On teaching (in) English in Japan as foreign, female, and 'nonnative'
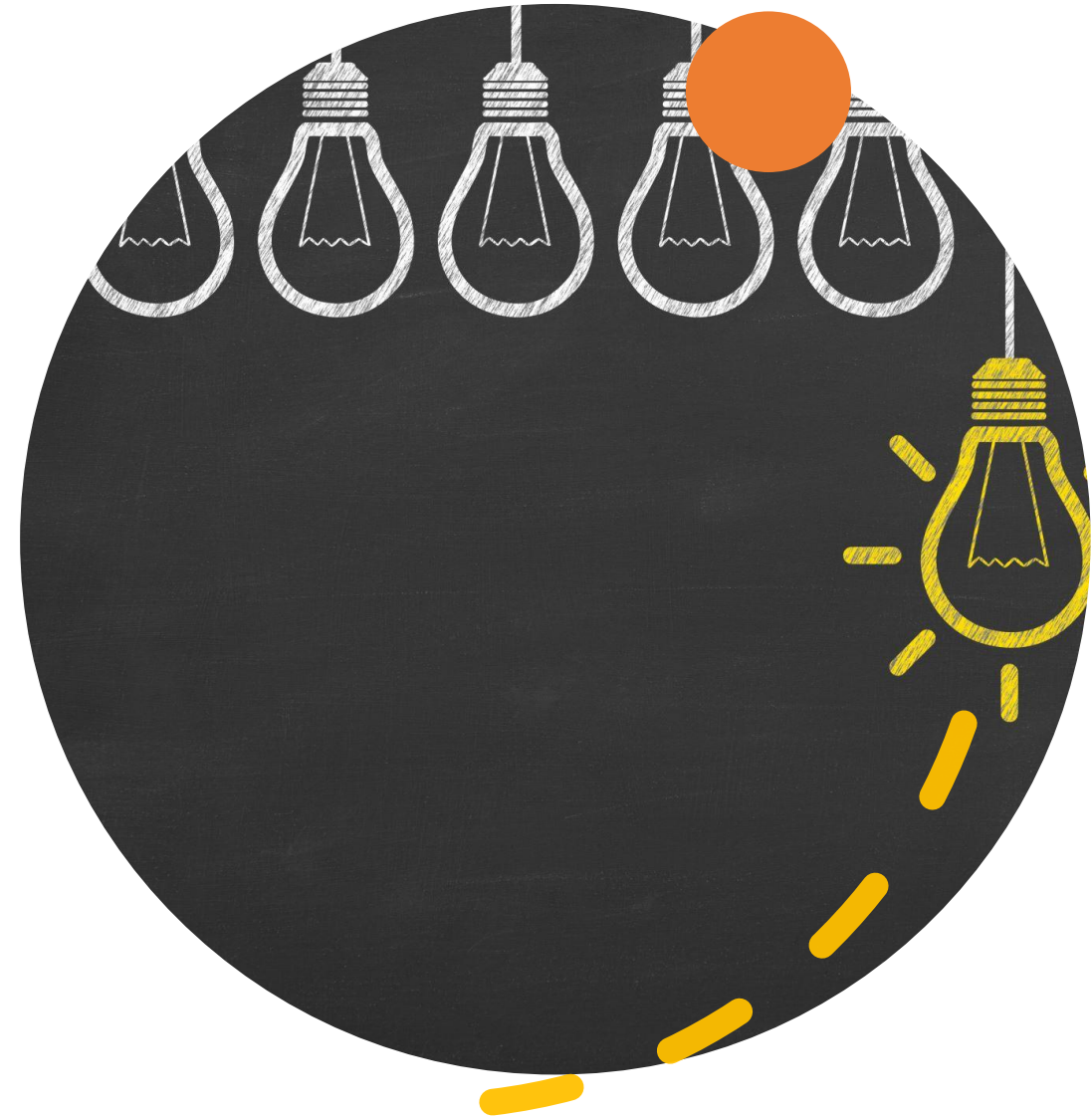
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CENTRE FOR GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION

Our paper:
Native-Speakerism in Higher Education Through the Eyes of Non-Japanese NNESTs

My Educational Background

- Bachelor's 2010

Persian Language, Literature, and Linguistics

- Master's 2016

Internationalization of Higher Education

- PhD 2019

Critical Studies in Transformative Education

First exposure: 2014 – Professor Nobuyuki Hino's class

Diverse lab (2014 – 2019) – never felt marginalized

Since 2019 (after graduation) – job hunting

Joe Norris, Richard Sawyers introduced duoethnography as a research method about 10 years ago

Duoethnography

- "a **collaborative research** methodology"

- Researchers "juxtapose their life histories to **provide multiple understandings** of the world" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 9).

