

The Narrative of a Female Jamaican ALT in Japan: Status and Identity

Avril HAYE-MATSUI

Introduction

Assistant language teachers (ALTs), have been part of English language education in Japan since the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program was established in 1987. The JET program is a government sponsored program that recruits young people from English speaking countries all over the world to work as ALTs in pre-tertiary institutions. Since deregulation of the dispatch law in 1999, boards of education (BOE), are no longer required to recruit ALTs through JET. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of direct hire and dispatch company ALTs. In 2016 for example, 74.5% of ALTs were provided by dispatch companies (McCrostie, 2017). The reasons for boards of educations (BOE) switching to dispatch provided ALTs are two-fold, cost and convenience. Dispatch ALTs are cheaper, less paperwork and should an ALT resign, it is the dispatch company's responsibility, not the BOE's, to provide a new one (Sato, 2011; Nagatomo, 2016).

Teacher turnover at dispatch companies tends to be high due to a number of unfavorable working conditions. Dispatch ALTs earn approximately 30% less than JET ALTs (Flynn, 2009) and salaries as low as 100,000-yen per month have been recorded (kikuchi, 2016). They also are generally contracted to work 29.5 hours per week, which places them under the category of part-time workers, and thus ineligible for Japanese health insurance or inclusion in the pension scheme. This 29.5-hour work schedule covers only teaching hours, and non-teaching time spent preparing classes or taking part in school activities is not included. In addition, dispatch company contracts can be unstable as various companies compete for contracts with BOEs, driving the price down. For example, in 2016 sixty-five ALTs lost their jobs because

their dispatch company failed to renew its contract with the Sapporo BOE (Kikuchi, 2016).

Another issue that affects all ALTs, regardless of how they were hired, is their low status. The Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) are considered to be qualified, licensed English teachers while the ALTs are often young and considered relatively unqualified English teachers, who are hired on the basis of their native speaker status. According to some (e.g. McConnell, 2000; Hashimoto, 2013), this disparity in status was intentionally put in place by the Ministry of Education, (MOE), the precursor to MEXT, to quell initial resistance to the JET Program because of worries that native speaker teachers in the classroom could threaten JTEs jobs. This resulted in the decision to only employ foreign teachers as assistants to the Japanese teachers. Furthermore, differences in status are also reflected in the terms of employment, whereas JTEs jobs are respected and have upward mobility, ALTs are expected to hold temporary positions and there are usually no opportunities for promotion or professional development.

Considering the difficulties that ALTs have in Japan due to the issues mentioned above, how do they cope when other factors, such as race, nationality and gender are also added? This study attempts to examine these additional issues through the narrative provided by one female Jamaican ALT.

Literature review

As the participant in this study is a black woman from Jamaica, it is important to first briefly consider Japanese attitudes towards people of African descent (African diaspora). In Japan, there is positive interest and curiosity towards mainstream American ‘Black’ youth culture (Condry, 2006) and there have recently been more positive representations of black people in the media such as the African-American *enka* singer Jero or the entertainer and motivational speaker Steven Haynes. However, there are also negative perceptions (Russell, 1998) which follow western conventions of racist hegemony and are reinforced by Western media representations of

black people (Russell, 1991; Kastiro, 2014). Black people living in Japan have reported facing racial discrimination, in the form of police harassment or being refused employment (McNeil, 2017).

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of black people from African and Caribbean countries who have been recruited to work or study in Japan. The JET program, for example, began recruiting people from Jamaica in 2000 (jetprogramme.org/en/Tokyo-ori/). While some ALTs of African descent have complained of cultural insensitivity from colleagues and staff (Anton, 1989 in McConnell, 2000), many more have reported having good experiences as language teachers.

Much research has been done on the role and effect of being an ALT, most notably McConnell's (2000) investigation of the first decade of the JET program. He described the political reasons behind the program's creation but also revealed much about the experience and role of ALTs in the Japanese English education system. While many ALTs had positive experiences, others dealt with issues of miscommunication with JTEs due to a lack of cultural understanding, others felt that they were constantly stereotyped and excluded from the school community. Additionally, many were dissatisfied with the job and lack of professional development options. Many of these issues are still prevalent today (Takeda, 2017; Breckenridge and Erling, 2014). This lack of inclusion caused some ALTs to leave Japan and teaching while those that stayed did so because they had created communities outside of their schools which gave them a sense of belonging. Takeda (2017) found that the primary reasons for this exclusion were based on linguistic, racial and gender considerations.

