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Journal Editorial Board

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Disclaimer

Acknowledgments

Citation

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Editorial Foreword

"Powerlessness. Voicelessness. The overwhelming frustration of being small in a big world where all the cards were held by others," author Meg McKinlay writes in her beautifully composed essay about growing up female in Australia. "Talk over me, dismiss me, minimise my feelings:" silencing led to stuttering, which led to another experience of voicelessness in Japan as an exchange student where, she writes, "the socio-cultural imperative for containment, a kind of gentle muting, was even stronger." Her essay is reprinted here from the book *Women of a Certain Rage* (reviewed in Vol. 14 by Susan Laura Sullivan). Despite its cultural specificities, this essay nonetheless embodies a far-reaching sense of recognition for those who may have experienced muting via marginalization. The solution, according to authors in this edition of The GALE Journal, is Communities of Practice (CoPs).

While many of us were still struggling with the isolation and uncertainties of the (waning?) pandemic in 2022, the need for communities to form and re-form anew came to the forefront. In the US, women turned out in droves to vote with a unified voice to protect reproductive rights. In Iran, the murder of Mahsa Amini for not wearing a hijab sparked a female-led protest movement which succeeded in getting "morality police" disbanded (although, tragically, not in preventing revenge against protestors). UN News lauded a group of women from Niger and Mali, all displaced by conflict, who have not only created thriving market gardens in their new home but are also combating desertification in the process. It was a year of stark contrasts: there were heartbreaking scenes of diplomas being torn up in Afghanistan, with girls and women forbidden to pursue education, and thus, knowledge, at all. Around the globe, inflation and low, stagnant wages are leading families to the brink of economic despair. On the one hand, Tokyo has begun issuing certificates recognizing same-sex unions, yet there is also a sperm donor law that could outlaw the procedure for lesbian couples and single women. In all 32 states in Mexico, same sex unions are now legal while Singapore is penalizing and banning media which promotes 'non-traditional" families. Chile is including Gender 'X,' a gender-neutral option, for documentation. According to the latest WEF data, the gender gap could be closed within 60 years in Europe and 200 years in South Asia, but surely, CoPs can shorten those timeframes.

Each research paper, profile, essay, and review in Volume 15 of The GALE Journal could be said to embody principles of CoPs: purpose, place, practice, and especially, persons sharing the goal of advancing general knowledge regarding, in this case, the domain of gender-related studies and language education. In the first paper, Julia Kimura laments the dismaying historic lack of

female members and the general distancing from feminist issues in labor unions, then calls for
new feminist communities of practice to revitalize them. Given the gendered manner in which
women were overburdened with job cuts, lower wages, and child- and elder-care responsibilities
during the pandemic, Kimura's call for action seems even more pertinent now. In the second
paper, Aurelie Moulin insightfully analyzes qualitative data from both high school students and
their teachers to uncover some fascinating themes—such as that gendered stereotypes about
student behaviors and skills do not necessarily reflect the mindsets of the students themselves.
Adrianne Verla Uchida employs autoethnography in her paper about how she actively created
CoPs during the pandemic while struggling with the burdens of the infamous "lethal cocktail"
that is motherhood and academia. These articles echo certain themes: misrepresentation, and
indeed, a near-complete lack of representation at times, which could and are being overcome by
knowledge shared through CoPs.

The book reviews in this edition represent marginalized communities and their struggles. Terry
R. Tuttle eloquently discusses *Regimes of Desire: Young Gay Men, Media, and Masculinity in Tokyo*,
author Thomas Baudinette's critique of "types" (or kei) promoted by media to the young gay
male community of Tokyo which, in fact, support heteromasculinist tropes. Susan Laura Sullivan
poignantly highlights the struggles of Arab female reporters in *Our Women on the Ground: Arab
Women Reporting from the Arab World* (Zahara Hankir, Ed.) as they combat sexism at home, yet also
are hemmed in by seemingly inescapable international power structures. In her review of *Against
White Feminism*, Julia Kimura enthusiastically accepts the call of author Rafia Zakaria to question
the privileges white feminists take for granted, not only at the personal level, but also
professionally. In my review of Mark Seilhamer's exhaustive narrative inquiry study, *Gender,
Neoliberalism and Distinction through Linguistic Capital: Taiwanese Narratives of Struggle and Strategy*, I am
amazed at how similar the narratives of the Taiwanese participants initially seem to be to women
in Japan of the same era, yet saddened to realize how the countries have diverged in gender
equality issues since then. Although decades seem to have been lost in Japan, the levels of gender
equality that Taiwan has achieved inspire. Antonija Cavcic champions author Moya Bailey's
Misogynoir Transformed. Bailey describes the numerous efforts of Black women to make themselves
heard against insidious and outrageous examples of misogynoir in the digital world by re-
claiming power via the formation of online communities.

This issue also includes two special features. One is the reprint of Meg McKinlay's story
mentioned above, and another is a carefully crafted, moving profile piece based on interviews
with Dr. Avril Haye-Matsui about thriving in communities. Author Susan Laura Sullivan notes

that Haye-Matsui "felt that if she did not tell her own story, who was going to? If she did not relay the story of marginalised others, who was going to?" Haye-Matsui co-founded Black Women in Japan to deal with the complex intersectional realities of being "a minority in a minority in a minority." She participates in WELL and our own GALE, to name a few, and has recently created another CoP entitled Women's Empowerment Circle.

GALE has served as a CoP for decades for educators in Japan. We in the GALE Journal community stand with you on your quest for place, voice, self-determination, and intellectual growth. "The wisest person of all learns from others' successes." The origin of this quote may perhaps be a Zen parable, or perhaps a tele-evangelist (surprise!), nonetheless, it aptly highlights the main purpose of our CoP. It is our sincere hope that you are as inspired and enlightened as we are by the works in Vol. 15 of The GALE Journal.

Acknowledgements

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Enthusiastic volunteers. Reluctant feminists

Julia Kimura
Mukogawa Women's University

Abstract

Women constitute half of the world's population, but less than half of the paid workforce, less than half of organized workers, and less than half of leadership positions in professional organizations. In Japan, not only are women under-represented in professional organizations, but in leadership positions as well. In this article, I reveal a false dichotomy which hinders organizing efforts. Since the 1970s, it has been documented that many women in the workers' rights movement do not identify strongly as feminists. Consequently, unions are not living up to their potential with respect to organizing. Through conducting a case study on a union in Japan, it can be seen that, five decades later, the problem continues. Unions need to make greater outreach efforts to show members that they are sincere about representation, thereby improving their image and increasing their ability to organize more workers. The implications of this study can be applied to other similar contexts, including research on the rights of migrant working women in other countries.

Keywords: communities of practice, feminism, workers' rights, Japanese labour unions, identity

概要

女性は世界人口の半分を占めるが、有給労働者の女性の数は半分以下、組織労働者も半分以下、専門職団体の指導的地位も半分以下である。日本では、専門職団体だけでなく、指導的地位においても女性の割合が低い。本稿では、組織の努力を妨げる誤った二項対立を明らかにする。1970 年代以降、労働者の権利運動で活躍した多くの女性は女性開放の思想家としては強く認識されていないことが記録されている。その結果、組合は組織化に関してその潜在能力を発揮していない。そして、日本のある組合のケーススタディを通じ、この問題が 50 年経った今も続いていることが分かる。組合は、真摯に取り組んでいることを組合員に示すために、アウトリーチ活動を強化する必要があり、それによって組合のイメージを改善し、より多くの労働者の組織化する能力を向上させることができる。この研究の結果は、他の国の移民労働女性の権利に関する研究など、他の類似した状況にも適用できる。

キーワード：実践コミュニティ、女性開放の思想家、労働基本権、日本の労働組合、アイデンティティ

Women in Japan

Japanese women's poor social standing in international rankings reflects the notoriously male-dominant world that is modern Japanese society. This assertion comes as no surprise to readers of the *GALE Journal*. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2022, Japan ranked 121st out of 146 countries in terms of economic participation and opportunity and, on another measure, 139th out of 152 countries in terms of women's political empowerment. In 2021, in terms of the gender wage gap, Japan ranked lowest among G7 member states, only followed by Korea, Israel, and Latvia among OECD member states (OECD Data, n.d.). Though the Japanese government claims to be working to encourage more women to enter and re-enter the workforce, the late Prime Minister Abe was unable to achieve his mandate of 30% women even in his own cabinet (Macnaughtan, 2015). As of 2020, the Abe administration realized that it would be impossible even to attain downgraded targets (Hori, 2020). Furthermore, discourse analysis of the LDP's Women's Affairs Division website has demonstrated how, counterintuitively, the division's efforts go as far as to reinforce the Liberal Democratic Party's conservative ideology which delineates women's roles predominantly as caregivers (Cavcic, 2022).

Consequently, this lack of representation in the workplace correlates with a lack of female representation in labour unions. Kirton (2015) has examined the discrepancy in men's and women's union density in the United Kingdom, and Broadbent (2005) has reviewed these discrepancies in Japan. The gender gap is even more pronounced in leadership roles, as has been shown in labor unions in the United States (Martin, 2014), as well as in a professional organization for language instructors in Japan (McCandie in Healy et al., 2020). It is not my intention to conflate labor unions with other professional organizations, but there is a great deal of overlap in their memberships and the roles that they fulfill. To be sure, many professionals struggle with how to reconcile unionism with professionalism. Blue-collar workers tend to join labor unions more than white-collar workers. One way in which unions can address this dichotomy is through collective bargaining agreements which protect members' autonomy and place restrictions on assigning so-called non-professional duties (Hurd, 2000). For example, collective agreements can prevent teachers from having to supervise children on the playground at recess, or researchers from having to contribute their expertise to work that falls outside the job description.

Communities of practice in unions and women in unions

Communities of practice is a social theory of learning (Wenger, 1991), and a versatile one, because it can be applied to numerous contexts. Briefly, a community of practice is defined as a group of people bound by shared expertise working together on a joint enterprise (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). It has three essential characteristics: domain, community, and practice (Wenger et al., 2002). First, membership in the community is defined by a shared commitment to the domain and a shared competence that distinguishes members from outsiders. Second, the community is defined by members engaged in an activity, and who help each other and share information. Third, in addition to a shared interest, a community is also defined by shared practices. Members share a common repertoire of experiences, stories, and tools.

These common repertoires are merely defining features, not necessary conditions. In the context of the Saizen Union, a labor union in west Japan that primarily organizes foreign language teachers, common repertoires include engaging in activities such as participating in industrial actions such as leafleting or strikes, as well as attending collective bargaining and union meetings. Paradoxically, when newer and more peripheral members participate in a community of practice, there is little observable teaching, yet the most fundamental phenomenon is learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), participatory learning being fundamental to a community of practice. Cooper (2005, 2006) and Ball (2003) show examples of a community of practice in action among people in a labour union, as explained below.

Communities of practice and unions

Communities of practice theory has been used to examine learning through participation in the workers' rights movement in South Africa (Cooper, 2005, 2006) as well as in the United Kingdom (Ball, 2003). However, to date, little research has been conducted from a communities of practice perspective on women in labour unions in Japan, and more so on non-Japanese women's participation (cf. Kimura, 2021). In her research on non-Japanese women's identity, gender, and teaching English, Nagatomo (2016) briefly addressed labour law violations that affect non-Japanese English instructors. Nagatomo has also highlighted gender disparity in Japanese university faculties where, in 2015, approximately 23% of tenured faculty members and 30% of adjuncts in Japan were female. Furthermore, McCandie (in Healy et al., 2020, pp. 135-136) has collected data highlighting gender disparity in the Japan Association for Language Teaching, the largest professional organization for language teachers in the country.

As a result of gender disparity in Japan's workforce as a whole, labour unions exhibit the same disparity. Still, unfortunately, it is even more pronounced in unions than in the workforce. As mentioned earlier, research on women participating in the workers' rights movement exists worldwide, and specifically, research on women-only unions has been addressed in Japan by Broadbent (2005, 2007) and Zacharias-Walsh (2016). Even though the unions researched exclude men, in principle, they are legal because they have some token male members.

Women have enjoyed greater autonomy in forming women-only unions, as has been shown in the United States (Dye, 1975). Although some women in Japan (Broadbent, 2005, 2007) and Korea (Broadbent, 2007) have also been successful in organizing women-only unions, others are reluctant to do so for ideological reasons (Dye, 1975; Milkman, 1985), myself included. Furthermore, not cooperating with our male comrades would amount to a lack of solidarity, which is the fundamental principle of the workers' rights movement. It would be a wasted opportunity to promote solidarity among both workers and women if we continue to repeat the same mistake.

Women in unions

Unions improve working conditions for both men and women, but because some men, especially those in enterprise-based unions, are believed to want to protect the status quo in which men have traditionally been privileged (Broadbent, 2002; Endo, 2012; Kumazawa, 1981/1996), unions have gone as far as to work against female members' interests (Broadbent, 2002; Dye, 1975; Endo, 2012; Gordon, 1998; Kumazawa, 1981/1986; Nemoto, 2016; Zacharias-Walsh, 2016). Men who are members of labour unions might feel threatened by newly hired women who might cause the men to have to work harder to compete with equally or possibly more competent coworkers (Endo, 2012; Gordon, 1998; Nemoto, 2016; Porter, 2014). Nonetheless, labor unions can no longer afford to continue to ignore the lack of diversity among their memberships (Hopkinson, 2002). One reason is that, at the very least, unions can increase the number of members in absolute terms. In fact, more diverse labour unions enjoy greater success in organizing workers (Ferguson, 2016). This phenomenon can also be extrapolated to other professional organizations. More diverse professional organizations might enjoy greater success in recruiting more members. Specifically, cultural diversity has been shown to lead to improvements in innovation (Nathan & Lee, 2013), and gender diversity has fostered innovation as well (Eswaran, 2019). Therefore, it stands to reason that gender diversity might positively influence innovation in terms of union organizing.

Methods

Although I relied on multiple data sources for the dissertation research project, for the sake of this article, I draw on data from interviews and responses between four participants (Lucy, Jane, Norma, and myself), and from artifacts such as website mentions of women. Data were collected from this focus group and abovementioned sources over a period of three years, which allowed me to become more familiar with the participants, specifically Lucy, and to deepen my relationships with Jane and Norma.

Research participants

The participants in this project are situated in the context of non-Japanese women who have worked as EFL teachers in western Japan and who participated in the labour movement. There were four participants, all females, including myself. As a member of the Saizen Union, I explain my emic perspective here. I joined the union in 2002; therefore, I had privileged knowledge about the union and experiences not encountered by outsiders. I have held various roles, including rank-and-file member, organizer, executive officer, branch officer, auditor, and treasurer. I have been an executive officer of my workplace branch and volunteered when possible. I participated in union-wide and branch meetings. I also promoted the union at events organized for foreign language teachers. Among what Monture (2007) coined the trinity of the three axes of intersectionality: race, class, and gender, in the dissertation, I emphasized the gender and class aspects of participants' identities.

All four participants held or had held official posts in the union, which was the main criterion for participant selection. However, merely holding a position is not the same as being a leader in the truest sense of the word. Therefore, comparatively lax selection criteria were necessary for this project due to the lack of women in leadership positions; otherwise, virtually no women in the Saizen Union would have been eligible to join this study. One secondary informant was the former chair of the union, a Canadian man, who also served as a gatekeeper to the research site. I also communicated with the former treasurer of the union, an American man, who provided data on the demographics of the Saizen Union's membership. I provided the three primary participants with two hard copies of an informed consent form, one of which they signed and returned to me. In addition, after the focus group discussion, the three women reaffirmed that they were willing to remain participants in this study for its duration.

The majority of Saizen Union members are non-Japanese men, and the second largest demographic is non-Japanese women. These two groups made up well over 95% of the union's

membership in 2019 (personal communication with the former union treasurer, who was responsible for keeping membership records, January 29, 2019). However, as in many unions worldwide, the gender makeup of the leadership does not reflect the unions' membership (Gray, 1993), even in female-majority unions (Kaminski & Yakura, 2008; Martin, 2014).

Findings

Three of the four main participants could be described as reluctant feminists. Using a general baseline definition of feminist, such as Delmar's (1994), a feminist is a person who agrees that women suffer discrimination because of their gender, have unique needs that remain unsatisfied, and that fulfilling these needs requires radical change. One, however, does not need to consider themselves a feminist to agree that women experience gender-based discrimination. Individuals who do agree that gender-based discrimination exists could charitably be considered to be feminists, whether they use the label to describe themselves or not. Even if they do not use the label, they can be regarded as allies in the women's rights movement. Most of the participants appeared to be reluctant feminists, or at least allies, as Dye (1975), hooks (2012), and Milkman (2016) found among union women in the United States. Referring to Crenshaw's (1989, 1995) discussion of identification as reluctant feminists, the core participants in this study did not strongly take ownership of the feminist label.

Participants' Identities as Feminists?

As has already been documented in the research literature, unions have had complicated relationships with women (Ferguson, 2009; hooks, 2012; Milkman, 2016). Many women in the workers' rights movement, including the participants in this study, have expressed feeling uncomfortable with the feminist label. Women in the workers' rights movement have tended to identify more strongly as workers, but women in the women's rights movement have tended to identify more strongly as feminists (Dye, 1975; hooks, 2012; Milkman, 2016). In the focus group discussion, the participants provided working definitions of what they consider a feminist to be. Moreover, at various stages of data collection, the participants discussed some of the problems they saw with the feminist movement. Lucy expressed the greatest discomfort, while Jane and Norma sounded ambivalent about pushing the feminist agenda and their identities as feminists.

In our first interview, I asked Lucy if she considered herself to be a feminist. She stated, "Ah, hm. Being a feminist. There are positive and negative connotations" (Skype interview, October 31, 2017). She attributed part of her discomfort to others' perceptions: "Because if I say, 'I'm a

feminist!' I think people will look at me and assume certain things. And unfortunately, a lot of those assumptions could be negative. Like, 'Oh, this could lead to discrimination against men.'" Lucy stressed the importance of being a union representative in both the second interview and the focus group discussion. She felt that union representatives needed to be mindful and exhibit pride as union members, and that expressing feminist views might be seen to undermine that. Jane expressed comparatively ambivalent feelings about what it means to be a feminist, because she thought that "men and women, in many ways, cannot be equal, but they should have equal opportunities" (personal interview, November 4, 2017).

In the focus group discussion three years later, Jane offered a qualified definition of feminism and said that she found it easier to define it by what it is not:

> It's tricky, sometimes, but a feminist is, I think, someone that believes that men and women should be treated equally. As much as possible. Um, like, for example, maternity and paternity leave. […] I've had so much time to think about this, and I've never come up with a better explanation. I'm better at telling you what it isn't. (Laugh.) A lot of people think it means that you can't criticize women, which isn't true. People think it means saying we're better than men. It's not true. (Focus group discussion, October 31, 2020)

Lucy agreed:

> Very well put. I was going to add, I think that needs to be made clear. Women like me feel uncomfortable these days. I remember when I was in my twenties. And I was, "Of course I'm a feminist! I want equality. I want gender equality." But these days, it's more and more difficult for me to feel that way. Just because of that side, you're saying. […] There are exceptions to what I'm saying about equality. Or exceptions to that label. It's *not* women being better. (Laugh.) You know, but I just feel that that's a problem. (Focus group discussion, October 31, 2020)

The participants have a weaker conceptualization of feminism than I do. Jane and Norma emphasized the equality of genders. Norma said that she was a feminist because she "believe[d] in equal rights for women and that women should be empowered [and] not subjected to male approval and oppression and stuff like that" (personal interview, November 26, 2017). However, hooks (2012, 2000) took a stronger position and defined feminism as a means to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. I endorse this more proactive definition because of the emphasis on creating change instead of merely accepting the premise of equality. Later I

address the participants' varying degrees of feminism and suggest possible causes of the gap between women in the workers' rights movement and women in the feminist movement.

