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Discovering Voices, Discovering Selves: Auto-ethnographic Examinations of the Relationships between Japanese Queer Sexualities and English as Language and Culture

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DISCOVERING VOICES, DISCOVERING SELVES:
AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC EXAMINATIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
JAPANESE QUEER SEXUALITIES AND ENGLISH AS LANGUAGE AND
CULTURE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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May, 2011

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Title: Discovering Voices, Discovering Selves: Auto-ethnographic Examinations of the Relationships between Japanese Queer Sexualities and English as Language and Culture

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In order to highlight the ways in which language may be ideologically bound to specific performances of selves, this qualitative project examines the relationships between conceptualization, performance and revelation of queer sexualities by bi-lingual, English-speaking Japanese men and women and their experiences with English language and culture. Written, narrative auto-ethnographies in the form of linguistic and sexual literacy narratives were completed by 8 participant-researchers who were both originally from and living in Japan at the time of this project and who self-identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Framed by theories of communities of practice, imagined communities and narrative identity construction, the auto-ethnographies were then analyzed by the authors and fellow participant-researchers in order to more deeply contextualize and deconstruct the writing in light of this project's main research questions. Additionally, I completed a semantic analysis of all narratives and analyses in order to further highlight these writers' affective stances towards languages and cultures, emotions which have influenced language acquisition motivation and sexual identity performances.

Influenced by a feminist communitarian ethical framework, analyses of narratives proceeded using a set of questions collaboratively created by myself and the participant-researchers and revealed that conceptualization, performance, and revelation of human

sexuality were all sensitive to exposure to English-speaking cultures and acquisition of English language, a phenomenon resulting in what I have termed “linguistically-contextual sexual identity.” The degree to which a participant-researcher had acquired English language - for example, exposure, acquisition, regular use, and immersion – further influenced conceptualizations and performances of human sexualities. Moreover, semantic analysis revealed an overall positive affective stance towards English language and culture and an overall negative affective stance towards Japanese language and culture, suggesting that queer Japanese such as the researcher-participants in this project, may imagine English-language communities to be more accepting of sexual diversity than their Japanese-language communities and a safer space in which to perform and reveal their sexualities. This stance may also be correlated with motivation to acquire language; English is perceived as a tool for communication allowing for participation in international communities where sexual diversity is thought to be looked on more favorably. Such affective stances are likely due to the availability of Western, queer discourses, e.g. global queering, as well as an individual’s opportunities for international travel, employment, or study. This recognition of marginalization in comparison to knowledge of other queer, linguistic communities may result in the further development of an “activist stance,” the recognition that one’s personal behaviors could affect positive change in local communities.

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CHAPTER 1

DISCOVERING LANGUAGE AND SEXUALITY IN JAPAN

“On my third day in New York, I met one of my roommates for the first time. After a while, he asked me if I was gay. I was totally at a loss but tried to be cool about it and said, “Did I give you a hint? He said it was just because of my [theater] major. This could never come up if I had been in Japan and been talking in Japanese. By saying, “Did I give you a hint? I somehow admitted that I was gay. I would never reply, “Doushite wakatta no? (How did you know?)” if someone asked me of my sexuality in Japanese. It’s the language, atmosphere of New York, and my excitement in the foreign city that made me admit my sexuality so naturally. I had come out to my close friends in Japan but that coming out to the roommate I had just met was by far the smoothest one.” Akihito, 34 year-old male, university instructor from Nagoya, Japan

The above excerpt from a literacy narrative by Akihito¹, a Japanese participant-researcher² in this project, addresses the differences that some multi-linguals experience when participating in various linguistic communities outside their native cultures. What makes his narrative so compelling is his perception of New York as both a linguistic community - “*it’s the language*” - and a cultural community - “*atmosphere of New York*” - where human sexuality may be more readily revealed - “[*I admitted*] *my sexuality so naturally...that coming out to the roommate I had just met was by far the smoothest one.*” Though Akihito notes “coming out” or being open about his sexuality in Japan, his perception of coming out to a roommate in New York reveals his surprise at both the

¹ All names in this project have been changed to pseudonyms.

² As participants played dual roles as both providers of data as well as analysts of that data, I use the term participant-researcher.

relative ease of the speech act and the response of the interlocutor as a “cultural other” different from himself.

Akihito’s narrative, along with those of the other participant-researchers in this project, entitled *Discovering Voices, Discovering Selves*, addresses how additional languages, specifically English in this case, and intercultural experiences allow for modes of sexual self-expression not deemed possible or acceptable by modern Japanese in their local Japanese-speaking communities. This idea, the revelation of sexuality as contingent on a linguistic context was actually presented to me during my first few years of living in Japan. Therefore, the best place to begin is in Japan itself, eight years prior to this current project.

Osaka, 2002: I’m Only Gay in English

It’s an ordinary autumn evening like any other. The breeze gently swirls fallen *momiji* (maple leaves) around my feet as I walk towards Hankyu Osaka station. I’m going out for dinner with a new Japanese friend I’ve met from a bi-lingual social networking website – JguyUSguy.com – and I’m going to a restaurant I’ve not yet visited, just minutes from the house I’m renting. I’ve neither seen a photo of my dinner companion, Takashi, nor spoken to him on the phone, so I guess I could call it a blind date.

I’m finding it easy to be myself here in Japan. Everyone that I talk to about my sexuality is both accepting and curious to learn more. Though I was by no means closeted while living in the US, this new cultural context has kind of thrown me for a loop. I often find myself wondering if I should tell people that I’m gay, an idea that I

usually follow with worries about judgment and rejection; my identity as an instructor with students of various ages might be confounded with fears about my abilities to be professional in the classroom. As I know so little about gay culture here, having only ever seen a handful of television shows or movies from Japan, and having only read a few perfunctory travel guides and books, how Japanese people react to homosexuality has been somewhat of a mystery to me.

I arrive at *Shiro Hana Izakaya* (White Flower Restaurant) just in time to meet Takashi. As I'm the only Caucasian in the restaurant, he recognizes me immediately. As we take our seats, Takashi asks if I've been to *Shiro Hana* before. I reply that it is indeed my first time. A waitress comes over and hands us hot towels with which we wipe our hands. She then fills our water glasses and begins speaking to Takashi.

"This stone will become hot and we will cook meat on it," he announces in English, translating for the waitress as she points to the stone in front of us. It appears to be seated over a small grill.

The waitress continues talking, looking from me to Takashi. I nod my head and try to make out some of the words. She speaks so rapidly that it's quite difficult to pick out any one word so I look at the other patrons' food in an effort to guess what she might be talking about.

"The stone is very hot so don't touch it. You might burn your hand," explains Takashi.

"*Hai. Wakarmiasu.* I see," I reply. "*Nani o tabetai?* I ask.

"I would like to eat beef. What would you like to eat?" he asks.

We look at a menu that, unluckily for me, has no photos to help me make my decision. Though I try not to rely on it, I search the room for plastic food that I might be able to use for guidance – no luck. I next look back at the menu for *katakana* (Japanese syllabary used for foreign words), the only Japanese writing I can read, but nearly everything is listed in *kanji* (Chinese characters).

Takashi is wearing a black turtleneck with black corduroy pants. His hands are small and pale. His large brown eyes do not often meet mine. He brushes his hair away from his face with the same gesture that he pointed to the menu items, the back of his hand turned towards his forehead. And no matter how much Japanese I use, Takashi only responds to me in English.

“Because this is my first time, I’ll order the same thing you order,” I decide.

“Ok. I’ll call the waitress,” he replies. He then turns around in his chair, searching for the waitress and yells “*Sumimasen* (excuse me)!”

From across the room they make eye contact. She nods her head and smiles and Takashi turns back towards me. We continue chatting, my short Japanese responses dotting our dialog. He tells me about his office work for a trading company, that he lives with his elderly father and aunt in his hometown of Ibaraki-shi, and that he loves traveling to England. He explains that he enjoys the “atmosphere” of Europe, but it is easiest to communicate with English-speakers, and so London is his travel destination of choice. He explains that he goes at least once or twice every year.

After we eat, conversation begins again. I glance around the room from time to time and notice the diversity of people all around me. A man sits next to me in an

expensive designer suit. Behind me is a group of young college-age women in jeans, layers of lacy and sequined tops, and Converse sneakers. But Takashi, all dressed in black, stands out a bit. As Billy Holiday begins to croon through the dining room speakers, “*He’s funny that way*”³, I ask Takashi if he is “out” and he looks at me, moves his head slightly forward and asks, “Pardon?”

“Are you out of the closet?” I explain.

He shakes his head from side to side a little, leans in and says slowly while smiling, “I’m not gay in Japanese, I’m only gay in English.”

Birth of the Study

Having only lived in Japan less than 6 months when I had met Takashi, my reaction to his statement was confusion. “I’m not sure I understand what you mean,” I replied. Takashi went on to explain that his family, co-workers, and most of his Japanese friends were unaware of his sexuality. This stood in stark contrast to another gay friend in Japan, Wataru, who at the age of 23 had already come out to his entire family and co-workers in Japan but had longed to move to the USA where he perceived a greater openness towards sexual variation. But Wataru had warned me that he was an anomaly, a product of a new youth generation influenced by globalization and Westernization; I was very unlikely to meet other Japanese as out as he was.

³ Whiting & Moret, 1928

“What is it about English or sexuality that Takashi should say ‘I’m not gay in Japanese, I’m only gay in English’?” I asked myself. A number of possibilities had occurred to me at the time. For example, maybe he meant 1) that the actual word “gay” had either a different meaning or no meaning for him in Japanese, but a very specific meaning in English or vice versa; 2) that he prefers to reveal or perform his sexuality with English speakers or using the English language; or 3) that for Takashi, “gay” only exists as an identity construction in non-Japanese contexts. In other words, with regards to this last possibility and via a sociolinguistic lens, perhaps Takashi does not consider himself to have constructed a “gay” identity in his Japanese language communities, or if he has, perhaps this identity is silenced there or according to Japanese-American author and civil rights activist, Yoshino (2007), “covered” but expressed in other linguistic communities (see also Canagarajah, 2004b; Foucault, 1972 on “institution” and “instinct”). This next led me to question, “What is it about Japan or Japanese language that Takashi would silence specific performances of sexuality?” Just a year before my meeting with Takashi, Gordon, a sociologist, wrote:

It is said that sexuality is unknown to the average Japanese because of societal restraints. To discuss homosexuality would probably cause a meltdown. Schools certainly are no source of sexual information of any kind, and it is impossible to ask friends and family. To come out is considered by the vast majority of homosexuals to be suicidal. (2001)

Other researchers paint a somewhat more optimistic picture of queer life in Japan as I will later illustrate (McLelland, Suganuma & Welker, 2007). However, etc, analytical

interpretations of Japanese culture such as Gordon's are not without their own biases and in Chapter Two I'll further discuss the challenges of examining language and sexuality in Japan through a Western cultural lens (Lunsing, 2001; McLelland, 2000).

I never saw Takashi again after that evening at the restaurant, but his words would always intrigue me. This concept of "not gay in Japanese but gay in English" would return in future conversations over the next six years; throughout my doctoral coursework, I constantly returned to issues of language, sexuality, culture/community, and identity in my writing and research, always questioning both the personal and social significance of English language in Japan, my home and workplace from 2002-2006 where I existed as multiple selves – a foreigner, a queer man, a Japanese language learner, an English teacher, an English speaker, and depending on the context, multiple other selves.

Perhaps what was most remarkable in my interactions with Japanese co-workers, friends, students, and in my observations of Japanese culture in the early days of the 21st century was the profound presence of English language and English-speaking culture in the daily lives of Japanese, a presence that has had a particular influence on expressions of human sexuality. For example, a 1928 article in *The English Journal* declared, "English has become so much a part of the Japanese people in the last 50 years that it has rightly been called the second language of the empire" (Crocker, p. 288). In 2005, language researcher Torikai reflects on national language policies in Japan:

On the surface, English language seems to dominate the Japanese society at present...To be sure, globalism is the key term in today's Japan, leading the

people toward a global society where English as a global language is a prerequisite – hence the emphasis on English language education. (p. 253)

The first purpose of this project, then, is to examine both the significance of English culture and language in the lives of self-identified, queer Japanese who are proficient⁴ users of English language in order to provide a broader and more detailed discussion about the crossroads of language and sexuality than currently exists in the English language corpus of applied and sociolinguistic research. As such, this project offers implications first for the field of applied and sociolinguistics, specifically language and sexuality studies, and secondly, language learner development.

In the remainder of this first chapter, I'll define key terms, specifically my choice of title, present main themes, and introduce the origins of and research questions for this project. I'll more deeply elaborate on these themes in Chapter Two where I discuss my theoretical framework and relevant literature in greater depth.

The Significance of “Queer” in This Project

The descriptive term “queer” is used here to describe non-heteronormative sexual expressions often labeled as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, though I concede that the range of human sexual expression is not necessarily limited to these English terms. It is also

⁴ According to *TESOL.org*, proficiency is “the level of competence at which an individual is able to use language for both basic communicative tasks and academic purposes.” In this project I will refer to such proficient users of English as bi-lingual, although some of the participant-researchers are in fact multilingual. I will more deeply explore the politics of choosing such a term later in this chapter.

worth noting that these types of identifications may be culture-specific, temporary, mutable, and conceptualized/performed/revealed in numerous ways. The use of “queer” in this project also honors both the recent academic reclamation of the term and development of queer theory and queer studies as academic disciplines (Cameron & Kulick, 2003; Curran, 2006; Gamson, 2000; Kopelson, 2002; McLelland, 2005; Nelson, 1999; O’Móchain, 2006; Richie in McLelland et al., 2008; Summerhawk, et al., 1998). Moreover, the term “queer” has been in popularized use for at least the last fifteen years in language and sexuality research (e.g. English language publications such as *Queer Japan; Queer Voices from Japan*) and is not intended to denote a derogatory or pejorative meaning.

As to the significance of the term “queer” in this project, I also follow Japanese language and sexuality researcher, McLelland, who in his own language and sexuality research about Japan wrote:

I use the English term “queer” to describe a range of nonheterosexual and gender-variant identities, practices and communities that have come into being in Japan in the postwar period. However, my use of queer also references “queer theory,” especially the manner in which queer theory critiques fixed identities. (2005, pp. 2-3)

Therefore, I proceed with the use of “queer” to reference both queer theory as a way of examining participant-researchers’ responses to hegemonic, heteronormative language, gender and sexuality paradigms (Barrett, 2002; further discussion of queer theory is presented in Chapter Three), and a range of sexual expressions, sometimes unlabeled or

indefinable, and often dynamic, highly personal and context-dependent. For if linguistic identities are dynamic and contextual (Kanno, 2003; Norton, 2000), why can we not examine sexuality as also dynamic and contextual (Chauncey, 1994; Foucault, 1978)? Sex researcher Alfred Kinsey explains, “Males [and females] do not represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual. The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats. It is a fundamental of taxonomy that nature rarely deals with discrete categories....The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects” (1948, p. 639). Despite this 50 year old explanation, the world continues to label and wrestle with sexual expressions that deviate from real or imagined norms as categorical and static. As Kinsey suggests, this concept of a sexual continuum is key to understanding human sexual behavior and will aid a deeper understanding of the interplay between languages and sexualities in this project.

So far I have introduced Akihito, Takashi, and Wataru, three Japanese men of varying generations, socioeconomic classes, geographic origins, and linguistic abilities who have influenced my understandings of language and sexuality in modern Japan. What all three men share aside from ethnicity is a certain emotional tension towards queer sexuality in Japan and an open-minded, optimistic attitude towards participation in English-speaking communities. In future chapters we’ll meet other queer participant-researchers, Japanese men and women who are proficient users of English, ages 28-40, and who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

An Introduction to the Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks

Discovering Imagined Communities of Practice

This project is the outgrowth of my four-year experience living and teaching in Western Japan and interactions with self-identified, queer, Japanese individuals. For example, English-language interactions with such individuals have included statements (spoken in English) from Japanese such as “I’m not gay in Japanese, I’m only gay in English” as noted. This statement reflects some of the attitudes and beliefs about identity construction across and within these two linguistic communities, English and Japanese. Additionally, such statements speak to the uses of English language as a practice, a point of access to other communities, real or *imagined*, and expressions of identity (Anderson, 1991; Norton, 2000; Wenger, 1998). Applied linguists Kanno and Norton synthesize these concepts of “imagined community” and “community of practice” as follows:

Imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination. In our daily lives we interact with many communities whose existence can be felt concretely and directly. These include our neighborhood communities, our workplaces, our educational institutions, and our religious groups. However, these are not the only communities with which we are affiliated. As Etienne Wenger (1998) suggests, direct involvement with community practices and investment in tangible and concrete relationships—what he calls engagement—is not the only way in which we belong to a community. For Wenger, imagination—“a process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space

and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (p. 176)—is another important source of community. (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 241)

Participation in such communities of practice, real or imagined, may be a reflection of the prevalence of English-language, culture and more specifically educational practices in Japan as noted above in Torikai, offering insight into a) other ideas/concepts that are transmitted through language teaching and learning such as values, behaviors, ideologies, etc (Gee, 1994), and b) the larger influence of English-language culture present in Japan or in the lives of Japanese. For example, many of this project’s participant-researchers, as we shall discover in later chapters, have been strongly influenced by international travel and study experiences that offered profound learning opportunities far beyond speaking and listening skills.

Language, gender, and sexuality researcher Bucholtz writes that the need to consider language use in the construction of identity “becomes a much more complex problem than simply mapping linguistic behavior onto social categories. Understanding such uses of language constitutes one of the most pressing questions of current studies of language, gender, and sexuality” (2004, p. 425). In response, Stone, a sociologist, examined queer diasporas and the connections between language and sexuality by researching Japanese lesbians who have lived abroad and then returned home (2004), while Moore’s 2007 Master’s thesis in TESOL investigated English language learner motivation among Japanese, male homosexuals. Together, these projects serve as a starting point for *Discovering Voices*, confirming that for some people, English symbolizes a space or resource for communication (an imagined community) where

one's sexual desire may be revealed, accepted, and possibly legitimized as an identity, and as such, motivation to learn and use English may be related to the desire to perform or express such an identity within specific communities of practice. Moore reflects on his study:

Based on their experiences and knowledge of foreign sociocultural contexts the participants [in my project] had developed a generally positive (though not unproblematic) conception of an imagined international community in which they felt they could live more comfortably as gay men. Based on this, the participants tended to view English (in its capacity as a global language) as a linguistic resource that could be used to gain access to this imagined international community and frequently described their motivation for learning English in terms of communicating with people from around the world. (2007, p. 34)

Inspired by the work of these applied linguists, a second purpose of this project will be to methodologically expand on Stone and Moore's approaches to language and sexuality research via 1) the use of composition methods as opposed to interview or questionnaire in order to re-construct realities, showcase linguistic repertoire and affect, and emphasize the narrative nature of identity, 2) the inclusion of written narratives by both women and men thereby representing a wider range of human sexualities than a single sex study, and 3) the creation of a community of participant-researchers to analyze data and perform triangulation rather than a single analytical voice (Christians, 2005; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Hermans, 2001; Polkinghorne, 1988; Raggat, 2006). I'll further elaborate on these methodologies in Chapter Three.

Furthermore, I have asked participant-researchers to consider, through writing their own stories, how experiences with English language and English-speaking cultures have possibly influenced the ways in which they a) think about or conceptualize sexuality, b) perform a gendered and/or sexualized identity (Butler, 1999; Foucault, 1978; Goffman, 1959), or c) reveal their sexual selves, i.e. coming out/sharing one's ideas about his/her sexuality with others, in order to more deeply explore Takashi's comment about only being gay in English. I'll explain the three concepts above in greater detail in Chapter Two, concepts identified as significant to analysis of data in this project through collaborative discussion among the participant-researchers and myself, a methodological choice further discussed in Chapter Three.

Discovering Narratives: “We Are the Storytellers, and We Are the Stories We Tell”⁵

In the winter of 2002, when I realized that I would be moving from the United States, my home, to Japan, I purchased a number of books to help prepare me for the transition that lay ahead. One of the books, a collection of auto-ethnographic narratives examining sexual diversity in modern Japan entitled *Queer Japan*, never called out to me as a reader, initially. Instead, I opted for books that addressed the practical, day-to-day tasks of living, or novels that romanticized Japan's history. Though I skimmed the chapters, the significance of the narratives in *Queer Japan* would not become clear until mid-2006 when, back in the States, I began to consider a dissertation topic. It was then

⁵ From McAdams, D., Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A., 2006, p. 3.

that the significance of *Queer Japan* became clear; as a collection of writing about sexuality, this method of qualitative research responded to my decision to explore the possible relationships between sexualities, linguistic systems, and linguistic cultures.

At the same time, I was deeply intrigued by the prospect of storytelling as a legitimate form of phenomenological inquiry thanks to a course I was taking on narrative research. In fact, my first academic explorations into my own experience in Japan were documented in a paper written for a Second Language Teaching course, and that instructor's response to my narrative, written as an auto-ethnographic attempt to explore the representation of queer sexuality in TESOL texts, methods, and materials, reflected an awareness of how deep an impact the narrative approach had made on me as a developing writer-researcher.

With this strong affinity for narrative, the book entitled *Queer Japan* and the research method known as auto-ethnography, "a particular form of writing that seeks to unite ethnographic (looking outward at a world beyond one's own) and autobiographical (gazing inward for a story of one's self) intentions" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 13) suddenly seemed to be useful methodological models for a project examining the possible significance of English language and culture in the lives of queer Japanese. As noted earlier, this research design expands on the work of earlier inquiries about language and sexuality in the Japanese context. In addition, I realized that my own stories of multilingualism and socialization in Japan would help foreground and frame the various questions raised throughout this project. Pagnucci, a narrative researcher, suggests, "Stories are how we think, how we talk. They form our governments, our religions, our

cultures. They're how we fall in love. And how we fall out of it. Stories are what make us human" (2004, p. 7). What follows then in this dissertation is a good amount of storytelling, partly in order to re-construct the realities, perceptions, paths, and most importantly, the *voices* of the participant-researchers and partly in order to emphasize the written, narrative data collection approaches presented in Chapters Three and Four.

But what is meant by *voices* in the above paragraph? Chase, a compositionist, writes, "The word *voice* draws our attention to what the narrator communicates and how he or she communicates it as well as to the subject positions or social locations from which he or she speaks" (2002, p. 65). To this end, where useful, I will also consider my own voice as a bi-lingual, queer man via narratives that I have created, stories based on my own interactions with friends and acquaintances in Japan that a) offer insight into the universality of interactions between sexualities and linguistic systems/cultures, b) examine how identity is constructed and performed through the lens of narrative, and c) serve as introductions to key issues to be explored in each chapter. Richardson, a narrative researcher, justifies this inclusion of researcher voice in qualitative inquiry by explaining that, "[W]ith the advent of poststructuralism, critical and storied writing about the researcher as "data collector" has been legitimated, if not mandated...savvy readers want to know about the researcher's investments in the project, their political/personal agendas" (1995, p. 191). It is my intent that the inclusion of my own stories supports the readers' appraisal of my credibility as a cross-cultural researcher and that many of the themes explored therein overlap the themes in the participant-researchers' own narratives (Bell, 2002; Chase, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Moss, 2004).

In addition to my narratives, excerpts from the participant-researchers' narrative auto-ethnographies will serve as epigraphs to each section. As the participant-researchers' narratives themselves are not showcased within this text in their entirety, this form of integration of data throughout the text will strengthen readers' understanding and awareness of the relationships between language and sexuality and increase their familiarity with the participant-researchers' narratively reconstructed lived experiences.

I began this chapter with my own narrative auto-ethnography about Takashi and Japan in order to both foreshadow the significance of narrative composition within this work and to hint at my own journey navigating sexuality in second language settings. As noted, the main method of data collection with participant-researchers in this project will be narrative auto-ethnographies. These narratives will also serve the secondary role of data for participant-researchers' own analyses⁶ of self-authored and co-participant-researchers' narratives, emphasizing the process of telling one's story and representing one's experiences through composition rather than questionnaires, oral interviews, observation, or question and answer (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Schaafsma, an accomplished narrative researcher, explains:

Stories are representations of a negotiable reality. Told as they always are, from particular perspectives, they are interpretations of reality, or what Foucault would call "fictions," particular ways of shaping experience in terms of particular values

⁶ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the methodological, theoretical and ethical approaches taken within this project.

and concerns...Stories, as an important potentially empowering form of speaking and writing, are more than just tools for individual imagination and self-discovery. (1993, p. 48)

In keeping with this philosophy, the present research will illuminate the significance of English language and culture in the lives of self-identified, bi-lingual, queer Japanese through written narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002). More importantly, such stories – narratives of linguistic literacies examining both second language acquisition and use, as well as sexual and cultural literacies – will showcase the intersection between linguistic repertoire (ability to communicate, to write, to read, etc) and those critical moments when individuals conceptualize, reveal, and perform sexualities (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2000). As such, this project offers additional implications for the fields of literacy and composition, specifically narrative psychology and research, and second language writing.

Discovering Language and Affect

In “Bilingual Selves,” the first chapter of the anthology *Bilingual Minds: Emotional Experience, Expression and Representation*, applied linguist Pavlenko asks, “Do bi- and multilinguals sometimes feel like different people when speaking different languages” (2006, p. 1)? The book attempts to showcase the ways in which emotions impact language choice/use as well as how such individuals “represent, process, and express” emotions in various languages (p. xiv). Because data is collected via narrative composition in this project, a methodological question then remains, “How can written, narrative approaches to language and sexuality research illuminate the affective worlds of

bilinguals and how does such affect influence the choices they make when using language?”

To answer this question, narrative psychologist Hermans, inspired by Bakhtin, suggests that identity is composed of multiple positions of self, positions created historically and contextually which together forms the *narrative identity*:

[We] conceptualize the self in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions. In this conception, the I has the possibility to move from one spatial position to another in accordance with changes in situation and time. The I fluctuates among different and even opposed positions, and has the capacity to imaginatively endow each position with a voice so that dialogical relations between voices can be established...Each of them has a story to tell about his or her own experiences, from his or her own stance...resulting in a complex narratively structured self. (2001, p. 248)

Strongly echoing the work of previously-quoted applied linguists Kanno, Pavlenko and Norton, Hermans' view of identity furthers the understanding of multiple, positioned selves and suggests that the interaction of selves greatly influences the stories an individual tells. As such, how participant-researchers use language to write about their experiences navigating different linguistic worlds can construct an *affective stance* towards those worlds (Ochs, 1993) that may encourage or discourage language acquisition and linguistic community participation (Bamberg, 1991; Mori, 1997; Wierzbicka, 1994). Likewise, understanding the emotions a bilingual experiences about such worlds may help to explain why Takashi would have claimed to construct a

sexualized self in English, and also have claimed not to do so in Japanese. Therefore, one part of the data analysis within this project is a semantic analysis of affective language used in participant-researchers' narrative auto-ethnographies. I will continue this discussion of language and affect in Chapter Two.

Discovering Voices, Discovering Selves

Now that I have introduced the significance of community, narrative, and affect in this project, I'd like to address my choice of *Discovering Voices, Discovering Selves* as a title for this research. In a broad sense, this dissertation is about languages and identities, the significance of linguistic repertoire in the construction of identities, and the significance of narrative in relation to exploring and understanding such identities. As such, the auto-ethnographic stories presented are in many ways *literacy narratives*. Soliday, a compositionist and literacy researcher, explains, "The plot of a literacy story tells what happens when we acquire language, either spoken or written" (1994, p. 511) although literacy here refers not only to linguistic or orthographic literacies but cultural and sexual literacies as well (Daniell, 1999).

During preliminary discussions about this project, one colleague argued that "discovering" suggests that an innate "self" is waiting to be recognized rather than emerging out of contextualized action. While I agree that selves do indeed emerge out of dialogic, contextualized action (Kramsch, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Pennycook, 2007), I want to take the definition of discovery slightly further.

According to the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, to discover is "to make known or visible," or in my own words, *to remove the cover*, or "to obtain sight or

knowledge of for the first time” (“Discover”, Definitions 1a & 2a). Synonyms include expose, display, unearth, and learn (“Discover”, Synonyms). This project’s title was also inspired by Eckert & McConnell-Ginet’s (1995) applied linguistics research, “Constructing Meaning, Constructing Selves,” Rahimieh’s (2001) socio-historical book, *Missing Persians: Discovering voices in Iranian cultural history*, and Yoshino’s (2006) exploration of American civil rights and sexuality, *Covering*, and was intended to highlight the process of gaining insight about one’s *voice*⁷ as a writer (Alsup, 2006; Canagarajah, 2004a; Chase, 2008; Finke, 1993; Iida, 2008; Lincoln, 1995), hopefully empowering the author to gain insight into his or her actions/choices and share such insight with readers. The “discovery” process then also describes the readers’ introduction to and recognition of otherwise silenced or marginalized voices.

Additionally, via personal writing and collaborative reflection on such writing, the participant-researchers learned about their own and others’ linguistic, cultural, and sexual *selves*⁸ (Kanno, 2003; Kondo, 1990; Rosenberger, 1992), selves that might not otherwise be illuminated or revealed. Kanno discusses the notion of selves and identities with regard to bilingual/bicultural individuals

⁷ Alsup, a compositionist, writes: “Voice can be meant literally, as verbalizing one’s ideas to another; it can also mean speaking out or expressing oneself and one’s beliefs through writing, through actions or behaviors, or even through appearance” (2006, p. 120-121).

⁸ I follow Rosenberger (1992, p. 14), a researcher of Japanese sociolinguistics, who in her introduction to *Japanese Sense of Self* writes “Throughout the volume, each author presents self as multiple, moving, and changing. They show people grounded in meanings beyond themselves, meanings that shift in relation to other people, close and far, to nature, wild and tamed, and to the political economy, past and future.”

...to refer to our sense of who we are and our relationship to the world. Many aspects of our “selves” contribute to our understanding of who we are...I am concerned with parts of our identities that are related to language and culture. Thus, by bilingual and bicultural identity I mean where bilingual individuals position themselves between two languages and two (or more) cultures, and how they incorporate these languages and cultures into their sense of who they are. In addition, because I believe that identity is multiple and changing, I use the plural form of the term, bilingual and bicultural identities, to reflect my belief. (Kanno, 2003, p.3)

“Selves” and “identities” will be used interchangeably in this project and should always be understood as “diverse, contradictory, and dynamic; multiple rather than unitary, decentered rather than centered” (Norton Pierce, 1995, p. 15), and the focus will be on Japanese bilingual/bicultural individuals. I use the term “bi-lingual” to connote any individual with proficiency in two or more languages and to reference current scholarship on the nature of bilingualism as a specific sub-discipline with the fields of language and education.

More importantly, this sense of “discovery” as discussed above also entails finding and validating one’s own struggles in the narrative auto-ethnographies of others, a kind of bibliotherapy where one finds that his or her journey is not a solitary, lonely path but one that is shared by other fellow queer Japanese (see Denzin on *symbolic interactionism*, 1969). Indeed one female participant-researcher, Naoko, expressed her great surprise and joy discovering another participant-researcher’s *voice*:

To be honest, at first I hesitated to read the story because I don't like to read anything...But, when I started to read it, I couldn't stop reading. There were so many parts I totally agree with and I felt really happy about it. I'm so wondering where she is now and what she is doing now.

Rika, another female participant-researcher, wrote:

I've read all the 8 stories and thought that there is no "normal" people, everybody has dramas in their lives. Even straight people has dramas, right? But at the same time, I found out that all of the eight story tellers suffered or struggled because of their sexuality. I'm one of them. I want to change it.

Others admittedly used the project for their own personal insight, understanding that the participation process could be used as a learning opportunity. As such, many of the participant-researchers wrote personal essays in English for the first time or wrote about sexuality for the first time, revealing themselves to the researcher, fellow participant-researchers, and imaginary audience of readers; all participant-researchers contributed stories with the knowledge that they would be read and possibly published as a collection. Therefore, selves are indeed constructed via participation at all levels in this project and discovery becomes a metaphor for learning, exploring, and revealing for both participant and reader.

Research Questions

In presenting the narratives of self-identified queer Japanese and establishing what relationship, if any, exists between a) revelation, conceptualization, and/or

performance of sexuality and b) exposure to various linguistic cultures and systems, I seek to answer the following questions.

1. In what ways have self-identified, bi-lingual, queer Japanese, both men and women, *formed ideas* about sexuality as a result of their English learning experiences and exposure to English as a linguistic system and English as a linguistic culture? In this project the phrase “formed ideas” may be understood as conceptualization and comprehension of individuals’ sexualities.
2. How have the above *ideas* influenced how participant-researchers *perform* or *reveal* these sexualities? Considering Takashi, another way of asking this question is “In what ways do languages become ideologically bound to particular performances of selves, specifically sexuality, and why?” In this project, “performance” references speech acts and non-verbal behaviors that index sexuality while “revelation” may be a specific type of performance where an individual makes his or her sexuality known to others.
3. How do the relationships between language and affect influence the performance of specific identities for bi-lingual, queer Japanese? In what ways can written, auto-ethnographic, narrative approaches to language and sexuality research also illuminate the significance of affect in the ongoing construction of linguistic identities and sexualities?

Though the aforementioned Takashi indeed exists, he was not a participant-researcher in this current project but rather an anecdotal, friendly starting point for inquiry. As I attempt to consider why he would have made his claim about sexuality as linguistically

contextual, “I’m only gay in English,” I’ll present him as a hypothetical, model participant-researcher. It is my goal to honor his inspiring comment by thoroughly examining the experiences of other queer Japanese who may or may not feel similarly.

Organization of the Dissertation Chapters

Chapter Two begins with a narrative that introduces the challenges of translating sexuality across linguistic borders and the significance of participation in various linguistic communities. I then shift to a review of the literature on language and identity, specifically the social significance of English language and culture in Japan, and then continue by exploring theories of language and sexuality and my own conceptualizations, performances and revelations of sexuality in different linguistic communities. I continue by discussing key concepts such as *safe house* and *imagined community* as ways of considering relationships between language and affect. I explore histories and definitions of sexuality in the USA and Japan and conclude with a hypothetical theory that reflects the relevant literature to explain Takashi’s statement from Chapter One’s narrative.

Chapter Three begins with a narrative that reflects my decision to employ written composition methods and discusses *narrative auto-ethnographic* approaches to data collection, methodologies that have been selected in response to the needs of: *phenomenology*, which focuses on interpretation of lived experience as socially situated; *phenomenography*, which seeks to illustrate diversity within similar life experiences via

writing; *queer theory* which challenges socially constructed categories of sexuality and heteronormativity; and the *feminist⁹communitarian ethical framework* for research which emphasizes participant voices in the research process and de-emphasizes the privilege of the researcher as the lone interpreter of data. I conclude with a discussion of the analytical methods employed in this project and how researcher *trustworthiness* has been considered in this qualitative research.

Chapter Four begins with a narrative that considers the role of English writing in the lives of Japanese students of English and then presents the participant-researchers' auto-ethnographies as three levels of results and data analyses: 1) Participant-researchers' analyses of their own narratives; 2) participant-researchers' analyses of co-participant-researchers' narratives; and 3) my own analyses of emerging themes and affective language within the narratives and analyses. I conclude this section with a discussion of the main themes that emerged from the results in response to the literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three.

Chapter Five begins with a narrative about my early days as an English instructor in Japan and my struggles with understanding conceptualizations, performances, and revelations of sexuality, and examines how my pedagogical framework as a language instructor has shifted as a result of this project. I respond to my research questions,

⁹ Ethnographies can refer to a feminist vision to construct narratives that do not claim to be literal representations of the real. A feminist vision allows emotions to surface, doubts to be expressed, and relationships with participants to grow. Data collection becomes less formal, more immediate and participants' concerns take precedence over researchers' questions (Charmaz, 2000, p. 523).

review key concepts from Chapters 1-4 and formulate a theory addressing language, sexuality and affect interactions. Limitations are noted, implications for future research are discussed and final conclusions are offered.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“Speaking Japanese put me a hesitation to be honest. It may be because of my inborn personality, of my childhood experience, or of my having developed defense mechanism. It was long after I started studying English when I realized it’s much easier for me to express my honest feelings in English. Even after having studied hard, not being perfectly fluent left me a protection because I still had to intellectually “think” before putting the emotion into words or words into the emotion. Since I’d found out that English was an easier way for me to express emotions, I had an obsession to learn more about it. For quite a long time, I just kept studying without knowing why I had to study, but it was a path to re-integrate myself, and probably sexuality resided in the emotional part.” Katsuya, 28 year old male, mental health counselor from Saitama, Japan

In the above quote we are introduced to another project participant, Katsuya, and his ideas about language and sexuality. While Akihito’s excerpt from Chapter One focused on the revelation of sexuality to other individuals in a foreign context, Katsuya’s excerpt reflects his motivation to acquire English and the relationship between language and affect. In order to highlight current scholarship, more deeply establish this project’s theoretical underpinnings, and to frame the participant-researchers’ own narratives as presented in Chapter Four, I will continue to focus on three main linguistic relationships: a) Language and identity in general, b) language and sexuality, and c) language and affect. As in Chapter One, I will continue to establish my own experiences with queer Japanese by further introducing yet another project participant, Rika, a 36 year old, Japanese bisexual. Though Rika’s own narrative will be presented in a later chapter, here I present her as an individual who was foundational to my understandings of Japanese culture and communication.

Osaka, 2002: Is *Okama* Okay?

I met Rika at karaoke. Having always loved to sing, especially around others who enjoy the hobby just as much as I do, Japan was a great place for me to put to good use all those years of classical voice training. Another friend of mine, Hiroe, told me that she had invited some friends of hers to join our karaoke party, friends who she said “really want to meet you.” I was flattered, but I just assumed that these friends were eager to meet Hiroe’s *okashii* (crazy) English teacher and quickly forgot all about the additional guests that night...that is, until Rika walked in. My first impression told me that Rika was *rezu* (lesbian). With short, spiky hair, no make-up, jeans and a men’s shirt, my *gaydar* went off; experiences in international gay and lesbian communities helped me become sensitive to identifying possible allies. Though there is no guarantee that my judgments are always correct, gender performance is a fairly trustworthy clue.

After a few songs, Rika looked at me across the table and said “Whole New World...you know it? Disney...Aladdin.”

“Yeah, of course I know it. Duet? I replied.

“Yeah, but I get to be Aladdin, you can be Princess Jasmine.”

The crowd of teachers and students, on their way to becoming *tomodachi* (friends), got a kick out of this and before I knew it, the opening bars of the famous Disney duet began, “*I can show you the world, shining, shimmering, splendid*¹⁰...” We got plenty of laughs

¹⁰ Menken & Rice, 1992

and a round of applause as I did my best diva impersonation; at 5'6", with a shaved head and dark goatee, dressed in a black shirt, camouflage pants and black army boots, I'm sure it was *omoshiroi* (amusing) to hear me sing the part of the headstrong princess.

When the night had ended, many of us exchanged *keitai* (cell phone) numbers and wished each other "*ja ne* (see you later)" as we headed for our train stations. A few days later, Hiroe sent me a text message asking if I would like to celebrate my birthday with her and Rika and a few other friends. After being in Japan for only four months, I was flattered that my new friends would be so thoughtful.

When I arrived at Rika's apartment for my birthday celebration, our other guests excused themselves to buy food for our party at the supermarket across the street while I stayed behind and chatted with Rika. I'm not sure how it came about, but Rika and I began discussing sexuality. Rika explained to me that Hiroe was eager to introduce us to each other because both Rika and I were "gay." I then asked Rika what the word for "gay" was in Japanese.

"Gay," she replied, straightforwardly.

"No, I mean in Japanese," I clarified.

"Gay...G-E-I is 'gay' in Japanese. We use the English word. Though we also use R-E-Z-U or just '*rezubian*'¹¹ for women...sometimes 'homo'...sometimes 'queer'."

"Well, if I wanted to use Japanese, what would I say to people?"

¹¹ In Japanese, there is no distinction between "r" and "l" sounds. As such, the Japanese pronunciation of lesbian is actually "re-zu-bi-an".

“*Gei desu*, I am gay,” she replied plainly. Sensing my frustration she thought for a moment more, “*Eh-tou* (umm)...” She continued, laughing, raising one eyebrow, “I’m not sure, Princess Jasmine, but maybe *okama*¹²? And with that, I would begin telling people “*Okama desu* (I am *okama*).”

Two years later, while talking with a group of mostly gay, male, Japanese friends I was asked what I say to Japanese people when I want to tell them that I’m gay.

“*Okama desu*,” I replied. I was met with a few giggles and raised eyebrows that asked “seriously?”

“Do you know what *okama* means?” asked Ryohei.

“*Hai, okama no imi wa gei, deshous*¹³?” I questioned.

“Umm, *okama* does kinda mean gay, but usually refers to a ‘queen’.”

I was confused to say the least. I had been telling people that I was *okama* for two years now. I felt a heat wave of embarrassment. “You mean ‘queen’ as in ‘He’s so fem, he’s such a queen’?”

“*So desu* (that’s right).”

“So I’ve been telling people that I’m a queen?”

¹² Okama – translates to “honourable pot” (a pot that is used for cooking) but is popular slang for a man who behaves like a woman or wants to assume the identity of a woman.

¹³ Hai, okama no imi wa gei, deshous – Yeah, *okama* means gay, doesn’t it?

“Well, we don’t usually say *okama* like that ‘cause it’s slang, you know. Maybe it’s kind of like saying ‘fag.’ Sometimes we use it when joking. I think *nihonjin* (Japanese) prefer the English word ‘gay’.”

“When I hear *okama* I think of drag queens or cross-dressers,” added Yutaka.

“Aren’t there any other Japanese words that aren’t English?”

“*Doseiai*, same sex love,” replied Ryohei, “but it sounds so clinical...or medical.”

“Gay is best,” concluded Yoshihiro.

“Well that’s just great. I’ve spent the last twenty-four months telling people I’m a drag queen when all I needed to do was keep on speaking English!”

Language and/as Identity

I share the above auto-ethnographic narrative, “Is *Okama* Okay?” in order to illustrate the significance of English language in Japan as evidenced by the use of English loanwords for specific expressions of identity (referencing linguistic systems) and ideas about the revelation of such sexualities (referencing linguistic cultures), and to highlight the challenge in translating sexuality across such cultures and systems. Pavlenko (2000, p. 5) describes the process of successfully crossing/participating in various sociocultural contexts as necessitating a “self-translation.” My own experience living in Japan required me to translate my sexual self across linguistic borders and as my narrative above illustrates, language choices do more than just label a personal characteristic. These choices may be political, highly connotative, audience-dependent, chosen with a specific purpose in mind, or perhaps the only known symbol.

In the following sections I re-visit the theoretical framework for this project, addressing the relationships between language and identity, language and sexuality, and language and affect, while reviewing pertinent literature grounding this project in the fields of applied and sociolinguistics.

Language as Label: From the Word to the World

In Chapter One I discussed my initial wonder as to why Takashi would say he was gay in English but not Japanese. I considered that perhaps the explanation lies at the word level where language comes to symbolically represent different meanings for different people. Theories of *symbolic interactionism* suggest that language as label has no assurance that all users of that label will define it similarly; meaning is highly personal and a result of social interactions and social construction (Blumer, 1969; Bordieu, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, the significance of language has specific relevance to its user and audience. That user, by his or her nature as a social creature, is situated in multiple communities and as such, may have various social identities that influence which labels are chosen. Moreover, such labels may be chosen or avoided with specific audiences in mind, for to use certain labels is to ally oneself with specific ideologies.

Norton elaborates:

While some identity positions may limit and constrain opportunities for learners to speak, read or write, other identity positions may offer enhanced sets of possibilities for social interaction and human agency. Indeed, in post-structuralist theory, subjectivity and language are theorized as mutually constitutive. As Weedon (1997) notes, it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of

self within and across a range of sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to – powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak. (in press)

Therefore, according to post-structuralist sociolinguistic theories such as Norton and Weedon's, language not only shapes our identities in terms of how we come to understand our world (Bourdieu, 1991), but language also constructs identity through social discursive acts (Kramsch, 2000). Pavlenko continues by suggesting that a) languages may create different worlds for their speakers, sometimes conflicting, sometimes compatible, and b) such speakers may perceive that their “selves” change when participating in these distinct linguistic worlds (Pavlenko, 2006, p. 27; also see Vygotsky, 1978).

Discourses

What exactly is meant by the phrase “distinct linguistic worlds?” In one sense, speakers must navigate not only linguistic communities but the various discourses in which the community is constructed. Foucault (1984) explains that *discourse* (as language, speech, text) represents the struggle for power in social life while Pennycook notes, “discourses are organizations of knowledge and are always linked to power, embedded in social institutions, and produce ways of understanding...(they are) often, though not exclusively, realized through language” (1994, pp. 127-128). Examples of discourses in this project include the often conflicting conversations/ideas about the significance of English language as a skill or tool, the impact of English-speaking cultures in the lives of Japanese, and understandings of human sexuality. Later in this

chapter, I will examine a specific discourse about sexuality that has influenced this project's participant-researchers' understandings of possible selves - *global queering*.

In Chapter Three, I'll explore how phenomenological research, specifically narrative research, can offer glimpses into how these discourses are understood and participated in by various individuals. Here, however, I want to more thoroughly discuss Bordieu's concept of *habitus* (2000), interpreted by linguist Menard-Warwick as "the way that an individual has learned to perceive and act in the world based on previous experiences" (2005, p. 255). This concept has strong phenomenological underpinnings and in the above interpretation, parallels the phenomenological concept of *life-world*, directly speaking to the beliefs (realized or unconscious) a speaker may hold about his or her uses of language. The *habitus* or *life-world* then is constructed from the various *discourses* available to an individual and his or her participation in such discourses. It is such beliefs and experiences that further influence communication and social behavior, and as a result, constructions of identities or performances of selves.

To explain the ways in which the individual participates in such discourses, applied linguist Weedon uses the term *subject positions*, "ways of being an individual" (1987, p. 2); individuals take on new subjectivities through language acquisition and performance, and the opposite is also true, individuals take on new linguistic practices as they develop new subjectivities. Just as the individual is shaped by the labels they take on (Whorf, 1956), so too do they act on the labels ascribing meaning based on lived experience and symbolic interaction. This beautifully echoes my discussion of "I-positions" in the section on narrative psychology in Chapter One; the stories we tell

reflect the various discourses and communities we participate in and the struggles and joys of how these I-positions interact or conflict as a result.