Unlike ALTs hired by JET or directly by schools, dispatched ALTs are in a different position. Business considerations are of great importance for dispatch companies, and BOEs and schools are regarded as clients whose needs must be met. Sato (2011) highlights this difference in her study on the issues surrounding the employment of a North American male dispatch ALT. As an example, she writes that he was asked to do something that was not in his contract and he refused. This incidence, she suggests, shows a lack of understanding of working culture in Japan and the JTEs lack of understanding

of the labor law regarding dispatched ALTs.

These studies provide valuable insight on the ALT experience and the construction of their professional identities. However, with the exception of Sato (2011), they focus on JET participants and/or teachers from Western countries. Thus far there have been no studies on the experiences of black, female ALTs from an outer circle (Kachru, 1982) country like Jamaica where English holds an official status. The majority of ALTs come from inner circle countries. For example, 47% of the ALTs at the leading dispatch company in Japan are North American, whereas only 4% are, like the participant, from the Caribbean (<http://www.interacnetwork.com/recruit/galtjobs/gwhoisanalt.html>).

In this study, I examine the identity construction of one Jamaican ALT who is teaching in Japan, to investigate whether the intersection of race and gender and essentialist notions of native speakers impact her professional identity. I will also look at her perception of her role as a dispatched ALT and how she perceives her adjustment to that role. The overall question guiding this study is the following:

What major factors affect the professional identity construction of a female Jamaican ALT?

Methods

The participant

The participant in this study is Rose, (a pseudonym), a 28-year-old Jamaican woman. She was hired in Jamaica by a well-known dispatch company. Rose has lived in Japan for two years and works as a base school ALT in a large senior high school in central Japan. This means she goes to the same school every day as opposed to ‘one-shot’ ALTs who teach at multiple schools. She teaches all three grades and on average teaches twenty-one fifty-minute classes per week. She plans and conducts all her classes by herself, however, a JTE is present at all times to deal with any discipline issues that may arise.

Data collection

Narrative inquiry is employed in this study as I am trying to build theory and understand the participant's perceptions, beliefs and identity through the stories that she tells over time (Bruner, 1990). Narrative inquiry also helps to reveal how people negotiate their identity amid the expectations of those around them (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), such as students, colleagues and superiors. Therefore, it is an ideal method with which to examine the role and status of ALTs in Japan.

Data were collected through two ninety-minute semi-structured interviews and were supplemented with follow-up emails and SNS messages. The first interview took place in June 2016, after Rose had lived in Japan for thirteen months. It covered her background, reasons for coming to Japan, initial experiences at the school, her relationships with the teachers and her adjustment to her job as a teacher. The second interview took place in May 2017 and focussed on how Rose felt she had adjusted to teaching, her changing relationships with the JTEs, and any other issues that she felt had affected her approach to teaching. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

All the data were analyzed using thematic analysis, the process of placing data into identifiable themes (Boyatzis, 1998). Following Boyatzis's data-driven (inductive) approach to classification, the data was collated, and key quotes were identified, highlighted, and coded manually. The data was then placed into the following themes; adjustment to Japan, the school, relationships with the teachers, relationships with the students, future goals and feelings about life in Japan.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Black feminist theory, a field of inquiry that emerged from critical race theory and feminism. Black feminists assert that

the shared experience of marginality creates a unique standpoint from which black women view their world. These experiences are validated through black feminist thought in the creation of knowledge (e.g. Mirza, 1997; Collins, 1991). Black feminists advocate a participant centred approach, involving three criteria:

- Knowledge: the individual's experiences create knowledge.
- Consciousness: understanding what factors influence and impact upon that experience.
- Empowerment: the ultimate aim of the research should be to empower black women.

Research done in this way is not simply about black women but for black women and ultimately my aim is to empower black women and include their voices in academic discussions on the foreign experience in Japan.

To examine the participants' identity formation, aspects of Wenger's (1998) framework on communities of practice (CoP), was used. According to Wenger, identity is formed through participation or non-participation in groups known as communities of Practice. For the purpose of this study, the relevant CoPs are the dispatch company which has hired the participant, the high school in which she works every day, and the English department at the school. Wenger states that one's degree of participation or non-participation puts us on various trajectories within the CoP; Insider trajectories, members have full participation in the Cop, Peripheral trajectories, members do not have full participation, inbound trajectories which will lead to full membership, boundary trajectories, in which CoPs are connected and outbound trajectories, where members will leave one CoP for another.

