identity development. Furthermore, although their childhood experiences of being labeled as *gaijin* (foreigners) may occasionally surface to haunt them on a psychological level, they were able to transform these narratives of struggle into stories of empowerment. Each used different (albeit questionable) survival tactics to deal with cross-cultural conflicts such as bullying and harassment. Furthermore, the initial reluctance on the part of both participants to admit that they were bullied in elementary school may be attributed to the universal cultural conditioning that prevents most boys from admitting any type of weakness, vulnerability, or victimization.

On the surface, both Mike and Rob seem to have a lot in common. For instance, both were born in developing Asian countries, but had to move to Japan as elementary school children. Both had attended local Japanese public schools where they were among a handful of minority children immersed in a native Japanese-speaking environment. In Rob's case, after attending a Japanese elementary school, his parents enrolled him in an international secondary school with many *kikokushijo* (returnees) who had spent significant time in foreign countries. Given their backgrounds, both could be categorized as first-generation L2 speakers of Japanese since neither was born in Japan nor raised by native Japanese-speaking parents. Furthermore, neither could claim any Japanese heritage, ancestry or blood lineage. In spite of these barriers, both managed to maintain their respective heritage languages learned through their parents at home.

For Mike, his accelerated acquisition of Japanese may have been involuntary, but this forced him to develop the diplomacy skills he needed to avert racial violence, even if it meant acquiescing to and eventually joining forces with the very gang of bullies who once preyed upon him. In other words, although it might seem cowardly on the surface, he did what he had to do in order to survive in this hostile environment, which his Japanese teachers ignored and his parents were blissfully unaware of. Although he still struggles with feelings of inferiority and the deep-rooted fear of being ridiculed for being Chinese, Mike feels a responsibility to mentor younger Chinese students who may be struggling with similar issues of being bullied or ostracized by Japanese classmates. As a former Chinese national who recently attained Japanese citizenship, Mike tries to view the political and historical conflicts between his native country and his adoptive country as objectively as possible through a dialectic lens

that critically examines each perspective.

In contrast, Rob refused to back down to bullies from an early age, and while his defiance may have cost him superficial friendships at school and alienated him from his Japanese classmates, these experiences molded and solidified his identity as a proud Filipino national. He is self-assured, fully aware of who he is and where he comes from, and relishes his role as a non-conformist and critic of Japanese society. It is obvious from his counter-story that Rob has internalized very little of Japanese culture into his self-identity, or arguably none at all. He seems to view Japan as a stepping stone to a brighter future in either the United States or the Philippines.

Bilingualism and Self-Identity Development

Festinger's (1957) Theory of Cognitive Dissonance states that contradictory attitudes and behaviors in learners experiencing identity changes must be resolved in one way or another. Gao (2007) defines self-identity as how learners perceive themselves in light of their values, abilities, communication style, and worthiness to belong to a particular linguistic and cultural group. It remains unclear whether Mike and Rob were able to fully grasp how exceptional they are as trilingual university students in predominantly monolingual Japan. Both Mike and Rob identify English as their third language, yet the researcher had never observed any noticeable signs of uneasiness or discomfort during their numerous interactions with native-English speakers at the international conversation club where they met. Being trilingual not only indicates oral proficiency in three languages, but the ability to think, develop multiple perspectives, and compare and contrast thought processes across three languages (Nero, 2006). Furthermore, empirical studies by Baker (1993) and others reveal that bilingual children may develop cognitive advantages such as divergent thinking and metalinguistic awareness over their monolingual peers. At times, like most EFL learners they struggled to come up with the right word or phrase to accurately articulate their opinions in English during the interview, yet both managed to communicate effectively and fluently to the interviewer in their third language. In spite of having to endure painful childhood experiences as minority language users in Japan, both Mike and Rob were able to devise strategies to combat oppressive sociocultural forces, while constructing and reinventing their self-identities as non-Japanese students.

Norton (2000) contends that cultural identity plays a critical role in second language acquisition and whether bilingualism is perceived as additive or subtractive. Baker (1993) defines additive or productive bilingualism as when a second language and culture are acquired with little or no pressure to replace or reduce the first language. Brown (2007) adds that additive bilingualism usually occurs where the native language is held in prestige by a community or society, as in the case of native French Canadian speakers learning English in Quebec. On the other end of the stick, subtractive bilingualism occurs when a native language is considered non-essential or detrimental to the learning of a dominant second language (Brown, 2007), as evidenced by the prejudice faced by the masses of

“Spanglish” speakers in the United States. Although bilingualism is often outwardly valued among the mainstream middle and upper classes, Shin (2005) points out that children from immigrant families are expected to assimilate as quickly as possible into monolingual English-speaking America, and the resulting social, educational, and economic pressures have caused immigrant children to lose their L1 capabilities at a faster pace than in previous generations. Even among nations of the European Union, where English is successfully learned as a foreign language, the languages of immigrants are often seen as problems that need to be dealt with rather than resources (Phillipson, 2009).