In my exploration of the possible reasons for Takashi's statement "I'm not gay in Japanese, I'm only gay in English," I'll begin with the significance of words themselves and examine English as a linguistic system. Bolton, an applied linguist, writes, "The analysis of 'Japanese English' today involves the recognition of a range of English forms that constitute a 'created-in-Japan' variety of the language, and that this variety has extended the range of the [Japanese] language itself as well as its cognitive and symbolic systems" (in Stanlaw, 2003, p. viii). Returning again to my question, "*Did he mean I that the actual word "gay" had either a different meaning or no meaning for him in Japanese, but a very specific meaning in English, or vice versa?*" I posit that for Takashi, the word "gay" is specific to a discourse of sexual and social marginalization and thus, fails to represent an ideal image of the individual that Takashi most wishes to present in his Japanese language communities.

Linguistic anthropologist Leap writes, "Understanding why speakers favor certain forms of self-reference and why they devalue other references are an equally important linguistic practice" (2002, p. 61). In this section, I'll examine the ways in which language, sexuality and identity are related by exploring the social significance of English words in Japan and then by continuing to English-language communication and culture more generally in the lives of contemporary Japanese. More importantly, I'll discuss the possible significance of language and culture as affective and symbolic systems and physical spaces (Burke, 1968; Canagarajah 2004b; Denzin, 1969; Pratt 1991;

van Lier, 2004; Gee, 1994) that may hold very specific perceived meanings for some learners/speakers, meanings that might encourage an affective pull towards another linguistic community/culture (Anderson, 1991; Altman, 1996; Altman, 2001) and a push away from one's native linguistic community/culture (Moore, 2007) such that we can more deeply examine the relationships between language and identity.

The Social Significance of English as a Linguistic System

In his book, *Japanese English: Language Culture and Contact*, applied linguist Stanlaw discusses the significance of English loanwords in the lives of many Japanese women as “giving [them] another voice, and a different symbolic vocabulary, in which to express their thoughts and feelings” (2003, p. 128). Hogan, also an applied linguist, further explores the usage of English-derived vocabulary by contemporary Japanese (both male and female) as being “used to label the world and to shape it in particular ways” (2003, p. 43). Hogan adds:

The use of English-derived vocabulary allows [native Japanese] speakers to manage personal impressions and social distance, and to talk more comfortably about taboo or intimate topics, while simultaneously expressing acceptance or rejection, approval or criticism of the West and Western cultural influences in Japan. (p. 57)

This phenomenon has already been noted in this current project. As Katsuya explained in his epigraph to this chapter, “*It was long after I started studying English when I realized it's much easier for me to express my honest feelings in English. Even after having studied hard, not being perfectly fluent left me a protection because I still had to*

intellectually “think” before putting the emotion into words or words into the emotion.”

During a casual discussion of language use with a Japanese male colleague at my graduate institution (not a project participant-researcher), he described Japanese as his native language, German as his L2, and English as his L3; as such, English words carried the least amount of “emotion” for him, and likewise, the least amount of “power.” This lack of power, as he explained it, also allows him to express himself linguistically without the need to second-guess his word choice, comparatively less than he would in Japanese or German. Hence, English is indeed “*a symbolic system*” viewed as *affectively* different from Japanese (Schrauf & Durazo-Arvizu, 2002).

But is any second language privileged as unique with regards to power and expression or is English specifically meaningful in comparison with other languages? In another anecdotal situation, a group discussion ensued during a 2007 panel presentation about language and identity at an American TESOL conference. The conversation revealed that nearly the entire audience, comprised of about 15 international students and scholars, believed English to be a unique symbol system, qualitatively and affectively different from other languages. Some noted the structural differences in age/class/power-related hierarchical or polite language, others discussed the cultural significance of English terms themselves as carrying meanings or emotions that could never be discussed in other linguistic communities, and yet others discussed the customs and styles of English conversation and cultural norms (Besemeres, 2006). Yet again this led me to considering English as both a linguistic system and cultural system.

In yet another pivotal, anecdotal conversation during the development of this project, a Japanese female colleague at my graduate institution (again, not a project participant-researcher) discussed the relationships between emotions, languages, and identities; the student noted that in her experiences with English she learned to express herself differently than she had previously done through her native Japanese (Besnier, 1990; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989). This English language “*expression*” allowed her to experience a healing process for past psychological traumas, a form of therapy through English language interaction and writing. As a result of English acquisition, practice, and use, the student came to view English language and communication as affectively different from Japanese. After a year of studying in the United States, she marveled at her English-language identity that had developed and remarked that her returns to Japan at the holidays required a conscious emotional and mental shift; she could not express herself using Japanese with a Japanese audience in the same way that she could express herself using English with an English audience, and as such she had to prepare herself for communication in the Japanese context (Kanno, 2003). The changes in linguistic systems, cultural practices, and Foucauldian discourses required her to experience a *self-translation* (Mori, 1997). Oda explains:

While in the airplane from Japan to the United States, I could already feel that I would soon think differently. I could already sense a difference with myself between a Japanese self and an American self. Additionally, after arriving I behaved differently from when I had been in Japan. But why? During the process of learning English, I realized my identity was gradually changing and

being modified. *The question, “who am I?” found different answers when I was in the context of Japanese society from when I was in an English speaking country, such as the United States....* This recognition suggested a research question: Why I did feel differently about myself when speaking English, especially, once I went abroad to an English-speaking country, such as in the United States? (2008, p. 1, italics my own)

Oda’s introduction to her master’s thesis in TESOL beautifully illustrates the cognitive-emotional differences experienced by some bilinguals when shifting between linguistic systems and communities¹⁴ (Hoffman, 1989; Mori, 1997; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko, 2006). Other conversations with native Japanese studying in the United States, and with native Japanese who have completed studies in English-speaking cultures outside Japan, reflect how English is used to not only “*label and shape the world,*” but it is also a label that shapes the speakers themselves, partially in direct relation to the audience and partially in relation to a sense of freedom from the cultural ramifications and restrictions inherent in Japanese linguistic structures and interaction (Moore, 2007; Pillier & Takahashi, 2006; Stone, 2004).

But what kind of significance could English words hold for Japanese? One of the most interesting descriptions of English-language use in Japan that offers support for this

¹⁴ Pavlenko’s *Bilingual Minds* (2003), an anthology about “emotional experience, expression and representation” deconstructs this phenomenon from various perspectives and reinforces relationships between language and affect.

research is introduced in Hogan's 2003 "The Social Significance of English Usage in Japan":

Euphemisation, the substitution of a negatively marked term with a neutral or metaphorical term, allows speakers to talk about something while giving the illusion of not talking about it. Because many Japanese do not understand the original meanings of words borrowed from other languages, loanwords are particularly useful as euphemisms – they are sufficiently *vague*. (p. 51, italics my own)

The first example that Hogan provides of such euphemisation¹⁵ is "kamingu-auto-suru", or "coming out [of the closet]," a phrase used to denote the revelation of one's queer sexuality to others. Hogan adds, "In the realm of sexuality, for instance, the Japanese language is admitting increasing numbers of English loanwords" (p. 51). Hogan then describes a discussion she had with one of the high school teachers she had interviewed. The participant concluded that the English-derived terms *gei* (gay) and *nyu-hafu* (new half), compared with the Japanese colloquialisms *tama-nashi* (no-balls) and *okama* (honourable pot), sounded less harsh/discriminatory and more neutral, reflecting a growing acceptance of homosexuality in Japan. Furthermore, Hogan asserts that the use of English-derived vocabulary can manage social distance and create various emotional

¹⁵ It should be noted that her research did not intend to focus on human sexuality, but rather the social significance of English language use in a particular *geographic* community.

impressions among interlocutors and allow speakers to discuss “taboo topics” more comfortably than in the Japanese native language.

English in Rural Aoyama

Hogan’s 2003 study offers much for my own study in its exploration of the significance of English as a linguistic system in Japan. Despite my conceptualization of English as both language and culture, and though I separate the two for the purposes of this literature review, I wholeheartedly concede that it is virtually impossible to separate the two because language indexes culture and likewise culture is influenced by language. I realize this sounds very Whorfian, and I will return to this issue later in Chapter Three. For now, Hogan will offer us a snapshot into 21st century life in a northern Japanese rural town to help us better understand English use in the Japanese context. She begins by establishing the prevalence of vocabulary derived from foreign languages (outside Japan) and asserts that some of these words fill gaps in the current Japanese lexicon while others are adopted despite similar Japanese equivalents. This phenomena underscores the concept of lexical choices (between Japanese and a foreign language equivalent), as Hogan writes, “These choices are shaped by the goals and status of interlocutors, and the larger socio-historical context” (p. 43). Therefore, uses of English vocabulary may be influenced by the social contexts within which the speakers are performing.

Hogan next establishes the specific forms of language that she is interested in studying - the two forms of English loanwords in Japan: Direct loanwords and pseudo-loanwords. Direct loanwords retain their original meaning and forms while pseudo-loanwords combine foreign and native lexical elements. Hogan offers the following

examples: “insutanto-kohi” is “instant coffee”, a direct loanword; “kanningu peipa” is “cunning paper”, a term that signifies a cheat sheet. In the latter example we can see that although English words are being used, they are being used in a way atypical amongst native speakers, and likely the definition of such a phrase would be ambiguous to native speakers.

Hogan concludes that, “speakers used less assimilated English loanwords to create a positive impression, to manage social distance, to discuss socially sensitive topics, and to inflect their statements with subtle value judgments about the West” (p. 47-48). Most interesting is her assertion that some of the speakers she interviewed were aware of the impression that the use of English made upon their interlocutors. She also admits that there may have been a tendency for her participants to adjust their linguistic performances during the research in light of her own linguistic competencies and/or presence. Hogan’s interviews also revealed that her participants associated English loanwords with cosmopolitanism, youthfulness, informality, and humour: “Ms. Ono, the local farmer who assisted me with my research, explicitly linked Japanese language and culture with a rural way of life, and the English language and Western culture with modernity and progress” (p. 48). Likewise, another participant who had spent most of his life in “big cities” in Japan where English language use tended to be more common, and therefore more socially acceptable, was often remonstrated for his English use while living in Aoyama, “he had to remind himself constantly to use less English terminology to suit the rural tastes of Aoyama” (p. 48).

Additional findings included the association of English with younger generations, suggesting that such language use was a marker of the line between generations. Of particular interest is Hogan's interview with two teenage girls who noted that "With people older than me, it's '*arigatou gozaimasu*,' but to friends, to people just like me, it's 'thank you'" (p. 49). Likewise, English was used humorously, underscoring the perceived informality of many English-derived expressions. Hogan describes a young teacher at the high school who upon making a mistake in the teacher's lounge (surrounded by his own peers) used the Japanese "*machigaeta* (I made a mistake)" and then immediately followed it with its English equivalent "mistake" and then for extra emphasis and humour, "*O mai ga!* (Oh my God!)," which elicited laughter from his peers. Hogan concludes, "Any tension over Mr. Otsuki's error was dispelled by the unexpected use of an informal English expression in the formal setting of the school staffroom" (p. 49).

Interviews also revealed that English was associated with people who were "intelligent" and "educated" and with people who used English loanwords in their work. Hogan discusses how for one of her participants, "English-derived vocabulary initially gained him access to a specialist occupational group and gave him a sense of personal satisfaction" (p. 50). Additionally, this specific participant used English in his work to create the impression of professional expertise and to make the products he sells more attractive and sophisticated (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960; Schiffman, 1996).

Hogan asserts that English-derived terms in Japan are “used to convey referential meaning and to accomplish pragmatic goals. Well-assimilated terms have a primarily referential function, while less assimilated lexical items are used in ways that capitalize on their connotations” (p. 56-57). Furthermore, the use of English-derived vocabulary can manage social distance and create various impressions among interlocutors, allow speakers to discuss taboo topics more comfortably, signal acceptance or rejection, criticism or approval of the West, and can index constructs such as cosmopolitanism, youthfulness, informality, and humour. Hogan believes that these phenomenon are partially a result of Japan’s history of contact with the English-speaking West as well as a sign of ambivalence toward contemporary Western influences, “particularly the uses of English and English-derived vocabulary” (p. 57).

Takashi and Hogan

Why would Takashi say “I’m gay in English but not Japanese?” If the significance of the statement lies at the sentence or word level, and considering Hogan’s study, we might expect Takashi to say that he indeed is “gay” in Japanese as a way to index the seemingly positive qualities Hogan lists above. But perhaps the word “gay” has actually taken on a different connotation for Takashi in Japanese-speaking communities, one that he would prefer not to be associated with. Perhaps the word “gay” carries no English cultural reference at all, just as for me, a native English-speaker born and raised in the US, the word “kindergarten” doesn’t necessarily reference German culture or European sophistication. McLelland (2000) suggests that for some gay men in contemporary Japan, the word “gay” has taken on a popularized, social connotation via

popular visual media, an understanding of sexuality that limits ideas about same-sex intimacy to illness, pedophilia, and cross-dressing. Because of this, some men are loathe to refer to themselves using a word that seems not to describe or embrace their realities, for other Japanese may only see gay men through the media's unfortunately limited perspectives. I'll come back to sexuality in modern Japan later in this chapter.

The Social Significance of English as a Linguistic Culture

Now that we have some evidence as to the social significance of English language use in Japan, generally, I want to next explore the influences of English-speaking cultures. In Chapter One, I considered Takashi's statement about being gay in English and not in Japanese and in the previous sections I considered the possible social significance of the word "gay" for Takashi. In Chapter One I also wondered if "*he prefers to reveal or perform his sexuality with English speakers or using the English language.*" In this section, I'll explore the ramifications of examining English as a linguistic culture and why that culture and its imagined communities should be accepting of such performance or revelation. McDermott, an applied linguist, echoes the previous discussion on Foucauldian discourses and power:

Language and culture are no longer scripts to be acquired, as much as they are conversations in which people can participate. The question of who is learning what and how much is essentially a question of what conversations they are a part of, and this question is a subset of the more powerful question of what conversations are around to be had in a given culture. (1993, p. 295)

Again, I understand that my separation of the two – English as linguistic culture and English as linguistic system – may seem artificial, but let’s consider the following scenarios from my personal experiences teaching at Japanese private universities (2002-2006): Institutions of higher learning in Japan offer a wide range of English studies, everything from reading skills to literature, from TOEFL/TOEIC preparation to composition. At a well-known private university in Western Japan, “Introduction to English-speaking Cultures” was a regular offering and instructors had the freedom to design their own curriculum. At a smaller institution with less stringent entrance requirements, my courses were generally Oral Communication, Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and general English for non-majors courses. No matter what the emphasis, I addressed both English as a *language* and English as a *culture*¹⁶.

For example, in my English-speaking Cultures courses, we generally paid attention to language, but only secondarily to the ways in which such language was used in various culture-specific settings, e.g., dating, weddings, birthday celebrations, etc. Videos of American television shows, everything from The Learning Channel to popular animated series, were used to illustrate such language use; drama and play scripts were incorporated as ways of examining differences in overall cultural performances. The point is that communication and awareness of styles of communication were privileged as

¹⁶ Throughout my four years in Japan, academic and professional discussions, presentations, and conferences all revealed that my experience was not idiosyncratic but shared by other educators as well. Indeed the teaching of English was as much about cultural awareness as language acquisition, especially at the college level.

the goal of such courses and language became the tool with which to examine and reproduce such cultural modes of communication. The customs, habits, and lifestyles of the people who use English to communicate were just as significant as the language itself.

In any one semester, I could teach an incredible variety of courses, as many as 14 a week at 3 different institutions in various areas, with students of diverse backgrounds, origins, and abilities, and with very different goals and purposes. But learning and teaching only started in the classroom: I regularly ate lunch with my students and their friends, chatted with them on train rides home, and met them for coffee after school. I was a gateway to America and American culture and questions abounded in such conversation that hadn't organically developed during classroom lessons: "What did you normally do on weekends while back at home? How can I get a job at Disney? Which summer study abroad program is best for me? My host family from Vancouver is coming to Kyoto; where do foreigners like to go in Kyoto? What do American college students think about arranged marriage?" There were so many questions about English-speakers that lessons on paragraph transitions and conversation turn-taking just didn't respond to, though such tasks were not without their own cultural ramifications (Farrell, 1995; Kachru, 1997).

As much as those students used me to gain a sense of American culture and American people, I also learned from them about Japanese culture and Japanese adolescents and young adults. As such, the next few sections will examine the concepts "imagined community" and "safe house" in order to more deeply consider English as a

linguistic culture whereby any group of English learners/users becomes an extension or manifestation of that English-speaking culture, no matter how culturally hybridized.

Language and Affect

(Imagined) Communities of Practice

In his 2007 Master's thesis, "Sexual identity and motivation in second language acquisition: A qualitative research project," TESOL instructor-researcher Moore discusses his own project with self-identified queer Japanese men and their motivation to study English and find community:

Emerging commonalities [among participants] indicate that they felt some disjuncture between their own self-concepts as gay men and the modes of sexuality and level of general understanding prevalent in Japanese society. This engenders a 'push' away from the Japanese sociocultural context, towards an imagined international community. The participants motivationally invest in English as an international language in order to realise their desires to experience non-Japanese sociocultural contexts. (2007, "Abstract")

This concept of imagined community will be useful in this project, suggesting that some Japanese may imagine that in English-language communities they can reveal or perform their sexualities with less fear of marginalization as explained in Akihito's narrative excerpt from Chapter One, yet in Japanese-language communities such revelation or performance is prohibited.

Social psychologist Tajfel discusses a *social* identity, “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of this membership of a social group...together with the value and emotional significance *attached* to that membership” (1981, p. 255, italics my own). It is this concept of attaching emotional significance to membership in a group that necessitates a sense of imagination, for what is membership if not an assumed or imagined connection to others whether via behavior or ideology?

Oda’s 2008 master’s thesis examining the identities of Japanese women studying in the United States suggests that Tajfel’s theory can be further elaborated by Brewer and Yuki’s *intergroup* identity, a useful concept when considering how bilinguals must constantly shift and adapt to different communities and discourses, real or imagined, and why different selves come to be performed or concealed: “The shift between personal (individuated) identity at one end and social (collective) identity...is presumed to lie in universal cognitive processes associated with social categories” (Brewer & Yuki, 2007, p. 309). This shift between identities corroborates my earlier discussions with Japanese colleagues and Oda’s discussion of moving between two different linguistic cultures. I believe that this discussion of different selves might explain Takashi’s comment about being gay in one language and not another. Perhaps what he was trying to explain is that certain selves are ascribed sexualities while others, due to the nature of the community within which such selves are performed, are not ascribed sexualities (Goffman, 1959).

Earlier in Chapter One I suggested that “*perhaps Takashi does not consider himself to have constructed a ‘gay’ identity in his Japanese language communities, or if he has, perhaps this identity is silenced there (or according to Yoshino, “covered”)* but

expressed in other linguistic communities.” The concept *imagined community* may symbolize any “social group” as discussed above, for how can we ever really know or fully understand the identity of a group whose parts are likely many, diverse, and dynamic? Again, we must rely on participation and imagination to achieve a sense of kinship with other group members. Our feelings about or perceptions of those various social groups influence what we do in those groups and how we do it (participation or non-participation); thus it is my belief that a combination of imagination and participation, thought and action, craft any identity whether cultural, linguistic, or sexual (Anderson, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Norton, 2000).

English as a *Safe House*

Why should English be a “community” that one would want to be a part of? How do we move from English words as foreign language symbols to English-speaking communities/cultures being a desirable site for participation? Canagarajah suggests that “What motivates the learning of a language is the construction of the identities we desire and the communities we want to join in order to engage in communication and social life. How we resolve these conflicts is at the heart of becoming a successful language learner” (2004b, p. 116). This explanation seems to parallel Moore’s 2007 study investigating the motivation of some gay, male, Japanese language learners to acquire English. Moreover, in Canagarajah’s own words we see the distinction yet again of English as linguistic system (communication) and linguistic culture (social life). He continues, “[students] need a safe way of adopting alternate identities without being penalized for (what is perceived as) deviant behavior...students can make almost any site in the educational

environment free of surveillance by colluding in constructing a culture of underlife behavior” (pp. 120-121). While English language may be the subject to be studied and the skill to be acquired, the English learning environment itself becomes representative of English culture. Likewise, the instructor and all of his/her behaviors becomes a cultural artifact; his/her appearances, behaviors, and communication with students are all understood to be an example of English-speaking culture. In this study, the educational environments are not so much a single educational institution but participation in various communities that allow for sociocultural and language learning, whether a classroom, church, train, or other setting. As such, participation in any community where individuals “can celebrate suppressed identities and go further to develop subversive discourses that inspire resistance against their domination” can function as a *safe house* (Canagarajah, 2004b, p. 121).

Kostogriz, drawing on Gee’s understanding of the classroom as a cultural site in addition to an academic one, envisions the creation of a semiotic, ESL “thirdspace” as a way of “reconceptualizing literacy pedagogy in/for conditions of multicultural life” (2002). Kostogriz recognizes the politics of the language learning environment as a multi-cultural arena and re-imagines the classroom as a collective of diverse identities “whose learning is related to the practices, discourses, and funds of knowledge of other communities” (2002). While Canagarajah refers to times and spaces that allow for identity construction in a specific site, so Kostogriz sees the potential for the entire learning environment to be seen symbolically as a hybrid space where perhaps no single cultural or political paradigm prevails, but where many such paradigms can be examined

and enacted. Both Canagarajah and Kostogriz hint at English as a semiotic and cultural space, real or imagined, whether in a classroom or in a specific moment in time, where otherwise marginalized identities might be performed.

Now that I have considered English as both a linguistic culture and system, discussed key concepts relating language to identity such as *imagined community* and *safe house*, and considered the social significance of English in Japan, I will explore the possible relationships between sexuality and identity and the role language plays in these relationships.

Theorizing Sexuality and/as Identity

In order to build my credibility as a researcher and narrative auto-ethnographer, I feel it necessary to reveal my own sexual history and the ways in which I personally conceptualize, reveal and perform sexuality. Because I wouldn't consider myself truly bilingual until the age of 30, much of my sexual literacy is limited to a monolingual, though not necessarily a monocultural, way of being in the world. Finally, like many of the stories showcased in Chapter Four, I too have struggled with finding appropriate language to discursively construct sexuality and so I offer the following narrative.

My Narrative Auto-ethnography of Sexual Literacy

I can remember around the age of 4 or 5 looking at a book titled *Where Do Babies Come From?* There were two illustrations in particular, an adolescent male and an adult male, naked I should add, that were so stunning to me that I can actually remember staring at the illustrations late one evening when I should have been fast asleep. I flipped

back to the illustrations of the women in the book for comparison, but my heart didn't race; no spark existed when considering women. The men were by far more fascinating to me. Even as a young child I knew that I was innately drawn to the male body; for me, who I have desired physically has never been a conscious choice.

Around the age of 12, though I could hang with the guys, I preferred to hang with the girls. Though I had male friends, I grew increasingly nervous around them because I quickly realized that some of them were attractive. It was around this time that I became aware of my sexual desires, not yet pairing such desire with any kind of label. I had resisted the labels despite years of taunting and teasing by peers. Apparently they all knew I was a "fag," so why didn't I? Perhaps it was because "fag" was said with such disdain and scorn. I wanted to avoid the ire, but not necessarily the accuracy of the derision. How could I be "gay" if "gay" was something so horrible that it turned otherwise charming children into bullies? So I avoided any admission of difference until around the age of 15 when I finally decided that I had to tell someone about my "secret feelings." The year was 1989 and the United States was still reeling from the AIDS crisis. For me, "gay" also equaled AIDS. "Gay" equaled pain and death. "Gay" equaled, once again, scorn, so much so that some people felt that AIDS was a plague sent by God to kill off the homosexuals. There was no way that I was going to be "gay."

A good friend at the time had let me in on a little secret – she told me that her father, Allen, was now a woman, Ellen. She explained the entire situation with such a matter-of-fact-ness that I figured I could tell her about my desire for men and she likely wouldn't reject me. When I told her, she smiled and asked if I had a boyfriend.

“So are you gay? she asked?

“I think I’m bi,” I explained.

“Have you ever been with a guy?”

“No.”

“A girl?”

“No, not really.”

“So how do you know, then?”

After a long pause, I concluded, “I just do, I feel it,” and that seemed to settle it. I was now officially “bi” because I told my friend that I was. I then told another close friend, this time expecting approval, and that’s exactly what I got. People approved of me being “bi.” I liked this – I had never been made fun of on a playground or in a school parking lot for being “bi.” So, “bi” stuck for a few years until college.

I went to school in a small yet liberal Blue Ridge mountain town where my family had kept a summer home. I quickly found a girlfriend, and soon after that, I performed oral sex on a man for the first time. This was interesting to me: I could have a girlfriend whom I was sexually active with, yet I was also sexually active with men. I guess I *was* bi. Or was I? During my sophomore year of college, I had decided that the time was right to try having a boyfriend. And I did. And it was great. And then it ended. And then I had another girlfriend.

Males I had befriended in my freshman year now came to me wondering what was going on. “How are you with both guys and girls?” they asked. “Ever both at the same time?” they wondered. “We thought you were a fag,” they explained. It was as if I

had some secret to share, and a couple of guys didn't want to just talk about it, they wanted to participate as well. So what did that mean? Were *they* fags? Were *they* bi? I was growing thoroughly confused. At the time I had concluded that some people are straight, some people are gay, and some people are bi. Some people are nothing at all and some people are born with the other sex's equipment.

Then I met a man who would change the way I thought about sexuality. He was an older man, a professor and a researcher of great fame. His name was Alfred and I found him fascinating. Unfortunately, he had died in 1956 and we never got a chance to meet, but his legacy, the Kinsey Scale, illustrated that people could perform a range of sexual behaviors throughout their lives and as such, people needn't necessarily be classified as either/or.

Though I'd tried, unsuccessfully, to nurture long-term romantic relationships in the USA, it wasn't until I lived in Japan that I experienced my first "partner" relationship, one that encompassed long-term friendship, co-habitation and physical intimacy. I'm still not entirely sure if this was "the right guy at the right time" phenomenon or a function of my various identities in Japan, seeing myself differently via the various co-constructions of selves. I quite often felt as if I came to Japan without much self-confidence or self-esteem and left an entirely different person. Often with my Japanese friends I had that Sally-Field-at-the-Oscars moment, "They like me, they really like me!" and I consistently felt as if I was the best me I had ever been. Every day was met with linguistic and cultural challenge, and every day I experienced both successes and failures that helped me construct a new sense of self, or more appropriately, selves.

Today I just tell people, if the need arises, that I am gay. I feel my sexuality has polarized somewhat, perhaps because of my natural emotional or physiological inclination to develop as such, or perhaps in response to my belief that I had to choose an orientation and stick with it and old habits die hard. When I do use the word “gay,” I often feel that this isn’t quite right. But as I learn more about the academic reclamation of the word “queer” and what queer can connote, I feel that it might be more appropriate, though certainly more confusing for my audience. Even more striking is my suspicion that in America I feel the need to be polarized in my performances whereas when abroad I often experience a greater sense of fluidity of sexual performance; oftentimes, women interest me just as much as men. The bottom line is that I choose to develop emotional and sexual relationships with men, deep friendships with women, and more than a few times in my adult life have found myself intimate with women and wondering about more. I understand that I do indeed have choices, but they are not related to who or what I desire inasmuch as they are about how I reveal or perform my desires.

Sexuality as Conceptualization, Performance and Revelation

I begin with my own literacy narrative of sexuality in order to hint at the ways in which I understand and perform my own sexualized selves. Any discussion of queer sexuality must first begin with an exploration of what constitutes “sexuality” and the multiple ways sex, gender, and sexuality have been theorized in both Western and Eastern traditions. For example, the above narrative addresses definitions of sexuality and how behavior and desire constitute one’s sexuality; what is meant by phrases such as “I’m bi” or “I’m gay” and how these very labels may be both politically charged and

culturally sensitive; and perhaps most importantly, how sexuality might be discursively constructed, context-dependent, and both fluid and dynamic. Next, I will establish what is meant by the use of the word sexuality as in “Japanese queer sexualities”, a segment of this project’s title. Sullivan, a sociologist and queer theorist, writes:

I want to begin with the suggestion that sexuality is not natural, but rather, is discursively constructed. Moreover, sexuality, as we shall see, is constructed, experienced, and understood in culturally and historically specific ways. Thus we could say that there can be no true or correct account of homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality, and so on. Indeed these very categories for defining particular kinds of relationships and practices are culturally and historically specific and have not operated in all cultures at all times. (2003, p. 1)

In order to illustrate how this project’s participant-researchers might experience and come to understand their own sexual selves, and to further establish the ways in which I, the researcher, regard sexuality, I have prefaced this section with my own historical narrative examining the evolution, emotions, and language of sexuality – in short, a narrative of sexual literacy. What we can conclude from the narrative is that physiologically, I am male – that’s my sex. In terms of gender identity, and here I rely on Judith Butler and her work with gender as socially constructed and not strictly correlative with biological sex (1990), I am also male, though throughout my life my gender performances have been ostensibly on the margins of 20th century, American, hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and in many ways I’ve grown suspicious

of gender as a result of my own questions about selves. With regards to sexuality, this concept is slightly trickier and necessitates a further breakdown of ideas and terms.

I'd like to break sexuality into two components: Much like linguistic identities were earlier theorized to be a combination of imagination and participation, or thought and action, sexuality may be conceived similarly. As I'll further explain in Chapter Three, when brainstorming questions for the analysis protocol as a research community, the participant-researchers and I recognized that thoughts and actions constituted a large part of what was considered sexuality. As such, I am defining sexuality as both *conceptualization* and *performance*. Of specific interest in this project is a specific type of performance that indexes conceptualization: *revelation*, also known as "coming out." In my sexual literacy narrative above, readers can witness my struggle to 1) conceptualize sexuality: "*At the time I had it all worked out in my mind: Some people are straight, some people are gay, and some people are bi;*" 2) perform sexuality: "*it wasn't until I lived in Japan that I experienced my first "partner" relationship, one that encompassed long-term friendship, co-habitation, and physical intimacy;*" and more specifically, 3) reveal sexuality: "*These days I just tell people, if the need arises, that I am gay.*" These three constructs were also used to analyze the narrative auto-ethnographies created by this projects' participant-researchers, presented in Chapter Four.

I have thus far resisted the phrase "sexual identity," preferring instead to simply use "sexuality." In the next section I'll more thoroughly explore the ramifications of defining sexuality as an identity.

Sexual Behavior, Desire, and Identity

It is important to distinguish between an individual's sexual behavior, sexual desire, and sexual identity, for much like physiological sex and gender, the terms are not necessarily correlative. First, sexual desire is often conceived of as an innate psychosocial process of wanting to engage in acts of sexual behavior and/or emotional intimacy while sexual identity is the outward performance of a specific sexualized role, for example, gay or straight (Cameron & Kulick, 2003). Inevitably, biological sex, ideas about gender, sexual behavior, and sexual desire all come together in an intricate dance that may be different for every individual, a sexual identity, and may be different depending upon social context, time, age, audience, etc. – the possibilities seem endless (Beck, Bozman & Qualtrough, 1991; DeLamater & Sill, 2005).

For example, Takashi was physiologically male. His gender identity was dubious as he didn't use language that clearly signaled a male gender identity, such as gendered pronouns in Japanese like "*ore*" to reference a highly masculinized "I" or "*uchi*" for a highly feminized "I." His gender performance, by my assessment, was slightly feminized in comparison with other Japanese men I knew, a judgment made based largely on speech production and non-verbal physical behaviors as well as my own interpretive albeit ethnocentric socio-cultural lens. As for his sexual desire, by his own admission he was interested in men. Because we only met once and were never physically intimate with each other, I can only assume that his behavior would enact his desire. As for sexual identity, and considering Takashi's "I'm not gay in Japanese" comment, this project might illuminate the possibility of a sexualized, public identity that is linguistically

contextual and support the argument that in fact all of the above constructs - gender, sexual desire, sexual behavior, etc - can also be completely contextual.

Distinct Sexual Categories

As I previously noted, Kinsey's studies in the mid-20th century led him to conclude that sexuality is not necessarily a strict binary of gay or straight. In his 2002 book, *The End of Gay and the Death of Heterosexuality*, social scientist Archer discusses a relationship with a male sexual partner, questioning his own understanding of sexuality:

...the reasoning behind [Josh's] not wanting me to mention anything to [gay friends], got me thinking. He had no problem with their being gay. He just didn't like where they put sexual habits in their list of priorities and character assessments, didn't want to get swirled into a pre-set world of In and Out, Gay, Bi, and Straight, in which every sexual act is seen as a denial or affirmation of identity. As it was happening, from the first moment he touched my leg, I figured Josh was closeted and was starting, right there beside me, a natural process of coming out, that I, through my shining example of outitute and pride, had helped him see the real, gay Josh. It wasn't until months later that I started to admit the possibility that maybe this guy was something different. (p. 17)

Throughout Archer's book, largely comprised of narrative storytelling and reviews of contemporary literature, he asks the question "Why do we persist in defining ourselves by our sexual behaviors?" He contends that the identity categorizations of sexual behaviors has been "a natural and wholly salutary step in a sexual evolution...The gay movements are a stage...a means to an eventual sexual end, rather than an end in itself, something

that will ultimately, and I predict and hope, imminently be superseded” (p. 24). This is a fascinating concept and one that plays out both within myself and in others around me. Moreover, I have been in Archer’s position; I have had Joshes in my life¹⁷ and have experienced that urge to help others come out of the closet and embrace their assumed “true identities.” To not do so, to not admit one’s sexual self, flies in the face of everything I had built my own American sexual identity on, namely the journey to establish a specific sexuality and the need to be able to embrace and accept it, proclaim it, and likewise be embraced and accepted. But once again, if the definition of identity is multi-faceted, contextual and ever-changing (Kanno, 2003; Norton, 2000), why then is there a persistence to keep viewing sexuality as monolithic categories? It seems as if sexuality in the West has been painted as one immutable identity, if it can be considered an identity at all, despite data from Kinsey and other researchers. More importantly, Stone explains, “In many East Asian societies, Japan included, people are not considered independent individuals, who can thus be divided into straight and gay, but rather nothing but their location within a network of family and community, a relational self without coherency” (2004). Lunsing (1999) continues this line of thought by suggesting that it isn’t necessarily same-sex, sexual desire that is problematic in these cultures, but rather the adoption of a specific lifestyle, such as homosexual, that positions one outside of the

¹⁷ Two of the participant-researchers in this project – Rika and Kenjiro - have reported coming out to various individuals and communities as a result of their relationships with me, relationships existing solely because of my status as native English speaker and their ability to use English.

societal norms of lifespan development, namely the norms of heterosexual marriage and childbearing.

So where then does this notion of a distinct homosexuality and heterosexuality come from? As we shall soon see, this concept of a sexual binary was almost non-existent in the Japan of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, a time period that witnessed public acceptance of openly expressed male-male intimacy, a remarkable phenomenon considering how such public acceptance would change in following centuries (Pflugfelder, 1999). This period was a time of “nanshoku” or societally-imposed etiquette for a publicly accepted culture of male-male intimacy. As a Western, Caucasian, male researcher, born and raised in the United States, it is necessary for me to identify the histories of understanding (and/or misunderstanding) regarding sexuality in which I have been raised and struggle to establish myself in and in which this study’s participant-researchers were raised and exist, for surely these are not the same worlds. While I inevitably approach this project from my own late 20th century, Amerocentric perspectives and interpretations of experience, they will likely not be the same as the ways in which the participant-researchers follow suit.

For thorough histories of sexuality in the West we may turn to such 19th century authors as Krafft-Ebing (*Psychopathia Sexualis*, 1886) and Ellis (*Sexual Inversion*, 1897) who did much to establish constructs of distinct sexualities in their examinations of human sexual behavior and deviance. In the 20th century, Foucault (*The History of Sexuality*, 1978) looks back at the ways in which sexuality evolved into its own construct

in the West. Foucault writes of the construction of sexual categories and the birth of a new sexual discourse:

All along the great lines which the development of the deployment of sexuality has followed since the nineteenth century, one sees the elaboration of this idea that there exists something other than bodies, organs, somatic localizations, functions, anatomo-physiological systems, sensations, and pleasures; something else and something more with intrinsic properties and laws of its own: 'sex.'

(1978, pp. 152-153)

Kertbeny, an Austrian writer, first coined the term “homosexuality” in 1869, and it was then popularized by Krafft-Ebing who described it as a form of “paraesthetic desire,” or contrary to procreative purposes, though not a mental illness however. Twentieth century psychologists and researchers such as Freud and Kinsey, both translated into Japanese and widely discussed (McLelland et al, 2006), continued to discourage consideration of homosexualities as illness, though there were numerous psychoanalysts who vehemently disagreed, often reflecting the condemnation of non-procreative sexual acts as pathological. Such condemnation has historically been the norm in many 20th century industrialized cultures rather than the exception, a norm typically found in the writings of philosophers entrenched in religious traditions (Bosley, 1980; Herek, “Historical Background”). This history of thought about sexuality in the West is important as it underscores the paradigms of hostility/acceptance towards queer sexuality (and again, same-sex intimacy was not seen to be “queer” at all by Japanese of that time period) that was encountered by Japan when it opened to the West in the late 19th century.

The initial 19th century inclusion and then late 20th century removal of homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association as a mental illness perfectly illustrates popular American perspectives on homosexuality despite the fact that in many states in the US, homosexual behaviors are still considered unlawful. So it is within the last 125 years that English-speaking cultures have witnessed the social inception of, and then embraced the concept of, distinct sexualities, a concept which as we shall see in Chapter Three may be problematized/challenged by queer theory.

Currently, the American Psychological Association explains sexual orientation, homosexuality, and bisexuality as follows:

Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectional attraction toward others. It is easily distinguished from other components of sexuality including biological sex, gender identity (the psychological sense of being male or female), and the social gender role (adherence to cultural norms for feminine and masculine behavior). Sexual orientation exists along a continuum that ranges from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality and includes various forms of bisexuality. Bisexual persons can experience sexual, emotional, and affectional attraction to both their own sex and the opposite sex. Persons with a homosexual orientation are sometimes referred to as gay (both men and women) or as lesbian (women only). Sexual orientation is different from sexual behavior because it refers to feelings and self-concept. *Individuals may or*

may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviors. (“Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality”, italics my own)

This final sentence is most prescient with regards to this project and a direct response to Takashi’s declaration of being gay in English but not in Japanese. If Takashi’s orientation or sexual desires are same-sex focused, why must he also construct an outward, public identity mirroring this? Perhaps his desires are indeed expressed and conveyed via a gay identity in English language communication or with English speakers, but not conveyed via a sexualized identity in Japanese language communication or with native Japanese speakers. Truly, the cultural identity of the interlocutor (as Japanese, or English-speaker) is likely less significant than perceptions of trust and safety. It is this concept of believing specific audiences to be trustworthy or safe such that a speaker can divulge sensitive information that is so perfectly captured by Canagarajah’s *safe house*.

If the APA uses the term *sexual orientation*, where then can we locate the concept of *identity* with regard to sexuality in applied linguistic research? Cameron and Kulick, in their 2003 landmark publication on language and sexuality, argue that to only pay attention to sexuality as a performative identity construction is to miss out on other aspects of sexuality. In anticipation of this argument, Kulick proposed the following:

By having a clear sense of the limitations of the research on gay and lesbian language, and by pursuing some of its leads and building on some of its insights, future scholarship should be able to move away from the search for the linguistic correlates of contemporary identity categories and turn its attention to the ways in

which language is bound up with and conveys *desire*... We should shift the ground of inquiry once and for all from identity categories to culturally grounded semiotic practices ... desires for recognition, for intimacy, for erotic fulfillment... What are specific to different kinds of people are the precise things they desire and the manner in which particular desires are signaled in culturally codified ways. (2000, p. 247, italics my own)

This call for an examination of desire rings true, and I can locate this very concept in my own history that I included earlier, “even as a young child, I knew that I was innately drawn to the male body... for me, who I have desired physically has never been a conscious choice.” As such, how one thinks of, discusses/reveals, and enacts this desire is contextually- and performance-based and a matter which may involve language, labels, and discourse (Bucholtz, 2004; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

With the distinction that sexuality need not necessarily be conceptualized as a sexual identity, we can move to an examination of queer sexuality in the Japanese context in the hopes of more deeply considering Takashi’s comment “I’m not gay in Japanese.” In his own qualitative research with Japanese gay males, sociologist McLelland (2000) asks, “Is there a Japanese ‘gay’ identity?” In other words, how is homosexuality represented and understood differently in different parts of the world?

The use of Western categories of sexual identity and the deployment of forms of social mobilization characteristic of Western nations cannot be denied to Japanese same-sex desiring men and women, but judging Japanese people who do not see

their experience reflected in these terms as somehow ‘failing’ to develop an US-style sexual identity is surely to fall into ethnocentrism. (pp. 468-469)

Viewing sexual identity as monolithic and immutable fails to embrace the performative, contextual, and socially constructed nature of sexuality, similarly espoused by Butler regarding gender. For example, I am routinely mistaken to be heterosexual via paradigms of heteronormativity despite my own regular adoption of “gay” as my predominant sexual identity, though my previous narrative illustrates that the dominant sexual identity doesn’t always account for sexual desire or behavior. However, there have been times when I have not identified myself as such, and so I would like to suggest that all future considerations of sexuality in this project be done so with the understanding that sexuality may take on many different identities throughout one’s lifespan, regardless of or in direct response to linguistic identity or community, gender or sex, sexual orientation, or behavior. Because of this, I propose that while limiting research on gay and lesbian language to sexual identity sacrifices the significance of behavior and desire, it is still significant nonetheless in the present project because of the highly public nature of adopting and revealing a sexualized identity in discourse, a symbolic move that I have witnessed time and time again with my own friends in Japan. A brief review of queer and feminist theory in Chapter 3 will further elucidate the significance of working with sexual identities as research constructs in light of what we understand about sexual desire, and likewise, it is the gendered and sexualized performances of such desires that lead to the construction and co-construction of sexual identities.

Now that we have examined definitions and Western historical antecedents to the ways in which sexuality, specifically queer sexuality, may be conceptualized and constructed, let us begin our examination of queer sexuality in Japan in the 19th century, a time when Japan was joining the international political scene and opening its ports to Western traders and missionaries, a time in which same-sex sexual desire was viewed quite differently than it is today. Though I begin here, I in no way intend to suggest that queer sexuality was non-existent prior to this time. It is this recent history of queer sexuality in Japan that offers the background evidence needed to understand the motivational and affective push away from Takashi's native linguistic communities and possible pull towards English-speaking imagined communities as safe houses for not just linguistic, ethnic, or cultural identities, but sexual identities as well.

Queer Sexuality in Japan

At first glance, the history of queer sexuality in Japan may seem like an open and shut and then re-opened case: Queer sexuality was an unmarked, even politically regulated practice amongst males throughout the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries (Garber, 2005; Plugfelder, 1999) and there is additional evidence that such public acceptance had existed for centuries prior to that (Calimach, 2000). Once Japan famously opened to the West in the mid-19th century, the religious traditions brought to the Pacific islands appear to have shut down the public and political acceptance of such practices until the late 20th century when Western influences, often referred to as "global queering" (Altman, 1996) - "The global propagation of Western gay culture...generally perceived as a progressive development that is liberating sexual minorities in third world

countries” (Lim, 2005) – once again affected how sexuality was perceived in Japan, re-opening the possibility for acceptance of such sexuality. From a Foucauldian perspective, global queering is itself a discourse. To many queer individuals who perceive their local communities to be hostile to sexual diversity or without information about sexual minority lifestyles, Western sexual rhetoric may understandably be glorified and embraced.

This first glance, however, proves to be controversial. A deeper examination of how sexuality is understood and situated within 20th and 21st century Japanese *cultures* (for certainly, as homogeneous a “culture” as Japan is thought to be, one must concede that culture is neither monolithic nor uniform; likewise, subcultures exist), reveals quite a different story: “Japan was by no means a passive recipient of influences from the West, and Western sexological discourse, like much else, was only ever selectively borrowed and strategically deployed to enunciate very nuanced understandings of sexual diversity” (McLelland, Suganuma, & Welker, 2007, p. 2). What is evident in the academic literature is the recognition of changes in social acceptance and visibility of specific expressions of sexuality as a result of Japan’s relationship with the West (McLelland, 2000; Yoshino, 2007), although the specifics as to how such public displays of desire became marginalized is unclear and ultimately beyond the scope of this research.

I next want to examine an extended passage by famed Japanese historian, researcher, and filmmaker Donald Richie in his foreword to *Queer Voices from Japan*. One of the foremost English-language writers on Japan throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, Richie looks back at Japan throughout the last hundred years and concludes:

When [Japan] was still its traditional self, many were the differences from its present state. Among these was that few thought it politically expedient to mess with the sex lives of citizens. Homosexuality was not necessarily thought problematic. No official connection was made between gender and sexual preference. There were codes of ethics for those preferring males just as there were for those preferring females. Probably there were political reasons for what we can now only see as liberality. Certainly, interest in other, younger warriors made for better warriors all around; certainly, priests who had acolytes made for more occupied priests. (2007, pp. x-xi)

In this first section, Richie presents a common view of pre-Meiji period Japan that stands in stark contrast to my narratives and the narrative excerpts of the participant-researchers. Pflugfelder, Lunsing, McLelland, Welker, and Yoshino all look back on this period with a similar conclusion: Homosexuality was not necessarily problematic and sexuality was not connected with gender. Richie continues:

In general, however, same-sex love was socially approved (or ignored) to a degree regarded as unthinkable after 1868, the Meiji period, when Japan elected to imitate the West. One of the results of this imitation was the incorporation of a Judeo-Christian bias that stigmatized homosexuality. There were no enduring laws promulgated against the practice in Japan as there had been almost everywhere else, but an imported prejudice became apparent, and still is. One of those quoted in this volume refers to “the disease of fellowship with the same sex.” This phrase would certainly never have occurred to an author in Japan prior

to the Meiji era. Of all the damage done by prejudice against homosexuals, perhaps the most grievous has been the internalization of homophobia. The practitioner becomes the sufferer, and his already apparent alienation is rendered double by his distaste for what prejudice has done. This tone is clearly audible in these postwar voices. (2007, pp. x-xi)

Richie's observations above are similar to Yoshino's 20th century observations from his 2007 book on human sexual rights, *Covering*, and hint at the difficulty that sexual minorities might encounter conceptualizing self-acceptance and public performance of sexuality in the Japanese-speaking community in modern day Japan. Just as it had in the West, performance, revelation and conceptualization of sexuality in Japan has undergone much change since the 19th century. Whether on its own developmental path, or in conjunction with foreign influences, it is clear that sexualities once unmarked, have now become marked.