Wenger also states that in order to understand the process of identity formation three modes of belonging must be considered; alignment, one's actions are matched to the broader goals of the CoP, imagination, our own image of our role within the CoP and engagement the degree of one's ability to take an active part in the community and to negotiate meaning.

My position within the study

As a person of African descent who also came to Japan as an ALT, my position within this research context is that of an insider. I worked in a base school for three years and had similar, (and different due to being a JET), experiences to the participant in this study.

I also knew Rose prior to the research through the Black Women in Japan group. Rose is also part of a larger on-going study I am conducting that investigates the lives of Black women in Japan. While it is true that insider researchers may find it difficult to be objective, I believe my insider status helped foster trust and enabled Rose to be open about her thoughts, feelings and experiences (Few, Stephens & Rouse-Arnett, 2003). Collins (1991) describes black female scholars as ‘situated knowers’ (Collins, 1991, p. 17), who because of black women’s shared experiences and standpoint are ideally placed to study the lives of other black women. Being a ‘situated knower’ can facilitate understanding between researcher and participant, (Collins, 1991) and I believe that this was the case between myself and Rose.

Discussion and Results

In this section I will discuss the relevant themes connected to Rose’s professional identity development. The main themes to be discussed are: her adjustment to the being an ALT, her relationship with the teachers, the development of a new identity and how she felt her native speaker status was perceived.

Teaching and adjusting to being an ALT

Rose began teaching five weeks after the start of the academic year because of her predecessor’s sudden decision to leave the company. Due to her late arrival, she did not go through the five-day induction training provided by her company for new teachers. Naturally as a new ALT Rose experienced some anxiety about getting the job done, but despite feeling that she had been

“thrown in the deep end” she said she worked very hard to plan effective lessons. Rose acknowledges that, “Having one school means a bit more work sometimes, because you’re their main ALT. Sometimes at the end of the year, the teachers they don’t know what to do so the ALT is the one they see.” The workload, though challenging at times, was not the most demanding aspect of her work as she indicated below:

The hardest thing is trying to keep up this personality that the company wants me to have and the school wants me to have. It’s almost as if they forget that I’m a human being and I just don’t want to be happy and smiley and the fun one. Because they expect me as an ALT to just go into the classroom and be like ‘Yea! Let’s go!’ but sometimes I’m just not feeling it, but I have to fake it because that’s the job. Naturally, I am like that but I can’t be that every day. All the time.’

Although this excerpt shows Rose’s understanding of what is expected of her as the ALT, she feels that this expectation is a denial of her individuality as a human being. Previous studies of ALTs have reported that teachers sometimes feel like “specimens of a foreign culture” (Seargeant, 2009, p. 56). This denial of individuality can, as it was for Rose, be emotionally draining for ALTs. She also describes the JTEs surprise at her work ethic and overall demeanour at work:

It’s like they’re shocked! ALT works hard! Who did they have before? I think it’s because I’m not really a complainer, if something doesn’t work I’ll try to find a way to adapt and work with it. But when I go home I’ll talk to my mum and de-stress but to them I just say ‘ok, I’ll do it, I’ll make it work’.

This implies that Rose’s attitude toward her work may have differed from the JTE’s expectations, which are perhaps based on their experiences with previous ALTs. According to Sato (2011), there is a belief that dispatch company ALTs are ‘troublemakers’ due to intercultural misunderstandings

between JTEs and ALTs. This may explain why Rose felt that initially the JTEs teachers did not expect her to be easy to work with. They commented on her pleasant demeanour in surprise as Rose recalls one teacher said, ‘Oh you never get upset! You’re always happy and smiling’ and I’m like ok, thank you. Am I supposed to be angry all the time?’”

Before Rose arrived at the school, four ALTs had left within the first semester. Perhaps the JTEs thought that Rose would do the same. She was later told that had she also left, the school would have requested to the BOE not to send anymore ALTs from that dispatch company.

