

DECONSTRUCTING NARRATIVE IDENTITY  
IN  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHER INTERVIEWS IN JAPANESE AND ENGLISH

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is the third of three modules, and explores narrative identity in interviews with English language teachers. It offers an analysis of how speakers used linguistic resources to construct identities for themselves during life story interviews. Both interviewer (the author) and interviewees (21 native English speakers and 21 native Japanese speakers) taught English in Japan. All interviews were conducted in the interviewee's native language. The analysis therefore consists of a contextualised cross-linguistic description of the linguistic resources employed by speakers for expressing identity. I use this analysis to address the role of the 'native speaker' in English language teaching in Japan (introduced in Module 2) through a fresh analysis that includes the perspectives of 'non-native' teachers. In terms of theory, this module offers a response to the general question: 'What differences are there between narratives told in Japanese and English?' (posed in Module 1). In turn, my answers to this are used to inform pedagogic proposals (the principal focus of Module 1) on the development of a pedagogic model of narrative suitable for Japanese learners of English.

49,990 words (excluding tables, figures and reference list)

*for Noriko, Leon and Emma*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ALT	Assistant Language Teacher
CA	Conversation Analysis
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELT	English language teaching
JET	Japan Exchange and Teaching (Programme) – also used to refer to teachers on the programme
JTE	Japanese teacher of English
M&W	J.R. Martin and White (2005)
NET	Native English (speaker) Teacher
TESOL	Teaching English as a Second or Other Language
S&C	Sinclair and Coulthard (1992)

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part.                      Shakespeare, AYLI: II-vii (Hattoway, 2000: 124)

<i>Dad, oh Dad, my Dad,</i>	(Dad having breakfast with his son.)
<i>At the office you're an office worker,</i>	(Travelling to the office.)
<i>When you are working you're the 'Section Chief'</i>	(Giving directions to one of his staff)
<i>At the cafeteria you're the customer</i>	(Ordering lunch at a restaurant)
<i>Dad, oh Dad, my Dad,</i>	
<i>When you visit the dentist you're the patient,</i>	(Being treated by the dentist)
<i>When you walk down the street you're a passer-by,</i>	(Taking a leaflet from a woman on the street)
<i>Dad, oh Dad, my Dad,</i>	
<i>When you take classes you're a student,</i>	(At an English conversation class)
<i>When you're on the train you're a passenger,</i>	(Standing on a crowded train)
<i>Dad, oh Dad, my Dad,</i>	(Coming home to his flat)
<i>But when you come home to me,</i>	(The door opens and
<i>you're my Dad.</i>	his son greets him with a hug)

(Transcribed and translated from Honma, 2007)

## **1.1 Introduction**

In this module I explore the way a sense of who one is or what one is, is created, negotiated, modified, and regenerated through talk, particularly in the form of personal narratives. I am concerned with how human identity is given shape through narrative discourse and the consequences of this for English language teaching. The two quotations at the head of this chapter illustrate two dimensions of this shaping. In the first passage, a life history is presented as a series of life stages. The second quotation instead focuses on the many faces that an individual may assume in the course of a day. I will return to these quotations later in this chapter, but for the moment it is worth noting that the changing nature of identity, both over a lifetime and through association with particular places even on the same day, means that it is inappropriate to conceive of human identity as fixed; rather identity is something that is best understood in terms of a narrative which encompasses changes in time and place and unites them in a meaningful way. What it means for an individual to be an English teacher in Japan is framed by a variety of factors such as cultural expectations and educational policy, amongst others. It is something that grows out of individual educational experiences and is put into practice through interaction in the classroom, staff meetings and conversations with colleagues, students or their parents. Through such interactions, individuals draw on

discourses they encounter and gradually create for themselves an English teacher identity (though one in a state of flux). To investigate this identity through narrative interviews is partly a process of ‘tapping into’ an evolving life story narrative but is also an act of creating one—the interview itself. Finding out about teachers through the analysis of such interviews is one way of learning about what is going on in education and thereby finding ways to improve it. Examining teacher identity in this way also offered an opportunity to explore a widely used research technique in the social sciences: the narrative interview. In research interviews of the kind discussed here, identity takes shape through discourse, or more specifically through a life story narration, embedded with reports of incidents, plus explanations and rationalisations. As the data I describe consist of interviews in Japanese and English, I am also concerned with differences in the way identity is shaped in Japanese and English. I demonstrate ways in which recounting a personal narrative in Japanese is somehow different from doing the same thing in English, and consider the implications of this for narrative and identity in language teaching.

The focus in this thesis is on teachers of English as a foreign language, a group of people whose professional life is intrinsically involved with linguistic identity. Foreign

language teaching ideally involves promoting the conditions under which students can nurture a foreign seed within themselves; a language which is not their mother tongue, but the language of some foreign Other. If this seed does indeed grow and flourish, and if the foreign language teacher's students acquire for themselves the target language and make it their own, they will not only gain access to the foreign Other, but to some degree invest a part of themselves in this foreign Other. They will become users of the language so that, in a sense, it will no longer be completely foreign. The identity of foreign language teachers is therefore one that is inextricably bound up with the fostering of new identities which reach across the borders of language into foreign cultures. In practice, being a foreign language teacher also involves other challenges to a teacher's own sense of identity. For 'native speakers' who travel to Japan or elsewhere to teach English, it means coming to terms with one's identity as a foreigner as well as the nature of the host culture, perhaps in relation to the place of one's upbringing. For local teachers who have learned the language as a foreign language in the first place, language teacher identity means negotiating a position with regard to one's ability in the foreign language and the culture associated with the language. For all language teachers and perhaps all teachers, there is also the issue of professional identity, and the role they occupy vis-à-vis their students and employers.

## **1.2 Methodological, theoretical and practical aims**

In this thesis I aim to address three interrelated issues in applied linguistics through the analysis and discussion of interviews with English language teachers in Japan; I have methodological, theoretical, and practical objectives. Methodologically, I explore the narrative interview as a research tool and how narrative analysis can be applied when using interviews for qualitative investigations. Theoretically, I focus on the relation between narrative and identity with a particular emphasis on comparing narrative formulations of identity in Japanese and English. From a practical perspective, I look at what can be learned about language teachers that might be relevant to improving English education in Japan. I also have a pedagogical goal in so far as I propose that the analysis presented here might be developed to inform the teaching of English in Japan.

From a methodological perspective, the study discussed here is an exploration of the potential for linguistic analysis to serve as a tool in qualitative research. As with many studies of the experience of English teachers (Bueno and Caesar, 2003; Casanave and Schechter, 1997; Johnson and Golombek, 2002; McConnell, 2000; McVeigh, 2002; Senior, 2006) or students (Benson and Nunan, 2004; Kanno, 2003; Norton, 2000) this

study employed narrative interviews as a way to get under the skin of the human experience of a teaching context. Like these studies, this module aims to find out about the educational context through examining the life history narratives elicited in the course of extended interviews. One point that sets this study apart from them is that after transcribing the interviews my aim was not simply to summarise and present the data in a comprehensible form that would give voice to the participants, but to explore the linguistic organisation of the interview, taking into account both interviewer and interviewee. I argue that extending analysis to incorporate linguistic analysis would be a valuable way of developing qualitative approaches to sociological research.

This module is organised into six chapters. This chapter sets out the background to the study by providing a selective overview of relevant research into narrative identity. In Chapter 2, I outline arguments in favour of a linguistic approach to analysing interviews, introduce the project that is the focus of this module and describe the overall discourse structure of the research interview. Chapter 3 considers resources at work in the construction of a sense of time and place, and how they shape identity in the narratives. Then in Chapter 4, I turn to the role of evaluation in particular. The approach to analysing language draws on methods developed in discourse analysis (Fairclough,

2003; Hoey, 1991; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1992; Watanabe, 1993), systemic functional linguistics (Eggins and Slade, 1997; M. A. K. Halliday, 1994, 2003; J. R. Martin and Rose, 2003), particularly appraisal theory (J. R. Martin and White, 2005) and narrative analysis (Bal, 1997; Clandinin and Connelly, 2004; Cortazzi, 1993; Daiute and Lightfoot, 2004; Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Ochs and Capps, 2001) introduced in previous modules. The principal theoretical focus is on the way in which professional identity is constructed in the course of the interview, and with unearthing some of the differences between Japanese and English spoken narrative in this situation. For this reason, discussion is set in the context of social and psychological theories of the relationship between language and identity (Bourdieu, 1992, 2000; Giddens, 1991; Goffman, 1959; Sarangi and Baynham, 1996; Taylor, 1989). Based on my interview data and drawing on the analytical approach outlined in the previous chapters, Chapter 5 provides an exploration of English teacher identity in Japan. The analysis is presented as a way of better understanding the context of English education in Japan as well as what it means to be an English teacher in Japan in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Attention is given to the differences between native and non-native speaker perspectives, and in this sense it builds on the discussion of the native English speaker that was the focus of Module 2. Chapter 6 then brings together the discussion so far to consider potential applications of

the approach to analysis I use in this module. Most importantly, I assess the potential contribution that a comparative narrative analysis might make to English language teaching pedagogy in Japan. I argue that since learning a language involves the modification of identity or the incorporation of new identities (Guiora *et al.*, 1972), language should be taught in a way that empowers learners to build new identities for themselves rather than instilling an ideology whereby English is the code of a foreign Other (McVeigh, 2002). I propose how, given that foreign language learning and teaching go hand in hand with identity work, cross-linguistic descriptive work into narrative identity may offer insights relevant to informing a more holistic pedagogy. Narrative seemed a particularly appropriate choice of discourse for pedagogical application, partly because of the widespread appeal of stories in language learning (Wajnryb, 2003) but also out of respect for the importance of narrative in formulations of identity. Indeed, I offer some suggestions of ways in which the cross-linguistic analysis described here could be put to use in the classroom. Finally, I consider directions for further application and research. I will begin, however, by clarifying what I mean by identity and provide some justification for its importance as a topic.

### **1.3 Identity matters**

Identity today has become a complex issue that has rightly attracted considerable attention across the social sciences. People, particularly in ‘developed’ consumer societies, live in highly sophisticated multimodal semiotic environments where everything from clothes to musical tastes, to literary preferences or the gadgets you own, are liable to be interpreted as attributes of ‘personality’. In such societies, as Bauman puts it, ‘identities are for wearing and showing not storing and keeping’ (2004: 89). In today’s postmodern world, lifestyle options overlay and complicate divisions such as class, race and gender so that structuralist accounts that focus on these categories no longer seem adequate when one comes to consider individuals. Improvements in transportation, particularly jet travel, as well as urbanisation and the development of cosmopolitan centres, the rise of a global media, international trade and politics and the Internet have increased the potential for hybrid or ‘mongrel’ (Caldas-Coulthard and Alves, 2008) identities that straddle cultures (Kanno, 2003) or become ‘displaced’ (Baynham and De Fina, 2005) as individuals become involved in hitherto distant cultures. The increasing importance of identity, from an academic perspective, has been reflected in such phenomena as the appearance of psychoanalysis, identity politics and the postmodern notion of a self associated with multiple discourses, (although Lemke

(2008) suggested that identity has always involved such multiplicity and hybridity) and ensuing 'identity troubles' (Caldas-Coulthard and Iedema, 2008). This is not the place for a detailed review of these developments as up to date overviews are readily available (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Block, 2007; du Gay *et al.*, 2000). Instead, I draw attention to particular features that help to set the present study in context. In so doing, I mean to provide a working definition of identity, clarify its relation to narrative and expand on the reasons why I see narratives of personal identity as a particularly important area for further development in applied linguistics, both generally and for language teaching, especially in the Japanese context considered in this thesis.

What is identity? The historical examples of the primary definitions of identity provided in the Oxford English Dictionary indicate that the underlying meaning of identity has changed little since the first recorded use in 1570 (Simpson and Weiner, 1989). Identity is concerned with 'being the same substance' or the 'sameness' of a person or thing. That is to say, at its core, identity is about the identicalness or sameness, or 'continuity of personality'. Prominent collocates in the examples in the English dictionaries on my bookshelf included 'false identity', 'true identity', 'disguised identity', 'mistaken identity', 'identity card' and 'identity parade' and Block (2007) highlighted 'identity

theft', all of which converge on the meaning of authenticating an individual. On the other hand, a search of The Bank of English revealed a diverse range of collocates, and the highest proportion of occurrences of identity appeared in the more academic sub-corpora. 'US Academic' had nearly 103 instances per million words, compared with under 6 per million for 'US Spoken'. Not an academic word per se, 'identity' apparently gets good mileage in academic tracts without finding much resonance in everyday talk.

Some scholars have proposed that individual identity can be aligned with relatively recent historical developments in Western thought. Taylor (1989), for example, associated the emergence of personal identity with the Enlightenment philosophy of Descartes (1596-1650) and Locke (1632-1704) in the seventeenth century, traced it through romantic individualism of the nineteenth century to the development of psychoanalysis associated with Freud (1962). Meanwhile, in the twentieth century, the Romantic individualism of the nineteenth century was also superseded by sociological perspectives. In contrast to the focus on the inner self in psychoanalysis, sociological accounts of identity described the way individuals were located in society. They recognised that there could be no self or identity unless it was located with respect to others. The structuralist analysis of society began with class accounts and expanded to

encompass other elements of social identity such as gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, migration, and language (Block, 2007). Structuralist accounts of social identity have been criticised as ‘mosaic’ models of identity (Benhabib, 2002: 8) because they treated elements of identity as discreet entities, implying a determinism which made the repression of disempowered identity groups inescapable. For this reason, social identity has been reformulated in ‘poststructuralist’ or ‘postmodern’ accounts of identity.

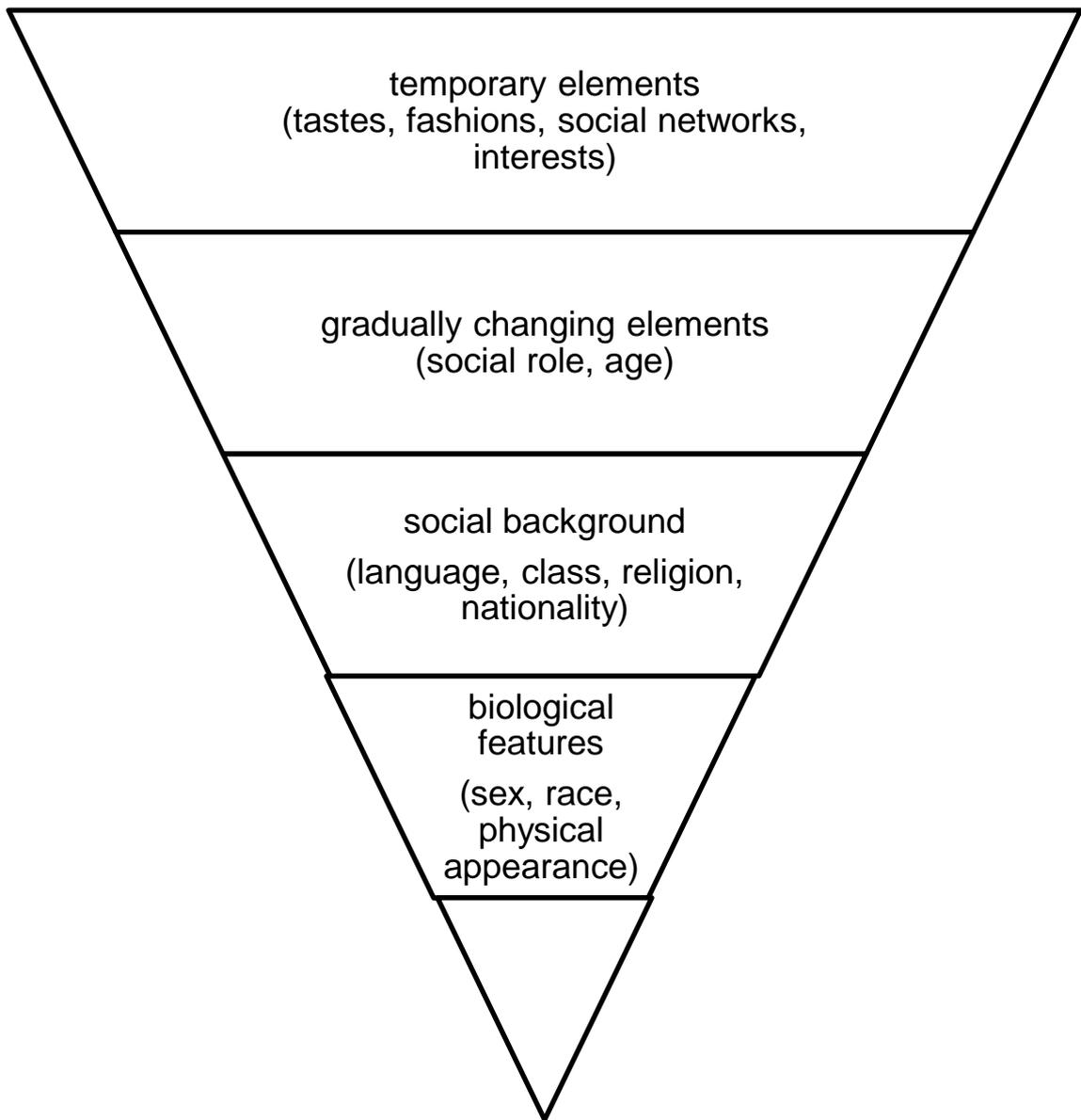
Postmodernist accounts represent identity as multiple, transient, generated through culture and located in multimodal semiotic and linguistic discourse (Bauman, 1996, 2004; Giddens, 1991, 2000; S. Hall and du Gay, 1996). A postmodernist account also allows for the possibility that perspectives on identity pushed into the past by diachronic accounts may survive as relevant discourses today. The social categories have not been discarded entirely; rather their relationship with identity has been reformulated. For example, it has been pointed out that even ‘biological’ features such as sex and sexuality are heavily overlaid with social discourses (Butler, 1988, 1990; Weedon, 1987). Among other things, the location of social and political identities in discourse has foregrounded the role of language and culture in relation to power (Bourdieu, 1992; Fairclough, 1989) and sociocultural theorists have located identity within discourses of cultural and

scientific knowledge (Bernstein, 2000; Foucault, 1972). It is for this reason that narrative, long associated with the unscientific activity of storytelling, has emerged with a new potential for critiquing discourse and deconstructing the self.

#### **1.4 Dimensions of identity**

One way to visualise identity would be to consider the relationships between identity categories such as those discussed by Block (2007) mentioned above. Race, ethnicity, nationality, migration, gender, social class, language, sexuality and religion (discussed elsewhere by Block, 2006a) are all socially constructed features of identity, but not all of the same order. I have illustrated this in Figure 1.1 by placing them in layers of an inverted triangle where the further up one moves, the more contingent identity becomes on time and place. The physical features associated with race and sex and the feelings associated with sexuality are genetic and biological in origin and relatively permanent over the course of a lifetime, even though the discourses of race and gender associated with them are socially acquired and constantly changing. Indeed, it is only because sex and race are heavily socially constructed that they are identity issues at all.

**Figure 1.1**



**Elements of Identity**

Identity features based on one's physical make up do not naturally lead to any community identity. Indeed, Rustin (2000) made the point that race is effectively an empty category in and of itself, and for this reason can readily acquire all manner of attributes. Ethnicity and nationality differ from race in that they imply a community of individuals associated with a specific place rather than physical difference. Ethnicity posits an identity derived from one's ancestors while nationality originates in political discourse. Bauman (2004: 17) noted that inclusive membership of all who live in a country as members of a nation has only come about relatively recently. The next category acknowledges that it is possible to acquire foreign languages or adopt a different religion; changes in economic circumstances or educational opportunities are likely to affect an individual's social class; and acquired (or lost) material and cultural resources may alter one's class membership. Above this I have placed age and social role. These are elements that inevitably change over time, a point I return to below. Becoming a teacher could belong here. So too might migration, which confounds identity by introducing 'hybridity' or 'third places' (such as Koreans in Japan) that do not always fit divisions made at lower levels such as ethnicity or nationality (Castles and Miller, 1998). Finally, there is the level of temporary allegiances including social networks and symbolic ones associated with fashions or tastes.

Any attempt at identity classification, let alone stratified organisation of this kind, is bound to be a gross simplification since it fails to show how elements in the different layers may be interrelated, and makes it appear as if sex is a simple category whereas short-lived fashions in the upper layer may well constitute ways of doing masculinity or femininity. Nevertheless, I think it is conceptually productive to view identity in this way to avoid conflations of such concepts as race and nationality. In order to describe identity as more than simply a list of interrelated attributes, it needs to be depicted in a more multidimensional way that takes account of time and space, and reflects a meaningful sense of human experience.

What does it mean to speak of a ‘multi-dimensional’ self? In order to answer this, I would like to return to the two quotations at the head of this chapter which divide identity along different dimensions—the first highlights the changes identity undergoes at different periods in life; the second shows strands of identity on a fictional day linked to place. The first quotation is a section of Jacques’ ‘All the world’s a stage’ speech from Shakespeare’s comedy *As You Like It*. In the quote, Jacques played with the idea that identity was something acted out over the course of a lifetime, involving roles

which shift with age. The ‘whining schoolboy’ became first ‘sighing lover’, then ‘quarrelsome soldier’, before succumbing to a comfortable position of authority in middle age. The stage metaphor suggests that these roles are an outward expression of an identity that encompassed age-related changes. Rather than treating this conception of identity as specifically Shakespearean the point that interests me about the quotation is that identity was construed as a social realisation of the biological process of aging. This dimension of identity is central for developmental psychologists such as Erikson (1980) or Kroger (2007).

In contrast to the identity changes portrayed in the Shakespearean quotation, the song lyrics below it represented identity shifts over the course of a day. The lyrics are my translation of a song which featured on a children’s hour programme broadcast by *Nihon Hosou Kkyoku* (NHK), the Japanese equivalent of the BBC. They were set to music and accompanied by an illustrative video clip of ‘Dad’ shown in scenarios I have indicated in parentheses. This song offers an everyday example of the way people in contemporary societies live out multiple identities, which were nevertheless resolved here through the son’s narrative of a day in the life of his father. For postmodernist writers, identity is ‘multiple’ (Giddens, 1991), ‘endlessly performative’ (S. Hall, 2000)

and 'liquid' (Bauman, 2005), and coming to terms with identity is an all embracing struggle. In this song, 'Dad' had to negotiate a variety of identities. Some such as 'Section Chief' probably required a considerable amount of performativity, and others, such as 'student,' 'patient' or 'customer,' rather less and yet others, like 'passer-by' or 'commuter,' almost none. All of these roles were defined by their location in time, but perhaps more importantly *place*. One thing that this narrative of Dad's day did was to map out the time and place for the various 'hats' he had to wear. At the same time, it resolved the problem of fragmented responsibilities by uniting the man's roles into a coherent narrative that fronted 'Dad' as the most important one. Not only did the day begin and end as Dad, but he retained this identity in the chorus line at the beginning of each verse. The climax of the song was that when he came 'home' he was Dad. In other words, the song implied that the various roles he took on during the day were superficial, and that his real calling was as the boy's father. Within the context of the song this nicely fitted the perspective of the supposed narrator, the man's son. Appearing in a children's hour slot, the song was framed as entertainment for children to share (perhaps sing along) with their parents. It also alluded to an emerging discourse of fatherhood (in Japan) whereby the father retains the traditional role of 'breadwinner' but takes a greater responsibility in child rearing. A regular slot on the same programme featured fathers

who mimed actions indicated by their child using a cardboard ‘*otousan suichi*’ or ‘Dad Control’. Like the song, the Dad Control symbolically suggested that the father’s primary responsibility was to their child.