I must note that any impressions the reader may have at this point of Japan being a completely hostile environment to sexual diversity must be challenged. As of 2010, many Japanese metropolitan cities enjoy gay pride festivals, host gay bars, clubs, saunas, etc, and are even famed for their gender-bending theater troupes (e.g. *Takarazuka Review* is an all-female theatrical company in Western Japan; more below). There are notable transvestite television personalities, gay and lesbian film festivals, even gay television characters on primetime dramas. Though not as bleak as the previous two quotes might make it seem, public queer life in Japan in my own experience is both a

possibility and reality, even if only in isolated metropolitan locations or in specific linguistic or cultural communities.

Thus far, in our brief overview of historical perspectives on sexuality in Japan we have really only examined male sexuality. What of other expressions of sexuality such as female homosexuality? In a 2005 article, cross-cultural researcher Garber asks “Where in the world are the lesbians? How come every time queer studies looks in a new direction it seems to reproduce the same ‘male homosexual studies’” (p. 29)? Unfortunately, the same seems to be true with regard to 20th century English-language historical and social science research about Japanese female homosexuality: More seems to be written as to why women have not been addressed in literature than actual examinations of female-female sexual attraction and desire in Japan. Garber goes on to criticize the disproportionate amount of English-language literature concerning lesbians in Japan and questions Pflugfelder’s comment in the introduction section of his book, *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950*, that “the nineteenth century entailed a new understanding not only of male-male but also of female-female erotic practices and desire, the discursive construction of female-female sexuality in Japan demands a more thoroughgoing treatment than I am able to give it here” (1999, p. 14). Likewise, she continues by mentioning the omission of women in McLelland’s work as yet one more example of exclusion and concludes “Despite the existence of lesbian social and political communities in Japan, McLelland chose to ignore them when he wrote a book titled *Homosexuality in Modern Japan*.... I am not suggesting that such work is without value but, rather, that its explanation for studying

only male homosexuality (inadvertently?) undermines the study of lesbian existence” (pp. 34-36).

Garber presents Robertson’s 1998 book, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* as “the only book-length study focusing substantially on Japanese women’s cross-gender behavior and same-sex love” (2005, p. 33). Yet Robertson herself explains that *Takarazuka* is not a historical examination of female sexuality in Japan, but “an exploration of the overlapping discourses of gender, sexuality, popular culture, and national identity” (1998, p. 23).

I’d like to counter Garber’s claim by presenting Welker’s 2009 review of Summerhawk and Hughes’ *Sparkling Rain* (2008), a collection of Japanese lesbian fiction published in English. Welker writes:

What a difference a decade makes. In the 1990s, a reader not competent in Japanese would be hard-pressed to find much of any details about Japan’s queer culture, present or past, particularly in the case of women. Over the past ten or so years, however, an expanding amount of information about women-loving women in Japan has become available in English, in both academic and popular writing, painting an increasingly complex picture of lesbian life in Japan. (section 1)

The two anthologies of narratives, *Queer Voices from Japan* (2007) and *Queer Japan* (1998), both contain voices of women as well as men while other English language literature addressing female sexuality includes an anthology entitled *Lesbians in East Asia: Diversity, Identities, and Resistance* (Khor & Samano, 2006) and the 2002 anthology *Emerging Lesbian Voices from Japan* (Chalmers), also addressing

contemporary issues. Because of my own relationships with men and women in Japan throughout my time there, I felt it important to honor a range of identities and address the lived experiences of both sexes in this project.

Sexuality and Media

The last two decades have witnessed the creation of a surprising body of English-language research dedicated to celebrating, exploring, and understanding sexuality and gender in Japan, largely led by Western researchers such as Barbara Summerhawk's *Queer Japan* (1998) and *Sparkling Rain* (2008); James Welker's "Telling her story: Narrating a Japanese lesbian community" (2002); Sharon Chalmers' *Emerging Lesbian Voices from Japan* (2002); Clare Maree's "Ore wa ore dakara ['Because I'm me']": A study of gender and language in the documentary *Shinjuku Boys*" (2003); Amy Stone's "Queer diasporic (non) identity: Japanese lesbians return home" (2004); and Mark McLelland's *Queer Voices from Japan* (2008), to name but a few. More importantly, as hinted at by the concept of global queering, English-language media seems to exist as a corpus of information legitimizing sexual diversity for individuals in cultures where no such corpus exists, or where the individual has no access to such a corpus; as one Japanese friend of mine noted back in 2002, "Where is the Japanese equivalent of mainstream, English language, lesbian fiction?" However, the presence of queer characters in first-language television, publications, film, and theater in Japan reflects a growing public willingness to at least acknowledge the presence of such sexualities, though not unproblematically.

Of additional note is the marked distinction between the majority of late 20th century English and Japanese language publications about sexuality and gender in Japan; while the majority of literature published in English is largely oriented in social science academic research or popular media, much of the Japanese literature is historical and personal. McLelland notes:

In the case of queer voices...these have been available in marginalized Japanese publications but have never been disseminated, never been translated....The majority of these interviews, essays, memoirs, and roundtable discussions come from the back issues of specialized publications that the Japanese know as *hentai zasshi* – perverted publications – which have long had a minority readership. Originally purchased only in specialized venues, thought somehow allied to the printed-porno trade, these were regarded as hobby magazines, as though they were akin to afghan-making or fly-fishing. At the same time their reputation as perverted kept them off the wider bookstore shelves. (2007, p. x)

This certainly gives support to Gordon's earlier claim in Chapter One and Yoshino and Richie's descriptions in this chapter that queer sexuality has, throughout the 20th century, been hidden and deeply marginalized. If publications were not readily available to Japanese, how could they read or learn about queer sexuality? One possibility is that those who were literate in English may have found solace in English-language publications or media, even if clandestinely so. Likewise, other linguistic cultures may have seemed more open, more accepting of such sexualities because of the visibility of

their queer media – for example, witness Thailand’s considerably more open attitude to gender variation.

The Queer Diaspora

Perhaps one of the most compelling arguments for considering the ramifications of contact between linguistically, culturally, and sexually diverse identities is the concept of the *diaspora*, a term that “speaks to diverse groups of displaced persons and communities moving across the globe” (Brazier & Mannur, 2003, p. 1). Generally used to describe ethnic and religious migrations due to political and economic situations, Watney (1995), a sociologist, suggests that the term can be extended to consider the movements of peoples who define identity somewhat differently, such as sexuality.

Stone further explains:

The idea of queer diaspora is in itself puzzling. While most diasporic communities are based on common ethnicity or origins, the foundation of queer diaspora is an assumption of commonality, not only a disjuncture with societal heteronormativity but also an assumption that this disjuncture is an important and defining identification in the lives of queer diasporic subjects. (2004)

Stone’s study examined the lives of Japanese women who spent time living outside of Japan, exposed to Western queer identities and communities, and then returned home.

She questions the ways these concepts of queer identity were taken on by her participants, particularly in light of the cultural differences that lie at the core of sexual expression in Japanese and Western communities. Stone concludes that few of her participants

...embraced a Western lesbian identity defined by coherency or stability...however, all of them became accustomed to the byproducts of that public coherent identity, such as public presentation of sexuality and family-centered gay community, while abroad and found the readjustment to a community without those features problematic upon their return to Japan.

This conclusion brings us back to the beginning of this chapter, questioning what constitutes an identity (and how identities are sensitive to contextual time and space) and how language and culture affect or contribute to such constructions. Returning to Bourdieu, we can imagine how identities can conflict and compete in the face of various social messages and customs. We might expect the habitus (plural) of such individuals as those in Stone's or Moore's (2007) studies to bring into their scope all lived experiences, in both English and Japanese, in both Japan and English-speaking countries. The results of such experience may result in multiple *subjectivities* dependent on what *discourses* such individuals enter into. It is entirely possible that the range of subjectivities and discourses may witness conflict, struggle, competition, and even support, transformation, and integration. The concept of a diaspora then is helpful to consider the ways in which, despite the lack of stasis of identities, Takashi for example may identify with queer individuals in foreign communities when such identification in local communities is either unknown or discouraged.

English and the Japanese as Window into Language and Sexuality Interactions

In this and the preceding chapter, I have attempted to provide a number of possibilities as to why Takashi would state "I'm not gay in Japanese, I'm only gay in

English” by examining the significance of English as a linguistic system and culture in the lives of bi-lingual, Japanese speakers of English. By further examining what sexuality is and how one “does” it, I have suggested that it is possible for Takashi to have had difficulties with a) the word “gay” as a label, b) constructing a public, sexualized identity in various communities, and c) Japanese language and culture such that linguistically and culturally “English” represents an imagined community, a safer space, where marginalized sexual identities may be performed or revealed. Identity is taken here to be an interaction of thought/imagination and action/performance and is discursively constructed. Identities then, for we may construct more than one, are also understood to be multiple, contextual, dynamic, and possibly even in conflict with each other as they index multiple subjectivities and enter into multiple discourses. Once again, despite specific disciplinary connotations, the term “identities” is used interchangeably with “selves” in this project. Furthermore, Takashi would have received information about “English” and “sexuality” via the exposure to, acquisition of, practice, or immersion in English and English-speaking communities and the phenomenon of global queering and its messages about sexuality in communities around the world, communities that Takashi himself may participate in through his travels. What we might then expect from a literacy narrative of such an individual like Takashi is expressions of a) the emotional struggles for integration of experiences and identities in the quest for acceptance (of self and by others) and b) explorations of how sexuality, affect, language and linguistic cultural ideology shape such identities.

In Chapter Three, I will explain the theories and methods of data collection in this project - particularly the connections between phenomenological inquiry and narrative research, and the significance of employing queer theory and ethical frameworks - and discuss how they will allow participant-researchers to both reconstruct and question their life experiences, challenge self- or culturally-imposed norms of sexual expression, and examine the relationships between English and sexuality. I then introduce the participant-researchers, procedures, methods of analysis, and timeline and conclude with a discussion of trustworthiness in qualitative research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

“The most comfortable thing in speaking in English was that I call myself “I”. In Japanese, there are so many words refer to yourself and it differs by their sex and age. For instance, women usually call themselves “Watashi” or “Atashi” or sometimes “Uchi” (Osaka dialect) and men call themselves “Boku” or “Ore” or “Washi” (older men). When I was in Japan, I hated and refused to call myself “Watashi” because I did not recognize myself as a girl. But I did not want to call myself “Boku” either because it was too weird. In Canada, the problem was easily solved. I just call myself “I”. Everybody call themselves “I” regardless of their sex or age. Through using English, I was able to become “a person with no sex”. The words “She” or “Her” were kind of new words for me, so I accepted them naturally. People around me, mostly Canadian, Hong Konger, Korean never minded what I wore or how I acted. They accepted me as I was. I was true me in a little town.” Rika, 36 year old female, English instructor from Osaka, Japan

Despite countless conversations in person, by email and via phone with my friend Rika, a participant-researcher that I introduced in Chapter Two, she had never once mentioned the above story. It was amazing to read her words when she sent her first narrative for this project. I felt as if I was gaining insight into someone I thought I had already known quite well. Having always preferred writing prompts to typical question and answer approaches as a participant in academic courses or research, I can clearly see my phenomenological inclinations to reconstruct past experiences through narrative research (Harris, 2005; Harrison, 2008; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990). As such, the following reconstruction of recent experiences with another participant-researcher, Toru, offers insight into my adoption of written, narrative, phenomenological methodologies in this project while continuing to highlight my relationships with participant-researchers and my knowledge of and experiences in Japan.

Kyoto, 2008: The Narrative Turn

Kyoto was a city I knew fairly well, having both worked and lived just minutes from the famed, one-time capital. I liked to stroll the streets around Kawaramachi admiring the various examples of architecture while browsing modern stores like Benetton and The Body Shop and enjoying *ocha* (tea) or *ame* (candy) in centuries-old, traditional *kisaten* (coffee shops) and confectionaries. My favorite streets in the city, where I often brought visitors to look for *geisha*¹⁸ and *maiko*¹⁹, were just minutes east towards Gion and the Kyoto hills. If lucky, we could catch a glimpse of the lavishly dressed women scurrying between restaurants and bars or being whisked away to parties on the Kamo River in Kyoto's shiny black taxicabs – powdered, white faces and flowing, embroidered robes a reminder of how traditions live on in *Nihon* (Japan).

The evening was perfect for a stroll and by sheer coincidence I had reunited with a Japanese man I had once known, nearly passing right by him while on my way to the train station. It was great to see my friend Toru again, and quite a surprise. A bilingual Japanese/English speaker with a PhD in Chemistry who I had known for about 5 years, he was someone with whom I could really explore some of my hypotheses about language and sexuality in Japan. Still unsure at the time what methods I would use to

¹⁸ Geisha – translates to “artist”, a woman who has been trained in numerous arts such as dance and tea ceremony and works as a paid companion or entertainer.

¹⁹ Maiko – a geisha in training

gather data when I officially began to work with participants, I simply invited him to join me for a meal the next night in Kyoto.

As our dinner started, I began by asking him questions about his English language learning experiences like “After the mandatory English classes in high school, tell me about your decision to continue your language studies,” and “what connections if any exist between your English studies and your sexuality?”

Our conversation was fascinating – there was so much I hadn’t known about this handsome, successful, 40 year old man. We had dated once or twice and then each gone our separate ways; I pondered the significance of meeting him both initially and now recently. Perhaps what was most significant about our conversation that evening was learning that one of Toru’s motivations to learn English, perhaps his greatest motivation, was to meet foreign men that he could be romantic and sexual with and that there was so much about his own sexuality that he had never really discussed with friends. It occurred to me in that moment that I was both his friend and a researcher, selfishly prodding him with questions hoping to learn more about my topic, but immensely satisfied to be learning about my friend.

We often came back to the larger questions about partnership, happiness, and sex that seemed to be peppering so many of my conversations at that time. I learned that although he was physically attracted to Caucasian men, he hadn’t really had what he considered a successful, emotionally-fulfilling relationship with a Caucasian. In fact, he had recently fallen in love with a Japanese man a few years his senior. When I asked him about this relationship, he explained that it had been the first time he had ever had a

relationship with a Japanese man, “I think the fact that we are from the same culture makes it easier for me, even though I am still very much attracted to non-Japanese.” A drink or two later and a little more prodding revealed that there had been something missing in his relationships with these *gaijin* (foreigners), some kind of connection that only another *nihonjin* (Japanese) could offer, and yet there was also something missing in his sex life with his new boyfriend, something that he felt he might never experience with a Japanese man. This ultimately led to the larger questions, “What is sexuality?” and “Isn’t it fascinating how language allows us to do things that we might not be able to do if we were monolingual?”

By the end of our dinner I was excited by Toru’s pensive attitude and eagerness to consider each new question I came up with. However, I did feel guilty at times that our conversation was mostly in English; poor Toru, though completely proficient in English, he had very little time to think, formulate responses, or edit himself. I wondered, “If he had more time to really reminisce about his English language history, what more might he come up with? What other connections could he make?” It also occurred to me that although I was jotting down notes about our conversation, mostly paying attention to his responses, I would never truly be able to capture Toru’s *voice* unless he composed the entire text himself. Each note I took was inevitably in my own words and related back to whatever I personally found significant. Note-taking couldn’t capture that sense of “atmosphere,” to use Takashi’s word, which a storyteller can create through his or her own choice of language, plot, presentation of conflict, etc. I immediately thought back to that collection of stories, *Queer Japan*. My earlier idea about narrative as method was

confirmed; I had decided that participant responses had to be in their own written voices. And in that moment, the narrative turn was taken.

Narrative Auto-ethnographic Research as Phenomenological Inquiry

The above story reflects the initial stages of topic exploration for this project and my understanding that there is something very different about talking with someone about language and sexuality, and writing a narrative about it (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In the following sections I will further explore my interests in written narrative research as a method of phenomenological exploration in this project. I will also discuss feminist and queer theoretical influences on this project's methodologies, and introduce the participant-researchers, procedures, and considerations of researcher trustworthiness in qualitative research.

In this project, the form of narrative research employed for data collection is guided story telling: Participant-researchers were provided with both a specific research question and a variety of writing prompts to aid the formulation of response (Appendix A). This approach may be considered a form of auto-ethnography, an examination of one's own lived experience and life-world or habitus in order to answer a question, invite the reader into the author's experience, and make connections between the personal and cultural.

After surveying recent writing about auto-ethnography (Anderson, 2006; Bennett, 2004; Bocher & Ellis, 2000; Coffey, 1999; Denzin, 1989; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Denzin, 2006; Ellis, 1997; Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Hayano, 1979; Holt, 2003; Pratt, 1999; Reed-Danahay, 1997; Richardson, 2000; Russell, 1999; Smith, 2005) and in

an attempt to find guiding principles from which to proceed with the current research, it is clear that prescriptions for performing auto-ethnographic research vary wildly and are largely dependent upon a given discipline and specific writer. Smith writes that “the exact definition of the term is elusive, and there are many other genres, too numerous to list, that fall under its umbrella” (2005, Section: What is auto-ethnography?). While some of the definitions seem to focus on explorations of culture and cultural identity, such as those by Hayano, Reed-Danahay, and Pratt, others focus on narrative inquiry such as those by Coffey, Ellis, and Ellis & Bochner, and still others synthesize both, such as those by Denzin and Bennett.

Because auto-ethnography as a genre is still considered by some to be a controversial approach to qualitative research (Duncan, 2004; Holt, 2003), Duncan concludes:

If the value of auto-ethnography is to be understood more clearly by the wider research community, those engaged in this emerging art need to assist their readers in judging its worth. To include in the research report adequate justification for the choice of this method and demonstration of how appropriate evaluation criteria might be applied are two ways in which researchers can help reviewers appreciate what auto-ethnography has to offer. (2004)

In the next section I will further respond to Duncan’s call for justifying auto-ethnography as a method for data collection by elaborating on the type of auto-ethnography used in this project.

The Literacy Narrative

Following the work of Daniell (1999), Park (2006), Oda (2008), and Soliday (1994) I asked participant-researchers to provide a language learning history as a starting point for data collection. Provided with a collection of writing prompts (Appendix A), an explanation of the overall goals of the project, and a copy of *Queer Japan* to use for writing models, participant-researchers first traced the significance of English language learning in their lives and juxtaposed this with significant moments that address their own understanding, revelation, or performance of sexuality (Somers & Gibson, 1994). In this way, participant-researchers created *heartful auto-ethnographies* (Ellis, 2000) that trace the significance of English use while at the same time discussing sexuality, life experiences, development, etc. Ellis explains the “heartful” distinction as

... an ethnography that includes researchers’ vulnerable selves, emotions, bodies, and spirits; produces evocative stories that create the effect of reality; celebrates concrete experience and intimate detail; examines how human experience is endowed with meaning; is concerned with moral, ethical, and political consequences; encourages compassion and empathy; helps us know how to live and cope; features multiple voices and repositions readers and “subjects” as coparticipants in dialogue; seeks a fusion between social science and literature in which, as Gregory Bateson says, “you are partly blown by the winds of reality and partly an artist creating a composite out of the inner and outer events”; and connects the practices of social science with the living of life. In short, [the] goal

is to extend ethnography to include the heart, the autobiographical, and the artistic text. (1999, "Abstract")

As a researcher, I join the participant-researchers and form a *research community* by sharing my own stories throughout this manuscript, stories that are auto-ethnographic examinations of my own experiences with language and sexuality. But why should such a narrative, an auto-ethnography, be sufficient to explain Takashi's comment; why is such narrative research phenomenological?

Phenomenological Theories of Language

Language learning commonly requires learners to engage in both self-reflection and communicative tasks: Introspection, analysis, and expression all become practices of language learners as they attempt to explore language through repetition, imagination, conversation, composition, and revelation. In the pursuit of linguistic proficiency such communication is sometimes surface, little more than repetitive drills, observations or re-statements, while at other times the communication is deeply personal and self-revelatory. It is therefore worthwhile noting both the potentials and varieties of expression inherent in second language communications; learners call on their own experience in reference to their life-worlds, and actively choose (mediated by level of proficiency) how they are to be represented in both words and symbolic action, as Burke writes, "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (1968, p. 43).

Using my own teaching experiences as a foundation, I have come to believe that second language writing as described above calls on the learner to engage in phenomenological inquiry:

...in the practice of phenomenology, we classify, describe, interpret, and analyze structures of experiences in ways that answer to our own experience...In such interpretive-descriptive analyses of experience, we immediately observe that we are analyzing familiar forms of consciousness, conscious experience of or about this or that. (Smith, 2003)

Because phenomenology is not a single theory put forth by a single theorist, but rather, a school of thought that has witnessed its major developments over the last 200 years by numerous thinkers from a variety of disciplines, the concepts and applications are many. Smith, a philosopher and social scientist elaborates on what phenomenological approaches may offer:

The basic intentional structure of consciousness, we find in reflection or analysis, involves further forms of experience. Thus, phenomenology develops a complex account of temporal awareness (within the stream of consciousness), spatial awareness (notably in perception), attention (distinguishing focal and marginal or “horizontal” awareness), awareness of one’s own experience (self-consciousness, in one sense), self-awareness (awareness-of-oneself), the self in different roles (as thinking, acting, etc), embodied action (including kinesthetic awareness of one’s movement), purpose or intention in action (more or less explicit), awareness of other persons (in empathy, intersubjectivity, collectivity), linguistic activity

(involving meaning, communication, understanding others, social interaction (including collective action), and everyday activity in our surrounding life-world (in a particular culture). (2003, para. 2)

Based on this definition, we might expect to find that the literacy narratives written by the participant-researchers address many of the above phenomena. But where does language come in? What is the significance of language to the phenomenological mind? Ratner, an applied linguist, explains:

Language, of course, is central to the social construction of mind because, as Lwia said, language is thought's most vital cultural tool. Language links culture and cognition because it is an element of both. It is engendered by social communication, and reflects and transmits the interests of particular social relations. Language is also an aspect of individual consciousness because it is the symbolic instrument used for thinking and verbal expression. (1991)

This idea also seems to be in keeping with rhetorician Kenneth Burke's discussion of the nature of terms: "Much that we take as observations about reality may be but the spinning out of possibilities implicit in our particular choice of terms" (1968, p.46). It might then be said that in phenomenology, using Burkean rhetoric, the word is first, and the action flows from the meaning; language itself becomes a *terministic screen* that shapes how the user both understands and experiences his world, echoing my discussion of symbolic interaction from Chapter Two.

This approach to examining language may also be seen in the Whorf Hypothesis (discussed as linguistic relativity in Whorf's 1956 *Language, Thought and Reality*):

“This states that language is not simply a way of voicing ideas, but is the very thing which shapes those ideas. One cannot think outside the confines of their language. The result of this process is many different world views by speakers of different languages” (Romanine, 1994, p. 74), as well as in the work of phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, “[He] argues that because different cultures experience the world differently, the differences of language correspond to their different emotional experiences of the world” (Flynn, 2004).

In examining the influences of early phenomenologists on other schools of thought, Ross posits the influence of Kant on Wittgenstein’s ideas about logic and language: “Wittgenstein sees all reality as created by particular languages...” (2002, para. 16). But it is McDevitt’s 1995 essay that most succinctly synthesizes much of phenomenological thought and its ideas about language in general and writing in particular:

Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes language as a gesture an act of the body that bears upon language’s origin in the carnal world. It cannot be known why a specific word is chosen but once it is, no other can take its place without referring to other contexts. There is a givenness, a quality exclusive to itself, in language, even in students’ speech and writing. (Abstract)

The question then follows, where does the ability to understand, integrate, and adopt words as nomenclature that can describe experience originate; from where does this interpretive process arise? Haight writes: “The vehicle which thought has to make itself

public is speech. For Merleau-Ponty...the question easily becomes, what is the source of inter-subjective meaning” (1976, p. 239).

Life-world and Phenomenography

The life-world, or *Lebenswelt* is a pivotal concept to phenomenologists such as Husserl, Schutz, and specifically, Merleau-Ponty. Elveton explains that life-world is:

...best understood as a way of emphasizing the centrality of perception for human experience. This experience is multi-dimensional, and includes the experience of individual things and their contextual/perceptual fields, the embodied nature of perceiving consciousness, and the intersubjective nature of the world as it is perceived, especially our knowledge of other subjects, their actions and shared cultural structures. (2005, para. 1)

Put another way, life-world is a source, a cognitive collection of all of one’s knowledge acquired through learning, culture, and experience as it stands prior to analysis or reflection (Van Manen, 1990). It is that place that a writer draws from when crafting his or her ideas and constructing linguistic meaning and is similar in its attempts to describe the phenomenological gestalt to Bordieu’s *habitus*.

Jacobs’ (1978) essay on phenomenographic writing seeks to discuss the role of phenomenological inquiry (or research) in student writing as it involves self, world, other, and phenomena, tapping into the author’s life-world and emphasizing the author’s point of view. By providing evidence of phenomenographic writing (poetry), Jacobs illustrates the process involved in such an approach, including collaborative brainstorming, identifying authorial perspective, and most importantly, examination of a

particular phenomenon: “Phenomenology is based on that state-of-being-conscious-in-the-world where one becomes ‘attentive’ to the things themselves” (p. 68).

Phenomenographic writing seeks to describe phenomenon in the world as others see them and to uncover variation in perception and experience. With this pairing of phenomenology and writing – phenomenography - we are brought back, once again to auto-ethnography.

Auto-ethnography itself has its roots in critical, phenomenological inquiry: “Auto-ethnography is a genre of writing and research that connects the personal to the cultural, placing the self within a social context” (Holt, 2003). I suggest that auto-ethnography is an approach to examining one’s own life-world in order to reach a fuller understanding of a specific phenomenon. In this project, auto-ethnography leads the writers to conduct a phenomenological inquiry into the nature of their experiences, making use of their written explorations (revealing terministic screens) to further develop both their linguistic awareness and writing skills, and their understanding of language as symbolic action.

If the heart of phenomenology is “how we observe and reason about and seek to explain phenomena we encounter in the world” (Smith, 2003), then ethnographic, phenomenological writing activities call on the writers to become authors, scientists, linguists, and rhetoricians. Through such approaches to examinations of life-world and language, the writer engages in a focusing of attention, of intentionality, and as users of language as symbolic action.

I earlier stated that this project employs *critical* phenomenological research. Lather writes: “Critical methodology may be defined as scholarship done for explicit political, utopian purposes, a discourse of critique and criticism, a politics of liberation, a reflexive discourse constantly in search of an open-ended, subversive, multi-voiced, participatory epistemology” (2007, pp. x-xi). Therefore, the narrative auto-ethnographies presented here, including my own, may be considered post-modern social critiques (Richardson, 1991) in that they present the marginalized voice as response to contemporary social conflicts. In Chapter 5, I’ll further explore the ramifications of such a narrative voice when reviewing the *activist stance* that some of the participant-researchers narratively adopt.

As noted above, there are numerous approaches to performing phenomenological auto-ethnography as narrative research. Below, by discussing both feminist communitarian moral approaches to research and queer theory, I will suggest that Ellis’s *heartful* (with a focus on the subject) and Anderson’s (2006) *analytic* (with a focus on the researcher) approaches may be synthesized to create a critical researching/learning *community* whose practice is to recreate, explore, and uncover experiences and ideologies.

Feminist²⁰ Communitarian Moral Ethic and Queer Theory

While planning this project, I often considered the difficulties inherent in being a researcher from the outside looking in. In other words, how could I possibly minimize or reduce my own ethnocentric analyses while also accepting the limitations of my own ethic perspective? After discussing this concern with a colleague, she suggested looking into a feminist communitarian moral ethic for research, “not a methodology, but a framework, an approach.” Denzin and Lincoln write:

In the feminist communitarian model, as with the model of participatory action research advocated by Greenwood and Levin, Fine and Weis, Smith, Bishop, and Kemmis and McTaggart, participants have a coequal say in how research should be conducted, what should be studied, which methods should be used, what findings are valid and acceptable, how these findings are to be implemented, and how the consequences of such action are to be assessed. Spaces for disagreement are recognized, and discourse aims for mutual understanding and for the honoring of moral commitments. (2005, p. 36)

When asked by colleagues how I planned to analyze data for this project, I suggest that participant-researchers would do most of the analysis themselves. As this generally

²⁰ “Ethnographies can refer to a feminist vision to construct narratives that do not claim to be literal representations of the real. A feminist vision allows emotions to surface, doubts to be expressed, and relationships with participant-researchers to grow. Data collection becomes less formal, more immediate and participant-researchers’ concerns take precedence over researchers’ questions” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 523).

invites puzzled looks I explain that participant-researchers will help identify what is, in Denzin and Lincoln's words, "valuable and acceptable" by discussing their own writing and developing auto-ethnographies. This is one way I can supplement a solely etic analysis with Japanese voices themselves. Denzin explains that such an ethical framework "presumes a researcher who builds a reciprocal, collaborative, trusting, and friendly relations with the persons he or she is studying" (2003, p. xii).

Moreover, the feminist communitarian model is an approach to research that might be compared to a Hippocratic oath for a physician, a "first do no harm" mindfulness possessed by the researcher, ever motivated to treat participant-researchers with the utmost respect and to create a community with them, rather than view them merely as subjects. To implement this model is to adopt a way of being, a way of thinking about one's research and the role of participant and researcher, a way of crafting research so that it meets specific ethical standards: "From the perspective of a feminist communitarian ethics, interpretive discourse is authentically sufficient when it fulfills three conditions: it represents multiple voices, enhances moral discernment, and promotes social transformation" (Christians, 2005, p. 152; see also Christians, 2000). Denzin and Christians, perhaps the most prolific proponents of this model in the literature on qualitative research, explain the concept of *multiple voices* as recognizing and honoring the need for diversity in research; *moral discernment* is to offer a new way of examining a topic or showing it to one's audience; to *promote social transformation* is to raise the social consciousness of the audience. I like this description as it implies opportunity for empowerment, as Finke writes:

Most feminist teachers, when they talk about teaching, speak of a desire to “empower” the learner to tell her own stories, rather than parroting those of the dominant culture. Even more specifically, they seek to give “voice” to those who have been silenced and alienated by traditional pedagogical practices that privilege hierarchy, authority, “rigor,” and exclusivity, and that value abstract and objective knowledge over subjective and experiential knowledge. (1993, p. 12)

Though my primary role in this project is to serve as a researcher, involved in the theoretical and methodological framework that guides this project, I have found that in many of my interactions with participants I must also be a teacher. As such, I see many facets of my researcher identity to mirror my teacher identity, though of course, these identities are dynamic and only have meaning in specific contexts. My need to illuminate, reveal, and illustrate ideas as a researcher is enacted via my desire to guide participant-researchers to do the same, and such guidance calls on me to also be a teacher, and as such, to enact a critical and feminist communitarian approach.

Moreover, feminist theoretical approaches problematize the social constructions, power relationships, and binaries of male/female and masculine/feminine and question gender as static categories rather than socially situated (Frye, 1983). In many of the narratives I examined for this project I noted the struggle queer individuals confronted when constructing gendered identities and considering the ramifications of their sexual desires. Questions about gender performance and sexuality, and how one necessitates a consideration of the other, abound in coming out stories. Feminist theory may be used in phenomenological exploration (Butler, 1986) as a way to challenge ideas that we inherit

our lives as creatures engaged in social action, rather than experimenting with, adapting to, adopting, and challenging cultural and historical expectations of gender.

Likewise, where feminist theory challenges the construction of gender, queer theory challenges the construction of sexuality as operating under paradigms of heteronormativity, specifically, and questions ideas about identity, generally:

Queer theory is a set of ideas based around the idea that identities are not fixed and do not determine who we are. It suggests that it is meaningless to talk in general about 'women' or any other group, as identities consist of so many elements that to assume that people can be seen collectively on the basis of one shared characteristic is wrong. Indeed, it proposes that we deliberately challenge all notions of fixed identity, in varied and non-predictable ways. (Gauntlett, n.d.)

Queer theory and feminist theory both may serve as terministic screens or lenses through which we can examine the journeys of project participant-researchers as they discuss their own struggles with gender and sexuality constructions. Jagose explains:

Broadly speaking, queer describes those gestures or analytical models which dramatise incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire. Resisting that model of stability--which claims heterosexuality as its origin, when it is more properly its effect--queer focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire. Institutionally, queer has been associated most prominently with lesbian and gay subjects, but its analytic framework also includes such topics as cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. Whether as transvestite performance or

academic deconstruction, queer locates and exploits the incoherencies in those three terms which stabilise heterosexuality. Demonstrating the impossibility of any 'natural' sexuality, it calls into question even such apparently unproblematic terms as 'man' and 'woman'. (1996)

As such, queer and feminist theoretical approaches will shape the ways in which the *research community* of participant-researchers and researcher regard gender and sexuality as constructed against the backdrop of dominant, heteronormative paradigms.

With an understanding of narrative, phenomenological methodologies and queer and feminist paradigms, I proceed with my research in order to establish a collaborative and communicative relationship with my participant-researchers that might not always fulfill my expectations as researcher, but that must be meaningful and valuable exactly as it unfolds (Ellwood, 2006). One significant influence the use of feminist and queer frameworks will have on this project is the highly collaborative nature of the participation process. After composing the research narrative, participant-researchers were asked to reflect on both their own and other participant-researchers' work via the project blog and answer a set of questions to help analyze the "data." This allowed them to adopt a researcher's gaze and provide a space for them to write about their experiences and to express their ideas and opinions. Of particular importance is the ability of participant-researchers to read and respond to other participant-researchers' auto-ethnographies. This allows feedback through a specific cultural filter that I could not possibly perform. It is my hope that such a methodological move both enhances the experience for participant-researchers and enriches the data for discussion.

In the next sections I'll introduce the project participant-researchers and procedures of data collection and analysis.

Procedures

I use qualitative methods of data collection, which include narrative auto-ethnography, peer analysis, and metacognitive reflection on the participation process. Participant-researchers have been asked to provide their English language learning histories (literacy narratives) via written auto-ethnographies (Appendix A) and then to return to these narratives for further examination (Ramanathan, 2005; Van Manen, 1990) in order to consider the possible relationships between language and sexuality. Figure 1 below shows the timeline and steps of the project. All narratives may be found in Appendix E and analyses of narratives may be found in Appendix F.

Summer 2008: Preliminary exploration of project's main themes via discussion with colleagues and friends in Japan and USA.

Fall 2008: Open call for participation via email and websites.

Winter 2008: Close call for participation; I send participant-researchers instructions, informed consent, and a copy of *Queer Japan*.

Spring 2009: First drafts of narratives due via email; I read and offer suggestions for revision via email.

Summer 2009: I visit with all but one participant²¹ in Japan to discuss the project, answer questions, motivate continued participation, etc.; 2nd drafts are due via email.

Fall 2009: Participant-researchers and I brainstorm questions for analyses of narratives via email; participant-researchers paired with partners and asked to read each other's final drafts via the project blog, <http://DiscoveringVoices.com>.

Winter 2009: Participant-researchers' analyses of narratives due; I check-in regarding final questions, ask for clarification, etc.

Spring 2010: I check-in with participant-researchers one final time to see if they have any additional insight (member checking).

Summer 2010: I meet with a peer debriefer to review the reliability and validity of my semantic analyses of participant-researcher narratives and analyses.

Figure 1. Timeline and stages of research.

²¹ Akihito and I were not able to meet due to differences in schedules.

Participant-researchers

Eight people (self-identified queer, bilingual Japanese; see Table 1) were recruited via public announcement (email and internet; see Appendix B) to act as participant-researchers in this project: Information was posted on public forums (*JguyUSGuy.com*, *Dykenet.com* and JALT's²² *Gender Awareness in Language Education* website) and email distribution lists (such as JALT Chapters and special interest groups) inviting individuals to visit the author's blog to learn more about the study and to participate by writing a short narrative (<http://discoveringvoices.com>). Participant-researchers were also recruited using a snowball approach where my acquaintances and colleagues invited potential participant-researchers to contact me or visit the project website if interested in participation.

Once the participant-researchers agreed via email to participate, they were sent a set of English language instructions and a copy of *Queer Japan* as remuneration and inspiration. I clarified the time line in Figure 1 above and answered any questions they had. After they completed the first drafts of their narratives, I offered commentary to help clarify passages or elicit greater depth in their stories.

At that time, and with help from a research grant from my doctoral institution, I was able to visit with all but one of the participant-researchers in order to build rapport and clarify any confusion. After a second revision, and in some cases a third, the

²² Japan Association for Language Teaching

narratives were then posted to the project blog and as a research community we brainstormed questions for analyses of narratives via email. Four of the eight participant-researchers participated in this conversation (see Appendix D for the list of questions). Finally, participant-researchers were asked to read and comment on both their own and another writer's narrative using the analytical questions we had previously created. Comments were sent to me privately in order to protect participant identities.

I feel it important to note that I had pre-existing relationships with three of the participant-researchers: Rika and I have been good friends since 2002 and our friendship is reflected in the first narrative presented in Chapter Two, "Is *Okama* Okay?" Toru and I romantically dated briefly in 2002 and our friendship is reflected in the narrative presented in Chapter Three, "The Narrative Turn"; and Kenjiro and I have been friends since 2002, having lived together in a romantic relationship for two years from 2004-2006. Ramifications of researcher-participant relationships are discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five's section on limitations of the study.

All 8 participant-researchers completed narrative auto-ethnographies though only 7 participant-researchers were available to continue the project by analyzing their self-authored and co-participant-researchers' narratives.

Table 1. *Participant-researchers' Demographic Information as Reported by Participant-researchers in Winter, 2008 (in English)*

- 1) Your first name (pseudonyms used below)
- 2) Age
- 3) Gender (man or woman or other)
- 4) How would you describe your sexuality? (example: gay, bisexual, straight, none of these terms apply, etc.)
- 5) Current occupation (example: student, salaryman, teacher, etc)
- 6) Location (address)

NAME	AGE	GENDER	SEXUALITY	OCCUPATION	LOCATION
Akihito	34	M	Gay	Teacher	Nagoya
Akiko	32	F	Lesbian	Elderly Assistant	Tokyo
Katsuya	28	M	Gay	Counselor	Saitama
Kenjiro	31	M	Gay	Nurse	Osaka
Naoko	28	F	Lesbian	Owns English Cafe	Osaka
Mayumi	32	F	Lesbian	Office Worker	Tokyo
Rika	36	F	Bi-sexual	Teacher	Osaka
Toru	40	M	Gay	Businessman	Osaka

Compensation for Participation

There was no monetary compensation for participating in this project. However, participant-researchers were given copies of *Queer Japan* as a form of remuneration and as a set of models for English-language narrative writing.

Site

Participant-researchers were asked to submit written stories and responses to follow-up questions via internet, email or text messenger and as such could participate in the study from whatever location best met their needs. If meeting in person, I allowed the participant to choose a site that was a convenient distance from her/his home. No data was collected during these meetings, however, and meetings were intended to build rapport and intimacy with participant-researchers in order to renew motivation to continue and complete the project.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is largely phenomenological and inspired by Denzin's 1969 discussion of the methodological assumptions of symbolic interactionism as necessitating "a two-step process for any study; meanings at both the individual and interactional levels must be examined" (p. 926). Data was analyzed first by the writers' themselves (their own narratives) and then by their co-participant-researchers using a set of questions created by the research community (researcher and participant-researchers) reflecting on and following the creation of narratives. As such, the analysis protocol was inductive in that it emerged from the data and experiences of the participant-researchers, and involved analysis of meaning at both the individual and social levels – what the individual deems significant is evident in his/her analysis of narrative and what is significant with regard to the individual in social context can be discussed by another member of that social group or community, the co-participant.

As the researcher, I then looked for themes²³ (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), metaphors and descriptive phrases/adjectives (Besnier, 1990; Ochs, 1993; Patton, 1980; Patton, 2002; Spradley, 1979) related to English and Japanese language and culture within and across all a) narratives and b) analyses that further highlight both shared and idiosyncratic experiences/attitudes related to the emotional experience of the bilingual participant-researchers and the three following research questions:

1. In what ways have self-identified, bi-lingual, queer Japanese, both men and women, *formed ideas* about sexuality as a result of their English learning experiences and exposure to English as a linguistic system and English as a linguistic culture?
2. How have these ideas possibly influenced how they *reveal* or *perform* these sexualities? Considering Takashi, another way of asking this question is “In what ways does language become ideologically bound to particular performances of self, specifically sexuality, and why?”
3. How do the relationships between language and affect influence the performance of specific identities for bi-lingual, queer Japanese? In what ways can written, auto-ethnographic, narrative approaches to language and sexuality research also illuminate the significance of affect in the ongoing construction of linguistic and sexualized identities?

²³ Inspired by grounded theory, using a constant comparison method.

Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

The aim of this study is not to predict behavior nor test deductive hypotheses, but rather to illuminate the relationships among constructs such as “language”, “culture”, and “sexuality” in the lives of self-identified queer Japanese men and women. The credibility and trustworthiness of this study are then grounded in the participant-researchers’ and researchers’ narrative auto-ethnographies and analyses of lived experiences (Park, 2006). Because of the nature of the analysis methods in this project, participant-researchers were asked to become first level (own stories) and second level (others’ stories) analysts for all data. The triangulation of data – 1) auto-ethnographies of researcher and participant-researchers, 2) participant analyses, and 3) researcher analyses for themes, metaphors and adjectives - also aids in a fuller understanding of the complex phenomenon at work in the lives of the participant-researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Denzin notes:

If the scientific observer is subject to interactional demands, and hence less than perfect as a recorder of social events, then multiple observers and multiple methods, which overcome one another’s restrictive biases, become one of the most valid and reliable strategies of observation based on the triangulation principle will yield data that are more reliable and valid than an investigation that is not so based. (1969, p. 932)

Finally, member-checking was employed in order to fulfill the needs of a feminist, communitarian ethical framework whereby participant-researchers share in each step of the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Park, 2006).

Next I'll present the participant-researchers' analyses of their own and co-participant's stories and conclude with my own analyses of the narratives and analyses. Chapter 5 will then critically discuss the data collected and offer reflections on limitations, implications, and final conclusions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

“[My Australian English tutor] made a bed (futon) for me, but his futons were placed close to mine. After getting into futon and said “good night”, he started putting his hand under my blanket and touching my body. I did not remember my first reaction, but it is obvious that I did not resist what he did to me. Then he sneaked into my futon and.....we kissed.... He went down..., Anyway, it was my first experience of gay sex. My body was sensitive and I totally felt great with him. It was totally different from sex with my girl friend. As I mentioned before, I did not have feeling that I wanted more with her. But, I felt that I wanted to have more sex with him. My gay life has started since the day. I had had no idea that I was gay, but after having sex with him, I had to admit that I was gay. But for no reason, I did not feel bad about it. It might be because I had confidence about my sexuality to some extent from the beginning (maybe from educational background). Since I discover my sexuality, my life has been totally changed to better one. I still thank him for changing my life. Now I understand why I started to go to English conversation school. I must always have had feeling to white guys deep in my mind and wanted to have love relationship with them. English and Myself.... They have clear relationship for me. I can say that my hidden sexuality was surely my driving force to study English.” Toru, 40 year old male chemical scientist, Osaka, Japan

The above epigraph, an excerpt from Toru’s narrative, reinforces Moore’s (2007) conclusion that some gay men may be motivated to acquire English partially due to their need to explore or express their sexual desires (also see Kulick, 2000), as Toru wrote: *“English and Myself.... They have clear relationship for me. I can say that my hidden sexuality was surely my driving force to study English.”* But the relationships between language and sexuality are not solely limited to language acquisition motivation. As we have already seen in the previous chapters’ epigraphs from Akihito, Katsuya and Rika, one’s understanding of linguistic community can also influence conceptualization, performance, and revelation of sexual selves. It is these influences that I present in this

chapter through analyses of the eight participant-researchers' auto-ethnographic narratives.

As noted in Chapter Two, much of the existent academic research into language and sexuality in Japan involves single-sex studies - solely men or solely women - and employ question and answer protocols vs. written auto-ethnography in order to investigate the relationships between language and sexuality. In this chapter, I will present results from the written, narrative auto-ethnographies. The complete writings by participant-researchers may be found in Appendix E; here I present specific excerpts from the results in order to showcase the ways in which English as a linguistic culture and English as a linguistic system impact various performances of selves, specifically sexual selves. In addition, I respond to Pavlenko's question about bilinguals feeling like different people when speaking different languages, as discussed in Chapter Two of this manuscript, by also examining the *affective stances* participant-researchers create through their linguistic choices in their writings. I will more thoroughly address the relevance of affect and language below in the section titled "Analysis of Descriptive Language."

I continue this chapter in the same way I have presented every chapter thus far, with a personal narrative reflecting my own experiences in Japan. The following anecdotal story will help to establish the stances some Japanese may take towards written English and the ways in which some instructor-researchers might view such expression, thereby offering deeper insight into the significance of written self-expression in the lives of some Japanese. Following this introductory narrative, I more fully introduce the participant-researchers' own narratives and analyses.

**Osaka, 2003: Japanese Students' Experiences
with Writing - The English Part of Me**

About five or six months after moving to Japan I began additional substitute teaching at other conversation schools. One student, a single woman in her early 30's named Tomoyo, had requested a private lesson, a common occurrence, so that she could get some feedback on her writing. Tomoyo was a bit of an anomaly because first of all, the school's curriculum focused on oral conversation skills, not writing. Second, what was most fascinating about her was that, by her own admission, she only wrote her stories in English and all of her writing centered on ghosts and zombies. One look at the current manuscript sitting in front of her revealed that she had created almost 10 single-spaced pages of horror fiction. "But why?" was all I could manage to ask, slightly intrigued.