Discussion

The primary participants' ambivalent attitudes towards feminism lend support to Dye's and Milkman's claim that women's identities as members of the workers' rights movement trump their identities as feminists. As of May 2022, the Saizen Union has no functioning women's caucus, though there has been one in the past. Changes to the Labour Standards Law and Saizen members' problems related to the COVID-19 pandemic were a bigger priority than tackling gender equity in the union. For the sake of fairness, the union has prioritized addressing members' problems brought on by the pandemic over problems of non-members. The union has not necessarily focused efforts upon dealing with women's problems that have arisen from the pandemic, even though women are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. For example, the additional burdens of child and elder care tended to fall on women, and job losses and suicide rates for women climbed dramatically (Boyd & Montgomery, 2022; Osumi, 2022). Perhaps, then, consciousness-raising about the gendered effects of the pandemic has the potential to be most effective regarding representation in the union context.

Conclusion

"Positive discrimination" (Hopkinson, 2002), or more precisely, what I prefer to call *affirmative action*, is one plausible solution that the Saizen Union might consider pursuing to address the historical exclusion of women from labour movements, and to encourage more women to take on more leadership roles. For example, when holding elections for branch or executive committees, the elections committee could establish a minimum quota of posts to be held by women, or at the very least, invite specific women to run. To speak anecdotally, I know that many union members have taken on leadership roles only after being specifically invited to do so. If the best leaders are to be found from the largest possible pool of talent, it stands to reason that the union should aggressively recruit more election candidates. "Opening doors for women fosters equal opportunity and can help a society to allocate its human resources optimally" (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

In addition to affirmative action, consciousness raising, as suggested by hooks (2000), might be another solution to the gender gap in the union's leadership. Consciousness raising is defined as an activity in which women, for example, regularly meet in groups to give accounts of their lives and see that others experience the same problems. Once members' personal experiences

have been examined, the group can move on to establish self-help or reading groups, for example (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). The Saizen Union could survey members to determine interest, and then host meetings in which women would be able to discuss their problems, which is something that members of all genders already do. However, opening meetings only to members who identify as women might foster a safe environment in which to share. Based on issues unearthed through consciousness raising, all union leaders could make efforts to implement positive changes that will ultimately support organizing. Consequentially, consciousness raising might benefit the women in the Saizen Union, thus supporting union organizing efforts on the whole, and thereby creating a larger pool of potential leaders. Though only the male/female gender distinction was salient in the data that I collected for the dissertation research, I am aware that some union members who did not participate in the dissertation study do not identify as cisgender. Therefore, in the future, union leaders might want to consider making concerted efforts at helping members of various gender identities.

To extrapolate from Kuenzi, Mayer, and Greenbaum (2020), the Saizen Union's practices should demonstrate not only to members, but to prospective members alike, that the union is committed to gender equity. Perhaps the union could revive its currently defunct women's caucus and publicize efforts at achieving gender disparity. Furthermore, more outreach directed towards women's groups in the region might show that the union is sincere about fighting for working women's rights and therefore could lead to more success in organizing foreign language instructors in the region.

Ultimately, more role models will inspire rank-and-file members to take on more responsibilities, and hopefully, take on more leadership roles, therefore benefitting the union's organizing efforts. One potential barrier to both affirmative action and consciousness raising meetings is that labor unions tend to be "male and stale (Hopkinson, 2002)," so one can expect resistance from some male members. To mitigate this, the leadership would need to explain to all union members of all genders how lack of diversity hurts the union's organizing efforts. As long as the leadership consists mainly of men, there is a potential Catch-22 in which the union needs more gender diversity, which will not happen as long as (male) leaders work to protect the status quo. Therefore, men will also need to participate in consciousness-raising efforts.

As for future research directions, for the sake of comparison, looking at a younger sub-demographic of women in the Saizen Union might unearth interesting differences. At the time that the data for this research were collected, all research participants in the dissertation study, including myself, were in their 50s. The comparison of attitudes and opinions of women in a

different demographic, such as Saizen Women in their 30s, would be a worthwhile endeavour which could lead to full representation.

Acknowledgements

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Gender and Group Work Tasks:
Differences in Preferences and Perceptions

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Abstract

This study investigates gender differences – and thereby underlying gender beliefs – in EFL classes' group work in Japanese private high schools. The study reveals that boys and girls enrolled in these schools perform and enjoy different tasks when they do group work. When asked what tasks each gender group might prefer to perform, the teachers surveyed had expectations that did not match the students' preferences and habits. The qualitative data analysis showed that girls were consistently represented as the more competent students while boys were seen as less naturally gifted. These expectations and perceptions can – in part – be attributed to gender beliefs which can affect the students' choices in the classroom. To ensure that their students have the same learning opportunities, teachers should take measures to closely monitor their students' group work.

Keywords: EFL; Gender beliefs; Gender stereotypes; Group work; Language learning

概要

この研究では、日本の私立高等学校の第二外国語としての英語クラス（**EFL**）にて行われるグループ活動下においての、性別による違い、および性別に対する一般的なイメージ・偏見について調査している。この研究では、これらの学校に在籍する男子および女子が同じタスクを楽しんだり実行したりしないことが明らかになった。また、調査対象の教師に各性別のグループが好むと思われるタスクを質問したところ、実際の生徒の好みや行動様式とは異なるタスクを予想した。定性データ分析によると、女子は一貫して優秀な学生と思われ、一方で男子は生まれつき才能に乏しいとされていた。これらの予想と認識は、教室での生徒の選択に影響を与えるような、性別に対する一般的なイメージ・偏見にある程度起因する可能性がある。学習者の学びの機会が等しく確保できるよう、教師は学習者のグループ活動を注意深く観察する手段をとる必要がある。

キーワード：第二外国語としての英語教育、性別についての調査、ジェンダーステレオタイプ、グループ活動、言語学習

My experience teaching in both all-girl and co-ed high schools inspired this investigation of gender in educational settings. Indeed, during my years of teaching in Japan, I noticed that the behavior of girls differed greatly depending on whether they were in single-sex or co-ed schools. Also, despite numerous gender studies in educational contexts, many Japanese studies have been conducted at the university level (Matsumoto, 2010; Mori & Gobel, 2006; Yashima, Nishida, & Mizumoto, 2017) while most studies that investigate gender in high school are set in western contexts (Ahlquist, 2019; Baxter, 2003; Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Chambers, 2005; Sunderland, 1998). Studies that investigate gender in Japanese high school settings (Kobayashi, 2002; Yazawa, 2020) remain quite rare. It is hoped that this study will help bridge this gap in research.

The decision to focus on group work was motivated by the desire to investigate the students' choices when they are working more autonomously with their peers in a manner that is less structured and which allows them the freedom to choose their tasks or assign roles to each other. Students' attitudes and preferences for certain tasks could reveal their underlying gender beliefs which could then be compared to their teachers'. As the teacher's own gender identification can influence classroom interactions (Einarsson & Granström, 2002), and since teacher-student interactions can be a source of stress for the students (Tsui, 1996), the analysis of group work seemed the best way to try to identify patterns in students' task preferences and underlying gender beliefs.

Group work is also an essential part of EFL classes taught by L1 teachers in Japanese private high schools selected for this study. The schools that participated are all private schools which put a strong emphasis on English learning. They employ full-time foreign teachers to teach smaller classes in a more student-centred and interactive fashion involving considerably more group work in comparison to traditional English classes taught by Japanese teachers in most Japanese high schools. These tend to be more teacher-centred and employ grammar-translation methods (Funada, 2020, pp. 261-262). In the classes that were investigated, group work constitutes 25 to 50% of class time. Students are encouraged to use English during group work but using Japanese is also an option. Group work activities range from short EFL game-like or warm-up activities to group projects that are sometimes carried out in task-based classes over several hours.

Literature Review

Gender and Language Learning

In a review article on gender studies in education, Sunderland (2000) points out the contradictory findings of many studies focused on gender, whether they are investigating achievement, ability, engagement, learning styles and strategies, or other topics. This shows the difficulty of generalising any findings regarding gender beyond the context in which they were investigated. The stronger motivation of girls to learn a second language seems to be the only constant pattern seen in research. As pointed out by Menard-Warwick et al., "With some exceptions, attitude and motivation research for both mixed- and same-sex language instruction confirms the common notion that girls are more likely to study foreign languages, and more likely to make an effort to succeed. (Menard-Warwick, Mori, & Williams, 2014, p. 481). It is not clear, however, whether this apparent difference in motivation is due to students' interest (or lack thereof) and perception of language learning, or if it is a result of traditional gender beliefs that encourage girls to study languages and humanities and boys to study scientific subjects.

Indeed, from 2000 to 2010, many studies that focused on gender differences showed boys' lower engagement in learning a foreign language (Carr & Pauwels, 2006; Chambers, 2005; Mori & Gobel, 2006; Sunderland, 2000b; Yazawa, 2020). While Carr and Pauwels (2006) noted boys' disengagement from L2 learning in New-Zealand high schools, despite the fact that learning a foreign language could be useful in their future careers, Kobayashi (2002) found that girls enrolled in Japanese high schools displayed a positive attitude towards English learning even though English skills do not help them advance in their career and are of little use for the majority of women employed by Japanese companies. It would therefore seem that career opportunities and rational thinking about future careers have little impact on the choices, motivations, and behaviours of high school students. It should be noted, however, that Kobayashi's study was published twenty years ago, and that high school students are often more focused on university entrance examinations, for which English skills do matter, than on future career choices. Recent studies propose that the difference in motivation lies in the boys' external and the girls' intrinsic motivation (Oga-Baldwin & Fryer, 2020; Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017). Yazawa (2020) proposes that traits displayed by women in Japanese contexts, such as warmth and interest in others, can result in more self-determined and autonomous language learning.

Gender Beliefs and Education

Research has evolved from a focus on dominance and gender differences, into a more fluid perception of gender, more diversity, and an understanding of gendered practices that differ according to the context in which they are performed (Menard-Warwick et al., 2014). Indeed, studies have moved away from the binary system of gender differences with some recent studies

focusing on gender beliefs or gender stereotypes and their underlying influence on students' behaviour and attitudes. Gender beliefs are defined by Han (2021, p. 29) as "a set of cultural expectations about gender, [that] provide a blueprint for people about how to behave, what to expect and how to evaluate themselves in a social context," The image of a blueprint illustrates how deeply ingrained in cultural ideology our representation of gender is. Indeed, it is important to insist on the distinction between conscious beliefs and the subconscious set of expectations about gender that Han describes. In Western countries, egalitarian gender beliefs seem to be becoming more common, however, this trend does not mean that people's subconscious conceptions of gender do not follow Han's cultural blueprint. In Japan, however, gender equality is often opposed by a widely accepted concept of gender differences. The concept phrase "different-but-equal," commonly used by Japanese university students to justify some cultural gender differences, thus implies that students believe that "males and females are different by nature" (Helverson, 2016, p. 17) in line with "essentialist gender beliefs" (Brescoll, Uhlmann, & Newman, 2013; Humbert, Kelan, & Brink, 2019). Recent Taiwanese, Japanese and Chinese studies show that the gender beliefs of students, their parents, and their teachers can influence students' choice of academic and career paths (Han, 2021; Ikkatai et al., 2019; Li, McLellan, & Forbes, 2021). Specifically, Ikkatai (2019) and Han's (2021) findings show that daughters of families that hold traditional gender beliefs are less likely to choose scientific academic paths. These findings shine a light on how gender beliefs could influence the engagement of Japanese girls in English classes and their willingness to improve their English skills despite the lack of relevance of such skills in their future careers. This influence of gender beliefs on students' academic and career paths could also explain Sunderland's observation that foreign languages are "more popular amongst boys in single-sex schools than in mixed-sex schools" (Sunderland, 2000a, p. 205). This observation is corroborated by both Chambers (2005), who found that boys were more motivated in single-sex L2 classes, and Carr and Pauwels (2006) who found that some boys saw learning a language as feminine. These studies highlight the need felt by students to conform to expectations associated with their gender. Baxter (2003) notes in her study on oral assessment promoting normative male speech that students who did not act in the way their gender group was expected to, that is, gender non-conformists, were met with peer group disapproval (Baxter, in Cameron, 2005, p. 493). This further highlights the pressure that students might feel to conform in their attitudes and choices with what they believe is expected of their gender group.

Haines *et al.* (2016) investigated the evolution of gender beliefs and found that traits associated with each gender were constant between 1983 and 2014, with men being seen as more agentic

and women more communal. They define agency as incorporating traits such as "competence, instrumentality, and independence" whereas "communion" encompasses expressivity, warmth, and concern with the welfare of others" (Haines et al., 2016, p. 354). These stereotypical traits of agency and communion were used in the questionnaire design of the present study to categorize certain group tasks.

These later studies on gender beliefs show a shift in the focus of gender studies that no longer simply observe difference or dominance, but try to uncover the roots of observable phenomena. They show the power gender beliefs have in shaping society as well as the decisions and behaviours of individuals. Such beliefs could be seen to have the same power in influencing students' behaviours and attitudes in EFL group work. The goal of the present study is to work towards gaining a more complete understanding of students' and teachers' gender beliefs and their influence on English learning and teaching in Japanese private high school classes.

> RQ1. What roles and tasks do girls prefer when they do group work?

> RQ2. What roles and tasks do boys prefer when they do group work?

> RQ3. What are the students' gender beliefs and what explanations do students provide for certain role preferences in a specific gender group?

> RQ4. What are the differences between students' gender beliefs and native English teachers' gender beliefs?

Participants

Participants in this project are high school students in 1st or 2nd grade – aged 16-17 – attending Japanese private high schools in Aichi Prefecture, as well as native English teachers who teach in Japanese private high schools in Aichi Prefecture. It should be noted that the teachers who answered the questionnaire do not necessarily teach the classes surveyed. Three schools are involved in the project, two are co-ed and one is all-girls. The classes that took part in the study had between 25 to 40 students each. The answers of a total of fifty-one students were analysed. Four students came from either mixed ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Among the student questionnaire participants, three girls volunteered for the interview and five teachers answered the teacher questionnaire.

Table 1.

Classes Involved and Participating Students

	School type	Information on the classes			Information on survey participants		
		Total Number of students	Number of girls	Number of boys	Number of students	Number of girls	Number of boys
School 1	Co-ed	34	26	8	28	22	6
School 2	Co-ed	30	22	8	12	7	5
School 3	All girls	40	40	0	11	11	0

In each school involved in the project, one teacher acted as gatekeeper to liaise with parents and students. They also contacted other teachers by email and forwarded the link to the teacher questionnaire.

Limitations

This study presents several limitations and characteristics that must be kept in consideration when interpreting results.

Since the schools involved are all private and require tuition, lower-income family students are underrepresented in the population of students surveyed. All three schools are located in Aichi prefecture, and two of the three classes were electives. The data collected and the results of the study, therefore, apply only to that context and those participants. The qualitative dimension of the study does not allow the generalisation of its findings to other contexts. As previously mentioned, the teachers surveyed have worked in similar schools but do not necessarily teach the students surveyed. The rationale behind this decision was to facilitate an authentic and independent environment free of potential offense to either the school or the students, were they to read the paper. It should also be noted that teachers and participants were free to base their comments on their own classmates' or students' behavior, but they were not restricted to these observations. Many questionnaire and interview questions were directed at a more general perception of gender. For this reason, the fact that teachers and students might refer to previous experiences in different classes was not seen as problematic.

Another limitation is the reduced number of boy participants. Since one of the classes involved is all-girl, having more girls than boys amongst the participants was to be expected. Nonetheless, the discrepancy – 11 boys to 39 girls – was quite significant. This lower number

of boys makes comparisons between the two gender groups difficult and must be a consideration in the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. It was originally planned to exclude answers given by students who had lived abroad for a period exceeding 2 years to reduce the cultural differences that might arise from the experiences of residing and attending school abroad. However, 54.5% of the boys had lived abroad for a period exceeding 2 years, while only 13.7% of the girls had had that experience. It was felt that this difference was significant and could bring something to the analysis. Excluding the data of these participants would also have further reduced the number of boy participants from 21.6 % to 11.1%. It was therefore decided to adjust the original criteria and include these students' answers.

Lastly, only three students volunteered for the interview and all three were girls. While this is a reduced sample, the aim of the interview was to further investigate students' gender beliefs and was therefore central to this research. Also, since the researcher and students involved do not share the same cultural background, the interview stage was useful to address any cultural blind spots in my questionnaire. For these reasons, the interview answers, despite the reduced number of interviewees, were analysed as qualitative data.

Method

Questionnaires gathered quantitative data which highlighted different patterns in both gender groups. The answers to open-ended questions in the questionnaires provided qualitative data. The questions in the student questionnaire can be found in Appendix A and are thereafter denoted SQ+ number.

The choice to collect quantitative data might not seem appropriate when investigating gender beliefs, but it was made to allow students to reflect on trends and differences identified in a context that was familiar to them such as their own class or classes of approximately the same year level. Quantitative data analysis is meant to be a stepping stone for the qualitative data provided by the interview. The aim of the first part of the questionnaire is to identify the influence of gender on students' preferences. SQ8 and SQ11 involve students ranking the tasks listed in table 2 according to what they like to do or how often they do these tasks and include supportive tasks as well as leadership tasks. The answers listed for SQ8 and SQ11 were chosen based on personal experience and observation and were informed by teachers' comments at the piloting stage of the questionnaire. The aim of these questions, together with the answers to the second part of the questionnaire, is to find out whether there are differences which could corroborate the findings of Haines et al. (2016) to show that boys are perceived as more agentic

and girls as more communal. The tasks were categorised as agentic, communal, or mixed and these categories were used to determine how students perceived themselves, and how teachers perceived them. These tasks were classified according to Haines' definitions of agency and communion, but this classification was also influenced by the researcher's perceptions. It must be noted that task 5 was classified as communal because taking notes, for example, requires paying attention to all members' contributions which could limit the time devoted to that student's own contributions. Also, the students who undertake the task of taking notes or decorating a poster often do not get individual recognition in the assessment process, although their work will benefit the whole group. This aspect of "working behind the scenes" for the good of the group led me to classify it as communal. However, other researchers might see the initiative of taking notes and decorating and the organizational skills involved as agentic.

Table 2

Characteristics of Tasks

	Task description	Characteristic
1.	Presenting or sharing your work with the rest of the class.	Agentic
2.	Volunteering ideas and opinions.	Agentic
3.	Explaining instructions to others (when necessary).	Agentic / communal
4.	Keeping other students on task.	Agentic / communal
5.	Taking notes for the group, writing or drawing on a poster.	Communal
6	Checking words in a dictionary.	Communal

The second part of the students' questionnaire introduces gender factors and students' own preferences (SQ14) and mainly focuses on each student's own observations (SQ15 to SQ22) and interpretation (SQ23 and SQ24) and consists of more attitudinal questions. The open items in that section invite students to reflect on their observations of gender patterns and on what could cause such patterns. These explanations were further explored in the interview stage of the research.

To gain insight into the trends identified in the student questionnaire, follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted with three student volunteers. Interview questions can be found in Appendix B and are thereafter denoted IQ+ number.

The teacher questionnaire was designed with several open items to compare teachers' and students' perceptions. The teacher questionnaire can be found in Appendix C and the questions are thereafter noted TQ+ number.