Although Rose feels that she has now proven herself to be a valuable ALT, she also believes that her good reputation could easily be lost. A situation concerning a student illustrates this. Before coming to Japan, Rose had worked as a professional dancer and used her dancing skills to connect with the students by volunteering to help the students in the dance club. In her second year, a male student asked Rose to perform only with him. As a teacher, Rose thought this would be inappropriate as it would mean rehearsing alone together. Furthermore, this would have been against the dispatch company’s policy and a violation of the labour law. Had she agreed, she could have been dismissed. Rose explains the teachers’ attitudes as follows:

... they didn’t seem to understand. It’s almost as if I’m not allowed to say no, they, (the teachers) were like ‘but’... there’s no ‘but! ‘They can’t seem to understand me saying no and I explained that its company policy and said if there were two students its fine but not just with him. But I don’t know if they were trying to spare his feelings or what but they spun the story anyway they want to. So, some of the students were so visibly upset and crying. I’m just like sorry but I’m not going to change my mind though because they need to learn that if somebody says no, that means no.

The situation escalated to where the head of the English department had to intervene and diffuse the situation, though it seems strange that even he

was unaware of the constraints of the labour law. This raises questions as to why the teachers would put Rose and the student in this potentially awkward position? Any answer would be conjecture, but it does indicate that JTEs view ALTs very differently and this may have something to do with their differing statuses.

Relationship with teachers

In this section, I will show how Rose feels about her relationships with the JTEs and her development as an instructor over time. Rose works with ten JTEs, five females and five males. Rose plans and teaches all of her lessons by herself, and in accordance with the dispatch law, the JTE as the qualified teacher must be present during classes (Hashimoto, 2013). The JTE's are usually passive, and according to Rose, they mainly position themselves at the back of the classroom.

According to the dispatch law, JTEs are not supposed to make requests directly to the ALT. All communication or requests from the school or JTEs must be given via the company. However, Rose is at the same school every day, and filtering information through the company takes valuable time. As a result, the JTEs talk to Rose directly. However, this could be considered a violation of the dispatch law. To avoid this, Rose was instructed by her company to consider any requests from the JTEs as 'suggestions'. The JTEs willingness to discuss classroom issues with Rose suggests that the JTEs have a huge amount of trust in Rose and this she feels has given her more confidence and helped her develop as a teacher. In reply to how she feels her teaching has changed, she said:

I'm more confident, it's easier. When things don't work and its very rare that they don't work now, it's easier for me to think on my feet and fix it. Or when the class is finished I'll change it. I'm not anxious anymore, I used to be extremely nervous and anxious all the time, but now I have fun with it, I role with the punches.

Rose also feels comfortable enough with the teachers to make suggestions when asked on how to improve classes. She has created a number of initiatives to increase student motivation, such as an English newsletter and a reward system that can help students increase their test scores. Rose also collaborates with the JTEs to create lessons that complement the material taught in the JTE's classes. For these reasons perhaps, students are also tested on the content of Rose's classes too. This is unusual as ALTs' lessons are often seen as having no academic merit (Miyazato, 2009). Rose explains that she takes pride in creating lessons that give students the opportunity to apply the grammar structures they have learned in conversation and believes that "the students are having such a good time, they don't realise that they are learning." Rose's status as a dispatch company ALT makes her an outsider at the school, but nonetheless, her work is valued. Teachers feel able to communicate with her about classes even though she is still learning to speak Japanese.

Although Rose has been successful in creating good working relationships she has found it somewhat difficult to create amicable relationships with the teachers. Research shows that creating personal connections in the workplace can lead to a pleasant working environment and more efficient workers (Davies, 2015). For Rose, social interaction with the JTEs is very limited and she feels that the majority of JTEs "...only speak to me if they have to", thus highlighting her outsider status. The only JTE who conversed with Rose outside of lessons was her previous supervisor, who having lived in the UK for two years, knew how it felt to be an outsider. Unfortunately, he was transferred to a new school at the start of the 2017 academic year. Concerning the other JTEs Rose says "...none of the other teachers would really speak to me unless we're going to class then they would appear friendly but if I pass them in the hallway it's almost like they would look through me. It's like unless we're teaching together, I don't exist." She feels that when polite conversation does take place it often serves only to highlight her foreigner status, she recounts that female teachers in particular often comment on her clothes:

I wore a pink shirt once and every five minutes a teacher would ask me, ‘oh did you buy that shirt in Japan?’ and I would say no in Jamaica. And they would say ‘well it’s just so bright we don’t really sell those in Japan’ and it wasn’t inappropriate, it was long sleeved up to my neck, it was just pink and I had a jacket on over it. So, you could only see a hint of it. It wasn’t like oh my god she’s wearing a neon colour.