I have introduced these examples to draw attention to some important dimensions of identity: (1) identity is something that changes over the course of a lifetime; (2) identity is multiple so that concurrent identities are associated with particular places and times, even over the course of one day; (3) identity is defined by social relations, both on an interpersonal level (father and son) and at a broader societal level. It is for this reason that narrative approaches to exploring identity have become widespread. Narrative is an ideal medium because it represents self through portrayal in time and space, and from a particular perspective. Not only do I feel that narrative is a form well suited to describing identity, but I follow those who propose a narrative ontology of identity (Daiute and Lightfoot, 2004; McAdams, 1988, 1996). It is through narratives, whether shared over a cup of coffee, or broadcast in the international media, that otherwise fragmented elements of ‘self’ are located in a temporal and spatial framework and imbued with meaning. Narrative itself exists on a number of levels from the broad world narratives of international relations or even the history of the universe, down to

the micro level of conversational anecdotes or exemplums such as the Shakespearean analogy of life to the theatre or the ditty about Dad's day used as illustrations above. A further dimension of identity is the psychological facility that allows for the construction and maintenance of a sense of identity.

### **1.5 Psychological research and autobiographical memory**

So far, I have focused on identity as a social phenomenon; that is, the self in relation to the outside world. I would now like to consider the role of autobiographical memory, which from a psychological perspective represents both a facility for narrative and the principal way in which human beings develop a sense of identity. Research into autobiographical memory dates back to Frances Galton's (1822-1911) enquiry into his own memory (Galton, 1879) but was otherwise not pursued until the 1970s (Crovitz and Schiffman, 1974; Wagenaar, 1986). The body of work that has accrued since then offers some interesting insights into the relationship between language, autobiographical memory and identity (Draaisma, 2001, 2006; Rubin, 1995). Autobiographical memory turns out to be a rather fickle faculty for organising life experience. The narratives of autobiographical memory, like narrative in conversation, have been proved to be susceptible to change over time (Belli and Loftus, 1996; Neisser and Harsch, 1992);

traumatic states of mind are likely to have particularly adverse effects on later recall (Wagenaar and Groeneweg, 1990) and *déjà vu* (Bancaud et al., 1994) and panoramic memory in near death experiences (Noyes and Kletti, 1977) appear to be no more than tricks of the brain. Perhaps the most relevant finding for the discussion here is the phenomenon of ‘memory bumps’. In subjects of middle age or younger, the memories stimulated using Galton’s word card technique were overwhelmingly recent ones, tailing off in the manner predicted for memory in general by the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve (Finkenbinder, 1913). This was also true for older subjects except that, as Galton himself found, there was a clustering of earlier memories. The ‘bump’ with a greater concentration of memories is usually located between the ages of 15 and 25, peaking around age 20. This effect became more pronounced for subjects aged over 60. One theory is that memory peaks at the age of 20, allowing for easier retention. However, this account does not agree with the findings of developmental research which point to a much earlier memory peak. A second suggestion is that there are more first time and therefore vivid memories. While this is plausible, it does not account for the increasing prominence of the bump with age. Draaisma (2006) summarises a third theory in this patterning of reminiscences proposed by Fitzgerald (1992) as follows:

During our youth and early adult years events occur that shape our personality,

determine our identity and guide the course of our life...The similarities between the present-day self and the experiences that have shaped that self lead the associations of the elderly back to their youth almost automatically...elderly people looking back remember episodes that constitute part of their life history. Conversely the manner in which they recount that history defines and demonstrates their own identity. (Draaisma, 2006: 195)

In other words, Draaisma, following Fitzgerald, was suggesting that autobiographical memory, particularly in old age, appeared to serve the purpose of maintaining a life history that was not a mechanical recording of events over a lifetime, but one where memory selection was intimately linked to the construction of identity and involved a focus on significant events in the genesis of that identity in talk.

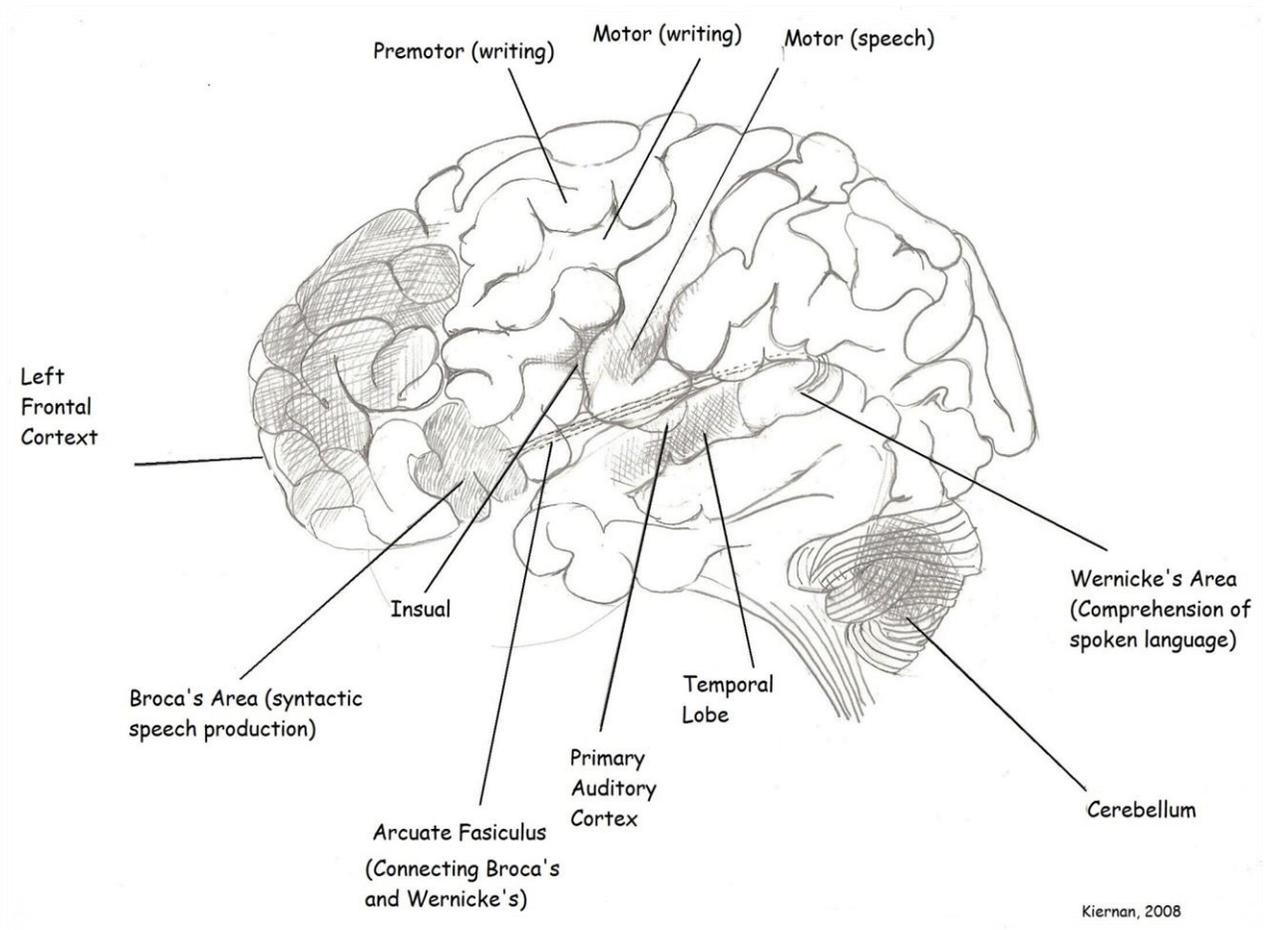
I have suggested that autobiographical memory works in narrative terms and is closely related to personal identity, but it may be helpful to understand what autobiographical memory is in neurological terms. First I will consider the findings for language processing in general, and then consider autobiographical memory. The two connected areas of the brain generally associated with language processing are Broca's area and Wernicke's area. The former is located in the left inferior frontal cortex, the centre for syntactic production of speech; the latter is further back and active during the comprehension of spoken language. Some remarkable observations have been made in

neuropsychological clinical case studies of bilinguals with polyglot aphasia whereby a patient may lose one language and not another (Paradis, 1983). This appeared to suggest that languages were either stored or in some sense functioning separately (see also Ojemann and Whitaker, 1978). More recently, neuroimaging tools such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) which highlight brain activity have shown that while foreign language learners incorporate additional areas of the right side of the brain in language processing (Kim et al., 1997), proficient bilinguals process different languages using exactly the same areas of the brain (Abutalebi *et al.*, 2001; Chee *et al.*, 1999; Kim et al., 1997; Perani *et al.*, 1998). Following a review of studies into bilingual language processing, Abutalebi *et al.* concluded that bilingual language processing is not two systems but ‘a unique and complex neural system which may differ in individual cases’ (2001: 188).

Autobiographical memory is generally described as a specific kind of episodic memory (memory involved in narrative recounts) that is concerned with auto-noetic consciousness (self awareness) (Piolino *et al.*, 2003: 2204). It has been observed that autobiographical memory remained even where language processing ability had been severely damaged or effectively lost. Production of autobiographical memories has been

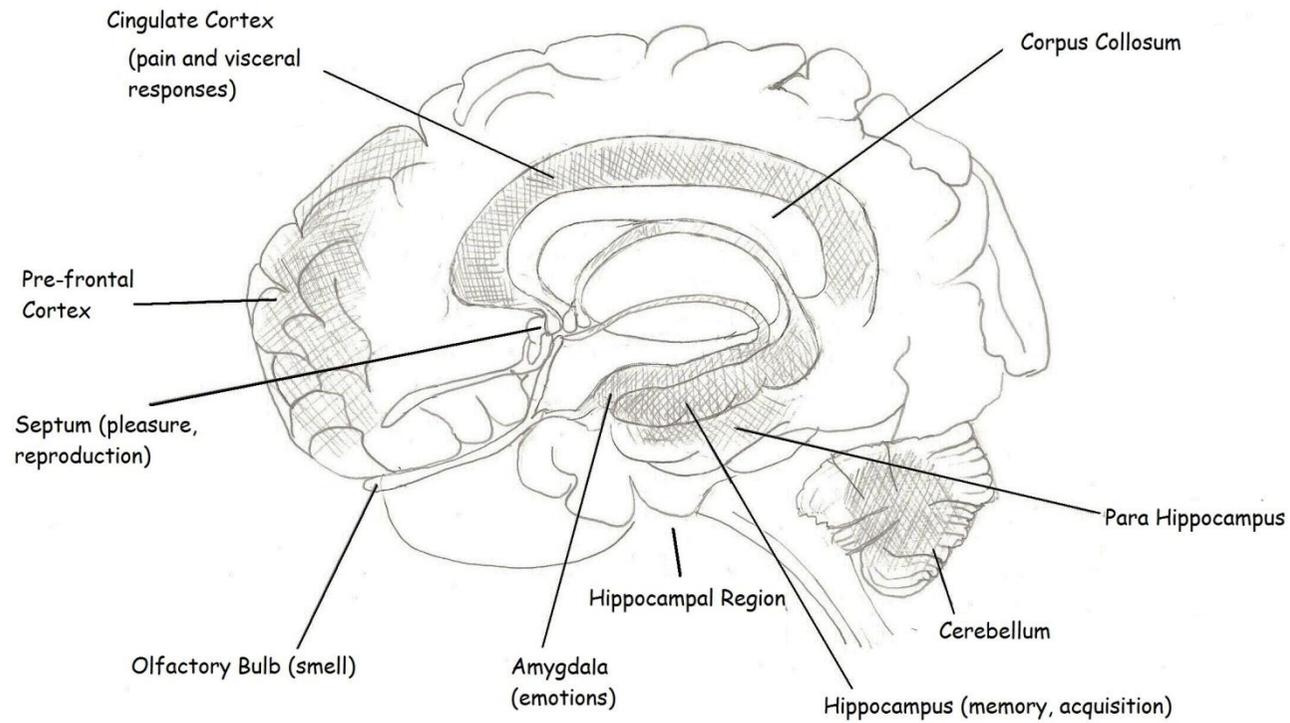
shown to stimulate activity across a range of areas in the brain that include Broca's area (though not Wernicke's) with a particularly high level of activity in the right side of the brain, particularly the hippocampal region (Fink, 2003). In order to help visualise this, Figures 1.2 and 1.3 below illustrate some of the key areas activated in neuroimaging studies based on a review by Fink and colleagues (Fink et al., 1996). The shaded areas show the areas that were active. Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from this complex area of research that I have greatly simplified here, the overall picture is of a variety of 'emotional', 'memory' and 'language' related areas of the brain working together in the service of creating human experience and identity, through the production of a verbal discourse. This being the case, it seems to me that research focused on human experience produced through such a faculty should pay careful attention to the discourse itself rather than treating autobiographical recounts as direct access to experience per se. At the same time, given the high level of activation in areas other than Broca's, it seems reasonable to suppose that there may be other levels of organisation in autobiographical discourse than those associated with sentence and word production.

Figure 1.2



Autobiographical Memory and the Brain – Left Exterior View Based on Fink et al., 1996 (shaded areas indicate activity)

**Figure 1.3**



Kiernan, 2008

**Autobiographical Memory and the Brain – Cross-section Based on Fink et al., 1996 (shaded areas indicate activity)**

## 1.6 Identity in Japan

It is sometimes implied that the concept of identity is a uniquely Western phenomenon, unsuitable for the examination of exotic cultures such as Japan (see discussion in Calichman, 2005). Block (2007) for example, hampered in finding identity literature in non-English languages, presumed this was because he was working with ‘a version of a construct [of identity] very much of the English-speaking world’ (Block, 2007: 8). There is some truth in this since the Japanese language has no clear equivalent for the word identity and instead relies on the English loanword when used in relation to personal identity. Moreover, discussions of identity in Japan largely centre on national identity. Having said this, identity is a highly relevant concept to Japan that is closely related to Western notions of identity. Although I will limit myself to commenting on works published in English, Japanese references can be found in Iida’s *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan* (2002).

In the same way that modern identity in the West has been traced back to the philosophical enlightenment associated with Descartes and Kant (Taylor, 1989), Modernism and its consequential impact on Japanese identity is typically located as beginning in the Meiji Revolution in the nineteenth century and the rebuilding of Japan

after World War II (Iida, 2002; McVeigh, 2004). Washburn (2007: 20-21) highlighted Taylor's (1989) history of Western identity as a relevant source in accounting for the identity shift implied by modernisation during the Meiji period, drawing out a number of parallels. For example, Washburn (ibid) pointed out that prior to the Meiji period there was a discourse of individual duty to the state based on aretaic ethics which assumed that individuals developed themselves to fulfil the expectations of the community. Modernist ethical codes, on the other hand, were represented as a kind of deontological ethics whereby actions were based on an individual's inner sense of reason and morality (Washburn, 2007: 3). The most significant influence on Japan's identity was perhaps not so much the reconceptualisation of the individual person, nor the rapidity with which this was presumed to have happened, but rather the implied relationship it set up with the West. Following the West meant setting up the West as an epistemological Other. Iida summed this up aptly when she wrote:

Since the encounter with the West in the mid-nineteenth century, Japan has never been at ease with its position in the modern world, and Japanese identity has been constantly reproduced in the context of its love-hate relation to its powerful other, the modern West. Modernization for Japan was much more than a series of incremental adaptations of Western institutions and technologies; instead it entailed a voluntary participation in an alien game played by what Meiji intellectuals called "the logic of civilization," in which the Japanese accepted the task of struggling to overcome their Western-defined inferiority. (Iida, 2002: 3-4)

Ultimately, adopting the Western model has been economically successful but the implications for Japanese national identity have never been satisfactorily resolved. The love-hate relationship with the West, discussed in detail by Iida (ibid) in relation to political and ideological responses, continues and inevitably impacts on identity discourses in Japan today.

National identity in Japan is not simply an abstract notion of a body politic. Neither is it merely about the ultra-nationalism of fanatics such as Yoshihiro Tanjo who in July, 2007 chopped off his finger and sent it to the Prime Minister's office to protest the failure of Abe's cabinet to attend the war memorial service at Yasukuni Shrine. Rather, nationalism in Japan is what Billig (1995) has called a 'banal nationalism' that pervades everyday life. McVeigh (2004) pointed out that nationalism itself is divisible into many kinds of nationalism that are not all pursued with equal vigour. Whereas nationalism in Japan often brings to mind images of military nationalism associated with the Japanese expansionism into Asia that culminated in World War II, McVeigh argued:

...any given "nationalism" is actually a vast array of "nationalisms" that interconnect, overlap and resonate as well as collide, clash, and compete with each other. Moreover these nationalisms are implicated in the mundane practices of everyday life, and like

other hegemonic ideologies, they garner their strength from invisibility.

(McVeigh, 2004: 4)

This array of nationalisms was considered in as many as 16 different categories by McVeigh, including all of the identity categories discussed in the section on dimensions of identity above. This division proved to be particularly helpful because it showed how attributes of Japanese identity have been moulded into one. It is for this reason that identity in Japan cannot be understood without recognising the importance of national identity. For example, Japan has its own gendered discourses about what it means to be a Japanese woman. Femininity in Japan has on the one hand been strongly associated with motherhood and caring for the home, with minimal responsibilities in the office, and on the other with a particular brand of cuteness (Kinsella, 1998). Interestingly, Kelsky (2001) has argued that the positioning of the West as the dominant Other has made the West particularly attractive for Japanese women both because it offers an alternative discourse of gender and an image of a powerful Other. Studies of Japanese living abroad have highlighted the new potentials for Japanese identity, especially among women in overseas contexts (Block, 2006b; Kanno, 2003; Sakai, 2000). As I illustrated in Module 2, English language teaching is one area where discourses of national identity are ubiquitous. The representation of the native speaker as an iconic

Other has become a way of negatively defining Japanese identity which pervades English language teaching in Japan. Finally, one important consequence of the active construal of Japanese nationality as an overarching identity construct, besides the ambiguous relationship with foreigners, is the exclusion of minority groups who do not fit the nationalist paradigm. The notion of Japan as a country of one race, one language and one culture denies the identities of Korean Japanese (Iwabuchi, 2000; Kashiwazaki, 2000; Ryang, 2000); ethnic Japanese from Brazil (de Carvalho, 2003) and indigenous inhabitants such as the Ainu (Shigeru, 1994). Consideration of the identity of English teachers in Japan, then, cannot be understood without some reference to this multi-faceted notion of Japanese identity, but also perhaps with respect to the Japanese language.

### **1.7 Identity in Japanese**

The expression of identity through language is dependent on fundamental resources for denoting or connoting self and Others. In English, the pronouns 'we' and 'they' or 'us' and 'them' do a lot of the work in establishing relations in talk between the self and selves that one identifies with and the Others that one is different from (Duszak, 2002a). In Japanese, these resources for this basic identity work are organised in a way that is

quite different from English to the extent that pronouns are almost never needed. Even though the use of pronouns is relatively rare, Japanese speakers are instead constantly required to make lexical choices that reflect a social bifurcation that allocates both conversational interlocutors and those referred to within the discourse to either in-group (*uchi*) or out-group (*soto*) membership (Kozai, 2002). The key resource for doing this in Japanese is the distinction between conceptual styles of speech, the most outstanding of which is the use of honorific and humble language.

As a general rule, honorific language is used to show respectfulness to one's elders and superiors. Humble language is used to talk about oneself when addressing such people. These two styles differ in the verbs used, as well as in prefixes applied to nouns and adjectives, but could also be said to extend to a habit of talking modestly about oneself and lavishly about the respected addressee. There are ways of talking respectfully or modestly in English but in Japanese the system is all pervasive in two ways which radically differ from English. First, the choice of honorific or humble terms extends beyond oneself and the immediate interlocutor to others mentioned in the conversation. All those one might think of as 'us' in the sense of 'me and others but not you' must also be dressed in humble language. Accordingly, all those associated with the addressee

that might belong in the plural 'you' in English must be referred to using honorifics. In addition, all outsiders (the 'they' group) will also require honorifics. As with the use of pronouns in English, these are not fixed relations but must be flexibly applied during the discourse in accordance with conversational norms as well as the individual speaker's purpose. For example, if you were a junior employee you would naturally use honorific terms when talking to the company president and talking about the president or other senior people in the company with her or him. On the other hand, if you later talked to a customer from another company on the telephone you would have to use honorific language to refer to the caller and those in his or her company but humble language to refer to all people in your own company including the president, irrespective of the caller's social status vis-à-vis the president.

The second factor that makes this system all pervasive in a way which is completely different from English is that the decision of whether to use the honorific/humble or a plainer style of speech is also dependent on whether the addressee is perceived to be an in-group or out-group member. The use of honorific-humble language will automatically position the person as an outsider, whereas the use of a more informal register will locate someone as an insider. The *uchi* (insider) / *soto* (outsider) distinction

created through the use of this highly conventionalised use of registers is also associated with the content of what one says. With insiders, one will be expected to speak plainly about one's thoughts and feelings or *honne*, whereas the politer register's prioritisation of decorum will tend to mean that only superficial *tatemae* views are expressed. I have explained that the management of register in Japanese is strictly governed by conventional rules that are dependent on the abstract distinction between *uchi* and *soto*, but the important point is that as such stylistic variations in register are effectively a resource for the management of identity. Kozai (2002) discussed a number of examples of the ways in which stylistic markers of in/out group membership are blended or otherwise manipulate identity. For example, he considered the following example of a salesperson at a market hailing a female passerby to encourage her to buy from him:

*Okaa-san yasui yo, katte iki na!* Madame ['mother'], it's cheap. Buy them!  
(Kozai, 2002: 74)

In this case the salesperson used the word *okaa-san* or 'mother' meaning 'my mother' and added the casual *yo* to the adjective *yasui* (cheap). Although the addressee was a stranger and potential customer (and hence should be addressed using honorifics), Kozai argued that this expression gave a sense of familiarity to attract the customer,

positing a shared viewpoint with the shopper. However, this contrasted with the deictic verb *iki* which means ‘go’ so that the salesman was saying ‘go and buy’ rather than ‘come and buy’, thus positioning himself, the seller, as an outsider. Kozai explained that this appeal to the customer was made by ‘blending’ the two perspectives. In Chapter 4, I will consider ways in which speakers use deictic features of language as identity resources in more detail. For the time being, it is enough to recognise that differences exist in the linguistic means available for expressing identity and allegiance in Japanese and English. In the next chapter I consider the narrative research interview.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE NARRATIVE RESEARCH INTERVIEW

*The interviewer should just tell me the words he wants me to say and I'll repeat them after him. (Andy Warhol quoted in Gidal, 1971: 9)*

### 2.1 Introduction

Warhol's suggestion, although referring to journalistic interviews, is indicative of a whole host of worries about 'internal validity,' 'bias,' 'leading the interviewee,' or 'the Observer's Paradox' that have plagued researchers who use interviews. In response to such concerns, batteries of procedural techniques have been drawn up with the aim of eliminating, or at least keeping to a minimum, the effect of the interviewer. In my view, attempting to make interviewers into standardised tools (Singleton and Straits, 2001) is misguided, and researchers would be better served by giving more attention to what is happening in the interviewer-interviewee discourse, rather than expecting the interviewee to produce some unbiased objective truth. Warhol's comment, for example, although on the face of it unhelpful to the interviewer who wants to find out about 'the real' Andy Warhol may say a lot about the mysterious mirror-like persona that he created for himself as a pop artist, and his self-reflexive understanding of this persona. I

therefore think researchers employing interviews would benefit from having a method of analysis that would allow them to view their data as live discourse rather than access to spoken truths.

This chapter focuses on methodology. It provides an outline of the approach taken to planning, conducting, transcribing and analysing the interviews. It also includes the results of the first stage of the analysis, offering an overall description of the interview. I begin by making the case for an applied linguistic model of the narrative interview. I argue that Labov's (1973) warnings about the 'Observer's Paradox' have been overly influential in discouraging linguists away from the research interview. Indeed discourse and conversation analysts—those with the best tools for describing the research interview—have tended to opt for more 'natural' 'fly on the wall' data wherever possible. I then consider the narrative interview as it has evolved in the social sciences. I illustrate how social scientists, who greatly value the interview as a research tool, have cleared away intellectual cobwebs such as the Observer's Paradox to create more dynamic conceptions of the interview. I note some of the linguistic models that have been used in interview-based research, introduce some key discourse-based studies that have been done and propose that there is a need for an applied linguistic model of the

research interview. I then provide a descriptive outline of the process I went through in organising, carrying out and analysing the current project and an overview of the data obtained. Finally, I introduce the overall structure of the interview itself. My starting point for doing this was the Sinclair-Coulthard model (1992) and I propose some changes to adapt this model to describe narrative interviews.