"I like to tell stories...but words have different feelings in Japanese vs. English." She continued, "We don't get much chance to write creatively or freely in school." She paused then added, "I like the horror stories best. Japanese literature is full of ghost and goblin tales so I experiment with telling them in English."

"So how can I help you?" I inquired.

"I need to know if my ideas make sense in English."

"Well, do you write in Japanese first and then translate into English?" I wondered, considering her writing process.

"No, I don't care to write in Japanese, just English. My tone is not strong enough when I use Japanese to capture the feeling of my story and words are too hard to choose.

When I got to level six²⁴ in my English studies, I started to notice that I could write in English and I liked it. I always try to go straight to English...but even though I'm level four now, sometimes I need to know if I am choosing the right words."

"So you only write these stories in English?" I asked.

"Yes, I can exercise my English. I want to write English *manga* (graphic novels) someday. English is really the only chance I get to write. The other teachers think I'm crazy. What do you think?"

"Show me what you brought today," I instructed. And with that I started reading about a Japanese ghost who, angered at the replacement of her Tokyo gravesite with a modern housing development, brought chaos to the lives of the construction workers. I could make it through most all of the sentences, though some were jarringly incomplete. I could get the main idea of her paragraphs, though they were short and sometimes disconnected. I found myself challenged, pondering "What do I comment on?" Despite the grammatical errors, I was in fact able to understand her story and she had even used humor to criticize Japanese metropolitan land development (though whether or not this was intended, I couldn't tell). To be sure, she had her own unique style and this interested me; Tomoyo had an English authorial voice with which she could write. From

²⁴ The English school where I was teaching at the time ranked students according to communicative ability and reading comprehension in order to create a system of lessons. Level 7 (a, b and c) were the beginners; 6, 5 and 4 were intermediate; 3, 2 and 1 were advanced. Though speaking, listening, and reading were all routinely drilled, writing was the only skill not directly addressed in the school's curriculum, a common phenomenon in the Japanese *eikaiwa* (English conversation schools).

what I knew about Japanese modes of both education and communication, and considering Tomoyo's age (between 45 and 50), I understood that not all Japanese perceived that they actually had such an authorial voice.

Tomoyo and I decided that we would work on recognizing errors in her sentence structure by comparing spoken English with written English. After the lesson, another substitute teacher who I knew, and who had taught Tomoyo previously, offered, "Isn't she a total nut job? Did she bring you one of her stories to proofread?" I felt angry at the lack of regard for Tomoyo's hard work and imagination and was quick to defend her creativity and risk-taking, "When's the last time YOU tried to write a 10 page story in another language?"

A few months later I started teaching university English courses and within six months I began teaching my first advanced writing seminar. Thinking about Tomoyo, my only writing student thus far, and her insistence to only write in English, I told her story to my seminar participants as a way to examine possible differences in English and Japanese expression. One young woman, Chie, explained that creative writing was virtually non-existent in the Japanese educational system and writing itself was not an academic discipline as much as it was a tool for communication and learning. "No wonder writing is equally absent from the *eikaiwa* (*English conversation school*)," I concluded.

But it was Nobu, Chie's classmate who had just returned from two years of studying in northern England, who further explored this idea of voice, "When I lived in

England during high school and had to write about myself, a lot, much more than I did in Japanese school, I was always amazed by how I sounded in English.”

Chie nodded her head as Nobu continued, "Like, writing in English and reading myself in English suddenly made *the English part of me* seem more real. I guess in conversation I'm so busy trying to just keep up or think about what to say next. With writing, I have a little more freedom to do what I want and I can do it in my own way."

Participant-researchers' Auto-ethnographies:

Who Did What and in What Ways?

As the above narrative illustrates, the practice of writing is viewed somewhat differently in the Japanese educational system as compared to its English-speaking cultural counterparts. Knowing this, I was unsure as to what I might receive from this study's participant-researchers in terms of the content of their auto-ethnographies and in terms of how the writers would view the auto-ethnographic composition and analysis process. The diversity of both subject matter and rhetorical modes of expression the participant-researchers' provided for this project were remarkable: From poetry to narrative story-telling, the auto-ethnographies took many forms.

All eight participant-researchers completed literacy narratives and seven participant-researchers completed the reflective analyses, leaving one narrative not analyzed by any of the participant-researchers (see Table 2). Only six of the writers completed 2nd or 3rd revisions of their auto-ethnographies. Kenjiro explained that due to other time commitments (during the course of this project he completed nursing school and began his first full-time job in a hospital) he could neither revise his narrative nor

reflect on others' work. Mayumi submitted a first draft of her narrative, which partner Naoko then read and analyzed, but later submitted a revised draft that Naoko did not further analyze. Finally, Akiko submitted a first draft that was not quite complete, but was read and analyzed by partner Rika, anyhow. Table 2 below summarizes the writing activities completed by participant-researchers.

Table 2. *Participant-researchers' Completion of Writing and Analysis Activities*

	Partner	Own Narrative	Revision of Own Narrative	Analysis of Partner's Work
Akihito	<i>Kenjiro</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>
Akiko	<i>Rika</i>	<i>incomplete</i>	<i>not submitted</i>	<i>completed</i>
Katsuya	<i>Toru</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>
Kenjiro	<i>Akihito</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>not submitted</i>	<i>not submitted</i>
Mayumi	<i>Naoko</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>
Naoko	<i>Mayumi</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>
Rika	<i>Akiko</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>
Toru	<i>Katsuya</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>	<i>completed</i>

The first section below titled “Auto-ethnographic Analyses by the Writers Themselves” examines the writers’ own thoughts about their stories and their perceived relationships between English and sexuality. The next section titled “Co-Participant Analyses” examines the reflective analyses of each narrative by partner-participant-researchers. This method was inspired by the feminist communitarian ethical framework (Charmaz, 2000; Christians, 2000; Christians, 2005; Denzin, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln,

2005) discussed in Chapter Three. Such analysis allows for participant-researchers' reflections on what is significant in the data, allows for an emic analysis of the data, and helps to de-privilege my Amerocentric researcher lens in data analysis. Additionally, this methodological move (see Chapter Three) also functions as a form of member-checking, triangulation among data sources and analytic lenses, and an examination of both process and product. I then examine key descriptive language that describes affective stances towards English and Japanese languages and cultures. All data will first be presented in, where possible, the original writers' words and without my interpretation as a researcher. Subsequently, in the final section titled "Discussion of Results" I will more deeply discuss the significance of all three levels of analyses with regards to the main themes examined in Chapters One through Three and the main themes that emerged from the analyses.

Auto-ethnographic Analyses by the Writers Themselves

As previously discussed in Chapter Three, not all auto-ethnography is intended to be read, analyzed and deconstructed; for some authors, inviting the reader into the reconstructed experience may be sufficient (Ellis, 1997). However, I felt that greater insight could be achieved by having participant-researchers reflect on both processes and products in their auto-ethnographic experiences (Anderson, 2006). Moreover, because the auto-ethnography is intended to fulfill the function of phenomenographic writing by highlighting diversity in similar lived experiences (Anderson, 2006; Jacobson, 1978; Richardson, 1999), further analysis results in deeper insight and clarification into such experiences.

First, I have selected a short thematic phrase to use as a section sub-header that captures the essence of the writers' auto-ethnographic reflections, as close as possible to their own words. Next, I foreground the participant-researchers' writing with a short summary of his/her narrative in order to contextualize the auto-ethnography. I continue by providing the writers' own analyses of their narratives based on a completed protocol of questions created collaboratively by both participant-researchers and the researcher. The protocol (see Appendix D) included investigating three aspects of sexuality – conceptualization, performance, and revelation, as previously discussed in Chapter Two. A number of other meta-cognitive prompts examining the overall participation/writing experience are also addressed. Each participant's analysis is then concluded with my own brief discussion of the major themes identified in each narrative in relation to the main research questions in this project. Table 3 at the end of this section offers a summary of participant-researchers' responses and analyses.

Akihito's Narrative: Safe Distance

Summary: Akihito discussed his English learning history starting with junior high school, high school, and undergraduate studies before shifting to graduate studies in New York. This episode is significant as he recounts the relevant ease with which he could come out to others while in this English-speaking environment. He reflects how those experiences have shaped the person he is now, an EFL instructor at a Japanese university. Of note is Akihito's observation of homophobic jokes and remarks in the current Japanese workplace and his belief that it is "a lot easier to come out in English."

Analysis: Akihito began by discussing his understanding of this project's purpose: "to get a perspective on people's language backgrounds and his/her sexual identity." He next responded that based on his narrative, he could conclude that English influenced his conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization:* English language exposure and acquisition allowed an awareness of mainly Western, English-speaking cultures such that it "enabled me to think my sexuality in more positive ways." 2) *Performance:* Akihito did not perceive his general performance of sexuality to have been influenced, "In terms of performance, I don't think I have changed much." 3) *Revelation:* The perceived "safe distance" of English and English-speaking cultures from Akihito's first language communities made it easier for him to talk about his sexuality when in New York, while the perception of openness about English-speakers confirmed that such openness was possible, "Many gay English speakers (not all of them, though) express their sexuality more freely than Japanese gay people." With regards to what he could write in English about his sexuality that he could not write in Japanese, Akihito concluded, "Again, it's easier for me to express my sexuality in English because I can get safe distance and I know that my acquaintances who do not know about my sexuality won't read it."

Discussion: Akihito perceives English speakers to express themselves more openly than Japanese, specifically regarding sexuality. His study abroad experiences were pivotal to his understanding of the ways in which he could construct a public sexualized identity. He is concerned about members of his native language communities knowing about such a sexualized identity due to witnessing homophobic behaviors in his

workplace. His fear of rejection in such communities and his perception that English communication has an affective and cognitive distance from his native language community contribute to him feeling less anxious about constructing a public sexual identity using English with English-speakers.

Akiko's Narrative: Jumping Boundaries

Summary: Akiko began her narrative by examining the influences of Hollywood and Western culture's films on her developing sense of self and sexuality before recounting her earliest English learning experiences and first instances of sexual expression. She uses mathematical equations to describe various stages of struggle with her gender and sexuality, e.g. "American Movie \times English \times Masturbation \times Akiko = Akiko's identity for the period of elementary school," and emphasizes how significant English is as it relates to sex and sexuality: English represents additional opportunities for self-expression not present in Japanese.

Analysis: Akiko's understanding of the project was, "to find how English affected my sexuality and how grow up my identity. Looking back my life related learning English realize me who I am." She next responded that after considering her narrative, English influenced her conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization:* Akiko explained perceived Japanese and English-speaker cultural views towards specific sexual behaviors, "Masturbation is not bad things! But in Japanese make me feel bad." 2) *Performance:* English films influenced her understanding of how she could live her life, "I watched so many English movies to learn how I live my life as gay." 3) *Revelation:* English

language allows for comparatively easier self-expression, “English language is always makes easier to expression myself.” Akiko continued by reflecting on her overall narrative, “English language helps jump the many kinds of boundary line like different culture, different race, different sexuality, it was guiding me to find who I am.” Finally, she discussed how participation in this project has affected her, “I could look back my life, realized me how much I love expressing myself who I am and English language helps me a lot get clear vision and future.”

Discussion: Akiko’s early awareness of both her sexual feelings and the emotional connotations of English and Japanese words used to describe such feelings resulted in an awareness of how words as labels can wield power or remain powerless. As she moved through adolescence, she gained an appreciation for foreign cinema because, in her words, “Movies became a secret of school to teach me about some stuff Japanese adult never tells me and teaching language were always in English. English always easy to show me what I want to know.” Moreover, Akiko’s focus on English as a linguistic culture in addition to a linguistic system leads to her conclusion that English media, especially films, had a huge impact on her developing sense of sexuality.

Katsuya’s Narrative: English as Protection

Summary: Katsuya’s narrative examined his sexuality from childhood to young adulthood set against the backdrop of a significant relationship with another Japanese male. He discusses the significance of English-language music and media, study abroad experiences, and the uses of poetry, both Japanese and English, for self-expression. Of

note is the inclusion of an English-language poem written to his deceased lover. An excerpt follows:

“waiting”
I’m waiting for
the day
when you come
to take me
to where you are
Knowing that
it won’t
till my life’s
blown away
to the vault of heaven

Analysis: Katsuya, likely due to his own identity as a mental health therapist interested in working with the LGBT community, begins by theorizing the relationship between language and sexuality with a perspective somewhat unique to the range of responses. As such, I present the response in its entirety to preserve the integrity of his ideas:

I think the purpose of this project is to discover how you utilize "a linguistic container" to express yourself. Though what happens at the unconscious level is most likely universal, as in the Jungian theory, those natural happenings are shaped arbitrarily going through a linguistic mold. As linguistic mold is developed based on each social and ethnological context, a mold of word which shows a quality that is regarded negative in the context has to include a negative

connotation. In this sense, Japanese which has developed in a society highly suppressive about being different must be a hard linguistic container to express being gay. This is not only a matter of a language but a society per se. Any individual grown up in a society is automatically adjusted to the society. Thus, if you are grown up in a society that says being gay is a taboo, that quality should be hallmarked in your deep inside. It is not very strange that some of gay Japanese feel more comfortable speaking English about being gay because in my opinion, they are suppressed both at the language level and at the society level. However, I'm rather suspicious about them saying it's "perfectly" more comfortable being out in English while not in Japanese. One reason is, if their national identity is Japanese and their mother tongue is Japanese, in speaking a foreign language, there'd always be a gap between what they want to say and what they have inside because it doesn't agree with the society level structure. In my case, speaking English is actually felt better in terms of talking about me being gay, but it is used as a protection not as a better linguistic container.

Furthermore, English influenced his conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization*: Katsuya discussed the relationship between language and emotion, "Using English...I can have a better control over emotional flow so that I won't be overwhelmed. For me, speaking Japanese causes me too much emotional fluctuation, and it prevents me from being freely expressive." He continued by explaining how in Japanese he has to choose "intellectualized words to explain, not express, my feelings"; English is thought to allow freer expression, "because

I don't have to project too much of my feeling on words and I can always supervise (have more control) what I'm saying about when using English, though I'm not very fluent." 2)

Performance: The role of English in both his developing sexuality and his relationship with a boyfriend suggested that "learning English brought me to a better place. Death of my boyfriend was a shocking event and I still have to use English for a control, but at the same time, it's allowed me to observe my deep inside." 3) *Revelation:* Because Katsuya uses poetry as part of his narrative, to capture emotions that reflect his relationship both with his boyfriend and English, he reflects on the use of poetry as similar to the use of English: "...a certain pattern of word construct and unique word choice are sorts of protection. In this sense, what is more important to me is the sense of security rather than a linguistic difference."

Question #2 in Part III of the analysis protocol asked participant-researchers, "What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?" Katsuya responded:

What I thought is very important was that the sense of belongingness is that important for me. Being "out" means revealing myself which should be hidden. Thinking of heterosexual people, they don't have to go through the process of declaration [sic] of their sexuality. In most modern societies, anything sexual is something that should be hidden in public situations, but it's regarded as what is shared by everyone. Without the premise that my sexual orientation is always accepted, I do feel I'm excluded. The first and threatening step to a shared group is to declare [sic] my sexuality, which is quite private. On this step, using

English can work as a protection. If one I'm coming out to is a foreigner [sic], it doesn't mean I'm automatically kicked out of where I belong because s/he and I are not in the same group in the first place. Even if s/he is a Japanese, I can always make it a joke because talking to a Japanese in Japanese about sexuality is a rare occasion.

This sentiment is echoed again later in the analysis when Katsuya discusses the nature of writing his narrative in English, specifically, "As I mentioned above, using another language or poetry is like a protection. This story is very private, and I couldn't have written the entire story in Japanese." However, he did add, "The story means a lot to me and would mean more when shared with others."

Discussion: Katsuya's narrative recounts early childhood masturbation and opposite sex sexual encounters to establish the relationship between sexual desire and sexual identity. In his twenties, it was an English language song by Celine Dion, "To Love You More," that attracted him to English language and culture and re-motivated his English studies. At this time he began to write poetry in both English and Japanese but limited emotional language in his relationship with a Japanese boyfriend to mostly English. In this way, English served as a mediator between what he wanted to say and the emotionality of the message; English felt safer, and this safety was a form of protection from perceived emotional struggle and possible rejection.

Mayumi's Narrative: English as Enhancement

Summary: Mayumi's narrative was largely centered on adolescent and young adult attractions and relationships in Japan and China. A multilingual speaker, she

problematizes the Japanese labels for specific sexualities, the differences in Japanese, Chinese and English communication strategies, and focuses on gender as a constant site of struggle. One of the more thorough writers, she also examines the significance of location, religion, and language in identity development and concludes by taking what I have termed an *activist stance* regarding public expression of sexualized identities, a conscious recognition of the marginalization of sexual minorities in Japan and the further recognition that one's actions can affect change. I will further discuss this term in Chapter Five.

Analysis: Mayumi began her analysis by explaining her understanding of the research, "To look into the relation with sexuality and English. To know how English influence to your self-confidence about your sexuality." She next responded that based on her narrative, English influenced her conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization:* Mayumi writes, "I learned terms about sexuality through English and got self-confidence as a lesbian." 2) *Performance:* Awareness of individual and cultural diversity was a major outcome of English exposure/acquisition, "I began to pay more attention to natural emotion of people including me, not the manners of patterns. I was getting to have strong opinion. I am not concerned about my self-introduction anymore." 3) *Revelation:* English language helped introduce her to English-speaking cultures and as such, her sexuality could be normalized via another cultural lens. She explained, "I became positive to live my life as I am by knowing about me in the theory of sexuality. English gave me much relief by showing

the way to think or speak about myself without dirty image belonging to Japanese terms related with sexuality. I became honest to myself after I got self-confidence.”

Addressing the nature of identities as being contextual and dynamic, Mayumi reflected on what she found most significant/surprising about her narrative: “I felt shocked that I could stay cool without discussing about our sexuality with my first girl friend whom I was dating for 6 years. I felt my identity was very changeable.”

Question #1 in Part IV of the analysis protocol asked, “How has participation in this project affected you or influenced you, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before?”

Mayumi’s response addresses the nature of the narrative as a reconstruction of experience, and the significance of the author’s inclusions and exclusions:

Honestly I felt big pressure to write my story because I knew essay is also a kind of fiction even though I try to note the facts. I was afraid to put myself in a story. I wanted to light up the line to show how I have been exploring myself. It was hard to figure out what was meaningful and what was not for this story. And I am still wondering if those episodes that I picked up for my story was really important...if I might overlooked important things affected to my life. I am very concerned with words. On the other hand I still doubt how much the words could have the meaning.

The power of words is further pondered in her response to the use of English to write the narrative:

It made me feel positive to write in English. Japanese is too heavy. I have to use too much Chinese characters and it would look hard. I couldn't avoid using the words related with sexuality, which was imported. However, it was still hard to find the right expression in English when I couldn't see my thought clear. I often wanted to escape to the muddled word in Japanese.

Mayumi concludes by suggesting that future research could examine similar phenomenon in the lives of tri- or poly-lingual individuals, as she speaks Japanese, Chinese and English and wonders about the differences in quality of life for sexual minority men vs women in Japan. Finally, she adds, “I think your project is really interesting and has significant meaning in the linguistic study. It was exactly what I felt – that I was enhanced by English.”

Discussion: Mayumi’s 22 page manuscript traced her journey from Japan to China and back to Japan again, and specifically focused on the ways she constructed herself in these various environments. Of note is a comment early in her narrative that “Japanese as my first language is not enough to explain my feeling.” At the time, however, Mayumi’s lack of confidence in her English abilities led her to immerse herself in Chinese language and culture. Ever aware of societal inequalities regarding minority identities (nationality, gender, sexuality), Mayumi adopted a kind of activist stance that later encouraged her participation in a Feminist English study group in Tokyo where she came out in English for the first time. It was at this time that “I realized I was more comfortable to read or talk in English regarding to sexuality.” Mayumi continues:

It might be able to think that it's because English was not my first language and there is distance between the concept in my mind and the real meanings that the terms have. And the another is that there were much more useful terms in English to think about it logically. Also I still couldn't get rid of the dirty image from the Japanese terms.

In Mayumi's narrative we can clearly see how the connotations of terms (as ascribed by the individual and/or larger culture) create an affective frame for a specific language that serves to push or pull the individual to or away from that language. In Mayumi's case, she was pulled towards English because of the possibilities it afforded her personal development, self-awareness, and self-expression. Her first "coming out" experiences in face-to-face social groups vs. anonymous internet communication were both in English-speaking contexts: a feminist English study group and a Christian church group.

Naoko's Narrative: Indirect in English

Summary: Naoko's narrative is centered on her study abroad experience in the USA and her life as owner of an English conversation school later in her early twenties in Japan. She recounts her struggles trying to find her place in Japanese lesbian society and discussing her sexuality openly with her employees and students. Of significance is Naoko's explanation that she is a lesbian despite never having had sex with a woman.

Analysis: Naoko began by explaining the purpose of the project as she sees it, "This project is for knowing about ourselves and letting people know about us. It's like 'coming out from myself'? It's very simple, but also it's the most important thing." She continued by explaining that English influenced her conceptualization, performance and

revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization*: Awareness of individual diversity via English cultural and linguistic experiences helped her to become more comfortable with herself, “If I can speak English, I can communicate with much more people. And it gives me a chance to see much more people. Seeing a lot of different [sic] people makes me feel comfortable to be myself. That's because I'm just one person of those different people. "Everyone is different" is something what I learned by studying English.” 2) *Performance*: Though I'm not clear if she was considering sexuality, Naoko's response focused on her awareness of the need to be a “more energetic communicator.” 3) *Revelation*: The emotional distance of the second language was discussed, “Coming out in English is easier for me [than] in Japanese. I feel it's a little bit indirect when I come out in English.”

In terms of writing her narrative in English and how it might have been different in Japanese, Naoko explained that she feels limited in English and Japanese is still easier for her to use, “I guess I could write my story more simple and easier to understand in Japanese. That's because of my poor English skill.”

Discussion: Naoko's narrative highlights the uses of English as a tool for international communication and how such communication leads to an awareness of diversity. It is this awareness along with study abroad experiences in the USA that have helped Naoko both understand and embrace her sexuality. Despite her reported confidence, she also describes her struggle to reveal this sexuality at the English school she owns and manages:

Customers and staffs are people who want to know different culture. I believe that they have open mind to many things not only languages. I haven't told to any customers that I like women yet. But I have told to a few foreigner staffs. I was a little bit scared of telling them, but I feel I made stronger relationship with them than before. I hope that one day I can come out closet to customers and I can talk with them about my favorite actress, my type of women and my girlfriend!

Naoko views her staff differently than her customers and constructs her sexuality differently along those lines. As her staff is all foreign and the customers all Japanese, this is an interesting distinction because it illustrates how she performs her sexuality differently dependent on the cultural-linguistic identities of her audiences. Naoko's conclusion however explains that being a lesbian is only one aspect of who she is, "I am a person before a lesbian."

Rika's Narrative: Music from another Room

Summary: Rika's extensive narrative follows her journey from grade school in Japan to high school in Canada and back again, and the significance of this experience in the development of both gendered and sexual identities in her 20's and 30's. Of special interest is her discussion of gendered pronouns in Japanese and the lack of such pronouns in English and how this affected her self-concept and awareness of gender. Also an owner of a small, private English school, Rika recounts numerous experiences with Japanese and foreign friends and how they have influenced her understanding and expression of sexuality. As the only participant to identify as bi-sexual, Rika's narrative is significant because of the ways in which she explores sexuality as dynamic and fluid.

Analysis: Rika began with her understanding of this project's purpose, "To find, explore deep inside myself; to think about how learning English affected my sexuality; to study about the difference between when I talk in English and Japanese."

Conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality were influenced by English in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization:* Rika listed the sex-less English pronoun "I"; the power of English as a tool for international communication and thus, acceptance; and ability to perform an "authentic self" while living in Canada as ways in which her concept of sexuality was affected by her English experiences. 2) *Performance:* Rika simply wrote, "Being able to speak English makes it easier for me to come out to the people from other countries. It is easier to come out in English than in Japanese." 3) *Revelation:* She explained that after living in Canada she came back to Japan and "joined Japanese lesbian society and made many lesbian friends." More interesting perhaps is her explanation that though she came out when back in Japan (including coming out to her mother) she had never come out while in Canada.

With regards to the intersections of gender and sexuality, Rika emphasizes the distinctive linguistic structures of English and Japanese, echoing Akiko's sentiments: "The way I called myself in English, the simple "I" [is significant]. How much I hated to call myself "Watashi" or "Atashi" [neutral or feminized versions of "I", respectively]. I didn't want to admit that I was a girl." Rika also emphasizes the role of immersion in other linguistic communities: "I'd like to [add] that living abroad could change your life in a good way. Not only being able to speak another language, but also you can learn how to communicate with people from deep inside of your heart."

Question #2 in Part IV asks what could be written in English that could not be written in Japanese and vice versa. Rika explains: “What could I not write in Japanese? EVERYTHING! hahaha. I couldn't have written this in Japanese. I don't know exactly why, but as I said in my story, maybe it's because English is not my mother tongue, and it's still vague in many ways. It's like listening to music from the room next to your room.”

As other participant-researchers (Mayumi & Toru) also explained, Rika voiced her hope that her narrative can help others. She notes the shared struggle in all eight participant-researchers' narratives (participant-researchers had the freedom to read each other's narratives; all narratives were password protected on the project blog and only participant-researchers were given the password) and explains that she wants to “educate Japanese people about being gay...what we need is not a psychiatrist, but true friends, parents, teachers who know the right information about gay.” Rika concludes:

So, as a start, I CAME OUT TO ONE OF MY STUDENTS!!! yay! She's been learning with me for nearly 9 years and we are very close. So I just told her that I am bi. She knew the word "bisexual" but she didn't exactly know what it means. (This is Japan....sigh) So I explained it to her. She understood me and still loves me. I want to change the world....am I a big mouth? hahaha. But seriously, if my coming out could help people understand that there are many kinds of sexual orientations, I'm eager to do that.

Like Mayumi, Rika is constructing an activist stance towards sexuality in Japan.

Discussion: Rika's narrative emphasizes the interactions of gender and sexuality regarding language use and attitudes. Her discussion of personal pronouns underscores

the significance of English as a linguistic system that is affectively different for her than Japanese, one which doesn't necessarily implicate her gender, and as a result, her sexuality. Moreover, the difference is related to a perceived distance from her native language communities and language, and as has been already reported by other participant-researchers, allows her to write and speak about specific subjects in ways she may not feel as comfortable doing in Japanese.

Toru's Narrative: Confidence

Summary: Toru's narrative focuses on his English studies after college and the relationship between his desire to perform his sexuality/to be sexual and his motivation to acquire English. Of significance is Toru's confusion about being sexually attracted to primarily Caucasian males but emotionally attracted to other Japanese males and the role of a supportive native language community in sexual identity development.

Analysis: Toru's understanding of this project's purpose was "to show my confidence for my sexuality." He next responded that based on his narrative, English influenced his conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization:* Toru explained how his relationships with Western males influenced his own self-concept, "Actually, meeting and having relationship with white guy makes me realize my sexuality. Because most of Western gay guys are confident to their sexuality, it is true that I could easily change my thinking about sexuality. So, in some way, English influenced my thinking about sexuality." 2) *Performance:* Toru reflected on his queer experiences and their relationship to his increasing confidence, "Because of American gay friend or American boyfriend, I

participated in gay parades in US and Japan or gay festival in Japan. I used to play tennis at gay tennis tournament [sic] in US when I was in US. Now, I sometime join gay tennis club in Japan, go for gay BBQ party or participate in blind date party. That means that confidence to my sexuality are gradually getting stronger.” 3) *Revelation*: Toru limits his revelatory behaviors to environments associated with foreign gay friends, “I barely come out to my parent, my school friends or coworkers. But I do not mind meeting straight guys or women in party (mostly women) where my foreign gay friends hold. So, my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English to some extent.”

When asked about the most significant aspect of his narrative, Toru explained that meeting with a gay, private English instructor “completely changed my life to much better way. Meeting with new people is very important in life.”

Lastly, when asked about the process of writing in English, Toru responded, “I happen to express directly in English writing because, I guess, my limited vocabraries [sic]. In Japanese writing, as you know, we use ambiguous expression. I can not do it in English. Sometimes, it is frustrating, but sometimes, I prefer it because I can express directly in English.”

Discussion: Toru’s narrative illustrates how desire to perform sexuality may motivate second language literacy practices, “Now I understand why I started to go to English conversation school. I must always have had feeling to white guys deep in my mind and wanted to have love relationship with them. English and Myself.... They have clear relationship for me. I can say that my hidden sexuality was surely my driving force

to study English.” Likewise, this pull towards English also accompanied an opposite push away, at least initially, from Japanese:

I did not want to have connection with Japanese gay at first. It was because I wanted to avoid risk that my co-workers or my straight friend would know my sexuality through Japanese gay guys (Now, I know it is so absurd). But, a few months after I met my first boyfriend, I finally met one Japanese guy who was one of his best friends. He said to me “Do not worry, you are not alone”. It is so powerful word for me and his word made me feel comfortable in gay life in Japan.”

The oldest of all of the participant-researchers, Toru’s narrative and his integration of various identities from a stage of conflict to harmony may be a sign of what’s to come for the younger participant-researchers. It is clear that language has had a strong relationship with the ways in which Toru constructs sexuality, both personally and publicly.

Table 3 below provides a summary of the participant-researchers’ responses to sections I and III of the research protocol (in Appendix D), a set of questions I developed with the participant-researchers themselves. The questions were intended to clarify the writers’ understanding of the overall goals of the project (I.1), address the main research questions of the project, (III.1a-III.1c) and by way of summary, to highlight what each analyst considered to be most significant in the narratives in response to the overall goals of the project. Section II was omitted as it was related to the participant-researchers’ analyses of their fellow writers and is presented at the end of the next section in Table 4. I have paraphrased the writers’ words where verbatim quotes could not adequately

summarize the protocol responses. Further analysis of Table 3 is presented in the final section below, “Discussion of Results.”

Table 3. Summary of Participants' Analyses of Own Narratives from Parts I & III of the Analysis Protocol (see Appendix 4)

	I. Project purpose	III.1a *E~S: Concept	III.1b E~S: Performance	III.1c E~S: Revelation	III.2 Most important?
Akihito	<i>get a perspective on people's language backgrounds and his/her sexual identity</i>	<i>From US experience; regard sexuality more positively</i>	<i>"I don't think I have changed much"</i>	<i>Easier in English, "safe distance"</i>	<i>"How even well educated Japanese people think about homosexuality"</i>
Akiko	<i>"I can find How English affected my sexuality and How grow up my identity"</i>	<i>English language easier for self-expression</i>	<i>Learned from English movies</i>	<i>Negative connotations of sex in Japanese</i>	<i>"English language helps jump the many kinds of boundary line"</i>
Katsuya	<i>"to discover how you utilize "a linguistic container" to express yourself"</i>	<i>English language easier for self-expression</i>	<i>"use English for a control"; led him to a better place; allows observation of self.</i>	<i>Sense of security in English use</i>	<i>English as emotional protection</i>
Mayumi	<i>How English influences self-confidence about sexuality</i>	<i>Learned terms about sexuality; got confidence</i>	<i>"I was getting to have strong opinion. I am not concerned about my self-introduction anymore"</i>	<i>"English gave me much relief by showing the way to think or speak about myself without dirty image belonging to Japanese terms"</i>	<i>Identity is changeable</i>
Naoko	<i>"coming out from myself"?</i>	<i>English allows communication which creates awareness of diversity</i>	<i>Better communicator</i>	<i>Coming out in English is easier than Japanese; "little bit indirect"</i>	<i>"I'm just a human being like the other people. I just want to love someone and someone to love me"</i>
Rika	<i>How learning English affected sexuality</i>	<i>Ungendered English "I"</i>	<i>Easier to come out in English than in Japanese</i>	<i>Came out to friends and mother after returning from Canada</i>	<i>"The way I called myself in English, the simple "I". How much I hated to call myself "Watashi" or "Atashi". I didn't want to admit that I was a girl"</i>
Toru	<i>To show confidence of sexuality</i>	<i>Influence of Western gay men on concept of sexuality</i>	<i>Participates in gay communities in DC and Osaka</i>	<i>"I barely come out to my parent, my school friends or coworkers. But I do not mind meeting straight guys or women in party where my foreign gay friends hold"</i>	<i>"Meeting with gay private English teacher completely changed my life to much better way. Meeting with new people is very important in life"</i>

Note: Kenjiro is not listed here because he did not perform analyses. *E~S = Relationship between English and sexuality.

Co-Participant Analyses

In the following section, I will present the analyses of narratives by each author's participant-partner in order to examine the ways in which participant-researchers see themselves and their stories reflected in co-participant experiences. Moreover, this approach allows for greater analytic sensitivity from a socio-cultural standpoint by allowing members of the same in-group to offer their own perspectives. Partners were paired at random, but were grouped by gender partially due to the nature of gender stratification in everyday Japanese society but mostly with the hope that participant-researchers would be more likely to see their own gendered struggles in someone of the same biological sex. Using responses to section II of the collaboratively-created question protocol (see Appendix D) I present the participant-researchers' reflections on partners' stories. Table 4 below summarizes the relationships among participant-researchers (the identities of writer and analyst). In the table, I have provided summaries in my own words where succinct verbatim quotes from the analysts were not present.

Additionally, I use the symbol "W" to connote the identity of the original writer and "A" to connote the identity of the analyst in the following sections.

Akihito Discusses Kenjiro's Narrative: The Way English Speakers Think

First it is necessary to note the main themes in Kenjiro's (W) narrative as it was not already introduced above: Kenjiro (W) noticed a talent and passion for English in his childhood and pursued it in college all the while coming to terms with his sexuality and keeping it hidden. Foreign friends and cultures – via media and internet – provided an alternative model to closeting and those resulting relationships encouraged Kenjiro (W)

to come out and re-examine his ideas about sexuality. According to Akihito's (A) response to protocol questions about his partner-participant's auto-ethnography, English influenced Kenjiro's (W) conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization*: Akihito (A) notes the effects of foreign friends in Kenjiro's (W) narrative, "I don't specifically think that his sexuality was influenced by English itself. But he is definitely influenced by his gay friends from foreign countries and by the way they think." 2) *Performance*: Akihito (A) noted an absence of information about performance of sexuality in Kenjiro's (W) narrative, "I don't think he described anything about his performance." 3) *Revelation*: Again, Akihito (A) notes the influence of English-speaking friends, "In the same way, Kenjiro was influenced by the way English speakers think. That had him come out to his close friends."

Akihito (A) next reflected on the most "interesting or important" aspect of Kenjiro's (W) narrative in item II.2 from the research protocol, "That he became more active in terms of coming out," and similarities between Kenjiro's (W) and Akihito's (A) own narrative, "We both are affected by the way English speakers think about their sexuality. It's very different from how Japanese gay people think: more open, positive, and affirmative."

Akiko Discusses Rika's Narrative: English Expression Makes Her More Comfortable

Akiko (A) focused on the long-term effects of Rika's (W) study abroad experience as discussed in her narrative. 1) *Conceptualization*: "Before she start study

English she think she was not good at anything. She needed to something to make her life better and she tried to get out of Japan. So I think it was by chance that she choose study English. Also, to study English was challenge to make it happen.” 2)

Performance: Akiko (A) reflects on difference and comfort, “She feels different from ordinary girl since when she was little. The differences tells her how her uncomfortable in her life. English expression makes her more comfortable to be how she is.” 3)

Revelation: Akiko (A) notes Rika’s (W) coming out to her mother and friends as a result of her time in Canada and resulting level of comfort.

Akiko (A) next reflected that Rika’s (W) new found hope for her future after her experience in Canada was the most important or interesting aspect of her narrative. With regard to similarities, Akiko (A) discusses Rika’s (W) ideas about gendered language, “She feels comfortable to call myself "I" this is no boundary line to tell people how I call myself specifically like Japanese “watashi" [neutral or feminine “I”] or "Boku" [masculine “I”].”

Katsuya Discusses Toru’s Narrative: English Worked as a Protection

Katsuya (A) used his own experiences as a therapist to deconstruct Toru’s (W) narrative. 1) *Conceptualization:* Although Katsuya (A) concedes that “English learning doesn’t have a direct connection to his sexuality conceptualization,” he continues by explaining:

As in Toru’s story, he was led to realizing he was gay when he firstly had sex with a Caucasian man, and then he's been gradually attracted to Japanese as he construct a stronger gay network. In addition, his interest was in only Caucasian

men, and any other race who speaks English didn't attract him, which is interesting enough. I may need another ten paragraphs to explain this, but I would say the keys leading to the connection between English and his sexuality conceptualization lies in social learning and inferiority complex. As he says was afraid that any connection to a Japanese gay may lead to a disruption of his social status, he might have avoided having a gay relationship with Japanese. Then why he had to choose a Caucasian? I can't say much because I don't know Toru personally, but I'm suspecting that it was due to a sort of identification process.

2) *Performance*: Katsuya (A) suggests that Toru's (W) experiences with Caucasian gay men led him to have less hesitation about identifying himself with a gay community. 3)

Revelation: Katsuya (A) concludes that for Toru (W), "English was a trigger. He was afraid of being recognized as an outsider, but with the experience of his first boyfriend, he became more confident about what he's really like. Not mentioned directly in his story, but he seems to now be out to some extent in Japan."

What was most significant in Katsuya's (A) opinion about Toru's (W) narrative was that "English...led him to a safer place to realise his own sexuality." Katsuya (A) concludes that as in his own narrative, Toru's (W) illustrates how English worked as a form of protection.

Mayumi Discusses Naoko's Narrative: The Ways of Being Herself

According to Mayumi (A), English influenced Naoko's (W) conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization*: Mayumi (A) recognizes the discursive construction of self in Naoko's (W) American

experiences, “She was getting her sexuality as a part of her identity through communicating with people with different nationalities or backgrounds in English and learning the ways of being herself.” 2) *Performance*: Mayumi (A) focuses on identity integration:

She opened her English cafe. She wanted to have business related with English and it meant a kind of performance to show her style. She employed herself. Her English skills and experience in America influence her independent spirit. At the beginning English was just a tool or window to see different world for her but as she was getting to know more about Western cultures and getting self-confidence as a lesbian English was becoming a kind of function with herself to express her style. And it turned to become a part of herself in some way.

3) *Revelation*: Mayumi (A) finds Naoko’s (W) experiences with English in America to have influenced her coming out behaviors, “She came out to her boy friend. She may have found another reason to end up with him but she has chosen the way to tell him the fact she was more attracted to women. It was affected by her experience of learning English in America and seeing to people being themselves.”

Discussing what she found most interesting or important in Naoko’s (W) narrative, Mayumi (A) again reflects on Naoko’s (W) study abroad experience as helping her learn not only English, but also about herself. Mayumi (A) concludes:

There are similarities between her story and mine, which is that English and communication with Western people influenced to think about who you are and encouraged to be independent. I had sympathy with the point that she didn't feel

comfortable to be in Japanese lesbian community. And I felt she was very honest to herself. English was also just tool for me to only know Western culture or communicate with people with different nationalities and it was becoming a function belonging to my brain.

Mayumi's (A) final words hint at an integration of the English identity with other salient identities.

Naoko's Discussion of Mayumi's Narrative: We Are Not Different from Other People at All

Naoko (A) began her discussion of Mayumi's (W) narrative by examining the significance of multiple language abilities and living abroad: 1) *Conceptualization*: Though Naoko (A) does not find direct evidence of English influencing Mayumi's (W) conceptualization of sexuality, she does note that, "...she became a different person when called a Chinese name. It means that her way of thinking about everything changes when she speaks other languages." 2) *Performance*: Again, Naoko (A) did not identify any influence of English on performance of sexuality. 3) *Revelation*: Naoko (A) wonders if living in other cultures might not have had an additional effect on Mayumi's (W) revelation behaviors, "When she speaks other languages like Chinese or English, she seems to feel more comfortable to communicate with people. Also, she feels easier to explain about herself. I don't know if it's affected by English though. It might be affected by not only language, but also living in other cultures."

Regarding what was most important or interesting about her partner's narrative, Naoko (A) writes, "No matter what kind of situation she is in, she always tries to be

herself. She doesn't lose herself and stays herself." Naoko (A) concludes by suggesting that both she and Mayumi (W) "just want to live our lives being ourselves; we want people to know we are not different from other people at all."

Rika Discusses Akiko's Narrative: I Was Actually Influenced by English Movies

According to Rika (A), English influenced Akiko's (W) conceptualization, performance and revelation of sexuality in the following ways: 1) *Conceptualization*: She notes that English language sex words may have been more comfortable for Akiko (W) than their Japanese equivalents, "When Akiko started learning English, she was interested in English words that are related to sex. She liked using these words. I think she felt more comfortable and natural when she uses English sex words than using Japanese sex words." 2) *Performance*: Rika (A) only states that "English movies led [Akiko's] interest in English, but she didn't clearly mention how." 3) *Revelation*: Again, Rika's (A) response is brief, "She uses English words that are related to sex to her mother, but she didn't mention if it affected her sexuality."

Akiko's (W) lack of awareness about her sexuality as an adolescent surprised Rika (A), "I thought every gay has indications that s/he might be attracted to the same sex when they are children." Regarding similarities in their stories, Rika (A) concludes, "I didn't write about it, but I was actually influenced by English movies as well although our taste of movies are totally different. And I also looked for English gay movies when I wanted more information, to study about gay."

Toru Discusses Katsuya's Narrative: He Could Not Show His Real Life in Japanese Gay Community

Toru's (A) focus is the ways in which Katsuya (W) has struggled to construct a sexualized identity in English and Japanese speaking environments: 1)

Conceptualization: Like Akiko and Rika, Katsuya (W) was also influenced by foreign media. Toru (A) writes, "He watched many gay guys in foreign country come out of closet or show real gay life on TV, which influenced his thinking about sexuality. I think English influenced his thinking about sexuality, not directly, but to some extent." 2)

Performance: Toru (A) writes, "I guess there is no answer." 3) *Revelation:* Toru (A) explained that "Getting to know foreign English speaking friends let [Katsuya] come out to some of his friends and show his real life to them."

Toru (A) concludes by reflecting on what was most interesting or important about Katsuya's (W) narrative, "He was struggled with his sexuality for long time. However, at some point, he found his solution, which was to have foreign gay friends and talk freely about gay life. Actually, I was surprised to know that he could not do it in Japanese gay community." This conclusion is reiterated once more in Part II Question #4, "Anything else you'd like to share about your partner's story? Toru (A) writes, "He could not show his real life even in Japanese gay community. So, I realize that Japanese gay community have to be changed to better one in order to make guys like him happy in Japan."

Table 4 below provides a summary of the participant-researchers' analyses of their participant-partners' narratives, responses to sections II of the research protocol (in Appendix D). As noted in the previous section, the questions were created

collaboratively among the participant-researchers and myself. Questions II.1a-II.2 directly address this projects' main research questions while question II.3 seeks to identify phenomena or experiences that are shared by both writer and analyst. I have paraphrased the writers' words where verbatim quotes could not adequately summarize the protocol responses. Further analysis of Table 4 is presented in the final section below, "Discussion of Results."

Table 4. Summary of Participant-researchers' Analyses of Partner's Narratives from Part II of the Analysis Protocol (see Appendix D)

	II.1a *E~S: Concept	II.1b E~S: Performance	II.1c E~S: Revelation	II.2 Most important?	II.3 Similarities between writers' & analysts' stories?
Akihito analyzes Kenjiro	<i>Influence of foreign friends</i>	N/A	<i>English speaker influence on coming out</i>	<i>Became active in coming out</i>	<i>"We both are affected by the way English speakers think about their sexuality"</i>
Akiko analyzes Rika	<i>English experiences helped shape her</i>	<i>"English expression makes her more comfortable to be how she is."</i>	<i>Came out to friends and Mom</i>	<i>New found hope after study abroad in Canada</i>	<i>Attitudes towards gendered personal pronouns</i>
Katsuya analyzes Toru	<i>"the keys leading to the connection between English and his sexuality conceptualization lies in social learning and inferiority complex"</i>	<i>"less hesitation about identifying himself with a gay community"</i>	<i>English as "trigger" to coming out</i>	<i>"English...led him to a safer place to realise his own sexuality"</i>	<i>English as emotional protection</i>
Mayumi analyzes Naoko	<i>Influence of English language communication and speakers</i>	<i>Identity integration</i>	<i>Influenced by English speakers' behaviors</i>	<i>Study abroad increased self-awareness</i>	<i>Difficulty finding a place in Japanese lesbian community; English as tool for communication</i>
Naoko analyzes Mayumi	<i>Way of thinking changes when using other languages</i>	N/A	<i>More comfortable communicating in other languages</i>	<i>"No matter what kind of situation she is in, she always tries to be herself. She doesn't lose herself and stays herself"</i>	<i>Sexuality is just one part of who they are</i>
Rika analyzes Akiko	<i>English language sex words more comfortable than Japanese equivalents</i>	<i>English films provide models</i>	N/A	<i>Lack of awareness of sexuality as a child</i>	<i>Use of gay, English media for info about sexuality</i>
Toru analyzes Katsuya	<i>Influence of Western gay media on concept of sexuality</i>	N/A	<i>"Getting to know foreign English speaking friends let [Katsuya] come out to some of his friends and show his real life to them"</i>	<i>Cannot come out in Japanese communities, only English</i>	N/A

Note: Kenjiro is not listed here as an analyst, nor is Akihito's narrative analyzed, because he did not perform analyses. *E~S = Relationship between English and sexuality.