While the teacher questionnaire was in English only (all teachers involved were L1 speakers of English), the student questionnaire and the interview contained questions in both English and Japanese and students had the choice to answer in the language they preferred.

Data analysis procedures

To identify students' gender beliefs, students' answers were transcribed and analysed using corpus analysis tools and Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). The results obtained using corpus tools serve as a base to define some of the categories of the coding frames for the coding of the student questionnaire answers. Students' answers to the interview questions were then compared to the teacher questionnaire answers to identify differences in gender beliefs and expectations between Japanese students and L1 English teachers.

Results and discussion

Student Questionnaire

In the first part of the student questionnaire, a trend was identified by SQ3 and SQ4: the high proportion of boys who have lived abroad (54.5%) compared to the girls (13.7%). This experience abroad could mean that, as a group, boys have an advantage and could be expected to feel more comfortable in the language classroom compared to girls. This was, however, not observed in the study.

The students' answers to the first part of the questionnaire provided the data to be analysed quantitatively. In SQ8, SQ11, TQ10, and TQ11, the top 2 ranking answers were considered to provide a point of comparison between the two gender groups. This simplification allowed for clearer comparisons between the different groups under scrutiny, without spending too much time and words on quantitative data that was meant to be a steppingstone for the qualitative analysis. The first choice appears in a darker colour than the second in the charts below.

Chart 1

Most Popular Tasks for Girls (SQ8)
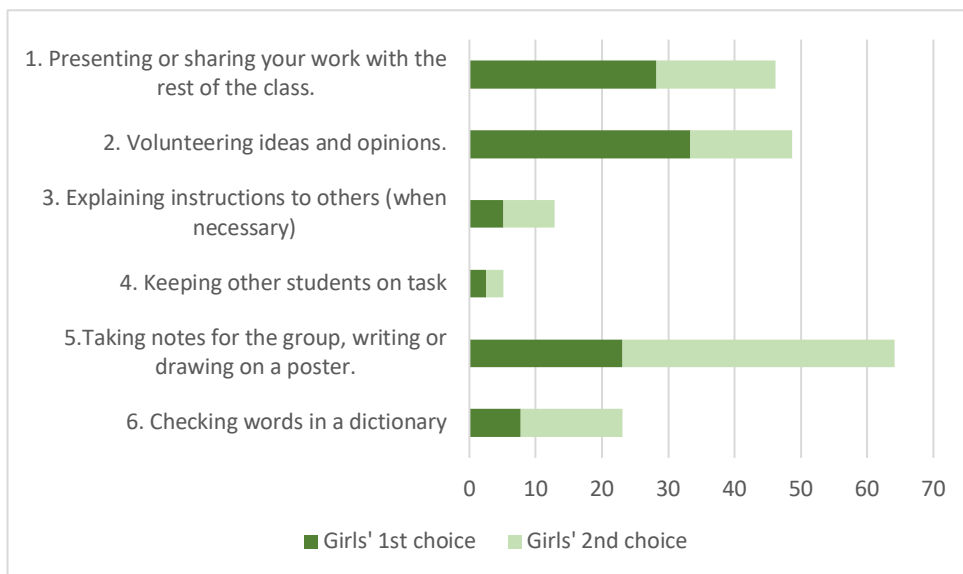
Chart 2

Most Popular Tasks for Boys (SQ8)
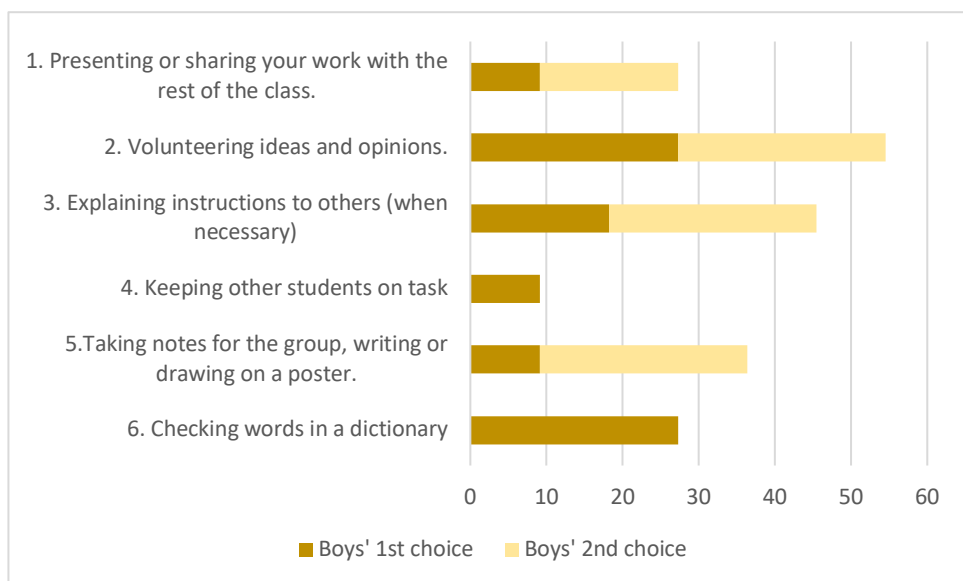
The charts show that the three most popular tasks for girls are Tasks 5, 2, and 1. The top-ranking tasks for boys are not as clear-cut as for girls. As was the case for girls, Task 2 and Task 5 are popular choices, but Task 3 and 6 are also popular for boys. Interestingly Task 1, *presenting and sharing your work with the rest of the class,* is not part of the three most popular tasks as was the case for girls. The charts below show the tasks that students perform the most in class.

Chart 3

Girls' Most Performed Tasks – According to Students (SQ11)
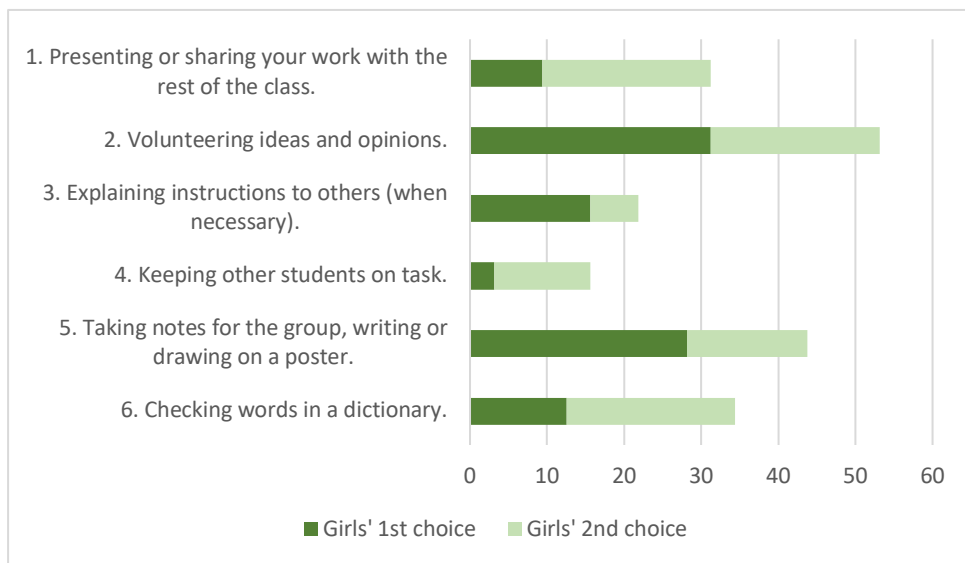
Chart 4

Boys' Most Performed Tasks – According to Students (SQ11)
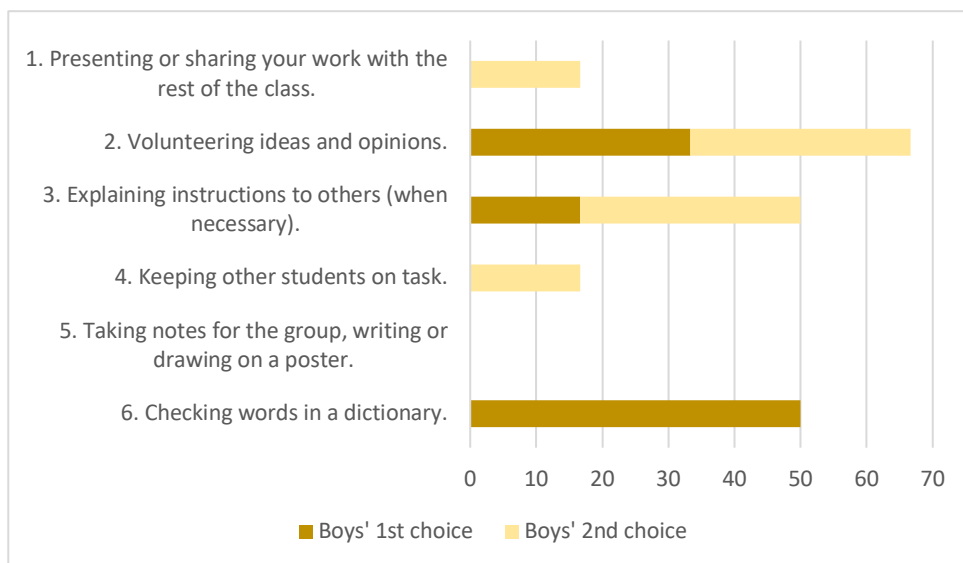
For girls, the distribution of tasks performed appears more balanced and follows the distribution of tasks enjoyed. For boys, however, Task 5: *Taking notes, writing, or drawing on a poster*, which was identified as an activity that they enjoyed, is completely absent from the list of tasks they perform. Task 1, *Presenting and sharing your work with the rest of the class*, was not selected as a first choice by any of the boys.

The teacher questionnaire showed a more polyvalent profile for boys with first choices matching perfectly with the boys' task preferences, while their perception of girls' preferences was more restricted. Interestingly, in Charts 3 and 4 which represent the most performed tasks selected by students, it is the girls' group that seems to perform a wider variety of tasks and not the opposite.

Chart 5

Tasks That Boys Are More Likely To Perform – According To Teachers (TQ10)
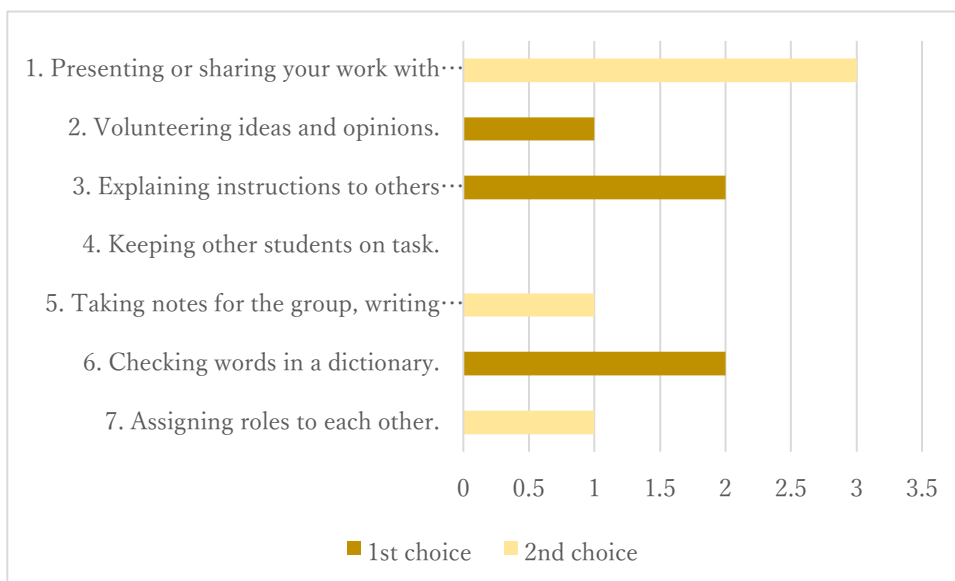
Chart 6

Tasks That Girls Are More Likely to Perform – According To Teachers (TQ11)
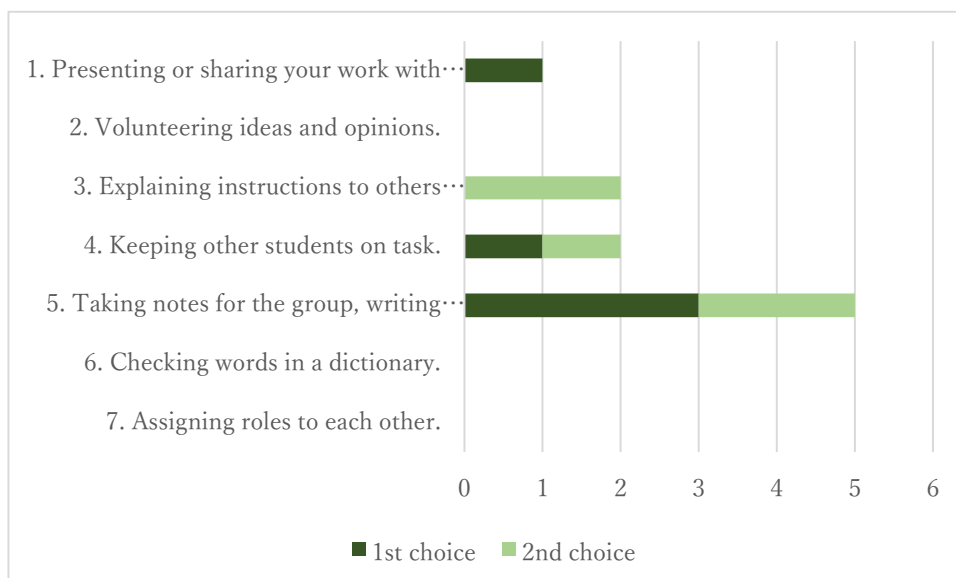
We can also note from the observation of Chart 6 that teachers seem to agree on the tasks performed by girls, as only 4 categories of tasks and roles were selected in the first 2 choices, whereas the tasks performed by boys were spread over 6 categories. Girls appear as a more homogenous group according to teachers' perception, which could mean that girls are more closely observed by teachers but also that they may be viewed in a more stereotypical way than boys.

If we go back to the classification of tasks according to gender traits (see Table 2), we can see that boys are consistently more agentic than communal for both preferred and most performed tasks. However, teachers' perceptions are too widespread across the various tasks to discern any trend. By looking at the teachers' perception, girls appear more communal than agentic whereas girls do not perceive themselves that way according to Charts 1 and 3.

In any case, these discrepancies in students' and teachers' perceptions could be caused by either a lack of introspection from students or the difficulty for teachers to observe individual students during group work and the need for further research on group work in the EFL classroom.

To analyse the qualitative data in the student questionnaire, namely the answers to SQ15 and SQ16 on what boys and girls respectively seem good at, and SQ23 and SQ24 on why boys and girls are better at some tasks but not others, a wordlist was first generated in Sketch Engine to list the most recurrent nouns and verbs. Only words with an occurrence greater than or equal to 3 were listed. Concordance tools were used where it was deemed necessary to clarify the context in which recurrent verbs and nouns were used. Using these lists, a coding frame was determined, and the answers were coded accordingly. The coding frame and the results of the analysis are shown in Chart 7.

Chart 7

Coding Frame and Content Analysis Results for SQ15 and SQ16
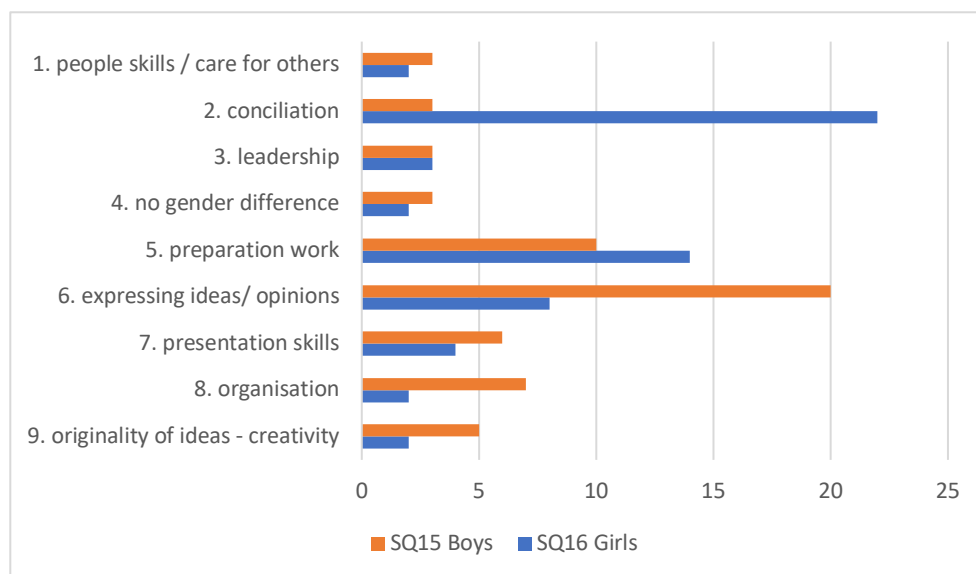
Chart 7 shows two areas in which girls are felt to outperform boys: preparation work, but mostly conciliation. Boys are seen as outperforming girls in organisation, and especially in expressing ideas and opinions. This seems to indicate that despite their interest in volunteering ideas, girls find boys' skills superior to theirs. The concentration of girls' abilities on two areas, while boys' abilities spread over numerous categories, echoes the perceptions of teachers in TQ10 and TQ11 (see Charts 5 and 6). Teachers agreed on the four tasks that girls were most likely to perform, while their choice of tasks for boys spread over six tasks. Again, this can indicate that girls systematically choose specific tasks while boys are more polyvalent, but it can also indicate that girls are seen – and see themselves – in a more stereotypical way. It could also mean that girls choose specific roles to match the beliefs and stereotypes attached to their gender group.

In SQ23 and 24, students were asked what, in their opinion, could cause differences. These two questions seemed quite challenging for the students. Some students mentioned boys' or girls' abilities or personalities, but very few students gave an answer that could explain the differences. This tendency made the answers very similar to SQ15 and SQ16 answers. The content analysis of these answers is presented in chart 8.

Chart 8

Coding Frame and Content Analysis Results for SQ23 and SQ24
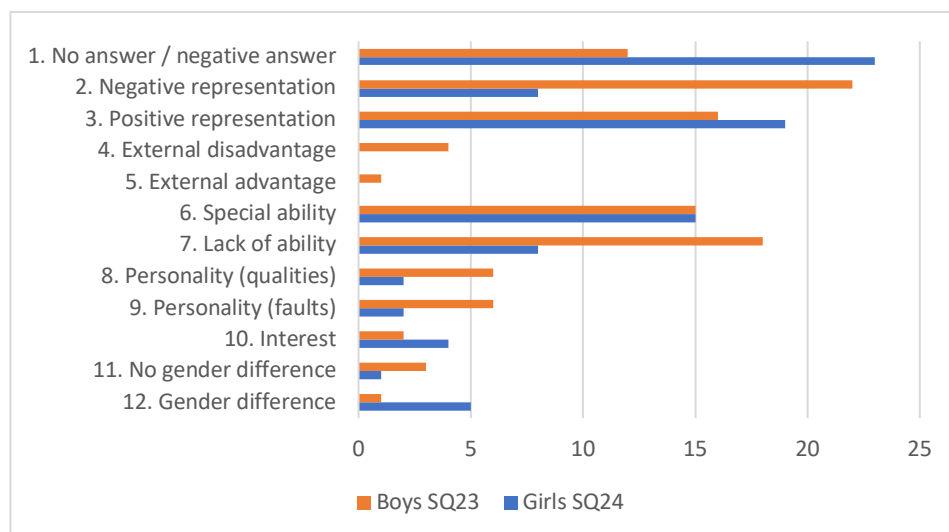
The results show a clear negative representation of boys and a positive representation of girls. Boys are more represented as not being able to do certain things or being at a disadvantage. Both girls and boys focused more on what girls were good at and on what boys were not.