## **2.2 Moving beyond the Observer's Paradox**

The term Observer's Paradox, coined by Labov (1973) to highlight a specific problem he faced in obtaining authentic examples of colloquial accents, has become a byword for the problem of the influence of field workers. Labov and his colleagues wanted to collect samples of speech in the vernacular and decided that the most efficient way of doing so on a large scale was through research interviews. However, there seemed to be an inherent contradiction in collecting everyday talk in the formal context of interviews. Labov (1973) reasoned that the formality associated with the interview as a speech event tended to militate against the production of informal speech, since even the most casual and friendly interviewee was likely to be more so when joking or arguing with intimates (ibid: 209). Hence, he suggested, interviewees would not produce the kind of language that interested him in the interview situation even though they may regularly

do so outside it. This he described as a paradox:

We are left then with the Observer's Paradox: the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation.

(Labov, 1973: 209)

In practice, Labov later found that this apparently inescapable paradox can be partially solved through modifications. One strategy that he used for doing this was to organise peer interviews. He also discovered that techniques designed to heighten the human involvement of the interviewee were effective in eliciting features that interested him (Labov, 1997). Even so, the paradox identified by Labov strikes at the heart of concerns over the authenticity of the interview as a speech event that niggle sociolinguistic and other researchers.

One form that concerns over the Observer's Paradox have taken, is worries over the distorting effect of the interviewer on the (otherwise pure) data; whether the focus is spoken discourse or some 'truth' about the informant's experience. In her discussion of the paradox, Cukor-Avila (2000) cautioned that:

The problem sociolinguistics faces is that while neither the exact set of characteristics

[of interviewers] nor the ways in which they interact with one another have ever fully been specified, their impact can be enormous. (Cukor-Avila, 2000: 254)

The characteristics she referred to were features such as age, sex and race. She quoted Bailey and Tillery (1999) as an example of the individual impact that field workers have on interviews and recommended that:

In order to systematically address these issues, there needs to be a greater concern with the methods used to conduct the interviews and collect data. (ibid)

I would agree with this advice but am less inclined to agree with her solution which was to ‘diminish the role of the field-worker and allow informants to interact with each other’ (ibid: 253; see also Cukor-Avila and Bailey, 2001). Instead, I take the approach in this module that the key is to acknowledge and explore the emerging identities of both interviewee and interviewer, and try to account for the way identity takes shape in language. Indeed, perhaps a more serious concern than interviewer influence is the ‘enormous impact’ warnings about the ‘Observer’s Paradox’ have had on linguistic research in precisely the disciplines that offer the best potential for exploring the research interview: discourse and conversation analysis.

The fact that conversation and discourse analysis have ventured into the apparently disorderly world of ‘everyday conversation’ has been a tremendously exciting thing for linguistics. The most stimulating finding that permeates this research is that talk of the most ordinary nature is structured to transmit what Halliday has called ‘the deepest and most pervasive patterns of culture’ (1973: 45). The speech situations that have been considered now cover a broad range, yet conversation analysts have been principally concerned with collecting ‘naturally occurring’ data and so have not been inclined to explore something which is so obviously structured by the researcher. Cameron’s classic guide to doing spoken discourse, for example, offered researchers the following advice:

[If]... the purpose of collecting language data is to find out how some aspect of talk itself works ... interviewing may not be the best method for collecting data, because the conventions of the interview as a particular sort of “speech event”... discourage certain kinds of potentially relevant behaviour – interview subjects rarely initiate or change topics, for instance. Rather than taking the role of the interviewer, therefore, the researcher may prefer the role of observer, bystander or eavesdropper.

(Cameron, 2001: 19-20)

In the same way that Labov noted that interview data provided less than ideal samples of ‘the vernacular’ or ‘casual speech’ Cameron implied that the constraints of the interview made them unsuitable models of ‘talk itself’. She related her advice directly to Labov’s Observer’s Paradox and highlighted specific reservations associated with the

problem of ‘setting up’ a situation to generate talk. Whatever the reason, the tendency to avoid research interviews as a focus for linguistic analysis is an unfortunate oversight—or a ripe opportunity—when one considers the importance of the interview as an iconic sight for meaning making and dissemination in what has been dubbed ‘the interview society’ (P. Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Gubrium and Holstein, 2001a).

Fortunately, not all researchers have been perturbed by the Observer’s Paradox and Hutchby and Wooffitt saw it in a light which was much closer to my perspective. As they explain:

The interview is one of the most widely used research instruments in the social sciences. Consequently, much of our knowledge about the social world is derived from information generated during interviews. However, research interviews are themselves periods of social interaction between two parties. (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 172)

The prevalence of research interviews makes them worthy of investigation, and because they involve social interaction they are amenable to approaches such as conversation, discourse or narrative analysis. Accordingly, some researchers have recognised that interviews, including research interviews are highly relevant and worthwhile sites of investigation, both because they are revealing about the interview as a speech event and

because they exhibit features found in other interactions which might more readily be classed as everyday conversation (Plum, 1988). Interview situations that have been analysed by applied linguists working as outsiders include employment interviews (Lipovsky, 2006); police interviews (Newbury and Johnson, 2006); medical interviews (Maynard and Heritage, 2005); dietary history interviews (Tapsell et al., 2000); telephone survey interviews (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1995) and many other kinds as well as the survey research interview (Suchman and Jordan, 1990a). These studies have revealed important critical perspectives on their respective interview contexts and how interviewer and interviewee manage their discourse interaction. Indeed, the most remarkable finding about the survey research interview is that in spite of the researcher's best efforts to design it as a uniform scientific instrument, the interview remains a live interactional event (Suchman and Jordan, 1990b).

Some examples of studies where, like this one, the linguistic researcher and interviewer have been the same person include Widdicombe and Wooffitt's (1995) investigation of opening moves of interviews with members of British youth subcultures which examined data originally collected by Widdicombe for a social theory project; Wooffitt's (1992) analysis of narrative interviews with people describing paranormal

events; and Plum's (1988) genre-based account of narrative interviews with dog breeders.

### **2.3 The narrative interview as postmodern qualitative research**

In contrast to the overall lack of attention the research interview has received in applied linguistics, it is a central research phenomenon in the social sciences that has been much discussed (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001b; Lieblich *et al.*, 1998; Mishler, 1986a; Riessman, 1993). Accordingly the conception of the research interview has been developed with considerable sophistication. A narrative analysis that involves exploring the linguistic organisation of discourse, as opposed to statistical analysis of the content fits better with a *qualitative* approach of the kind outlined by researchers like McCracken (1988); Mishler (1986b) and Holstein and Gubrium (1995). Indeed the impetus to develop the qualitative research interview grew out of dissatisfaction with the dominant quantitative paradigm and could be seen as arising in direct opposition to it. Rather than review the widely discussed practical and ontological differences between quantitative and qualitative research interviews I have summarised them in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1**

	Quantitative Interview	Qualitative Interview
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ testing previous claims</li> <li>✧ generalisable results</li> <li>✧ breadth of coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ raising new issues</li> <li>✧ fresh observations</li> <li>✧ depth of understanding</li> </ul>
Interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ large sample</li> <li>✧ sample representative of a larger population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ small group (or single case)</li> <li>✧ informants with relevant and interesting perspectives</li> </ul>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ detailed research design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ overall research process structure</li> </ul>
Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ closed questions suitable for subjecting to statistical analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ open questions, <i>probes</i> and <i>prompts</i> to stimulate meaningful responses</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ interview schedule</li> <li>✧ interviewers trained to follow detailed guidelines precisely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ audio or visual recording device</li> <li>✧ interviewers trained to listen and draw out speakers</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ short interview</li> <li>✧ fixed interview format</li> <li>✧ identical questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ long interview (or multiple)</li> <li>✧ flexible interview format</li> <li>✧ questions tailored to interviewee</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ short answers</li> <li>✧ interviewer careful to avoid bias and keep interviewee on task</li> <li>✧ interviewee answers questions simply and directly</li> <li>✧ straight forward content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ extended responses</li> <li>✧ interviewer aids collaborative structuring of meaning</li> <li>✧ interviewee narrates experiences</li> <li>✧ content probed to encourage reflection</li> </ul>
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ coding according to pre-determined categories</li> <li>✧ statistical analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ sorting and discovering categories of interest</li> <li>✧ thematic exploration and distilling of ideas</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ tests for reliability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ consideration of validity and relevance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ description of the data</li> <li>✧ use of statistical graphs</li> <li>✧ highlighting outstanding statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ reporting of narrative content</li> <li>✧ use of conceptual diagrams</li> <li>✧ highlighting significant quotes</li> </ul>

**Differences between Quantitative and Qualitative Interviews**

Mishler (1986a) highlighted research indicating that in survey based interviews, even well trained interviewers depart from the questioning forms specified in the research schedule in ways that affected interviewee responses (Brenner, 1982; Schuman and Presser, 1981). Unlike Brenner who referred to his findings as creating ‘a somewhat alarming picture’ (ibid: 163) Mishler saw this not as a problem of interviewer training but of

...reliance on the stimulus-response paradigm of the experimental laboratory for the conceptualization of the interview process and, consequently, for specification of issues for research. (Mishler, 1986b: 13).

Thus for Mishler, the concern with procedural consistency in quantitative interviewing was indicative of its being stuck in a behaviourist rationale. As he explained:

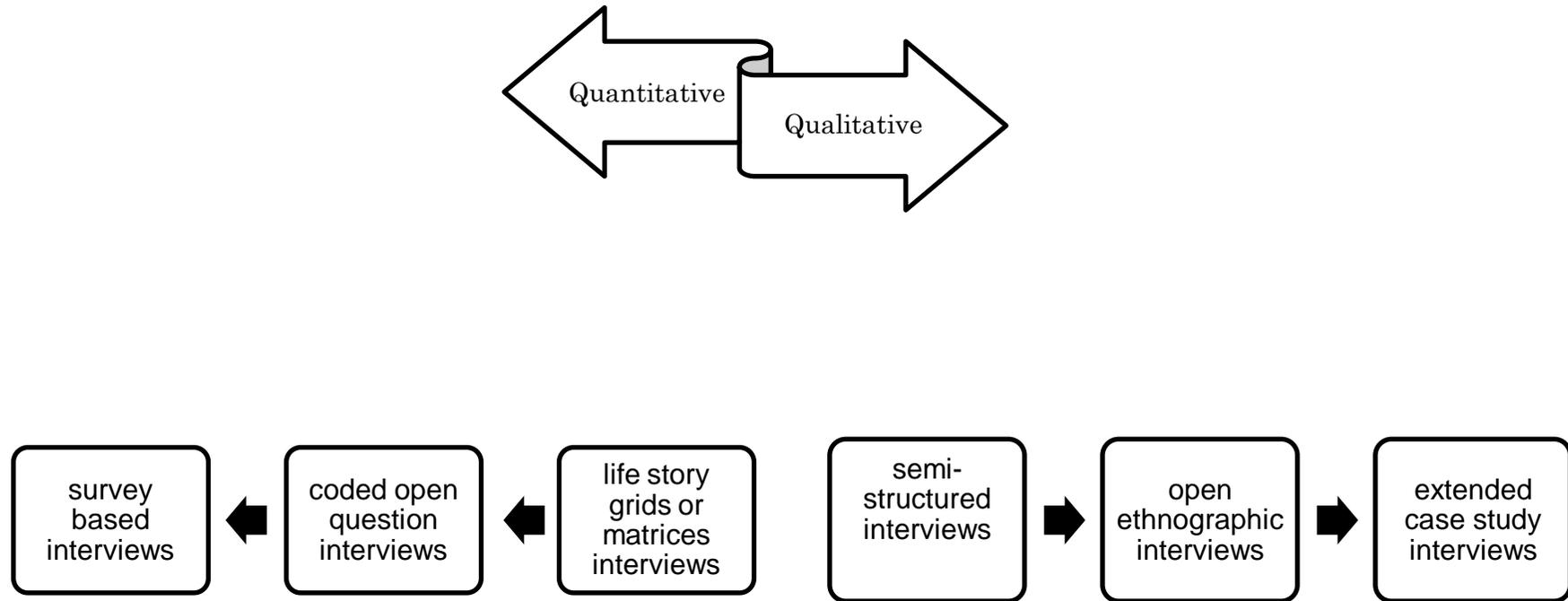
The sense of precision provided by these methods is illusory because they tend to obscure rather than illuminate the central problem in the interpretation of interviews, namely, the relationship between discourse and meaning’ (ibid: 12)

It is for this reason that he proposed a more open style of interview which instead of cutting off the interviewee’s narrative explanations encouraged them; in place of statistical analysis he proposed a narrative analysis of discourse. In both his original

proposals (Mishler, 1986a, 1986b) and later (1995), he considered a number of approaches to the analysis of these interviews including Labov and Waletzky's (1967) six part model of oral narrative; Agar and Hobbs' (1983) and van Dijk's (1980, 1982) models of coherence; and Gee's stanza-based style model (1991). An example of Gee's approach applied to interviews can be found in Reissman (1990). Helpful as these approaches are, I felt that narrative interviews in general (as well as my focus on identity) would benefit from more input in terms of linguistically oriented approaches to analysis.

Today the narrative interview covers a broad range of interviewing and analytical techniques that span the full spectrum of quantitative and qualitative approaches selectively suggested in Figure 2.1. Quantitative methods include *event history analysis* used in longitudinal studies (Allison, 1984; Singer et al., 1998); *life story grids* (Tagg, 1985) and *transition matrices* (Shank and Abelson, 1977) besides the survey type *account analysis* (Brenner, 1985). Useful as these methods doubtless are for their intended purpose, they are unsuitable for the exploration of narrative identity, as I am concerned with it in this module.

**Figure 2.1**



**Quantitative and Qualitative Narrative Interview Types**

Survey based interviews refers to those where the interviewer asks questions prepared in advance on the interview 'schedule' and typically include check boxes for answers. Such interviews would ideally be short, and anything not indicating a check box deemed irrelevant. They might be employed in a quantitative narrative study such as a longitudinal event history analysis where regression techniques would be used to measure the timing of events (such as the time between acquiring a teaching certificate and taking up a job as a teacher). By 'coded open question interviews,' I refer to interviews that again work from an interview schedule but code answers as belonging to a particular type retrospectively. In a large scale study, coding is more time consuming than working with predetermined answer categories and so is widely used as a piloting method to acquire suitable categories. 'Life story grids' (also known as 'life-story matrices') focus on dating events in people's lives using a grid representing the years of a person's life. The interviewer's job is to work with the interviewee to fill out the grid.

Semi-structured interviews in a qualitative paradigm may use prepared questions but the interview schedule will be less detailed than in quantitative studies, and intended to be applied with greater flexibility. It is unlikely that answer categories will be predetermined and greater attention is likely to be given to individual responses. Open

ethnographic interviews focus on understanding a specific context (e.g. a particular school) and so interviews will be tailored to this context. Interviewees may include teachers, students and administrators so that questions addressed to these respective participants in the study may be quite different. Ethnographic studies are likely to employ extended and/or multiple interviews. Extended case study interviews explore a small number (sometimes only one) of individuals in depth over a number of years. The aim is to understand specific individuals in great detail. In spite of the availability of quantitative narrative research techniques, they are unsuitable for exploring narrative identity. Indeed, even Elliot (2005), who set out to argue for the importance of quantitative narrative research, acknowledged:

It is not so much that quantitative research obscures the individual but rather that there is no scope within quantitative research for understanding the ways in which individuals use narrative to construct and maintain a sense of their own identity. (Elliott, 2005: 131)

Since it is precisely this focus on understanding individuals through the way that they construct identity that interests me, I have adopted a qualitative approach.

Other criticisms of the survey interview, and indeed orthodox approaches in general,

include observations that interview manuals seemed to delineate a ‘masculine paradigm’ that insisted that the interview was a one way process that stifled the interview of its meaning as human interaction (Chase, 2005; Oakley, 1981). I am not sure that it makes much sense to talk about interaction associated with interviewing traditions as inherently ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ without any empirical evidence. Nevertheless, such researchers have helped reconceptualise the interview as a site where both interviewer and interviewee can explore experience and find shared revelations. This means that rather than the interviewer remaining passive and aloof or intent on obtaining answers, he or she should be prepared to share their experiences and involve themselves emotionally with the interviewee. Ellis and Berger summed up this reformulation of the interview as an interactive event as follows:

The interviewing process becomes less a conduit of information from informants to researchers that represents how things are, and more a sea swell of meaning making in which researchers connect their own experiences to those of others and provide stories that open up conversations about how we live and cope.  
(Ellis and Berger, 2003: 161)

This radical reformulation of the interview is far removed from the concerns over the Observer’s Paradox discussed above. Yet by positing a greater involvement in the interview and with the interviewee there seems to be the potential not only for a more

ethical, humanistic and rewarding interview experience, but also the possibility of generating more meaningful 'data'; including conversational interaction which reflects language use outside the interview.

Ellis and Berger's (2003) reconceptualisation of the interview, particularly the interviewer-interviewee relationship, is typical of a number of departures from mainstream interviewing which reflect what Gubrium and Holstein called 'postmodern sensibilities' (2003). According to Fontana (2003) 'postmodern interviewing' is a term that does not describe any particular kind of interview but has come to be used to refer to interviewing styles that challenge the traditional notion of the interview (quantitative or qualitative). Instead of an interview being a spoken dialogue (ideally face-to-face) it embraces email or internet interviewing (Mann and Stewart, 2003) and the exploration of culture through cinematic interviews (Denzin, 2003). Rather than interviewees providing codifiable or quantifiable truths to be interpreted by the researcher, participants are given voices to speak through the research paper, including political involvement as advocates for interviewees (Denzin, 1997). The theme that unites these 'postmodern' approaches is the reconceptualisation of interviewer and interviewee as active subjects with stories to tell. These stories in turn may be deconstructable as

voices of discourse (Gubrium and Holstein, 1995). This rethinking of the interview makes it a potentially exciting topic for applied linguistic research. I also think that adopting a linguistic focus would help interpret or recontextualise identities in interview situations. The project described below aimed to do just this.

## **2.4 Project overview**

The principal data used as the basis for discussion in this module consist of recordings and transcriptions of 18 interviews with 21 native English speaking teachers of English in English and 18 interviews with 21 Japanese teachers of English carried out in Japanese. The English interviews took place during May and June 2004 and the Japanese ones during November and December 2006. The reason there were less interviews than interviewees is that in both cases three of the interviews were conducted with two teachers at the same time. I conducted, transcribed and analysed all the interviews myself, though I depended on the help of colleagues to check and correct the Japanese transcriptions. As there are a number of differences in the way these two sessions were organised, I will begin by introducing them separately.

#### *2.4.1 Interview procedure – English interviews*

The English interviews are a subset of those discussed in Module 2. I decided to exclude telephone interviews with teachers who had already left Japan. I also unfortunately lost the digital recordings of the last few sessions due to computer troubles. As I described in Module 2, the English interviews were follow-up interviews to an online questionnaire which I advertised through an internet discussion group for English language teachers in Japan. As a result, some teachers who responded lived quite far from Tokyo (where I was based) and so were interviewed over the telephone. Besides telephone interviews, venues included coffee shops or restaurants, the interviewee's house or school and my office at work. Although I prepared some prototypical questions beforehand, I did not bring them with me to the interview, make any attempt to reproduce question wording, or stick mechanically to the ordering or choice of questions. Instead, I followed a temporal trajectory from how the teacher got into English teaching, and why in Japan; an overview of their teaching experience from beginning teaching to the present. Following this, I asked teachers about their experience of working with Japanese colleagues and to reflect on the role of native speaker teachers; how or whether teaching English in Japan had changed them, and finally about changes they would like to see in English language teaching in Japan as

well as their own futures. Besides the digital recordings that were lost, these interviews were recorded using a Walkman tape recorder on 60 minute cassette tapes. In most cases this effectively brought the interview to an end once the tape ran out and anyway meant that the final part was unrecorded. A summary of the English interviews showing interviewee profiles is provided in Table 2.2. As the table illustrates, although the interviewees were not intended to be a representative ‘sample’ they nevertheless cover a range of ages and experiences. The following points are intended to help reading Table 2.2. All ‘names’ are the pseudonyms used throughout this module. Where reference was made to interviewees in Module 2 the same pseudonym is used. Interviews with two teachers are indicated with a/b codes in the second column of the table and the cells for date, time and place of the two interviewees have been merged. ‘Japan’ indicates the approximate length of time the teacher had lived in Japan at the time of the interview and the number in parenthesis is the length of his/her total teaching experience. ‘School type’ indicates the main school where the teacher taught at the time of the interview. As almost all teachers had taught in more than one kind of school, the coverage of school types could be considered broader than it appears here. ‘Time’ refers to the recording time as registered on the digital recording made from the original tape.

**Table 2.2**

Japan=time in Japan; TE=teaching experience ; P/T=part-time; F/T=full-time; ES=elementary school; JHS=junior high school; HS=high school; LS=language school

No.	Code	Name	Sex	Age	Country	Japan (TE)	School type	Date	Time	Place
1	N1-a	Jim	M	34	US	8 years (10)	University P/T	13/5/04	62:31	Tokyo-restaurant
2	N1-b	Jackie	F	33	US	8 years (9)	University P/T			
3	N2	Lucy	F	35	Canada	6 years (9)	Private ES/HS	14/5/04	62:37	Wakyama-phone
4	N3	Tom	M	42	UK (England)	9 years (20)	Private HS	15/4/04	62:25	Fukushima-phone
5	N4	George	M	33	US	11 years	University P/T	21/5/04	63:07	Tokyo-restaurant
6	N5	Bruce	M	37	UK (Scotland)	12 years	University F/T	26/5/04	63:08	Tokyo-office
7	N6-a	Sarah	F	25	US	3 years	JHS/ES	27/5/04	62:37	Chiba-restaurant
8	N6-b	Paul	M	26	UK (England)	3 years	JHS			
9	N7	Graham	M	54	Australia/UK	6 years	LS	29/5/04	62:49	Chiba-home
10	N8-a	Richard	M	30	US	7 years	HS	30/5/04	63:30	Chiba-restaurant
11	N8-b	Deepa	F	26	UK (England)	3 years	HS			
12	N9	Charles	M	60	UK (England)	25years (35)	University P/T	3/6/04	31:42	Tokyo-office
13	N10	Ray	M	26	UK (England)	1 year	LS	10/6/04	46:16	Tokyo-school
14	N11	Andrew	M	47	UK (England)	28years (24)	Private H/S	12/6/04	62:31	Tokyo-pub
15	N12	Joe	M	41	US	15 years	Private H/S	12/6/04	63:10	Kangawa-home
16	N13	Phil	M	55	Canada	1 year (5)	LS	12/6/04	61:43	Kobe-phone
17	N14	John	M	36	Philippines	13 years	University F/T	16/6/04	63:19	Miyagi-phone
18	N15	Kate	F	60	New Zealand	8 years	Private HS	17/6/04	40:49	Gifu-phone
19	N16	Oliver	M	28	Canada	4 years (7)	University P/T	17/6/04	62:57	Tokyo-restaurant
20	N17	Helen	F	38	UK (England)	14years (15)	LS	17/6/04	63:01	Tokyo-home
21	N18	Martin	M	43	US	16years (20)	University P/T	19/6/04	94:55	Tokyo-coffee shop

### Overview of English Teacher Interviews in English

#### **2.4.2 Interview procedure –Japanese interviews**

As I did not have access to an internet discussion group for Japanese teachers, I relied on personal contacts to set up interviews with teachers though, as with the English interviews, I met many of the teachers for the first time at the interview. None of these interviews were carried out over the phone. Venues again included the interviewee's home, coffee shops and my office, though more took place at the school where the interviewee taught. As with the English interviews, I prepared some prototypical questions beforehand which provided an overall structure in my mind at the time. For these interviews, I began by asking about the teacher's experience of learning English. Then I questioned them about how and why they decided to become teachers and had them summarise their careers. For reflective questions, I asked them about experiences working with foreign teachers; their worst and best experiences as teachers; what they would like to change about their present situation; how they would like to see English education in Japan improve and about their futures. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder which effectively allowed for unlimited recording. Generally shorter than the English interviews, these recordings nevertheless contain the entire Japanese interview aside from wind up chat in either Japanese or English that occurred after the recording device had been turned off. Table 2.3 is a summary of participants.