- "[Duoethnographers] **use themselves** to assist themselves and others in **better understanding the phenomenon under investigation**" (p.13).
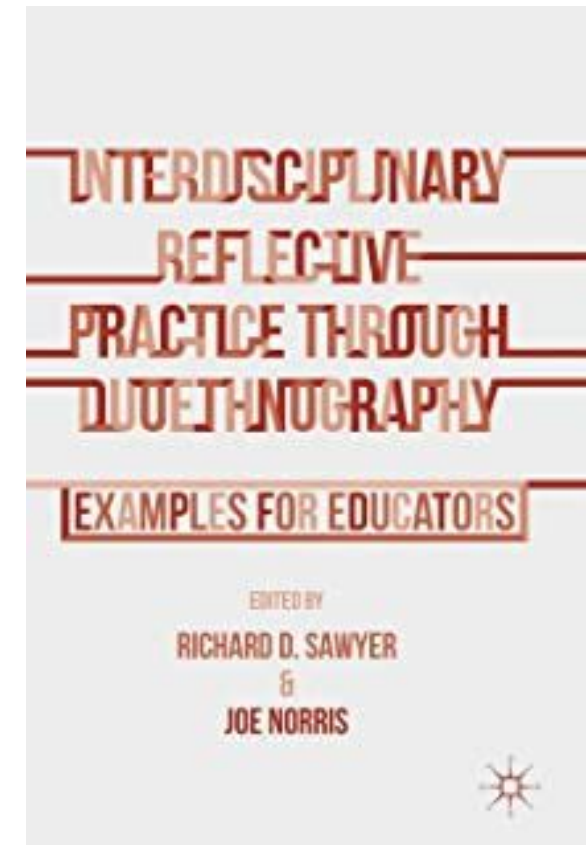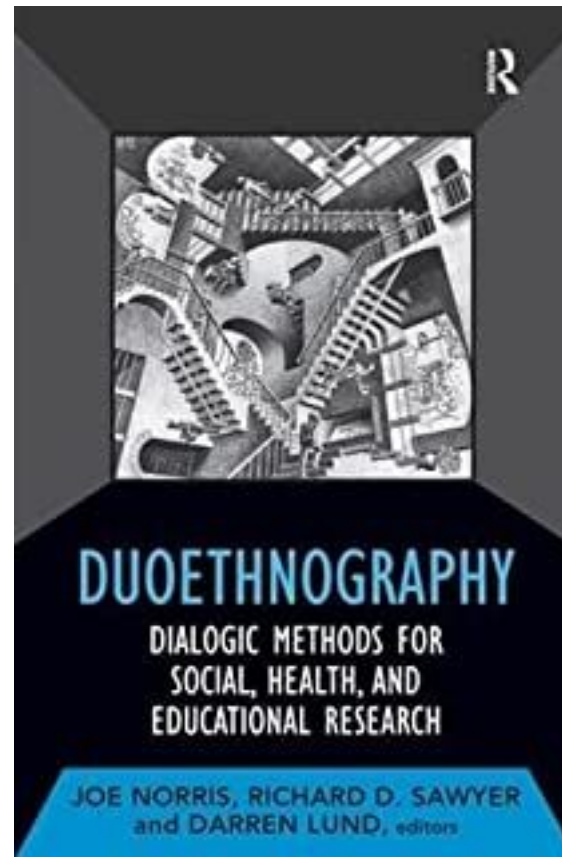
Why Duoethnography

—

- **Examine** [our] **practice** (Sawyer & Norris, 2016)

- How we remember, interpret, co-construct & make sense of events, our (re)actions, feelings—not making a "truth claim" (Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012, p. 20)

- It also helps us "learn from [our] difference[s]" (Sawyer & Norris, 2015)

Duoethnography Literature

Duoethnography Literature: ELT in Japan

Lawrence, L., & Nagashima, Y. (2019).

The intersectionality of gender, sexuality, race, and native-speakerness: investigating ELT teacher identity through duoethnography

Native English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs)

- Native speakerism (2003, Adrian Holliday)
- A culturally "superior" model /label/ideology → English, pedagogy (Holliday, 2018).
- A form of discrimination, linguistic imperialism, racism

- MEXT 2003 '<mark>Action Plan to Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities"</mark>'

"A **native speaker of English** [teacher] provides a valuable opportunity for students to learn living English and familiarize themselves with <mark>foreign languages and cultures</mark>.... The use of a native speaker of English [teacher] has great meaning" (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan (MEXT), 2003, cited in Tsurii, 2019).