Analysis of Descriptive Language

Throughout the narrative auto-ethnographies and participant analyses, numerous descriptive words and phrases (Table 5) are employed to create an *affective stance* (Ochs, 1993; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989) towards languages, cultures, and experiences. In this section, I highlight such language (Patton, 2002; Pavlenko, 2006) as part of a *semantic analysis protocol*. This approach creates an overall sense of each participant's attitudes towards language and culture (Japanese and English), attitudes which also comprise each participant's *language ideology* (Besnier, 1990; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994) and reflects their multiple subjectivities as gendered, sexual, linguistic, and cultured beings (Weedon, 1997). While in the previous section, participant-researchers were purposefully examining ideas and experiences, little attention was specifically focused on the types of language used to describe such ideas and experiences. Thus, the analyses in this section respond to my third main research question, "How do the relationships between language and *affect* influence the performance of specific identities for bi-lingual, queer Japanese?" This question could be rephrased in greater detail, "In what ways did the participant-researchers create a positive or negative *affective stance* towards Japan or English-speaking communities, Japanese or English language, and Japanese or English-speaking cultures as manifested in the words used to describe or reflect on their own and other's life experiences?"

Semantic Analysis Protocol: Examining Affective Language

Table 5 below presents a summary of the semantic analysis protocol. First, after reviewing all participant-researcher writing and protocol responses, I identified words and phrases used directly in the writing that refer specifically to English or Japanese language and culture. The majority of words reflect affective stances through adjectives used to describe emotion or attitude. Others are metaphors whether presented as metaphor, simile, idiomatic expression, etc.

I then determined if the language created a positive or negative affective stance towards English or Japanese language or culture based on my own cultural understandings of such languages . A trained peer debriefer, a doctoral candidate in English Composition and TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, acted as peer debriefer and reviewed two of the eight narratives using this semantic analysis protocol in order to ensure the reliability and validity of such an approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Japanese negative affective stance. Negative attitudes towards Japanese language and Japanese culture were evident to some extent in all eight narratives/analyses either through direct labeling and description or indirectly through comparison statements such as “The most important effect that English brought to him was that it lead [sic] him to a safer place to realize his own sexuality.” Though Japanese language and culture are not directly discussed in this statement, it can be implied due to the context of the response - Katsuya explaining what he deemed most important in Toru’s narrative - that the choice of “safer” suggests an improvement over the comparatively less safe Japanese environment. These kinds of responses, negatively implicating Japanese language and

culture via comparison statements are common in participant-researchers' writing. Moreover, as much of the writing discusses both language and sexuality, much of the Japanese negative word choice and phrasing is related to participant-researchers' feelings of marginalization, repression, struggles to come out of the closet, and struggles to find a community in which to belong.

Japanese positive affective stance. Very few (five) examples of viewing Japanese language or Japanese culture positively appeared in the narratives/analyses, likely due to the nature of the stories that the writers were crafting and the prompts they were given. Katsuya discussed his enjoyment of writing Japanese poetry due to the strict structure and rules of such writing: "Those rules may have functioned as a protection so that I could safely express emotions." Mayumi's experience as an adolescent listening to a female singer use a male pronoun as a self-referent in her Japanese song lyrics offered her "some space to be free from the gender role of a girl."

Naoko wondered if her familiarity and comfort using Japanese language would have made it easier for her to participate in this project.

Rika recounted a positive experience coming out to other young Japanese women, albeit using English, and was happy to have found acceptance. She also notes recent language change in the lesbian community in order to construct a less negatively-marked identity, "The words lesbian or bisexual are kind of discrimination words in Japanese. In English, they are not. So the lesbians in Japan call themselves 'bian'. It sounds cute and much less prejudice."

English negative affective stance. Very few (six) examples of viewing English-speaking cultures, peoples, or language negatively appeared in the narratives/analyses, again, likely due to the nature of the stories being presented and the given prompts. Akiko discussed her childhood dislike of English words for sexual minorities because they were used by Japanese and felt racist; after she understood her own sexuality, this affect changed.

Katsuya discussed how he disliked studying English as an adolescent because his “grade was terribly bad” and he perceived it pointless to learn a foreign language because he had “nothing to share with other people.” This changed in late adolescence when he first heard Celine Dion’s “To Love You More” (song) and became enamored with the emotion expressed in the English language song.

Kenjiro mentioned that the straightforward nature of communication observed in English speakers’ speech was a surprise, “Sometimes I can’t take it and sometimes I envy it.”

Mayumi’s narrative highlights the various emotions towards English experienced at different times in her life and in different social contexts. Firstly, she was drawn towards Chinese literature and culture and so avoided study and travel in the West. While in China, she recognized that she had “a complex with English” due to her lack of skill and knowledge.

Naoko expressed her dislike for reading English and the challenges involved in participating in this project in English, “I guess I could write my story more simple and easier to understand in Japanese, that’s because of my poor English skill. It seems that

using Japanese is still easier for me than using English. Of course I like to communicate with people in English though....Why wouldn't you do this kind of project in Japanese next time?" Naoko also noted, "Communicating in English makes me feel comfortable and easy, but on the other hand it makes me irritated and feel stress sometime."

Rika discussed her "struggle looking for right words" in English, and that her vocabulary is so limited that she has to use direct and simple words to express herself, "My English is still far cry from being perfect."

English positive affective stance. The most common occurrences of positive affective stances as evidenced in Table 5 below were constructed in relation to English language and culture. Such stances were often constructed as English being preferable to Japanese. Symbolic distance, safety, comfort, and freedom were most commonly constructed via participant-researchers' language choices, often due to their perceived lack of proficiency. English was also perceived as preferable because of both the lack of full understanding or command of the English language - for example, described by three of the participants as "distance," - and the suggestion by four of the participants that positive affect towards English language and culture existed in response to difficulty or stress with Japanese language and culture equivalents, a "grass is always greener on the other side" effect.

Summary. All of the language examined must be contextualized as belonging to the particular times (various ages of the writers as presented in their narratives) and spaces (locations and social contexts) as representative of different stages of self-acceptance or self-conflict while in various communities (school, gay areas of cities,

abroad, etc). Therefore although Mayumi, for example, discusses difficulty feeling comfortable in Japanese lesbian society and sees this same phenomenon in Naoko's narrative, such discomfort may only be indicative of the specific events described in their stories and may not represent how she feels about the Japanese lesbian community in general or at the present time.

Because the participant-researchers make comparisons between Japanese and English cultures and communities, it is tempting for me to do the same. However, readers are likewise cautioned to remember that the data examined (taken from narratives and analyses) are representative of each individual's personal experiences and interpretations of such experience. All participant-researchers would be expected to take various affective stances throughout their lives and in response to various events; Bourdieu's *habitus* (1977) may be useful here in conceptualizing the realm of cognitive and affective stances the participant-researchers adopt and the resulting language ideologies that result. In the next section I will more thoroughly discuss common themes throughout all levels of analyses including more thoroughly examining the affective language presented here.

Table 5 below summarizes the negative affective stances towards Japanese language and culture and the positive affective stances towards English language and culture as discussed above. As the number of affective responses that were positive towards Japanese and negative towards English were infrequent, I have omitted them from the chart and highlighted the language representing the affective pull towards a second language and push away from a native language (Moore, 2007).

Table 5. *Affective Language Use, Positive and Negative, by Participants*

	Negative stance towards Japanese language	Negative stance towards Japan & Japanese culture	Positive stance towards English language	Positive stance towards the west and English-speaking cultures
AKIHITO		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Atmosphere for coming out not comfortable * homophobic jokes from colleagues, “makes it nearly impossible to come out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “Comfortable” * “Easier to come out in English because English is second language” * “like a different part of the brain” * “I play a role reading a line written by myself” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Atmosphere for coming out is “smooth” * Admit sexuality “naturally” * “more people in the US tend to know actual gay people” * “sexualities are a lot more natural in the states” * Coming out to foreign colleagues “just easy because I would be sure that they would understand” * “English-speaking people generally more tolerant to homosexuality” * “the way English speakers think about sexuality: more open, positive, affirmative” * “learning English...enabled me to think my sexuality in more positive ways”
AKIKO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sexual terms “Medical”; * “Technical”; * “Couldn’t understand Japanese translation”; * “Difficult” * “Douseiaisya” = “racist, uncomfortable, abnormal, hate myself” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “Japanese movie was so boring cause story was always just daily life for me”; not cool * Sex education = “immature” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “Comfortable”; * “Exciting”; * “Cool” * “Hope”; * “Feeling good” * “Easier to expression myself” * “Helps jump boundary lines; guiding me to find who I am; gives me more meaning of life” * “Helps me get a clear vision and future” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “No English life, no fun to live” * “Hollywood movie was surreal and English sound was so sexy” * Foreign movies (English)=secret lessons about life; “English always easy to show me what I want to know” * “English movie was my cry of the heart”

Note: Due to the low number of “Japanese positive” and “English negative” responses, they are excluded from this table and discussed in the analyses both preceding and following this table.

	Negative stance towards Japanese language	Negative stance towards Japan & Japanese culture	Positive stance towards English language	Positive stance towards the west and English-speaking cultures
KENJIRO		* <i>“Kept my real personality secret”</i> * <i>“Taboo to come out”</i> ; <i>“would never come out”</i> ; <i>“fear”</i> ; <i>“strange”</i> ; <i>“secret”</i> ; <i>“hurting my mind”</i>	* <i>Desire to study since childhood</i> ; <i>“really like”</i>	* <i>Native speakers “told their opinion straight[forward]”</i> ; <i>“envy”</i> * <i>“Encouraged to live as gay”</i>
MAYUMI	* <i>“Heavy”</i> ; <i>“muddled”</i> ; <i>“looks hard”</i> ; <i>“dirty”</i> ; <i>“taboo”</i> ; <i>“awkward”</i> ; <i>“unclear”</i> ; <i>“indirect”</i> ; <i>“not enough to explain feeling”</i> ; <i>“don’t feel comfortable”</i> ; <i>“formal”</i> ; <i>“scholastic”</i> ; <i>“stressed”</i> ; <i>“roundabout”</i> ; <i>“negative”</i> <i>“misunderstanding”</i>	* <i>Not comfortable in Japanese lesbian society</i> ; <i>“hiding”</i> * <i>“Discriminatory”</i> ; <i>“anger”</i> ; <i>“stress”</i> ; <i>“embarrassing”</i> ; <i>“over-earnest”</i> ; * <i>Japanese lesbian communication over internet = “lonely”</i> ; <i>“not real”</i> ; <i>“afraid”</i> * <i>Gender struggle as Japanese female</i> * <i>“Outsider”</i> * <i>LGBT studies “behind” in Japan</i> <i>“Coming out in Japan = “Big monster”</i> * <i>“Different atmosphere”</i> ; <i>“something missing”</i> * <i>“Taga ga hazureru = bound to societal rules</i> * <i>“Not easy to tell your idea or feeling whenever you want”</i>	* <i>“English as tool or window”</i> * <i>“Feel positive to write in English”</i> * <i>“Function...to express style”</i> * <i>“Didn’t influence my emotion with too much flavor of gender”</i> * <i>“Preferred”</i> ; <i>“vague”</i> ; <i>“free”</i> ; <i>“far”</i> ; <i>“direct”</i> ; <i>“expressive”</i> * <i>Decrease in hesitation to talk about self</i> * <i>“More comfortable”</i> ; <i>“useful”</i> ; <i>“distant”</i>	* <i>Sexuality as part of identity gained through English communication</i> * <i>“People being themselves”</i> ; * <i>“Experience in America influenced independent spirit”</i> ; <i>“self-confidence”</i> * <i>“encourage independence”</i> * <i>“Relief”</i> ; <i>“honest”</i> ; <i>“getting to have strong opinion”</i> ; <i>“enhanced”</i> * <i>“Eccentric”</i> ; <i>“free”</i> ; <i>“cool”</i> * <i>English = feminism</i> * <i>Decrease in hesitation to talk about self</i> * <i>“More comfortable”</i> * <i>English “brings people together”</i> * <i>“Say it”</i>
NAOKO		* <i>Not comfortable in Japanese lesbian society</i> ;	* <i>“Easier to explain about herself”</i> * <i>Coming out = “little bit indirect”</i> * <i>“Tool for communication”</i> * <i>“Communicating in English was the only thing that I have confidence”</i> ; <i>“comfortable”</i> ; <i>“easy”</i>	* <i>“More comfortable”</i> * <i>“Easier to explain about herself”</i> * <i>“Everyone is different”</i> ; <i>learning about diversity makes it easier to accept oneself</i> * <i>“Can become more energetic communicator”</i> * <i>Opportunity for self-confidence</i> * <i>“Fascinating”</i> ; <i>“open”</i> ; <i>“good at expressing feelings”</i> * <i>Study abroad “boosted self-confidence”</i> ; <i>“gave me a spice of optimism”</i> ; <i>“most important thing I learned in America, being myself”</i>

	Negative stance towards Japanese language	Negative stance towards Japan & Japanese culture	Positive stance towards English language	Positive stance towards the west and English-speaking cultures
RIKA	<p>* <i>Difficulty finding appropriate label for sexualized self</i></p> <p>* <i>“Hated to call myself ‘Watashi’ or ‘Atashi’</i></p> <p>* <i>I could not have [come out] in Japanese, maybe.</i></p> <p>* <i>Lesbian, bisexual = “discrimination words”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Sexuality is a smelly thing”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I cannot say ‘aishiteru’ (I love you) in Japanese”</i></p>	<p>* <i>Difficulty finding appropriate label for sexualized self</i></p> <p>* <i>“I did not fit in”; “I was never happy while I was in Japan”</i></p> <p>* <i>Hated name, “Too feminine”</i></p> <p>* <i>Father “would not let me go to college”</i></p> <p>* <i>Working at a company in Japan = “having to wear a uniform”</i></p> <p>* <i>“There is less right information about sexuality in Japan compared to Western countries”; “lack of right and proper information”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I’m afraid [to come out to Japanese patrons]”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Dirty jokes”; “make fun of gay people”; “don’t know how to react”</i></p> <p>* <i>“My mother cried”; “mental illness”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I do not want to be put in a cage/categorized”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I got sick of categories”; “keep a distance”</i></p> <p>* <i>“We or they? “Maybe I’m not fully Japanese?”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Glass closet”; “anyone can see I am different from other Japanese girls”</i></p>	<p>* <i>“More comfortable and natural when using English sex words”</i></p> <p>* <i>English = “easier to come out to people from other countries”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Easier to come out in English than in Japanese”</i></p> <p>* <i>English is vague, therefore easier for self-expression, “like listening to music from the room next to your room”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Most comfortable thing in speaking English was that I call myself ‘I’”</i></p> <p>* <i>Studying was “fun”</i></p> <p>* <i>“English is my bread and butter now”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Feel freer”</i></p> <p>* <i>“clear and straightforward”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I simply said, ‘I’m a lesbian’”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I manage to express myself with limited vocabularies”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I think I was able to come out because we were talking in English”</i></p> <p>* <i>“So much easier to say “I love you” in English”</i></p> <p>* <i>“English sounds so congenial”</i></p>	<p>* <i>Influenced by English movies; “can learn gay slang”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Being in Canada and speaking in English made me feel comfortable.”</i></p> <p>* <i>English = communication = acceptance</i></p> <p>* <i>“In Canada, I was able to be ‘a real me’”; learned to help others and be helped</i></p> <p>* <i>Living abroad = “learn how to communicate with people from deep inside your heart”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Studying was fun”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I was able to say what I wanted to say”</i></p> <p>* <i>Canada = “started to like name”; “happier”</i></p> <p>* <i>“People in Canada naturally accept people who are different from them”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Liberal”; “self-confident”; “open-minded”; do not judge people at first sight”; “I am very lucky to have warm-hearted friends”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Because he is American, he expresses his feelings toward me so directly”</i></p> <p>* <i>“English magic”; “being an English-speaker is a big bonus”</i></p>
TORU	<p>* <i>“In Japanese writing, we use ambiguous expression. I cannot do it in English... sometimes frustrating”</i></p>	<p>* <i>“Could not [come out] in Japanese gay community”; “could not show his real life”</i></p> <p>* <i>“I barely come out to my parent, school friends, or coworkers”</i></p>	<p>* <i>“Passion to improve my English”</i></p> <p>* <i>“...express directly in English writing because, I guess, my limited vocabularies”</i></p>	<p>* <i>Foreign TV influenced his thinking about sexuality</i></p> <p>* <i>“Getting to know foreign friends let him come out and show his real life”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Most Western gay guys are confident to their sexuality”; “I could easily change my thinking about sexuality”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Do not mind [coming out] at parties where my foreign gay friends hold”</i></p> <p>* <i>“Because of American friend, I participated...confidence to my sexuality are gradually getting stronger”; “meeting with gay English teacher completely changed my life”</i></p>

Discussion of Results

Imagined Communities of Practice

In his 2007 study investigating language learner motivation among Japanese gay men, Moore concluded that his participants, due to knowledge of and ability to participate in English language communities, were also able to imagine themselves as members of those linguistic communities (also see Kanno & Norton, 2003). This membership then allowed for interaction with other members, and the positive experiences that followed only reinforced a continued desire for participation. As such, the perceived benefits of English language acquisition such as use of English as a tool for international communication motivated their continued learning. For participants like Toru who had his first same-sex experiences with an English-speaker, lived and worked in English-speaking settings and experienced sexual desires for Caucasian males, the same was true as evidenced by his statement “I can say that my hidden sexuality was surely my driving force to study English.”

Other participants such as Naoko, Rika, Kenjiro and Akihito also experienced positive experiences from participation in English speaking communities. These interactions eventually led to both a greater acceptance of selves either through being accepted by peers or recognizing diversity in human identities not previously understood when in Japanese language communities, and through continued participation in English speaking communities whether in the USA or Japan. For example, Naoko writes:

If I can speak English, I can communicate with much more people. And it gives me a chance to see much more people. Seeing a lot of differnt [sic] people makes

me feel comfortable to be myself. That's because I'm just one person of those different people. 'Everyone is different' is something what I learned by studying English.

A further discussion of symbolic interactionism below more deeply analyzes the significance of such community participation.

Language and Identity

Symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism was earlier described as the process of interaction in the formation of meanings for individuals (Blumer, 1969). I also suggested that such interaction allows for inspection of social constructions of roles and identities (Bourdieu, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). For participants like Rika, Mayumi and Akiko who discovered a sense of freedom in the use of different symbols, Japanese gendered pronouns were viewed as problematic. In constructing what they felt were appropriate, socially acceptable and thus socially constructed gendered and sexualized selves when in Japanese language communities there was an often a conflict. For example, Rika wrote, "Through using English I was able to become 'a person with no sex.' The words 'she' and 'her' were kind of new words for me, so I accepted them naturally." Likewise the relative unfamiliarity with English linguistic symbols as compared with Japanese language equivalents also created a perceived emotional distance from the conflict felt when using culturally pejorative terms related to sex and sexuality in Japanese (Hogan, 2003; Stanlaw, 2003). Akiko wrote,

I think Japanese people tend to use a difficult word instead of describe the meaning straight away if people doesn't want to talk about it in public...so that is

why I feel English language is more easy to say many words more than Japanese language. I can express my feeling to people straight away in good way...English is not only cool sound language anymore, it gives me more meaning of life.

Below I further examine this concept of expressing oneself “straight away” as representative of cultural discourses available to the participant-researchers and how such freedom from discourses allowed a sense of power in language use.

Discourses, subjectivities & honne/tatemae. Akiko and her fellow participant-researchers refer to differences in *honne* vs *tatemae* cultural communication styles when discussing their abilities to be more direct in English-language communities and as a result, freer to express both feelings and ideas that would seem unthinkable in general Japanese language communication. The *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* describes these two Japanese terms as follows:

Tatemae/honne distinguish between the world of social relations (surface reality) and the world of feelings (inner reality). Tatemae refers to formal principles or rules to which one is at least outwardly constrained, while honne conveys personal feelings or motives, which cannot be openly expressed due to tatemae. Rather than a discrepancy between a “false” exterior and “true” interior, tatemae/honne are better understood as conveying the existence of more than one kind of truth in social situations. Thus the “truth” of what is appropriate to say directly to others may be different from the “truth” in our hearts. (2007)

Katsuya discusses his preference to both communicate with his lover using English and to write in the form of poetry because of the “protection” provided from the emotions of

Japanese language communication, a sentiment echoed by Akihito's description of English as providing a "safe distance" and Akiko's explanation that "English language helps jump the many kinds of boundary line."

The importance of preserving the *tatema*e principle in Japanese language communication is visible throughout the participant-researchers' discussions of being afraid to talk about their sexualities because of *taga ga hazureru* (being bound to societal rules about polite conversation) as Mayumi put it. Language choices such as *negative*, *awkward*, *uncomfortable* or *unclear* also signal the discomfort in Japanese conversation that some of the writers felt when trying to maintain a public face that seemed in conflict with their sexual desires. Likewise, the *honne* nature of English as *easier*, *straightforward*, *direct* and *comfortable* signal the relative safety experienced in such communication, underscoring Hogan's (2003) discussion about the uses of English language to manage sensitive topics.

Sociolinguist Grein describes the maintenance of social harmony as the interaction-ideal for Japanese, "Speakers have to acquire linguistic means and skills to avoid any kind of disharmony" (2008, p. 196). In such discourses where power in the form of "face" may be lost due to one's choices of both words and topics during conversation, it makes sense that preservation of harmony for all participants be the utmost goal. More interesting, however, is the subjective positioning by the researcher-participants of English as both a language and a place where such preservation of harmony necessitates self-disclosure or where topics normally considered disharmonic are more socially acceptable, an idea further discussed in the following section.

English as emancipatory discourse and a *safe house*. Undoubtedly, as evidenced by the participant-researchers' stories, exposure to English language media in the forms of television, film, magazines, and music has had a profound impact on the ways in which they have come to understand both English-speaking cultures and themselves. For those who have had opportunities to immerse themselves in English-speaking environments (all but Kenjiro and Mayumi), ideas resulting from exposure to such media seem to have been confirmed via lived experiences in English speaking environments. For those who have not immersed themselves in an English language environment quite as extensively, such as study, travel or work abroad, opportunities for rich application of skills were still possible via personal relationships and leisure activities. In all eight examples provided in this section, participant-researchers reported using English spaces as symbolic *safe houses* (Canagarajah, 2004b) where discourses of emancipation from Japanese cultural constraints could be participated in. Returning to the concept of community, all eight writers reported participation in communities whether in-person or online that allowed them to step outside the disempowering Japanese language discourses of *tatema* where one's sexuality could have been viewed as a burden to the interlocutors or marginalized due to paradigms of pathology and fear, and into empowering discourses of confirmation and approval.

Language and Sexuality

Global queering and sexual identities. Despite criticism of the global queering phenomenon as being often viewed as an exported discourse of LGBT sexual emancipation, primarily from North America (Jackson, 2009), it is worth noting that six

of the eight participant-researchers spent time living in North America and none had anything negative to report about these experiences in terms of sexuality. More importantly it was such immersion experiences that aided their own understandings of their sexualities. Although Kenjiro never spent time there, he did cohabit with a North American man for almost two years in Japan. Therefore, it is easy to understand the aforementioned inclination to view the West, specifically North America, as exporting a liberatory brand of consumerist sexual identities and discourses.

McLelland (2000) discussed the challenge of using Western discourses of sexual identities as the only modes for considering sexual diversity in non-Western settings and further challenged the concept of researching sexuality as necessarily an identity construction as opposed to a behavior contextual to local cultures. Kulick (2003) furthers this discussion by suggesting that sexual identity is not the only aspect of sexuality meritorious of inquiry and like McLelland calls for an examination of the very behaviors and emotions that constitute sexuality, namely desire rather than the concepts “gay and lesbian identities” that seem to be espoused by discussions of global queering. But considering a) the generally negative affective stances towards Japanese language overall as discussed by the participant-researchers, b) the lack of successful and functional models for sexually diverse peoples, and c) the lack of discourses of acceptance available to participants in largely Japanese language communities, it is not surprising that English language and culture be held in a high esteem when it provides what Japanese language communities cannot.

Conceptualization, performance & revelation of sexualities and English

language learning and performance. In Chapter One, as a way to introduce the first narrative about Takashi's comment, "I'm not gay in Japanese, I'm only gay in English," I raised the idea of sexuality being contingent on a linguistic context. As discussed throughout this chapter, participant-researchers reported a variety of experiences supporting this idea, *linguistically-contextual sexual identity*. While all of the writers discussed being influenced by Western, primarily English speakers', cultural concepts of human sexuality, others performed their sexualities, and interestingly, genders as well, in response to imagined freedoms inherent in English speaking communities. Such performances were for some, sexual in nature. For example, Toru discussed being sexually attracted to Caucasian men and participating in sexual exchanges with English speakers. Others focused on revelatory behaviors such as Akihito's report of coming out to his roommate in New York and Rika's reports of coming out to groups of students at a women's college in Kyoto and to one of her own students.

What is not explicitly addressed in the narratives is the ways in which the researcher-participants possibly *maintain* different sexualities in different communities, for example covering their queer sexual desires by publicly proclaiming a heterosexual orientation to one community and a queer sexuality to another. It is clear enough that a majority of the participants do indeed discuss their sexual feelings with other Japanese, but what is underscored time and time again are the feelings of marginalization and struggle in the face of proclaiming one's sexuality publicly in Japan to Japanese.

It may then be concluded, as I hinted at in my Chapter Two discussion of language and sexuality, that sexuality is highly personal, dynamic, and most importantly contextual. While sexual desire for a specific gender may not be as mutable as public presentation of sexuality in the form of a sexual identity, the participant-researchers have shown how desire itself can change, e.g. Toru's increasing desire to be with Japanese rather than Caucasian men or Rika's desire to be with women initially and now a man currently. The constructions of sexualized public identities, however, are greatly subject to specific contexts, for example a workplace or when in the company of a specific group of peers. More importantly, and in light of what this projects' writers have reported, linguistic contexts – Japanese or English – can in fact have an enormous influence on the types of constructions deemed acceptable in those contexts. What is viewed as acceptable is a result of all of the knowledge and experiences an individual possesses, his or her habitus or life-world, in or about those contexts.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

“I CAME OUT TO ONE OF MY STUDENTS!!! yay! She's been learning with me for nearly 9 years and we are very close. So I just told her that I am bi. She knew the word "bisexual" but she didn't exactly know what it means. (This is Japan....sigh) So I explained it to her. She understood me and still loves me. I want to change the world....am I a big mouth? hahaha. But seriously, if my coming out could help people understand that there are many kinds of sexual orientations, I'm eager to do that.” Rika, reflecting on actions resulting from her participation in this project

The central purpose of this project was to examine the relationships between sexuality, language and culture primarily. Additionally, this project sought to examine uses of written narratives and explorations of affect and bilingualism as a means to represent such relationships. Methodologically, this project offered participant-researchers opportunities for metacognitive consideration of not just their own lived experiences, but those of other Japanese men and women as well. The above quote written by Rika reveals a sense of conflict for Japanese sexual minorities: there is a difference in what they perceive as the current climate towards sexual diversity in Japan and what they imagine such a climate could be. More importantly, it also reveals a desire to change such conflict, an attitude that I earlier described as an *activist stance*. For example, Rika comments, *“if my coming out could help people understand that there are many kinds of sexual orientations, I'm eager to do that.”* This awareness that “things may need to change for the better” has been a welcomed bi-product of a project that was intended to highlight relationships between language and sexuality and distinctions between English as a linguistic system (the English language) and a linguistic culture

(English-speaking cultures and peoples). Participants such as Akiko and Rika have reinforced the qualitative and affective differences between English and Japanese language, discussing the difficulty of gendered pronoun use, the emotional responses or attitudes towards the different languages and their linguistic communities, and appraisals of direct/indirectness, for example. Others, such as Toru and Akihito have also discussed the significance of participating in English-speaking cultural communities and their motivation to acquire new English as a result of their desire to fulfill or express themselves sexually and emotionally.

As an introduction to this final chapter, I offer another narrative, also written about Rika and me. As hinted in her own narrative (see Appendix E), the contact between cultures, Japanese and English-speaking, or even Japanese and non-Japanese, can have a profound impact on an individual's sense of self and how such selves are performed or revealed. Before I continue my discussion of the activist stance and respond to my three main research questions, I will provide additional context about both Rika and me. As I hope this project to be applicable to instructors and researchers who regularly have contact with bilingual queer students, I must also address educators' identities in preparation for my discussion of the ramifications and recommendations resulting from this project. Although classrooms may be imagined to be communities of diverse identities with various needs and abilities, too often is heteronormativity assumed by both instructors and students alike (Vandrick, 1997, 2001). More importantly, because instructors serve as directors, planners, and models to their students, critical awareness of the ways in which instructors manage and perform their own numerous

selves is useful (O'Mochain, 2006). By way of conclusion, we return to Japan just a year after my arrival there, and seven years prior to this current project.

Kyoto, 2003: A Closet in a Classroom

“Purposefully vague” became my *modus operandi* in my first few years in Japanese classrooms, and with each lack of disclosure came a sting of betrayal. I was betraying not only myself by withholding my sexuality, but betraying all of those who had struggled with hiding their own sexualities. A fellow student in my PhD program once wrote, “If certain identities are never spoken of, it may create the impression that there is something shameful about that identity.” I knew this despite my vagary; how could I champion honesty and yet not be honest about myself? It seemed that I was not the person I had thought myself to be.

With all of my friends, I was honest and open about my sexuality. But the classroom was an extension of employment, and though I had never been worried about my identity with prior employers (mental health settings and hospitals), I did question whether or not the classroom was a place to *come out*, reasoning that my professional world was separate from my private world. So, this was my approach to creating my teacher identity in the early days as a TESOL instructor in Japan.

Towards the end of that first school year, I was discussing metaphors with one of my classes of English majors. One of my male students joined the discussion, practicing making metaphor by offering “Ma-chan is a pansy.” I was struck by the comment, wondering if he realized the connotation of the word “pansy” in English. I felt

embarrassed, suddenly thirteen years old again and being harassed at school and so didn't press him for explanation. I tried to cover the flush of embarrassment by quickly moving to another student's metaphor. A learning opportunity had been jeopardized because of my own insecurity. I see now, after reading articles on critical pedagogy that the learning opportunity was immense, and I completely missed it.

Throughout my years in Japan, there were students that while I couldn't say for certain were queer, I assumed that they were. However, never did I directly confront these students about sexuality. If they wanted to talk with me, they could have. But now I question if I gave students an opportunity to do so. How did I let them know that it was ok to talk with me? Queer identities were never present in any of the teaching materials I used, and none of my students ever publicly admitted to being queer in any of my classes.

Strangely enough, there *was* one event that stands in stark contrast to my otherwise reticence or fear of approaching sexual identity. A close friend of mine, also an English teacher, was a Japanese bisexual. Rika had had a difficult time finding her place in the Japanese lesbian community and often commented that she only felt like she could be herself when speaking English, a sentiment that I would hear echoed time and time again. She was not *out* to her mother though most of her close friends knew about Rika's sexuality.

I was teaching two sections of an advanced English seminar at a private women's college when towards the end of the first semester, about the time Rika and I had become close friends, I asked her to come to my classes for an interview. Rika was a strong and independent woman who had spent time in Canada studying English, and upon her return

to Japan, had opened her own private language school. I felt that she was a successful person, a fluent English-speaker, an appropriate role model that my students could talk with and possibly take inspiration from.

A week prior to Rika's visit to my classes, she asked how she should handle her sexual identity while talking with the students. Thinking back to my own philosophy about communication of identity, I suggested that if the topic arose, she could, if comfortable enough, be honest about herself. She agreed that this was a reasonable approach. Sadly, I also recalled that I actually hadn't followed my own advice just months before.

My students had prepared and practiced questions for Rika and when the interviews ensued, and questions about Canadian men were asked she indeed came out to them. The process was moving and surprising. Rika had come out to very few people at that point, and now here she was revealing herself to two groups of strangers in an English language classroom in her hometown. Moreover, my students exhibited no knee-jerk reactions. On the contrary, they openly admitted to admiring her bravery. Perhaps most poignantly, I saw her doing what I had not. In the way I had so often come out to my own friends and family in the USA, but not to my students in Japan, Rika came out when faced with questions about whether or not she had dated Canadian men, did she have a boyfriend, and were she and I dating.

At the end of the semester when asked what their best experience in my courses had been that school year, my students at the women's college almost unanimously agreed that meeting Rika was the highlight of their time with me. About a week after

Rika came to my classes, she also came out to her mother, though not meeting quite the same level of acceptance as with my students. When I asked her why she chose to finally reveal herself to her mother, she shrugged her shoulders and stated that she had finally found the courage.

Review of Chapters 1-4

The above narrative illustrates that despite what I've learned about attitudes towards English by the Japanese participant-researchers in this project, there was a time in my professional career where I indirectly may have maintained a closet in my own classrooms. In other words, my lack of critical awareness of my students' identities, and my lack of confidence in my own, may have served to diminish the opportunities for transforming the classroom into a safe house and to limit the discourses available to my students. Surprisingly, just as social context has been theorized to be key in examinations of language and sexuality in Chapter Two of this project (for example, Hogan, 2003) so were my social contexts key to who I thought I could be as an instructor. The classroom was off limits for discussions of sexuality. Likewise, for some queer Japanese, environments where Japanese culture is predominant may be perceived to be prohibitive of public constructions of sexual selves while English-speaking spaces may be perceived to be liberatory. For example, Naoko discussed coming out to her foreign staff but never to her Japanese clientele.

What I find to be most ironic is that it was friends like Rika who had been struggling with sexual expression who most opened me to questioning heteronormative paradigms in Japan and English language education. Despite the fact that I thought I had

a strong sense of confidence regarding my own sexuality, I was still maintaining “a closet in my classroom.” Japan offered me a challenge: In response to regular discussions about struggles for sexual expression, most notably with Kenjiro and Rika, grew ideas as to how to give voice to such struggle. This current project is one of those ideas and the process has been a continuous sense of discovery and reflection by not only the participant-researchers, but by me as well.

When discussing this project with colleagues and friends, I usually begin by sharing Takashi’s narrative from Chapter One. His final explanation of being only gay in English, not in Japanese, is regularly met with astonishment and questions like “What does that mean?” Throughout the beginning chapters I have endeavored to craft a framework within which to address both Takashi’s claim and typical audience responses. In Chapter One I introduced Takashi, the catalyst for this project, and the concept of what I would now like to term *linguistically-contextual constructions of sexuality*. I presented the research questions, introduced key concepts and foreshadowed the remainder of the chapters.

In Chapter Two I examined the translation, construction, and labeling of specific identities across linguistic communities in order to highlight English as both a linguistic system and linguistic culture. I discussed the possible affective push away from one sociocultural community and pull towards another in terms of imagined communities, safe houses, global queering, and the climates and cultures of queer sexuality in English-speaking cultures and Japan. I concluded that examinations of English learning and usage in Japan offers a window into the interactions of language, culture, and sexuality.

Chapter Three reviewed the methods, procedures, and participant-researchers of the project, highlighting the nature of narrative auto-ethnography as critical phenomenological research, the influences of feminist and queer theories, and trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Chapter Four presented three levels of analysis of data: Participant-researchers' analyses of their own narratives, participant-researchers' analyses of co-participant-researchers' narratives, and my own semantic analysis of narratives and analyses from participant-researchers. Of specific interest were the uses of language such as adjectives and metaphors to display *affective stances* towards Japan and Japanese language and English-speaking cultures and English language. I concluded that conceptualization, performance, and revelation of sexuality are all associated with exposure to, acquisition of, application of, and immersion in English language and culture, with conceptualization being the most sensitive as reported by participant-researchers. All conclusions are assumed to be relevant to the educational experiences, economic realities, and ages of the participant-researchers and resulting theories are specific to this group of participant-researchers at this specific point in time. I will further elaborate on these conclusions in the next section.

Response to Research Questions

My first research question for this project was: In what ways have self-identified, bi-lingual, queer Japanese, both men and women, *formed ideas* about sexuality as a result of their English learning experiences and exposure to English as a linguistic system and English as a linguistic culture?

In direct response to the stories provided by this project's participant-researchers, I begin by theorizing English learning as occurring at four different levels: exposure, acquisition, application, and immersion. *Exposure* may be defined as having access to English language and culture, usually via media, travel, internet, or socialization. For example, Akiko and Rika reported watching English-language movies for information regarding queer life. *Acquisition* is purposeful learning of English language and culture as discussed by Toru and his Australian English teacher or Mayumi's English learning in middle school. *Application* involves the ability to use learned English language and culture for communicative or expressive purposes, generally outside of a learning environment as evidenced by Kenjiro and Rika's friendships with English-speakers. Finally, *immersion* requires the individual to exist in a largely monolingual English setting as suggested by Rika, Naoko, Katsuya, Toru, and Akihito's studies and travels abroad.

The narratives and analyses presented in Chapter Four suggest that *conceptualization* of human sexuality is sensitive to exposure to, acquisition and use of English. Because the majority (six) of the participant-researchers had lived or traveled abroad in English-speaking communities, this *immersion* has had the most profound effect on how they understood human sexuality, especially in light of cross-cultural comparisons. Theoretically, we can return to symbolic interactionism and suggest that in keeping with theories of linguistic relativity, language as symbol is both highly personal and highly contextual and can indeed influence cognition (Whorf, 1956). The intercultural experiences of the participants helped them to understand this phenomenon.

At the same time, participants had access to discourses that could not have been readily available to them without English abilities (Foucault, 1984). These discourses, such as the proliferation of Western queer culture known as “global queering”, presented linguistic communities that offered a sense of freedom from the perceived hegemony of heteronormativity in Japanese communities (Altman, 1996; Altman, 2001; Lim, 2005). Movies, books, magazines, language schools, and study abroad experiences all provided access to these discourses and communities.

My second research question was: How have the above *ideas* influenced how participant-researchers *perform* or *reveal* these sexualities? Considering Takashi, the individual who inspired this project with his comment about only being gay *in English*, another way of asking this question is “In what ways do languages become ideologically bound to particular performances of selves, specifically sexuality, and why?”

Throughout the narratives and analyses, all of the participant-researchers mention their perception of English-speaking communities as more accepting of sexual diversity. As such, speech acts such as the coming out proclamation, are reported to have been easier or less fearful in non-Japanese communities. Moreover, English proficiency and the quest for greater proficiency have been reported by half of the participants to have been motivating factors to reveal sexuality to others. Yet two other participants find their motivation to acquire language directly mediated by their desire to perform their sexualities. In all eight examples, participant-researchers reported the perception that it is easier to perform queer sexuality in all of its manifestations in English-language or non-Japanese environments, supporting Moore’s (2007) conclusions about extending oneself

via imagination and participation into another community. I have labeled this phenomenon *linguistically-contextual sexual identity*.

My final research question was: How do the relationships between language and affect influence the performance of specific identities for bi-lingual, queer Japanese? In what ways can written, auto-ethnographic, narrative approaches to language and sexuality research also illuminate the significance of affect in the ongoing construction of linguistic and sexualized identities?

As this is a dissertation in composition and TESOL, I understand the ramifications of employing written, narrative auto-ethnographic methods in order to learn more about language and sexuality interactions. With written narrative, response time is longer than in verbal data collection methods, the writer may view their responses as a narrative *story*, and performance anxiety may be reduced due to the indirect nature of written responses vs. face to face oral responses in data collection. Perhaps more importantly, because the analyses of such narratives requires metacognitive reflection, additional insight could be gained by sharing and reflecting on such narratives, protecting confidentiality and privacy in a way that could not have been possible with a focus group, for example.

That the written narratives and analyses in this project should so strongly reflect affective stances towards both Japanese language and Japanese speaking cultures as well as English language and English speaking cultures is a testament to the power of language imbued with symbolic and affective meaning and responds to Pavlenko's (2006) question, "Do bi- and multi-linguals sometimes feel like different people when

speaking different languages?” Polar metaphors used by participant-researchers such as English being “indirect” and Japanese “direct”, and English being “comfortable” while Japanese is “muddled” help create affective stances and highlight the affective worlds of these bilingual writers. Indeed, written composition methods revealed often strong emotions about each writers’ conceptualizations, performances, and revelations about sexuality, suggesting that not only does an imagined linguistic or cultural community allow for different emotional experiences in the lives of bilinguals, but that they can make use of such language to describe their lived experiences in such communities.

Is There a “Gay” Japanese Identity?

As I discussed in Chapter Three, when research on language and sexuality is confined to examinations of identity, a limited understanding of how sexuality is constructed in different locations at different times may result. Moreover, what one individual may deem to be an identity, another may only consider a behavior. As such, I have resisted framing sexuality as an identity at Kulick’s (2000) and McLelland’s (2000) suggestions. However, in three of the narratives presented in Chapter Four, participant-researchers actually use the word “identity” to refer to their queer sexualities. When the word itself is not used, it is also often hinted at. Naoko, for example, writes, “I am a lesbian. Yes, I like women. But I have never had a sex with any women...I have no idea how I feel when I have a relationship with a woman for the first time. Wonderful?? Weired [sic]?? I have no idea. But I still call myself lesbian.” For Naoko, this identity label is valid despite the lack of actual behavior that would seem to legitimize such a label. We must imagine that the label refers not to behavior but rather to desire.

Despite Kulick's assertion that identity studies in sexuality research severely limit such inquiry, the symbolic labels for identity, especially for those who find such labels to provide them with opportunities for community and self-understanding, may be a necessary step (as noted by Archer, 2002) towards the extinction of such labels.

Limitations of the Study

English Language Corpus

Because of my own limited abilities to read Japanese text, the majority of literature reviewed here is limited to English-language publications or English translations of Japanese works. The research examining sexuality is largely an English language corpus, further complicating discussions of language and sexuality in Japan due to possible ethnocentric analyses by non-Japanese researchers.

Knowledge of Participants

Because I knew at least half of the participant-researchers as friends or colleagues (Rika, Kenjiro, and Toru), or even friends of friends (Rika and Naoko), it is possible that in keeping with Japanese cultural behaviors such as saving face that writers gave me what they thought I wanted to read rather than true accounts of their lived experiences. The metacognitive analyses by the participant-researchers themselves, however, should have controlled for this phenomenon through the process of triangulation and reflection.

Written Data Only

Because extensive face to face interviews were not undertaken as part of the research protocol, I did not have the ability to more fully inquire about participant-

researcher responses or analyses in person. This may have limited the kinds of information provided by the participant-researchers. But again, the metacognitive analyses helped to provide a more thorough picture of language and sexuality interactions in Japan, a picture that may not have become visible via face to face interactions due to language performance anxiety or lack of preparation time.

Sample Size

The sample size of eight individuals severely limits generalization to a larger population. However, such generalization was not the intent of this project. Rather, I intended to show how language and sexuality interact for some bilingual, queer Japanese. That all eight stories should construct affective stances pushing them away from Japanese culture and towards a perceived, welcoming English-language community is strong evidence that these eight individuals may in fact be representative of the lived experiences of other queer Japanese who possess a basic proficiency in English language skills.

Implications

Having studied English in the 1980's, 1990's and 2000's, is it possible that through learning English, the project participants could have also received ideas about sexuality? Did they pick up cues from teaching materials or instructors that "gay is ok" in English language communities such that they might feel safe (or safer) constructing a queer sexual identity in English? The prevailing post-method, critical pedagogy paradigm in language education in the late 20th and early 21st century encourages the

consideration of queer identity in this field through its accent on inclusion, reflection on practice, student-centered learning vs. method, and awareness of student needs and local cultures (Hall & Eggington, 2000; Hoodfar, 1992; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pennycook, 1999). Yet only within the last decade have queer identities become visible in language learning materials; such identities have traditionally been marginalized in the international TESOL community as evidenced by their almost total exclusion in instructional materials and classroom practices (De Vincenti et al, 2007; Kappra, 1998; Nelson, 1993; Nelson, 1999; O'Mochin, 2004; O'Móchain, 2006; Schweers, 1997; Spurlin, 2000; Vandrick, 1997; Vandrick, 2001). Arguably, this exclusion results in a denial of the existence of this population simply by ignoring it (Vandrick, 1997). We may expect then that participant-researchers of differing age groups, exposed to English language education at different times throughout its history in Japan and in varying learning contexts, will have had different ideas about possible connections between language learning and sexuality.

Throughout the last two decades, a number of researchers have examined this paradigm of heteronormativity (Nelson, 1993; 1999) in TESOL and sounded a call for inclusion; heterosexuality is not the only identity, but rather one amongst a variety (Sears, 1997). The question has then been raised as to how to shift this paradigm within the field of TESOL specifically. Though queer identity in TESOL now has a presence as evidenced by such professional organizations as Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language's (TESOL) LGBTF Caucus, and Japan Association for Language Teaching's (JALT) Gender Awareness in Language Education (GALE) sig, very few studies have

actually ensued (O'Mochin, 2006) as to the ramifications of including queer sexualities in TESOL classroom methods or materials.

Kumaravadivelu (2003) asserts that in a post-method critical pedagogy, language teachers have a responsibility to understand and act within the local conditions in which they teach. Does this mean that teachers must avoid culturally taboo topics as necessitated by the cultural climate in which they teach? If English is in fact being used by queer Japanese individuals in ways meaningful to the constructions of their sexual selves, e.g. providing access to specific communities that foster identity construction or expression, or allows for expression of selves otherwise marginalized within Japanese language communication, couldn't approaches to TESOL reflect this via their materials and practices?

Future Research Directions

As an applied and sociolinguistic researcher, I have been interested in language and sexuality interactions not only in Japan, but in other communities around the world. After viewing such documentary films as *A Jihad for Love*, examining the lived experiences of queer Muslims, and *Trembling Before G-d*, examining the lived experiences of queer Orthodox Jews in North America, I feel that film as a visual medium could be an excellent vehicle through which to more deeply explore the lives of this projects' participant-researchers in ways that textual presentations cannot. Moreover, as this is an English-language project, and many of the participant-researchers expressed their desires to share their stories with others, a published anthology of such auto-

ethnographic narratives focusing on language and sexuality, specifically, would make an excellent addition to the growing corpus of language and sexuality research.

Questions that have arisen from the current project include:

- What more could be gained from focus/oral discussion groups as opposed to writing groups?
- As discussed by Mayumi: What about the experiences of tri- or multilinguals who must navigate not two, but multiple linguistic systems and cultures?
- As discussed by Naoko: What could similar narrative auto-ethnographies written in Japanese as opposed to English offer in response to my research questions?
- As discussed by Rika: How is language that is used as labels in multilingual and multicultural queer life changing and what are the affective stances towards these labels?
- In what ways have the “digital age”, including social networking sites, texting, discussion boards, cell phone applications, etc facilitated a growing understanding of language and sexuality interactions?
- Because many of the participant-researchers report English language writing to be affectively different from Japanese language writing, what are the ramifications of language choice for bilinguals who use writing for therapeutic or metacognitive purposes?
- Finally, a longitudinal study, similar to Kanno’s (2003) examination of bilingual Japanese returnees, could more thoroughly illustrate how linguistic and cultural participation affects an individual’s developing sense of sexuality over time.