**Table 2.3**

TE=teaching experience; Abroad=time spent overseas; P/T=part-time; F/T= full-time ; JHS= junior high school; SHS= senior high school; LS=language school

No.	Code	Name	Sex	Age	TE	Abroad	School type	Date	Time	Place
1	J1	Yumi	F	34	4 years	2 years	University F/T	24/10/06	54:36	Tokyo-office
2	J2-a	Hideki	M	53	26 years	11 months	SHS	4/11/06	46:21	Tokyo-office
3	J2-b	Tomoko	F	34	10 years	1 year	SHS			
4	J3-a	Miyuki	F	35	10 years	1 year	SHS	4/11/06	35:14	Tokyo-office
5	J3-b	Naomi	F	36	10 years	6 months	SHS			
6	J4-a	Taro	M	35	16 years	1 year	SHS	4/11/06	50:40	Tokyo-office
7	J4-b	Yuki	F	33	10 years	1 year	SHS			
8	J5	Taka	M	46	24 Years	2 years	University F/T	14/11/06	33:32	Tokyo-office
9	J6	Taro	M	69	48 years	Never	University P/T	14/11/06	61:33	Tokyo-home
10	J7	Osamu	M	51	31 years	3 years 6m	University F/T	18/11/06	37:06	TDU
11	J8	Yoshiko	F	47	23 years	3	SHS	21/11/06	56:34	Tokyo-school
12	J9	Ai	F	35	10 years	1	SHS	28/11/06	72:45	Tokyo-school
13	J10	Ryo	M	32	5 years	4	University F/T	29/11/06	48:03	TDU
14	J11	Hiroki	M	66	43 years	Never	University P/T	2/12/06	44:48	TDU
15	J12	Kenji	M	50	18 years	1	University F/T	13/12/06	80:19	TDU
16	J13	Yuri	F	31	7 years	1years 10m	LS	14/12/06	90:41	Kanagawa-home
17	J14	Kenta	M	41	14 years	1	SHS	19/12/06	52:16	Tokyo-restaurant
18	J15	Yuka	F	25	1 years	1	SHS	19/12/06	21:16	Tokyo-school
19	J16	Jiro	M	43	22 years	Never	JHS	19/12/06	24:02	Tokyo-school
20	J17	Hiro	M	44	10 years	4	SHS	19/12/06	39:07	Tokyo-school
21	J18	Jun	M	47	25 years	3	University F/T	19/12/06	47:45	Chiba-school

### Overview of English Teacher Interviews in Japanese

Since all the teachers were born in Japan, I have omitted the country of birth column found in the summary of the English interviews. Instead, I have included a record of the time spent living outside Japan in the column labelled 'abroad'. At the time of the interviews I had been living and working in Japan for just over 16 years and used Japanese regularly both inside and outside my place of work which was a Japanese university. While I consider myself a reasonably fluent speaker of Japanese, it could certainly be said that the use of a Japanese interviewer would have provided more 'natural' examples of Japanese interaction as one Japanese speaker to another. However, this would have been at the expense of the authenticity implicit in my interest in the interviewee's experience as a teacher and the interviewee's formulation of their responses to me in whatsoever capacity they perceived me (whether as fellow teacher, foreign teacher, outside researcher, non-native speaker of Japanese or whatever).

Just as there was no attempt made to select representative individuals from either the Japanese or overseas teachers, I did not try to assemble interview groups with matching profiles. Instead, both groups represented reasonably varied examples of English teachers working in Japan today, covering a breadth of experience. This made it possible to draw out common themes of potentially widespread relevance with regard to

English teacher identity and ways in which it can be formulated in Japanese and English.

### **2.4.3 *Transcription***

For me, the purpose of transcription is to ‘translate’ ongoing talk as it has been captured on the recording device into written form so that it is easy to read. For this reason, I find many of the distinctive features of Conversation Analysis (CA) transcripts, such as pop spellings and strings of ‘hhhhh’ for the breathy sounds (which are so noticeable on high quality recording equipment), distracting and unhelpful. The argument that this makes them more accessible to reanalysis by other CA researchers seems to contradict the more sensible emphasis placed on treating the recording itself (which is generally confidential material) as the ‘raw data’ (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 73-92). With digital recordings, it is relatively easy to relocate sections; and noting the clock count of key passages allowed for instant access to check on details such as the intonational patterning; the speaker’s tone of voice; the length of a pause or to remind oneself of the general feel of the live interaction. Where necessary, I have added additional notes in parentheses to aid the reader when presenting the transcripts here. On the other hand, cleanly typed manuscripts allowed for easy reading and scanning. In addition, they

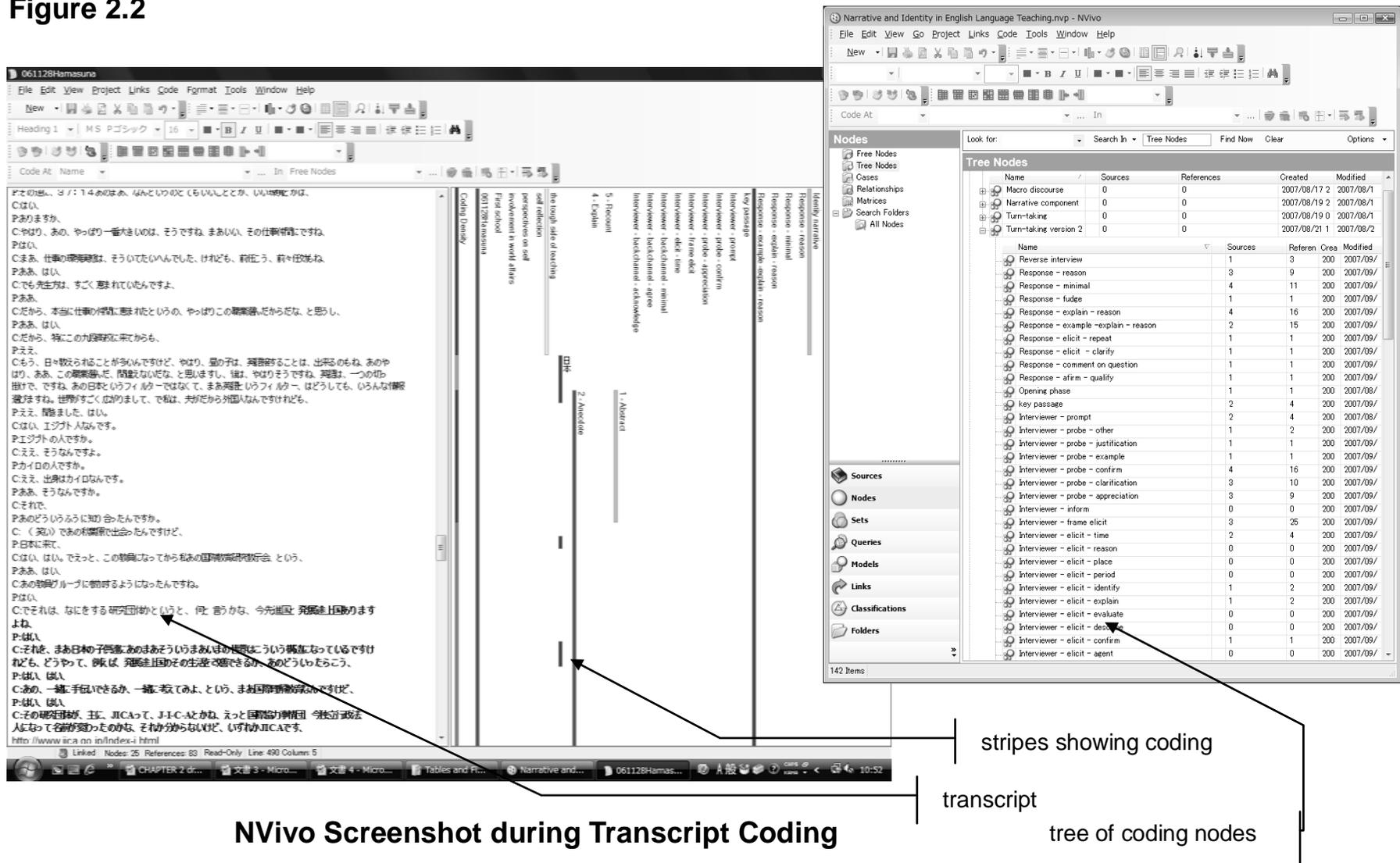
made it possible to do computerised word frequency counts and searches which would have been disrupted by the pop spellings and colons indicating word stretching found in CA transcripts. Otherwise, I opted for a detailed style of transcription which included word repetitions, false starts and half words, indications of overlapping speech and backchannel. Moreover, in order to clearly indicate the momentary turn-shifts implied by listener backchannel coinciding with main speaker pauses, I represented these on separate lines. The English transcripts printed out with single spacing and using commas to denote divisions represented by line breaks in the transcripts used here amount to some 520 pages.

In accordance with the principle of readability, I typed out Japanese transcripts in Japanese using the conventional combination of *kanji* characters and syllabic scripts. For English readers unfamiliar with character based languages, the Japanese writing system may appear complex and impenetrable, and for this reason I present all Japanese extracts in Romanised form together with translations. Translations provided in the discussion in this module were made on an ad hoc basis to aid the reader. The Japanese transcripts occupy a more modest 326 pages, partly due to slightly shorter interviews and partly as a result of the more compact nature of Japanese written language.

#### *2.4.4 Analysis using NVivo*

In order to analyse the transcripts, I used a qualitative software analysis programme called NVivo7 available online through QSR International and described in Bazeley (2007). This software allowed me to develop coding systems while I was analysing the data, apply multiple coding systems to the same data and view the data easily from a variety of perspectives. NVivo allows for the creation of coding categories called ‘free nodes’ either manually or generated by doing a word search. These can later be organised into hierarchies called ‘tree nodes’ and users can set up cross-referencing systems. In addition, transcripts can be assigned as cases and given attributes such as male, female, Japanese or British. When I set out to analyse the overall structure of the interview, I began by setting up a tree of nodes corresponding to the Sinclair-Coulthard model (1992) in NVivo and adapted it during the analysis to reflect the interaction during the interview. Below, I describe these adaptations. Figure 2.2 shows an NVivo screenshot during coding.

Figure 2.2



NVivo Screenshot during Transcript Coding

## 2.5 Modelling organisation in the qualitative narrative interview

One resource for the expression of identity is the interactive organisation of spoken discourse which reflects actual or perceived relationships of solidarity or power, or speaker roles. A host on a TV chat show will interact in a different way with a guest interviewee than a police officer interrogating a suspect. In my study, interviewees varied considerably as to whether they passively responded to my questions or took charge of the interview to put across their message. In this section, I consider the organisation of interactive discourse between interviewer and interviewee in relation to Sinclair and Coulthard's (1992) exchange model (hereafter S&C). I indicate how S&C could be adapted to the description of interviews, situating terms such as 'probe' and 'prompt' that are widely used by interview researchers (R. Atkinson, 1998; Gillham, 2000). S&C was developed as a description of the organisation of discourse in British secondary school classrooms, built around a basic unit of interaction: 'the exchange'.

Teacher: What time is it Susan? (initiate – elicit inform)

Susan: It is three o' clock. (response – inform)

Teacher: Good girl. (follow-up – evaluate)

The ‘exchange’, as I have indicated in parentheses, is made up of three ‘moves’ *initiate*, *response* and an optional *follow-up*. The terms following the dash indicate the classification labels or ‘acts’. In this example, they are realised by the teacher *eliciting information* from the student; the student *informing* the teacher as required; and the teacher *evaluating* the student’s response positively. Exchanges themselves are organised within *transactions*. Finally, above this S&C hypothesised that *transactions* might be organised within a larger discourse unit: *lesson*. When applied to the interview these units can be summarised as:

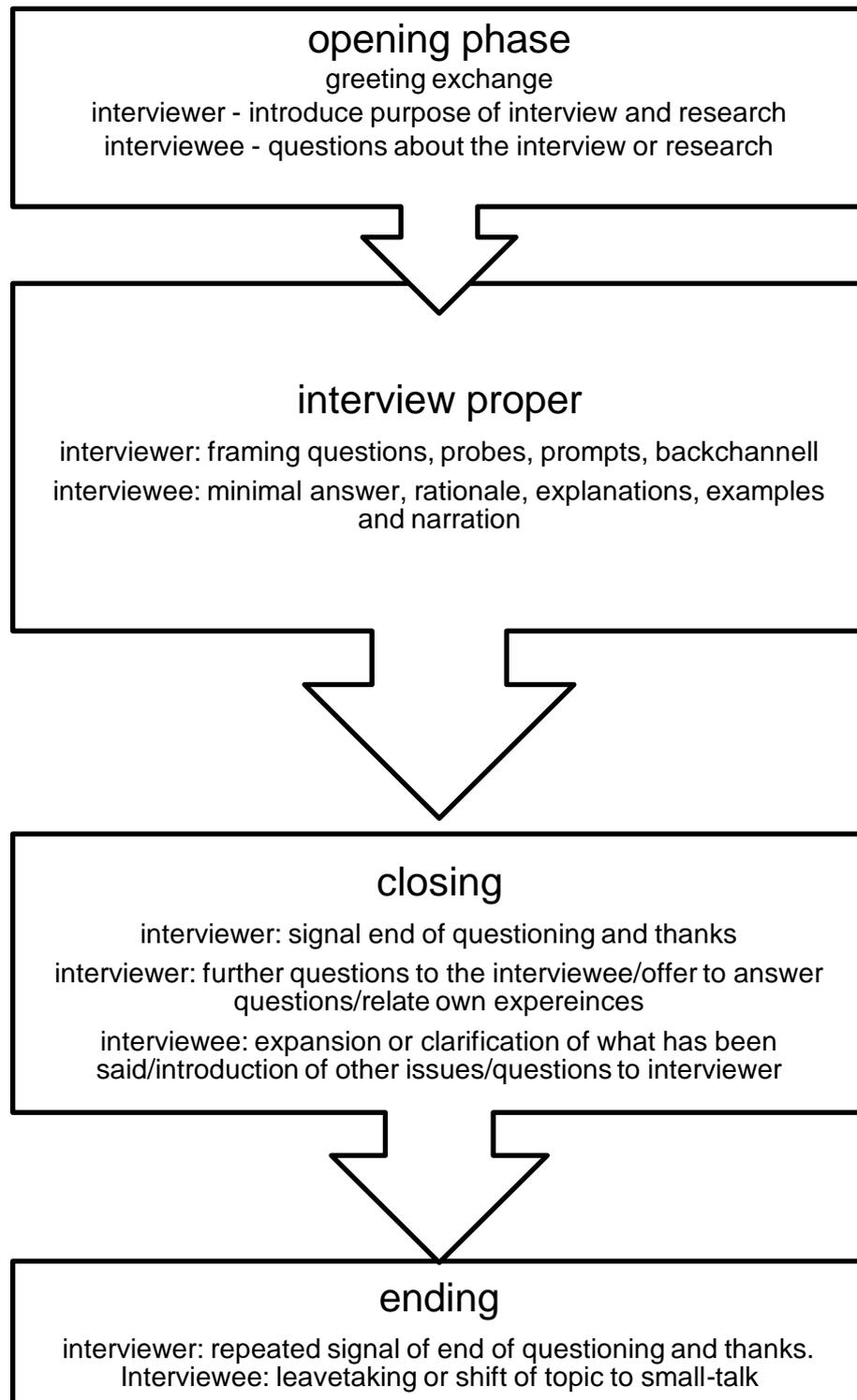
Rank I	Interview
Rank II	Transaction
Rank III	Exchange
Rank IV	Move

### 2.5.1 Rank 1 – the interview

The largest potential unit of discourse considered by S&C was the *lesson*, however, this was ultimately rejected since organisation within the lesson was perceived as being pedagogic rather than discourse based. In the case of interviews, I think there is a

stronger case for considering 'interview' as a unit of discourse, partly because it is more clearly jointly constructed than a lesson but also because interviews generally have a more marked beginning and end. An interview cannot begin or end without some indication in the discourse of beginning or ending. In practice, the narrative interview, which for the sake of description here refers to the semi-structured interviews on which this analysis was based, consisted of three main parts: *opening phase*, *interview proper*, and *closing phase* plus an optional *ending*. The opening phase prepared for the interview, beginning with a greeting and ending with a signal that the interview proper was beginning. Generally brief, it usually included informing the interviewee about the research and recording, and questions from the interviewee. This phase often took place before recording began. The *interview proper* began the moment the interviewer asked the first question on the interview schedule and ended when the interviewer indicated that the final question had been answered. The *closing phase* varied considerably in terms of length and content. In some cases, the signal that the interview proper was completed quickly led to the end of the interview. In others, it led to questions from the interviewee, elaboration on issues that had been previously raised and additional input from the interviewee, or blended into small talk which in turn was finally bounded by an *ending* (see Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3**



**Basic Structure of the Narrative Interview**

### 2.5.2 Rank II and III – the transaction and the exchange

The *opening phase*, *interview proper* and *closing* each comprised of one or more *transactions*. In these narrative interviews, *transaction* was a focal unit of discourse since meaningful narrative components such as anecdotes were told over the course of a transaction. In S&C, *transactions* are divided into a *preliminary* (beginning); one or more *medial* (middle) and a *terminal* (end) *exchange*. In my interviews, *preliminary exchanges* contained a framing question or comment (an *elicit* in S&C) by the interviewer or a topic initiation by the interviewee. The *medial exchanges* were concerned with expansion and clarification. In guides for traditional research interviewing (e.g. Gillham, 2000), interviewers are advised to structure the interview around framing questions, supplemented by *probes* and *prompts* to encourage expansion. As noted in previous sections, in quantitative studies these would be prepared in detail in advance, while in a qualitative study, such as the one described here, *probes* and *prompts* arose spontaneously. Following S&C, ‘framing questions’ are therefore *eliciting* moves in the *preliminary* position in a *transaction*. ‘Probes’ and ‘prompts’ are those occurring in the *medial* position. Probes correspond to *elicitations* (Table 2.4), but there was no equivalent to prompts such as ‘Could you say a bit more about that?’ which encourage the speaker to continue talk that is already underway (see Table 2.5).

**Table 2.4**

<b>Probe type</b>	<b>English example</b>	<b>Japanese example</b>
Confirm	(Do) you mean ...?	<i>...desu ka / ...to iu koto (desu) ka</i>
Clarify	How do you mean?	<i>Do iu koto desu ka</i>
Appreciate	How interesting? (or other adjectives depending on context)	<i>subarashii [great!] desu ne (or other adjectives)</i>
Relevance	What are you getting at? / What is your point?	<i>dou iu imi desu ka</i>
Justification	What was your reasoning behind that? Why did you say that?	<i>doushite deshou ka</i> <i>sore wa naze deshou ka</i>
Example	Can you give me an example? For example?	<i>Toku ni rei arimasuka [do you have a particular example?] / Tatoeba?</i>

**Summary of Probes in English and Japanese**

**Table 2.5**

<b>Style of prompt</b>	<b>English example</b>	<b>Japanese example</b>
Continue	carry on / go on	<i>dozo / tsudukete,</i>
Expand	Could you say a bit more about that...	<i>Sore ni tsuite, mou sukoshi hanashite kudasai.</i>
So ...	OK, so ... / so that was ...	<i>Sore de wa... / soshite... / dakara</i>
Repeating back	repetition (with rising intonation) repetition + right	repetition + <i>tte</i> (with rising intonation) repetition + <i>desu ne</i>
Suggesting an example / possibility	(Was it) ...?	<i>...desu ka?</i>

**Summary of Prompts in English and Japanese**

### 2.5.3 Rank IV – moves

As noted above, the exchange in S&C consisted of three moves: an *initiation* (I), a *response* (R) and an optional *follow-up* (F). The principal *acts* through which initiating moves were realised were *elicitation*, *informative*, and *directive*. *Elicitations* denote moves where one speaker requires the other to provide some information. These are *usually* questions, though not necessarily in the interrogative. In so far as the interview is concerned with the interviewer eliciting talk from the interviewee, it could be said that virtually anything the interviewer says in the *initiation* position is likely to be interpreted as a kind of *elicitation*. In my data, almost all of the *informative* moves by the interviewer occurred in either the opening or closing phases, the main exception being ‘reverse interviewing’ where the interviewee encouraged me to share my experience on the topic under discussion. The predominance of initiating informing moves by the interviewee was usually a sign that the interviewee was particularly forthcoming. There were few *directives* with none during the interview proper, and those that did occur related to peripheral matters such as seating interviewees or collecting questionnaires.

*Responses* in S&C were effectively limited to those that endorse an initiation (a *positive*

*response*); those that do not fit the initiation (a *negative response*) and those that seek to neutralise or delay a response (*temporisation*) (Tsui, 1994). In my data *temporisations* were rare, and followed by requests for clarification. *Negative responses* were surprisingly common as interviewees frequently challenged assumptions in my questions. I also subdivided *positive responses* into *minimal responses* (a one ‘sentence’ reply) and *detailed responses* that included explanation. From the point of view of interview researchers, this difference is important because, while the *minimal response* satisfies the survey interviewer who needs to code responses, narrative interviewers focus on the detailed responses.

*Follow-up* moves by the interviewer served to evaluate the interviewee’s contributions. In practice, the interviewer signalled *agreement* with some proposition (That’s right!), *acknowledged* a point (I see), or simply showed a *minimal* attentiveness to ongoing talk (mm) (Table 2.6). I have classified minimal utterances as ‘backchannel’, though one might say all follow-up moves are a kind of backchannel, that is, the utterances of a listener in a conversation. A summary of the analytical framework for the interview as a whole is provided in Figure 2.4, and Figure 2.5 summarises a taxonomy of interview moves in the interview proper.

**Table 2.6**

<b>Category of follow-up</b>	<b>English example</b>	<b>Japanese example</b>
Minimal backchannel	right / yeah / hmm	<i>Mm / un / hai</i>
Acknowledging	OK / oh, yeah / really / I see	<i>naru hodo / sou desu ka / aa hai</i>
Endorsing	that's right / too right / (absolutely) / (certainly) / (I quite agree)	<i>ne / sou desu ne / (tashika ni) / (honto ni)</i> <i>(watashi mo sou omoimasu)</i>

**Summary of Follow-up Moves in English and Japanese**

**Figure 2.4**

<i>Exchange (interview function)</i>	<i>Move</i>	<i>Act</i>
Preliminary (framing question/ topic introduction)	initiate	- [ elicit (interviewer) inform (interviewer / interviewee)
	response	- [ minimal extended
	follow-up	- [ backchannel acknowledge endorse
Medial (probes /prompts)	initiate	- [ elicit (interviewer) inform (interviewer / interviewee)
	response	- [ minimal extended
	follow-up	- [ backchannel acknowledge endorse
Terminal (completion/ acknowledge completion)	initiate	- [ inform (interviewer /interviewee)
	response	- [ minimal (extended)
	follow-up	- [ backchannel acknowledge endorse

**Transaction Structure in the Interview Proper**

**Figure 2.5**

<i>Move</i>	<i>Act</i>	<i>Example</i>			
<b>Initiate</b>	confirm	positive negative choice	(Is it true?) (It isn't true, is it?) (Yes or no?)		
		clarify	explain relevance	(How do you mean?) (What are you getting at?)	
			inform	action agent place time period reason circumstance	(What happened?) (Who?) (Where?) (When?) (How long?) (Why?) (How?)
	identify describe evaluate example	(Which?) (What was it like?) (How do you feel?) (Give me an example.)			
	inform	(I once experienced ...)			
	prompt	(What about?)			
	<b>Respond</b>	none		(silence)	
		elicit		repeat clarify	(Once again, please?) (What do you mean?)
				minimal	confirm deny direct
		answer + rationale /explanation /example			
<b>Follow up</b>	minimal backchannel	(Mm.)			
	acknowledge	(Right. Yeah. I see.)			
	endorse	(That's right. Absolutely!)			