"Foreign" language / culture = native English language / culture

The ownership of language (Galloway, 2021)

Farewell to Japanese English (Hisama, 1995)
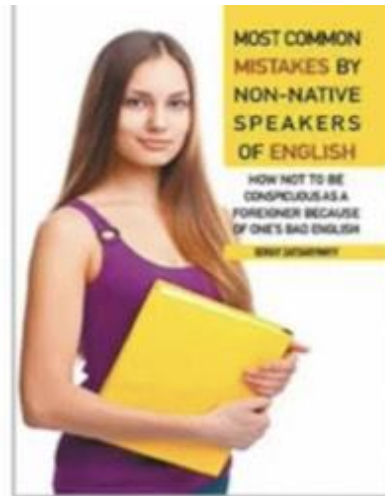
Non-native speakers
Zatsarynnyy (2014)
Most Common Mistakes by Non-Native Speakers of English. Strategic Book Publishing & Rights Agency.

Common Mistakes of Japanese English Speakers (Kobayashi, 1998)

A Native English Speaker Would Say it This Way (Williamson & Katsuki, 2005)

Native
Archer (2015)
Learn English: 300% Faster. Createspace Independent Publishing.

How your English sounds to Native Speakers (Thayne & Koike, 2008)

Native English-speaking teachers (NESTs)
vs
Japanese teachers of English (JTEs)

Communication in English I・II	Communication in English III・IV
Non-native English Speaker （日本人教員）	Native Speaker of English

Japanese Teachers

Not one common definition of NESTs, but mostly as opposed to Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) (e.g., Matsuda, 2002; Sutherland, 2012; Yazawa, 2017)

A disparity between NESTS & JTEs
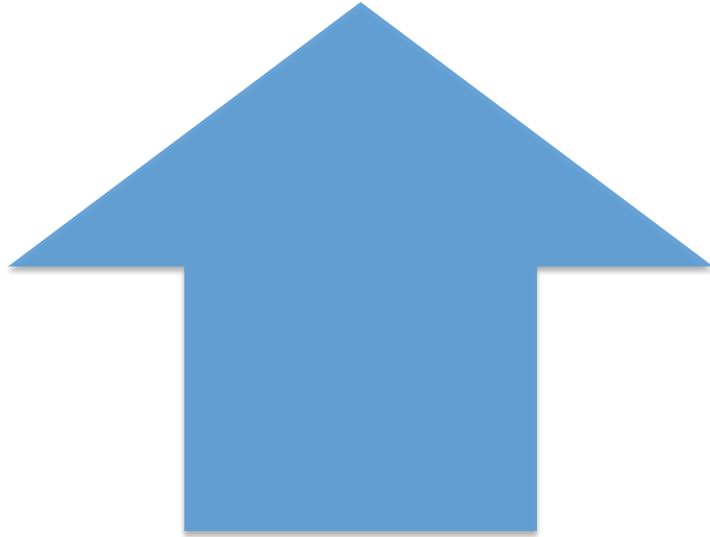
NESTs: Role model (especially in terms of pronunciation, accent, and knowledge about foreign cultures), The producers of "*real* English" accuracy or authenticity

Predominance of "White" English teachers, social media, *Eikaiwa*

JETs: more Tenure positions
Team teaching, security and support (classroom interaction), **grammar**

# A shortage of research from a bottom-up standpoint

- Research in Europe, the US, the United Kingdom: a greater value on qualities of a teacher (pedagogical, linguistic, and personal) rather than on a teacher's nationality and/or linguistic background (e.g., Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014, p. 1), questioning native speakerism (e.g., Mahboob, 2004; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999)

- Better English proficiency → desire for having NET (Colmenero & Lasagabaster, 2020).

- A shortage of research in East and Southeast Asia

In Japanese context

- A clear distinction between NESTs and JTEs (e.g., Yuzawa, 2017)
- Negative attitudes towards Japanese students' own English: correctness (*real* English), favoring Anglo-American English (e.g., Ishikawa, 2016)
- Moving forward: de-Anglo Americanized English for multicultural expression, Importance of Japanese values (e.g., Hino, 2018)

Data Collection

1. Emails
2. Google doc diary

   + comments (December 2021 ~ December 2022)