Amongst the reasons proposed to explain why boys and girls would be better at certain tasks but not others, students' answers could be grouped into external advantages or disadvantages, ability, personality, and interest. Students are thereafter identified by ST and their number in the database. One exception is STA, who volunteered for the interview but did not provide a valid email address in the questionnaire and therefore could not be linked back to her database number. Answers that were translated from Japanese are marked *. Some students clearly said that gender had no influence in these differences, while others did not give any example or further explanations but stated that these differences were linked to gender. These answers were coded as "gender differences" and included answers such as:

> *SQ23 ST35: Because I think there are gender characteristics.
>
> *SQ24 ST02: Because boys and girls are different in their personality for example.
>
> *SQ24 ST24: Because of their personality and maybe because of the environment in which they were raised.
>
> *SQ24 ST31: Because girls' bodies are not built the same way.

*SQ24 ST32: Because there are some aspects that are slightly different depending on the gender group, because the environment in which they were raised is different

Amongst the reasons given, ST31 mentioned biological differences, ST24 and ST32 mentioned education and environment while ST02 and ST35 mentioned gender characteristics without explaining where these characteristics came from. The fact that so few students provided reasons and the many differences they mentioned might be explained by contemporary Japan's expectations for and acceptance of essentialist gender differences (Helverson, 2016).

Student Interviews and Teacher Questionnaire

Three girls volunteered to take part in the interview. One answered the questions in Japanese, and two answered mostly in English. Due to the reduced number of participants in the interview stage, CL tools were not used in the analysis. The answers provided by students in the interview were compiled into three blocks to be compared to the teacher questionnaire answers.

Block 1 focused on the students' perception of group work. Questions were designed to establish whether students and teachers had the same perception of group work and the same expectations. Regarding the purpose and merits of group work, students' answers focused on helping each other and getting a varied range of opinions and ideas. One student mentioned being less embarrassed in small groups than in the whole class.

Teachers mentioned cooperation and reduced anxiety but also considered the value of group work as an increased opportunity for students to practice their speaking skills. Some teachers also mentioned more independence from the teacher (T4 and T5) and one teacher mentioned the variety of tasks that students can undertake when working in group work: T2: "Students learn to cooperate, share the burden of a task, practice varying roles when working in groups […]."

However, STM mentioned in the interview that students did not rotate tasks and ended up being stuck in one task for the duration of the project:

*STM: Group work is very important but Japanese people, well, it's like there is one person who […], one person who takes notes, and others who seem to just listen to the discussion. But I think that's wrong. I think everybody should discuss their opinions, everybody should write them down, everybody should bring things together.

Overall, students had a clear understanding of what group work involved and their description of it was similar to the teachers'. Comments on reduced anxiety and independence support this study's choice to investigate group work.

Block 2 (IQ7, IQ8, TQ7, TQ9) was designed to see if the gender of group members was mentioned as a factor that could help or hinder group work. Gender was not mentioned by either students or teachers which confirms the results observed in SQ6 and SQ7.

Block 3 was composed of IQ9, IQ10 TQ9, and TQ14. IQ9 asked students which gender group was more likely to possess the qualities they had mentioned in IQ8. STA said it was the same for both gender groups while the others two students said girls were more likely to have these qualities. TQ9 asked teachers whether they expected to see any difference in the way boys and girls behaved in group work. Teachers were very careful in their answers, pointing out that gender was not the main factor to determine students' behaviour, citing cultural differences as well as differences in ability and proficiency. However, three teachers mentioned the girls' greater ability to focus and concentrate. T2 mentioned that girls tended "to be more serious and engaged at a younger age." The positive representation of girls and negative representation of boys that was observed in the students' answers to SQ23 and SQ24 was also found in the teachers' answers. One answer is particularly interesting:

> T5: Definitely. Girls tend to have an easier time staying focused on task. Boys tend to play / joke around more.

The phrase "have an easier time" suggests that girls do not have to make any effort to focus, as if this ability was natural to them. By using the comparative form "an easier time", the teacher presents the girls as better students and the boys as disadvantaged students who are not as naturally gifted. Such a stance is reminiscent of essentialist gender beliefs (Brescoll et al. 2013; Humbert et al. 2019) and in line with the "different-but-equal" Japanese motto (Helverson, 2016). It also shows that the beliefs contained in this motto are not restricted to Japan, but are also valid for Western teachers. The representation of girls as naturally better students is also found in teachers' answers to TQ13 that asked teachers to name some reasons why girls would be better at some tasks but not others. The last words of the question seemed to have been disregarded and teachers only provided reasons why girls were better at some tasks, such as planning, organizing, group management, and creativity. Tasks that girls were not good at were not mentioned. In contrast, in answering TQ12 about boys' strengths and weaknesses, teachers

mostly mentioned weaknesses. Two out of the four answers to this question were particularly negative.

> T1: Male students are more verbal when getting organised and thoughtful planning is often overlooked.

> T2: I find that boys are more likely to vocalize and speak, largely due to less skill, interest, or experience in organization and group management.

We can note here that teachers, like students, listed strengths or weaknesses. Like students, teachers also seemed to accept gender differences without questioning possible reasons for such gendered patterns in behavior. Because students did not provide explanations or reasons in their answers to SQ23 and SQ24, questions IQ10 and TQ14 were added. These questions asked students and teachers to think of some reasons why girls were more motivated than boys to study foreign languages, as evidenced by research. ST40 mentioned the attractiveness of foreign countries for Japanese women who, suffering from discrimination in their home country, might hope to find better conditions of employment abroad, while ST17 and STA mentioned again the girls' better suitability. It is interesting to note that in ST17's answer, she states that boys' attitudes and lack of communication skills would hinder their language learning. The same trend is found in the teachers' answers. Two teachers also mention the attractiveness of foreign cultures for girls and their greater interest in communication for traveling purposes. T1 also mentions girls being more ambitious and T5 advocates a difference in motivation comparing boys' interest in instant gratification to girls' ability to understand the use of speaking a foreign language. T4 mentions something that could be linked to the observation made earlier about the high number of boys in this study who had lived abroad compared to the number of girls:

> T4: Girls feel less shameful about their mistakes. It is more part of the fun, whilst boys are more likely to feel they could lose social standing by mistakes.

This comment could explain why there are so many boys with experience living abroad in the international classes involved, as highlighted by the answers to SQ3 and SQ4. Boys might be more confident knowing that they start with an advantage and will not "lose social standing" by making mistakes since they will be amongst the best students in the class. It could also be that they chose an elective class to gain credits easily and that boys who do not have this advantage prefer not to join foreign language elective classes.

The remaining questions of the student interview asked students to provide reasons for girls' apparent better performance with tasks that showed the most significant gap between boys and girls according to the questionnaire's answers.

ST17 said women's taste for "cute things" could explain why they are they are the ones who write, draw, and decorate posters, and ST40 mentioned differences in personality, women being more meticulous than men. STA offered the following explanation:

> * STA Well, boys might think "isn't it enough if I memorise things in my head?" Maybe that's why. […] But girls are more, how can I say, maybe serious, because they are hard-working, in order not to forget, they will feel like they have to write things down. Maybe because they are a little anxious or afraid to forget. I think because of this anxiety they are more likely to write things down.

For STA, girls' tendency to take notes stems from a greater sensitivity to pressure. Her rationale contradicts T5's claim that girls "have an easier time" focusing on the task. It might be added that it could be the girls' desire to conform to teachers' expectations that creates the anxiety described by STA.

For IQ12, the three student respondents explained that girls were more likely to explain instructions because they were better suited for the task, because of their "meticulous" and "serious" personality, or because they could grasp things faster than boys. ST17 went further in her answer:

> ST17: Because girls, I think girls like to take care of the children more than boys. Yeah, because we will be mum.[…] So girls like to take care of other people.

According to STA, this difference in task performance can be attributed to a biological difference. A similar explanation was posited by ST31 in SQ24.

Conclusion

This study revealed some differences in gender group preferences and perceptions in EFL classes taught by L1 teachers in Japanese private high schools (research questions 1 and 2). The gender beliefs that could be identified were a more negative perception of boys' abilities to complete tasks among students of both genders and by their teachers. Furthermore, teachers perceived girls as more communal than agentic, whereas girls perceived themselves as more agentic than communal. The lack of reasons proposed to explain gender differences hinted at essentialist gender beliefs shared by teachers as well as students.

Even though this study has a limited scope, the situation of girls appearing more competent to teachers and students of both genders with boys being represented as less gifted and sometimes unsuited to the EFL classroom is problematic because as Li *et al* (2021) point out, these perceptions can reinforce the common belief that girls are better suited to learning languages. Such beliefs could be the cause of the boys' lack of confidence observed in this study and could even deter boys from studying languages, as this study's reduced number of boys as well as their profiles would suggest. The positive representation of girls – being more caring and better communicators – also supports the traditional gender beliefs that view language learning as something feminine when other academic path choices might be more beneficial and lucrative regarding girls' future careers.

The fact that students' preferences and most performed tasks do not match the teachers' expectations implies both an issue with students' lack of introspection and a difficulty for teachers to observe individual students in group work. It could also mean that teachers were influenced by traditional gender beliefs, as with their finding of girls as being more communal than agentic – when girls did not perceive themselves that way – would suggest.

While trying to influence students' and teachers' gender beliefs seems neither possible nor desirable, teachers should ensure that their students, regardless of gender, have the same learning opportunities when engaging in group work. To balance activities and expose both gender groups to a variety of tasks, several solutions can be considered. As some teacher respondents judiciously pointed out, clear instructions are key to making group work efficient. Assigning roles to students and rotating these roles would be a way to ensure that some students do not "get stuck" in a role, as one student mentioned in the interview, but instead contribute to all aspects of group work. Teachers could also ask students to work with teacher-made visuals so that girls do not feel the need to decorate posters but instead engage in more communicative learning opportunities. Since the students' preferences and most performed tasks did not always match the teachers' expectations, ending group work with a short exit survey about what students enjoyed or did not enjoy might be a useful way to better understand students' preferences.

Aurelie Moulin started her teaching career in the U.K. after the obtention of her PGCE in Modern Foreign Languages. She has taught EFL in Japanese high schools for over 10 years. This paper is based on her Applied Linguistics master's research with the University of Limerick, Ireland, in 2022.

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Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

Section 1: (general)

1. Please state your gender: Male – Female – Other
2. What kind of school do you attend? All-boys All-girls -Co-ed
3. Have you ever lived abroad?
4. If you have lived abroad, please state how many years and in what country you stayed.
5. In class, which do you enjoy more, working in a group or working on your own.
6. When doing group work, what kind of things can make you nervous?
7. When doing group work, what can help you work well with other members of the group?
8. When working in a group, which of the following tasks do you enjoy the most?
   a. Taking notes for the group, writing or drawing on a poster.
   b. Checking words in a dictionary
   c. Explaining instructions to other (when necessary)
   d. Presenting or reporting in front of the class

e.   Volunteering ideas and opinions

f.   keeping other students on task

9. What do you like about your favourite tasks?

10. What do you like about your least favourite tasks?

11. When working in a group, which of the following tasks do you perform the most?

a.   Taking notes for the group, writing or drawing on a poster.

b.   Checking words in a dictionary

c.   Explaining instructions to other (when necessary)

d.   Presenting or reporting in front of the class

e.   Volunteering ideas and opinions

f.   keeping other students on task

12. When you work in a group, do you get help from other students?

Yes, every time – Yes, I often do – I sometimes do – I almost never do – I never do.

13. When you work in a group, do you help other students?

Yes, every time – Yes, I often do – I sometimes do – I almost never do – I never do.

Section 2: Gender and task preference

14. When working in group, what kind of group do you prefer to work with?

a.   All girl groups

b.   All boy groups

c.   I have not observed any difference. Mixed groups

15. In group work in English class, what do boys seem good at?

16. In group work in English class, what do girls seem good at?

17. In your English classes, which group seems most comfortable presenting in front of the class?

a.   Girls seem more comfortable

b.   Boys seem more comfortable

c.   I have not observed any difference.

18. In your English classes, which group seems most comfortable taking notes, writing or drawing on a poster?

a.   Girls seem more comfortable

b.   Boys seem more comfortable

c.   I have not observed any difference.

19. In your English classes, which group seems most comfortable checking words in the dictionary?

      a.   Girls seem more comfortable

      b.   Boys seem more comfortable

      c.   I have not observed any difference.

20. In your English classes, which group seems most comfortable explaining instructions to other students?

      a.   Girls seem more comfortable

      b.   Boys seem more comfortable

      c.   I have not observed any difference.

21. In your English classes, which group seems most comfortable volunteering ideas and opinions?

      a.   Girls seem more comfortable

      b.   Boys seem more comfortable

      c.   I have not observed any difference.

22. In your English classes, which group seems most comfortable keeping other students on task?

      a.   Girls seem more comfortable

      b.   Boys seem more comfortable

      c.   I have not observed any difference.

23. Can you think of some reasons why boys might be better at some tasks but not others?

24. Can you think of some reasons why girls might be better at some tasks but not others?

25. I would like to invite you to participate in a 15-to-20 minute interview on MS Teams. If you would like to participate, please specify your email address so I can contact you.

Appendix B–

Interview questions

Block	IQ#	Matching TQ#
N/A	IQ1. Do you like English	N/A
	IQ2. Do you like to do group work in your English classes?	N/A
	IQ3. Is there anything you would like to say about the questionnaire you answered? Anything you would like to say about group work, specific tasks or gender?	N/A

Block 1	IQ4. What do you think group work is for?	TQ6
	IQ5. How can group work improve your English skills? Do you think group work is an efficient way to learn English?	
	IQ6. Can you describe a good group work activity?	
Block 2	IQ7. Sometimes, it is difficult to work with other students in a group. Can you name 3 common problems that can make group work difficult?	TQ8
	IQ8. In your opinion, what are the 3 main qualities that students need to do group work efficiently and benefit from it?	TQ7
Block 3	IQ9. In your opinion, is one gender group more likely than the other to possess these qualities?	TQ9
	IQ10. Some studies show that girls are more motivated than boys to study foreign languages. Why do you think that is?	TQ14

Appendix C

Teacher Questionnaire

1. Please state your gender

2. What is your nationality?

3. How long have you taught in Japan?

4. In what kind of school have you taught? Please check all boxes that apply.

    -   co-ed
    -   all-girl
    -   all-boy

5. In which context (single-sex or co-ed) have you enjoyed teaching the most? Why?

6. In your opinion, what are the benefits of having students work in group (3 to 5 students) in your classes?

7. In your opinion, what are the (3 main) qualities that students need to work in group efficiently and benefit from it?

8. In your opinion, what are the three main factors that might hinder students' cooperating and learning in group work?

9. Do you expect to see any difference in the way boys and girls behave when they do group work in your class?

10. Which of the following tasks do you think male students might be more likely to perform than female students when they do group work?

    *   Assigning roles to others
    *   Taking notes for the group, writing or drawing on a poster.
    *   Checking words in a dictionary
    *   Explaining instructions to other (when necessary)
    *   Presenting or reporting in front of the class
    *   Volunteering ideas and opinions
    *   Keeping other students on task

11. Which of the following tasks do you think female students might be more likely to perform than male students when they do group work?

    *   Assigning roles to others
    *   Taking notes for the group, writing or drawing on a poster.
    *   Checking words in a dictionary
    *   Explaining instructions to other (when necessary)
    *   Presenting or reporting in front of the class
    *   Volunteering ideas and opinions
    *   Keeping other students on task

12. Can you think of some reasons that would explain why boys might be better at some tasks but not others?

13. Can you think of some reasons that would explain why girls might be better at some tasks but not others?

14. Some studies have shown that girls are more motivated to learn foreign languages than boys. Why do you think that is?

15. Would you like to share any additional observation or opinion on the topic of gender and group work?

Treading the Waters of Motherhood and Academia during the first year of the COVID Pandemic

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Abstract

As the Covid-19 pandemic unfolded, I was facing the completion of my maternity leave and a return to full-time academia at a Japanese university. Additionally, I was a first-time mother of an infant. As universities across Japan began announcing the move to online courses, I had the best intentions of getting ahead, then the daycares closed. As my daughter's main caregiver, I tried to juggle myriad responsibilities and began to experience what Munn-Giddings referred to as "a lethal cocktail," or the "mixing [of] motherhood and academia" (1998, p. 56). This case study utilizes narrative inquiry and reflective practice to examine the challenges and implications of being a first-time mother while making the transition to emergency remote teaching during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of continuous professional development and communities of practice on my language teacher identity and teaching practices will also be explored.

Keywords: motherhood; academia; language teacher identity; communities of practice; continuing professional development

概要

新型コロナウイルスが流行した頃、私は産休を終え、日本の大学の教員の職に復帰しようとしていた。しかも、私は乳児を持つ新米母である。日本中の大学がオンラインへの移行を発表し始めた頃、先回りし事態に備えておこうと努力をした。が、娘の保育園が閉鎖されてしまった。娘の世話をする者として私は無数の責務を抱え、言うまでもなく、私は初めてマン・ディングスの言葉「致死のカクテル」、つまり「母性と学問の混合」（1998，p. 56）を経験し始めたのである。この事例研究では、ナラティブ・インクワイアリーとリフレクティブ・プラクティスを用い、コロナの大流行が始まった最初の年に、初めて母親となり、緊急遠隔授業へと移行することの難しさと意味を考察した。また、継続的なプロフェッショナル・デベロップメントと実践コミュニティが、私の言語教師のアイデンティティと教育実践に与えた影響についても検討した。

キーワード：母性、アカデミア、言語教師のアイデンティティ、実践コミュニティ、継続的なプロフェッショナル・デベロップメント

Tertiary teaching landscapes across the globe have been altered due to Covid-19. During the height of the pandemic, many tertiary educators were forced mid-semester to make the transition to emergency remote teaching (ERT), while others, such as those in Japan, were fortunate that the start of the academic year is in April. Regardless of how long each educator had to transition, it was a stressful and challenging time for all. This study examines the personal experiences of one female tertiary educator in central Japan regarding continuing professional development (CPD) as she navigated the transition to ERT while balancing the challenges of first-time motherhood and a return to full-time academia. Using data collected through narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014) and reflective practice (Farrell, 2019; Thompson & Thompson, 2018), critical incidents (Tripp, 2012) from her time undertaking ERT and engaging in CPD will be examined to highlight the challenges and implications of being a first-time mother in academia during Covid-19. While this research is a case study focused on just one mother in academia, the insights into the challenges of balancing motherhood and academia, and the impact that communities of practice (CoP) can have on one's CPD during a global pandemic, should be relatable and applicable to many people in a variety of teaching and caretaking contexts.

Mothers in Academia

Motherhood is said to be one of the most rewarding experiences in a woman's life and also has a significant impact on their identity. However, Munn-Giddings (1998) refers to the combination of motherhood and academia as "a lethal cocktail," (p. 56) due to the amount of time and responsibilities demanded from both careers. Moreover, within tertiary education, while lecturing is a given requirement, the pressure to research, write, and publish is significant. The need to publish or perish and the pressure it places on academics and the effect it has on published work has made headlines (Rudy, 2019; van Dalen & Henkens, 2012). However, the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic both exacerbated this issue and increased gender disparities (Eringfeld, 2020; Flaherty, 2020; Minello, 2020; Viglione, 2020).