**Taxonomy of Acts in the Interview Proper**

As an example of this approach in practice, consider Extract 2.1 below. I have laid out the extract here so that it is possible to see a discourse analysis based on S&C side by side with the kind of labels typically used by interview researchers. Although one can see that it is marked by a series of exchanges, breaking it into three part exchanges does not do justice to this extract as a coherent whole. Consider the first three turns of the initial response in the extract:

- (i) **Pat:** And when did you yourself first think you might become an English teacher?
- (ii) **Osamu:** (I) thought about English teaching when I was thinking about university entrance exams, so that's third year of high school isn't it?
- (iii) **Pat:** Ah, right.

(translation taken from Extract 2.1 below)

Viewed in isolation, this fits the three part model introduced above. Turn (i) by the interviewer is an *initiating move* that would be classed as an elicitation in this case *elicit inform* (since it asks for information). Turn (ii) is a positive response which directly answers the interviewer's question of 'when' by identifying a specific time in his life. Finally, the interviewer provides what could be read as a minimal acknowledging *follow-up* move. However, in the next utterance the interviewee goes on to elaborate on his initial response so this could be considered a 'Preliminary' exchange. The narrative unfolds over the ensuing turns.

	Pat:	English translation	Exchange	Move	Class – sub	Interview
(1)	<i>De jibun de wa,</i>	And as for you,	Preliminary	Initiate	elicit – inform	Framing
(2)	<i>Ano, eigo kyouin ni naritai ka toka wa, hajimete itsu deshita deshou ka?</i>	Well, when did (you) first think (you) might become an English teacher?				question
	<b>Osamu:</b>					
(3)	<i>Eigo kyouin to kangaeta no wa,</i>	(I) thought about English teaching		Response	+ve - minimal	Short answer
(4)	<i>daigaku juken wo kangaeta koro</i>	when (I) was thinking about university entrance exams,				
(5)	<i>desu kara,</i>	so that's				
(6)	<i>kouko no san-nen desu ka ne.</i>	third year of high school isn't it?				
	<b>Pat:</b>					
(7)	<i>Aa, haa,</i>	Ah, right.		Follow-up	minimal	Back-channel acknowledge

\_\_\_\_\_ solid lines denote exchange boundaries

\_\_\_\_\_ broken lines indicate bound exchanges (dependent on the exchange which surrounds them)

**Extract 2.1**

**2/5**

	<b>Osamu:</b>	<b>English translation</b>	<b>Exchange</b>	<b>Move</b>	<b>Class – sub</b>	<b>Interview</b>
(8)	<i>Tada, ano, boku wa,</i>	(It's) just (that), well I,	Medial 1	Initiate	inform – explain	Expansion -
(9)	<i>ee, dono gakubu ni ikitai toka,</i>	er, it wasn't (a matter of) which department I wanted to enter,				explain
(10)	<i>dono bunya ni susumitai toka, to iun de wa nakute,</i>	neither was it which field I wanted to pursue,				
(11)	<i>aru hitotsu no daigaku ni hairitai to,</i>	(I) wanted to enter one (particular) university,				
(12)	<i>iu kimochi deshita kara,</i>	(I) felt, that's why				
(13)	<i>sono daigaku no bunkakei no juken wo subete ukemashita.</i>	(I) took all the humanities entrance exams for that university.				
(14)	<i>Desu kara, moshi hougakubu ni ittereba,</i>	Therefore, if I could have entered the School of Law,				
	<b>Pat:</b>					
(15)	<i>Ee,</i>	Yeah,		Response	+ve minimal	Backchannel
	<b>Osamu:</b>					
(16)	<i>Houritsu wo mezashiteru</i>	(I) would have pursued law,	Medial 2	Initiate	inform – explain	Continuation
(17)	<i>deshoushi,</i>					
	<b>Pat:</b>					
(18)	<i>Aa, hai.</i>	Ah, yes.		Response	+ve minimal	Backchannel

## Extract 2.1

3/5

	<b>Osamu:</b>	<b>English translation</b>	<b>Exchange</b>	<b>Move</b>	<b>Class – sub</b>	<b>Interview</b>
(19)	<i>Keizaigakubu ni ikeba,</i>	If I had been able to enter the School of Economics,	Medial 3	Initiate	inform – explain	Continuation
(20)	<i>tatoeba keizai gakubu wo yatekureru to omoimasu.</i>	for example I think I would have gone to the School of Economics.				
	<b>Pat:</b>					
(21)	<i>Aa,</i>	Ah.		Response	+ve minimal	Backchannel
(22)	<i>sono daigaku no akogare wa,</i>	What was the attraction of that university?	Medial 4	Initiate	elicit – inform	Probe
	<b>Osamu:</b>					
(23)	<i>Nan deshau ne.</i>	(I wonder) what was it?		Response	temporisation	
	<b>Pat:</b>					
(24)	<i>Maa, imeeji ga yokatta ka?</i>	Well, was the image (of it) good?	Medial 4	Initiate	elicit – confirm	Probe
	<b>Osamu:</b>					
(25)	<i>Un, riyu wa,</i>	Yeah, the reason (was),		Response	-ve (incomplete)	
	<b>Pat:</b>					
(26)	<i>Shiriai toka?</i>	Acquaintances or something?	Medial 5	Initiate	elicit – confirm	Probe
	<b>Osamu:</b>					
(27)	<i>Sore wa nai,</i>	It wasn't that.		Response	-ve	

**Extract 2.1**

**4/5**

	<b>Pat</b>	<b>English translation</b>	<b>Exchange</b>	<b>Move</b>	<b>Class – sub</b>	<b>Interview</b>
(28)	<i>Ano ryoshin ga,</i>	Your parents?	Medial 6	Initiate	elicit – confirm	Probe
	<b>Osamu</b>					
(29)	<i>Chigaimasu ne.</i>	That wasn't the case (either)		Response	-ve	
(30)	<i>Tada, daigaku wa,</i>	(It's) just (that), universities,	Medial 7	Initiate	inform – explain	Expansion –
(31)	<i>Chugakkou, koukousei no toki kara 'daigaku' to iu to,</i>	Ever since junior high and high school (when one) spoke of 'universities'				explain
(32)	<i>Todai ka, Kyodai ka, Waseda ka, Keio ka</i>	Tokyo University or Kyoto University, Waseda or Keio				
(33)	<i>To iu yotsu shika atama ni nakatta</i>	Only those four came to mind				
(34)	<i>Ikitai toka</i>	(it wasn't a matter of) wanting to go				
(35)	<i>Ano ikeru toka</i>	Being able to go and so on,				
(36)	<i>Atama ni omoiukabanakatta</i>	(Other universities) didn't come to mind				
(37)	<i>To iu no mo arimasu ne</i>	(That was) another factor				
	<b>Pat</b>					
(38)	<i>Aa, hai</i>	Ah, yes.		Response	+ve	Acknowledge

**Extract 2.1**

**5/5**

	<b>English translation</b>	<b>Exchange</b>	<b>Move</b>	<b>Class – sub</b>	<b>Interview</b>
(39) <i>De sono daigaku wa, buji ni hairaremashita ka?</i> <b>Osamu</b>	And did you enter that university alright?	Medial 8	Initiate	elicit – confirm	Probe
(40) <i>Nantoka de hairimashita.</i>	Somehow I managed to enter.		Response	+ve minimal	
(41) <b>Pat</b> (Laughs)			Follow-up	acknowledge	
<hr/>					
<b>Osamu</b>					
(42) <i>De sono toki ni,</i>	And at that time	Terminal	Initiate	inform - explain	Expansion –
(43) <i>Moto, moto kyoin ni naritai kimoichi wa,</i>	Originally, (I) felt (I) wanted to become a teacher				explain
(44) <i>Sukoshi ariamshita.</i>	To some extent				
(45) <i>Houritsuka ni naru ka,</i>	Either become a lawyer				
(46) <i>Arui wa kyoin ni naru ka</i>	Or become a teacher				
(47) <i>De kyoin de areba,</i>	And if (I) were to become a teacher,				
(48) <i>Ichiban kuippagure ga nai no ga</i>	the one where (I) would be least likely				
(49) <i>eigo ka na,</i>	to starve was probably English				
(50) <i>To omotta no de,</i>	(I) thought				
(51) <i>Kyoiku gakubu mo eibunka mo uketashi</i>	(I) also took the School of Education, Department of English Culture (exam)				
(52) <i>De bungakubu ni susumeru koto ni narimashita.</i>	And ended up entering pursuing English Literature				
<b>Pat</b>					
(53) <i>Ah, hai, hai.</i>	Ah, yes, yes.		Response	+ve	Acknowledge

In the exchange model, it would be natural to class turns that follow the first three moves as separate exchanges. However, keeping in mind Grice's (1975) maxim of quantity, it could be said that restricting the answer to a time reference would have been insufficient in this context. In order to present himself as a cooperative interviewee and rational person, the interviewee offered a rationale which served to clarify the logic of his dating and his original interest in English teaching. Hence, it makes sense to see the whole of Extract 2.1 as framed by the interviewee's original question which was not fully answered until the end of it. S&C (pp. 28-29) allow for 'bound exchanges' such as those that follow my enquiry about the attraction of the university (line 22). The elicitations at lines 24, 26 and 28 effectively serve as 'hints' to the initial enquiry rather than as independent initiations, but with segments like Extract 2.1 there is a need to expand the notion of bounding. From the interviewer's perspective, the interview consists of segments of talk like this that are bounded by key questions which effectively mark topic shift. From the interviewee's point of view, responding to questions automatically involves identity work which while in some cases may be fulfilled by a minimal response, as here, often demands something more.

## 2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have made a case for exploring narrative identity in the research interview through the use of linguistic resources. I argued that the concern for collecting naturalistic data has dissuaded linguistic researchers from giving the research interview the attention it deserves as the prime research tool in the social sciences. More generally, I noted that the interview is one of the most important forms of acquiring and disseminating information today. In reviewing the literature on interviewing in the social sciences, I found that although many researchers have highlighted the importance of language and discourse, there is really no established approach to deconstructing narrative interviews. As a first stage towards developing such an approach, I have illustrated how the interaction between interviewer and interviewee can be usefully represented by elaborating on the Sinclair-Coulthard exchange model (1992). Borrowing the terms ‘framing question’, ‘prompt’ and ‘probe’ which would be familiar to researchers using interviews in sociological research may be one way of making models of interactive discourse such as the exchange model more comprehensible, accessible and potentially useful. I have illustrated how the choices made by interviewer and interviewee can be described by this model in a way that highlights the nature of the interaction and the relative roles played by participants.

Such participant roles are, nevertheless, too ephemeral in terms of identity construction unless they can somehow be correlated with other forms of identity work. In the following chapters, I explore other resources used by interview participants for narrative identity construction.

## CHAPTER 3

# SPATIO-TEMPORAL FOCUS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

*In literature and art itself, temporal and spatial determinations are inseparable from one another, and always colored by emotions and values.*

(Bakhtin, 1981: 243)

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter takes a more detailed look at the narratives in the data. Drawing on Bakhtin's (1981: 84-258) notion of a chronotope, I propose the concept of spatio-temporal 'focus' as an organising feature in the construction of identity in oral narratives as they occurred in the interview data. In the same way that Bakhtin has illustrated how the representation of time and space in novelistic narrative discourse is effectively inseparable from the portrayal of action, events and characterisation, I argue that spatio-temporal representation in oral narratives is a key feature of identity work. My approach is also inspired by Baynham's (2003) discussion of migrant narratives in which he argued for the centrality of time/space. Baynham explored the question:

How are spaces and times, understood as semiotic resources, involved in the construction of narrative? (Baynham, 2003: 352)

This question is also implicit in my approach in this chapter, albeit taken up in a slightly different way from Baynham. Whereas Baynham used this question to make a point about narrative organisation in relation to social contexts, I am more specifically concerned with space/time as an identity resource in narrative.

In Module 1, I identified a number of studies that pointed out that, while there were often Labovian narratives to be found in everyday conversation, there were also a variety of narrative-like constructions including stretches of talk where it was difficult to decide whether or not they were actually narratives (Ervin-Tripp and Kuntay, 1997; Norrick, 2000). The same is true of the interview data discussed here. This is partly the result of the fact that I did not in so many words ask interviewees to ‘tell me a story about a time when ...’ as other researchers using interviews as a source of data have usually done (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Plum, 1988; Wooffitt, 1992). As a result, narratives occurred in response to the needs of the interview at a particular moment, as a way of clarifying some point, rather than to provide the interviewer with narrative data. The range of narrative types also seems to reflect a tension between recounting critical moments and the broader narrative of the teacher’s life history as a whole. This relationship can be accounted for by considering how spatio-temporal focus is depicted.

The influence of memory on narrative form is also considered. Finally, by juxtaposing narratives told in English and Japanese, I explore some of the apparent differences between spatio-temporal organisation in Japanese and English.

It seems common sense to think of time and place as represented through different linguistic resources, but there is a considerable overlap that is worthy of attention. A differentiation between time and space is fundamental to many features of grammar (English or Japanese). Tense and aspect, for example, can link the actions expressed through verbs to temporal dimensions without any explicit reference to place. The same is true of temporal referents such as dates and times, or deictic expressions such as ‘then’, ‘yesterday’, ‘tomorrow’, ‘soon’ or ‘next year’. ‘Place’ tends to be represented by nouns (home, school, Birmingham, the library) and deictic expressions: ‘here’, ‘there’, ‘nearby’. Questions about time and place are also separated; ‘when’ and ‘where’ in English, and *itsu* and *doko* their respective equivalents in Japanese. On the other hand, while many prepositions are explicitly indicators of time, or of place the most common ones generally overlap, if not semantically, at least conceptually. I have summarised these resources for representing time and space in Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

**Table 3.1**

<b>Grammatical Resource</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Japanese</b>
<b><i>Tense and aspect:</i></b>	<b><i>verb form &amp; auxiliary</i></b>	<b><i>verb endings</i></b>
<b>Present</b>	(I) teach	<i>oshieru /oshiemasu</i>
<b>Present continuous</b>	(I) am teaching	<i>oshietei-ru /oshietei-masu</i>
<b>Present perfect</b>	(I) have taught	<i>oshieta koto ga aru /ari-masu</i>
<b>Past</b>	(I) taught	<i>oshieta /oshiemashita</i>
<b>Past continuous</b>	(I) was teaching	<i>oshietei-ta /oshietei-mashita</i>
<b>Past perfect</b>	(I) had taught	<i>oshiteta koto ga atta /arimashita</i>
<b>Future</b>	<b><i>lexical</i></b>	<b><i>lexical</i></b>
	(I) am going to teach /	<i>oshieru yotei /</i>
	(I) will teach	<i>oshieru tsumori</i>
<b><i>Nominal phrases</i></b>		(year) (month) (date)
<b>Date, day, month, year</b>	Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2008	2008nen ichi-gatsu tsuitachi (day) kayoubi
<b>Ordinals (order of time)</b>	The first time	<i>dai-ikkai-me</i>
	The second time	<i>dai-nikai-me</i>
<b>Cardinals (length of time)</b>	One week	<i>is-shu-kan</i>
	Two weeks	<i>ni-shu-kan</i>
<b>historical or biographical reference points</b>	In the Meiji period	<i>meiji-jidai ni</i>
	During high school	<i>kouko-no-toki (toki=time)</i>
<b><i>Deictic markers</i></b>	<b><i>temporal</i></b>	
	then /at that time	<i>sono toki</i>
	now	<i>ima</i>
	at the moment	<i>ima no tokoro</i>
	today/tomorrow/yesterday,	<i>kyo/ashita/kinou</i>
	this (year/month/week)	<i>ko(toshi/ngetsu/nshu)</i>
	this time	<i>kon-kai</i>
	a (year/month/week) ago	<i>(ichi-nen/ik-ka-getsu/is-shu-kan) mae</i>
	in a (week/month/year)'s time	<i>(ichi-nen/ik-ka-getsu/is-shu-kan) go</i>

**Resources for Representing Time in English and Japanese**

Table 3.1

Grammatical Resource	English	Japanese	
<b>Vague markers</b>	<b>temporal</b> sometime	<i>kondo /itsuka</i>	
	at one time	<i>izen</i>	
	in the past	<i>kako ni</i>	
	one time / once	<i>aru toki</i>	
	soon	<i>chikai uchi ni / mou sugu</i>	
	one day	<i>aru hi</i>	
	a while (ago/before/ later),	<i>kekko (mae/izen/ ato)</i>	
	in due course	<i>sono uchi</i>	
	<b>Prepositions</b>	before ...	<i>...mae</i>
		...ago	<i>...mae</i>
		previously	<i>izen</i>
		after / later	<i>ato</i>
		at	<i>ni</i>
in		<i>ni</i>	
on		<i>ni</i>	
around		<i>gurai / goro</i>	
between A & B		<i>A to B no aida</i>	
within (a week)		<i>(isshukan) no aida</i>	
during...	<i>...no aida</i>		
from ...until...	<i>...kara ...made</i>		
since...	<i>...kara</i>		
<b>Ordering in discourse</b>			
<b>In temporal order</b>	no markers	no markers	
	having done A, I did B	<i>A wo shite(/shimashita) kara, B wo shita (/shimashita)</i>	
	first	<i>mazu</i>	
	then	<i>soshite</i>	
	after that	<i>sono ato</i>	
	next	<i>tsugi</i>	
	finally	<i>saigo ni</i>	
	in the end	<i>kekkyoku</i>	
<b>In reverse order</b>	(I) did B having done A	<i>B wo suru mae ni, A wo shita</i>	
	Before doing B, do A	<i>A wo suru mae ni, B wo</i>	
	before that ...	<i>shite</i>	
	previous to this ...	<i>kono mae ni</i> <i>kono izen ni</i>	

**Table 3.2**

<b>Grammatical Resource</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Japanese</b>
<b>Nominal phrases</b>		
<b>Proper nouns</b>	Birmingham University	<i>baamingamu daigaku</i>
<b>nouns</b>	the/a library	<i>toshokan</i>
	at the conference	<i>gakkai de</i>
<b>Deictic markers</b>	<b>spatial</b> here	<i>kocchi / koko</i>
	there	<i>socchi / soko</i>
	over there	<i>acchi / asoko</i>
	in (this/that) place	<i>(kono/sono) bashou ni</i>
	upstairs / downstairs	<i>ue / shita</i>
<b>Vague markers</b>	<b>spatial</b> nearby / close by	<i>chikaku</i>
	around here	<i>kono (shuuhen) hen</i>
	in the neighbourhood	<i>kono kinjou ni</i>
	somewhere / some place	<i>doko ka / aru tokoro</i>
	far away	<i>tooku</i>
<b>Prepositions of place</b>	before	<i>temae</i>
	behind	<i>ushiro</i>
	next to / beside	<i>tonari</i>
	at	<i>ni</i>
	in	<i>ni</i>
	on	<i>ni</i>
	around	<i>mawari ni</i>
	between	<i>aida</i>
	over / above	<i>ue</i>
	under / below	<i>shita</i>
	across from / opposite...	<i>... no hantai</i>
	outside	<i>soto</i>
	inside	<i>naka</i>
	alongside	<i>ni sotto</i>
<b>Preposition of movement</b>	(go/put) into	<i>naka ni / ee (hairu/ireru)</i>
	(go/take) out of	<i>soto ni / ee (deru/dasu)</i>
	(go/push) through	<i>aida ni (toru/toosu)</i>
	(go/push) over	<i>ue ni (koeru/koyasu)</i>
	(go/push) under	<i>shita ee (iku/ikasu)</i>
	(walk) past	<i>tooru</i>
	(walk) towards...	<i>...ee mukatte (aruku)</i>
	(walk) up/ down/ along ...	<i>...ni sotto (aruku)</i>

**Resources for representing place in English and Japanese**

In this chapter, I will argue that when one comes to consider discourse, time almost inevitably implies a place and place is generally associated with time. Furthermore, time and place are not so much background information as semiotic coordinates for establishing identity.

### **3.1.1 Bakhtin's *chronotope***

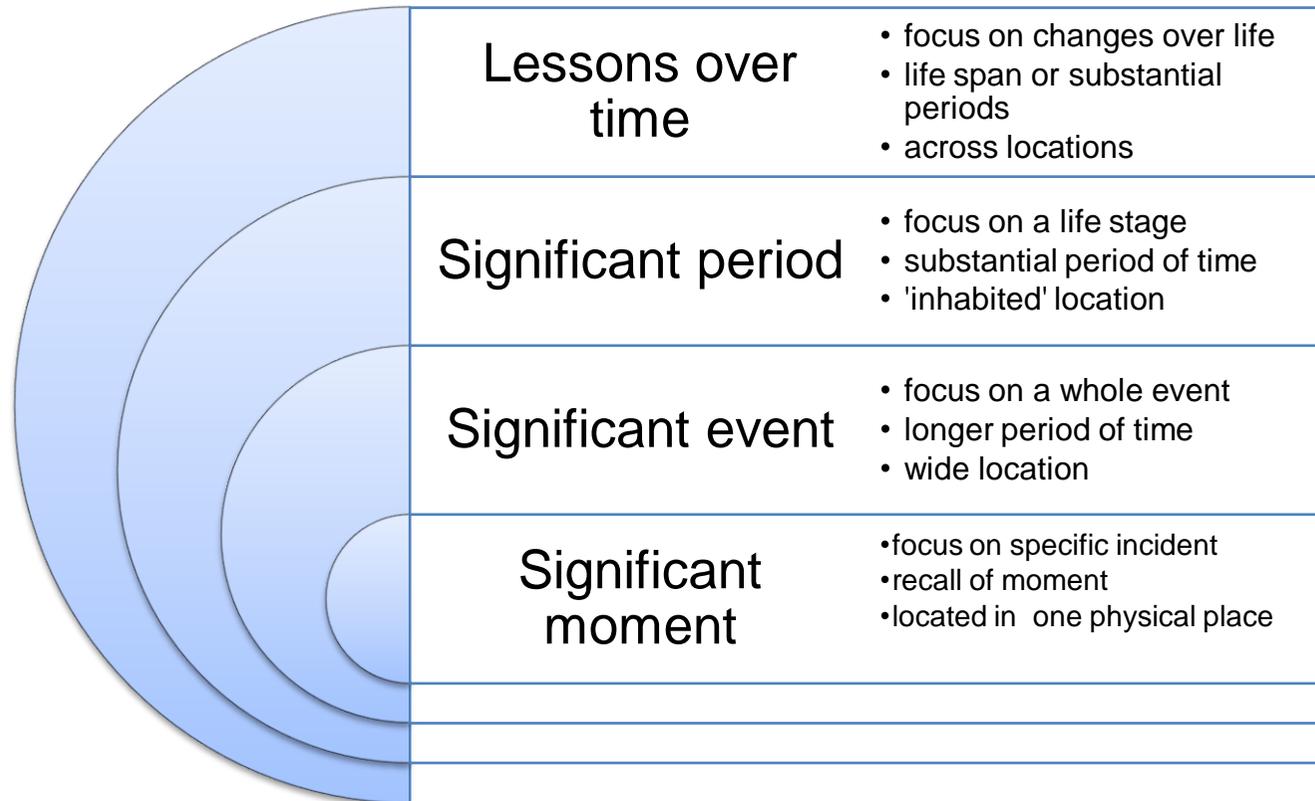
In an essay entitled 'Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel', Bakhtin (1981: 84-258) used the term *chronotope* to refer to the inter-relatedness of time and space, in literary narratives. For Bakhtin, time and space were not only inseparable but fed into each other. A static scene is brought to life by being given a sense of time, and the abstract phenomenon of time is given shape by representing it in terms of place. He defined his chronotope in the following way:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin, 1981: 84)

In the essay, Bakhtin effectively provided a history of this phenomenon from the 'Greek romance' to the modern novel. As can be seen from the above quotation,

Bakhtin emphasised that the chronotope was a literary artistic device and illustrated how the otherwise intangible nature of time and space are given form through the chronotope. It is, as he put it, ‘the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied’ (ibid: 250). Towards the end of the essay though, he hinted that it is rather more than a literary technique. Indeed the importance of the chronotope as Bakhtin represented it, in conjunction with the use of semiotic codes, was ultimately no less than the underlying human ability inherent in abstract thought in general (ibid: 258). In other words, abstract thought is dependent on spatio-temporal conceptualisation. Nevertheless, Bakhtin also showed that there were a broad range of stylistic conventions associated with the representation of the chronotope, making it amenable to description and analysis. For this reason, I look at the different ways narrators represent time and space and the overall effect this has on their narrative. I found that some narrators focused their telling on a specific time and place, whereas others treated time and place more loosely. I used spatio-temporal focus—the degree to which a narration of an event is linked to a specific time and place—to classify narrative extracts for discussion in this chapter into the four types shown in Figure 3.1. I chose 1-4 segments from each interview which stood out as significant tellings—77 in total. I then categorised them according to narrative type as shown in Table 3.3.