This may have been the JTEs attempt at chitchat but it served to highlight Rose’s outsider status, to point out that she was different.

Thus far Rose’s attempts to create meaningful relationships with the teachers have largely been unsuccessful and one of the reasons for this may be due to her status as an outsider and as an ALT.

Development of a new identity

As a Jamaican, being in Japan is for Rose the first time to be a visible minority and the first time to identify as a black person. Regarding this new identity she said, “I know I’m a black woman but I’ve never seen myself outside of my Jamaican bubble.” In Japan, Rose feels that she has lost all the privileges that having majority status in a society can bring. Racially motivated incidents that have happened to Rose outside of school have made her realise that some Japanese are fearful of black people and may perceive her negatively because of her race. When in the first year of teaching she encountered two teachers who appeared to genuinely dislike her for no apparent reason. She tried to understand why but finally she conceded that being either foreign or black may have had something to do with it. She said, “I don’t know if it’s a foreigner thing or because I’m black, I just don’t know.” Until coming to Japan she had never had to factor race into how she was perceived by others, unlike minorities living in countries like the UK. This development of a minority consciousness is new for Rose. This is reminiscent of W.E.B. Du Bois’ concept of double consciousness (Du Bois, 1989). But instead of looking at herself through the eyes of a racist white society, Rose is seeing herself through what she defines as a “xenophobic

Japan”. This creation of a new consciousness is important because it affects how she interacts with JTES and how she interprets their actions or attitude towards her.

A ‘real’ Native speaker

Rose has come to realize some Japanese people have a preference for white foreigners. There is a belief in Japan that ideal speakers of English and therefore ideal English language teachers are white and from either the UK or US. (Matsuda, 2002). In her school, the arrival of a white part-time male ALT from the UK seemed to illustrate this. Initially his arrival caused a lot of excitement amongst the JTEs. Rose feels this may be due to his Japanese ability, but there were other factors as explained below:

... the first things I heard about him were that he was tall, handsome and could speak perfect Japanese. I don’t mean to sound prejudice but he walks around like he owns the school. And because he’s more confident with Japanese, they seem to be friendlier with him, even some of the teachers who aren’t friendly with me. I’m not sure if it’s because he speaks Japanese or because he’s male and white. I think it’s a combination.

The new ALT may also be advantaged by Japan’s patriarchal society and the foreign male dominated sub-culture of TESOL (Hicks, 2010).

Initially, Rose thought that the JTEs seemed to be more comfortable working with him because he was given a special work assignment that had previously been Rose’s. Although she was upset by this, she decided to respond by being even more conscientious and making more effort to interact with the JTEs outside of classes. This strategy seems to be working as the JTEs are once more entrusting Rose with special work assignments. She explains, “I’ve proven myself based on my work ethic and the quality of work given.”

Another important point connected to the image of the native speaker that

Rose believes affects the JTE's perception of her, is her nationality. Rose feels that for some JTEs her nationality delegitimizes her as a native speaker. She believes this is the reason that some JTEs repeatedly ask her questions about the languages spoken in Jamaica. As Rose explains:

They are trying to confirm it but they do it in a kind of ...the Japanese way, a passive way. They want to know that it is English and they're trying to make it sound like a friendly question, they'll ask, 'Is English the only language that Jamaicans speaks?' or 'are there any other languages?', or 'what's the main language?' And I'll say well the official language is English, then some teachers would also go into, 'oh but you also speak Jamaican?' And I'm like yes, but the official language is English, we are educated in English, the legal system is in English. That is our official language.

Rose thinks that they are politely trying to challenge her right to teach English in Japan: "They aren't disrespectful with the questions but there is almost like a shock or a disbelief that Jamaicans speak English."

This apparent challenge to Rose's native speaker status exemplifies how problematic it can be to separate English users into native and non-native categories, it "...perpetuates racist/classist assumptions about language and simultaneously undermines the complexity of actual language users in the world" (Nero, 2010, p. 29). In the Japanese context, these "racist/classist assumptions" often mean that white native speakers from western countries are viewed as the ideal English language teachers despite the professionalism and dedication of many non-white teachers like Rose (Matsuda, 2002).