What then, might be the reason for Mike and Rob’s remarkable English proficiency that has propelled them into the elite realm of the trilingual given the fact that neither grew up with native English-speaking parents nor had learned English much differently from other Japanese students? Obviously, in Rob’s case his parents were educated in the Philippines, a former U.S. Territory, and therefore probably understood the value of English, moreso than most stereotypical Japanese parents who can barely speak English. This was evidenced by their decision to send Rob to an international school in order to improve his English. Although Rob never mentioned it explicitly during the course of the interview, it is likely that his parents raised him in a bilingual environment in which both English and their native Tagalog (standard Filipino) was used at home. Furthermore, although Rob had only spent a year in the United States as a kindergartener, this early childhood experience clearly had a positive impact upon his propensity and motivation to acquire English later in life even within the confines of predominantly monolingual Japan.

In Mike’s case, he acknowledges the fact that although he is completely fluent in Japanese and has recently acquired Japanese citizenship, he will never be classified as Japanese by most Japanese people because of his Chinese ancestry. However, he does not feel hindered or shackled by rigid Japanese social norms either, and exercises the freedom to use English to speak up in class and articulate his opinions. He is very critical of Japanese teachers who tacitly permit a passive learning style through boring lectures and discourage students from voicing dissenting opinions in class because it may be offensive to others. As he becomes more secure in his identity as a Chinese student who grew up in Japan, he begins to care less about being the proverbial nail that sticks out and gets hammered down in a society that values conformity and superficial harmony to such an extreme. He credits his rigorous primary school training in Shanghai for shaping his pragmatic educational philosophy. In contrast to his native country, which has infamously suppressed the heritage languages and cultures of its indigenous minority groups such as the Tibetans (Upton, 1999) and the Uyghurs (Bastid-Bruguere, 2001), Mike has successfully managed to maintain his heritage language in Japan. Furthermore, although English has been accused of further exacerbating the educational inequality of China’s indigenous minority groups who already face significant disadvantages in literacy development (Lamontagne, 1999), Mike has managed to thrive academically within the Japanese university system and to develop additive proficiency in both Japanese and English.

What also differentiates non-Japanese EFL learners like Mike and Rob from their Japanese peers is their attitude towards ownership of English (Matsuda, 2003). At the onset of the interview, both proudly proclaimed that they speak English as their third language and that they are studying hard in hopes of attaining greater fluency in English. They also feel comfortable adopting English nicknames, a relatively uncommon practice even among their Japanese peers who speak English well. Mike and Rob, moreover, use English as a communicative tool to combat Japanese supremacy through open criticism of the hegemonic forces that forced them into submission when they were young boys trapped in an unfamiliar culture. From their counter-stories, it is clear that both find their English classes liberating, one of the few respites from a scripted Japanese university life. Their exceptional ability to code-switch at will across three languages with diverse groups of people is not due to an inability to keep their languages separate (Shin, 2005), but a proud reflection of their trilingual self-identity. English adds to their already impressive degree of linguistic capital across three languages, analogous to having three different types of currency in their linguistic banks from which they can withdraw on demand. But perhaps the most impressive sociolinguistic achievement of these young men is the fact that both managed to maintain their heritage languages to attain trilingualism in spite of the hegemonic forces within Japanese society that devalue or stifle the languages of its non-English speaking minorities (e.g., Brazilian Portuguese). As Mike and Rob elevate their levels of English proficiency and as their interactions with other speakers of English increase, they will begin to understand more fully the power the English language holds across cultures and continents.

Limitations of the Study

This case study has been entitled, “A Tale of Two Trilingual Princes,” precisely because it encapsulates the life histories of but two non-Japanese trilingual students from a mid-sized Japanese university. Due to the demographic paucity of trilingual, non-Japanese university students who have grown up in Japan, the investigator was hard-pressed to find participants interested in being interviewed for the study. In fact, among a university population of nearly 5,000 students, the researcher was acquainted with only five or six non-Japanese candidates who had clearly developed trilingual proficiency in English, Japanese, and their respective heritage language. Some declined to participate in the study for personal reasons. The counter-stories of those who were interviewed but were either unable or unwilling to answer the interview questions adequately in English were not included in the study. The superficial answers given by some of the interviewees could be attributed to the interviewer’s failure to establish effective rapport since he had had limited contact with these individuals prior to the interviews. Given the difficulty of finding even non-Japanese bilinguals who could speak English fluently, being able to identify and interview two trilingual students from the same university who were interested in sharing their life histories was an impressive feat in itself.