**Figure 3.1**



**Chronotope Types**

Table 3.3

Ref.	Title	Teller	Code	Sex	Age	Topic	Chronotope type	Length*
(01)	Teacher observation	Yumi	J1	F	34	Good and bad teachers	significant period	1,237 K
(02)	You are too kind	Yumi	J1	F	34	Studying interpreting	significant period	1,878 K
(03)	English radio programmes	Ai	J9	F	35	Joy of study thro' radio	significant period	1,087 K
(04)	The spoilt AET	Hideki	J2-a	M	53	Telling off a foreign teacher	significant period	369 K
(05)	Reading <i>Graduation</i>	Naomi	J3-b	F	36	Emotion through English	significant moment	815 K
(06)	A tiny excitement	Ai	J9	F	35	English speech at school	significant event	950 K
(07)	English radio programmes	Tomoko	J2-b	F	34	Learning English	significant period	1,158 K
(08)	Starting out	Naomi	J3-b	F	36	First experience teaching	significant period	788 K
(09)	Mini English Community	Taka	J5	M	46	Ideal workplace	lessons over time	749 K
(10)	Baby boomers	Taro	J6	M	69	Background to teaching	significant period	723 K
(11)	Classroom breakdown	Miyuki	J3-a	F	35	A problem school	significant period	721 K
(12)	The poorest student makes good	Taro	J6	M	69	Appreciation from student	significant moment	807 K
(13)	Abnormal communication	Taro	J6	M	69	How not to teach	significant moment	1,150 K
(14)	Learning through experience	Osamu	J7	M	51	Adult critics aid teaching	lessons over time	889 K
(15)	Turning a blind eye	Yoshiko	J8	F	47	Tough high school classes	significant period	1,219 K
(16)	Culture shock	Yoshiko	J8	F	47	Passive Japanese teachers	significant period	1,843 K
(17)	Finding strength in teaching	Yoshiko	J8	F	47	Survived cancer	lessons over time	1,177 K
(18)	The boat trip	Ai	J9	F	35	Learning to <i>speak</i> English	significant event	914 K
(19)	The good in the bad	Ai	J9	F	35	Tough teaching also good	significant period	1,299 K
(20)	Born to teach	Ryo	J10	M	32	Acted like teacher as a child	significant moment	544 K

\* Length of extract: Japanese 'K' = *kanji*, the total number of characters. English 'W' = word, the total number of words.

### Selected Narratives—Japanese Narratives

**Table 3.3**

Ref.	Title	Teller	Code	Sex	Age	Topic	Chronotope type	Length*
(21)	A logical choice	Taka	J5	M	46	Reason became teacher	significant event	538 K
(22)	The 60th Birthday	Hiroki	J11	M	66	Students show appreciation	significant event	372 K
(23)	Tokyo Tower	Osamu	J7	M	51	Speak English to foreigner	significant moment	851 K
(24)	The island school	Yusuke	J4-a	M	35	Working with AETs	significant period	959 K
(25)	Oh I just sneezed	Yuri	J13	F	31	First English lessons	significant period	613 K
(26)	Answering back	Yuri	J13	F	31	Foreign students anti-Japan	significant period	2,059 K
(27)	5 precious hours	Yuri	J13	F	31	Feedback comments	significant period	812 K
(28)	Return to Tokyo	Kenji	J12	M	50	Rationale for school move	Significant event	1,329 K
(29)	A failed exam	Kenta	J14	M	41	Failing scholarship exam	significant event	582 K
(30)	A prestigious university	Osamu	J7	M	51	Why English teacher	Significant event	691 K
(31)	A small mistake	Yuka	J15	F	25	Making mistakes in class	significant moment	319 K
(32)	The joy of English	Jiro	J16	M	43	Using English with teachers	significant period	1,033 K
(33)	The difficulty of teaching	Jiro	J16	M	43	Development as teacher	lessons over time	1,053 K
(34)	The tennis player	Hiro	J17	M	44	Dispute with parent	significant period	1,034 K
(35)	Keeping abreast of troubles	Yuki	J4-b	F	35	Approach to troubles	lessons over time	452 K
(36)	The Egyptian teacher	Ai	J9	F	35	Meeting her husband	significant event	2,035 K
(37)	A second career	Hiro	J17	M	44	Becoming a HS teacher at33	lessons over time	1,248 K
(38)	The debate	Jun	J18	M	47	A successful seminar	significant event	722 K
(39)	Like Buddha	Jun	J18	M	47	Japanese joke about France	significant moment	620 K

\* Length of extract: Japanese ‘K’ = *kanji*, the total number of characters. English ‘W’ = word, the total number of words.

**Selected Narratives—Japanese Narratives**

**Table 3.3**

Ref.	Title	Teller	Code	Sex	Age	Topic	Chronotope type	Length*
(40)	Strange Japanese	George	N4	M	33	Effect of TV programme	significant period	600 W
(41)	A half-half child	George	N4	M	33	Dispute over language	significant event	441 W
(42)	The interview	Bruce	N5	M	37	Interview for JET	significant moment	421 W
(43)	Bad communication	Paul	N6-b	M	26	JET not told about lecture	significant event	577 W
(44)	Correcting the textbooks	Paul	N6-b	M	26	Classroom experience	significant period	297 W
(45)	Keep smiling	Graham	N7	M	54	How to treat students	significant period	309 W
(46)	A corporate scandal	Graham	N7	M	54	Why fraternisation banned	significant event	323 W
(47)	Looking at your roots	Deepa	N8-b	F	26	Reflecting on Indian roots	significant period	424 W
(48)	A quaint story	Tom	N3	M	42	Present from the neighbours	significant moment	332 W
(49)	Materialism and butterflies	Charles	N9	M	60	Spiritual state of students	significant period	583 W
(50)	You must be crazy	Ray	N10	M	26	Reaction to Japan plan	significant moment	240 W
(51)	Selling <i>Eikaiwa</i>	Ray	N10	M	26	Role as salesperson	significant period	522 W
(52)	Reverse interview	Patrick		M	38	Why came to Japan	significant period	458 W
(53)	The first gaijin	Andrew	N11	M	47	Early experience in Japan	significant period	560 W
(54)	Swimming instructor	Andrew	N11	M	47	Taking responsibility	significant event	391 W
(55)	A moment	Joe	N12	M	41	Feel inspired to see learning lessons over time	lessons over time	401 W
(56)	Others of us	Joe	N12	M	41	Seeing other foreigners	significant event	646 W
(57)	Greeting the neighbours	Phil	N13	M	55	Daily life in Japan	significant period	298 W
(58)	Escape from cram school	Phil	N13	M	55	Pulling son out of school	significant event	481 W
(59)	<i>Kumon</i> Japanese school	Kate	N15	F	60	Learning Japanese	significant period	351 W

\* Length of extract: Japanese ‘K’ = *kanji*, the total number of characters. English ‘W’ = word, the total number of words.

**Selected Narratives—English Narratives**

**Table 3.3**

Ref.	Title	Teller	Code	Sex	Age	Topic	Chronotope type	Length*
(60)	The trials and joys of teaching	John	N14	M	36	Challenge of teaching	lessons over time	493 W
(61)	The foreigners you know	Kate	N15	F	60	Being treated as Japanese	significant event	236 W
(62)	Foreigners can understand me	Kate	N15	F	60	Experience at speech contest	significant event	318 W
(63)	An ambitious career	Helen	N17	F	38	Career at language school	significant period	509 W
(64)	JET troubles	Sarah	N6-a	F	25	Rescheduling a flight home	significant event	430 W
(65)	First impression	John	N14	M	36	Impressions of Japan	significant period	1059 W
(66)	Communication strategies	Helen	N17	F	38	Seeing an angry foreigner	significant event	316 W
(67)	Language loss	Helen	N17	F	38	Losing English in Japan	significant moment	677 W
(68)	An impressive speech	Oliver	N16	M	28	Speech at JET welcome	significant moment	598 W
(69)	An unpaid phone bill	Oliver	N16	M	28	Problems caused by JET	world background	905 W
(70)	Anybody can learn	Oliver	N16	M	28	Learning Thai	significant period	464 W
(71)	English for squid fishers	Richard	N8-a	M	30	Teaching English by the sea	significant period	477 W
(72)	Dining with the governor (1)	Jim	N1-a	M	34	Two embarrassing stories as	significant moment	
(73)	Dining with the governor (2)	Jackie	N1-b	F	33	newcomers	significant event	1,059 W
(74)	An extremely relevant question	Lucy	N2	F	35	Interview for JET	significant event	393 W
(75)	Broken mobile	Jackie	N1-b	F	33	Troubles at school	significant period	773 W
(76)	Turning Japanese	Jim	N1-a	M	34	Trying to fit in but giving up	significant period	457 W
(77)	Riff-raff	Lucy	N2	F	35	Bad attitude of many JETs	recent event	494 W

\* Length of extract: Japanese ‘K’ = *kanji*, the total number of characters. English ‘W’ = word, the total number of words.

**Selected Narratives—English Narratives**

This classification in terms of spatio-temporal focus cuts across genre in the sense of ‘comedy’ or ‘romance’ and cannot be neatly aligned with the structural classification based on Labov and Waletzky (1967) proposed by Plum (1988). Instead I illustrate ways in which the representation of time and place in narrative episodes from the interviews is a defining feature of the narrative.

### **3.2 Significant moment (1) – *The Interview***

Sometimes in the course of these interviews there occurred segments of talk which instantly stood out as narratives. These episodes were not simply continuing sections of an ongoing life story but brought to life a particular incident, as if through Technicolor. While other parts of the interview were expressed in plain terms, certain episodes were acted out in a way quite different from the rest of the interview. The depiction of a specific experience was sharpened by elaborating details of the kind associated with a vivid memory.

The first example I consider is an English narrative told by Bruce who described his participation in another interview: the interview for the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme introduced in Module 2 (see Extract 3.1 below). Acceptance onto

this programme was decided by this interview which provided him with his first ticket to Japan and was effectively the beginning of his career as an English teacher. As such, it was likely to be a memorable and significant moment. Indeed, four other teachers (three for JET and one for a language school) mentioned their interviews and described them in similar detail. Circumstantial details worth bearing in mind are that this interviewee was quite well known to me prior to the interview. We were of a similar age, had been in Japan for roughly the same length of time and were both British. There was therefore plenty of common ground on which to build. Indeed, Bruce commented at the beginning of our interview ‘I mean this would probably all come out if we were just chatting anyway.’ In the transcripts, I have broadly indicated how the extracts might be divided to follow Labov and Waletzky (1967) so that readers can see how extracts fit this widely used organisational scheme. However, this scheme is only of incidental relevance to my concern here with chronotopes and identity.

### **Extract 3.1      The Interview**

#### ABSTRACT

**Bruce:**

(1) I went for the interview in London.

**Pat:**

(2) OK right.

**Bruce:**

(3) Which was very entertaining,

(4) um, at the Japanese Embassy.

**Pat:**

- (5) In what sense?

#### ORIENTATION

**Bruce:**

- (6) Well, I mean it was kind of one of these old fashioned interviews.  
(7) Where, you know, it was this enormous room in the embassy.

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

- (8) And, you know, you open the door,  
(9) and right at the far end there is a table  
(10) with three people sitting behind it.

**Pat:**

- (11) (laughs)

**Bruce:**

- (12) And you know dum-dum-dum-dum (knocks on the table in time to this)  
(13) you can hear your footsteps as you walk up.  
(14) And just sort of rapid fire random questions.  
(15) And I always remember,  
(16) um, there was one moment when I knew like,  
(17) oh yeah, they're going to give me a job

**Pat:**

- (18) Um, mm,

**Bruce:**

- (19) Because, um,...  
(20) well, actually there were two things...  
(21) and the first one was they said  
(22) 'Oh I see you studied Greek at university,'

**Pat:**

- (23) Right, yeah.

**Bruce:**

- (24) 'So how would you explain...'  
(25) what was it?  
(26) Aspect...  
(27) yeah 'How would you explain "aspect"  
(28) to a Japanese high school student?'  
(29) Immediately I thought

- (30) 'well, I wouldn't probably'.  
(31) It is probably not something you would do to some poor kid!  
(32) Um, but I mean as luck would have it  
(33) I was immediately able to bang (snaps fingers)  
(34) come up with an answer.  
(35) So obviously having done Greek,  
(36) it is something that you come up against.  
(37) And then somebody else said something about cricket...  
(38) I think?  
(39) Was it cricket or football?  
(40) Something like,  
(41) 'Oh you're from Scotland,'  
(42) you know,  
(43) 'how would you...  
(44) explain Scottish nationalism'  
(45) or something,  
(46) 'to a Japanese person?'  
(47) I mean, it was this kind of question,  
(48) just right on the spot.

#### EVALUATION

**Pat:**

- (49) Right, yes, yes,  
(50) it sounds like a pretty rough interview.

**Bruce:**

- (51) It was, it was pretty full-on.

#### CODA

- (52) I mean, I think,  
(53) I think it was at the stage of the programme,  
(54) where it was expanding quite a lot.

**Pat:**

- (55) Mm, mm.

**Bruce:**

- (56) I mean I don't know about the internal politics]

**Pat:**

- (57) No, no.]

**Bruce:**

- (58) Of it, but I think they were kind of keen to um,  
(59) weed out kind of chancers,  
(60) you know people who just thought  
(61) 'Oh, I'll have an easy year.'

**Pat:**

- (62) Oh, I see yeah.

**Bruce:**

- (63) You know,  
(64) Go somewhere nice and sunny  
(65) and go surfing all the time.

**Pat:**

- (66) Right, right.

**Bruce:**

- (67) So anyway that was quite an entertaining experience.

**Pat:**

- (68) Yeah, that's right. I see what you mean.

This extract is particularly interesting for the way time and space are represented.

Bruce's narrative brought into play a range of storytelling techniques. He rapped his knuckles on the table in time to his stylised 'dum-dum-dum-dum' to represent the echoing footsteps on the floor and snapped his fingers as he said 'bang' to indicate the swiftness of his response to the interviewer's questions. These features are indicative of the depiction of a particular moment as if reliving it. The entire narrative is tightly focused on one specific spatio-temporal moment, elaborated in some detail. The sequence of events could be summarised as:

- (i) I opened the door (to the interview room in the Japanese Embassy).
- (ii) I saw the three interviewers sat at the far end of a large room.
- (iii) As I walked towards them, I could hear my footsteps.
- (iv) I was asked several questions in quick succession
- (v) One of the interviewers asked me how I would explain aspect to a Japanese student.
- (vi) I answered this question successfully and thought at that moment that I would get the job.
- (vii) They also asked me other difficult questions about British sports (cricket or football?) and how I would explain Scottish Nationalism to a Japanese person.

As Bruce recounted it, this complicating action of his narrative was split stylistically into two parts: the first part (i)-(iii) appealed to a generalised job interview scenario through a description of place in the present tense using the generalised 'you' as subject; the second (iv)-(vii) highlighted certain features of this interview through a representation of the interview talk and an overall shift to 'I' as the subject. Bruce drew

on a specific memory but he also contextualised it by alluding to a generic cultural narrative which he labelled as ‘one of these old fashioned interviews’. This effect was achieved by orienting the listener to details of the setting intended to evoke this kind of interview ‘this enormous room in the embassy’; ‘right at the far end there is a table with three people sitting behind it’ and the sound of his footsteps on the floor. The generalised account of his actions using ‘you know’ and the present tense (‘you know, you open the door’) invited the listener to recognise this scene as a ‘classic’ intimidating interview in which the scale of the setting and the ‘rapid fire random questions’ leave the interviewee feeling small and helpless. The scene he described reminded me of Billy’s interview at the Royal Ballet School in the film *Billy Elliot*. In the film, Billy, a teenager from a small mining town, was overawed and dumbfounded by the impressive historical setting of the school, but appeared to redeem himself in the final moments when one of the interviewers asked how he felt when he danced. The implication seemed to be that, in spite of the class culture shock, his genuine attachment to dancing sees him through. Bruce, although clearly not one to be cast dumb, also highlighted a specific question as clinching the interview for him. I suspect that there are many similar cinematic examples which contribute to the interview scene Bruce evoked. Thus, the sense of movement through time created here is also timeless.

If this general conception of the interview evoked a shared cultural understanding with the interviewer, the reported details of the interview talk asserted his individuality. The expression ‘And I always remember, um, there was one moment when ...’ signalled this move from a generalised account to his specific memory and worked like an abstract to preview the highlight of his story. In this part of the story, he spoke in the past tense, used direct speech and metaphorically moved into the driving seat by adopting ‘I’ as the subject for the action here which was constituted by talk. The rhetorical focus on a specific moment as the climax of his narrative is, more importantly, an opportunity for identity work. The implicit evaluation here, also hinted at in his coda was that Bruce was successful because he was authentic. In this case, his suitability for the programme was linked directly to his language skill. He knew his Greek and his grammar and so was able to pass the interview, unlike the ‘chancers’ who were ‘weeded out’, a circumstance that he also attributed to time: ‘the stage of the programme, where it was expanding quite a lot.’

Given the overall scenario of ‘interview’, the temporal sequence described by Bruce could be considered as predictable, even inevitable. At the same time, there are many

other equally inevitable parts to the interview scenario, such as applying for the position, travelling to the interview, and finding out the result, which go unmentioned. The fact that only selected moments inside the interview room are recounted gave the narrative a tight spatio-temporal focus. This selectiveness can be considered as both a reflection of the narrative emphasis on details which serve to structure the implicit meaning of the story in this context and the memory being accessed by the narrator. The key question about ‘aspect’ seems to have been remembered in detail, while topics of others are recalled only vaguely. One can also imagine that on another occasion telling or writing about this incident, he may have rendered it in a quite different way. Such full-blown narratives, depicting memorable and meaningful incidents in the lives of the interviewees, also serve as important focuses for exploring identity, but were relatively rare in my interview data (see Table 3.1), and it was particularly difficult to find any equivalent in the Japanese data. Instead, I will consider a shorter narrative by a Japanese speaker which, like *The Interview*, highlighted a specific spatio-temporal moment.

### **3.3 Significant moment (2) – *Abnormal Communication***

Like Bruce, Taro was also known to me before the interview. The interview took place

at his house. Many of the topics he raised (including the theme of his narrative discussed below), he had talked to me about before. Taro had been a junior high and high school teacher for many years but had retired, and at the time of the interview taught part-time at a private university in Tokyo. He was one of only two teachers I interviewed who had never travelled abroad, but attributed his fluency in English to intimate friendships he had had with English speaking foreigners in Japan. I had generally had conversations with him in English before, occasionally code-switching into Japanese. In the Japanese interview, as the extract below illustrates, he sometimes code-switched into English for dramatic effect. Taro believed in using stories in the classroom and like Bruce told several illustrative anecdotes in the course of the interview. He was also an advocate of communicative use of language in the classroom and disliked the use of artificial examples. Immediately prior to this extract, he had commented that the use of examples based on the teacher or students in the class is one way of maintaining student interest. He turned from this to reflect on the remarkable persistence of artificial examples, and his narrative served as one concrete example.

In this and other Japanese extracts, I have used parenthesis in the translation to indicate words that do not appear in the Japanese, but are essential in English. Most of the

examples are pronouns so that it is up to the listener to keep in mind who or what is being focused on. Although I pointed out in Chapter 1 that pronouns are generally unnecessary in Japanese as verb choice can indicate who is being referred to, this does not apply to the familiar register used by Taro. Instead, the listener must identify participants based on a contextual understanding of the whole narrative.

### Extract 3.2 Abnormal Communication

#### ABSTRACT

**Taro:**

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| (1) | <i>De kyonen mo ne</i>                 | And last year too, right,                           |
| (2) | <i>OOO ni aru Chugakkou ni ittara,</i> | When I went to a junior high school in<br>OOO City. |

#### ORIENTATION

**Pat:**

- |     |                         |                            |
|-----|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| (3) | <i>Un, ano kengaku?</i> | Mm, for class observation? |
|-----|-------------------------|----------------------------|

**Taro:**

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| (4) | <i>Sou, gakusei wo tsurete, XXX no gakusei<br/>tsurete</i> | Right, with students from XXX<br>(university). |
| (5) | <i>Souiu koto yarun desuyo</i>                             | I do things like that                          |

**Pat:**

- |     |                |          |
|-----|----------------|----------|
| (6) | <i>Aa, hai</i> | Ah, yes. |
|-----|----------------|----------|

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

**Taro:**

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| (7)  | <i>De ittara ne ,</i>                           | And when I got there, right,                          |
| (8)  | <i>Kouchou sensei ga,</i>                       | The head teacher (said),                              |
| (9)  | <i>'Kondo iku kurasu no sensei wa,</i>          | 'The teacher of the class (you) are about<br>to go to |
| (10) | <i>Eigo takusan tsukatte kurete ne, kouchou</i> | Uses lots of English, right,                          |
| (11) | <i>toshite yorokonde orimasu.'</i>              | As headmaster I am delighted.'                        |

- (12) he said to me  
**Pat:**
- (13) *Hai, ee.* Yes, yeah.  
**Taro:**
- (14) Then we went there, to her class,  
(15) *Sou shitara* And then  
(16) 'What are you doing?'  
(17) *Sensei kiitara* The teacher asked  
(18) 'We are studying English' they said.  
**Pat:**
- (19) (laughs)

#### EVALUATION

- Taro:**
- (20) *Mou* abnormal communication, you know. Absolutely abnormal communication, you know.
- Pat:**
- (21) (laughs)
- Taro:**
- (22) *Dakara tsukatteitemo,* So even when (English) is used  
(23) *honmono no komunikeeshon* (it is not) real communication  
(24) *nihongo de wa son na kaiwa shinai noni* Even though in Japanese (people) don't converse like that.
- Pat:**
- (25) *Sou desu ne.* That's right.
- Taro:**
- (26) *Eigo de yaru to kichigai kaiwa* In English it becomes insane  
(laughs) conversation.
- Pat:**
- (27) (laughs) *tashika ni sou desu ne.* That is true isn't it.
- Taro:**
- (28) *Mada sou iuno ga arun desuyo ne.* Still stuff like that goes on doesn't it.

#### CODA

- Pat:**
- (29) *Aa, XXX no seito wa,* Ah, are the students of XXX (University)

- (30) *korekara eigo kyouin ni naru* going to become English teachers?  
**Taro:**  
 (31) *Un, demo ne, naka naka chotto, takusan* Mm, but right, (it's) rather difficult,  
 (32) *wa narimasen ne,* Lots of them won't right,  
 (33) *sukoshi shikane* Only a few.