An additional research question that warrants a more thorough understanding and future research is how ideological concepts, values, beliefs, etc are being transmitted in English language classroom education in Japan and how this information may shape ideas about sexuality or influence revelation or performance. Nelson (2009), along with Curran (2006), King (2008), and Moffatt & Norton (2008), discusses the ways in which sexuality as an identity category has begun to receive attention in the language classroom, raising questions about the ways in which linguistic and cultural practices naturalize certain sexualities and gender identities, and how instructors can challenge such heteronormativity.

Takashi, for example, as is typical of the participant-researchers in this project, spent a number of years studying English, from early childhood well into adulthood. Would he be likely to see himself represented in his English learning materials or his English language classes such that he would eventually establish a public, queer, English identity? Interestingly, there have been a number of approaches to including queer identities in TESOL classroom practice throughout the last ten years (Curran, 2006; Ellwood, 2006; Harrison, 2008; Nelson, 1999; Joritz-Nakagawa, 2000; O'Mochain, 2006; Schweers, 1997; Summerhawk, 1998; Vandrick, 2001) and it's notable that many of the examples provided above discuss the Japanese TESOL context or Japanese language learners, specifically. It's a curious phenomenon - influencing curriculum development, teaching practices, and investigations of language learner identities - worthy of further research. As such, additional questions for further in-depth study include: What is it

about the cultural and political climate (social conditions) in Japan, or the Japanese language itself, that should allow for such research when queer Japanese themselves make comments such as Takashi's "I'm not gay in Japanese, I'm only gay in English"? If the social and political climate in Japan seems to be currently moving to an acceptance²⁵ of the potential varieties of human sexual expression, what role has the prevalence of English-speaking cultures in Japan played and what role has second language educational practices played?

Qualitative Research and Critical Consciousness: The Activist Stance

At the beginning of this chapter, I presented Rika's comments about wanting to make a change in the way sexual minorities are perceived in Japan, an attitude that I have termed an *activist stance* - the recognition that something more must be done to enhance the quality of life. Though not an intended outcome of this project, it is an outcome that merits consideration, for qualitative research with a strong feminist communitarian ethic has the ability to raise critical consciousness in its participant-researchers. For example, through the process of peer collaboration in narrative analysis, Toru found that he was surprised by Akihito's story:

He was struggled with his sexuality for long time. However, at some point, he found his solution, which was to have foreign gay friends and talk freely about

²⁵ I in no way contend that such societal attitudes are uni-directional; as discussed in Chapter Two, Japanese culture has historically, and will likely continue to, take various stances towards sexual minorities.

gay life. Actually, I was surprised to know that he could not do it in Japanese gay community. He could not show his real life even in Japanese gay community. So, I realize that Japanese gay community have to be changed to better one in order to make guys like him happy in Japan.

This recognition that a change is needed in Japan's gay communities to develop a greater sense of inclusion is a direct result of Toru's collaborative participation in this project, one that is also a result of his own bilingualism. Similarly, Mayumi writes:

It is not so easy to tell your idea or feeling whenever you want, especially in Japanese society. But I want to be a unique supporter to let people to try it. It's also a kind of trial for me to do that with Japanese as my first language because it doesn't have the structure to tell the conclusion at the beginning of the sentence. It might be getting fuzzy or losing the goal when you are looking for a word or being ready to say something. My advantage is that I knew the difference of the way of communication between Japanese and English or Chinese. And I know the style - "Say it", which I have learned from my non-Japanese friends. I don't have knowledge of the rehabilitation but I think I can do it in somehow unique way. And I hope I can be a part of small revolution among the people who need to speak about yourself.

Mayumi's wish to be part of a "revolution among the people who need to speak about [themselves]" is another example of how participation in this project has led to the development of an activist stance, again mediated by bilingualism. It would be

interesting to re-visit the participant-researchers in the future to examine what kind of activism, if any, has actually been enacted.

Final Reflections

If specific linguistic communities can be imagined to be safer places in which to reveal or perform one's sexuality as compared to one's native linguistic communities, and if discourses from other linguistic cultures offer alternative ways of being in the world, it is not surprising that Takashi would have claimed to be gay in English and not in Japanese. It is likely that his language, peers, family, co-workers, and even political and religious beliefs all prevent him from constructing, performing or revealing a public sexual identity, especially when such an identity is perceived to be problematic.

Likewise, written accounts of the lived experiences of some of Japan's sexual minorities such as those included in *Queer Japan* and *Queer Voices from Japan* point to the ways in which language is used to construct various selves, sometimes to the extent that specific performances of selves, such as sexuality, may be ideologically bound to specific linguistic identities.

Most importantly, and considering the long history of English-language colonization around the world, it is worth noting the imperialism inherent in English language global queering. I can only wonder how such a phenomenon may someday result in a rejection of English language linguistic and cultural practices, specifically, and either a return to Japan's cultural heritage practices and beliefs about sexuality or the evolution of new Japanese discourses of language and sexuality. As pointed out by Hogan and Stanlaw, the Japanese are adept at transforming foreign language into "made

in Japan” equivalents. Likewise, Rika has already noted the change in the word “lesbian” to “bian” to opt for a less politically charged word. Language variation and change is inevitable.

During my last visit to Japan in 2009, I attended my first Japanese Gay Pride festival in Tokyo. There had been an outrage in the queer community when the current mayor of the city denied the festival participants access to public roads for their annual parade, citing that such an act would not put forth the most desirable image of Tokyo to its visitors and inhabitants. While at the festival, I also learned another interesting phenomenon - a number of Japanese men and women whom I had spoken to about my research had mentioned that a rejection of Western labels and a return to Japanese heritage words was indeed becoming popular, a response to the often inescapable presence of Western queer culture in Japan.

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April 24, 2009

Hi XXX!

Thank you for helping me with my project. In this package you'll find:

- 2 copies of the *Informed Consent* letter
- The book "Queer Japan"
- Writing Advice
- An envelope addressed to me with a coupon for a stamp inside. Take this coupon to the post office and they will give you a Japanese stamp to mail the envelope back to me.

Here's what you should do, please:

1. **First**, sign both copies of the Informed Consent letter. Keep one copy for yourself, and put the other copy in the envelope I provided. Please mail this back to me. My address is already written on the envelope.
2. **Next**, browse through "Queer Japan", a collection of stories written by Japanese people. For example, Kirara-san's story on page 19, Matsunaga-san's story on page 37, and Sakamoto-san's story on page 66 are all interesting examples of how you can tell your own story. You may also use these as models to help you understand what your writing might look like. These writers tell stories about their sexuality, but I'd like you to focus on your English language learning history right now. Later in May/June, I will ask you to re-visit your story and write a little more for me.
3. **Finally**, think about your English language learning history. In 3-5 pages, please tell me stories about your experiences learning, practicing, and using English (speaking, writing, listening, reading, etc). The page length might seem like a lot, but you'll be surprised how quickly you'll be able to write your story. Rather than write individual answers to the questions below, please think of your response as a "short story". Some of the questions you may want to answer in your writing include:
 - *When, where, why and how did you begin learning or using English?*
 - *How did you feel or how do you presently feel about learning or using English?*
 - *Describe your teachers and English learning experiences.*
 - *When was the last time you learned or used English?*
 - *How have you used your English in important ways either in your professional or personal life?*
 - *How has English been useful to you? What impact has English had on your life?*
 - *How have you participated in English-speaking communities (for example, friendships, study abroad, employment, sexual relationships, etc)?*
 - *How will English be important to you in the future?*
 - *How has learning/using English been different from learning/using Japanese?*

These questions are designed to help you tell your story – you may focus on just one of them or address all of them. Remember that I am not evaluating your writing skills – rather, I am most interested in your story!

THANK YOU so much for agreeing to help me. I hope this will be an interesting and rewarding experience for you. Please email me your essay to m.e.harrison@iup.edu by May 15th, 2009. Please email me if you have any questions, concerns, or need more time.

ARIGATOU! Marlen/Ma-chan

APPENDIX B – JGUYUSGUY.com call for participant-researchers

<p>Marlen</p>	<p>Posted 28 January 2009 02:34 AM</p>
	<p>Dear friends,</p> <p>My name is Marlen (everyone calls me Ma-chan) and I used to live in Kansai. I was a university teacher at Doshisha and Momoyama Gakuin Universities.</p> <p>I am now finishing my doctoral work in the USA (kiyoju ninarimasu) and am writing a book about language and sexuality in Japan. You may visit http://DiscoveringVoices.com for more information.</p> <p>I am looking for queer Japanese (men and women, so please ask your lesbian friends, too!) to write their English language learner histories (should take about 1 hr) and then to answer some follow-up questions about their writing (should also take 1 hr). You can do this from your own home via email.</p> <p>I am interested in the possible connections between learning another language and how people understand or perform their sexuality. A friend of mine once said (in English), "I'm gay in English, not in Japanese." I want to know what this means, and you can help!</p> <p>If you are interested in participating (and I am not interested in your writing skills, I want to know your story!), I will send you info about protecting your confidentiality as well as a thank you gift - a copy of "Queer Japan", a collection of short stories.</p> <p>Please email me at <m.e.harrison@iup.edu> if interested and I will tell you what you need to do next.</p> <p>Total time commitment: approx 2 hrs Location: from your home Payment: a copy of "Queer Japan" Purpose: to help me explore language and sexuality in Japan for my PhD dissertation. Privacy: Should you wish, your name will be changed to protect your privacy in all of my writing.</p> <p>Arigatou! Ma-chan http://DiscoveringVoices.com</p>
	<p>Posts: 5 Location (city or country): Indiana, PA/Osaka, Japan Registered: 28 January 2009</p>

APPENDIX C – Informed Consent Contract

Informed Consent Form

*“Discovering Voices, Discovering Selves:
English language, intercultural communication, and Japanese queer sexualities”*

The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. The *purpose* of this study is to examine the significance of English language and intercultural communication in the lives of self-identified, “queer” (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, intersex) Japanese who can speak, read and/or write English at a communicative level of proficiency language (according to TESOL.org, proficiency is “the level of competence at which an individual is able to use language for both basic communicative tasks and academic purposes”).

The study will examine:

1. motivations and outcomes of English language study/learning
2. who this language may be used with and in what spaces
3. how attitudes about and experiences with English language (i.e. learning & usage) and intercultural communication affect how queer Japanese reveal or express their sexuality to others
4. the relationship between EFL/ESL (English as a foreign language; English as a second language) learning experiences and ideas about/expression of sexuality

In this dissertation, the descriptive term “queer” is used to describe non-heteronormative sexual expressions or identities and honors both the recent reclamation of the term and development of queer studies as an academic discipline. As such, the term “queer” has been in popularized use for at least the last ten years (for example, two collections of stories were published in 1998 and 2007 entitled *Queer Japan* and *Queer Voices from Japan*, respectively) and no negative meaning is intended.

The information gained from this study may help us to better understand the significance of English language and intercultural communication in the lives of queer Japanese, and may help justify the inclusion of queer identities in TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) teaching materials and practices.

PARTICIPATION: You may participate in this project in two ways: - by leaving anonymous commentary on the project website (Group A): <http://DiscoveringVoices.com> (you do not have to login or provide any identifying information, nor are you required to sign this Informed Consent form) and/or by writing a short story discussing the possible connections between English language/culture and your sexuality (Group B). Writing a short story should require approximately 45-60 minutes; the researcher will also ask you some follow-up questions which should take an additional 30-45 minutes). If writing a short story, you will be provided a copy of *Queer*

Japan to help you get a better understanding of what your writing can look like and as a thank you gift for your participation. You will also need to sign this form and mail it to the researcher at the address listed below. ***You may choose to use your real name, or you may choose to use a pseudonym or imaginary name.*** The writing prompt is “**What relationship, if any, exists between your experiences learning/using the English language and your ideas about your sexuality? If the previous question does not directly apply to you, what reflections can you offer on this possible relationship based on your own experiences?**”

If participating, you may correspond with the researcher via mail, email, telephone, text chat, or in person for follow-up questions. If meeting in person, we will choose a site that is conducive to relaxed conversation, minimal outside noise or distraction, and is a convenient distance from your home (example: public library). As such, research may take place from any location in which the participants reside. Phone conversation will take place at the cost of the researcher.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the researcher and without fear of having your information/identity revealed. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the Project Director, Marlen Harrison at m.e.harrison@iup.edu. Upon your request to withdraw, you may also request to have all information pertaining to you destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and no attempt to reveal your responses and identity to others will be made. Should your participation require translation by a third party, all identifying information will be removed from the text to ensure complete anonymity and privacy. The information obtained in the study may be published in scientific journals, as a book, or presented at scholarly meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential and only available to Marlen Harrison. I will not make recordings of our conversations nor will I take photographs. Finally, I will not store, either electronically or in print, documents with your name on them.

If you are willing to continue, use of the <http://discoveringvoices.com> website or submission of a narrative will be considered an agreement to/understanding of all of the above. **If writing a story (Group B), please sign this form and mail it to Marlen Harrison at the address below (in bold):**

Project Director: Mr. Marlen Harrison
Hayward

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nancy

Doctoral Candidate (student)
Phone: 561-716-6690
Email: m.e.harrison@iup.edu

Professor, IUP
(724) 367-2473

nhayward@iup.edu

Campus Address: Leonard Hall, Rm 110

Indiana, PA 15705 USA

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/367-7730). FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROJECT, INCLUDING A THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION AS TO WHY THIS RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT, PLEASE VISIT: <http://discoveringvoices.com>

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM: I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession. I understand that I may use a pseudonym or my initials instead of my name.

Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ **Phone or**

email: _____

Best days and times to reach you:

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date: _____ **Investigator's**

Signature: _____

APPENDIX D – Analysis protocol

Hi there!

I have read all 8 of your stories - thank you so much for your hard work - ganbarimashita minasan!

I have also thought to make the end of this project easier for everyone, so this will be the final part of the project. I feel a little sad that it is now ending, but so happy that you have all told your stories. Once again, honto ni arigatou!

The following questions should take you about 15-30 minutes. When you finish these questions, your participation in the project will be finished. I will email you once more in the winter to see if you have any final comments, and to check some of my conclusions to make sure I understood you well.

The final due date for these questions is OCTOBER 1st, 2009.

THANK YOU so much for your writing and ideas. I could not be a PhD Professor without your kind help and support. In short, I am who I am right now because you agreed to work with me on this project. Thank you in advance for helping me finish :) Anatatachi no sankasuru kara, Ma-chan wa kiyouju ninaru koto ga dekimasu! Honto ni, arigatou gozaimasu minasan.

Please go to <http://discoveringvoices.com/category/participant-narratives/>.

Please find your story so you can know your nickname (I changed your names to protect your privacy). Your new name has the same first letter as your real name. For example, if your name is Daichi, with a "D", your new name might be "Daigo" also with a "D".

The password for the stories is "XXXX". Please find your partner's names below:

"Mayumi" and "Naoko" are partners

"Rika" and "Akiko" are partners

"Toru" and "Katsuya" are partners

"Akihito" and "Kenjiro" are partners

Below are a small group of questions. Please email your answers to me. Please give specific examples from your writing or other people's writing, like a quoted sentence or words. You can write as little or as much as you like.

Please feel free to read other people's stories and answer questions about his or her story as well! You don't have to read only your partner's story. It is possible that you have no answer for some of the questions, if so, please write "no answer".

Part I. Now that you have completed your writing, please explain your understanding about the purpose of this project.

I think the purpose of this project is....

Part II. Read your partner's story and then answer the following. If you are going to answer questions about more than one person, please tell me who you are writing about in each question:

1. What kind of relationship might exist between his/her English learning and communication experiences and how he/she a) conceptualizes, b) reveals, or c) performs sexuality?

Conceptualize means "how we think about or how we understand something"; to reveal means "to tell others using words or body language," for example, "coming out"; to perform means "physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities we participate in, hobbies," etc.

a) conceptualize

After reading the story, I think my partner's thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

b) reveal

After reading the story, I think my partner's revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

c) perform

After reading the story, I think my partner's performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your partner's story?

3. What similarities, if any, are there between this story and the story you wrote?

4. Anything else you'd like to say about your partner's story?

GREAT! YOU ARE ABOUT 40% FINISHED!

Part III. Look at the story you wrote - now think about what you thought or wrote about (remembered, considered, created).

1. What kind of relationship might exist between your English learning and communication experiences and how you a) conceptualize, b) reveal, or c) perform your sexuality?

Conceptualize means how you think about or how you understand something; to reveal means to tell others using words or body language, for example, coming out; to perform means physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities you participate in, etc.

a) conceptualize

After writing my story, I think my thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

b) reveal

After writing my story, I think my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

c) perform

After writing my story, I think my performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?

3. What did you not write about yet that you'd like to share know?

4. Anything else you'd like to say about this story?

GREAT!! YOU ARE 80% FINISHED!

Part IV. Think about the process of writing a story about yourself in English

1. How has participation in this project affected you or influenced, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before?

2. You wrote your story using English words. What could you write in English that you could not write in Japanese? What could you not write in English? Why? How was this process of English writing for you?

3. If you were to continue working with Ma-chan on this topic at some time in the future, what would you be most interested in exploring next? For example, what have we not explored yet that you think we should explore? What should Ma-chan do next, in your opinion?

4. Any last thoughts?

THANK YOU! ARIGATOU! I will now organize your comments and make conclusions based on your stories and your answers. I have already written the first 120 pages of my book. I can now finish my book because you answered these questions. I hope to be done by December/January. I will likely email you once more in November if I have some questions about your story, or if I don't understand something. Have a wonderful autumn. MUCH LOVE!!!

xox ma-chan

Mr. Marlen Elliot Harrison, ABD

<http://MarlenHarrison.com>

Adjunct Faculty, Department of English

Doctoral candidate, English Composition and TESOL

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

APPENDIX E – Participant-researchers' Narratives.

AKIHITO

My English Learning History

I started learning English when I was a junior-high student. Like most of the other Japanese, I did not know any person who speaks English and did not have any experience studying it. At school, I liked it as a subject from the start. While I did not like math and science, I was comfortable with subjects like English and Japanese, which could give me results more quickly. Later, I entered a university of foreign studies to focus on studying English language. There, I joined a club to put on plays in English at school festivals. Though, at first, I was not interested in acting or even being a member of the production, I started to be fascinated by the attraction being around the stage after I happened to get a part. Through four or five productions of plays in English, I learned English a lot more than through the classes. When I was a freshman, I already knew I was gay, but I sought the slight possibility of my heterosexuality. My first sexual encounter was a year or two later and I got involved in a relationship when I was a junior for the first time.

After finishing the undergraduate program, I got a job at a trading company. Before I quit the job after less than two years, I went on business trips to Australia and was sending and receiving faxes and emails in English. Looking back, it was a nice job because I could use and improve my English. Around that time, I was involved in a gay organization to do some volunteer works with gays and lesbians, where I met gay people other than my first boyfriend for the first time.

After quitting the job, I entered a graduate school to study homosexuality and American literature. I did neither have strong motivation to continue to the higher education nor to study homosexuality. I just wanted to quit a job in the securer way possible. My ex-boyfriend was already in the same program I would enter. My family did not exactly know about my study. I once have shown them my published paper on AIDS and an American drama but they seemed not to be intrigued at all. All their responses were to the fact that my paper was published in a magazine. While I was a graduate student, I read English every day but I have few chances to speak in English. That changed when I went to New York to be enrolled at a graduate program for a year.

On my third day in New York, I met one of my roommates for the first time. He asked me to go out for a drink. In the car he was driving to downtown, we were introducing ourselves to each other and I told him I was a theater major. After a while, he asked me if I was gay. I was totally at a loss but tried to be cool about it and said, "Did I give you a hint? He said it was just because of my major. This could never come up if I had been in Japan and been talking in Japanese. It had been only a few days there and I was nervous and excited because it was the first time for me to live outside Japan. Using English for daily conversations was new and having chat with a new American friend was something I had never experienced and I had long waited for. By saying, "Did I give you a hit? I somehow admitted that I was gay. I would never reply, "Doushite wakatta no? (How did

you know?)” if someone asked me of my sexuality in Japanese. It’s the language, atmosphere of New York, and my excitement in the foreign city that made me admit my sexuality so naturally. I had come out to my close friends in Japan but that coming out to the roommate I had just met was by far the smoothest one.

This story shows the difference. More people in the States tend to know actual gay people and have some information. People’s sexualities are a lot more natural in the States than in Japan. One of the professors and two of the classmates were so obviously gay that no one did not have to ask. After I came back to Japan, a woman, who is a theater scholar and, I must add, very nice person, and who knows I study gay literature, asked me whether I had been “all right” there. Because she had heard that “there were lots of gay people in New York,” she was curious if some “dangerous” gay guy had tried to pick me up. She did not suspect that I was gay at all. Though unintentionally, it was a homophobic joke.

I have been teaching English at a university for four years. Though the classes I’m teaching are mostly basic language courses, I occasionally talk about topics like the presidential election and gay marriage to educate students with gay issues. I have only come out to a couple of my colleagues, both of whom are foreigners . It was just easy because I could be sure that they would understand. Among Japanese colleagues, I occasionally catch homophobic jokes in everyday conversation and at parties over drink. Those jokes may not be intentional to hurt anyone, but make it nearly impossible to come out and talk about my private life like many straight people do. In addition to that, I found it a lot easier to come out in English. Partly because English is my second language. It is like I use a different part of the brain or I play a role reading a line written by myself. Also, English-speaking people, whom I come out to in English, are generally more tolerant to homosexuality and I can expect their reaction..

AKIKO

my broken english learning history

It things came up the word in my mind is “Hollywood Movies” when I think about English language at first. I really in to the Movies since when I was little. Especially influence by an American Movie.

In 1983 of Summer, Steven Spielberg’s Movie “E.T.” was shown in Japan. It was incredibly popular like a historical phenomenon, You can see the long line everywhere at the theater show the movie. I was second great of elementary school student that time. I and my mom, my brother and mom’s friend’s family decided to go to see the movie. so we had have to the in the long line. then suddenly my mom told me “ You are too little to watch the movie so we should go shopping today ok? After all, only my brother and friend’s son could watched the movie. I cried and tried to convince mom to let me watch it, in front of the theater. My mom pull my hand and went to the bloody department store. So mom gave me a great opportunity for me to become obsessed the movies. I don’t really like American’s Blockbuster movie lately but I did love this once when I was little. Japanese movie was so boring cause story was always just daily life for me. But Hollywood movie was surreal and English sound was so sexy same as beautiful actress and actor seems like a sculpture. I guess I was so typical Japanese who likes caucasian. Anyway, that is why to going to the theater was huge event for a little girl. It was like a traveling oversea that time to me.

In 1986, I was influenced by Another Steven Spielberg’s Movie “The Color Purple” My mom refused to go to see this movie at first cause she thought “ Mature movie” is not good for an elementary school girl reason for “Mature” and then I criticized her about I couldn’t watch “E.T.” and made her consented unwillingly to go. It seems like sexual and violence movie is “Mature” to majority Japanese adult, especially my mom. Luckily, I could watch the movie in this time. and this movie realized me that baby never borne from action of kiss between a woman and a man. It was just a silly fantasy. from around the time, the movies became a secret of school to teach me about some stuff japanese adult never tells me. and teaching language were always in English. English always easy to show me what I want to know.

When I started study English in the school, I always excited to show off to my mom what I learned. “Mom listen! I could count numbers now! One, Two, Three, Four, Five, “Sex”.... “ I couldn’t pronounce very well “Six” . Probably hard to pronounce for most of Japanese at first when they start study English. Anyway, I do remember mom was looks so shy and hard to making comment on the my pronunciation. I was a mean child, I was telling her this is practice pronunciation and kept saying “Sex, Sex, “ in front of mom I knew what is the meaning of sex. I was feeling good when I said Sex because I can’t say the word in Japanese in front of people usually. Maybe the word is related porn for Japanese. Even in the Sex education scene the word was quite hard to use in immature Japanese sex educations. Nowadays Japanese sex education was getting Americanized, so using many english words as GAIRAIGO (a word of foreign origin or

Japanized English) that is why people getting used to hearing the sexual word in English. Also, If make a literal translation of Sexual English into Japanese, It will be a medical and technical term. It sounds not a familiar for everyone. the other hand, familiar word is usually sexist word or racist word. for example, Lez (Lesbo), Homo. I remember, I felt uncomfortable when I heard someone use these words before I realize my sexual identity. Maybe that is why I was so shocked who I am. I was so straggled being a Lesbian for a while. I felt I lost my life and I was an internal homophobic. I will tell you about this story later.

I don't know why, I began felt close to the sexual words and the aggressive, violence word when I get interest in English. If I picked up the F word or sexual word when I watch movie I always look up the word in a dictionary like a young boy sneaking see the porn magazine. I remember checked these words Sex, Kiss, Masturbation, Petting, Fuck, Shit, Dick-head, Cunt, etc... I guess most of my friend did it same things. As I mention, It will be really sounds old and technical medical word if I translate all of the words. Some times I couldn't understand Japanese translation. Dictionary using really difficult "KANJI" letter for describing I never see. (KANJI is chinese character. also, meaning of the word) for example, translate "Masturbation" into Japanese it calls "Jii ?? it sounds like people use the word who people live in 100 years ago to me. ?ji means myself, ?i means solace. It will be means cheer up myself. Also, According Japanese dictionary Masturbation is safe and comforted by their own, or stimulation own genitalia and satisfy own sexual desire. I think Masturbation is to enjoying life, I've been learning at secret of school about it so I never feel cheer up myself. I think interpretation of japanese dictionary is really symbolic of japanese culture and custom, of course it depends on the people how think about it. but I think Japanese toward to use a difficult word in stead of describe the meaning straight a way if the word is really ethically or people doesn't want talk about in front of public. so that is why I feel english language is more easy to say many words more then japanese language. I can express my feeling to people straight a way in good way. Then now, english is not only cool sound language any more, it gives me more meaning of life.

By the way, American movies made me a precocious child emotionally and sensually. I knew already how to do masturbation when I was 4th great of elementally school. Sometimes I was so afraid of masturbation cause I was addicted, I couldn't stop do it myself I believed I got some kind of disease. One day morning when my mom was talking on the phone. I started masturbate behind her. there is a huge fish tunk in front of her. She saw me really clearly look through the fish tunk glass. she hang up the phone in the middle of talk and she yelled at me like an emergency. "Aki-chan!! What do you doing!!" well, I had have to stop my obsession. She started ironing her white shirts with anger. the day we promised to go to see a movie, the white shirts for going out. I could see the Iron strongly goes back and forth, right, left, right, left with anger.....She said "Why did you do that bad thing? she never look at me. I asked my self "Why did I do? "is it bad things cause some kind of disease?? She never mention the word "Jii" or "masturbation". She couldn't say that just because she doesn't know the word. even she

knew the words she won't say that because the topics are embarrassing and bad behavior. I do understand why she was so angry at me. Her anger made me have to tell her my feeling honestly. I was giving pressure to her shame in the end. What I said, She didn't like my answer, I said to her "because I feel good" Her face got really face and she shouted me said "We are not going to see movie today!!" Oh no!! This is so an emergency that I can't go to see movie! She force to me to recognize of this behavior is bad things! I think the word never use it that means dead word even exist in the dictionary. I guess, the words never recognized consciously if it never use. That is why The words and the language could be guide tool for realizing identity. And also, see formula below. It will be a formula of Akiko's identity for the period of elementary school.

American Movie × English × Masturbation × Akiko = Akiko's identity for the period of elementary school

So My mom denied my behavior and put a ban on movie, It means She completely denied my I identity either! I had have to against my mom for protect my identity. I did watch many movies and I did masturbate a lot, and also, speak up many english bad and shame words in front of mom. she never understood. "Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!"

When I reach puberty, I just realized that I couldn't express myself with a word at all. I became a movie nerd. English movie was my cry of the heart and I lost interest of Hollywood movie at the same time. My favorite movie was a Romantic and Sentimental plus hardboiled movie rather than Blockbuster movie. like a Jim Jarmusch, Lars von Trier, Martin Scorsese, David Lynch etc.... their movies were make me a cool person. Japanese movie never feels me this way. My puberty period went to by quickly with out falling love with real human. probably I let a chance to love some one went by. I started making film myself at the time. My formula of identity was changed.

Only my favorite movies in english × making own film × Akiko = Akiko's identity for the period of puberty

Finally I fell in love with human when I was in college. I had a boy friend, he was making film with me. Also, I made a really good friend from my company of film makers. She became my best friend. I could tell her every thing about my private story and she told me her story everything. We were realized really comfortable be with together. so I and my boyfriend and her, we are always hang out together. Tragedy is always unpredictable. One day I found about my boyfriend and my best friend were having an affair. Of course I was shocked. But I was shocked by her!!! I didn't give a shit about him! I didn't feel anything about him. I loved to her. I attracted to "woman!!" what's going on? I was completely fucked up my mind. I lost myself. I lost boyfriend and best friend at the same time. To attract woman means "Homosexual". I knew people around me using the word for make a fun of gay and Lesbian. that is racist word. I never had Homosexual people around me. so I had no idea to get information of homosexuality. I didn't know the word "Homosexuality" in English either. I only knew "Douseiaisyā" in Japanese and this sound really uncomfortable to live in Japan. because this word "Douseiaisyā" sounds makes boundaries of normal or abnormal in the majority

society. I stated hate myself being a “Les” which is racist word. My formula of identity was changed.

Homosexuality x racist word in Japanese x lost friend x Akiko = Lost identity (who’s the hell am I?)

What I done to myself after I found I am “Douseiaisyu”, I searched gay and lesbian movies. I was so awkward to rent videos. I was so paranoia. And also I couldn’t find any lesbian movies that time. I’ve been watched gay movies to get information of gay. Most of movie telling me Gay people having hard fuckin’ time in their life.

to be continued.....(i will write about relationship with Australians girlfriend and married with chinese canadian girl how we communicate in english.)

KATSUYA

“I’ll be waiting for you...” I was lying in the living room and half asleep when the phrase was heard from TV. It literally awakened me.

At that time, I was a junior in high school who I have to admit was not a very enthusiastic student. Not having any goal in life, I just kept expecting something good would happen the next day. Only it was more apathetic than optimistic. I liked to talk and laugh with friends. We did enjoy ourselves when we got together. However, there were times when those good times were felt dissociated from me. Behind that must have been that I did not know how to live myself. As many adolescents would wonder, “Who I am” was the question frequently popped up in my mind. However, that same question was something different to me.

Into adolescence, friends of mine began to get interested in sexuality. “I like that girl” or “She got big boobs” became frequently heard in boys’ conversation. Honestly speaking, I was rather a precocious child and more familiar to sexuality than others. I firstly experienced masturbation when I was 11, and I often indulged myself in it. Only it was always men that I was imagining. It didn’t bother me because it was just normal for me then.

I don’t know when it began but boys around me often talked about sex. Though very few of them actually had experienced it, they shared the same feeling to have another step to answer “who am I” question. I was the one who was left behind. I waited for someone to say “I like that kind of BOY” but none of them said that. Contrary, any girlish behavior, let alone “I like HIM” thing, was not for a “normal” boy. It was then I stopped waiting. Whenever they began a boys’ talk, I had no choice but went mute and made up a smile. Sitting beside those boys excited about their experiences with girls, I would forever swallow down the words “It’s you I like” with my heart so hurt. Isolation grew and the question remained unsolved.

Before adolescence, there had already been a sense of awkwardness. I liked girls’ play rather than boys’. While my parents always told me to go outside and do some baseball things with other boys, I cherished the time reading books, playing with dolls, or chatting with girls. It’s not the case that I didn’t want friends at all, but I didn’t enjoy what other boys liked, and vice versa. Consequently, I had very few male friends. Luckily or not, friends of my elder sister, all of them were girls, lived in our neighborhood, and they frequently let me hang around with them. They were 5 years older than I, so it was more like they enjoyed a little boy. Still I was one of the girls, and felt quit comfortable being in the group.

One day, one of them said to me “I’ve got something exiting” and I was invited to her house. Some girls, some of whom I knew and some I did not, were there. “What shall we do? I asked, and the girl took out a videotape saying “my dad got this from somewhere.” She set the tape into the VCR and played it. To an 8 year-old boy, it seemed an exercise video in which multiple men and women were hugging and kissing each other, undressed. I thought something was wrong but could not keep my eyes away

from it. “We want to try this” one girl said. I thought it was no good thing to do, so I said “I want to go home now.” Yet they wouldn’t let me and made me undressed. Another girl put off her shirt and said “Ride on me.” So I did, frightened. I don’t remember what exactly happened next. The next thing I do remember is when I was running home.

I never ventured to tell anyone about this. I was afraid that my parents might scold me over what I did. More than that, however, I was afraid that these girls wouldn’t any longer let me be in the group if I told somebody about the event. These girls behaved as if nothing had happened. Then I gradually came to think the whole thing was nothing but a nightmare. It may have really happened or not have. It’s still in the dark.

Next several years were a latent period. Nothing particularly emotional happened to me. I did feel happy, angry, pleased, or sad, but none of them was felt strongly enough for me to get overwhelmed. I may have learned to be patient, but too much patience resulted in numbing me. When somebody bullied me for being feminine, I would say “stop it” but I felt as if I could objectively observe anger or sorrow surrounding a dissociated part of me. If I kept away the emotional part of me, I didn’t have to be hurt too much. It was someone else who was responsible for feeling; at the same time, as the connection between the emotion and the rest got weaker, it was harder to pick up how the emotion fluctuated. That may have been the way to survive, but as I felt less, I deviated from being myself more. When I firstly realized being attracted to the same sex is not to be shared, I felt a little loneliness touching me from the distance. Feeling slightly hurt, I didn’t do anything to make things different because I sensed what waited for me was rejection, which would stimulate the emotion harder. I might as well keep the emotion asleep than dare to put it into a storm. Having no one to depend on, I’d learned to be patient by feeling less because everything must have been too overwhelming to tackle alone with. It was like surrendering to life. Accepting everything to come, I wouldn’t be rejected. I’d chosen to give up expressing freely what I felt so that I wouldn’t be rejected. “That’s the way it goes” was the frequently repeated phrase.

After the long period of numbness, the song was quite striking. The song was “To love you more” by Celine Dion. I didn’t like English at that time. For one thing, I had no motivation to learn a language. Language is meant to convey thoughts, ideas, and emotions, but because of that quality, language meant the least for me. Without anything to share with other people, it was felt stupid to learn another language. Actually, my English grade was terribly bad then. Yet the song was heard to the emotional part of me directly through the objective one. The song awakened my emotion and it again began to cry—a cry for being listened to. In that sense, there was a strange resonance between the song and I. I felt as if I were listened to while listening to the song without knowing what each other meant.

I couldn’t help listening to the song millions of time and trying to pick up each melody and each sound she made. Writing down the words in katakana characters, I would follow them as she sang. Shortly, I memorized each sound, though not word in a meaningful way, which led me to a further want. I wanted to know what she sang about,

so I looked up each word in the dictionary. It certainly gave me some literal meanings, but the words were not integrated to make up a story. I studied and studied to come from knowing to understanding and then to feeling. Hard time of studying was already far behind when I realized the combination of separated words made sense in me.

Here comes a question; why, in the first place, I was so obsessive about studying the song when I had been so lethargic for a long time. Even without that, many people do not care about what a foreign song is about. Strangely enough, however, English could reach my emotional part which had been numbed not to be overwhelmed. That may have happened because I didn't understand English. The use of the native language is the first choice to convey thoughts, feelings, and emotions to other people, but I'd somehow reasoned that was the way I got hurt.

Speaking Japanese put me a hesitation to be honest. It may be because of my inborn personality, of my childhood experience, or of my having developed defense mechanism. It's not very meaningful to identify what is the primary cause because human characteristics is so complex that it's very unlikely only one event is responsible for it. Yet somehow, my native language has developed an inhibition on my being honest because by keeping quiet I wouldn't be rejected nor hurt. At the same time, however, I wouldn't be listened to, either. I'd chosen to dissociate emotion to be patient knowing that I still waited for someone to listen to what I had deep inside. It was then I found the singer who sings to a crescendo in a very feminine but strong way, which sympathized with my inner cry.

It was long after I started studying English when I realized it's much easier for me to express my honest feelings in English. First of all, I had dissociated the emotion so as to alleviate impact. Intellectually inspecting and processing any overwhelming occurring before it reached the emotion, it didn't have to fluctuate too much. On the other hand, however, as English was a second language and incomprehensible to me then, words might have passed through the inspection without being processed. There was an impact because the emotion directly resonated with the song. Yet it reminded me of feeling unconditionally, which was felt really good to me. Even after having studied hard, not being perfectly fluent left me a protection because I still had to intellectually "think" before putting the emotion into words or words into the emotion.

Since I'd found out that English was an easier way for me to express emotions, I had an obsession to learn more about it. For quite a long time, I just kept studying without knowing why I had to study, but it was a path to re-integrate myself, and probably sexuality resided in the emotional part. Actually, it was when I was 23, when I was studying in the US, I met the first boyfriend. He was a Japanese and lived in Japan then.

Some years earlier, I had found poetry was another good way to express emotions. I'd never studied how to write poetry but following the examples of famous poets, I anyhow began writing Japanese poems. First it was merely a random string of words, but I just kept writing. It was an easier way because there are certain rules in composing a poem. Like English was so, those rules may have functioned as a protection so that I could

safely express emotions. Then I tried to write English poetry applying the Japanese poetry rhythm.

Then it was prevalent among young gay people to build a website. Still being underground, there was a strong necessity to make up a community to bond gay people. Computer network was a quite appropriate place to develop a community, and many of my gay friends, many of whom I became friends with on the web, had their websites. I was just one of them, and made up my own so that I could get in touch with them even during my stay in the US. I didn't have any other particular reason to have the website, but soon I found the website a place where I could open up my thoughts, ideas, emotions without caring others' evaluations. I knew others would know how I felt but there was less chance I was given back a direct refusal. It was natural for me to begin putting poems, English or Japanese on the site.

D contacted me first. He found my website by chance and read my poetries. Sending a mail to me, he said he liked how I expressed emotions; even those in English, he could sense what was meant though he could hardly understand English. He also had a website on which he put paintings. I wasn't an artistic person at all, and couldn't tell good paintings from bad ones. However, browsing paintings on his site, I somehow sensed their overtones. "It's sad" or "It's upsetting" crossed my mind every time I looked at his paintings. We were connected, in a sense, fourth-dimensionally. Though living so apart, it took no time for us to get attracted to each other having a different way of expression. It may have been his way of expression, which was to draw, that attracted me so much. We messaged and chatted almost everyday. I sometimes went back to Japan and met him for a short period of time to exchange emotions. After all, he was my first boyfriend. We talked a lot, but whenever some romantic words came up in my mind, I ended up with speaking English. Rather positive, this type of words was still overwhelming with so much emotion. Maybe I had to use a non-native language or certain types of expression rules as a protection. Words are like a container in which you can put whatever emotion, thought, or idea. Think about the situation where you give your loved one a gift box which has the best present you can think of. S/he opens it to find the present is not what s/he wants. S/he rejects to accept it. You'd be terribly hurt. The more you love, the worse you are hurt. To use another language to tell my honest emotion was like locking the gift box so that I could actually give him the words but it's made harder to open it up. That way I could make it possible to tell and never be rejected. He often said it's not fair to say it in English.

With the pain of being so distant, I was happy then. However, it didn't last very long. When I stayed in his house during a summer vacation, he said he had schizophrenia showing so many pills to me. I was surprised but said we together could overcome. First it was hallucination, then came delusion. Suicidal thought turned to multiple suicide attempts. Deterioration was as fast as a winter wind. Everyday I woke up to worry about his life.

Gradually, more quarrels over the frustration of being so apart cast between us to broaden the psychological gap. Becoming too emotional, I tended either to be too controlled or

to use English, and he said “it’s not fair.” One day we talked on the MSN chat. He said “The time has come”, and I kept silent. He said “The one I always loved was abroad, and I couldn’t see when I wanted to” and I said “I see.” I said “I love you” in English then he said “I hate you” in Japanese. In his box, I found ‘I love you’ but I said nothing thinking ‘I’ll be waiting for you to come back’. After all, it was the last chat with him.

On his birthday, I would come to see him in a graveyard. I say “I love you” in English. “It’s funny because you never spoke English, right? He never gives back a word. I wait. I wait for him opening up the box. Knowing never does it happen. I wait for another still moment and I say 「会いたいね」. As it slips out, I regret. Once unlocked emotion is at large, I can’t help crying. And I cry fro what I’m waiting for knowing it never comes. Like Celine sings the song, my heart sings to a crescendo to awake me from numbness.

“waiting”

I’m waiting for
the day
when you come
to take me
to where you are
Knowing that
it won’t
till my life’s
brown away
Your shadow’s
cast on my daydream
and it pulls my heart
back to those long lost days
You say, “Let’s dance to see the dawn”
and I say “Of our love”
Never to find the last step
Ever since
I’ve been waiting
for you to come
looking upon
I’m waiting for

the day
when you come
to take me
to where you are
Knowing that
it won't
till my life's
blown away
to the vault of heaven

KENJIRO

I have 3 big brothers and 1 big sister. When she was 7 I was borne, and then she had been taking care of me. We've always been together even when I she had played with her friends after school and we played with dolls and we've played dance with songs and we've gone everywhere with a bicycle. It had lasted before I had been in kindergarten. After that, I started playing with friends of mine. And when she was 5th grade, she belonged to softball club, so we had been able to been together only at home, but we've been still closed. When she was 6th grade, she started studying English at juku, like a cramming school in Japan, and sometimes she taught me some English like "What is your name? "My name is" and "I am ...". But then I was never interested in English, so just she taught me I remembered them. And I was 4th grade, we started learning the alphabet at school. I don't know why but then I was really interested in the alphabet and I thought it was great that we could express our Japanese in alphabetical order (just the pronunciation then). So at the end of my 4th grade, I told to my mother that I wanted to learn English at juku my sister. I knew that our family was not wealthy.....poor family, but I really wanted to do that. I was expected that my mother said NO, but unexpectedly she said "OK, you could do that. But promise that if you really want to do that you should not give up studying English, keep studying, ok? " I promise." I said. This is the beginning of my life with English. To keep promise between me and my mother, I kept studying English. I ordered weekly English-language paper and bought lots of English study books and kept watching TV program almost every night. At junior high school, I kept my English record excellent, grade A, and I changed the juku to the private lesson. I belonged to track & field club, so I couldn't have a lot of time to study every subject, but I kept the time to study English because I like English and to keep the promise with my mother. Then I was at the middle of 9th grade, the private teacher stooped teaching English because of her marriage. I was so disappointed, discouraged. I didn't have the courage to study English by myself in the future. But anyway I must study by myself I thought and I did it. After that I still kept my English record excellent and I went to a good high school and then I could still keep it good. I realized that I really like English again and want to study English more, so I decided to major in English at university when I was 11th grade and I studied English harder to pass the entrance examination of a university of foreign studies and languages and I could pass it. At university, lots of native English speaker taught us English and I thought they told their opinions straight. Sometimes I can't take it and at the same time I envy it. Because after I became aware that I am gay, I kept my real personality, gay, secret so I needed to spent my life as a straight man. In Japan, it seems taboo to come out our gay sexuality, except those who drag queens and courageous gay people, and of course I would never come out to

everyone even best friends of mine. I felt fear that if I came out all friends would leave me and look at me as a strange person. So I kept telling a lie to everyone surrounding me and to myself. But it too hard to keep it secret and it had been hurting my mind, like “ Why I can’t spend my life as gay? Is this the really me? I need to live as a straight man without an end? I can never love men and be loved by them? Is this the life? I wanted to know how other gay people live, so I bought gay books and went to the gay bars and clubs and only then I could feel my real life. But when I was out of such areas I need to live untruly. Even them I got acquainted with at gay space, they never came out, lived like me. On TV, lots of foreign gay people came out and live their real life and enjoy it. Then I wanted to have foreign gay guys and talk with them and show up my real life to me, and I don’t know why but I thought if I had foreign gay guys I could do it. So I found the internet sight to be able to become acquainted with foreign gay people living in Japan. After I met them, I thought I was encouraged to live as gay, just I thought..... Now I came out to some friends of mine that I am gay and they are still best friends after my coming out. I think that we gay people don’t have to come out to everyone including parents, coworkers, superiors, and classmates. But to the real friends it’s better to come out I think and we can enjoy our real life.

MAYUMI

It was around 10 years old when I was attracted to a girl for the first time. She was one year older than me. We were in a same committee in a school and I saw her one or twice in a week in the meeting. She looked quiet and intelligent. I still remember the moment that I was watching her far away in a playground and felt my heart beating in a strange way. That was my first love, I guess. Some of my classmates really liked chatting about someone in mind. I was in their circle but just as a listener. I couldn't tell anyone that she was my "someone" in mind. Then I had no opportunities to see what this feeling was then.

I had crashed on a few girls in the early of my teenage. I couldn't confess my feeling to any of them. I was also paying attention not to let people know I liked girls and trying not to break up the friendship. I already knew the word of "lezu" from TV or magazine as the meaning of lesbian in Japanese then but I was avoiding to think about myself to use this word. It sounded dirty and taboo for me. "Homo" was also a word of discriminatory term. And the "lezu" was the set with "Homo" though it didn't be taken as much as "homo" in any topics. I remember when I heard someone saying "lezu" as joking I felt so uncomfortable. I even felt anger but couldn't say anything. I was afraid if people might have realized I got angry with their joking because I was "lezu". I had a recognition that I was a lesbian and just didn't want to define me with this term.

In my junior high school days I had a favorite Japanese female singer, whose songs was sung with the first person of male "Boku". I throw me in her songs to find different me taking off the girl's uniform. Her singing as "Boku" sounded androgynous. It made me comfortable. I felt like I had some space to be free from the gender role of a girl in her songs.

I began to listen English songs almost at the same time. I preferred them because they didn't influence my emotion with too much flavor of genders in the songs like Japanese songs did. Even though the lyrics had meanings to distinguish if the song was for boy or girl, I had no idea to get it with my English skill in Junior high school level.