Some JTEs' reactions to Rose's nationality also reveal that there appears to be a hierarchy amongst English speakers of the African diaspora. Rose recounts: "Once I say I'm Jamaican they tend to loosen up. They kind of relax more. Or if some of them don't know where Jamaica is they go, 'Jamaica, Africa?' Once I say no, they kind of sigh and relax." Some JTEs apparent relief that Rose is not African implies they may have hierarchical ideas about the varieties of English taught or perhaps they have negative views about

people from the African continent.

Summary and Conclusion

The previous sections detailed Rose's adjustment to her role as an ALT and the factors that influence how she is perceived in that role. This section will discuss how Wenger's (1998) theory of identity can be applied to Rose's situation before summarizing the main factors that influence Rose's professional identity construction. By applying Wenger's theory, we can see that Rose's professional identity is shaped by participation and non-participation in her school's community of practice.

On the one hand, she participates by fulfilling the requirements of her job, by carefully teaching and planning her lessons and by supporting the JTEs by giving ideas and suggestions when requested. She also takes on extra duties by volunteering to help with the dance club which shows her willingness to participate. On the other she does not have full participation in her school's CoP because as a low status ALT, she is on a peripheral trajectory in relation to the JTEs whose status is higher. Rose would like to feel more involved in the school but she is aware of the limitations of her position. She says, "I would like to feel more included in the school. In most ways, I'm still on the outside looking in ...but I need to remember that I am an ALT, an assistant." As a foreigner and a dispatch ALT she is on an outbound trajectory. This is supported by her imagination which allows her to adopt an identity as a competent ALT. At the same time, however, she also knows that the job is temporary.

The primary factors that shape Rose's professional identity are her status as a dispatch ALT and the expectations and demands of the job. In this area, we can see that she has gained more teaching experience, resulting in confidence in the classroom. Her complicated relationships with the teachers are an expression of her outside status even though professionally they work well together. JTEs who question her native speaker status also impact upon her professional identity as it seems to challenge her right to teach English in Japan. This, however, motivates her to work even harder. Rose's identity

is also shaped by how she now identifies as a black woman in Japan. Her perception of self and of those around her have changed and she is beginning to develop a “double consciousness”.

Conclusion

This small-scale study reveals some important factors that show how a dispatch ALT's professional identity is shaped. Some of these factors are applicable to all dispatch ALTs regardless of race and gender. However, factors related to race such as “double consciousness” are less likely to apply to all ALTs but rather to those who become minorities for the first time in Japan. What is unique to Rose is the development of a global black identity and a double consciousness as it relates to being a black person in Japan. Contrary to negative opinions of dispatch ALTs and black people in Japan, Rose is an exemplary ALT. However due to low salary and no upward mobility Rose intends to move on in the future. Dispatch companies should implement better working conditions and salary. This may mean that ALT turnover would be lower, thus providing continuity and benefitting the company, schools, JTEs and ultimately the students.

Dispatch companies also need to make sure that all ALTs are adequately trained before they get to their schools, even if they, arrive after the start of the semester as Rose did. It is also essential that companies provide adequate cross-cultural training before ALTs arrive at their schools. JTEs would also benefit from studying abroad so that like Rose's former supervisor they can understand the experience of being a linguistic and cultural minority, and thus more easily able to empathise with ALTs who are new to their schools and/or Japan. Finally, it is also important to call into question JTEs beliefs about native speakers race and national identity and to teach from the perspective that there are varieties of English worldwide and therefore varieties of native speakers.

Note

- 1 The Jamaican referred to is called Patios, and it is a form of pigeon English also known as Jamaican Creole.