When Taro introduced his narrative with '*kyonen mo*' (last year too) he set up the expectation that his story would be another example of non-communicative teaching.

Where Bruce set his narrative in the context of old fashioned interviews, Taro appealed to a personal genre of examples of non-communicative teaching. He located the story using the name of the school, but dispensed with the descriptive physical detail employed by Bruce. Instead, the sense of movement through time and space was created through the reported conversation. '*Ittara*' is a deictic expression meaning 'when I got there', in this case meaning to the school. '*Kondo iku kurasu*' (the class you are about to go to) whether the exact words of the principal or not located the conversation as both prior to and outside the classroom. School visits in Japan, in my experience, tend to begin with a preliminary chat in the principal's office and I imagine the comments on the class were made there. But as the location was irrelevant to the story, they were not mentioned. The principal's words of praise for his teacher were followed up by the English 'He said to me'. This had the effect of distancing himself from his words and creating an English narrator persona; perhaps aligning himself with

me an English speaking listener. For many communicative teachers in Japan, as Taro indicated, this exchange has become something of a cliché of a ‘display’ response that is not real communication. He did not mince his words in condemning this style of teaching in either English ‘abnormal communication’ or Japanese ‘*kichigai kaiwa*’. In one sense, the event described here is trivial and mundane, particularly when contrasted with the life threatening accounts collected by Labov and Waletzky (1967). What gives this story its drama is the remarkable flaunting of the expectations set up by the school principal when viewed through the lens of Taro’s evaluative framework for communicative teaching. In spite of difference in theme, and use of stylistic devices, both Bruce and Taro’s narratives focused on a specific spatio-temporal moment surrounding a revealing verbal event. They effectively drew on a particular memory to reveal something about their respective values as teachers; Bruce highlighted his foreign language background and Taro his emphasis on communicative teaching. Where the two narratives seem markedly different, and where there seemed potential for exploring linguistic differences, is in the use of descriptive physical details employed by Bruce to evoke the cultural narrative of ‘old-fashioned interview’. None of the Japanese narratives were evoked with such descriptive detail.

### **3.4 Significant events (1) – *The Boat Trip***

A number of teachers highlighted significant events in their lives as teachers which drew their importance from the effect it had on the rest of their lives. The importance of such events was dependent on subsequent and perhaps even previous events. In order to represent this through narrative, the event needed to be related to the events that followed that gave it its significance. For this reason, the representation of such events was rather different from the two previous narratives which reported events more or less in isolation. In addition, such narratives often needed to take in much more than a single moment. In the previous sections, I discussed an English narrative that highlighted the physical situation and a Japanese one that used time and place more vaguely. Next, I discuss a Japanese narrative that is bound up with its physical location and an English one that is more conceptual.

Ai's interview was one of the longest Japanese interviews as she was especially forthcoming in explaining her experiences, both as a teacher and as a student. A particularly significant event in her life was a boat trip around Asia to which she attributed her development of fluency in English. She took the trip immediately prior to her first major appointment as a teacher, and, as she explained, this was confirmed

during the trip. Unlike Bruce's interview which relived a particular event, Ai's narrative was more loosely placed in time and space. Perhaps this was because the experience was one that stepped outside her ongoing life story in Japan and allowed her to experience a different self.

### Extract 3.3 The Boat Trip

#### ABSTRACT

- Ai:**
- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| (1) | Sou, wa, sou daigaku no ichiban un saigo no toshi ni, | Yes, mm, yes in the final year of university, Well (I took the) South East Asia Youth Boat as (it was) called, |
| (2) | ano tonan ajia seinen no fune to iu                   | and what is now called the Ministry of Home Affairs (and Communications)                                       |
| (3) | ano ima de iu to soumushou,                           | Well (there is) an office anyway   |
| (4) | maa yakusho arimasu kedo,                             | They organised the event   |
| (5) | asoko ga shusai shiteru                               | (It was) a national programme (you) see,   |
| (6) | ano kuni no puroguramu ne                             |  |
|     | <b>Pat:</b>   |  |
| (7) | Hai.  | Yes.   |

#### ORIENTATION

- Ai:**
- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| (8)  | ni sanku shite, kou fune de, tappuri               | (I) took part in (it), like on the boat,                                   |
| (9)  | san ka getsu kan,                                  | (for a) full 3 months  |
| (10) | tounan ajia wo,                                    | to South East Asia,  |
| (11) | sono tounan ajia no, ano seinen-tachi to issho ni, | together with the with youths from South East Asia                         |
| (12) | kou mawatte kouryuu wo fukumeru                    | like this (we went) round (as a way of) deepening (our) cultural exchange, |
| (13) | sono naka de ho-mu sutei mo atte                   | during the trip there was also a 'home-stay'                               |
|      | <b>Pat:</b>  |  |
| (14) | San-kagetsu-kan                                    | Three months   |

**Ai:**  
(15) San-kagetsu-kan, fune de, san-kagetsu-kan      Three months, on a boat (for) three months.

**Pat:**  
(16) Nagai desu ne      That's a long time, right

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

**Ai:**  
(17) Demo, san-kagetsu no naka de,  
(18) Watashi wa, youyaku eigo ga ne,  
Shaberu you ni nattan desuyo      But, in (those) three months,  
I finally became able to speak English

**Pat:**  
(19) Sou desu ka.      Is that right?

**Ai:**  
(20) Sou nan desu. Kore ga nakereba      That's right. If it wasn't for this  
(21) Sore de wa~firipin no hito tte eigo      And furthermore wow, Filipinos are so good at  
(22) ga umain da rou,      English  
(23) Wa~shingapooru mo,      Wow, Singaporeans too  
(24) Ee, kore dake no eigo kikitorenai      Oh, (I) can't catch much of the English,  
(25) Hajimete no keiken de,      It was my first experience (of this).

**Pat:**  
(26) Aa hai.      Ah, yes.

**Ai:**  
(27) Sore de, ano machigai eigo wo,      And, well, (not) being able to speak English  
(28) shaberu koto ga hazukashikunain      perfectly, (is) not something to be  
(29) da,      embarrassed about,  
(30) Kou, maa machigatte mo iin da wa      Like, well it is alright to make mistakes,  
(31) Toiu, nanka (?) ga torette      Somehow my (inaudible) was taken away

**Pat:**  
(32) Hai, hai      Yes, yes,

**Ai:**  
(33) Hai, soshite, un, de choodo,      Yes, then, um, just when,  
(34) sono kyoinsaiyou shiken gokaku      (I) received the notification of the (Tokyo  
shita tsuchi wo uketotta no mo,      Board of Education's) teacher employment  
exam too,

- (35) fune no ue to iu ka, sono burunei ni Was on the boat, or rather, in Brunei  
 (36) denpou ga todoitte (the) telegram arrived  
 (37) 'Aa, yokatta fune orite chanto shoku 'Ah, that's good (I will) have work (when I)  
 ga arun da' to omotte leave the boat' I thought.

**Pat:**

- (38) Ee, ee, ee, aa, sore wa, mou Yeah, yeah, yeah, that was (when you were)  
 (39) choudo owaru tokoro deshita fune already just about to finish, the boat trip?  
 wo

**Ai:**

- (40) Hai, sou deshita, hai. burunei de, Yes, that's right, yes. At Brunei, somehow  
 (41) nanka sono burunei no tsugi after Brunei (we went to) Indonesia,  
 indoneshia,  
 (42) to firipin no ne taizai ga atta kedo, and we had a stay in the Philippines  
 (43) aa, yokatta demo nanka, Ah, it was so good but somehow...

**Pat:**

- (44) Sono ato ni tsugi no shigoto After that (you) need to have some work lined  
 kimatteinai to, up

#### RESOLUTION

**Ai:**

- (45) To kuraberu to ne, hai. Compared with (not having work it is better to  
 have some) right, yes.  
 (46) Soshite, fune orite, kyouin ni natte, Then, (I) got off (the) boat, became a teacher,

#### EVALUATION

- (47) Sore de, aa mata betonamu no And then, ah there are Vietnamese students  
 seito mo iru wa, again,  
 (48) taiwan no seito to iu ka, obasan no a Taiwanese student, well actually a  
 (49) ne, nanka yappari, nanka yappari middle-aged woman, right, somehow  
 (50) ajia ni en ga aru na to iu ne, hai. of course (I) have a destiny with Asia, or  
 something, right, yes.

**Pat:**

- (51) Hai. yes

Ai located her story as *daigaku no ichiban saigo no toshi* (the last year of university). The university, a place, was used to signify the time that she spent studying there. Without specifically saying that she *took* the boat around South East Asia, she named the boat *Tonan Aji Seinen Fune* (South East Asian Youth Boat) and located it in the bureaucratic context of the government ministry which was represented as a place, rather than a body of people organising the programme. She first identified this place as '*ima de iu to soumusho*' (what is now called the Ministry of Home Affairs) that is a place contingent on the past time to which she referred. This was modified to '*yakushoku arimasu*' (there is an office); implying presumably, that both the youth boat excursions and the organisational framework remain intact today. She noted '*asoko ga shusai shiteiru*'. *Asoko* means 'there' yet in English this has to be translated by 'they' since it is the people and not the place that are implied. In addition, while the Japanese '*teiru*' form, denoting continuous aspect, is natural in Japanese, a continuous form in English would sound odd because the implication that the programme she participated in continues to run to this day implies a degree of permanence associated in English with the unmarked present tense. Finally, she located it as a national programme (place again) before finally explaining that she joined a boat with youths from South East Asia to visit South East Asia. From an English perspective, it may seem strange that

she doesn't begin by saying 'I went on a boat trip to South East Asia' and then elaborate. Why not? In Japanese, sentences are usually constructed by marking out a topic, elaborating on this, and ending with the verb which carries, tense, aspect and modalisation including negation. This orientation illustrates how this logic of *topic-elaboration-evaluation + action* works at the level of discourse. Another way of looking at the organisation of this discourse is as framing the action. The boat trip was an escape from Japan, but one that was framed for her personally by her university life and institutionally by the section of the national government which organised the programme. This emphasis on framing actions has also been identified as a cultural pattern associated with Japanese people, even using English. In her analysis of discussions held among Japanese and American students, Watanabe (1993) noted that Japanese groups spent some time organising speaking turns, whereas the Americans jumped straight into the discussion. For Ai, I think it was important to frame this as a cultural exchange programme because discussion later in the interview revealed that she met her husband through, and indeed continues to be involved with, an international exchange organisation. She used the expression '*kouryuu wo fukumeru*' which literally translates as 'deepening a cultural exchange', but in any case reflected the language used in official rationalisations for such programmes.

Framed within the context of a Japanese exchange programme, the cruise provided an eye-opening escape from Japan. In terms of physical place, the boat circulated South East Asia, yet the South East Asia that she foregrounded was not the ports of call, but rather the people she encountered on the boat who were depicted as representatives of their respective countries '*firipin no hito tte/ eigo ga umain darou/ wa shiganporu mo*' (Filipinos are so good at English, wow, Singaporeans too). Her encounter with them was liberating because she realised that her English need not be perfect to communicate. Rather than depicting this through conversations, she offered comments on her impressions as if recalling her reflections aloud. The use of *mo* (meaning 'too') implied that the observations of Filipinos and Singaporeans followed one after the other and *soshite* ('then' at line 33) located the receipt of her exam result soon after, once more with her reflection.

In Ai's story, time and place were portrayed relatively loosely in the sense that she did not highlight any one moment. There were two potentially important moments in her narrative: the moment when she received notification of her teaching qualification and her observation of the fluent English speakers from other parts of Asia, which was

implicitly linked to her own development of English fluency. Both were loosely situated on the boat trip which was located between the final year of university and the beginning of her teaching appointment at the evening high school. She symbolically situated the receipt of the announcement of the result of the examination to be hired as a public school teacher as occurring on the boat, though she located it more precisely as taking place at Brunei (presumably on land). Brunei must have been one of several ports of call on the trip, yet the other two that were mentioned (Singapore and the Philippines) were only introduced to correct my misreading of the temporal situation of Brunei. Although outwardly agreeing with my assumption that this was towards the end of the journey, her additional information suggested that it was perhaps closer to the middle of the trip and so, in a sense, a more central event.

The other point of her narrative that was renegotiated was the meaning of three months. Initially she evaluated this period as *'tappuri'* (line 8) which I translated as 'a full' but really meant a generous amount of time. When I reiterated this later in her narrative, commenting that it was *nagai* (a long time), she took this as an opportunity for reconceptualisation, pointing out that during those three months she effectively learned to speak English. It may be that this reinterpretation was brought out by the potentially

negative meaning of *nagai* as possibly implying 'too long'. Alternatively, as I think is more likely the case, she simply took up my comment on the time and found a way to adapt it to the continuation of her narrative. In this way, the negotiation of time and place are at one and the same time about the construction of meaning. Unlike the two narratives discussed above, the temporal and spatial focus of Ai's narrative was diffuse, taking place over 3 months while travelling around South East Asia on a boat and anticipating the Asia she later encountered in the classroom. Such significant life story narratives often do not find their real meaning until they are represented in the context of ensuing events. The meaning of Ai's story gradually became clear as she explained other events like her encounters with Asian students and the meeting of her husband. For other tellers, the story itself lay in the unfolding of events over time.

### **3.5 Significant events (2) – *Foreigners Could Understand Me***

In the case of some interviewees, narrative episodes emerged as highlights in their life story as teachers. This was the case with both Bruce's story and Ai's. In contrast to this, other interviewees picked out incidents to make a particular point. In order to demonstrate the kind of thing that motivated and inspired her as a teacher, Kate recounted the progress of one of her students up to several years after the period where

she actually taught him. The overall time scale was much broader than the 3 months of Ai's story but focused more clearly on a significant moment through the use of direct speech. Kate was originally a teacher of Japanese, and came to Japan to teach English on a short term basis through an agreement between the school where she worked and a high school in Japan. She came with the intention of improving her Japanese further and spending more time in a country she loved. However, an initial short-term agreement turned into something that covered the remaining years until her retirement when she planned to return to New Zealand. For her, barriers of time and place appeared to retreat with relative ease.

#### **Extract 3.4 Foreigners Could Understand Me**

##### ABSTRACT

**Kate:**

- (1) Oh, yes, yes, yes,
- (2) there is another experience I had.
- (3) That um, oh it was a while ago now
- (4) but we enter students into the junior high school T City speech contest.

**Pat:**

- (5) Oh yeah.

##### ORIENTATION

**Kate:**

- (6) And um, there was one boy who um,
- (7) I coached, and um,
- (8) after he had been to the prefectural speech contest,

**Pat:**

- (9) Wow,

**Kate:**

(10) He didn't get any further but,

**Pat:**

(11) Right, right.

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

**Kate:**

(12) Um somebody had come up to him,

(13) an ALT after his speech had said,

(14) oh 'I really enjoyed your speech.

(15) That was most interesting.'

**Pat:**

(16) Yeah, yeah.

**Kate:**

(17) And, he said

(18) 'Ah' he said to me afterwards,

(19) 'You know, foreigners could understand me.'

**Pat:**

(20) (laughs)

#### RESOLUTION

**Kate:**

(21) And then the next year he went off to Ireland,

(22) to do a year in Ireland at high school,

(23) as an exchange,

(24) and it sort of changed his whole life.

**Pat:**

(25) Wow, wow,

(26) he was a junior high school student then did you say?

**Kate:**

(27) He was a junior high school student.

(Evaluation)

**Pat:**

(28) That is amazing isn't it, Yeah.

## CODA

**Kate:**

- (29) Yeah, now he's,  
(30) now he's at university and um,  
(31) studying English and teaching it.  
(32) He went to the United States on a trip on his own  
(33) to have a look at the United Nations.

**Pat:**

- (34) Great.

**Kate:**

- (35) Yes, so um,

**Pat:**

- (36) So is he thinking,  
(37) he is going to work for the United Nations,  
(38) he's not going to become an English teacher then?

**Kate:**

- (39) I don't know, I think he might become a teacher.  
(40) He's just been back to do three weeks of teaching experience.

**Pat:**

- (41) Really?

**Kate:**

- (42) Yes, yes.

**Pat:**

- (43) That would be great wouldn't it?

## EVALUATION

**Kate:**

- (44) Yes, yes. Yes, so that was a,  
(45) that was a real boost to my um,  
(46) teaching thing,  
(47) you know, that sort of thing happening.

**Pat**

- (48) Yeah. Yeah.

A speech contest (like an interview) is something that could form a landmark in any

teacher's or student's life but the focus was explicitly shifted away from the actual speech to her student's inspiring experience, which was represented as overcoming barriers in time and space. To begin with the speech contest itself progressed in time and space. The success began with the move from the junior high school level contest to the prefectural level and Kate explicitly commented 'he didn't get any further'. The critical thing that allowed the student to find a new way to progress was the comment of the teacher he met at the contest. Kate made it clear that it was not simply the praise but the recognition that 'foreigners could understand me' that motivated him. As she told the story, this realisation removed the psychological barrier between him and the outside world. In this case, she was not seen as a foreigner because she belonged at his school as his teacher, whereas the other teacher was an outsider, and hence a real foreigner. The progress that followed this realisation was again represented through place. The move to Ireland and the visit to America and the United Nations were the ultimate signs of progress. In evaluating this narrative, she commented 'that was a real boost to my um, teaching thing, you know, that sort of thing happening'. In this case 'that' and 'that sort of thing' embrace not any one of the student's achievements, least of all the speech contest, but rather the progress made by the student over several years. This narrative was inspiring because it showed that a small accomplishment in learning

can lead to greater and more dramatic developments when magnified over time and space. The boost given to her teaching by the student's experience showed that the incident had even wider repercussions across time and space because they affected her and her sense of identity as a teacher. In a chronotope of this kind that focuses on significant events, the detailed representation of the focal incident is less important than in the focused narrative because significance in a life story requires a link with past and/or future events. It also points to a self which changes over time and place, opening up possibilities for more interesting identity work.

### **3.6 Significant period – *Turning Japanese***

Narratives that move beyond recounting a specific moment or event to embrace larger moves in time and place than the single scene of more focused oral narratives make it possible to depict change and developments in identity. In such narratives, time and place become agents of change. Jim's narrative about his experience as a student at a music college in Japan illustrates how time and place impose on and implicitly threaten identity. I interviewed Jim with his friend Jackie who had arrived in Japan at a similar time to Jim. As with the other five interviews of this kind, I posed a question and the interviewees would answer in turn; however, one narrative would lead to another and

an initial question about whether or not they had experienced changes in themselves since being in Japan, led to reflections on life in America and the kind of career options open to foreigners living in Japan, before Jim volunteered the following story about a particular period of his life as a student of music in Tokyo.

### **Extract 3.5      Turning Japanese**

#### ABSTRACT

**Jim:**

- (1) when I was a student at the university,
- (2) there was a maybe a year period, where,
- (3) because I was at a Japanese university
- (4) I had this feeling like I had to be Japanese.

**Jackie:**

- (5) Um-hum.

#### ORIENTATION

**Jim:**

- (6) Like, so I was trying to change the way I did things
- (7) and not say what I really wanted to say,

**Pat:**

- (8) Oh, yeah?

**Jim:**

- (9) I mean if a teacher said 'You should do this.
- (10) You shouldn't agree with ...'
- (11) You know you always agree with whatever the teacher said.

**Pat:**

- (12) So you really made an effort?

**Jim:**

- (13) I really made an effort to fit in. But I got so depressed,

**Jackie:**

- (14) Really?

**Jim:**

- (15) I was ready to quit,  
(16) and leave and go back to the States.  
(17) And I was miserable.

**Pat:**

- (18) Sorry, because?

**Jim:**

- (19) Because I felt it was impossible,  
(20) and even though I was doing it all, right, supposedly,  
(21) they still were treating me like an outsider.

**Pat:**

- (22) Right, right, right.

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

**Jim:**

- (23) So after a while somebody said to me,  
(24) 'Jim, just don't even try,  
(25) why would you want to be a Japanese anyway?  
(26) Just be yourself, that's why they let you into the university.  
(27) They wanted you to be Jim the American,  
(28) not Jim trying to be the Japanese person.'

**Pat:**

- (29) Um, um.

**Jim:**

- (30) So after that I started disagreeing with professors,  
(31) and saying, you know,  
(32) 'I'm not going to do this',  
(33) 'I'm leaving now it's 9 O' clock.'  
(34) 'I'm not staying an extra hour to clean up.'  
(35) You know...

#### RESOLUTION

- (36) And like I'm much better.  
(37) Cause I find, just trying to fit in you get pushed around  
(38) And you start feeling like you are being used and,  
(39) 'Now Jim let's go and speak English tonight for an hour' you know  
(40) 'Oh, it's just my hobby to sit around with you and help your English'.

**Jackie:**

(41) Yeah, it got that way with my privates.

**Jim:**

(42) Yeah, you know it's just,

(43) It got to the point where you know.

**Jackie:**

(44) You are donating so much of your time and energy,

**Jim:**

(45) Yeah,

**Jackie:**

(46) I mean in the end.

#### EVALUATION

**Jim:**

(47) But so, I mean after that, experience

(48) I felt like it's OK to be me, and be American,

(49) and still maintain that, even though I'm in Japan,

(50) and even more so, I should maintain that.

**Pat:**

(51) Right.

**Jackie:**

(52) You have found out who you are.

**Jim:**

(53) Yeah and not,

(54) not succumb to these little pressures of

(55) 'Well, everyone's staying to help put the chairs into stacks so,

(56) you have to too.'

(57) Even though you have to go home for two hours on the train you know.

(58) 'It doesn't matter you know,

(59) you are still part of our group'

(60) kind of.

It was difficult to segment the extract into Labovian segments. I have segmented it so that the orientation delineated a problematic situation and the complicating action was

concerned with resolving this situation. The 'resolution' then reiterated some of these problems. In the extract, Jim recalled a period of trying to 'fit in' to Japanese culture. At the outset, he explicitly distanced this attempt to become Japanese from his present self by locating this experience temporally as 'there was a period of a year, where'. The use of 'where' rather than 'when' is indicative of the fact that it was place rather than time that encouraged his attempt to conform. He explained, 'because I was at a Japanese university, I had this feeling like I had to be Japanese'. Moreover, trying to fit in created an inner conflict: '...I was trying to change the way I did things, and not say what I really wanted to say' which he portrayed as a conflict of place. Not only was he unable to change his inner self, but he was still treated as 'an outsider' somebody who belonged in a different place. Ironically, he noted later in the narrative that 'just trying to fit in you get pushed around.' In other words, not having a space but wanting one made him vulnerable to those who claimed the space for themselves. At first, he proposed that the way to resolve this would be to 'go back to the States.' This was an unattractive option because it involved 'leaving' the place and 'going back' implying regression in terms of life progress as well as relinquishing his claim on space at the university in Japan. The final solution to his crisis was to assert his own identity which, once again, he associated with place: 'Jim the American, not Jim trying to be the

Japanese person.’ He found peace by maintaining his links with America while staking his claim as a resident in Japan (48-50). When Jim gave specific examples of how he felt used, these too were closely associated with the meaning of time and place in his narrative. He was reluctant to ‘stay an extra hour’ at the university because he had a two hour train journey home—place was equated to time. The idea of losing time was also an issue when it came to ‘speaking English for an hour.’ In Japan it is widely believed that simply speaking to a native English speaker is an effective way to learn English. If students go to a language school they can pay to take ‘free conversation’ lessons where the teacher orchestrates a conversation, assisting with language points as they arise. The most expensive lesson of this kind is the ‘private lesson’ whereby the student has a one-to-one lesson with the teacher. Since all lessons are charged by the hour, the private lesson, which is effectively a conversation where one person pays the other for the privilege is one of the most blatant realisations of the cliché ‘time is money’. For this reason, some students naturally see a conversation in English with a foreigner as getting something for nothing. When Jim complained about being coerced into these unwanted chats, Jackie chimed in: ‘it got that way with my privates’, referring to students she taught on a one-to-one basis who presumably tried to schedule unpaid lessons, commenting ‘you are donating so much of your time and energy.’ On

one level, Jim's narrative was about specific problems he faced in settling down at university, but also about coming to terms with his identity as a foreigner in Japan. In this narrative, time and space were used, not as background features, but rather to define the action, and served as a means for exploring identity.