1. Zoom (3 times, 2021-2022)
2. F2F meeting

*Getting to know each other
   on social media
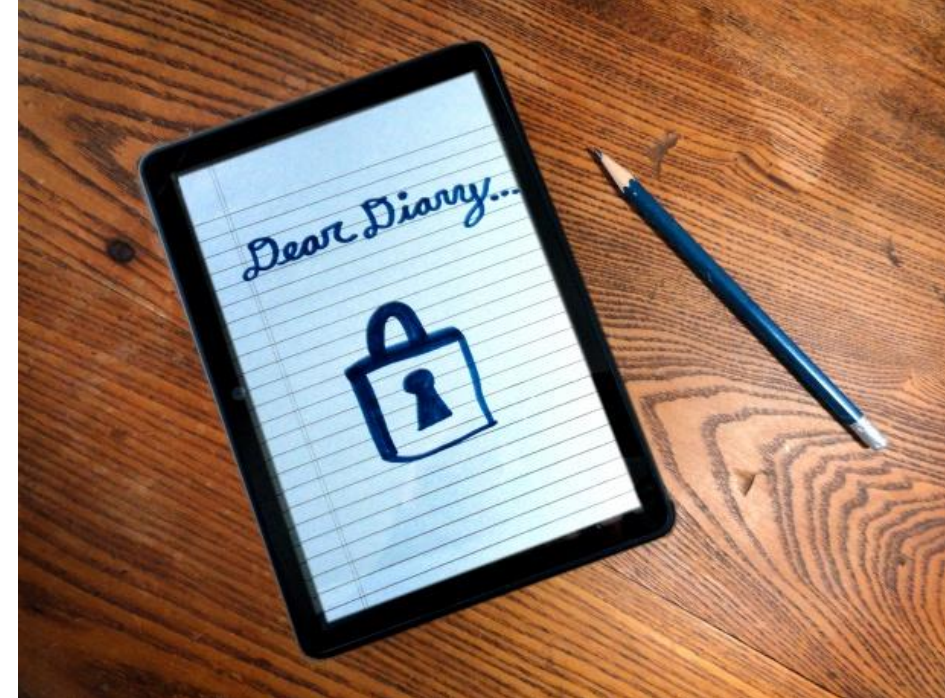
Themes

1. Job search
2. Work environment
3. Students & teacher identity

Positionality (Mahboubeh)

- Iranian Japanese (naturalized recently) – still counted as non-J teacher

- "Nn English speaker" (Expanding Circle)

- Educated in Iran (until 22) & Japan (graduate level)

- Multilingual - Persian/Farsi (L1), English (L2), Japanese (L3), Arabic & French (L4)

- Married, two children, working full-time

- Enabled agency as a woman in Japan compared to Iran, despite male-dominated ELT at Japanese universities (McCandie, 2021; Nagatomo et al., 2020)

- Marginalized as a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) – job hunting; lucky enough to have supportive work environments

- Professional identity grown during the emergency online teaching

Findings 1- Job search

Not being eligible for so many jobs

Positive experience for eligibility: Speaking examiner, my current job

"Where did you meet your husband? What's his job?"

"Will your family mind if you teach a class that starts at 7PM?"

"So, what are your thoughts on the possibility of a war between Iran and the US?"

"Where are you from"?   "Iran" "Oh!" [stopped talking to me]"

"We circulated your cv during a meeting today and some Japanese teachers were concerned about hiring what they constructed as non- native speaker…"

Findings 2 - Work environment

- Marginalized (gender, first language) - small talk

Microaggressions – "non-native"

"You had a *grammar mistake* in your materials today."
"Do you know the meaning of -----"? [not waiting for my response.
Teaching the vocabulary]

- Working in teams, supportive director, supportive environment
- Pedagogy - COIL, Global English[es], Critical language pedagogy (CLP)

Supportive work environment - director

Yalda Night: an ancient Persian festival that marks the longest night of the year, the winter solstice.

"I'm thinking about you all the time with all the stuff in Iran. Must be so difficult, scary, distracting…"

Findings 3 – Teacher identity & relationships with students

"When I see people use phrases like "raining cats and dogs" like our teacher, I'm so impressed and think oh! She is a native speaker!"

"Oh wow! You mostly learned English in Japan! I'd like to speak English like you in the future".