The impact of Covid-19 on female academics has been immediate and the effects will potentially ripple through their careers. Alessandra Minello, a social demographer whose research focuses on how academic and professional women manage a household and paid work, offers a personal example of how her life changed once her university went online in March 2020. She explained that the new goal became to "get through daily life," (2020, para. 5) and highlighted how she adjusted her schedule to prepare for lessons before her two-year-old woke up or after he went to bed. Frederickson mirrored this sentiment stating, "very little

scholarly work gets done with a six-year-old underfoot" (2020, para. 5). One participant in a study by Bennett (2020), Sarah Joyce Willey, said she felt like she had "five jobs: mom, teacher, C.C.O., house cleaner, chef," (para. 9). These examples highlight the experiences of caregivers worldwide during this pandemic.

Working from home and interruptions to childcare and educational services have also directly impacted female researchers' ability to research and publish (Frederickson, 2020; Minello, 2020; Priore, 2020; Scheiber, 2020). This situation not only has had an immediate effect on female academics' short-term career stability (i.e., contract renewal), it can have a lingering effect on their careers' long-term trajectory (i.e., promotion, tenure). Scheiber (2020) expounds that, "the pandemic has been brutal on many working mothers, especially those with little leverage on the job" (para. 4). Even before the pandemic, research has shown that men can devote more time to research obligations while women have to spend more time managing parental responsibilities (Scheiber, 2020).

Women in Academia in Japan

Japan is ranked 116th in the Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2022, p. 10). While this is quite low, it is generally attributed to the lack of female representation in economics and politics. In the field of Japanese higher education, data collected by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology (MEXT) found that in 2016, women held 23.2% of the 182,723 full-time positions in Japan. Non-Japanese full-time tertiary educators filled 7,735 tertiary positions, however, women only accounted for 27.8% of that total (MEXT, 2016). More recently, Huang (2018) analyzed the websites of 777 universities in Japan and found that there were currently 5,333 foreign faculty (p. 245) employed in private, local public, and national universities. Of those, only 987 were women (p. 243). This data indicates that foreign female educators at the tertiary level are a minority.

Career development can be hindered for women because traditional gender roles are still "firmly divided and strictly enforced" in Japanese culture (Nagatomo & Cook, 2019). This expectation pressures women to be responsible for the home, causing working women to feel an imbalance between their professional and personal life. Research by Nagatomo and Cook (2019) found that many women faced "daily struggles juggling their work and family" (p. 163). Nagatomo (2012) also found that "balancing married life and professional life may be one of the greatest obstacles for working women in Japan," (p.143). Similarly, in another study, Nagatomo (2014) analyzed the professional identities of 38 foreign female teachers teaching at Japanese universities and found that their professional identities were impacted by their job

security as tenured, contracted, or part-time teachers. The study also examined the effect that traditional gendered attitudes in Japan had on their identity. While change comes slowly in the Japanese context, Steel (2019) found that change for working women in Japan happens mostly due to their own life choices. Her research showed that more women are marrying later or not marrying at all and are instead focusing on their careers. She notes that there has also been an increase in dual-income households compared to the past. Moreover, Steel (2019) noted that the government initiated the policy "Womenomics" in 2013 to promote more women to join the workforce. However, the results did not reach the original targets, leaving some to question the success of the policy in the short-term.

Being a Mother and an Academic in Japan: A Personal Narrative

Stories help us understand the issues shaping a particular situation (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik, 2014). This section highlights multiple critical incidents (Tripp, 2012) of the author's personal experience using Farrell's six principles of reflection (Farrell, 2019). Reflective practice was chosen because "reflection helps teachers recognize and confront their own beliefs, values, and assumptions about their teaching, their students, the curriculum, their practices, leading to transformative practice, and encourages continuous professional development" (Bailey et al., 1998 in Crandall & Christison, 2016, p. 15). The reflections are shared in the form of autoethnographic stories of the author as she navigated first-time motherhood and returned to academia after an eight-month-long maternity and childcare leave. It will focus on how she utilized various CoPs to engage in CPD and the impact it had on her identity. Data were collected by analyzing recorded reflections on the themes of motherhood and academia during the pandemic and an examination of artifacts including course syllabi, projects, recorded video tutorials, various assignments, and an academic presentation given at an online conference (Verla Uchida, 2020). Data were collected regularly throughout the spring and fall semesters. During the summer and winter holiday periods the data were analyzed. Keywords were extracted and include the themes of "motherhood," "academia," and "professional development."

The Spring Semester

April 2020

On my first day returning to work from childcare leave, I donned a suit and took a photograph with my seven-month-old daughter documenting the experience. I was filled with mixed emotions, excited to return to the classroom because I missed teaching and the sense of pride

and fulfillment it gave me, yet I felt guilt tinged with fear for sending my daughter to daycare amid a global pandemic. I was experiencing firsthand that "one of the most challenging aspects of pursuing a career is undoubtedly the balance of combining the personal and the professional" (Nagatomo *et al.*, 2020, p. xvi). Later that morning, I led an orientation for the English teachers reviewing the curriculum requirements and events for the academic year. The university had yet to make any formal announcements regarding online teaching for the 2020-2021 academic year, however, the starting date of classes was moved from the second week of April to mid-May with the semester concluding at the end of August. The fall semester was to begin as originally scheduled in mid-September.

In preparation for a perceived move to online lessons, I joined two new CoPs that had started on Facebook: Emergency Online Language Teaching in Japan and Online Teaching Japan (OTJ). Both CoPs offered me opportunities to engage in CPD. It was through discussions on those pages that I learned about and began using two new applications that proved indispensable to my online teaching, Loom for video recording and Flipgrid for student speaking activities.

On April 9th, I received an email stating that classes would be moved online for the spring semester. Multiple emails written in Japanese and filled with important information regarding policy and procedures followed. Thankfully, I am proficient in Japanese, but the same is not true for many of the other non-Japanese faculty. To address this issue, a colleague and I voluntarily translated the essential information into English and shared it as a Google Document, including links to various websites and articles. We also created and shared video tutorials explaining how to use the various technologies, hoping it would be a useful resource for everyone. Additionally, we designed a survey to learn about the teachers' past experiences with online learning and teaching, comfort level with technology, and familiarity with various teaching tools. Finally, I offered multiple Zoom and Google Meet tutorials to get the teachers accustomed to the applications. As I had taken a few courses online while earning my master's degree, I felt comfortable with basic online tools such as Google Classroom and Google Apps and had learned how to navigate Zoom thanks to a colleague and friend at a different university. For these reasons, it was important to me to give back to my community and offer support to my colleagues. In doing so, I think the foundations for a CoP were laid.

The evening of April 9th held one more surprise, Covid-19 cases had begun to appear in my area and the local government announced the indefinite closure of daycare facilities for all non-essential workers. From the 10th, my daughter would be staying home with me. Again, I felt

mixed emotions, relief she would be home and not in direct contact with others at the daycare facility but flummoxed about how I would be able to plan and potentially teach my classes and support my colleagues while caring for her. Motherhood and academia were going to be combined on a whole other level. If my life were a cocktail, it would be shaken and not stirred.

May 2020

On the morning of May 11th, I taught my first online class using Zoom. It was a first period required English class for first year students and was truly a new experience for everyone. My husband took the morning off to watch our daughter so I could focus on teaching. I was grateful I could give my full attention to my students during that lesson. That afternoon and the following day my classes were more difficult to navigate because I also had to care for my daughter. With her at home, my work life was "upended" (Scheiber, 2020, para. 1). Looking back, I cannot recall ever feeling such anxiety before. There were the normal worries about my students' English ability and ability to communicate in English along with the anxiety I felt when my daughter began to cry or soiled her diaper in the middle of lessons.

As classes progressed, I fell into a routine with my daughter and my lessons, but quickly realized that teaching online required much more preparation than traditional lessons. As I was using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous lessons, I needed to make video tutorials and daily assignments for my on-demand classes with clear and detailed instructions so students could complete the tasks without needing to fill my inbox with questions. Additionally, I needed to create materials for my Zoom lessons. Once that was complete, I could shift my focus to assessing the assignments. Each of my classes had a different required textbook, three of which were new to me, so the majority of materials had to be made from scratch. Moreover, due to my varied class schedule, I could not ensure my daughter had a regular routine. This made it difficult for us both to adjust to daily changes. When not teaching, I had to complete much of my work during my daughter's short naps or after she went to sleep at night. Like Minello (2020), I just needed to get through each day.

In mid-May, the daycare announced its facilities would reopen the following week. I relived the same feelings from April about sending my daughter to daycare but added gratitude for the teachers who would care for her, and relief I could get more work done during the workday, allowing a reprieve from the exhaustion.

June ~ August 2020

The second half of the semester continued in a blur of material creation, lessons, and assessment. With my daughter happily and safely attending daycare, I was able to focus on work during the day. However, even with a research day, the amount of time consumed by lesson planning and assessment left no time for my research: as Frederickson reported (2020), it was out of reach.

The daily grind was a challenge. Spending every day at my kitchen table in front of my laptop, I began to crave connection with other academics and a desire to engage in professional development. I hosted a few Zoom sessions aimed at reflection and professional development for colleagues, but as the semester progressed, attendance dwindled. Given my situation, I understood why people did not attend. I knew I would have to be proactive to find opportunities to engage in CPD beyond my institution. Padwad and Dixit (2011) stress that:

Continuing professional development is a planned, continuous, and lifelong process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency, and the development of their organizations and their pupils.

To meet my needs, I attended the TESOL 2020 Virtual Convention in July. There were many presentations on a range of topics but with the time difference and online format, I felt just as disconnected and isolated from the TESOL community as before. However, a founder of another CoP I belonged to, OTJ, contacted me and invited me to give a workshop about Flipgrid (now Flip). Accepting the proposal provided me with opportunities for CPD, to work with another educator in a similar position, and to give back to a community that had supported me throughout the spring term.

The Fall Semester

September 2020

The shortened summer holiday was spent submitting grades, planning for fall courses, and creating two pre-recorded presentations for annual conferences run by JALT special interest groups (SIG)—the CUE SIG's conference and the TD SIG's Teacher Journeys conference. The first focused on the research I had conducted prior to my maternity leave and the second on my teacher journey with ERT in the spring semester. Too soon the break ended, and the fall term of online classes began. It was back to the grind, only this time it was more challenging because I had new students, new textbooks, and limited knowledge about how my students' previous teachers had conducted their courses in the spring semester.

October ~ December 2020

Settling into the fall semester took longer than anticipated. In most of my classes, the students fell quickly into the class rhythm, asynchronously completing assignments using Google Classroom and Flipgrid, and meeting synchronously on Zoom once at the end of each unit to complete communication activities. However, students in one class voiced frustration about my expectations because they differed from their previous teachers. For example, they did not want to complete speaking tasks using Flipgrid. It highlighted a challenge of teaching online. If I were on campus, I would have met their previous teacher in the staff lounge and would have been able to make an informed decision about using Flipgrid for speaking tasks. However, after using some of the synchronous class time to explain my rationale and the benefits of Flipgrid, most students began completing the tasks.

Reflections on Motherhood and Academia

Returning to academia after childcare leave would be an adjustment for anyone, however, doing so during a pandemic was something that few around me were experiencing. Spending an extended period of time with my daughter and watching her grow was priceless and rewarding. As a mother, I can think of nothing greater. However, identity is multifaceted and created through various lived experiences. For this research, I focused on only two facets of my identity: mother and educator. I had been a mother for a short time, and I had been a teacher for 17 years. Thus, the part of me that identified as a teacher was in need of attention. I wanted to be in the classroom again. I had been away for only a semester, but it felt much longer. My teacher's "well of well-being" (Oxford, 2020, p. 247) needed to be replenished. Being in the classroom with students gives me energy and fuels my passion for teaching. I have come to realize that I will always be experiencing these two conflicting identities of mother and teacher. Returning to academia after a brief time away taught me that the label "emotional rollercoaster" which Gkonou, Dewaele, and King (2020) ascribe to teaching becomes even more applicable when it is combined with motherhood.

Focusing specifically on motherhood and the sharing of childcare and responsibilities at home, this experience has confirmed that I do not have a traditional Japanese husband. Ogasawara (2019) completed a study about working women's husbands as helpers or partners in Japan and concluded that there were mainly two outcomes, men either make no changes in their working lives when they have children, or they become "Superdads" working long hours at work during the week and making up for missed time with family on the weekend. My husband does not fit

either description. During the pandemic, he decided that the company he had worked at for many years was not a good fit for our family and changed jobs in July of 2020. He was very forthcoming with his new employer that changing jobs was due to the importance he placed on his family. I realize that I am "lucky" because my husband comes home from work in time to help with dinner and the evening routine and has made sacrifices for our family. It is clear he is not a "Superdad," but a partner equally invested in our family. I would be amiss to not acknowledge that this is not considered the norm in my living and working context.

While it is difficult to say what my schedule would have been like had I returned to academia under normal conditions, with the move to online teaching, my typical daily schedule was completely different than before I became a mother. No longer was I waking up, getting ready, and going to work. Now I had to also take my daughter to and from daycare. It was an hour walk round-trip, twice a day, to the daycare. From July my husband was able to take her to daycare on his way to work, but her pickup was still my responsibility. From September the daycare commute was greatly reduced because my daughter was big enough to ride in a child seat on the back of a bicycle. This change in transportation allowed me almost an extra hour each morning to prepare for classes and an extra hour of one-on-one time with my daughter in the evenings. Both were vital in reducing my mental load throughout the fall semester.

When my daughter was in daycare, I was able to spend my mornings teaching and conducting office hours. Afternoons were spent preparing for the next day's classes and marking assignments until I picked her up from daycare. However, I seldom completed my work responsibilities within that time because I prioritized picking up my daughter while it was still daylight and decided to continue working a "second shift" (Machung, 1989, as cited in Ogasawara, 2019) after she went to bed. During that second shift, I completed various tasks, most often making tutorial videos for on-demand lessons. My second shift ended between 9:30 PM and 2:30 AM. Thankfully, these super late shifts were rare.

This schedule left me struggling with feelings of guilt that I was sending my infant to daycare during a pandemic while also ending the traditional workday early to pick her up. Additionally, it caused me to feel frustration in my professional life because I worried I was not putting enough energy into my classes and rarely making progress on my research projects. Nagatomo and Cook (2019) cite similar examples of women feeling guilty when facing these dilemmas.

Reflections on CoPs to facilitate CPD

Before the Covid-19 pandemic educators around the world were likely members of various CoPs. Wenger et al. (2002) highlight that CoPs are groups of people who share common problems, concerns, passions, or goals. JALT SIGs have been CoPs that allowed me to grow as an educator by sharing and learning from others. During the pandemic, two SIGs organized online conferences that provided me with very different experiences. For the CUE SIG conference, I elected to present a pre-recorded video but offered to be available for an optional live question-and-answer session on the day of the conference. While I would have preferred to give a live presentation, I was unsure if I could attend the full conference due to childcare concerns. However, I felt that even if I had to attend the session with my daughter that day, I could manage to facilitate the session. In the end, my daughter was able to go to Saturday daycare and I attended the full conference. However, no one came to my live session, and I was disappointed in the flipped style. Additionally, throughout the day, I found that rather than being completely present in the moment, I again felt the common emotions of guilt and selfishness for sending my daughter to daycare so that I could attend.

Presenting for the TD SIG's Teacher Journey's conference proved to be a completely different experience. The on-demand style allowed me to participate at times that worked for me. I could watch the presentations which were uploaded to YouTube during short work breaks and at lunchtime leaving me feeling connected to the educators who were experiencing similar circumstances. I also did not feel that I was sacrificing time with my family to engage in CPD like I did by participating in the weekend conference. Additionally, the SIG held a one-hour panel discussion at the end of the conference, and I was invited to participate. It provided me with an opportunity to reflect in real time on the conference experience. I recalled the excitement I felt when a limited number of videos were released each week. I also realized the relief I felt being able to participate in the panel and then spend the rest of the day with my family. I felt much more engaged and present with this format.

Gurbutt and Cragg (2019) posit that CoPs can be fostered by bringing people together by "establishing an online community" and "paying attention to the need to be able to share skills and identity and to interact regularly" (p. 77). My experience in my online CoPs helped me learn how to use new forms of technology, including Zoom and Flipgrid, with confidence. I felt very strongly that with the limited synchronous class time I had, I needed to provide ample opportunities for my students to use English. An OTJ member posted a thread about Flipgrid, and I decided to use it to try and achieve my teaching goal. By using Flipgrid, my students had

a handful of opportunities to produce videos on various topics and then watch and comment on their classmates' videos providing hours of English language engagement. Additionally, I was able to share how I utilized Flipgrid in my classroom with the OTJ community during their summer professional development sessions. In sharing my teaching experience with others, I could give back to the community that helped me. This support for and from the community sustained me and made me feel connected to the larger teaching community in Japan.

Engaging in CoPs also served as a catalyst for me to experience personal growth and what Kennedy called "transformative practice" by engaging with colleagues (2005, 245). One set of discussions about time management with a colleague allowed me to try to manage my ERT synchronous class time more effectively. It enabled me to identify some of my teaching beliefs, such as the importance of providing both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for my students to use English productively. As an educator it allowed me to feel that I was providing my students the best educational opportunities possible given the circumstances. It also strengthened my relationship with colleagues which in turn relieved some of the feelings of isolation I felt while working from home.

A final lesson I learned is that not all CoPs may end up being successful. Thompson (2022) cautions that fostering a CoP is not a simple process and Wenger *et al.* (2002) warn that some communities will not reach their full potential for various reasons including member relationships and time constraints. I had hoped that starting a CoP for English teachers at my institution would foster collegiality among its members, but finding time was difficult and help from other members was not forthcoming. While I was disappointed in the outcome and felt like I had failed at first, looking back now I realize that for a CoP to thrive, the responsibility of the community should not fall to one person alone. All members need to have a vested interest for it to grow. Moving forward, if time permits and interest is there, I may attempt to restart the CoP, or I might shift my focus to working more closely with specific colleagues who have a mutual interest in CPD.

Conclusion

This study introduced the ongoing challenges that women around the world are facing as mothers in academia and how those challenges have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic by sharing the lived experiences of one mother in academia based in Japan. While it would have been more reliable to collect data from other mothers or caretakers in similar situations, it was not feasible at the time. Collecting narratives from others and comparing their

lived experiences during the pandemic could be a future research study. By examining and reflecting on my journey as a first-time mother and an academic during the pandemic, I recognized that the feelings of guilt and exhaustion I felt were not unique to me, but the lived experiences of mothers in academia around the world. I also realized that the feelings of isolation that I felt throughout the spring semester were reduced as my involvement with various CoPs increased in the fall semester. During these uncertain times, it is especially important to recognize the benefits that belonging to a CoP can have on a person both personally and professionally.

These experiences also highlighted the importance that a CoP can have on CPD. Taking an active role in established CoPs as well as a newly formed CoP provided various opportunities to engage with teaching communities. While starting and maintaining a CoP requires time, dedication, and perseverance, I hope that others will try to form one if they cannot find one which meets their needs. Additionally, the pandemic has increased the offering of online events which has changed the way people engage with CPD. It has allowed people to find new ways to gather and exchange ideas through platforms such as Facebook groups but more importantly, it has created a need for one-day, multi-day, and extended conferences that can be held live, on-demand, or hybrid. The increase in online gatherings (i.e., forums, conferences) enabled me, and many others, to participate in events that would not have normally been possible. This is especially true for caregivers and for those with young children. As motherhood and academia are cornerstones of my identity and help form the identities of millions of other women around the world, I encourage those involved in CoP, and more largely CPD, to consider the importance of time when planning events. In doing so, one of the positive aspects of moving professional development online can be utilized effectively: more people from diverse walks of life are given the opportunity to interact and grow as educators, academics, and in my case, as a mother, despite the pandemic.