Another limitation of this study is the fact that the one-shot interviews were conducted entirely

in English -- the first language of the interviewer, but the third language for the participants. If the interviews had been given over the course of two or three sessions in the participants' native languages or in Japanese (their second language), perhaps their responses would have differed since language and identity are such interrelated, inseparable constructs. Researchers who are fluent in the native language of their participants and who have access to a more diverse pool of trilingual university students would be better equipped to carry out longitudinal studies in Japan or other countries where English is learned as a foreign language.

Implications for TESOL Professionals

Three interventions based on the literature are recommended for TESOL professionals in Japan genuinely interested in fostering an inclusive multicultural learning environment for both Japanese and non-Japanese university students.

First, TESOL professionals must recognize the power that English wields against other languages and devise ethical strategies to help their students attain additive bilingualism. Kubota & McKay (2009) argue that English exerts "invisible symbolic power" (p. 616) that can be used to educate and liberate but also to objectify and demean. Li (1998) advocates the establishment of English teaching theories and practices that have local ecological validity for countries where English is learned as a foreign language. Gao (2007) advocates productive bilingualism as an educational objective for language teachers who must strive to cultivate in learners an intrinsic interest in the target language and culture through properly integrating these with the respective languages and cultures of their students. Phillipson (2009) concurs that implementing projects that make English additive to other languages can build a more ethical road to multilingual competence, provided that English learning takes into account local sociolinguistic ecologies. Teachers, members of the community, and families must take practical steps to raise awareness about adding English while preserving their heritage languages to ensure that their children will become profitably bilingual (Miller, 2008).

Second, TESOL instructors must identify the inequalities that exist between favored and non-favored groups and evaluate our own personal prejudice and biases that affect our teaching methods. Hall and Eggington (2000) state that a teacher's personal values forged from a lifetime of social interactions become an integral part of his or her identity and shape the educational beliefs and professional practices that directly affect his or her students' learning contexts. Canagarajah (1999) promotes critical pedagogy to encourage teachers and learners to understand that educational sites are never neutral, but rather are shaped by powerful sociopolitical forces controlled by the interests of dominant social groups. Teachers must also identify entitlement, which Suchet (2004) defines as the privileges given to a favored group over a non-favored group, and involves the subjective feeling of being unmarked and invisible. Allowing favored groups to evade uncomfortable discussions about race and entitlement simply confirms and reinforces a discourse that denies the existence of

differences among groups and the consequent need to scrutinize the roots of social inequalities and to generate ethical interventions (Larson & Ovando, 2001). How sad it is to hear Japanese students say that Japan is a homogeneous society and that they had never learned much about minorities in Japan in school (Hammond, 2006). The shortcomings of current educational practices in Japan need to be rectified in order to assist Japanese students in developing an awareness of discrimination against foreigners within their own society. This requires the courage to turn the page on current curriculum policies that propagate supremacist attitudes and sustain an oppressive status quo through the inferiorization of other peoples, languages, and cultures.

Last but not least, TESOL administrators must strive to create an authentic multicultural environment that highlights English as an International Language used by native, ESL, and EFL speakers alike to express viewpoints of equal validity. An EIL curriculum that emphasizes critical multicultural education would allow both students and teachers to identify and boldly confront manifestations of social injustice (e.g., racism) on both an individual and collective basis. This approach would also debunk the myth of English as a distant foreign language, exclusively owned and operated by privileged white elites from inner circle countries. Even if the dominant target model remains standard American or British English, an awareness of different English varieties can foster communicative flexibility and help students develop a more comprehensive view of the English language (Chiba, Matsuura, & Yamamoto, 1995). As a new TESOL paradigm emerges for the 21st century, not only are alternative varieties of English becoming acceptable and legitimate (Scales et al., 2006), but nonnative English-speaking teachers who have undergone the rigorous process of attaining English fluency themselves are also being recognized for the distinct advantages they bring to English pedagogy over native speakers (Braine, 1999). The JET (Japan Exchange & Teaching) Program, which was heavily criticized in years past for hiring only native English-speakers from inner circle countries, has made a concerted effort in recent years to recruit qualified assistant language teachers from other parts of the world in order to expose Japanese students to alternative English-speaking models who more accurately represent English language usage worldwide. Given the fact that English speakers from the outer- and expanding circles comprise well over half the population of one billion English speakers worldwide (Kachru, 2005), university departments genuinely concerned about social justice and the worldwide inequality gap must reflect this diversity in their faculties (i.e., beyond one token position) if English truly is the world's premier international language. The World Bank Group (2014) estimates that over 3 billion people, nearly half the world's population of 7.1 billion people, subsist on less than \$2.50 USD per day. It is time for the inner-circle privileged to give someone else a chance and share with the less fortunate a larger sliver of the prosperity pie.