Teacher identity and agency

- Course Materials (developed, interactive)- materials from diverse countries and backgrounds to provide opportunities for students to learn and think about different cultures –e.g., Xreading graded readers
- Open about my English L2 identity, my Iranian background - e.g., Kahoot quiz about Iran

Global Englishes

- discussion- what students already know in order to build cultural awareness about diversity in English
- showcasing the differences even among the native varieties of English,
- internet research and group work to learn about different varieties of English
- ownership of English
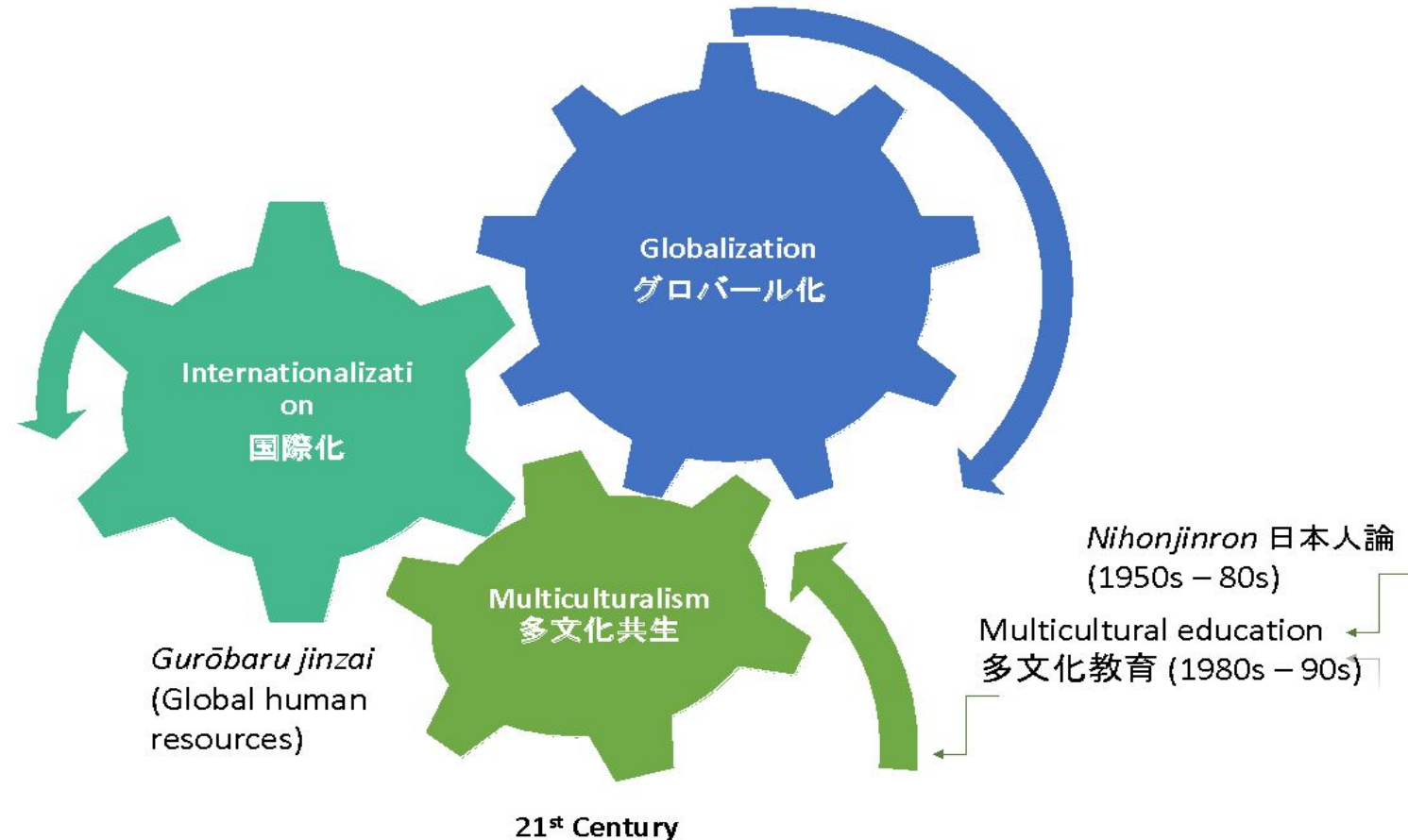- reflect on own identities as L2 speakers of English