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Avril Haye-Matsui Speaks for Herself: Interview and Profile

Susan Laura Sullivan
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Dr. Avril Haye-Matsui maintains, supports, and is supported by community. She does not want to spend her life looking for approval from others and has worked hard to build and nurture resilience and self-awareness. Stemming from methods she has found beneficial in helping fulfil her own personal and professional aspirations, she endeavours to assist others in also developing their authentic voices and in achieving their potential; particularly women.

Testament to the above is the existence of *Black Women in Japan* (BWIJ), and the *Women's Empowerment Circle* (WEC) (originally *Nagoya Women's Empowerment Circle*). Haye-Matsui co-founded BWIJ in 2014 and is the sole founder of WEC (2018).

My first question of our interview was whether these groups had been created as a deliberate response to Haye-Matsui's early academic career decision to remain as true to herself as possible (JALT, 2020). Alternatively, I asked, had this decision influenced the formation of the groups? I also wanted to know if their creation was a deliberate measure to address some of the aims of Black feminist theory that had informed her past work, especially in terms of giving back to and empowering the community (Haye-Matsui, 2014).

First, a little background. Haye-Matsui's PhD dissertation is *Exploring Issues of Race and Gender Among Black Female English Language Teachers in Japan* (personal communication, August 11, 2022) and she has had a long career in the ELT field here. As part of her research, she has written and spoken about a period in her early university career when she felt obliged to wear a "mask of behavioural conformity" (Collins, 2000 in Haye-Matsui, chapter 16: *Donning the Mask*, para 1) in order to advance as a Black female academic in a White male-dominated work environment (JALT, 2020). Broadly speaking, behavioural conformity is where individuals mould actions to conform to prevailing standards. In foreign circles in ELT in Japan, these standards maintain predominantly White, American and male values (Haye-Matsui, 2020; Nagatomo, 2020; Obiko Pearson, 2022; Ohri, 2020). At a particular university, Haye-Matsui found herself up against gender and racial discrimination, but also found that she needed to adhere to the institutional norms that perpetuated this bias in an effort to ameliorate it (examples to follow). This led to a sense of having

abandoned her authentic self, and resulted in unhealthy levels of stress and anxiety (2020, chapter 16: *Donning the Mask*, para 3).

At the university referred to, Haye-Matsui needed to leave at a set time each day in order to pick up her children from kindergarten. Concomitantly, she often gave a White Canadian female colleague a lift to the train station at the end of their workdays which was also the end of Haye-Matsui's "…contracted work time" (Haye-Matsui, 2020, chapter 16: *Donning the Mask*, para 2).

In an annual assessment, a male department head reported that he felt Haye-Matsui was "work shy" and "uncommitted" due to not putting in overtime (2020, chapter 16: *Donning the Mask*, para 2). The same evaluation of work ethic was not applied to the White female colleague she drove to the station. An obligation to work beyond contracted hours is far from ideal, but her male colleagues with family were mostly able to undertake overtime due to having the support of wives at home who looked after their children. (2020, chapter 16: *Donning the Mask*, para 2). The action of the department head implies unconscious bias and ignorance at the least, and a hefty dose of privilege. Stamarski and Son Hong write of "face time" being "a key performance metric that rewards employees who are at the office more than those who are not" (2015, p. 108). This metric therefore penalises women with family obligations who wish to advance in their careers.

After this incident, Haye-Matsui decided not to speak about her children in the workplace and she "played the game" (my quotation marks), emulating behaviours similar to that of her White male coworkers in an effort to get ahead and succeed at her job. The following year's assessment levelled no such criticisms about her performance, and her voice was heard more than it had been in relation to work and decision-making processes. However, as stated, changing herself at a fundamental level resulted in ill health and suppression of a large part of her identity (2020, chapter 16: *Donning the Mask*, para 3). When Haye-Matsui left the position, she vowed to never be untrue to herself again to the best of her abilities (JALT, 2020).

This leads us back to my questions. In answer, Haye-Matsui explains that when she formed BWIJ, it was to address the needs of being "a minority in a minority in a minority." For example, Haye-Matsui says, at JALT conferences there were very few Black attendees and even fewer Black women attendees. She jokes that when she or another Black woman saw each other on the street they ran to one another like lost family members. Later in the interview she also spoke about this recognition and essential connection with Black ALTs at JET orientation meetings when she first came to Japan as part of the programme in 1993. The programme continues to be predominantly

White American, although the make-up of participants has changed over the years (Jardon, 2018, pp. 12–13; JET Program, 2022).

Nonetheless, BWIJ's creation did not consciously stem from wishing to meet some of the aims of Black feminist theory or from a personal resolve to live authentically. Haye-Matsui currently finds that communities of practice and intersectionality are the best approaches for exploring and sharing untold stories of marginalised people,. The latter works well to describe "…how Black women's lives are affected by multiple oppressive systems, particularly race and gender" (Haye-Matsui, 2020, referencing Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Mirza, 1997, chapter 16, para 5).

Communities of practice and intersectionality highlight how one action is affected by another and goes on to affect others. Nothing exists in a vacuum: thoughts, experiences, and the shaping of these are in themselves moulded by other elements. Consciousness is accentuated, as is giving back to the community and/or empowering it.

Related to this, Haye-Matsui says that Black women in Japan connecting with other Black women find a form of reassurance and familiarity with people who look like themselves. Moreover, there is reassurance in connecting with those who understand aspects of the everyday and professional lives Black women deal with including, but not limited to, those oppressive elements touched upon. Naturally, there is a diverse range of backgrounds. Furthermore, Haye-Matsui's professional life and contacts are mostly within ELT circles, and with the development of BWIJ, ELT openings and other professional opportunities could be shared, whereas they might not have been before its existence. Considering the marginalised status of Black women in Japan, and the preference for White American male teachers (see paragraphs above and below), this type of social capital can be crucial to advancement and wellbeing (Agyeman, 2015; McNeil, 2017; Oesch & von Ow, 2015).

In Japan and elsewhere, there is a hierarchy of employment in the ELT field, and the top is still occupied by men (Nagatomo, 2020) and, among those, White men from the U.S. are still the widely held ideal (Obiko Pearson, 2022; Ohri, 2020). This has repercussions in terms of representation, opportunity and confidence across the educational and professional spectrum (Grissom & Redding, 2016; Haye-Matsui, 2020; Obiko Pearson, 2022; Ohri, 2020).

Regarding the Women's Empowerment Circle, Haye-Matsui tells me that, "Women in general in any industry, but especially within ours in Japan, need a little extra support." She builds upon this by detailing how women are in the minority in ELT employment in Japan, especially in higher education, but often carry a greater load of emotional labour, both at work and home, especially as men can have more institutionalised and systemic privilege. Subsequently, Haye-Matsui feels

that developing systems to foster resilience is desirable. This imbalance is also reflected globally (JALT, 2020; McKinsey & Company, 2021; Nagatomo, 2020; Ten Brummelhuis & Greenhaus, 2019).

She acknowledges that there are wonderful organisations such as WELL and GALE to enhance professional development, but also thinks that the emotional connection with work needs exploring, because the professional and personal are connected (Haye-Matsui, 2020; Nagatomo, 2020). Haye-Matsui initially says that living as women in Japan is hard work, and then corrects her statement to women in general, and then adds that foreign women living outside of their place of origin is a difficult undertaking.

She views women as industrious and also as the emotional glue that holds community together, all of which takes energy. In the workplace, this is supported by studies that show that women in management positions are the driving forces behind implementing emotional wellbeing strategies. These strategies have been shown to help secure employee satisfaction and retention (McKinsey & Company, 2021). However, even though employee satisfaction leads to greater productivity (Oswald, et al., 2022), the effort that goes into achieving it is often overlooked (McKinsey & Company, 2021). In educational settings pastoral care can contribute to student achievement which can in turn help secure the reputations of places of learning (Hayes, 2013). It is often undertaken by women and is just as undervalued (Nagatomo, 2020). Haye-Matsui's views are also supported by findings that within heterosexual households, working women are more likely than their male partners to offer emotional support (Ten Brummelhuis & Greenhaus, 2019), and are also more likely to have non-negotiable family obligations (McKinsey & Company, 2021; Nagatomo, 2020).

Cultural, societal and personal expectations, such as those detailed above, can lead to overcommitment and correlational stresses for women in Japan. Haye-Matsui started working with a life coach approximately five years ago and it has made significant differences to her interactions with others and with potentially stressful situations. As the introduction mentions, she wanted to share what she had learnt with a wider range of people, which is how WEC came into being.

For women and minorities, Haye-Matsui feels that it is necessary to be around similar people. In addition, the influence of others is also valuable. She highlights how it is important not to be closeted into one group or one point of view. Meeting other women who are achieving great things can be inspiring and can provide women with role models to actualise their potential.

A case in point is Haye-Matsui's PhD supervisor, Diane Nagatomo. She met Nagatomo through another community: *Association of Foreign Wives of Japanese* (AFWJ), and she explains that she would not have finished her PhD, or even contemplated it, if not for this connection. Both women undertook their PhDs later in life, and Nagatomo's achievement spurred Haye-Matsui to begin her own.

Part of the motivation for getting the PhD is the huge gap within ELT and pedagogical literature in relation to the voices of minority experience and knowledge. While recognising that many groups are underrepresented, in our interview Haye-Matsui explicitly cites the absence of LGBTQIA+, Filipino and Black voices. This vacuum can be linked to the not-necessarily conscious gatekeeping of the dominant face of ELT in Japan. She felt that if she did not tell her own story, who was going to? If she did not relay the story of marginalised others, who was going to? She has a sense of responsibility to put her research out there so that voices that do not slot neatly into the current hegemony are speaking for themselves, and are also being heard.

I first encountered Haye-Matsui when I read about the inaugural Black Women in Japan Conference (McNeil, 2017). In my role as programmes officer for Shizuoka JALT, I invited her to speak at the Constructive Communication Across Gender and Cultures Conference hosted by the chapter in 2017. She recalls this as the early stages of her research, and although I remember intersectional factors and nationalities featuring in her presentation, she would increase those elements if she were to give it again.

Haye-Matsui believes that many people think that all Black women have the same experience, but stresses that they do not. Much of her work illustrates the stereotypes or general lack of knowledge she has encountered (JALT, 2020; Haye-Matsui, 2020). She says, "Just like the hierarchy of foreigners in Japan, there's a hierarchy of Black teachers, at least in ELT, in Japan." Her research shows that, as with the common employment of ELT foreign teachers in Japan, the hiring and desired employment of Black foreign women in ELT favours those from the US. Africans tend to be the least represented, and those from the Caribbean feature somewhere in the middle. Black people from Europe, including the UK, are often seen as not existing.

More widely, female voices within the workplace are not always heard, and often deliberately (although, again, sometimes not consciously) ignored. Haye-Matsui has written of this in relation to herself and a White colleague (who was a head teacher) in department meetings (2020). This erasure can be exacerbated when race comes in to play. One of Haye-Matsui's research case studies is "Kerry" a Black woman from the Netherlands who is fluent in seven languages, including

English. Despite having a firm grounding in the mechanics of English, perhaps better than many native speakers, her intellect and knowledge were overlooked in preference to that of a White, male, native speaker when she was told that her opinion was not important in a new English exam meeting (JALT 2020). This was not an isolated incident.

Attitudes like this add to a "burden of representation" (Mercer, 1990 as cited in Haye-Matsui, 2022) that many Black women encounter, whereby there is a feeling and actuality of constantly needing to prove themselves (2020). In contrast, within Haye-Matsui's studies, this notion is not as evident among non-British and non-American subjects, but the challenge is not absent. Gender, race and nationality are some of the factors that influence the lives of the women in Haye-Matsui's research, including Kerry, and under the intersectionality umbrella, all of these factors come into play.

To expand upon the above, Haye-Matsui discusses her work with a Jamaican woman and a South African. Their different approaches to social and classroom influences are fascinating to her. For example, the difference as to whether women stem from a country where they are part of a racial minority (UK, USA), or a racial majority (Jamaica, South Africa) affects approaches. Even within that, individual personalities and backgrounds shape attitudes and practices.

For the aforementioned women, both encountered racism in the classroom. Both had a strong desire to succeed, but the South African stems from a society where the racial majority is culturally treated as a racial minority and faces racism on a daily basis. Conversely, the Jamaican is part of the racial majority and is treated as such in her country of origin. To counter the racism in the classroom, the South African woman decided to wait until the students became accustomed to her lessons, thereby giving her the autonomy to impact future lessons. Haye-Matsui posits that, due to having consistently faced prejudice and microaggressions in South Africa, she perhaps had a higher tolerance towards the students' mindsets. The second woman was not as tolerant of bigotry and micro-aggressions, perhaps due to not having experienced them to the same scale, if at all, in Jamaica. Consequently, this might have affected her decision to not engage with the aberrant behaviour of her students, and to focus her energies on those who wanted to learn (personal communication, January 12, 2023; also discussed JALT, 2020). Teachers from racial minorities in their countries of origin might feel less of a sense of being othered in Japan, whereas it is more pronounced for some of the women from countries where they were part of the racial majority (also discussed JALT, 2020).

As communities are a crucial part of Haye-Matsui's research, I asked her about those that were most important to her. When we spoke, it was via Zoom video conferencing and during summer. She and her family had rented a cabin in a community that has existed for over 100 years at Nojiri-ko in Nagano, nowadays known as *Kokusaimura* (Ross, 2021). By chance, I had visited the community as a guest of a colleague in the past, and it is supportive and welcoming. It was initially established by missionaries in the 1920s (2021).

Seeing as Haye-Matsui emphasises the impact that the personal can have on our professional lives (and vice versa), the feeling of normalcy she has when she walks down the street of the village cannot be understated. The area hosts a range of people from all over the world, including Japan, and the shared experiences of expatriates and those who qualify as third culture kids, in addition to many others, can help reinforce a sense of belonging and give members a place and chance to "be themselves." This acceptance may not be a consistent aspect of their interactions with mainstream Japanese society.

Considering the ideas of intersectionality, all of these communities obviously affect and influence one another, but other bodies that Haye-Matsui has particularly found supportive, either professionally or personally, are as follows:

AFWJ specifically provided immediate support when she was in hospital after the birth of her son, who was diagnosed with Kawasaki disease. This community of women, who were mostly unknown to her, banded together to bring food to her family and take her daughter to kindergarten, and generally made time to support Haye-Matsui in a time of need. It reinforced her belief in the strength of and need for community.

BWIJ has given her community and professional support with many other Black women (as described above).

Vocationally, associations such as GALE and WELL have provided assistance related to constructive feedback on presentations and research, and also supply chances to present and publish.

The Women's Empowerment Circle is her newest group, and her passion, and she feels humbled to be able to assist women in challenging and changing limiting beliefs. The ultimate goal is helping women to help themselves if they are to help the people around them. A main aim of the workshops, retreats, and events that Haye-Matsui instigates are to direct women to focus on what they are good at, and to provide them with a sense of accountability in regards to guiding them to areas they may be interested in, and ways to stay on track. She also has a strong focus on avoiding

burnout which, as covered previously, women are more likely to experience due to increased commitments in many aspects of their personal and professional lives.

In a similar vein, women are often conditioned to put the needs of others before their own, which can negatively impact their well-being. Therefore, one of Haye-Matsui's major aims with the circle is "putting on your own lifejacket first." Having attended a few WEC workshops, they are safe places where women can speak about personal and workplace anxieties that might be negatively impacting their lives, and it is a place where holistic methods and forms of management for dealing with said anxieties can be considered. For example, I attended one that focused on dealing with stress, and the sense of community and advice given was very helpful.

Concerning ways in which JALT or GALE might serve women/minority group members better, or how universities could improve their hiring practices, Haye-Matusi feels that if JALT and SIGs had more focus on mentorship, advice about how to start researching/publishing, and so forth, it would be beneficial for all female/minority group researchers. JALT and CUE in particular do host and have hosted a variety of "how to" feedback services and sessions (such as the writers' peer support group), but it would be useful if more people were aware of them.

Regarding hiring practices, Hayes (2013), Nagatomo (2020), and others have spoken about the lack of value institutions place on practical experience in employment guidelines, favouring research achievements instead, of which women have less time to undertake, especially when family expectations are taken into account. Universities, however, often wish to hire good teachers, seeing as happy students will help maintain a university's existence (Hayes, 2013). I asked Haye-Matsui her thoughts on this, and she feels that the hiring processes need to change (something with which I fully agree). This change might come about once more female representation is evident on hiring boards, or the criteria themselves are adapted to cover a wider variety of skills.

Vibrant, resilient and inspiring, Avril Haye-Matsui is one of the most interesting women in foreign teacher ELT circles in Japan at present, and in Japan in general. It was a pleasure to interview her, and to uncover a little of what drives her, and what she hopes to influence.

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Seen and Not Heard

Meg McKinlay

When I was four years old, I found myself in the pages of a picture book. There on the third spread of *Agapanthus is Lost* stood a small girl in a pink and orange dress who sent an electric jolt of recognition up my spine. In an instant, the story around her fell away. I was transfixed, unable to turn the page. Here was something I didn't know I'd been looking for. Here, at last, was me.

Now this, most would say, is an excellent thing. In children's literature circles, there is a truism that every child reader should be able to find their reflection in a book. As a children's writer myself, I know this only too well

But this moment was not about race or class or gender, the markers we're usually referring to when we talk about identity in this context. As an Anglo-Saxon reader in a middle-class family in a developed country, I was fortunate enough to take that kind of representation for granted.

This was about rage. It was about a small girl named Agapanthus, frozen by the illustration mid-foot-stamp, arms angrily angled, hands on hips. Her cheeks are cartoonishly pinked, her pin-dot eyes fused with contorted eyebrows in a stylised parody of childish anger. The text on the facing page tells us how Agapanthus stamped and cried, how she 'yelled and yelled'. How she desperately *wanted*. It ends with the simple, spare line: *But her mother took no notice.*

And just like that, we arrive at the heart of things. Because while the kinship I felt with Agapanthus had to do with her behaviour, with the glorious recklessness of her foot-stamping anger, it was also deeply and inextricably linked to the reasons behind it. Powerlessness. Voicelessness. The overwhelming frustration of being small in a big world where all the cards were held by others.

So deeply did I connect to this image of an enraged Agapanthus that, when left to my own devices with Play-Doh some days later, I recreated it – a colourful, ballistic bundle of girl with determined features and a foot in fierce motion. And just as *life imitates art imitates life,* I recreated her in the real world, too. My childish sense of injustice had already made me an accomplished tantrum-thrower, but I had always felt alone in that. Now I had a kindred spirit, a role model. I was newly, publicly, emboldened. In shopping centres and on buses and in libraries – at any time and any place and for any reason I felt overlooked, unheard, *under*heard, minimised – I

would become Agapanthus, raging, the world around me falling away. And my mother, often, walking away.

Oh, yes, you may think. We all know this. Childhood tantrums. Child*ish* tantrums. The terrible twos and threes and maybe even fours.

But how about teens and twenties? How about fifties?

Almost five decades later, thinking about Agapanthus still makes my hands curl into fists, my whole body tense.