Conclusion

Although English has often been criticized as an instrument for oppression used by western imperialists to colonize and subjugate non-western peoples, it can also be used to empower the marginalized by equipping them with an additive voice within a global democracy that intrinsically questions authority. Psycholinguist Steven Pinker (2007) identifies freedom of speech as the “foundation of democracy” without which citizens would not be able to “share their observations on folly and injustice or collectively challenge the authority that maintains them” (p. 323). In addition to Japanese and their respective heritage languages, English enables students like Mike and Rob to become full-fledged members of a more inclusive global community.

The purpose of this study is not to scapegoat native-speakers from Japan, China or America who may benefit from the existing status quo, nor to demonize racial majority groups that have historically oppressed others. People have no control over where they were born, how they were raised, who educated them, or who their ancestors were. That is not my aim, nor is it to nurse the psychological wounds of minority groups suffering from a “victim mentality” that uses social injustice as an excuse for underachievement, self-pity, or retaliation. As a racial/ethnic minority in the United States, I understand how tempting it is for the marginalized and disenchanted to ingest victimhood, a cynical poison which merely perpetuates racism, ethnocentrism, and other forms of social injustice. However, a critical discourse analysis of the oppressive forces inherent within this particular sociolinguistic context made it necessary to identify what these hegemonic forces were and how these could be overcome through educational intervention.

As a Hawaiian Creole English speaker of Chinese-Hawaiian ancestry in the TESOL profession, the fact that I represent two marginalized, underrepresented voices has equipped me with the ability to empathize and identify with ethnic minority students. This has shaped my own self-identity and positionality as an EFL educator from Hawai‘i, where East meets West and the border blurs between the inner- and outer-circle. The illegal overthrow and annexation of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i by a white supremacist oligarchy, the linguistic imperialism that attempted to extinguish the Native Hawaiian language and culture, and the reactionary usage of Hawaiian Creole English by indigenous and ethnic minority groups to unionize and fight back (see Rohrer, 2010) have had a tremendous impact upon my own perception of the English language as a potent weapon that can racialize and inferiorize, but also empower. The paradoxical nature of English has also influenced my career choices, my research interests, and my inner struggle to find meaning in my role as a non-white EFL instructor in a highly Anglocentric profession.

As a 4th-generation Asian-American born and raised in multicultural Honolulu, I feel fortunate to have grown up with relatives, neighbors, and peers of various races and ethnicities – Americans of Asian, European, African, and Native Hawaiian ancestry. I am by no means painting a saccharine view

of Hawai‘i as a conflict-free paradise where everybody gets along; locals and mainlanders continue to grapple with prejudice, bigotry, ethnic inequality, and racial tension (see Okamura, 2008). However, as Japan’s demographic landscape shifts in light of its continual influx of newcomers, I believe that politicians, community leaders, and fellow educators in Japan could learn much from studying the successes and failures of Hawai‘i’s no-nonsense approach to multiculturalism. In spite of our racial/ethnic differences and the inevitable misunderstandings that arise, the local communities of Hawai‘i have made a collective effort to transcend our negative biases and stereotypes through tolerance, humor, and an unwavering belief in an idealistic but flawed “melting pot” paradigm. If there is a society in North America that surpasses Hawai‘i’s multicultural model in terms of how it successfully manages to integrate the cultures and languages of its plethora of newcomers, it is definitely Toronto, Canada, which boasts street signs in more than 30 different languages! Multiculturalism can add synergistic value to a society if politicians, educators, and business leaders embrace it as an asset, not a liability.