Examples

Internationalization of Higher Education - CLIL course
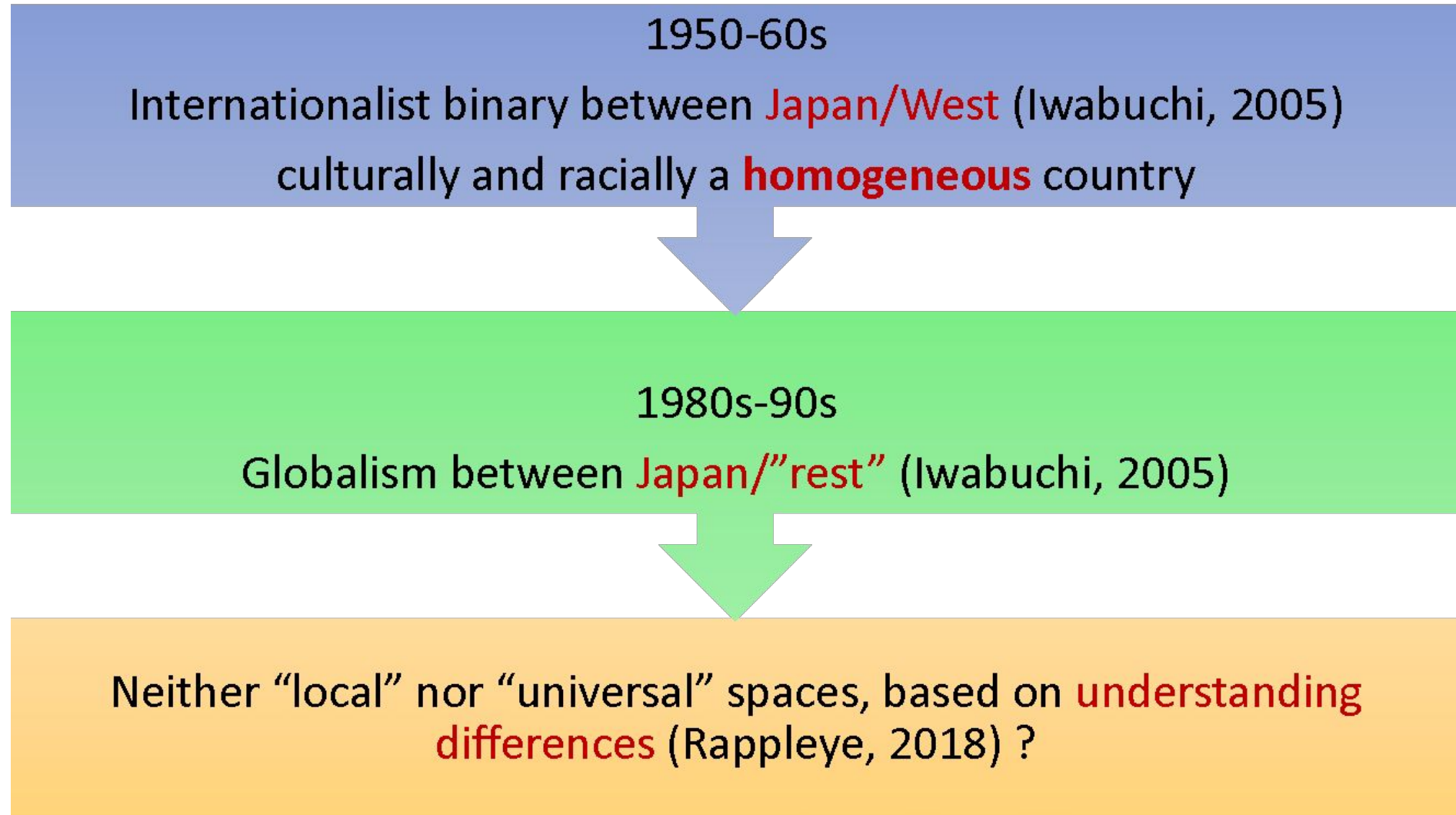# Focus on multiculturalism with COIL component

- Team-based learning
- Listen to, understand, and draw on the stories and narratives of students

Globalization
グローバル化

Internationalizati
on
国際化

Multiculturalism
多文化共生

Gurōbaru jinzai
(Global human
resources)

Nihonjinron 日本人論
(1950s – 80s)

Multicultural education
多文化教育 (1980s – 90s)

21st Century

Internationalization of Higher Education - CLIL course Examples of Japanese TV Programs regarding multiculturalism

- viewing issues from different perspectives
- relatable examples & small group discussion

1950-60s

Internationalist binary between Japan/West (Iwabuchi, 2005)

culturally and racially a **homogeneous** country

1980s-90s

Globalism between Japan/"rest" (Iwabuchi, 2005)

Neither "local" nor "universal" spaces, based on understanding differences (Rappleye, 2018) ?

Internationalization of Higher Education - CLIL course

"I feel my opinion about multiculturalism was changed compared to the first lesson… When I belong to a community of diverse people or interact with diverse people as a member of society, I want to reevaluate diversity and identity"

The US, Mexico, Germany, Türkiye

•Let's watch a video to see how different UK vs. USA vs. AUS English/es can be!

https://youtu.be/66aG5P0kQpU?feature=shared&t=184

How many
countries are
there in the
world today?