It's true that I no longer throw actual tantrums. At least in public. I'm an adult now, after all, socialised and contained. But the emotions remain, the force of their strength utterly intact. Talk over me, dismiss me, minimise my feelings, and I'm right back there, the intervening years collapsing as if they mean nothing at all. What was distilled into this four-year-old moment may have sunk below the surface but it remains one of the defining features of my internal landscape. And what is buried, of course, doesn't always remain so; when conditions are right – or wrong? – it will vent, even erupt.

I was four when I met Agapanthus and five when I met Miss Mitchell. She was my prep teacher and she was going to be my lighthouse. I was a bright child, precocious and articulate. I had been reading since the age of three. I devoured books and facts and made creative connections and soaked up learning like a sponge. Kindergarten had been a source of frustration. The teacher had insisted I do things with pipe cleaners and paints rather than sit with a book, 'pretending' I was reading. She was unmoved by my protestations, indeed by most things I had to say. I stamped my metaphorical foot frequently, both inwardly and out, and finally accepted that this was a place to put up with, to pass through on the way to somewhere else.

Which was here. This was big school, proper school, where people read things and learned things and where I would do that too and where I WOULD BE HEARD! In the classroom on that first prep morning, I practically hummed with excitement. There were desks in rows and one of them was mine. There was a blackboard up the front and shelves of books beneath the windows. This was my place, beyond the shadow of a doubt.

By lunchtime that day, my mother had received a phone call. There had been, the principal informed her, an incident. No, no, it was not serious. As such. But it did call for a stern talking to. It did suggest, perhaps, a lack of understanding on my part of the way to behave in the classroom setting. Of the need to listen, to offer my opinion only when called upon, to respect

the authority of my teacher. To not stand on a chair and attempt to lead my fellow five-year-olds in an insurrection against Miss Mitchell because she was WRITING WHOLE WORDS IN CAPITAL LETTERS AND EVERYONE KNEW THEY WERE JUST FOR THE START OF SENTENCES AND PROPER NOUNS.

At first, I had thought it was a test, that Miss Mitchell was simply checking to see who was paying attention. *Big school,* I thought, *I have your measure.* But when I put up my hand and pointed out her error, she frowned and shushed me. *Aha,* I thought, albeit with somewhat less confidence, *a test of persistence, then!* I waved my hand again, and was shushed. I waved my hand again and was ignored, Miss Mitchell looking right past me, turning back to the board, where she continued to print her enormous, ungainly capital letters.

But her teacher took no notice …

Oh, Agapanthus. I can't say whether that line itself was echoing in my head. I only know that I was consumed with the same feeling of frustrated powerlessness I had seen in her image. What could I do? I turned to my fellow five-year-olds, tapped them on the shoulders, whispered urgently, *That's not right! Don't listen!*

And then I got on the chair.

I know what you're thinking because I'm thinking it too. Because I'm an adult now and have some classroom experience from a teacher's perspective. But if I'm honest, my sympathy – my empathy – remains with myself. Because I'm an adult now and I have a lifetime of experience feeling silenced.

I was four when I recognised my own frustration and five when I realised school wasn't going to solve it. That not only was I still at the bottom of the power structure but I had no clear idea of what the rules were.

I say this, of course, with the benefit of hindsight. I was four and then five, too young to articulate any of this to myself at the time. And by the time I was six, I couldn't articulate much of anything to anyone because I had developed a stutter.

I don't know what the current thinking is on the etiology of stuttering. Back then, I was simply told to slow down, that my thoughts were racing too fast for my mouth. Or at least, that's how I understood it. But understanding, in my opinion, was the problem: that is, I understood too much and also not enough. I was a gifted child who wanted to be heard, to share everything I

knew, to learn everything I didn't. But I didn't know when it was okay to speak, how much speaking was reasonable, which of my opinions were too precocious, too much like smart-arsery, which would merit praise, which would be tolerated with pursed lips, which might even have a particular teacher, revelling in an apparent error, declare smugly in front of the class: "Well, I guess you're not so clever now are you?"

I am not making this up.

The sheer irony – that my rush to be heard, my very enthusiasm for speaking, should have been the thing that shut me down completely. But once you start second-guessing every word, examining each potential utterance for the risk of betrayal before it leaves your mouth, it is easier just to fall silent. Especially when you are small and powerless and frustrated by those things, and that frustration makes you tense and that tension makes every word spikier, makes your tongue hook and catch on even those soft sounds that used to be your friends. And thus my stutter became chronic, carved out a home for itself in what felt like my very bones.

Perhaps this sounds overly dramatic. But have you ever seen a stutterer gripped with the effort of trying to speak, to just.please.get.this.one.thing.out? At its most dysfunctional, this can almost be a whole-body contortion. And then there's the psyche – the distortion of personal identity that results when your capacity for self-expression is curtailed in this way. As a young person – all throughout my primary- and high-school years – I could not trust the spoken word to represent me, neither in tone nor content. No matter how inwardly confident I felt, no matter how sure of myself, when I was stuttering I came across as hesitant, stumbling. When I blocked, others would step in, 'helpfully' completing my thoughts, often in ways I didn't intend, and I would let them because in the moment it was just so much easier, for everyone. I said things I didn't really mean, in ways that made me cringe, because mid-sentence I realised they were all I could get out. I left unsaid things I felt strongly about because I couldn't come up with an interjection that didn't begin with a hard consonant, at least not quickly enough to snatch the conversational ball before it moved on.

When I was seventeen, I went to Japan as an exchange student. For a year, I grappled with a different kind of linguistic disadvantage – that of the non-native speaker – as well as a sharp increase in the severity of the challenges I was accustomed to. The Japanese language is full of initial hard consonants and the therapeutic principles of 'smooth speech', which I had by then begun to take on board to mitigate my stuttering in English, did me no favours here. I had no idea how to apply them to Japanese and knew that as a foreigner, any attempt to soften

consonants or breathe across plosives would simply come across as wrong or strange. In a physiological sense, it was now even more difficult for me to speak coherently, to be heard. But for cultural reasons, this was also true in other respects.

Firstly, as an exchange student, I was representing not just myself but also Australia, as well as my sponsor institution of Rotary International. This brought with it certain expectations about how I should conduct myself, how to frame my life in Australia in comparison to what I was experiencing in Japan. Some topics, I was told, were best avoided and I should in general take care not to seem critical or parochial. Secondly, as a Westerner it was understood that I would be louder, brasher, generally *larger* in self-expression, but it would be best to mitigate this as much as possible. Thirdly, as a female, the socio-cultural imperative for containment, a kind of gentle muting, was even stronger. I should lower my voice, my pitch, cover my mouth when laughing, keep my hands still. *Oh, of course you should be yourself!* my mentors said … just perhaps with the volume turned down and certain channels muted altogether.

My Japan year was a kind of crucible for me, a perfect storm for voicelessness. How could I be any version of myself given all these constraints on self-expression? I did my best but as time went on I found myself doing other things, too. Things I had never done before and was uneasy about doing now, even while they felt urgent and essential, sometimes the only things that were holding me together. I sought out railway underpasses, secluded spaces in which I could stand and shout at the top of my lungs while trains rolled over, their noise blanketing my own. At night, I snuck out to run – through city streets and rice fields, along the river and the highway, wherever I could, whenever I could, just running and singing and sometimes yelling and then running even faster to get away from the area where I had been yelling, until I felt like whatever it was in me that had been building to a point had been dulled, damped down a little, until next time. I was foot-stamping, chair-standing, raging in the only way I could think of for the context.

That year made something else clear, too: that gender had always been a factor, whether I was aware of it or not. While my Agapanthus moment was not primarily about gender, I am certain the image would not have had the same effect on me had Agapanthus been Archibald. There was self-identification on every level – a young girl, dismissed, de-voiced, and visibly, defiantly angry. And there was something else, too. Earlier, I described the illustration as a 'parody' of anger, and that word choice was deliberate. Even at four, I knew Agapanthus was being styled as a figure of fun. In the illustration, her little brother and even the cat stare at her, open-

mouthed, vaguely amused. How odd! *They* would never behave in such an unseemly fashion! While I could never have articulated it in these terms, on some level I could see what the book was doing to Agapanthus: making fun of her, minimising her anger, and then making her submit, reclaiming her for its idealised model of a young girl. In the following pages, Agapanthus is punished for her behaviour, abandoned and lost in the city until she is weeping, contrite and obedient, contained.

And this was no doubt predictable, the text on the very first page already having declared Agapanthus to be, at times, *very naughty;* the book itself having been preceded two years earlier by another entitled *Naughty Agapanthus,* which also featured on our family bookshelf. There, it shared space with another book featuring childish anger – the classic *Where the Wild Things Are,* in which Max, having made mischief for no apparent reason other than a boyish whim, is rewarded by the text, sent on a fantastical, adult-free adventure where he is made king of wild things and returns home to find his supper still warm. Max is neither parodied nor recuperated by the narrative and while this is just one example, there were many such contrasts on our shelves, and in children's books of that era generally. In this context, it is telling that I zoomed in on the image of an enraged Agapanthus, capturing it both in my mind and in Play-Doh, turning a deliberate blind eye to what the story served up next. Also telling is the response of my family, who, recognising my attachment to Agapanthus, immediately co-opted her for their own parodic purposes. At the slightest sign of me becoming angry or oppositional, they would beam at me, intoning, "And Agapanthus stamped her foot!" My younger brother, who was actually dangerous in his rock-hurling, fist-flying, lashing-out rage, received no such mockery.

Youth is one thing, I eventually realised, and gender another. Grow beyond one, and we must still contend with the other. Something in me still doesn't assume I will be fully heard when I speak, feels like I still have to jostle for air-time, for self-expression. Despite all the ground we've covered, we still live in a society in which women are perceived to dominate conversation when they even approach the level of male participation; in which the phenomenon of men repeating – to wide acclaim – something a woman just said is ruefully acknowledged by every woman everywhere; in which boys are boisterous and girls are shrill. That's why, I believe, my well-and-truly grown-up hands still ball into fists. It's why, despite now being a reasonably proficient smooth-speechifier, I will start blocking and stumbling if someone talks over me or cuts me off or tries to complete my thought. It's why, if I had to choose a war-cry, a single utterance that would immediately course rage through my entire being, it would be, *LET ME FINISH MY SENTENCE!*

It's also why, without meaning to, I write books about this very thing. It was a curious moment when I realised that four of what I thought were very different picture books are, at their most essential, worrying at the exact same knot: a bear is rendered voiceless by someone who insists on telling his story for him; animals are lectured by a zookeeper who won't listen to them because he is an expert; a small rhinoceros is told by her elders that there is one way and only one to be a rhinoceros; and a duck is ignored by larger animals when he tries to warn them about something falling from the sky. In each, the narrative is on the side of the small, the powerless, the de-voiced. It is the elders, the dismissers and over-talkers, who get their comeuppance. I had, shall we say, robust discussions with my publisher about the ending of *DUCK!,* in which the animals who fail to listen are struck by the falling object. My original story had them squashed fatally flat: THE END. My editor, however, pointed out that this was a book for very young children and it would be best if they were simply bruised. The strength of my initial opposition to this took me by surprise. How vehemently I wanted those ~~adults~~ animals to die! After some reflection, however, I had to accept that this was not quite rational. That perhaps I was standing on a metaphorical chair without realising why. Rage can be like that, I think.

Oh, Agapanthus. I must close now lest I be charged with over-talking, with exceeding my allotted word count. But here is a final coda. My father, extremely taken with my Play-Doh version, tried to preserve her with fixative. This had the reverse effect of liquefying my Agapanthus into a shapeless blob, colours running, limbs merging one into the other. And there must be a metaphor in there somewhere: that she would not be contained, even in this. Poor Dad. He was so apologetic. But it didn't matter. It still doesn't. Foot-stamping Agapanthus will always be with me in spirit. I am a fifty-something woman. I am a four-year-old girl.

Meg McKinlay is a writer who has published twenty books for young people and a collection of poetry for adults. Meg has a PhD in Japanese Literature and feminist theory and was previously an academic at the University of Western Australia, where she taught literature, Japanese language, and creative writing.

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***Misogynoir Transformed.* Moya Bailey.**
New York University Press, 2021, 248 pp.

Reviewed by Antonija Cavcic
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While Miki Kendall's *Hood Feminism* (2020) called out mainstream white feminism's blindness to the very notion of intersectionality and the ongoing and unaddressed issues that Black women face, feminist scholar and activist Moya Bailey's *Misogynoir Transformed* (2021) shifts the attention to how Black women's digital resistance is actively working to defy the rampant "Misogynoir" (loosely defined as anti-Black misogyny) in digital culture that negatively impacts the health and well-being of Black women. Rather than limiting the focus on the efforts of the entire community of "Black women," Bailey reminds us that "not all Black women are feminists and not all Black feminists are women" (2021, p. 20). In *Misogynoir Transformed,* Bailey essentially reveals how "digital alchemy" (efforts to create better representations for those most marginalized through digital networks) practiced by Black women, Black nonbinary, agender and gender variant folks (henceforth abbreviated as BW/BNB/BAG/BGVF) is a means to transform misogynoiristic digital media into invaluable social justice media.

For those who are sheltered from the toxicity of digital media or shrouded in privilege, some of the terms introduced in *Misogynoir Transformed* will be eye-opening and hopefully create greater awareness about demeaning and dehumanizing practices such as misogynoir. One of the absolute strengths of this book is how Bailey lucidly defines and outlines the meanings of terms stemming from African American Studies, gender studies, and digital media studies. Not only is it very readable, but for anyone teaching or lecturing in these fields, *Misogynoir Transformed* is an invaluable resource in explaining expressions ranging from 'misogynoir,' 'intersectionality,' and 'dragging' to "bros before hoes" or 'toxic masculinity.' Though this is obviously not the purpose of *Misogynoir Transformed*, it has a greater and lasting impact on readers as awareness creation is coupled with examples and case studies. For instance, I introduced the term 'intersectionality' when discussing gender representation in Netflix originals in my seminar and went to great lengths to explain how Black trans women are subject to far worse discrimination than cisnet white women. After becoming aware of how white, heteronormative, and homogenous most mainstream American and domestic dramas are, my students realized that the lack of intersectional representation in media does, in fact, marginalize communities. In any case, although the clarity and tone of the

book enhances its accessibility, what is more significant is its exploration of not only the discrimination and misogynoir towards BW/BNB/BAG/BGVF that is perpetuated in digital media and in daily life, but also the various avenues of digital resistance to combat it. Such resistance may even improve the participants' health and well-being.

Chapter 1 initially defines the term *misogynoir* that Bailey herself coined and highlights its ubiquity and various manifestations in media and society. As well as demonstrating how misogynoiristic tropes like "Sapphire" and "Mammy" are still being employed in television and film, she brings to light the fact that it is often Black male comedians who "regurgitate the same racists stereotypes that white supremacy uses to oppress Black women" (p.37). From Billy Sorrell's denigrating and cringeworthy "Shit Black Girls Say" YouTube video to the Twitter hashtag #RuinABlackGirlsMonday (in which images of long-haired white women with large breasts and backsides were uploaded to supposedly make Black women "feel bad"), the prevalence of these harmful images is something that should not be ignored. Bailey thus shows us how this is being addressed through resistance tactics such as in reactionary hashtags like #RuinAnInsecureBlackMansTuesday as well as footage on YouTube of both a horrifying case of actual physical dragging and "dragging" (in the sense of public humiliation) of Black school-age girls. Digital resistance thus helps to spread awareness, share evidence, and start constructive dialogues.

Chapter 2 follows by looking at case studies of Black trans women's use of social media as a "life-saving and health affirming praxis that mitigates transmisogynoir" (p.30). For example, Bailey demonstrates how #GirlsLikeUs has been used as both a safe space for trans women to network, share information about transition procedures or health care matters, and discuss experiences of transmisogynoir (p.74). Chapter 3 then examines the extent to which messages about health are being conveyed through close readings of several Black queer women's YouTube series and reveals how these shows both reinforce and challenge dominant ideas about sexuality. For Bailey, the web series *Skye's the Limit* not only gave more attention to queer sex and relationships than possible in mainstream media, it also "normalized health-seeking practices and destigmatized self-care practices" within the Black community (p.118). To close the book in Chapter 4, Bailey discusses how Tumblr and her experiences on the platform created a safe space for "affirmation and learning" (p.155) in which users share experiences of misogynoir and how they actively address it or challenge it. She also adds that the extent to which misogynoir occurs and/or is addressed on newer platforms such as TikTok is worthy of further investigation. Overall, *Misogynoir Transformed suggests* that real change is transformative: completely eradicating the deep and entrenched

misogynoir in media, culture, and society could be perceived as an insurmountable task, yet ameliorating representations of and living conditions for BW/BNB/BAG/BGVF are attainable through dedicated digital alchemy and the formation of support networks online.

We live in a time in which freedom of the press and freedom of speech are being challenged or hampered by disinformation campaigns, media policy, or platform rules. This, I argue, will be exacerbated as a result of billionaire Elon Musk becoming the major stakeholder of Twitter in early 2021. Not only have daily interactions on digital networks become a mainstay, but these platforms also provide a place for the silenced and marginalized to be heard. If handled carefully, they have the potential to mobilize individuals and instigate positive change. On the other hand, the harmful effects of cyberbullying, trolling and online toxicity can hinder progress and results in voices being shut down. *Misogynoir Transformed* addresses these matters and demonstrates that change is possible, but it comes with risks and requires bravery and solidarity. As a resource for feminist scholars or as a supplementary text for content classes or lectures related to African American and/or gender studies, *Misogynoir Transformed* has currency, ease-of-readability, and integrity.

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Gender, Neoliberalism and Distinction through Linguistic Capital: Taiwanese Narratives of Struggle and Strategy. Mark Fifer Seilhamer. Multilingual Matters. Encounters Series, 2019. 423pp. (ebook)

Gwyn Helverson
Osaka University

Mark Fifer Seilhamer's longitudinal study of young Taiwanese women as they hone, then wield, their linguistic capital to find their ways in their worlds is an exemplary example of narrative inquiry. The four focal participants were attendees of a private, prestigious women's college where most classes were conducted solely in English. While teaching there, Seilhamer was so impressed by his ambitious students that he conducted lengthy interviews with them (in 2005-6, 2009-10, and 2016). GALE readers of this impressive monograph may be surprised by the similarities of the interviewees' experiences in Taiwan to those of women of the same era in Japan. It must be noted, however, that over the intervening years, trajectories for the countries have diverged dramatically (WEF, 2022; BOCA, 2021; Shim, 2018; Takeuchi & Tsutsui, 2016; WEF, 2006) and the results are startling.

Seilhamer's 10-chapter book opens by referencing Bourdieu's *A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* regarding distinction (p. 12), particularly the "high social status, internationalization and upward mobility" (p. 17) that the mastery of English signified to these young women. He also provides a sobering account of the country's modern history and highlights linguistic issues such as "voicelessness," one example being that those who had mastered Japanese under the colonizers were no longer allowed to speak it after occupation ended (p. 19-20). The influences of ethnic and political identities such as Hoklo, Hakka, and Aborigines, and Taiwanese and Mainlanders (p. 22) are also introduced to delineate the complex environments these young women were navigating. Seilhamer devotes the next chapter to neoliberalism: "Neoliberal valorization of self-reliance, flexibility and continuous self-improvement" (p. 41) in this era is said to have been embraced by the participants.