As the father of two bilingual, bicultural toddlers, engaging in research on these issues has been a catharsis for me on a deeply personal level—I have had to stop writing on numerous occasions to reflect upon these implications for my own children. Above all, like other non-Japanese parents of children who do not fit neatly into the narrow mold of pure Japaneseness, I am primarily concerned about the safety and well-being of not only my own children but of all minority students who may be suffering in silence. On a professional level, I have had to question my own judgments which are so predicated upon heuristic biases (see Kahneman, 2011) and modify my teaching methods in order to create a more optimum learning environment. As an instructor, I confess that I can become so myopic in attaining instructional objectives designed to improve my students’ conversational proficiency, vocabulary, and TOEIC scores that I become oblivious to the subtle manifestations of institutionalized, epistemological racism embedded within university EFL education in Japan. Fu (2003) reminds teachers that we have no control over our students’ educational background or their birthplace, but do have control over how to educate them.

Hammond (2006) states that although critical multicultural education has proven to be an effective form of antiracist education, minorities who speak out against discrimination are often dismissed by the majority as incessantly whining about their suffering. Bonilla-Silva (2003) also reports that scholars who critically analyze race or publish articles on racism are sometimes inadvertently accused of promoting racial divisions and thus being racists. Admittedly, attempts to publish my findings have been thwarted by critics in the past, in particular an older Japanese professor who once dismissed my research as “unethical,” but refused to offer any plausible explanations why. Welch (2000) argues that societies operate on an ethic of control that seeks to protect people from any risk or discomfort resulting from uncertainty or ambivalence when they interact with others who are different. A communicative ethic of risk challenges people to enter into an unsafe, uncomfortable

dialogue, to open themselves up to the different ideas and values of others, and to make themselves vulnerable by engaging in the process of mutual challenge and transformation (Welch, 2000). If by addressing these volatile issues, so painfully obvious to many foreign EFL instructors in Japan, I end up burning my own professional bridges, then so be it.

Nevertheless, over the course of my English teaching career in Japan I have had the privilege of befriending a number of enlightened Japanese educators who are keenly aware of and deeply concerned about the alarming historical and political ignorance plaguing Japan's apathetic younger generation. I dedicate this publication to these outstanding Japanese educators who have put their own careers on the line in their quest for intellectual honesty and inspired me to tackle these disturbing but significant issues. Although English has been used to colonize and exploit, it is also the language of liberation and democracy, a linguistic weapon like no other that can empower the marginalized to speak out boldly against social injustice and to fight peacefully for equality, as exemplified by Gandhi, King, and Mandela. It is hoped that this study will ignite an impassioned, honest debate about the real struggles non-Japanese students face in Japan, and that my work as a TESOL professional will foster greater intercultural understanding and social justice for all.

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Appendix

Informed Consent: Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research study. The purpose of this study is to educate others about non-Japanese students studying full-time at a Japanese university. Your real name will not be used in the research publication in order to protect your identity, so please share your honest thoughts. If you don't want to answer any of the following questions, no problem! The interview will take about 45 minutes and the interviewer will take notes during the interview. You may stop the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable or uneasy. Thank you again for your participation!

I. Life History (How did you come to be a non-Japanese student studying full-time at a Japanese university?)

1. What is your nationality?
2. Why did you move to Japan? How old were you then?
3. What was your life like before coming to Japan?
4. How did your family feel about coming to Japan?
5. What problems did you have adjusting to life in Japan?
6. When did you first experience "culture shock" in Japan? Please share your story.
7. How many languages can you speak? Which language is your "native tongue"?
8. How fluent are you in Japanese?
9. Upon meeting you for the first time, can most Japanese people tell that you are not Japanese? Explain.
10. Do you ever miss your home country? Why or why not?

II. Contemporary Experience (What's it like to be a non-Japanese student studying at a Japanese university?)

11. Why did you choose to study at a Japanese university?
12. What are you studying at your university and why did you choose this major?
13. What do you like most about studying at a Japanese university? Dislike most?
14. Do you have any non-Japanese friends who are also studying full-time at a Japanese university? If so, how long have they been living in Japan, at which university do they study, and what is their major?
15. What is your relationship like with your teachers and other students?
16. How is your English compared to most Japanese students?
17. Do you have any advantage in learning English compared to Japanese students? Why do you think so?
18. Do you prefer taking classes from a Japanese professor or a foreign professor? Why?
19. Do you sometimes feel that you are treated differently by your professors or by your classmates?
20. How does your university support non-Japanese students when they are faced with a difficult situation?
21. If you could change one thing about the Japanese university system, what would it be?
22. What will you do after graduating from university?

23. Would you recommend studying at a Japanese university to students from your home country?
- III. Reflection on Meaning (What does it mean to be a non-Japanese student at a Japanese university?)
24. Describe the history between Japan and your country.
25. How do most Japanese people feel about your country these days?
26. What is the current political situation between Japan and your country?
27. What does it mean to be a (*nationality*) student studying full-time at a Japanese university?