Discuss your answer
in groups.

How many countries are there in the world today?

Around 200

What is the world population today?

Discuss your answer in groups.

What is the world population today?

About 8 billion

How many people (or what percentage of people) speak English today?
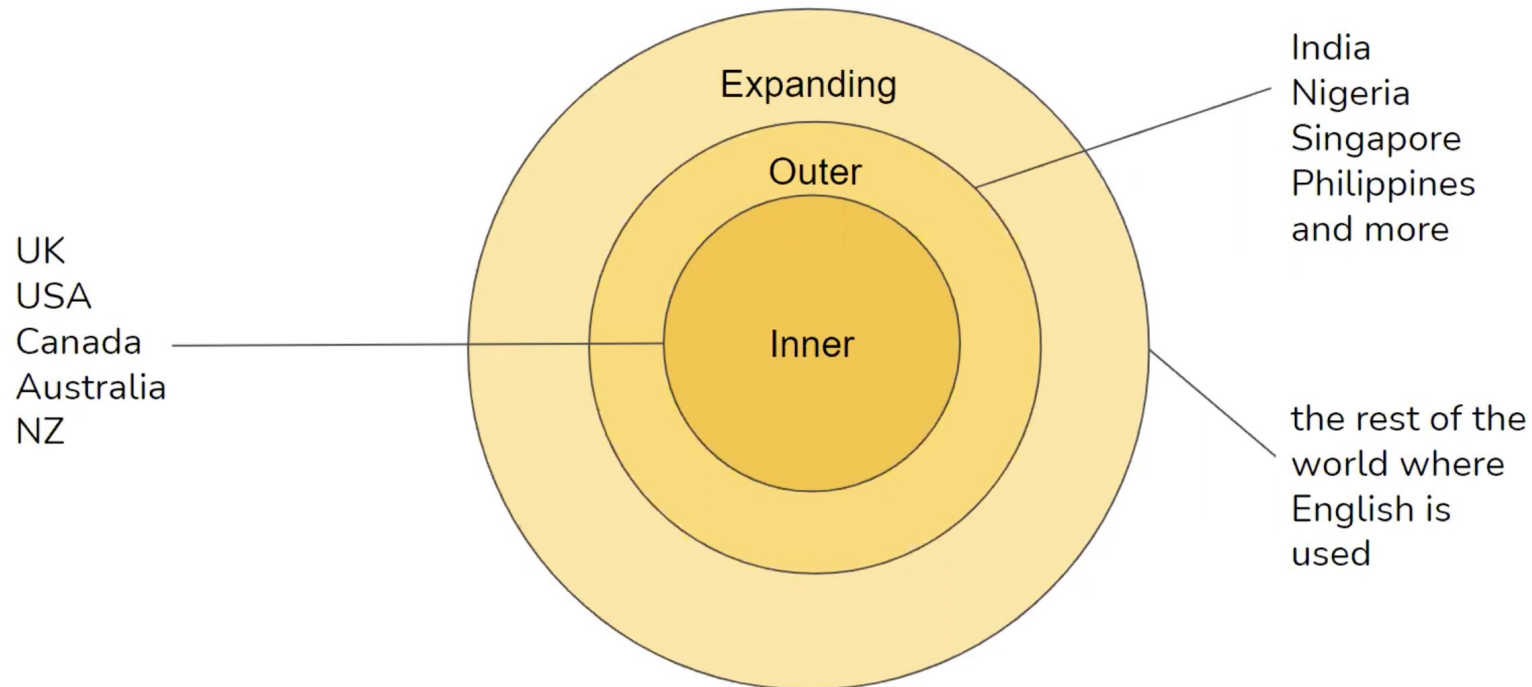
Discuss your answer in groups.

Can you estimate the number or percentage of each type of English user?