References

- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Thematic analysis: Coding as a process for transforming qualitative information*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Breckenridge, Y., & Erling, E. J. (2011). The native speaker English teacher and the politics of globalization in Japan. In P. Seargeant (ed.) *English in Japan in the era of globalization* (pp. 80–100). London, England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge: Harvard university press.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Collins Hill, P. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. NY: Routledge.
- Condry, I. (2006). *Hip-hop Japan: Rap and the paths of cultural globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Davies, W. (2015). *The happiness industry: How the government and big business sold us well-being*. London: Verso books.
- Few, A.L., Stephens, D.P. & Rouse-Arnett, M. (2003). Sister-to sister talk: Transcending boundaries and challenges in qualitative research with black women. *Family Relations*, 52, 205–215.
- Flynn, C. (2011). ALT furniture: A look at ALT contracts. *The Language Teacher* 33. Retrieved from <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/job-info-centre/articles/532-alt-furniture-look-dispatch-alt-contracts>.
- Geluso, J. (2013). Negotiating a professional identity: non-Japanese teachers of English in pre-tertiary education in Japan. In S. Houghton and D. Rivers (eds) *Native-speakerism in Japan: intergroup dynamics in foreign language education* (pp. 92–104). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Greene, M. J. (2014). On the inside looking in: methodological insights and challenges in conducting qualitative insider research. *The Qualitative Report* 19, 1–13.
- Hashimoto, K. (2013). The construction of the ‘native-speaker’ in Japan’s educational Policies for TEFL. In S. Houghton and D. Rivers (eds) *Native-speakerism in Japan intergroup dynamics in foreign language education* (pp. 159–169). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Hick, S. (2013). On the (out)skirts of TESOL networks of homophily: Substantive citizenship in Japan, in S, Houghton and D. Rivers (eds) *Native-speakerism in*

- Japan: intergroup dynamics in foreign language education* (pp. 147–158). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Houghton, S. and Rivers, D. (eds) (2013). *Native-speakerism in Japan intergroup dynamics in foreign language education* (pp. 159–169). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Kachru, B. B. (1982) (ed.) *The other tongue: English across cultures*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Kastiro, K. (2014). The portrayal of black people in manga and anime [web log comment]. Retrieved from <https://japansociology.com/2014/10/19/the-portrayal-of-black-people-in-manga-and-anime>.
- Kikuchi, D. (2016). Japan's dispatched ALTs struggle without a safety net. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/06/15/national/japans-dispatched-alt-s-truggle-without-safety-net/> (accessed 1st September 2017).
- Matsuda, A. (2002). The ownership of English in Japanese secondary schools. *World Englishes*, 22 (4), 483–496.
- McConnell, D. L. (2000). *Importing diversity inside Japan's JET Program*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- McCrostie, J. (2017). As Japan's JET program hits its 30s, the jury's still out. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2017/05/03/issues/japans-jet-programme-hits-30s-jurys-still/#.Wflw60yQ3-Y> (accessed 1st September 2017).
- McLennon, T. K. (2014). *TrailBlasian: Black women living in East Asia: An anthology*. Aurora, Ontario: Excelovate.
- McNeil, B. (2017). Meet the man who gets frisked by the Tokyo police five times a year. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2017/01/22/ourlives/meet-man-gets-frisked-tokyo-police-five-times-year/#.Wfl5tEyQ3-Y> (accessed September 3rd 2017).
- Mirza, H. S. (ed) (1997). *Black British feminism: A reader*, London: Routledge.
- Miyazato, K. (2009). Power-sharing between NS and NNS teachers: Linguistically powerful AETs vs. culturally powerful JTEs. *JALT Journal*, 31, 35–62.
- Nagatomo, D. H. (2015). How being an “insider” or an “outsider” shapes EFL teachers’ professional identity: One teacher’s story from Japan. *Asian EFL Journal*, 17 (3), 111–130.
- Nagatomo, D. H. (2012). *Exploring Japanese university teachers' professional identity*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Nero, S. (2010). An exceptional voice: Working as a TESOL professional of color. In A. Curtis and M. Romney (eds) *Color, race, and English language teaching: Shades of meaning* (pp. 23–36). New York: Routledge.

- Russell, J. (1991). Race and reflexivity: The Black other in contemporary Japanese mass culture. *Cultural Anthropology*, 6, 3–25.
- Russell, J. (1998). Consuming passions: spectacle, self-transformation and the commodification of blackness in Japan. *Positions*, 6 (1), 113–177.
- Sato, Y. (2011). When public education meets educational business: A case study of a newly employed assistant language teacher. *JALT Conference Proceedings*, 744–750.
- Sergeant, P. (2009). *The idea of English in Japan: Ideology and the evolution of a global language*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Takeda, Y. (2017). *More than a tape-recorder Negotiations of English language teacher identities in the JET program in Japan* “Masters thesis”. The University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.