I learned more English out of class by listening American 60's and 70's music. I had been admiring the days of hippie in America. I was interested in eccentric people, like those who were in Woodstock concert. I envied those who looked very free. I admired to be free even though I didn't understand what the meaning of "free" was. I was trying to get into the hippie world in mind through music, careless of the social background in those days in America or the meanings of their slogans. Just those weird people were enough cool to get my attention. I was escaping from the stress of the role as a "normal" girl who should have enjoyed yourself with "girl talk" in a class. I have learned a part of American culture and learned English. English was a kind of window to show me the different idea or style of people. And it was far from my daily-life.

In a high school I liked a girl who was my classmate and club-mate. We were together from the morning till the evening when we got out of the club everyday. One day when

we were in a English class I passed my English-Japanese dictionary, whispering, "Pick up a word and make a short sentence to message me. Just write it down there. I will do same for you. And we won't tell which word you picked up. We can't know until we accidentally find it someday. OK? I took hers. I turned the pages and stopped at "if". I wrote a message for her : "If I were a boy, I would love you." I closed her thick dictionary and gave it back to her. It was my first confession of love in a dishonest way. It was just a few month before we were going to graduate from high school. I wanted to let her know my feeling and I was afraid to do it directly. As like my message saying, I had this thought that I needed to be a boy if I would love a girl. I also needed to use English to tell it, not in Japanese. It couldn't have been happened on my Japanese dictionary. It would be overearnest and embarrassing because Japanese people normally doesn't express your feeling or ideas directly. And If I wrote it in Japanese, it sounds so awkward."Moshimo watashi ga otokonoko dattara, watashi wa anata o aishita deshou." is like an answer of translation on the paper of the English examination. It's not spoken Japanese. And I don't feel conformable to say "watashi" or "anata" directly in the sentence. Most of the japanese people neither. Or I could say in this way "Moshimo watashi ga otonoko dattara, A(someone's name) no koto o suki datta to omou." It sounds more natural as spoken Japanese. There were some replacement and complement of the information in the sentence. "anata(you)" is replaced to "A(someone's name)", and "aishita deshou(would love) is replaced to "ski datta(would like)". Moreover, there was "no koto(thing)" put after "A(someone's name)", and "omou(think)" at the end of the sentence. It's a kind of Japanese way to avoid pointing out someone by directly saying "anata(you)" and it would turn to unclear by adding "omou(think)". Besides, to say "Anata" is too much polite if you are talking with friends, or too strong and straightforward if you are talking with someone who you don't really know. You even can't say it to your elders. And it sometimes makes people to feel being pointed out something about their behavior or attitude. Just "I" as a subject and "you" as an object in English has much troubles in Japanese. Therefore we don't say much in that way like the first translation but even the second one, honestly, doesn't satisfy me. It doesn't sound enough to mean what I wanted to say. I have been feeling that Japanese as my first language is not enough to explain my feeling. I am supposed that I have already had this feeling unconsciously since when I was in high school. However, I took Japanese literature as my major in University. I studied feminism in Japanese literature in Women's University. It was the physical start to explore a part of my identity as a woman. I enjoyed learning the theory of feminism. It was the great tool to light up the hidden structure of the society for me. I was interested to know what kind of unfair situations happen in the world and happened before standing as a woman of a minority . I was not in a circumstance to use English. I was not so interested in it as language but more theory or concept about feminism then.

In that moment I have crashed on my dormitory mate. We were getting along so well as other mates talked about us we were dating as a joke before we really started to date. We had been together as friends for a year. She really liked me, "as a friend", she said, but

for me It was obvious that she really liked me as the meaning of more than friends, as same as I did.

One day I told her my feeling. It was just the day before my 20 years old's Birthday. As she asked me what present I wanted, I answered her "I don't want any thing... not the thing but I want something untouchable." Then I said "It's someone's heart." She seemed to understand what I meant but her puzzled face made me nervous. She told me that she liked me more than anyone but we couldn't be more than friends. She even didn't want use the words like "dating" "girlfriend" or "love". She seemed to be afraid to get in to the deep discussion about our relationship and I was afraid to break up her thought, which was enclosed by the hetero-sexual idea. I also had no idea to talk about homo-sexuality. My thought was like blocked by something unexplainable pressure. I gave up to talk about our "special friendship".

In the morning of my birthday she came and knocked on my door and said, "Come down to the dinning room." There was a common dinning room in our dormitory. We used to have 3 meals prepared there. It was weekend and we had to cook by ourselves. When I opened the door of the dinning room, there was my breakfast on the table. She was actually not good at cooking but she tried it for my birthday morning. She was like my girlfriend. After a few days, it naturally happened, in her room. We had sex.

After the physical relationship, we became lovers. We had never talked about our same-sex relationship. One day when I asked her if she only liked girls she answered, "No, it's just you." I was not happy with her answer. And I didn't know the term of "bi-sexual" even in Japanese at the time. So there were only two types of women in my mind - woman who likes woman, or woman who likes man but can date with girl. She was the latter for me. And I as sometimes wondering if she was playing with me.

I didn't think about my sexuality so much because I already knew I liked girls. Only the concern was if I should come out to other friends. We were in a closet. Nobody knew our relationship then. It was such a big stress for me that I couldn't tell anyone about my love. She didn't look getting stress to be in a closet. In the other hand, I was also afraid to see people's reaction for me, imagining my coming out. I decided not to tell anyone about my love and avoid the situation that my coming out would become "outing" for my girlfriend.

In my senior year a professor advised me I should go to master degree with her recommendation but I refused her proposal. I run away from my first responsibility in a study field. As harder I studied about feminism I was getting to feel that I had to struggle with my sexuality and should write about the sexual minorities in a gender theory, however I was not enough brave to face it. At the same time I wanted to get into a "active" "real" society, which was always in my head as a big threat against my feministic thought. I wanted to get out of a plenty of thesis. I wanted to experience the discrimination as a woman over myself soon and know what the reality in this society exactly. After my graduation, I went to China for study. I was much more interested in Chinese than English or Japanese literature. And I wanted to live in other Asian

countries, not in western's even though I still love the music and movies from U.S or U.K.. China was a kind of trial for me because I didn't like so much Chinese culture and the country. I just wanted to know who I was as an Asian me, not Japanese me, trying to get the shape of myself in other way. It might be a kind of development of my study about feminism to make my thought wide and help me to find other type of the discrimination. Discrimination was a big key word to think about myself and society. I took Chinese course in a University in Beijing. My school days was great. Friends call me in my Chinese name "Anteng". I loved this name. It made me feel so free because I felt like I became different me. I talked with my classmates in Chinese, but some of the students from western countries still preferred to use English out of the class. My English was not enough good to have a conversation with them. Then I had complex with English. I also felt that the gap of language skills would distinguish the people, especially in English. It was able to be seen obviously when I looked at the slight difference of the faces of Chinese students. Those who were major in English looked more proud than those who were major in Japanese or other Asian languages. After I realized this I began getting involved myself more into Chinese or other asian cultures. When I finished my study in Beijing Chinese completely took a place as my second language.

In 1999, I got my first job in Shanghai. It was a trading of electric devices in Japanese manufacturer. It was totally different society than what I saw in Beijing. I had five Chinese co-workers and two Japanese bosses at work. My customers are mostly Chinese. I mostly use Chinese or Japanese at work, a very few opportunities to speak English.

Those days were so crazy busy. I was working as a sales. It was rare to see sales women working in the electric industry. I worked so hard not to be thought that I couldn't make it because I was a woman. I remember that my mother always said, "Study harder and work harder, more than men do, so that you can get the acceptance from the people." I tried my best as I did everything that I could do in a same way with other male coworkers. Even to a karaoke club where were Chinese girls with Japanese high school uniforms for Japanese business men, I have accompanied to customers even though how disgusting it looked.

I had never been to gay or lesbian clubs in Shanghai. I had no idea those kind of people exist in China. Instead, I was staying at home and looking for the some information on the internet when I was free from the work. I found some lesbian's websites. My favorite was the one collecting the gay/lesbian news from oversea. I was shocked to know there were out gay and lesbians struggling for their social rights. It was real somewhere far from me in the world. I learned the base of the sexuality with "Katakana" English from there.

It also had a chat space on the site. There were always several people chatting, even though most of them lived in Japan. It was strange feeling when I joined to there for the first time. Each of them used their handle names. Someone was called "ringo(apple)". Other one was called "usagi(rabbit)". No one used their real names. Most of the topic was about relationship issues. Everybody seemed to be afraid to be revealed who you

were. They should exist in front of their computers however I still couldn't feel those people real. I liked chatting with them but sometimes got more lonely as nothing was real.

I had been struggling to be a sales, but after 3 years I finally gave up. The trigger was my girlfriend whom I had relationship since my university days. She lived in Tokyo then. We had almost 4 years relationship in long distance after the graduation. At other night she gave me a call and said that she met someone and wanted to break up with me. This bad notification took all the energy from me. I couldn't get to think anything in a positive way. I felt I was like a balloon missing a direction in a big sky. I was getting felt so bored with my life even how busy on my job. I wanted to establish something as my carrier in China but the break-up made me change my mind. Carrier was not important for me any more. I was exhausted physically and mentally. I was back in Japan in 2001 after 4 and a half years' stay in China. I still tried to get the sales position in my country. It's not for showing my ability, just for making my living because I knew I needed to work long to feed me till my retirement. Desk job was not my ideal, like most of the women do. The word of "Kotobuki-taishoku(happy retirement for marriage) - is not in my dictionary.

I got a job. It was a kind of desk. It was not really my ideal but I accepted it. I got a bit tired after my job-hunting. Rather I wanted to have a new life to be happy again. I didn't want to get exhausted with job like the days in Shanghai.

My constant interest is to figure out the structure of the society from the point of view of minority. Instead of the devotion in to my job at office, I decided to be involved myself in activities to support migrants. I have been thinking that I was an outsider in this society after my awareness of my sexuality as a lesbian and after my experience living for 4 and a half years as a foreigner in China I started to have sympathy with people from other countries who live and work in Japan. The organization in which I joined deals with the case of overstayers. Most of the clients are from Middle-Eastern or South-Eastern Asian countries. My motivation was friends in my mind. I had a lot of friends or classmates who were from other Asian countries during my study in Beijing. I just couldn't accept the situation that the economic gap made people work away from their countries. I was imagining what if they were a part of my friends. It could be, actually. I had devoted myself into this migrant's labor's issue for a few years. I spent most of my private time for the labor-counseling.

I studied about labor law, immigration law and the the human rights. I have met some people who worked in a NGO to support human rights in other genres. One day I joined to a workshop to discuss about the method to manage the equitable organization, which was run by Feminist group. There were about 10 Japanese women. At the beginning of the meeting we introduced ourselves each other. And one of the women was a volunteer worker in the Domestic Violent support group for gay and lesbian. She didn't say she was a lesbian but her self-introduction also made people acknowledge her sexuality tacitly. It was first time for me to hear someone getting the word of "lesbian" out in public and to see someone implicant she was a lesbian. I was a bit embarrassed because I

was also a lesbian but didn't have a trigger to talk about my sexuality but my responsibility in NGO. Since I worked for human rights I began to feel I should reveal who I was. It was a kind of pressure. Not explaining of my sexuality as a lesbian, I felt I was hiding or telling a lie about me implicitly.

Another time I joined a Feminist English study group. I knew about them for a long and knew they sometimes took sexual minority issues as a topic to have a discussion in English. I wanted to develop my English skills to counsel with foreigners as my clients. There were 5 people in a class. One is a coordinator of the class, a Japanese woman in 50s. The other is the instructor, An American woman in 30s. In the self-introduction I talked about my occupation, I was still a office worker, and volunteering job for migrants workers and said I was a lesbian. I knew it wasn't necessary to say everything about myself but I felt that I wanted to let people know those important elements about me. Once I finished my self-introduction, the American instructor gave me a high five and said she was also a lesbian. I was glad. The reaction from other people was not bad too. I was really glad to see my profession was welcome.

After that, I started to hung out with the instructor. She was also interested in the social activities and minority issues. I was conformable to talk with her because I didn't need to hide anything about me and be able to talk ay kind of issues. Through the conversation with her my hesitation of using those words related with sexuality like gay, lesbian, even a Japanese translation "lezu", was taken out from my mind. I started to read more about sexuality in Japanese and in English too. The gay/lesbian study was so behind in Japan and people were so blind about themselves. Also I realized that I was more conformable to read or talk in English regarding to sexuality. It might be able to think that It's because English was not my first language and there is distance between the concept in my mind and the real meanings that the terms have. And the another is that there were much more useful terms in English to think about it logically. Also I still couldn't get rid of the dirty image from the Japanese terms.

Since I studied about my sexuality issues the responsibility of working for migrants became pressure. I still had sympathy as one of the minority or outside but it was too hard to take care of a part of someone's life. The hardest thing was that I couldn't be satisfied with the result always even when my clients could get back the pay or rights of social security. Their rights only had to be replaced by money every time. And co-workers in this organization thought that to claim back the money is to recover their dignity. I understand this theory but as I was working I started to feel I could work in another way with another style. I saw our clients controlling their original style, like the way of expressing their feeling or communicating with people, in order to survive in this Japanese society. It made me unsatisfied sometimes because I knew how Philippine people express their feelings when they are happy or sad, or angry. I had been thinking about the identity of minority people. And I thought of the idea upon on mind that I should focus on my issue as a lesbian, real me.

The meeting of a minister also influenced me in some way at that moment. He was a 72 years old Japanese guy. I am a kind of Christian though I doesn't look like. I hadn't

been to church for a long time, almost since 12 years old. When I was back in Japan from Shanghai in 2001 as it happened I found there were a Christian church which was very liberal and engaged in social activities as fighting for the authority of the headquarter of the Christian organization. It was the minister who recruited me to work in the NGO supporting migrants. He is always messaging that it doesn't matter whether you are Christian or not, just be yourself, stay as you are. What I found this church and met him was a big encouragement for me. I was still afraid to accept myself then. One day I told him about my sexual identity after the service. He looked surprised at the time, and gave me some simple questions, like how I felt when I was in love with a woman. He seemed to like to know if I was really a lesbian because he had never seen any gay or lesbian in his 72 year's old life. He said "thank you" to me after our conversation and offer me to have a workshop about gender and sexuality issues in his church. I looked into the sexual categories, like gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, interest and questioning in some books and the info through the internet. I should have prepared good explanation for lecture. It needs to inched a bit of biological theory to see people's sex like X and Y chromosome and mental range of love. Most of the terms to explain about the sexual categories on my resume were loan words as written in Katakana. I thought it would look more academic and acceptable for people as new study. But in the part of the topic about gay rights, I used the term of "Douseiaisha" as People with homo-sexuality. I had a purpose to appeal for the gap in the society. It sounded more real with Japanese term even though I didn't like the negative image. There were around 20 to 30 Japanese people, who seemed straight in my workshop. I gave the instructions about the sexual categories and social issues following to my resume and talked about myself as a lesbian. Nobody showed me a bad reaction. Rather they looked very impressed by my honest confession. I was just so glad to have the opportunity to relieve myself from the religious tie and crack down the invisible threat from the big monster, which was imaginal homophobia inside of me. And it was exciting to let people know homosexuality is just besides you, as well. After my coming out in public, something sparked out inside me. I got a confidence that I was happy as a lesbian and liked to feel seeing social activism physically as showing who I was, not spending time to writing a paper to pass to the labor standard office. In 2006 I went to Hong Kong to join the rally against WTO meeting. The international trading issue was not my main interest but I couldn't wait till the next big international rally would happen somewhere in the world. My eyes wanted to catch up the people who were fighting for their lives. The rally was held in a big park. There were a lot of people from different countries to appeal their problems caused by WTO system. I listened in some conferences. Most of the speakers had their presentations in English. I found a Japanese group having a conference about their agriculture issues in Japanese. It was a kind of different atmosphere from other groups there. Of course I could understand what they were talking about but I felt something missing there. Energy, spirit, anger, or what? Is it because the situation was less serious in Japan than other developing countries? It might be, but, what if one of the Japanese presenter would give the presentation more passionately, in Japanese? I still would feel same, I guess. Japanese conference sounded like too much formal and scholastic. There were too many

specific terms composed by Kanji (Chinese characters) in their talk. It sounded so heavy and made me feel the issues more far from my life. That's why I preferred to listen to the English presentations even though I couldn't catch up the all the meanings. I rather wanted to feel the energy or emotion from people through the presentations. After the conference, I joined the rally. There were a plenty of people flowing on the street, heading to the building in where were held the WTO meeting. As walking I felt my blood stepping inside of my body. I was wondering where I should go with those energy inside me. I was so excited with the atmosphere that was generated from the people who were appealing for their lives and against the big authority. At the same time, I envied them. They exactly knew the direction where their problems were, and they had their own style to express their idea or emotion.

In Japanese society it seems a major manner not to say, or speak in a roundabout way when any conflict would happened. To understand Japanese conversation deeply, you have to read something between the lines. It sometimes causes too much thoughts or misunderstandings. If you come directly to the point, there would be a silence on the other end. I realized that I was getting stressed out with this type of communication after coming out my sexuality. Then I became more frankly to friends, even to my bosses at work. There is a Japanese saying: "Taga ga hazureru.". "Taga" is a metal-loop binding a barrel or tub to keep the shape. It expresses rules or bondage, like a "ball and chain" in English. "hazureru" means "taken off/got a rid of/unfasten". So my "Taga" was taken off and set me free from the invisible restraints. Actually this saying is used as a negative meaning mostly when one becomes loose or rude, getting out of the strict condition. It means that Japanese prefer to have the belt of rules or manners to fix yourself in the society.

I also started to feel much more conflict with my language when I try to explain about myself, especially about my sexuality. I am still not sure which term is the best for me though I prefer "gay" rather than "lesbian" for me for now. In Japanese the term of "lesbian" sounds a sort of sensual and dirty. On the other hand "gay"-Japanese pronunciation is "Gei"- is still a new-import in recent years. It still has possibility to enhance the quality of the word though It's already used a lot on TV in describing homosexual men. We have this term called "Douseiaisha" as the meaning of "homosexual people". I don't use it much because it sounds negative like implying a social disability. "Gei" is used to make fun of someone as a joke at most of the time but still prefer to this as it doesn't have the sexual imitation of women or the boarder between men and women if I use it like English speakers do.

It was the hell when I talked about my sexuality to my mother. She was almost 60 years old. I used to think she was a kind of intelligent, social-sensitive person. It was a few years ago when I came out to her through the article on the newsletter of my church. I reported about my workshop of gender and sexuality on it and she read it. She was not a member of our church. She just got it from my minister. She was so upset and called me to say I should go to see a doctor. She meant that I should had mental troubles. Her

words damaged me a lot though I had a little expectation that she could accept me as a lesbian before the confession. After, I started to avoid this topic not to be hurt again.

In last January I had a new girlfriend. She was an African woman born in a small island called Guadalupe in Carib, and raised up in France. She came to Tokyo to see her friend and had a few weeks to stay then. I met her at the bar and we had a chemistry at a gLarry. We stayed 5 days together after the crash. She had a 3 year's old son with her. I had never thought what if I had a girlfriend who had a kid. But I enjoyed those days of three of us being together. At the end of the March just before my Birthday she visited me from France to stay with me again. We were planning to live together for 6 months. I was so happy to have her besides me. We communicated in English. Her English was no so good but she still had some skills to use any of English words to tell her idea or feeling. I remember when we met first time her first question for me was "Do you speak English or French? There was no option for Japanese or other languages since she only speak French and English. When I answered her that I didn't speak French but English she was a bit disappointed but immediately said "OK, I don't speak good English. when you don't understand what I say, ask me, every time, please." She really wanted me to understand her, not pretending. Her offer gave me a good impression. After we started to date she sometimes couldn't find right words in English but we had no big stress about it. She knew I had enough patience to wait for her finding the way to explain with other words. Either me. I knew she wouldn't be irritated or frustrated with my bad English. I had similar experience when I learned Chinese in Beijing. I had no stress to talk with non-Chinese classmates in Chinese but had a bit tense when I talked with Chinese students in Chinese. The gap of the language skills generates some distance between people. On this point we had no big problem to communicate in English.

One day we were talking about family. She asked me something about my mother, father and my sister. And she told me that she wanted to see them someday. After a few days, I decided to talk about her to my mother. I emailed her from my cellphone attached a picture of my girlfriend and her son. After that the second war happened between me and my mother. She gave me back the same reaction as she did to me a few years ago. I heard her voice totally upset through the phone and it made me flattered. I was trying to explain that I didn't have any mental problems and there was no any difference of the meaning to love someone between straight and gay people. I really wanted to let her understand there shouldn't be any difference of the feeling when the one is in love. But she insisted me to break up with her because we couldn't get married as we had same-sex. She was even trying to have me make sure that I was a woman. She even said I was attracted to her because of the strong friendship between women. She persuaded me to leave her and stay as friends. She even asked me if I am "homo" and answered by herself instead of me "No, you are not, because you are a woman." She took the meaning of "homo" as a gay guy who has woman's looking. The conversation was so complicated and it made me exhausted at all. It was going on for a week. After the several calls, I finally hung up the phone. I knew it was really rude but I couldn't stand what she told me. After that happened, I took some distance from my mother in order to keep my

mentality safe. Those conversation made me so disappointed and realized that it was different two issues in her mind that what women would be independent and how to live as what you are in this society. It seemed she almost forgot her feministic spirit keeping on telling me to be independent as a woman since my childhood. And I deeply felt the importance of the minimum knowledge and linguistic system about sexuality issues.

I told my girlfriend how my mother reacted about our relationship, and she said that my mother was just worried about me and couldn't accept in her traditional thought. She advised me to call my mother again to make her calm down by telling that I understood her feeling and say "Mom, I love you." I had never told my mother, or my family like that, same like most of the Japanese never do. And I did it, in Japanese. It was so awkward, strange feeling. As I anticipated, she didn't respond to me, even started to persuade me to end up the relationship with her again. I gave up. This is my life, not hers. I can't change her mind for now, or forever, but also understand how difficult for her to accept the reality about her daughter in her traditional thought. I thought I shouldn't spend too much energy against her. I just needed a comfortable circumstance to live as what I am, as a gay or lesbian or homo or whatever people say.

The next thing I knew, I had friends from other countries or those Japanese who had experience to stay oversea around me. I feel more comfortable to spend time with them. Most of my friends are lesbians. They are very different from my other straight friends. There is a lesbian bar in Shibuya, the most busy crowded and crazy area in Tokyo. We called there Chu's bar, taken the name of the owner. The bar is only open at Wednesday night. The place is mainly for gay women, but the owner whose name is Chu, is also welcome to gay men, even straight people. There is mostly a half percentage of Japanese people and the rest of non-Japanese speakers. It is fun to be up to the bar sometimes to see my friends or meet new people. There is a fabulous atmosphere to make people naturally friendly. I might be the effect of English working well to people getting closer there. In my closet time I was afraid to see gay people. It might have been a kind of homophobia existing very inside of me. Since I knew this bar I got different energy that I had never experienced before. I always can see new style or new life through those people, like, Teacher, Translator, Musician, Journalist, Peace activist, filmmaker, VJ, DJ, fashion model, lawyer, Author, Psychologist, Doctor, Care-worker, NGO officer, Embassy Officer, Sailor, Soldier, Make-up artist for dead people, Dolphin instructor, self-proclaimed photographer, business persons in a variety of industries, capitalism dropout, and Former Rastafarian. The bar is running by Chu but bartenders are volunteers. Two of current bartenders are lawyer and newspaper writer. When they are absent somebody will get in their place. Chu never asked someone to work with her. It's because of the alternative atmosphere surrounding the place making us move naturally. I think this is very important element to run your organization in a good way. We often catch up somewhere outside of the bar as well, sometimes for dinner, but not only for eating or clubbing, we do hiking, playing music, any kind of activities that we want, we do. And we help each other in our lives, sometimes offer accommodation to your friend for short stay, or help moving your stuff when you decided to get out of a house of your girlfriend.

My roommate is also a member of the bar. She is engaged in a gay and lesbian film festival. In other day, she was looking for people who could help her to be a part of extra for the shot of the flyer, and found 5 to 6 friends. They gathered in a theater for shooting. The meeting time was 5 a.m. in the morning!

I have watched the American TV show, L-word. Trust me. Chu's bar is much more interesting than L-word. There is so many dramatic lives and stories of lesbians. And they are not the fictions. I also feel people from the bar or our gay community much more active and passionate with their lives than other straight people. When finding something interesting, just go for it. There is no much worries or hesitations. Good or bad, we tend to live for the pleasure of the moment because there is no social securities reserved for gay people in this society. And we know we only have to live our lives with our own styles.

I will resign my current job in September and go to school to learn speech pathology. That's the big project for me. If I was not a gay, I wouldn't have taken this choice. It's because I have this confidence that the expression of your feeling is very important to people to live as what you are. I have my mouth, tongue and voice to make the sound with meanings, but some people doesn't have this function with them. Some of others can't find the right word when they want to tell you something, even a simple expression like, "delicious" or "cold" or "it hurts". I have this specific experience that I couldn't tell people who I am, I mean, what I was a gay although I had my tongue and voice to express that. So I can imagine somehow how hard it is for people who doesn't have this function even though it should be a different hardness.

It is not so easy to tell your idea or feeling whenever you want, especially in Japanese society. But I want to be a unique supporter to let people to try it. It's also a kind of trial for me to do that with Japanese as my first language because it doesn't have the structure to tell the conclusion at the beginning of the sentence. It might be getting fuzzy or losing the goal when you are looking for a word or being ready to say something. My advantage is that I knew the difference of the way of communication between Japanese and English or Chinese. And I know the style - "Say it", which I have learned from my non-Japanese friends. I don't have knowledge of the rehabilitation but I think I can do it in somehow unique way. And I hope I can be a part of small revolution among the people who need to speak about yourself.

NAOKO

I am a lesbian. Yes, I like women. But I have never had a sex with any women...

I have no idea how I feel when I have a relationship with a woman for the first time. Wonderful?? Weired ?? I have no idea.

But I still call myself lesbian.

When I was a child, many people said that I forgot my penis in my mom's womb. I liked playing with boys more than girls. Actually, I was very shy so I didn't have so many friends to play with. My favorite toys were always something for boys, not for girls. I didn't wear skirts. I wore only pants. After I entered junior high school, I had to wear skirt because of school uniform. But I didn't mind at all about it. Actually, I wore tennis skirt which was very short and girlish when I belonged to tennis club. It still didn't bother me at all. I prefer wearing pants and having short hair, but it is because it is easy and comfortable for me. I was just being comfortable with myself and that made me look like a boy without penis. But it has never meant that I want to be a boy.

When I was in elementally school, junior high school, and high school, I usually had my favorite boy. Every girl likes to talk about boys and gossip at that age, so it was like I had to make one favorite at least. But I could enjoy that. I enjoyed being in the group even if he was not my real favorite. My real favorite was secretly always in my mind. And it was always a girl not a boy. I have never kept any pictures with my favorite boy, but I remember that I kept a picture with my favorite girl in my desk drawer. It proves that she was my real favorite. Until I get self confidence of being a lesbian, I always had a fake favorite boy and a real favorite girl.

Studying abroad in America was one big opportunity of starting to have self confidence as a lesbian. When I was in the third year of university, I went to Mississippi in America to study English for a year. My main purpose was to learn English, but I also wanted to be surrounded by western people and feel western culture. At the time I was so fascinated by western culture through movies, music, and dramas. Actually, since I became junior high school student, I've started to watch American dramas and be into Western culture which is very open. I was(or still) not good at expressing my feeling, so I may have wanted to be like western people. At the time, I also started to learn English at school. It made me have interesting to Western culture more. Anyway, within a year I stayed in Mississippi I met so various people, different nationality, age, back ground, and sexuality. The meeting of them influenced me a lot. It made me feel it's important to be myself. It means not only as a lesbian, but also as a person. They were not modest in a good way. I mean that they expressed their feeling a lot and seemed to be really comfortable with themselves. Even though I didn't come out to my friends there, it boosted self-confidence and gave me a spice of optimism. I didn't realize at the time, but Although I didn't know that they were gay and that was a gay club, I have met some gay people and been to a gay club for the first time in my life when I was in America. It might have meant something to me. It might have been the time that I thought I could see the hope that I can be myself.

After I came back to Japan, I knew about lesbian society. I don't remember how I knew it. It might have been through internet. Since I knew it, I tried to make myself be in lesbian society and know about it. I joined the OFUKAI for lesbian which is a group meeting through internet, went to some girl's bars and girl's events, and tried to make friends. Everything was new experience and interesting. But I didn't feel comfortable. I expected I could be getting used to it so I kept doing the exploring lesbian society for a couple of years. I still don't know why even now but I couldn't get used to it. It might be because of people? atmosphere? However, the exploring made me changed my theme of my graduation thesis. Basically I was going to write about something I learned in America. And I thought it was going to be about culture difference or something ordinary. But I changed my mind and I decided to write about lesbian. I had a questionnaire to lesbians through website and I made a summarized them. Actually, it was the most important thing I learned in America. Being myself. In my case, being a lesbian. Of course English was one of the biggest things I learned, but it was only a tool to communicate with people and see the world that I didn't know. I've never read my thesis again since I wrote it because it is rubbish. But I am still proud of myself that I wrote about something very important for me.

I met a guy from England a couple of years after I came back to Japan and I started to date with him. Actually, I was dating with some foreign guys when I was in America, but they were still my fake favorite. Of course I was more serious about them than my younger age though. The British guy was so sweet and I really enjoyed the time with him. It was my first serious relationship in my life. I thought I would fall in love with him. I had not felt comfortable in lesbian world since I knew it. At the time I worked at girl's bar once a week as a part-time job and I was not attracted by any lesbians, so I believed I might like guys. And he was a really sweet guy.

The longer our relationship became, the less my feeling to him became. Even though I was not attracted by any lesbians in the lesbian world, but I was still fascinated by women sometime in my daily life. It never happened toward men. I started to know I like my boyfriend and my relationship with him but it was not falling love. Around at the same time, I started to attracted to a woman. She was my boss at the girl's bar. It means that she is a lesbian. It was my first time to like a lesbian, not straight woman. Since I realized my feelings to her, I was getting like her more and more. On the other hand, my feeling to my boyfriend was getting lower and lower. And then I have started to feel guilty to him. And it was getting bigger and bigger. Especially when he expressed his feeling like how much he liked me, it made me have a lot of guilty feeling.. Finally I couldn't stand it anymore. I told him that I liked women and how I had been feeling in the relationship everything and made him dump me. It took me about a few months to decide to tell him.

I think I could have kept our relationship with hiding my honest feeling, but I couldn't. He told me that he wants to be someone who loves him. And I knew I could never love him. I didn't want to waste his life. He was upset at the first time but he understood me. Since I broke up with him, I hardly have contacted with him. But a couple of years later,

I happened to talk with him on the phone and knew he got married with a Japanese woman. I was so happy about that.

So, since this relationship, I have never had a relationship with men. And I think I will never have one in the future as well...

Breaking up with my boyfriend and falling in love with my boss influenced me a lot. It was the time I could accept myself finally. Since then, I started to come out of the closet to my important friends whom I wanted to know. In other words, I started to make a real friendship with them. I also came out to my older sister and mom as well. I'm sure that my relationship with people became much stronger than it used to be. And I have fell in love with some lesbians. Most of the time the love didn't succeed, but I learned something a lot from that. I think people usually experience these love or romance when they are in high school. I experienced them about ten years behind. It seems like I am such a slow starter.

I've been having my own English speaking cafe in my hometown. It's a place for people who want to speak English. So, there are always some foreigner staffs or Japanese staffs who can speak English very well. It means that I'm always surrounded by English and foreigners. Honestly, I don't know why I started this business, but I wanted to do something by myself. Maybe I could do something different, but communicating in English was only thing that I have confidence. Actually, the jobs I've done before were always related to English in some way even though they weren't always needed to communicate in English.

Communicating in English makes me feel comfortable and easy, but on the other hand it makes me irritated and feel stress sometime.

I have been asked by many customers and foreigner staffs about my favorite actor, my type or my private life such as boyfriend or marriage. When those questions come to me, I usually try to avoid or pretend to be straight. The first year it was OK, I didn't feel any stress from being in the closet, but as time goes on I started to feel like coming out closet. It doesn't mean I want to tell every customers and staffs, but at least the people who want to know me, who have curious about me as a person. Customers and staffs are people who want to know different culture. I believe that they have open mind to many things not only languages. I haven't told to any customers that I like women yet. But I have told to a few foreigner staffs. I was a little bit scared of telling them, but I feel I made stronger relationship with them than before.

I hope that one day I can come out closet to customers and I can talk with them about my favorite actress, my type of women and my girlfriend!

Through whole my life, I've having a lot of experience and facing to myself. It might be because of being a lesbian. I might have been able to think or feel something other people usually don't. It's very thankful and precious. Being lesbian means a lot. But at the same time, it's just one part of me. I am a parson before a lesbian. I like women. That's all. I'm an only person who wants to love someone and wants them to love like everyone else.

The important thing is not escaping from facing yourself. And listening to yourself and know what you want. I trust this and I've been comfortable with myself.

So, I will be trying to be a better person and looking for love forever.

Please wish me luck on my love in the future!

RIKA

Why and How I studied English and How it Affected my Sexuality

Let me introduce myself first. My name is Rika and I am 36 years old now. I've been teaching English, mostly conversation, for more than 15 years. Now I have my own little school where I teach a wide range of people. Some people want to study English just as a hobby, others need to study for their schools examinations or TOEIC Test. Since I was a child, I liked women. So I thought I was a lesbian. But now that I have a boyfriend, it makes me a bisexual. I am in between lesbian and bisexual.

I was studying English in a little town near Vancouver for 4 years. 3 years as a high school student and I took a University Transfer course for a year. I learned not only English but also how to communicate with people, to be myself, to help others and it is OK to be helped sometimes. Anyway, I learned many things in Canada.

The reason I went to Canada was not to study English, but to get out of Japan. I was different in every way from ordinary girls. I wanted blue things while other girls wanted pink or red ones. I never wore skirts. I'd rather play baseball with boys than play with dolls. When my friends and I played house, my role was always a father or brother. I wanted to be a boy, but I could not tell anyone about it. I knew it would upset my parents even at age of 5 or 6.

I entered a very strict elementary school which is a mission women school and it has Junior high school, high school, and even a college. This kind of school is called "An escalator school" because once you entered the elementary school, the students do not have to take special examinations to get into Junior high school and high school unless your behavior is too bad. We have to take an entrance examination to enter the college, but it is an external one. The school rule was so strict that even our hair style was decided by teachers. The rule book said how long our hair should be, but it did not say how short hair we could have. Therefore, I had my hair cut extremely short like a boy when I was 14 or 15 years old. Then, the Principal hit the roof and told me that I was an alien in this school.

At this time, I was having my first relationship with a woman. She was an older sister of my friend. We had dated for about a year and a half and broke up because she went to a college. It was the time I started thinking about getting out of Japan. I had lost her and it made me so depressed. I started searching for something. Something that could make me happy or feel fulfilled. I did not fit into this strict school which we seldom had freedom. Moreover, I was not good at anything, Japanese, Math, History, PE or even music. I wanted to get a special skill so that I do not have to rely on getting married and having a husband feed me. I knew I didn't want to get married.

However, my parents did not allow me to quit the school. They had paid so much money since elementary school to put me into the college. And I am the only child. They wanted me to stay with them. It took me over a year to persuade them. The Principal, who was a sister, told me that I would never make it. Nobody was on my side, the Principal, teachers, or my parents. They believed without doubt that I would fail and

come back to Japan within a month. My friends did not support me, either. They said I was running away from an entrance examination of a university. But what they had said was totally ridiculous. Studying academic subjects in English and graduate from Canadian high school is much more difficult than that. I had courage of my convictions. I told everyone “ What would you do for me if I gave up this dream? Can you take full responsibility for my life? I want to decide what I want to do because it is my life and life comes just once”. And finally they let me choose my own way. Actually, it was my very first time to choose my own way. I was never happy while I was in Japan.

The country could have been anywhere. I did not have particular liking where to study. The language could have been anything, too. I was not planning to study English from the beginning. But my father knew a Canadian Ambassador and he recommended me to go to Vancouver. At age of 16, I left Japan and started living in a home stay in a little town called “ Port Coquitlam ”.

The school I entered is a Canadian private school with many foreign students from all over the world. Therefore, the school has ESL classes of 4 levels. You can not take academic subjects unless you finish the ESL level 2.

The first semester, I had to take 4 ESL classes which I learned listening, writing, reading and speaking English. The teachers were all nice and the very first time in my life, I thought studying was fun. I studied very hard and I got very good marks. Then I became sure of that I had chosen the right way.

I learned a lot from my host family, too. The host parents told me to call them “Mom and Dad “ while other friends call their host parents by their first names. I was lucky to be in this house. They treated me like their own child. They opened a surprise Birthday party for me, celebrate Christmas with me, took me to a church, and so forth. That is how I learned Canadian culture. There were a host sister, Nicole, who is the same age as me, and a host brother, Robert, who is younger than me by 2 years. They taught me many slangs or helped me with my homework. I spent my life just like an ordinary Canadian student. When I was having a problem of pronouncing Ls and Rs, my Mom and Dad told me that having an accent or grammar mistakes automatically proves that you are able to speak at least more than one language, so you should be proud and confident. They encouraged me a lot. My English was getting better day by day. And three months later, I was able to say what I wanted to say, but with a poor grammar.

The second semester, I took 2 ESL classes and 2 academic classes which do not require much English ability, such as Canadian Indian Art and Computer Science. As the time went by, I finished all the ESL classes and started taking academic classes. I took Social studies, Algebra, Accounting, English, and so on. The academic subjects were very difficult, so sometimes I had to burn the midnight oil. I learned so much from learning those subjects. Not only the subject itself, but also so many vocabularies and phrases. Catching up with Canadian students was always a problem, but somehow I survived. Many friends helped me, teachers volunteered their time for me. I could not have passed all the subjects without their warm help. Three years later, I took all the credits needed to

graduate from high school and I took Provincial Examinations. Luckily, I passed the examinations on the first try. Some Canadians could not pass them.

The most comfortable thing in speaking in English was that I call myself "I". In Japanese, there are so many words refer to yourself and it differs by their sex and age. For instance, women usually call themselves "Watashi" or "Atashi" or sometimes "Uchi" (Osaka dialect) and men call themselves "Boku" or "Ore" or "Washi" (older men). When I was in Japan, I hated and refused to call myself "Watashi" because I did not recognize myself as a girl. But I did not want to call myself "Boku", either because it was too weird. In Canada, the problem was easily solved. I just call myself "I". Everybody call themselves "I" regardless of their sex or age.

Before going to Vancouver, I hated my first name "Rika" because it is too feminine. Rika is in Hiragana characters which only girls have. Men's names are absolutely in kanji (Chinese characters). So I did not like this awfully feminine name. But after I went to Vancouver, of course, everyone called me "Rika" and I got used to it. I even started to like this name. Through using English, I was able to become" a person with no sex "The words "She" or "Her" were kind of new words for me, so I accepted them naturally.

I wore boy's clothes in Canada and had tremendously short hair, so sometimes I was mistaken for a boy. I was a little happier than being sad when someone called me "he" or "Mr".

People around me, mostly Canadian, Hong Konger, Korean never minded what I wore or how I acted. They accepted me as I was. I think it has a close relationship that Canada is a multicultural country. People in Canada naturally accept people who are different from them. They respect the others. Therefore, it was very comfortable for me to be in Canada, especially Vancouver where there are tremendous numbers of immigrants.

However, I did not come out to anyone about my sexuality. Strictly speaking, I did not care or mind about my sexuality while I was in Canada. I had no chance to meet gays or lesbians. There was an area called "a gay area" but I could not go there because I was under age. I was a teenager so that I could not enter bars and clubs. There was no internet at that time, but despite this isolated situation, I was true me in a little town. People could have suspected that I was a lesbian, but nobody asked me or mentioned it to me. So that I could forget about my sexuality and just be who I was.

Needless to say, I had some crushes on girls, but surprisingly, at the same time, I had crushes on boys, too. At that time, I thought I was not completely lesbian. I could be a bisexual. I just had not had opportunities to meet boys when I was younger because I had attended women school. When I found out that I also liked men, I was happy. I felt I was totally free. I did not have to choose the sex to love. I just love whomever I love.

After spending four years in Vancouver, I came back to Japan. I really wanted to go to a college or university, but my father did not allow me to. So I could not help it. Instead, I decided to take Eiken (Society for Testing English Proficiency) pre-first grade to prove my English level. Pre-first grade is so difficult that the pass rate for the examination was

only 7%. But I wanted to give it a try. Fortunately, I passed and I was so happy. I studied for the examination by myself. I did not attend any schools. I used reference books and studied difficult grammar, such as participial construction or third conditional and memorized tons of vocabularies. Since I had basic grammar knowledge, studying on my own was not so difficult. Actually, it was fun.

I passed Eiken pre-first grade, and wondering what to do next. Well-timed, my friend's younger brother was studying English to go to Boston, and he had attended many English schools before he met me, but he did not like any of them. So his parents asked me to be his English tutor. It was my very first time to teach, but I took the chance. He substantially liked me and learned good English. His parents and he appreciated me so much that I thought I had found a vocation; to be a teacher.

I put advertisements on town magazines and got some students and started teaching at my house or their houses. I taught English conversation and also a grammar for their school examinations. As I was teaching English (sometimes Math or History as well) I felt I needed to study English for myself . Thus, I found a British teacher near my house and took his advanced class.

After studying with him approximately half a year, he asked me to be his school's teacher because he wanted to make his school bigger. Actually, he was the only teacher at his school and he thought I could be a big help as a teacher and a manager. So we started a new school where I taught variety of people, from three years old to people who had retired from their work. I did not come out to this British boss because I was afraid of losing this job. I worked at this school for about three years. Since I was teaching and managing the school almost all by myself (which made me mad because everyone at the school put all work to me because I was the only one who can speak both English and Japanese), I thought it could be possible to open my own school. After thinking twice, I quit this school and opened my own. I had no intention of working at a company, where I have to wear a uniform.

English is my bread-and-butter now. (Or should I say it's rice-and-soy sauce?)I teach, translate, and sometimes interpret. When I speak in English, I feel more comfortable and freer than speaking in Japanese. I think that it is because my English ability, especially vocabularies, is so limited that I have to use direct and simple words to express myself. When I use simple words, what I want to say becomes very clear and straightforward. Of course, there are many times that I have to struggle looking for right words, but somehow, I manage to express myself with limited vocabularies that I have.

There was a day that I can never forget about coming out in English. I was invited to a class at a Japanese major women college. My American friend was a professor at this college and he invited me to his class as an interviewee for the students as a model woman who has succeeded by using English. The students spoke quite good English and they had prepared questions for me to ask. They asked me formal questions for the first 30 minutes or so, then the atmosphere became very friendly. Then the students started asking me about my personal life, like if I had a boyfriend in Canada or if I'm dating with

his professor. The professor had told me before the class that I could talk honestly if I wanted to, or I did not have to tell the truth if I want to hide about myself.

At that time, I suddenly thought I did not want to tell a lie to these women who were studying English eagerly and enjoying conversation with me. They were honest to me, so why did I have to tell a lie or made up a story. I simply said, “ I’m a lesbian, so I don’t date with boys. “ The students looked a little surprised at a moment, but 3 seconds later, all of them accepted my answer marvelously. And they asked me about how I feel being lesbian or what difficulties I have. I answered all of their questions honestly because I wanted to let them know that gay people could be anywhere, not only in dramas or movies. Before coming out, they had seemed to like me and been interested in me, so I thought “ You like me, right? Hey, I’m a lesbian. Does it change your feelings toward me? No, right? See? Lesbian can be your friend. No big deal.” I think I was able to come out because we were talking in English. The students and even I, had to look for the right words, used simple English. I could not have done that in Japanese, maybe.

My foreign friends, especially people from western countries, are liberal and self-confident. So that it is easy and comfortable for me to say whatever I want to say. They are greatly patient with my poor English. Foreigners are tend to be open-minded and do not judge people at the first sight. On the contrary, Japanese, there is a trend toward gathering with people who are the same as the are. No wonder Japan had national isolation from 17th century to 19th century. I am not a racist, so I know that there are many plentiful Japanese or judgmental foreigners. What I am saying here is just my opinion. Or I am only very lucky to have warm-hearted foreign friends.

Therefore, coming out to foreigners are much easier than that to Japanese in aspect of language and cultural background. The word “ lesbian “ or “ bisexual “ are kind of discrimination words in Japanese. In English, they are not. So the lesbians in Japan call themselves “ bian “. It sounds cute and much less prejudice.

However, I do not come out to foreign co-workers at an English speaking café where I work once a week. There are/were some staff I wanted to come out and tell the truth and be true friends, but I just did not have guts. And I will never come out to customers. There is less right information about sexuality in Japan compared to western countries. So that I am afraid of customers get a wrong impression about myself. In Japan, there is a proverb, “ Put a lid on smelly things “ and sexuality IS a smelly thing. They avoid talking about it, or when they talk about it, it’s usually dirty jokes or make fun of gay people. Probably, they do not know how to react when I come out. My mother cried and blamed herself for my being lesbian/bisexual. She can never understand true me and avoid talking about it. She thinks being gay is a mental illness and I should see a psychiatrist. My mother is not the only one who thinks this way. In my opinion, it occurs because of a lack of the right and proper information in Japan. Hence, I just come out only to some of my closest friends who understand and accept me.

After I came back to Japan, I started going to lesbian bars and events almost every weekend. I found all the information on the net at first. I made many friends, dated some

girls, and had a good time. However, I realized that Japanese lesbians like to categorize themselves into “ butch “ or “ fem “ or “ riba (it means reversible in bed. They can act both boy’s part and girl’s part.) Let me lay it all out about Japanese lesbian categories; there are Butch, Fem, and Riba. And finely saying, there are “ Ska-tachi “(A butch (tachi) who wears feminine clothes, such as skirts, but acts boy’s part in bed), and “ Zubo-neko “ (A fem (neko) who wears Zubon (pants) but act woman’s part in bed).