Three concentric circles

UK
USA
Canada
Australia
NZ

Expanding

Outer

Inner

India
Nigeria
Singapore
Philippines
and more

the rest of the world where English is used

# The number and percentage of each type of English user

20% Inner circle (e.g., US, UK, etc.) about 380 million

27% Outer circle (e.g., India, Singapore, etc.) about 300-500 million

53% Expanding circle (e.g., China, Russia, Japan, etc.) about 500-1000 million
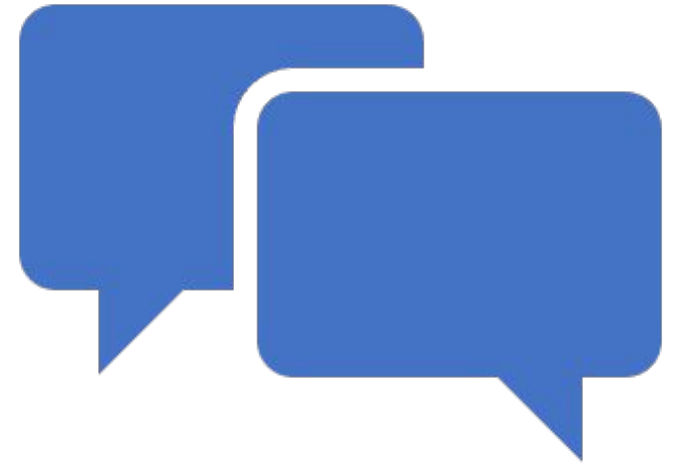
80% non-native English speakers (multilingual speakers)

What countries do you think have used these pictures in English language materials? Why?
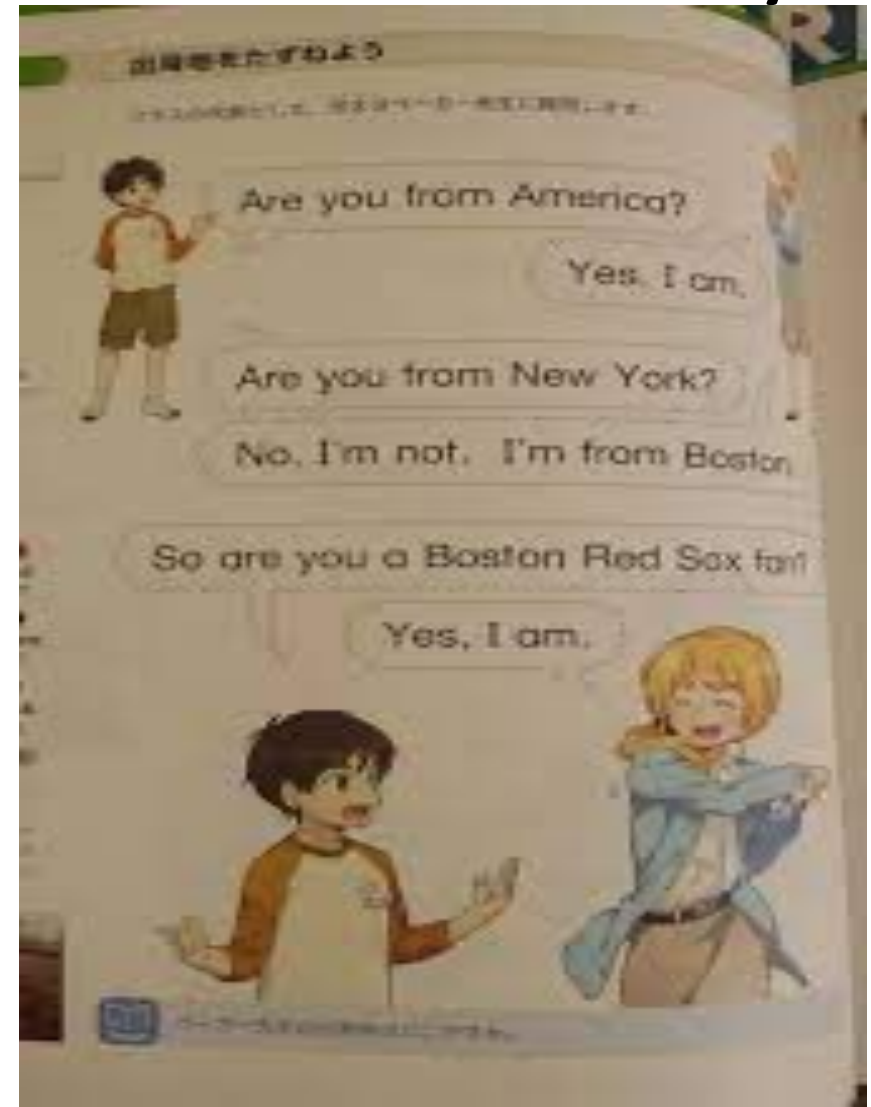
Have you ever had any problems communicating with English speakers?

What issues have you had and what have you done to make the communication work?

Conclusion

- A need for more duoethnography in language teaching

  esp. related to privilege: gender intersected with L1 status/nationality, accent, race, etc.

  - hiring practices
  - ownership of English language (learner/teacher)
  - workplace support

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Thank you so much!
ありがとうございました！
خیلی ممنون

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