In the chapter on methodology, Seilhamer explains that narrative inquiry "offers opportunities for researchers to be unshackled from the positivist requirement of generalizability" (p. 102). He further clarifies that this process is a "meaning-making phenomenon" (p. 102) which can be edited over time (p. 104). In his personal narrative, the author acknowledges white male privilege in his life trajectory as an English instructor in the Asian context (p. 109-128) and describes his

relationships with the participants as congenial, explaining that the interview process was "empowering" for them (p. 56). This chapter seems even more prescient regarding the postscript from 2016 in which both the researcher and the interviewees were able to re-evaluate not only their past experiences, but also interpretations thereof.

The section entitled *The Social Butterfly* provides an intriguing study of a woman whose identities change according to the culture and/or language in which she is engaging. Audrey describes her Tai-yü (Aboriginal) self as expressing emotions (p. 201), her Chinese self as being the most careful and considerate, her "carefree" English self as joking and laughing, unconcerned with saving face (p. 203) despite "reconciled guilt…for using English with Taiwanese friends" (p. 201). Her French self is described by the author as an especially unique "distinction" used to subvert "the essentialist assumptions people have" (p. 206-7). Another interviewee, Shannon, was described as *The Competitor*. She did not give up despite various setbacks, for example, she later laughed at pretending to be a foreign tourist speaking in English at the railway company which had earlier rejected her for a job (p. 312). This event is described as another example of how these young women attempt to utilize linguistic distinction as a source of individuality and pride (p. 303-306), yet further data about the gendered hiring policies of companies such as the railway which had rejected Shannon would provide context.

Viewed from a feminist perspective, the section on *The Ideal Neoliberal Subject* is unsettling. Rachel was a highly motivated person from a working-class background and a difficult family situation in which her mother was abused by her stepfather (p. 231-237). One of her relationships is explained away: Rachel had a French boyfriend, but it is stated that she, "even at 16, was not one to passively acquiesce to anyone and I suspect that she, more often than not, had the upper hand in her relationship with this older Frenchman (p. 357)." Rachel later quit an excellent job because of sexual harassment (p. 268), however, there is little commentary regarding the phenomenon, its long-term effects, or the male boss involved. Regarding the topic of lookism, or "feminine capital," the author writes that the participants most likely did not consciously use their attractiveness to forge ahead (p. 351), and it is supposed that, even if they had not been attractive, they still would have succeeded thanks to their own efforts (p. 356-362). These stereotypical interpretations of significant gendered events and circumstances are jarring in an otherwise insightful book, and, once again, context related to neoliberalism's intersection with the field of gender studies would be useful here.

For GALE readers who are perhaps more familiar with Japan, it may be interesting to note that Taiwan was ranked 29th in gender equality in the world in 2021 (BOCA, 2021, 4) and the

percentage of female legislators was 39.8% vs. Japan's 10.1% (BOCA, 2021, 5) with a relatively low gender pay gap of 14.2% compared to Japan's 31.9% (BOCA, 2021, 15). Interestingly, and unlike Japan, Taiwan "ambitiously aims to make Taiwan a bilingual nation in Mandarin/English by 2030" (Eliassen & Rich, 2021, para 1). Seilhamer predicts that Taiwan's future will be female given the impressive efforts of the active, skilled women he has encountered (p. 369-370) and, indeed, the participants in this study have ultimately been successful. Rachel, for example, had become an entrepreneur by 2016 (p. 391) and her long-term plans include supporting her mother financially (p. 362).

This monograph provides comprehensive background on Taiwan's modern history as well as discussion of narrative inquiry methodology. It also offers measured analysis of the personal insights of its participants. Even GALE readers who are not familiar with Taiwan's educational system or gender-related issues should find this book, which brings the struggles of extraordinary women to light, an engaging read. As the author has noted, narrative inquiry is an ongoing process for both interviewees and researchers. Have the skewed gendered effects of the pandemic also impacted them? Are technical innovations related to linguistic capital influencing their career trajectories? I look forward to reading Seilhamer's next update and wish these exceptional women well on their journeys.

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Against White Feminism.
Rafia Zakaria. Hamish Hamilton, 2021. 196 pp.

Reviewed by Julia Kimura
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If one goal of feminism is gender equity, feminists still have a great deal of work ahead of us. Women worldwide may now be able to drive a car and vote, but as Rafia Zakaria illustrates in her new book, *Against White Feminism*, a social and political equity gap remains. Although the wage gap between men and women has been closing, particularly for unionized women, women have no desire to merely achieve poverty levels equal to men; they want everyone to realize adequate wealth. One reason for capitalists to not only allow but to encourage have-not women to earn more money is that they too will garner greater profits from increases in women's disposable income. However, men who hold political and social clout are reluctant to change because to do so would upset the gendered power imbalance which remains still in their favour.

The timing of the publication of Zakaria's book was most serendipitous: I had just earned my doctorate researching non-Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructor in a professional organization in western Japan (Kimura, 2021). While conducting this research, I learned a great deal about intersectionality from researchers such as Crenshaw (1985, 1995) and Collins and Bilge (2020). These readings made me aware of how I was falling short because I was a white feminist, which Zakaria defines as a feminist who does not acknowledge the role that racial privilege plays in their life. After learning more about the causes of the economic, political, and social disparities between white women and their marginalized sisters, I was inspired to live according to the guiding principle of true sisterly solidarity.

Zakaria begins her book by critiquing and describing white feminism in the introduction. The first three chapters provide background on how feminism grew to be so white, the lie of supposed solidarity among women, and a description of what Zakaria, using Cole's terminology (2012), calls the White Saviour Industrial Complex: attempting to help people in the developing world, yet with the emphasis being upon self-serving virtue signalling. The beneficiaries of White Saviours remain nameless in photographs posted to social media, if not faceless. It is worth noting that while their names may be withheld to protect them, their unique identities are also left unacknowledged.

In Chapter 1, Zakaria describes the relationship between race and feminism in the women's rights movement. Because white individuals enjoy a privileged position, white women could use this

status to advocate for other marginalized women. Unfortunately, white feminists have tended to speak on behalf of marginalized women rather than letting them speak for themselves. Zakaria describes ways in which people in the West can be shamefully misguided when offering help to the marginalized. For example, in an effort to combat pollution, the United Nations implemented a program that would provide poor women in India with more efficient and environmentally-friendly stoves than the wood-burning ones in use. Apparently, no one in the United Nations thought to consult with the recipients of the gift. As a result of this oversight, women found themselves with a new set of problems, including less time to socialize with each other, which they had enjoyed when collecting firewood and which also had served as a vital means of communication and support. To add insult to injury, the wood-burning stoves were not even the worst polluters: encouraging the forestry industry to improve some of its practices would have done more to combat climate change. Another example of misguided White Saviourism mentioned was the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's offer to donate chickens to impoverished countries to help empower poor women economically. The Bolivian minister for land and rural development refused this act of "generosity" because Bolivia had a thriving poultry industry, against which individual women could not expect to compete. These are two examples of many in which muting marginalized women's voices keeps us from finding the best solutions.

In the following three chapters, Zakaria describes problems in modern-day feminism, including feminism and war, some of the issues of sexual liberation, and white feminists' hypocritical attitudes towards honour killings and female genital mutilation. Concerning honour killings, Zakaria reminds us that when Muslim men kill their brides, it is labelled an honour killing. On the other hand, when a white American man kills his bride in a jealous rage, it amounts to an ego killing. The main difference between these two tragedies is that many Asian cultures emphasize the group, therefore, any perceived slight against an individual can amount to affecting the group's honour. On the other hand, in the United States, individualism is emphasized, so the husband defends his own honour if he doubts his wife's fidelity. In the end, whether it is the individual's honour affected or that of the group, the result is the same: violence against women.

Zakaria concludes the book by encouraging feminists to work to transform the movement by acknowledging and embracing our differences so that all people can indeed be free. She makes a call to action and demands that we improve our lives as a collective, not as individuals, which I would add, is the foundation of sisterly solidarity. One strong point of the book is that Zacharia suggests policies that organizations can adopt which might close the gender gap in several realms.

Specific and actionable steps that her readers can take would be a helpful addition. An index would have also been beneficial for readers of the hard copy of her book.

Though *Against White Feminism* was informative and inspiring, I wish Zakaria had considered other marginalized feminists besides Blacks and west Asians. Specifically, learning about feminists in Asia would have been interesting and even helpful to me. Furthermore, in true intersectional fashion, including accounts of disabled feminists, for example, would have helped Zakaria to make a more convincing point. Despite these minor complaints, I would recommend this book to anyone who wants not only to talk the talk when it comes to intersectionality, but also to walk the walk.

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__Our Women on the Ground: Arab Women Reporting from the Arab World.__
Zahara Hankir (Editor). Harvill Secker, 2019. 278 pp.

Reviewed by Susan Laura Sullivan
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One of nineteen women reporters featured in Lebanese-British Hankir's collection, Yemeni photojournalist Amira Al-Sharif aims to empower subjects with the images she takes:

> I want to show the side of war that very few people see: the laundry hung up on tree branches to dry; the children playing on the beach; the women preparing food for their families; the little sisters who look after one another when their mother is busy and their father is away fighting. (p. 159)

She also informs the reader that as of 2019, the U.N. reported that "one Yemeni child dies every ten minutes" as casualties of the war (p. 159); a figure that is still rising (Duamelle, 2022).

Our Women on the Ground opens with a foreword from Christine Amanpour, chief international anchor for CNN, followed by an introduction from Hankir detailing the importance of journalists featured in the book in their role in providing a voice for others, and also in providing a voice for themselves. Whether locally or internationally based, the writers explore what it means to be Arab women journalists reporting on conflict. Instructors focusing on global, gender, learner identity and general identity issues should find this book a valuable resource.

Many of the journalists are second generation daughters of immigrants or refugees to countries such as the UK, US, and France. Others have independently emigrated or fled to these and other nations. A large number remain in their birth countries or the region (Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan, Libya and Malta, among others), covering confrontations, injustice, and humanity, often at risk to themselves—not always solely due to gender, but definitely due to the pursuit of truth.

It should be noted that the lack of journalists working for local news sources as opposed to journalists working for large western media organisations has been cited as a weakness of the book (El-Shaarawi, 2019). Arab-American Natcha Yazbeck (p. 76), among others, highlights her personal conflict with this situation. Libyan Heba Shibani (p. 188) and Palestinian Asmaa Al-Ghoul (p. 174), however, name local manipulation of media sources as influencing their decisions to cease

working for them. In fact, a number of the reporters have left the field or are working in adjacent areas.

The book is divided into five sections: *Remembrances*, *Crossfire*, *Resilience*, *Exile*, and *Transition*. Chapters that could especially interest GALE members include "The Woman Question," (Hannah Allam) "On A Belated Encounter with Gender," (Lina Attalah), and "An Orange Bra in Syria" (Donna Abu-Nasr).

As co-founder and former editor-in-chief of the news site *Mada Masr,* Attalah's chapter on gender and her exploration of its impact on her life is fascinating. Bookended by addresses to her dying father, she writes of coming to terms with the way that expected gender roles have affected choices she has made and the opportunities afforded to her as a journalist in Egypt. Reflecting on her early career, she describes being driven to professionally achieve and publicly shape change, while also trying to conform to the conservative ideals of her parents when she returned home each night. She denied the influence of gender upon this duality for some time, feeling that being publicly active worked as a countermeasure to expectation, but also believed that acknowledgment might result in limiting her to the same expectations (p. 48).

Fluent in English, she consequently felt that she needed to be aware of the imposition of "a form of bourgeois or liberal feminism" (p. 49) upon her identity, when Western media sought her out to comment on gender issues. She emphasises the constant stress and misunderstanding stemming from speaking "a lingua-franca, but [her] mind refusing to speak its dominant mind-set, which tends to represent the society [she comes] from as static" (p. 49). In her journey, Attalah finds herself without a third pathway to understand and talk about her situation.

Poet Iman Mersal's concept that a nonnative language spoken with an accent is a language maintaining the origins of the first (p. 49) provides her with solace. It is a beautiful idea. The presence of the first language within the second conjures a sense of linguistic and identity permanence, and the first language can even succeed in disrupting the second. Attalah states that she had "worked on perfecting the sound of my second language, while muting its troubling implications. Remember the duality of the family home and the street home? In language too, I silently lived this discomforting duality" (p. 49). Yazbeck above also touches on this topic (p. 76).

Weaving her way through gender and identity theories and politics, she feels that if she had been more aware of feminist notions of the personal being political, she could have navigated the paths of her life with acknowledgement, rather than suppressing one to the other (p. 49). She advocates change by concentrating on the forces behind bodies of power: "Instead of…focusing on male-

female gender dynamics, we have to look at the forces behind the construction of these identities. Only by addressing those forces can we deal with subjugation, including gender-based subjugation" (p. 53). Her exploration and curiosity about gender leads her to intersectionality, and she arrives at a point where she positions a gendered lens on her personal and working life (p. 54-55). As she notes, this was a big step for someone who had "found the consciousness of gender troubles psychologically daunting and somewhat unconstructive" when she was younger (p. 48).

It is important not to ignore the stories of abuse and discrimination that are told in this collection. As Erhaim writes, it was easier for an armed soldier to believe she was "an imposter with fake Syrian identification papers who [spoke] in an authentic Idlibi dialect" than it was to believe that an "unveiled Syrian woman journalist existed" (p. 209), and both she (p. 207) and Al-Ghoul (pp. 174-175) write of it having been easier to ignore tenets restricting women when those advocating constraints were not carrying guns. However, in keeping with Attalah's sentiments, it is also important to look at these *and* the other stories the women relate. Journalism is their livelihood, passion, and poison, and they risk their lives for it. Gender disparity should not be subjugated to prioritising *the cause* (my emphasis, implied by Attalah, pp. 53-54), but the causes and realities that these nineteen journalists want to bring to light, and their tenacity in doing so, should also not be overshadowed by sole concentration on ethnicity and gender. After all, as Erhaim asserts: "My camera, my passport, and I live or die together" (p. 206).

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Regimes of Desire: Young Gay Men, Media, and Masculinity in Tokyo.
Thomas Baudinette. University of Michigan Press, 2021. 251 pp.

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One of the perennial challenges of teaching lies in the realm of seeking out an ever-deepening understanding of the diverse needs and experiences of our students. Learning new classroom strategies is a vital element of teacher development, but it is equally important to further our understanding of students' perspectives. Information about these perspectives has the potential to be very helpful if analyzed thoughtfully. Thomas Baudinette's ethnography is a rich resource of such information about a highly specific, but equally informative, group: that of young men who frequented the Shinjuku Ni-chōme district in Tokyo, the largest and most well-known gay district in Japan, between 2012 and 2017.

Baudinette begins by laying out the main conclusion of his research: that the global apolitical neoliberalism of gay media and community (through capitalistic vectors such as business establishments, advertising, and online dating platforms) favors rigid typification of gay male bodies and personalities. He argues that these types impose restrictive, conservative, and nationalistic standards of masculinity on the men who frequent Ni-chōme. After describing the district itself, and his research methods, Baudinette presents case studies of four key informants and their complex relationships with identity, media, and their perceptions of the desires of others and trajectory of the groups with which they identify. Finally, he briefly discusses the "LGBT boom" that he encountered in 2015, near the end of his research, and the new possibilities it presented.

Drawing on an array of Japanese and foreign academic sources, Baudinette provides key context for why the community seeks refuge in extreme masculinity: "Japanese gay men possess considerable anxieties surrounding their gendered performances…[which] have a long history resulting from the intense societal discrimination against same sex attracted men that has developed in the postwar era" (p. 107). He describes the focus of his informants on a certain type of gay man as the "ideal," defined primarily by a sculpted, muscular physique as well as by "rough," masculine behavior. This led to a variety of negative outcomes, including self-criticism for perceived shortcomings in physique and behavior; the (geographical and figurative) marginalization of "feminine" gay men and other gender-nonconforming people in the district;

the fetishization of "straight" men as a trope in gay pornography; and even a tendency to take refuge in nationalistic images of historical colonialist masculinity, as opposed to the perceived "crisis of masculinity" of mainstream Japanese society. Using his media analysis and ethnographic research, Baudinette concludes that Japanese gay men's rebellion against homophobia has been co-opted by commercial forces within the district, transforming Ni-chōme into a space where identity is reduced to desire through normative pressures to commodify the self and consume both products and (essentialized performances of) people.

Against his somewhat grim picture of the gay male landscape in Ni-chōme, however, there are some brighter counterpoints. One especially interesting one from a language-teaching perspective was that, despite the nationalism Baudinette reported encountering, all of his key informants had studied abroad (p. 64). Some also expressed interest in traveling or living abroad in the future, with one man ultimately relocating to Canada and finding a boyfriend there. While this selection may be related to the researcher's positionality as a white foreigner (despite interviews being conducted in Japanese), these informants happen to have occupied demographics similar to those of a subset of our students, some of whom may also be attending English classes with queer transcultural ambitions in mind. Baudinette also posits this sort of internationalism and cultural exchange as hopeful, contrasting its benefits against the damage done by conservative nostalgia in Japan, while also noting that globalization has contributed to these problems by encouraging the growth of neoliberalism in the first place. Overall, he draws a nuanced picture of the influences he describes on the individuals interviewed, all the while attempting to avoid generalizing the patterns he traces in his informants' responses.

One key takeaway for my teaching practice was the possibility that, rather than feeling represented by non-normative (i.e., gender-nonconforming) material in the classroom, some young gay men may find it embarrassing or insulting in the context of a lifetime of pressure to align themselves and their desires with a hegemonic heterosexual masculine ideal. If a common response of young gay men to systemic homophobia is to take refuge in restrictive and misogynistic masculinism, then it is possible that efforts to build a more gender-expansive environment will be felt as threatening to an already-sensitive area of their identities. However, the comfort of these students cannot come at the expense of making those of marginalized genders and/or sexualities feel unwelcome.

A potential answer to this dilemma could perhaps be found through further exploration of the non-normative types of masculinity which Baudinette reported were still present, though marginalized, in Ni-chōme at the time of study. Baudinette's key informants seemed to struggle to

define these concepts themselves, and this lack of data is reflected in his analysis. Perhaps the perspectives of those less privileged in the Ni-chōme community, especially trans women, gender-nonconforming, and self-identifying *kawaii-kei* ("cute"-type) individuals, might provide more insights into more facets of queer identity than did Baudinette's primary informants. Moreover, it seems likely that even within the group of cisgender, gay men pursuing the "hard" ideal Baudinette outlines, perspectives have shifted further in the wake of Japan's LGBT boom, making this an interesting area to study across multiple demographics.

Baudinette himself raises the question of how broadly applicable his results may be for other populations. However, one pattern to be found in his research is the transformative influence of local and highly specific subcultures on young people's perceptions of very broad and deep concepts such as gender, sexuality, and expected (and acceptable) human behavior. Baudinette's interactions between in-person, in-group, and online communities influenced his informants' interpretations of media, and vice-versa. Increased online socialization has created classrooms with students who, despite their very close physical and geographical proximity with one another, may exist in very different perceptions of reality due not only to in-person cliques, but also highly diverse media influences and online communities. This situation has likely only increased in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the language classroom, there are sometimes situations in which intersectional identities come into conflict, and it is the responsibility of everyone in that environment, especially teachers, to ensure the safety and maximize the comfort of all present when it is possible and reasonable to do so. It seems to me that many "solutions" (or at least alternative framings) for the demands of hard masculinity exist in feminist, queer, disability, racial minority spaces, both local and global. What is the language classroom if not a space uniquely situated to nurture a deeper understanding of such differences, thereby empowering learners to better navigate their futures in a diverse world?

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