I did not want to be put in a cage; in other words, I did not want to be categorized. I do look like a butch, but I’m riba in bed. I would like to hold my girlfriend as well as to be held by her. So am I hundred-percent- butch? Or Riba? Or bisexual-butch? Or what? In my opinion, it is all right to change our sexuality day by day. For example, in January maybe I’m very butch, but I might sleep with a man in February. In March, I would like to send flowers to a woman, but I would be so happy if a girl send me flowers with a card in April. I might want to be alone in May but want to meet someone special man or woman in June. I can not be categorized. I do not know which category I belong to.

In addition, Japanese lesbian society is very small even in a metropolitan city, like Osaka. Everybody knows everybody. Rumors run very fast and they are usually exaggerated. Everybody talks about who dated who, who broke up with who, who is interested in who. And the first thing lesbians ask other lesbians is “ Are you Butch or Fem? I still do not know these words mean what clothes they wear or which part they act in bed. My best lesbian friend has never had sexual experience with women, so she always wonders how she should answer to that question. She looks feminine, wears

girl’s clothes, but no skirt because she says pants are much comfortable for her. Since she has never slept with women, she is not sure how she would act in bed. Is she really fem? She could be Ska-tachi. Who knows?

These categories and little lesbian world.....I got sick of it. So I decide to keep a distance from this tiny small lesbian world for some time.

Meanwhile, I tired to meet men. It was very simple. “ I’m tired of girls, so why not try boys? I joined a membership website that offers encounter with foreign men from all over the world. I had no interest in Japanese men although I had dated some of them. I tend to be too shy when I am with Japanese men. It could be because I can understand Japanese perfectly. I can not say “ Aishiteru “(I love you) in Japanese, but it is so much easier to say “ I love you “ in English. Maybe it is because a lot of part of English is still vague and ambiguous for me. Anyway, I tried to look for Mr. Right on the net. He did not have to be a Caucasian. I do not judge people by their skin colours. White, Black, Yellow, Purple, Rainbow, anyway, someone with a warm heart and nice jokes. Some men asked me my email address. I exchanged mails or chatted with them on the net.

And here comes Larry. He is my boyfriend now. It was me who talked to him first on the net. I chose him because he is a Japanese-American living in Hawaii. Hawaii is my favoutie place in the world, and I thought if he was a Japanese-American, he might be able to understand Japanese and Japanese culture. Bingo! He speaks both English and Japanese. We started writing mails and after a month or so, he asked me to be his

girlfriend. At that time, my mother was in a hospital and had to have two difficult operations. He cared about me and my mother so much. He mailed or called me every single day asking if I had eaten, how my mother was, if I was doing Okay. Because he is an American, he expresses his feelings toward me so directly. He says he loves me or he misses me or other sweet words everyday. He supported me so much. I was getting into him. It is so comfortable to be cared and loved, especially after I was hurt by girls whom I had dated. When we talk on the phone, we use both Japanese and English, and when we write email, we use only English because he can not read Japanese. I can learn a lot of things from him. I think I am in love with him. But honestly speaking, I sometimes wonder if I am in love with his background? If he were Japanese with no English skill, would I love him? Am I just a person who loves Gaijin (foreigner)? English sounds so congenial, as I said before, maybe it is because English is still vague for me.

When Larry and I talk, we speak like “ Are you isogashii (busy)this weekend? Mixture of English and Japanese and it makes me so easy to talk. And he says “ I love ya “ in a whisper. It just melts my heart. Is it English magic? Or Larry magic? I am pretty sure I truly love him for who he is..... but he being an English speaker is a big bonus.

When I was writing this essay, I faced a very funny problem: Should I call Japanese “ We “ or “ They “? Maybe I’m not fully Japanese. My nationality is Japan and I was born and raised in Japan, however, by the grace of spending my puberty in Vancouver, I am half Japanese and half Canadian. In fact, many people say that I am very much westernized. I’m proud of that. I can see and have good things both from Japan and Canada.

Living abroad for a long time changed my life completely. I can have jobs that I can be proud of, I became confident that I have something special (being able to speak English).

For a girl aged 16, studying abroad was a big and risky challenge, but I think it has succeeded. My English is still far cry from being perfect, so I would like to brush up on my English. And it is my life work. So I will keep on studying.

Being out of the closet is something I have to do from now on. I do not want to come out from myself to my students, customers, friends, relatives; however, should anyone ask me politely, “ Are you lesbian/ bisexual? I will proudly say “ Yes, I am.” I do not want to tell a lie. So I am in a glass closet now. Anybody can see that I am totally different from ordinary Japanese girls. I am not going out of the glass closet by myself, but being in the glass closet is not bad at all.

Thank you very much for reading my story.

TORU

English and myself.... They seems nothing to do with each other, but.....

Actually, I did not have interest in English conversation until I entered graduate school. I like playing sports, especially sports using racket, like tennis. But since second year of master course, my back had gradually been getting worse. Because of that, I could not play any sports, which is my only way to let my stress out. At the same time, for no reason, I had gradually been interested in studying English conversation and I decided to start to go to English conversation school. My major in graduate school was related to science. So, I was used to read scientific article in English and had read them almost every day. However, I realized that I could not talk about non-scientific topics in English. Even though I wanted to make friends with non-Japanese people, especially white guys, I thought it was difficult to make friends with them by talking scientific conversation which must be boring. On top of that, I did not want friends who were scientists. I did not want to look like nerd!! So, my main reason to start going to English conversation school was to study daily English conversation by which, I thought, it would be easy to make friends with “foreigners”.

I really enjoyed going to English conversation school. It was because I could meet new people at class who had different background from mine. And of course, I enjoyed talking with English teachers. To be honest, I always wanted to have white English teachers in my class. So, I remember that I had been disappointed to have Asian English teachers, like Hawaiian, in my class. I did not know why I felt like that at that time, though. It is no doubt that I was not only interested in English, but also something else.

As soon as I graduated university, I started to date with my female class mate, which was my first experience to date with someone. However, the relationship could not last for more than 3 months. Actually, I have not felt in love to women. But I started to date with her because she told me she loved me and I believed my feeling would be changed after stepping forward. However, my feeling to her did not get stronger and I could not find what falling into love was like. On top of that, having sex with her was not what I had expected since junior high school and I did not think I wanted more....

I mentioned before that I really enjoyed talking with white English teachers in class. However, I was not satisfied only by classes. So, I searched for other places where I could meet with English speaking people. By the time, I became an English mania and had studied English harder than before in order to enjoy English conversation. Even though I liked talking with white guys, I had female language exchange partner who was from Malta, Italy. She is married with Italian guy who were from her hometown. He speaks English, too. They lived together close to my place, so sometimes I went to their place to do language exchange. Actually, I liked talking with him more that her (sorry about it!). I also had pen pal who is from England. After exchange letters several times, he mentioned in his letter, “I am not gay”. I did not remember why he came up the word “gay”. Anyway, I did not think myself of being gay at all at that time. I had met him once because he visited me in Tokyo. It was nice of him to spend money and free time to

meet me. He stayed at my small place. I had good time with him during his stay in Japan.

Since I started to go to English conversation school, I also started to feel something funny. Because I lived in Tokyo when I was university and graduate student, I saw many “foreigners” walking with Japanese women. Some of them were couple or seemed like couple. To be honest, I felt something funny deep in mind, which turned out to be jealousy to those Japanese women. It was because I also wanted to talk with white guys. However, I wondered why I felt like that because I did not realize that I wanted more than talking with them at that time. I thought that most white guys might not be interested in hanging out with Japanese guys and convinced myself that it could not help it. Just before I graduated graduate school, I had chance to attend conference held in US and visited one professor in US who helped my research. When I visited her laboratory, she introduced me to her lab’s members. I was stunned by meeting with one white guy who was very good looking. Actually, I did not have chances to talk to him, but I felt kind of jealous to see him talking to other members, which, I do not think was not normal.

After coming back to Japan from US, I started to work in Kansai area. My English conversation school had many branched across Japan, so I started to go to a branch near my work place. However..... the school went bankrupt soon after I moved to Kansai area and I lost small fortune because the class fees had been paid in advance. I was kind of devastated by that and I decided not to look for another English conversation school. Instead of that, I placed my advertisement in local small English free news paper to look for private English teacher. Amazingly, I had received 5 or 6 calls from those who found my ad. As you can imagine now, I chose one white guy from Hawaii who lived close to my place. However, three months later, he had to return to Hawaii and I ended up that I had to find another teacher again. However, it was not so difficult to find another teacher because one of those who had contacted me to my ad called me again almost at the same time when I looked for another private teacher. Although he lived one hour away from my place by train, I decided to meet him and see what he looked like and whether I liked him or not as English teacher. We met at Izakaya (Japanese popular drinking place) and talked in English for about 2 hours or so. He was late 30’s who was from Australia, not bad-looking. He was easy-going and very easy to be with and to talk with. Instantly, I decided to have him as English teacher. After talking with wine and dine, we split our bill and I tried to pay some money for English lesson. But, he did not take my money and said to me “Today’s lesson is trial, so it is free”. However, instead of that, he asked me to come home with him for more drinking. I wanted to go there and talk with him more. But I have to go back my place at that night. I thought he was very nice guy because, as I mentioned before, I had thought that most of white guys are not interested in accompany with Japanese guys. One thing I have to mention about him is that I had got hard-on when I talked with him. Although it is obvious that I am different from ordinary boys or men, sadly, I did not think I was not different at that time. Furthermore, I thought many guys would feel same way against good-looking white guys as I did.

About one week later, I had his second English lesson at another Izakaya. We had good time to talk many things. After checking the bill, I tried to pay for English lesson. However, again, he did not take my money and asked me to come home with him. I said OK.... And I went home with him. Actually, I did not remember what I was thinking.... I must have got hard-on, though. After getting into his place, we started to drink again and he showed me his stuffs in his room, like photos. Actually, when I arrived at his place, I already missed my last train. So I had to stay at his place. I am not strong at alcohol, so I got drunk sleepy so easily. He made a bed (futon) for me, but his futons were placed close to mine. After getting into futon and said "good night", he started putting his hand under my blanket and touching my body. I did not remember my first reaction, but it is obvious that I did not resist what he did to me. Then he sneaked into my futon and....we kissed.... He went down..., Anyway, it was my first experience of gay sex. My body was sensitive and I totally felt great with him. It was totally different from sex with my girl friend. As I mentioned before, I did not have feeling that I wanted more with her. But, I felt that I wanted to have more sex with him.

My gay life has started since the day. I had had no idea that I was gay, but after having sex with him, I had to admit that I was gay. But for no reason, I did not feel bad about it. It might be because I had confidence about my sexuality to some extent from the beginning (maybe from educational background). Since I discover my sexuality, my life has been totally changed to better one. I still thank him for changing my life. As for my pen-pal I mentioned before, after finding my sexuality, he told me truth that he was gay later. We did not have sex when he stayed at my place, but he might have noticed something "gayish" in me.

Now I understand why I started to go to English conversation school. I must always have had feeling to white guys deep in my mind and wanted to have love relationship with them. English and Myself.... They have clear relationship for me. I can say that my hidden sexuality was surely my driving force to study English.

As you know, my life has changed a lot since I met the English teacher (He is my first boyfriend). As I mentioned above, the feeling after gay sex was totally different from straight sex so that I finally understood why people liked to talk about love life or sex. I wanted to meet with many white gay guys. However, I did not want to have connection with Japanese gay at first. It was because I wanted to avoid risk that my co-workers or my straight friend would know my sexuality through Japanese gay guys (Now, I know it is so absurd). But, a few months after I met my first boyfriend, I finally met one Japanese guy who was one of his best friends. He said to me "Do not worry, you are not alone". It is so powerful word for me and his word made me feel comfortable in gay life in Japan.

In addition, my gay network was quickly expanded, including white guys as well as Japanese gay guys since my second boyfriend took me to one gay event in our area, where I met some gay Japanese, gay white guys. Then, I finally started to go out to gay bar where many non-Japanese gay guys came together. I have met so many gay white guys who lived in our area, their friends, or sometimes their family. So, I had many

chances to talk in English, which was kind of my dream that I had when I was graduate students. Two and half years later since I found my sexuality, I was transferred to office in USA for work. As you can imagine, I could enjoy a life in US very much. To be honest, my passion to study English had gone to some extent by that time. I mean I did not feel like studying English using textbook or something like that. Before I met the English teacher, I usually studied English using English news paper, radio or TV English conversation program and so on. However, after that, I stopped studying English using book. Instead, I focused on talking in English with foreigners. Therefore, my English speaking ability had been improved, especially since I moved to US.

Since I came back to Japan from US, I have heard an interesting fact many times from my Japanese gay guys who used to date with white guys.... which is "Potato queen (Asian guy who only likes white guys) will turn to be rice queen (Asian guy who likes only Asian guy) in the end". Actually, I felt doubt about it and I wondered whether it would also become my case or not. However, the time has come to me two years ago. Before then, I was not sexually attracted to Japanese guys even though I thought some Japanese were very good looking. But I have noticed that my "taste" of gay men have gradually changed since I came back to Japan from US. And finally I started dating with first Japanese boyfriend two years ago. Now, I like Japanese guys as well as white guys (maybe 60% vs 40%, still fond of white guys more, though).

It is very funny that my sexual interest in Japanese guys and my passion to study English are inversely related. Since then, I have not had many chances to talk in English except at work. Therefore, I am sure that my English ability has been decreased. Now I am working in department where I have to use English almost everyday. So, I always feel that I have to improve my English... It is obvious that current reason to study English is different from one when I started to study English conversation. I mean, it used to be fun, but now it is sort of obligation. Obligation is not good driving force to study English, you know.

I believe that studying English should be fun. I know it is difficult to motivate myself to study English as much as before, but I have to search for my driving force to study English. Luckily, I still have sexual interest to white guys. Meeting my ideal white guys in the future might change my English life..... Who know?

APPENDIX F - Participant-researchers' Analyses

AKIKO (reflecting on her own and Rika's narrative)

Part I. Now that you have completed your writing, please explain your understanding about the purpose of this project.

I think the purpose of this project is....

I can find How english affected my sexuality and How grow up my identity.

Looking back my life related learning english realize me who I am

Part II. Read your partner's story and then answer the following. If you are going to answer questions about more than one person, please tell me who you are writing about in each question:

1. What kind of relationship might exist between his/her English learning and communication experiences and how he/she a) conceptualizes, b) reveals, or c) performs sexuality?

Conceptualize means "how we think about or how we understand something"; to reveal means "to tell others using words or body language," for example, "coming out"; to perform means "physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities we participate in, hobbies," etc.

a) conceptualize

After reading the story, I think my partner's thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

Before She start study english She think she was not good at anything. She needed to something to make her life better and she tried to get out of Japan.

so I think it was by chance that she choose study english. Also, to study english was challenge to make it happen.

b) reveal

After reading the story, I think my partner's revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

She feels different from ordinary girl since when she was little. the differences tells her how her uncomfortable in her life English expression make her more comfortable to how she is.

c) perform

After reading the story, I think my partner's performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

She tried to convince her parents and the others who never believes her ability and she get out of japan

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your partner's story?

She found lots of hope and future after studied English.

3. What similarities, if any, are there between this story and the story you wrote?

She feels comfortable to call myself "I" this is no boundary line to tell people how I call myself specifically like Japanese "watashi" "Boku"

4. Anything else you'd like to say about your partner's story?

She never give up on her life and alway she is a challenger. she has a good heart.

GREAT! YOU ARE ABOUT 40% FINISHED!

Part III. Look at the story you wrote - now think about what you thought or wrote about (remembered, considered, created).

1. What kind of relationship might exist between your English learning and communication experiences and how you a) conceptualize, b) reveal, or c) perform your sexuality?

Conceptualize means how you think about or how you understand something; to reveal means to tell others using words or body language, for example, coming out; to perform means physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities you participate in, etc.

a) conceptualize

English language is always makes easier to expression myself

After writing my story, I think my thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

b) reveal

*Masturbation is not bad things!
but in japanese make me feel bad.*

After writing my story, I think my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

c) perform

I watched so many english movies to learn how i live my life as gay.

After writing my story, I think my performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?

English language helps jump the many kinds of boundary line like different culture, different race, different sexuality, it was guiding me to find who I am.

3. What did you not write about yet that you'd like to share know?

*No Movies No fun to live
No English life No fun to live*

4. Anything else you'd like to say about this story?

sorry for the story is not completed

GREAT!! YOU ARE 80% FINISHED!

Part IV. Think about the process of writing a story about yourself in English

1. How has participation in this project affected you or influenced, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before.

I could looking back my life. realized me How I love express myself who I am. and english language helps me a lot get clear vision and future.

2. You wrote your story using English words. What could you write in English that you could not write in Japanese? What could you not write in English? Why? How was this process of English writing for you?

to be honest English writing was very hard. I realize i got really few english vocabulary. But I had fun. thank you for giving an opportunity.

3. If you were to continue working with Ma-chan on this topic at some time in the future, what would you be most interested in exploring next? For example, what have we not explored yet that you think we should explore? What should Ma-chan do next, in your opinion?

maybe make the documentary film?? :)

not only writing and reading.

interviewing is fun coz i like build up relationship in the communications.

4. Any last thoughts?

Hope I can help your study.....

???????

AKIHITO (reflecting on his own and Kenjiro's narrative)

Part I. Now that you have completed your writing, please explain your understanding about the purpose of this project.

I think the purpose of this project is to get a perspective on people's language backgrounds and his/her sexual identity.

Part II. Read your partner's story and then answer the following. If you are going to answer questions about more than one person, please tell me who you are writing about in each question:

1. What kind of relationship might exist between his/her English learning and communication experiences and how he/she a) conceptualizes, b) reveals, or c) performs sexuality?

Conceptualize means "how we think about or how we understand something"; to reveal means "to tell others using words or body language," for example, "coming out"; to perform means "physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities we participate in, hobbies," etc.

a) conceptualize

After reading the story, I think my partner's thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I don't specifically think that his sexuality was influenced by English itself. But he is definitely influenced by his gay friends from foreign countries and by the way they think.

b) reveal

After reading the story, I think my partner's revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

In the same way, he was influenced by the way English speakers think. That had him come out to his close friends.

c) perform

After reading the story, I think my partner's performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I don't think he described anything about his performance.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your partner's story?

That he became more active in terms of coming out.

3. What similarities, if any, are there between this story and the story you wrote?

We both are affected by the way English speakers think about their sexuality. It's very different from how Japanese gay people think: more open, positive, and affirmative.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about your partner's story?

none

GREAT! YOU ARE ABOUT 40% FINISHED!

Part III. Look at the story you wrote - now think about what you thought or wrote about (remembered, considered, created).

1. What kind of relationship might exist between your English learning and communication experiences and how you a) conceptualize, b) reveal, or c) perform your sexuality?

a) conceptualize

After writing my story, I think my thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I learned English and found the way to get to know cultures and people from, mainly, the United States. That enabled me to think my sexuality in more positive ways.

b) reveal

After writing my story, I think my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

It's easy for me to talk about my sexuality in English. Because it is not my native language, I can get safe distance. Also, many gay English speakers (not all of them, though) express their sexuality more freely than Japanese gay people.

c) perform

After writing my story, I think my performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

In terms of performance, I don't think I have changed much.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?

How even well educated Japanese people think about homosexuality.

3. What did you not write about yet that you'd like to share know?

none

4. Anything else you'd like to say about this story?

none

GREAT!! YOU ARE 80% FINISHED!

Part IV. Think about the process of writing a story about yourself in English

1. How has participation in this project affected you or influenced, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before.

I have thought about my sexuality and its status for a long time. It did not affect me so much but it tidied things up again.

2. You wrote your story using English words. What could you write in English that you could not write in Japanese? What could you not write in English? Why? How was this process of English writing for you?

Again, it's easier for me to express my sexuality in English because I can get safe distance and I know that my acquaintances who do not know about my sexuality won't read it.

3. If you were to continue working with Ma-chan on this topic at some time in the future, what would you be most interested in exploring next? For example, what have we not explored yet that you think we should explore? What should Ma-chan do next, in your opinion?

How to think about language and Cultural or social background.

4. Any last thoughts?

none

KATSUYA (reflecting on his own and Toru's narrative)

Part I. Now that you have completed your writing, please explain your understanding about the purpose of this project. I think the purpose of this project is....

to discover how you utilize "a linguistic container" to express yourself. Though what happens at the unconscious level is most likely universal, as in the Jungian theory, those natural happenings are shaped arbitrarily going through a linguistic mold. As linguistic mold is developed based on each social and ethnological context, a mold of word which shows a quality that is regarded negative in the context has to include a negative connotation. In this sense, Japanese which has developed in a society highly suppressive about being different must be a hard linguistic container to express being gay. This is not only a matter of a language but a society per se. Any individual grown up in a society is automatically adjusted to the society. Thus, if you are grown up in a society that says being gay is a taboo, that quality should be hallmarked in your deep inside. It is not very strange that some of gay Japanese feel more comfortable speaking English about being gay because in my opinion, they are suppressed both at the language level and at the society level. However, I'm rather suspicious about them saying it's "perfectly" more comfortable being out in English while not in Japanese. One reason is, if their national identity is Japanese and their mother tongue is Japanese, in speaking a foreign language, there'd always be a gap between what they want to say and what they have inside because it doesn't agree with the society level structure. In my case, speaking English is actually felt better in terms of talking about me being gay, but it is used as a protection not as a better linguistic container.

Part II. Read your partner's story and then answer the following. If you are going to answer questions about more than one person, please tell me who you are writing about in each question:

1. What kind of relationship might exist between his/her English learning and communication experiences and how he/she a) conceptualizes, b) reveals, or c) performs sexuality? Conceptualize means "how we think about or how we understand something"; to reveal means "to tell others using words or body language," for example, "coming out"; to perform means "physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities we participate in, hobbies," etc. a) conceptualize After reading the story, I think my partner's thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways... b) reveal After reading the story, I think my partner's revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways... c) perform After reading the story, I think my partner's performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

a) In Toru's case, English learning doesn't have a direct connection to his sexuality conceptualization. As in his story, he was led to realizing he was gay when he firstly had sex with a Caucasian man, and then he's been gradually attracted to Japanese as

he construct a stronger gay network. In addition, his interest was in only Caucasian men, and any other race who speaks English didn't attract him, which is interesting enough. I may need another ten paragraphs to explain this, but I would say the keys leading to the connection between English and his sexuality conceptualization lies in social learning and inferiority complex. As he says was afraid that any connection to a Japanese gay may lead to a disruption of his social status, he might have avoided having a gay relationship with Japanese. Then why he had to choose a Caucasian? I can't say much because I don't know Toru personally, but I'm suspecting that it was due to a sort of identification process.

b) For Toru, English was a trigger. He was afraid of being recognized as an outsider, but with the experience with his first boyfriend, he became more confident about what he's really like. Not mentioned directly in his story, he seems to be out to some extent.

c) By going through the experience with the Caucasian guy, he came to have less hesitation to connect himself to a gay network.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your partner's story?

I'm almost sure that he was, maybe unconsciously, aware of his sexual orientation even before he met his first boyfriend. The most important effect that English brought to him was that it lead him to a safer place to realise his own sexuality.

3. What similarities, if any, are there between this story and the story you wrote?

I would say his story is similar to mine in a way English worked as a protection.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about your partner's story?

I was wondering how he thought about his sexuality before entering university, especially during adolescence.

Part III. Look at the story you wrote - now think about what you thought or wrote about (remembered, considered, created).

1. What kind of relationship might exist between your English learning and communication experiences and how you a) conceptualize, b) reveal, or c) perform your sexuality? Conceptualize means how you think about or how you understand something; to reveal means to tell others using words or body language, for example, coming out; to perform means physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities you participate in, etc. a) conceptualize After writing my story, I think my thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways... b) reveal After writing my

story, I think my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways... c) perform After writing my story, I think my performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

- a) *Using English, a foreign language, is like having a good inspection device. I can have a better control over emotional flow so that I won't be overwhelmed. For me, speaking Japanese causes me too much emotional fluctuation, and it prevents me from being freely expressive. Consequently, I have to choose more intellectualized words to explain, not to express, my feelings. On the other hand, however, English, which is learned and more objective language, allows me to express more freely. It may be because I don't have to project too much of my feelings on words and I can always supervise (have more control) what I'm saying about when using English, though not very fluent.*
- b) *Poetry can work in the same way because a certain pattern of word construct and unique word choice are sorts of protection. In this sense, what is more important for me is the sense of security rather than a linguistic difference.*
- c) *However, learning English did lead me to a better place. Death of my boyfriend was a shocking event, and I still have to use English for a control, but at the same time, it's allowed me to observe my deep inside.*

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?

What I thought is very important was that the sense of belongingness is that important for me. Being "out" means revealing myself which should be hidden. Thinking of heterosexual people, they don't have to go through the process of declaration of their sexuality. In most modern societies, anything sexual is something that should be hidden in public situations, but it's regarded as what is shared by everyone. Without the premise that my sexual orientation is always accepted, I do feel I'm excluded. The first and threatening step to a shared group is to declare my sexuality, which is quite private. On this step, using English can work as a protection. If one I'm coming out to is a foreigner, it doesn't mean I'm automatically kicked out of where I belong because s/he and I are not in the same group in the first place. Even if s/he is a Japanese, I can make it a joke because talking to a Japanese in Japanese is a rare occasion.

3. What did you not write about yet that you'd like to share know?

Death of my boyfriend. I have thousands of things I have to write about him, but I just could not fully relate it with English learning story.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about this story?

The story means a lot to me, and would mean more when shared with others.

Part IV. Think about the process of writing a story about yourself in English

1. How has participation in this project affected you or influenced, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before.

I'd always thought that I was different from others. However, thinking about why I had to be different led me to thinking how important it is to belong to my group and to share feelings.

2. You wrote your story using English words. What could you write in English that you could not write in Japanese? What could you not write in English? Why? How was this process of English writing for you?

As I mentioned above, using another language or poetry is like a protection. This story is very private, and I couldn't have written the entire story in Japanese.

3. If you were to continue working with Ma-chan on this topic at some time in the future, what would you be most interested in exploring next? For example, what have we not explored yet that you think we should explore? What should Ma-chan do next, in your opinion?

Definetely I want to relate it with the death of my boyfriend.

4. Any last thoughts?

I'm very sorry that my comments and the story look fragments. I have so many things to write that I have had a very hard time to integrate them into one beautiful story. It may not be very helpful for your project. But if you need some more help, I'm glad to do so.

MAYUMI (responding to her own and Naoko's narrative)

Part I. Now that you have completed your writing, please explain your understanding about the purpose of this project.

I think the purpose of this project is....

To look into the relation with sexuality and English. To know how English influence to your self-confidence about your sexuality.

Part II. Read your partner's story and then answer the following. If you are going to answer questions about more than one person, please tell me who you are writing about in each question:

I will answer about Naoko's.

1. What kind of relationship might exist between his/her English learning and communication experiences and how he/she a) conceptualizes, b) reveals, or c) performs sexuality?

Conceptualize means "how we think about or how we understand something"; to reveal means "to tell others using words or body language," for example, "coming out"; to perform means "physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities we participate in, hobbies," etc.

a) conceptualize

After reading the story, I think my partner's thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

She was getting her sexuality as a part of her identity through communicating with people with different nationalities or backgrounds in English and learning the ways of being herself.

b) reveal

After reading the story, I think my partner's revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

She came out to her boy friend. She may have found another reason to end up with him but she has chosen the way to tell him the fact she was more attracted to women. It was affected by her experience of learning English in America and seeing to people being themselves.

c) perform

After reading the story, I think my partner's performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

She opened her English cafe. She wanted to have business related with English and it meant a kind of performance to show her style. She employed herself. Her English skills and experience in America influence her independent spirit. At the beginning English was just a tool or window to see different world for her but as she was getting to know more about western cultures and getting self-confidence as a lesbian English was becoming a kind of function with herself to express her style. And it turned to a part of herself in some way.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your partner's story?

She did not only develop her English skills but learned the way of being herself through the experience in America. And she performs her style even on her own business.

3. What similarities, if any, are there between this story and the story you wrote?

There are similarities between her story and mine, which is that English and communication with western people influenced to think about who you are and encouraged to be independent.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about your partner's story?

I had sympathy with the point that she didn't feel comfortable to be in Japanese lesbian community. And I felt she was very honest to herself.

English was also just tool for me to only know western culture or communicate with people with different nationalities and it was becoming a function belonging to my brain.

GREAT! YOU ARE ABOUT 40% FINISHED!

Part III. Look at the story you wrote - now think about what you thought or wrote about (remembered, considered, created).

1. What kind of relationship might exist between your English learning and communication experiences and how you a) conceptualize, b) reveal, or c) perform your sexuality?

Conceptualize means how you think about or how you understand something; to reveal means to tell others using words or body language, for example, coming out; to perform means physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities you participate in, etc.

a) conceptualize

After writing my story, I think my thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I learned terms about sexuality through English and got self-confidence as a lesbian.

b) reveal

After writing my story, I think my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I became positive to live my life as I am by knowing about me in the theory of sexuality. English gave me much relief by showing the way to think or speak about myself without dirty image belonging to Japanese terms related with sexuality. I became honest to myself after I got self-confidence.

c) perform

ci)

After writing my story, I think my performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I began to pay more attention to natural emotion of people including me, not the manners or patterns. I was getting to have strong opinion. I am not concerned about my self-introduction anymore.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?

*I was shocked with the fact that I could stay cool without discussing about our sexuality with my first girl friend whom I was dating for 6 years.
I felt my identity was very changeable.*

3. What did you not write about yet that you'd like to share know?

I wanted to think hoe Chinese influenced to my English or Japanese, and development of my identity.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about this story?

GREAT!! YOU ARE 80% FINISHED!

Part IV. Think about the process of writing a story about yourself in English

1. How has participation in this project affected you or influenced, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before.

Honestly I felt big pressure to write my story because I knew essay is also a kind of fiction even though I try to note the facts. I was afraid to put myself in a story. I wanted to light up the line to show how I have been exploring myself. It was hard to figure out what was meaningful and what was not for this story. And I am still wondering if those episodes that I picked up for my story was really important.. if I might overlooked important things affected to my life. I am very concerned with words. On the other hand I still doubt how much the words could have the meaning.

2. You wrote your story using English words. What could you write in English that you could not write in Japanese? What could you not write in English? Why? How was this process of English writing for you?

It made me feel positive to write in English. Japanese is too heavy. I have to use too much Chinese characters and it would look hard.

I couldn't avoid using the words related with sexuality, which was imported. However, it was still hard to find the right expression in English when I couldn't see my thought clear. I often wanted to escape to the muddled word in Japanese.

3. If you were to continue working with Ma-chan on this topic at some time in the future, what would you be most interested in exploring next? For example, what have we not explored yet that you think we should explore? What should Ma-chan do next, in your opinion?

It would be interesting to look into the comparison between Japanese gay guy and Japanese lesbian, how they are getting their self-confidence. It could be seen more influence or conflicts with the gender roles.

4. Any last thoughts?

I am so sorry that I made you wait so long. Hontouni Gomennasai!! And I am not really good at English.

I think your project is really interesting and has significant meaning in the linguistic study. It was exactly what I felt that I was enhanced by English. Good luck with your work from my heart.

NAOKO (responding to her own and Mayumi's narrative)

Part I. Now that you have completed your writing, please explain your understanding about the purpose of this project.

I think the purpose of this project is....

I believe that this project is for knowing about ourselves and letting know people about us. It's like "coming out from myself"? It's very simple, but also it's the most important thing.

Part II. Read your partner's story and then answer the following. If you are going to answer questions about more than one person, please tell me who you are writing about in each question:

1. What kind of relationship might exist between his/her English learning and communication experiences and how he/she a) conceptualizes, b) reveals, or c) performs sexuality?

Conceptualize means "how we think about or how we understand something"; to reveal means "to tell others using words or body language," for example, "coming out"; to perform means "physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities we participate in, hobbies," etc.

a) conceptualize

After reading the story, I think my partner's thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I didn't find any conceptualize of sexuality influenced by English from her story but she said she became a different person when she was called Chinese name. It means that her way of thinking about everything changes when she speaks other languages.

b) reveal

After reading the story, I think my partner's revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

When she speaks other languages like Chinese or English, she seems to feel more comfortable to communicate with people. Also, she feels easier to explain about herself. I don't know if it's affected by English though. It might be affected by not only language, but also living in other cultures.

c) perform

After reading the story, I think my partner's performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I didn't find any performance of sexuality influenced by English from her story.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your partner's story?

*No matter what kind of situation she is in, she always tries to be who she is.
She doesn't lose herself and stays herself.
I was impressed by that part.*

3. What similarities, if any, are there between this story and the story you wrote?

*Both of us just want to live our lives with being ourselves.
And it doesn't matter who we are, straight, lesbian, bisexual, gay or whatever.
We want people know that we are not different from other people at all.*

4. Anything else you'd like to say about your partner's story?

*To be honest, at first I hesitated to read the story because I don't like to read anything.
If it comes with English, it's worse!!
But, when I started to read it, I couldn't stop reading.
There were so many parts I totally agree with and I felt really happy about it.
I'm so wondering where she is now and what she is doing now.*

Part III. Look at the story you wrote - now think about what you thought or wrote about (remembered, considered, created).

1. What kind of relationship might exist between your English learning and communication experiences and how you a) conceptualize, b) reveal, or c) perform your sexuality?

Conceptualize means how you think about or how you understand something; to reveal means to tell others using words or body language, for example, coming out; to perform means physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities you participate in, etc.

a) conceptualize

After writing my story, I think my thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

*If I can speak English, I can communicate with much more people.
And it gives me a chance to see much more people.
Seeing a lot of different people makes me feel comfortable to be myself.
That's because I'm just one person of those different people.
"Everyone is different" is something what I learned by studying English.*

b) reveal

After writing my story, I think my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

*Coming out in English is easier for me doing that in Japanese.
I feel it's a little bit indirect when I come out in English.*

c) perform

After writing my story, I think my performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I can become better communicater or more energetic communicater because foreigners never understand unless I try to communicate.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?

*I'm just a human being like the other people.
I just want to love someone and someone to love me.
The thing is the target is women.
That's all!*

3. What did you not write about yet that you'd like to share know?

No answer.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about this story?

*When I finished to write the story, but after about a month, I've got girlfriend.
I didn't even think about that when I was writing the story, but it happened fortunately.
Nobody knows what will happen in the future...*

Part IV. Think about the process of writing a story about yourself in English

1. How has participation in this project affected you or influenced, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before.

*Expressing about myself is really difficult.
Especially, when I have to put them into words.
But I realized that my idea about my life before and now hasn't changed at all.
It doesn't matter how old I am, where I am, what kind of situation I am in.*

2. You wrote your story using English words. What could you write in English that you could not write in Japanese? What could you not write in English? Why? How was this process of English writing for you?

*That's difficult question...
I guess I could write my story more simple and easier to understand in Japanese.
That's because of my poor English skill!
It seems that using Japanese is still easier for me than using English.
Of course I like to communicate with people in English though.*

3. If you were to continue working with Ma-chan on this topic at some time in the future, what would you be most interested in exploring next? For example, what have we not explored yet that you think we should explore? What should Ma-chan do next, in your opinion?

Why wouldn't you do this kind of project in Japanese next time!?

4. Any last thoughts?

*I hope my entry and my story helps you in somehow.
And thank you for giving me a chance to think about myself.
Ostukaresamadeshita!:)*

RIKA (responding to her own and Akiko's narrative)

Part I. Now that you have completed your writing, please explain your understanding about the purpose of this project.

*I think the purpose of this project is....
to find, explore deep inside of myself.
to think about how learning English affected my sexuality
to study about the difference between when I talk in English and Japanese*

Part II. Read your partner's story and then answer the following. If you are going to answer questions about more than one person, please tell me who you are writing about in each question:

1. What kind of relationship might exist between his/her English learning and communication experiences and how he/she a) conceptualizes, b) reveals, or c) performs sexuality?

Conceptualize means "how we think about or how we understand something"; to reveal means "to tell others using words or body language," for example, "coming out"; to perform means "physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities we participate in, hobbies," etc.

a) conceptualize

When Akiko started learning English, she was interested in English words that are related to sex. She liked using these words. I think she felt more comfortable and natural when she uses English sex words than using Japanese sex words.

After reading the story, I think my partner's thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

b) reveal

She uses English words that are related to sex to her mother, but she didn't mention if it affected her sexuality.

After reading the story, I think my partner's revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

c) perform

She masturbated often even when her mother was around her, but I don't know

if it was affected by English.

After reading the story, I think my partner's performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

English movies led her interest in English, but she didn't clearly mention how it affected her sexuality.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your partner's story?

1) She didn't realize her sexuality until she was in a college.

I thought gays know about themselves since they were much younger.

2) I wonder when she was masturbating in her childhood, did she imagine man's body or woman's body.

3) The most surprising thing for me is that she didn't realize her sexuality until she found out her bestfriend and boyfriend are dating.

I thought every gay has indications that s/he might be attracted to the same sex when they are children.

3. What similarities, if any, are there between this story and the story you wrote?

I didn't write about it, but I was actually influenced by English movies as well although our taste of movies are totally different. And I also looked for gay movies when I wanted more information, to study about gay.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about your partner's story?

The formulas she made were very interesting and futuristic.

I've never thought of making formulas to write an essay.

They made her essay very unique and individual.

GREAT! YOU ARE ABOUT 40% FINISHED!

Part III. Look at the story you wrote - now think about what you thought or wrote about (remembered, considered, created).

1. What kind of relationship might exist between your English learning and communication experiences and how you a) conceptualize, b) reveal, or c) perform your sexuality?

Conceptualize means how you think about or how you understand something; to reveal means to tell others using words or body language, for example, coming out; to perform

means physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities you participate in, etc.

a) conceptualize

*Being in Canada and speaking in English made me comfortable.
I broke the curse of using Japanese which I can understand completely.*

After writing my story, I think my thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

- 1) *There is no sex-related word to call myself but "I"*
- 2) *Being able to speak English means I can communicate with many people from different countries and they accept(ed) me for who I am/was.*
- 3) *In Canada, I was able to be "a real me"*

b) reveal

- 1) *I didn't come out to anyone in Canada, but I have been in a glass closet ever since I was born.*
- 2) *After I came back to Japan, I joined Japanese lesbian society and I made many lesbian friends.*
- 3) *I came out to my mother, which made her crazy.*

After writing my story, I think my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

c) perform

- 1) *I started using Japanese word "bian" instead of lesbian or lez. Or I prefer to be called "gay". But in Japan, the word "gay" only refers to gay men, which makes me sad.*
- 2) *Being able to speak English makes it easier for me to come out to the people from other countries.*

After writing my story, I think my performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

It is easier to come out in English than in Japanese.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?

The way I called myself in English, the simple "I". How much I hated to call myself "Watashi" or "Atashi". I didn't want to admit that I was a girl.

3. What did you not write about yet that you'd like to share know?

Akiko's story made me realize how much I was influenced by English movies. But it happened after I came back to Japan. I am/was into English songs as well. I try to learn from songs and movies, especially I want to learn gay slangs from movies,if any.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about this story?

Somebody commented on my story that my story gave her hope or courage. If I can do that to many people, I'm not afraid of that. Or even willing to help gays who are struggling about their sexuality or identity. Moreover, I'd like to enforce that living abroad could change your life in a good way. Not only being able to speak another language, but also you can learn how to communicate with people from deep inside of your heart. Language is just a tool to communicate. What is most important is to express yourself in your own way. You don't have to be 100% fluent in another language to make friends. What you need is your heart.

GREAT!! YOU ARE 80% FINISHED!

Part IV. Think about the process of writing a story about yourself in English

1. How has participation in this project affected you or influenced, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before.

- 1) I didn't even think about that I've been in a glass closet.*
- 2) It became sure that I feel comfortable for who I am now.(I can't categorize myself and I don't want to)*
- 3) My sexuality could change every single day.*

2. You wrote your story using English words. What could you write in English that you could not write in Japanese? What could you not write in English? Why? How was this process of English writing for you?

What could I not write in Japanese? EVERYTHING!hahaha. I couldn't have written this in Japanese. I don't know exactly why, but as I said in my story, maybe it's because English is not my mother tongue, and it's still vague in many ways. It's like listening to music from the room next to

your room.

3. If you were to continue working with Ma-chan on this topic at some time in the future, what would you be most interested in exploring next? For example, what have we not explored yet that you think we should explore? What should Ma-chan do next, in your opinion?

I'd be very glad if I could help people with my experience, especially the young, who are having hard time trying find him/herself .

I've heard many gay all over the world commit suicide because of their sexual orientation.

Plus, I'd like to educate Japanese people about gay. Being gay is NOT a mental illness. What we need is not a psychiatrist, but true friends, parents, teachers who know the right information about gay.

4. Any last thoughts?

It was tough but fun project. I can't wait to see all the stories in a book! I've read all the 8 stories and thought that there is no "normal" people, everybody has dramas in their lives. Even straight people has dramas, right? But at the same time, I found out that all of the eight story tellers suffered or struggled because of their sexuality. I'm one of them. I want to change it. So, as a start, I CAME OUT TO ONE OF MY STUDENTS!!! yay! She's been learning with me for nearly 9 years and we are very close. So I just told her that I am bi. She knew the word "bisexual" but she didn't exactly know what it means. (This is Japan....sigh) So I explained it to her. She understood me and still loves me.

I want to change the world....am I a big mouth? hahaha. But seriously, if my coming out could help people understand that there are many kinds of sexual orientations, I'm eager to do that.

Are my answers satisfactory?

I hope my answers can help your study.

Ganbatte!ma-chan! :)

Rika

oxox

TORU (responding to his own and Katsuya's narrative)

Part I. Now that you have completed your writing, please explain your understanding about the purpose of this project.

I think the purpose of this project is to show my confidence for my sexuality.

Part II. Read your partner's story and then answer the following. If you are going to answer questions about more than one person, please tell me who you are writing about in each question:

1. What kind of relationship might exist between his/her English learning and communication experiences and how he/she a) conceptualizes, b) reveals, or c) performs sexuality?

Conceptualize means "how we think about or how we understand something"; to reveal means "to tell others using words or body language," for example, "coming out"; to perform means "physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities we participate in, hobbies," etc.

a) conceptualize

After reading the story, I think my partner's thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways,

He watched many gay guys in foreign country come out of closet or show real gay life on TV, which influenced his thinking about sexuality. I think English influenced his thinking about sexuality, not directly, but to some extent.

b) reveal

After reading the story, I think my partner's revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

Getting to know foreign English speaking friends let him come out to some of his friends and show his real life to them.

c) perform

After reading the story, I think my partner's performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I guess there is no answer

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your partner's story?

He was struggled with his sexuality for long time. However, at some point, he found his solution, which was to have foreign gay friends and talk freely about gay life. Actually, I was surprised to know that he could not do it in Japanese gay community.

3. What similarities, if any, are there between this story and the story you wrote?

I do not think there are many similarities. He has studied English because of his desire to learn. In may case, love realtionship was involved. So, motivation was totally different.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about your partner's story?

He could not show his real life even in Japanese gay community. So, I realize that Japanese gay community have to be changed to better one in order to make guys like him happy in Japan.

GREAT! YOU ARE ABOUT 40% FINISHED!

Part III. Look at the story you wrote - now think about what you thought or wrote about (remembered, considered, created).

1. What kind of relationship might exist between your English learning and communication experiences and how you a) conceptualize, b) reveal, or c) perform your sexuality?

Conceptualize means how you think about or how you understand something; to reveal means to tell others using words or body language, for example, coming out; to perform means physical appearance, sexual behavior, word choice, activities you participate in, etc.

a) conceptualize

After writing my story, I think my thinking about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

Actually, meeting and having relationship with white guy makes me realize my sexuality. Because most of western gay guys are confident to their sexuality, it is true that I could easily change my thinking about sexuality. So, in some way, English influenced my thinking about sexuality.

b) reveal

After writing my story, I think my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

I barely come out to my parent, my school friends or coworkers. But I do not mind meeting straight guys or women in party (mostly women) where my foreign gay friends hold. So, my revealing behaviors about sexuality was influenced by English to some extent.

c) perform

After writing my story, I think my performance of sexuality was influenced by English in the following ways...

Because of American gay friend or American boyfriend, I participated in gay parades in US and Japan or gay festival in Japan. I used to play tennis at gay tennis tournament in US when I was in US. Now, I sometime join gay tennis club in Japan, go for gay BBQ party or participate in blind date party. That means that confidence to my sexuality are gradually getting stronger.

2. What do you think is most important, interesting, significant, and/or surprising about your story?

Meeting with gay private English teacher completely changed my life to much better way. Meeting with new people is very important in life.

3. What did you not write about yet that you'd like to share know?

I think I told almost everything.

4. Anything else you'd like to say about this story?

Life is given to everyone just once!! We have to make it best one by ourselves!!

GREAT!! YOU ARE 80% FINISHED!

Part IV. Think about the process of writing a story about yourself in English

1. How has participation in this project affected you or influenced, if at all? For example, what have you learned about yourself? For example, what do you know now that you didn't know before.

Writing my story reminds me of my unclear feeling against English teachers when I did not realize my sexuality. yet. But at that time, I had passion to improve my English and kind of a dream for my future relating to English. As I get old, they are gone. I realize that I should get them back and grow up.

2. You wrote your story using English words. What could you write in English that you could not write in Japanese? What could you not write in English? Why? How was this process of English writing for you?

I happen to express directly in English writing because, I guess, my limited vocabularies. In Japanese writing, as you know, we use ambiguous expression. I can not do it in English. Sometimes, it is frustrating, but sometimes, I prefer it because I can express directly in English.

3. If you were to continue working with Ma-chan on this topic at some time in the future, what would you be most interested in exploring next? For example, what have we not explored yet that you think we should explore? What should Ma-chan do next, in your opinion?

I can not come up with any good idea relating to English and gay, sorry. But personally, I would like to know what old gay guys community is like in US. Is there gay nursing home? What is their life style? What do they feel to live as gay? etc. I really concern my gay life in future.

4. Any last thoughts?

Mmmmmmm..... Nothing.