### **3.7 Lessons over time – *Finding Strength in Teaching***

So far I have considered narratives that focus on increasingly broad spans of time and space, yet many important experiences in the life of teachers are often effectively repeated incidents over time. The habitual goings on in a particular place, such as a school, may reoccur over extended periods of time. In response to the question, 'What was your worst experience as a teacher?' Yoshiko told me a four stage narrative which brought together past experiences over the span of 7-8 years and related them to a much more recent one and her present self. She began by describing an incident in which she had caught a child smoking at school. When the child denied smoking, even though she had directly witnessed it, she found to her surprise that she had no support from her colleagues. She was shocked by their attitude. She went on to account for their lack of support as rooted in a fear that some students had links with organised crime. This marked a second phase of her narrative. She gave credence to the concern about gangsters by explaining that she had received numerous threatening phone calls

during her time at the school; including threats to set her car on fire. Next, her narrative moved into a third reflective phase that helped to justify her resolve in the situation. She pointed out, however, that those teachers who gave in to student intimidation very often ended up psychologically stressed and ultimately having to leave the school due to illness. This made matters even worse for those who remained at the school and had to cover the classes. In contrast, she explained that she was determined not to give in to such student intimidation. As a result, she reflected that it was an experience that toughened her. Extract 3.6 includes the first two sections of her narrative.

**Extract 3.6 Finding Strength in Teaching (1 and 2): Turning a Blind Eye**

**Section 1**

**Yoshiko:**

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| (1)  | Un, sou desu ne,   | Mm, that's right,  |
| (2)  | Ato wa, yappari, tatoeba,                                      | And, certainly, for example,   |
| (3)  | Kou, ano saisho ni itta gakkou wa,                             | Like, well the first school I went to,                                       |
| (4)  | Seitotachi ga sugoku taihen na gakkou<br>dattan desu keredomo, | It was a school where the students were<br>really troublesome unfortunately, |
| (5)  | Tatoeba, etto  | For example, um  |
| (6)  | seito no tabako wo sutteru tokoro wo,                          | (a) student (was) smoking a cigarette,                                       |
| (7)  | Watashi ga, mokugeki shiteita,                                 | (and) I saw (it)   |
| (8)  | de seito wa,   | And when the student   |
| (9)  | 'boku wa sutteimasen' to itta toki,                            | Says, 'I (was) not smoking'  |
| (10) | Watashi ga mokugeki wo shiteiru no ni                          | Even though I saw (him/her) smoking  |
| (11) | Ano seito wa 'sutteinai' to itteiru kara,                      | Because the student says '(I was) not<br>smoking'                            |
| (12) | To itta seito wa,  | With such students   |
| (13) | Seito wa kabau to iu hito ga<br>odorokimashita.                | (I) Was amazed to find that some people try<br>to protect (them)             |

- Pat:**
- (14) Aa, sugoi ne, Ah (that's) incredible, right,  
 (16) Sore wa ano, kyouin no naka Was that among the teachers?

- Yoshiko:**
- (17) Sou desu. That's right.

- Pat:**
- (18) Aa, sugoi ne. Ah, that's incredible, right.

## Section 2

- Yoshiko:**
- (19) Demo kekkyoku, yappari, But in the end, of course,  
 (20) Sore dake no, sou iu seito no, Having so many students like that,  
 (21) Kekkyoku ne, In the end you see,  
 (22) yappari mou, of course  
 (23) Tatoeba ano bouryokudan ka sou iuno For example, gangsters or something like  
 ga, that,  
 (24) Bakku ni tsui-tari, toka. Are behind them, and so forth

- Pat:**
- (25) Naru hodo (I) see

- Yoshiko:**
- (26) Maa, sono ko ni tsuite wa, Well, in the case of that particular kid,  
 (27) Wakaranai keredomo, (I) don't know but,  
 (28) Yappari odokasu mitai na denwa toka Certainly there were threatening phone calls  
 mo  
 (29) Kakkatekuru-shi Made (to me).

- Pat:**
- (30) Aa Ah.

- Yoshiko:**
- (31) Un, demo kuruma ni hi wo tsukeru, Mm, (I) was even told many times I would  
 (32) Nanka, nankai, iwareta koto mo arushi, have my car set on fire,

- Pat:**
- (33) Maa, jissai wa nakatta to omou kedo Well, (I) imagine that never actually  
 happened, even so

- Yoshiko:**
- (34) Un, demo sou iu fuu ni, Mm, but that was what (they) said

- Pat:**
- (35) Demo kowai desu ne, But that is scary isn't it.

- Yoshiko:**
- (36) Ato, odokasu no toka denwa mo,                      And threatening phone calls,  
(37) Sugoku kakattekitari surushi,                      (I) received so many (of them)  
(38) Dakara seito ni geigo suru no hou ga                      That's why it is easier to go along with the  
raku desuyo ne.                      students
- Pat:**
- (39) Hai                      Yes.
- Yoshiko:**
- (40) Seito ga kou itteiru toka,                      The student says this or,  
(41) Oya ga kou itteru, Tatoeba.                      The parent says this, for example.
- Pat:**
- (42) Ee, ee, sou desu ne. Taihen desu ne.                      Yeah, yeah, that is right. (That is) rough isn't  
it.
- Yoshiko**
- (43) Sou desu ne.                      That's right.

Yoshiko framed her narrative as a description of the school where she undertook her first teaching appointment. It was, she explained, '*seito ga sugogu taihen na gakkou*' (a school where the students were really troublesome). In this sense, the incidents that she referred to effectively became attributes of place. The first example, like Taro's description of the high school class, was sketched in with the minimum of details. There was no description of the physical location or any attempt to recall the exact circumstances of the incident in the way that Bruce did in his tale. When she quoted the student's words '*boku wa sutteimasen*' she evaluated him as a student talking to a teacher in a way that cannot be translated into English. *Boku* meaning 'I' is usually used by men or boys to refer to themselves. Although not as polite as *watashi* or the

more elaborate *watakushi* used in formal adult conversations, it is not as rough as the male self-referent *ore*. The polite negative verb ending *masen* (instead of the plain *nai*) shows that even in the act of brazen denial the student adheres to the linguistic norms of how students should address teachers. This line and her story establish both the norms that are expected in a school, that students should admit wrong doing and speak politely and that teachers should support teachers, and the ways in which this particular school flaunted these expectations. This atypical school setting was attributed, in the second phase of her narrative, to external influences which destabilised the normally unquestioned authority of teachers. She used the expression: '*bouryokudan ka sou iu no ga bakku ni suitari*'. *Bouryokudan* (literally 'violent group') is a generic term used to describe organised crime, though the reference is made deliberately inexplicit through the general extenders '*ka sou iu no*' (or something like that) and *tari* (and so forth) at the end of *suitari*. However vague, she situated these violent forces as '*bakku ni tsuita*' using a phrase that borrows the English word 'back' to show that they were metaphorically behind the school troublemakers. In the examples that follow of harassment from these outside forces, Yoshiko emphasised that these were repeated events throughout the time that she was at the school. This further underlined the violent and intimidating atmosphere as a feature of place—the school. In this way,

representing something as repeated action over time therefore becomes a way of representing place. She made it clear that her persistence in time at this particular school strengthened her as a person, though noted that she went into teaching to teach English not develop mental toughness. She also attributed her confidence to overcome breast cancer which had taken her out of teaching the previous year to this experience. Yoshiko's narrative was therefore one that identified the repetition of related experiences over periods of years as formative in one identity attribute – strength.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have illustrated how time and place are central to the construction of personal identity in interview narratives. I have discussed time and place together because the resources for representing them are often interlinked to the extent that place may stand for time or time indicate place. Rather than focusing on the entire interview, I have limited discussion to narrative segments. Even so, this has necessitated some consideration of how these segments related to the interview or the interviewee's life as a whole. Most importantly, this chapter has exemplified how time and place are important organising principles in narrative that narrators employ actively to construct a sense of personal identity. The most focused narrative type

‘significant moment’ represented as one end of this spectrum (see Figure 3.1 above), and corresponds most closely to the Labovian narrative. Further along this spectrum lie narratives with a looser focus on time and place like the Boat Trip, spread over three months, followed by narratives where the effects of an event are played out over years. Kate’s narrative although introduced as being about a speech contest spanned the progress of her student from junior high school to university. Yoshiko’s narrative, while beginning with one incident, was part of an experience of teaching at two troubled schools over a period of 7-8 years. The positive repercussions of this were related to an even larger time span, including her overcoming breast cancer years later. One feature common to all the narratives I found in my data was the focal incident. The generic differences arose in the way a spatio-temporal moment was embedded in larger spatio-temporal layers. Rather than being linear, events were contextualised to a greater or lesser extent in time and space, as though following ripples from a stone falling in a mill pond (Figure 3.2). The 77 narratives listed in Table 3.3 represent a relatively small sample of interview narratives spread across the four categories in Japanese and English so that conclusions are highly provisional. Nevertheless, from this data it appears that (1) tightly focused spatio-temporal narratives, that I have called ‘significant moments’ are relatively rare in these life story interviews (6 Japanese; 5

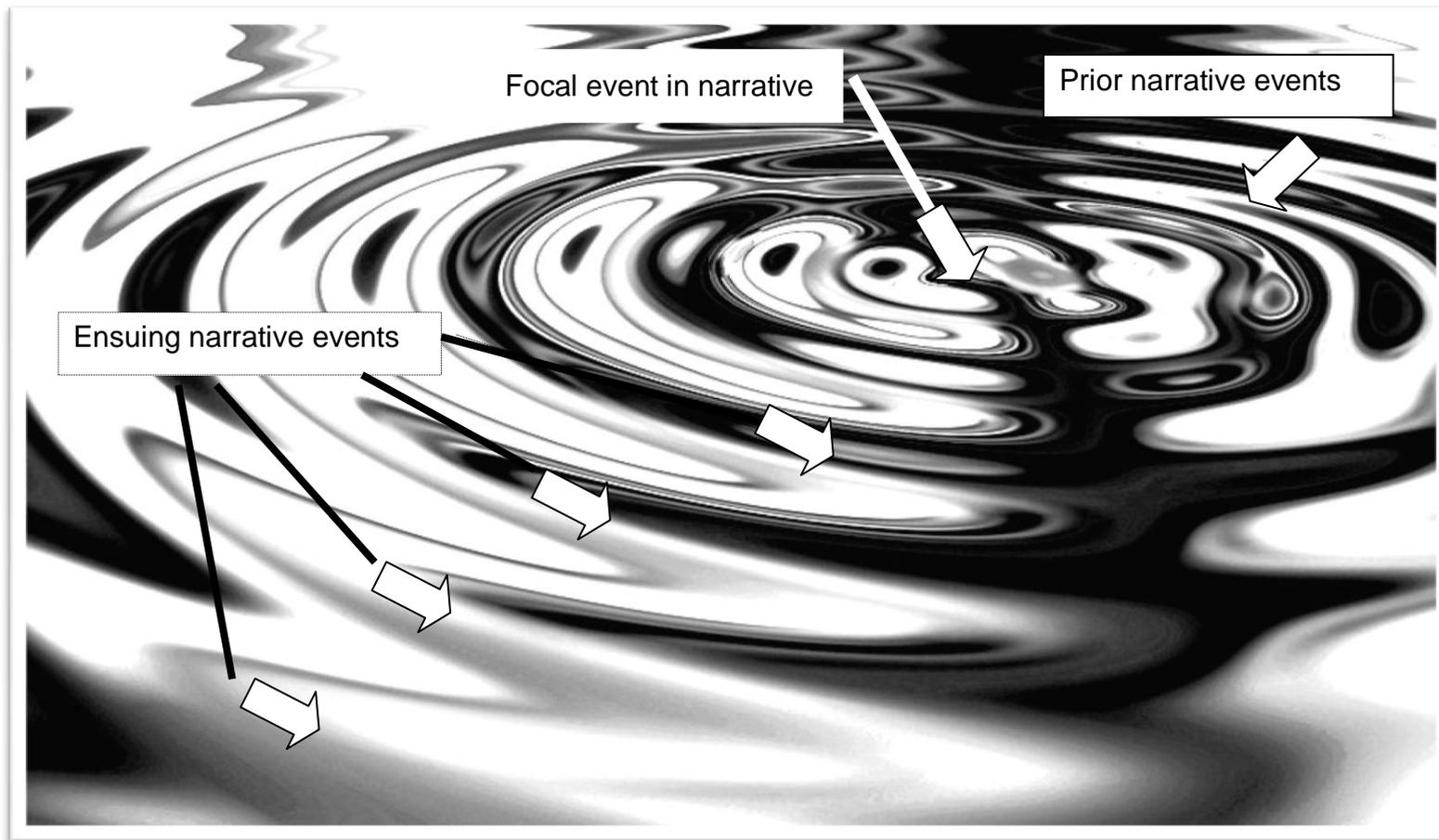
English); and (2) most noticeably in the ‘significant moments’ but also in other types the depiction of time and place is much less detailed in the Japanese narratives. This may reflect a tendency in Japanese to assume a shared outlook that encourages abbreviation and ellipsis, where English requires more specific detail.

In addition to suggesting that the layering of spatio-temporal time frames is a helpful way of classifying narratives, I have illustrated how spatio-temporal resources are used not so much as ‘background’ to the narrative, but rather as central structuring features in the representation of the self. Indeed, I have argued that since general cultural knowledge allows almost any event to be described with minimal reference to time and place, explicit spatio-temporal references are often there for another reason, one of the most pervading of which is identity work. As Jim’s narrative illustrated, Japan (like other capitalist countries) is a society in which time and place are valuable resources often equated with money. Commuting from one place to another takes time and English lessons are normally paid by the hour. Time and place imposed the undesired identities of ‘foreigner’ and ‘English conversation partner’ while denying the desired ‘Japanese university student’. While I noted in Chapter 1 that identity is about a unified ‘identicalness,’ identity generally emerges as something contingent on, even born out

of, time and space. Only in the narrative as a whole are these disparate elements united.

The unification is achieved through a single evaluative perspective. This evaluative dimension is the subject of the next chapter.

**Figure 3.2**



**Ripples—a Visualisation of Narrative Structuring**

## CHAPTER 4

# EVALUATION AND IDENTITY

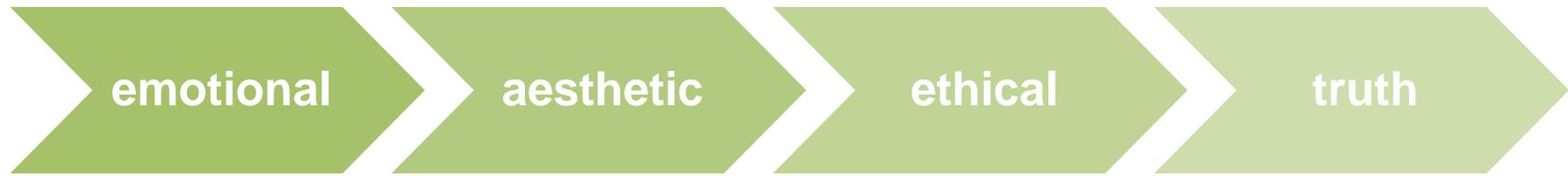
*Every sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation....The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs. They equate with one another. Wherever a sign is present, ideology is present, too. Everything ideological possesses semiotic value. (Vološinov, 1986: 10)*

### 4.1 Introduction

Evaluation is the assigning of ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ values ‘good’ or ‘bad’ to something. It is certainly possible, and in many cases inevitable, that evaluation will therefore be implicitly or explicitly a moral or ethical matter. However, evaluation pervades much more deeply into the way human beings orient themselves to the world around them; shaping and giving meaning to life. Evaluation begins with the recognition of one’s own emotional state but extends to interpretative judgements about the outside world. From an internal perspective, evaluation is about emotional responses and giving voice to one’s feelings; what J. R. Martin and White (2005) called *affect*. The sounds of infants communicate in a rudimentary way the evaluation of a personal inner state of happiness or sadness; contentment or discontent with bodily or emotional needs. Closely related to the emotional, but more focused on the external

world are aesthetic evaluations concerned with taste and beauty. Whereas personal feelings are unique to an individual, aesthetic evaluation depends on a match between personal sensibilities and the object of aesthetic appreciation. Nevertheless, unlike emotional evaluations, aesthetic judgements are potentially shared perceptions. Ethical judgements are concerned with a higher level of rationality than aesthetics, and strike more deeply to the heart of the meaning of human life. Unlike emotional and aesthetic evaluation, ethical evaluation, while it may depend on inner qualities such as integrity and rationality, presumes to judge what is right or wrong from an omniscient perspective. It is for this reason that ethics, rather than any other kind of evaluation, is enshrined in law and religion. Finally, there is evaluation at the level most abstracted from the individual, the evaluation of knowledge of the world around us which is evaluated according to its truth or falsehood and goes by the name of scientific knowledge (Figure 4.1). In practice all meaning making, whether a private or public, personal or scientific, is therefore evaluative. As Vološinov suggested, in the quotation at the head of this chapter, semiotic systems which allow for the conveyance of meaning are per se, systems of evaluation. In addition to this, semiotic systems create evaluation and in doing so become a resource for the construction of identity.

**Figure 4.1**



*subjective (personal) evaluation*

*objective (shared, universal) evaluation*

**A Scale of General Evaluative Categories**

Language is a semiotic system and, at the same time, a complex evaluative one. By language, I mean contextualised language in use; and it is this use and context which bring to life the semiotic system that is language (that has evolved through countless other evaluative interactions), in the present situation. Thompson and Hunston (1999) pointed out that individual texts construct for themselves a contextualised evaluative system and that in academic texts, for example, evaluation is likely to be primarily concerned with the truth or falsity of propositions since they are generally about exploring knowledge. On this basis, one could reasonably expect the evaluation systems at work within interviews to be intimately related to the subject matter, in this case language teaching and learning. Furthermore, the interpersonal nature of the interview as a medium, and the fact that these interviews were concerned with the experience of teaching and its relationship to the interviewees meant it was a space for the development of a self-evaluative system for the representation of identity. For the interviewer too, evaluation comes into play in a way that also has implications for identity. Research interviewers working with volunteers are unlikely to contradict the views offered by their interviewees but (as described in Chapter 2) offer varying degrees of endorsement through follow-up moves. The research interviewer also offers an overall evaluation of what has been said in the research report which will reflect his

or her own interests and evaluative criteria. These interests may in turn become the trademark of the researcher. This line of thinking could be taken even further to suggest that evaluation is, in a sense, always performing identity work.

The previous chapter illustrated how spatio-temporal representation is bound up with the realisation of personal identity and proposed that the way in which this is done is culturally and linguistically variable. This chapter takes this argument a step further by exploring more generally some of the resources used in generating personal evaluation.

Evaluation in narrative segments of the interview is discussed in relation to predominant models of evaluation, notably J. R. Martin and White's (2005) influential appraisal theory. The appraisal model was designed for written journalistic texts but I illustrate how it can be adapted to analysing interview narratives. I argue that evaluation in this context is closely associated with identity construction. Evaluation is therefore discussed as a key identity resource associated with narrative. In the following sections, I offer a descriptive definition of evaluation, including an overview of the appraisal model, then provide examples of how the self is represented directly through depictions of present and past selves and indirectly through epistemological others. I also consider the resources for showing emotional involvement with an

evaluation as well as how evaluations are rhetorically contextualised as either single focused, two sides of a coin or multi-faceted. Thematic evaluations that reoccur in more than one segment of the interview and differing resources used for evaluation in Japanese and English are also discussed.

#### **4.2 Approaches to exploring evaluation**

As noted in Module 1, evaluation was one of the key constituent elements of the Labovian narrative (Labov and Waletzky, 1967). The evaluation stage was an explicit comment on the narrative which underlined the purpose of the telling, warding off the potential ‘so what?’ reaction from listeners. Nevertheless, it is the way in which evaluation pervades narrative and indeed other kinds of texts that has made it a topic of real interest. Labov (1972: 375-396) proposed that all departures from the basic narrative syntax signify evaluation and divided them in to four categories of increasingly complex syntactic resources: *intensifiers*, *comparators*, *correlatives* and *explicatives*. *Intensifiers* embraced gestures, expressive phonology, quantifiers, repetition and ritual utterances such as ‘and there it was’ to highlight a dramatic moment with little need for syntactic complexity. *Comparators* included negative contrasts, futures, modals, quasimodals, questions, imperatives, or-clauses, superlatives

and comparatives. *Correlatives* referred to progressive structures denoting ongoing or parallel events. *Explicatives* referred to evaluative clauses appended using conjunctions. In reviewing his quantitative study of the differences, Labov suggested that the more complex evaluative syntax only occurred in adult narratives and commented that:

Children complain, question, deny, and worry but adults are more aware of the significance of this activity and more likely to talk about it. (Labov, 1972: 396)

One potential implication of this is that fully developed use of syntax in narrative is associated with self-reflexive identity work in adult narratives.

#### ***4.2.1 Stubbs' modal proposal***

Stubbs (1986) argument for a modal grammar of English added further support to the idea that evaluation is about identity work by proposing that the evaluative devices signalled through modality serve to encode the speaker (or writer's) point of view. The modal grammar he proposed encompassed a range of resources including the use of lexical commitment, explicit or vague language and private verbs (believe, suspect, expect). He predicted that it would be possible to show that 'many features of surface syntax have the function of presenting speakers' attitudes to propositions, illocutions,

and words' (Stubbs, 1986: 20). As one of the benefits of such an enterprise to English language teaching, he cited the notorious difficulties of translating modal particles between languages (ibid: 22). In Japanese, modality is represented through a system of adverbial endings (see S. E. Martin, 2004: 801-819 for details of modal resources in Japanese). For this reason, modal auxiliaries such as *would*, *will*, *could* and *should* which also serve other purposes in English can be confusing for Japanese learners. An exploration of the relationship between syntax and evaluative resources is an ambitious project but one that has been partially addressed by research reviewed in Module 1 such as Channell's (1994) work on vague language or Overstreet's (1999) description of general extenders. Such fieldwork is implicitly bottom-up in the sense that it moves from grammatical resource to evaluation, but evaluation also needs to be seen top-down as being situated within a theoretical framework. One example of a top-down approach is J. R. Martin and White's (2005) model of 'appraisal'.

#### **4.2.2 *Martin and White's model of 'appraisal'***

J. R. Martin and White's (2005) model of 'appraisal' (hereafter M&W) situated evaluation in the context of a Hallidayan model of language as organised in accordance with a functional system of meaning (M. A. K. Halliday, 1994; Hasan, 2005). The

model drew on a view of language as simultaneously functioning *textually*, *ideationally* and *interpersonally*. The textual describes relationships set up within a text or with other texts, realised through *mode*. The ideational is concerned with the way a text represents the outside world and is discussed in terms of *field*. Finally, the interpersonal denotes the way in which a written or verbalised text establishes a relationship between the producer and receiver of the text and is discussed in terms of *tenor*. Conceptually intersecting these metafunctions are the language strata of phonology and graphology; grammar and lexis; and discourse and semantics. Appraisal is located within this theoretical framework as one of three elements at the strata of discourse semantics that is concerned with the interpersonal realm of tenor. The other two areas of interpersonal discourse semantics are *negotiation* and *involvement*. Interpersonal discourse semantics is also the region characterised by its association with the overriding concerns of tenor as power or status on the one hand and solidarity or contact on the other. The theoretical framework and its relation to appraisal are described in detail elsewhere (Christie and Martin, 2000; J. R. Martin, 1999; J. R. Martin and Rose, 2003; White, 2001) so I will not elaborate further on them here. Appraisal itself is further subdivided into resources for *engagement*, *attitude* and *graduation*.

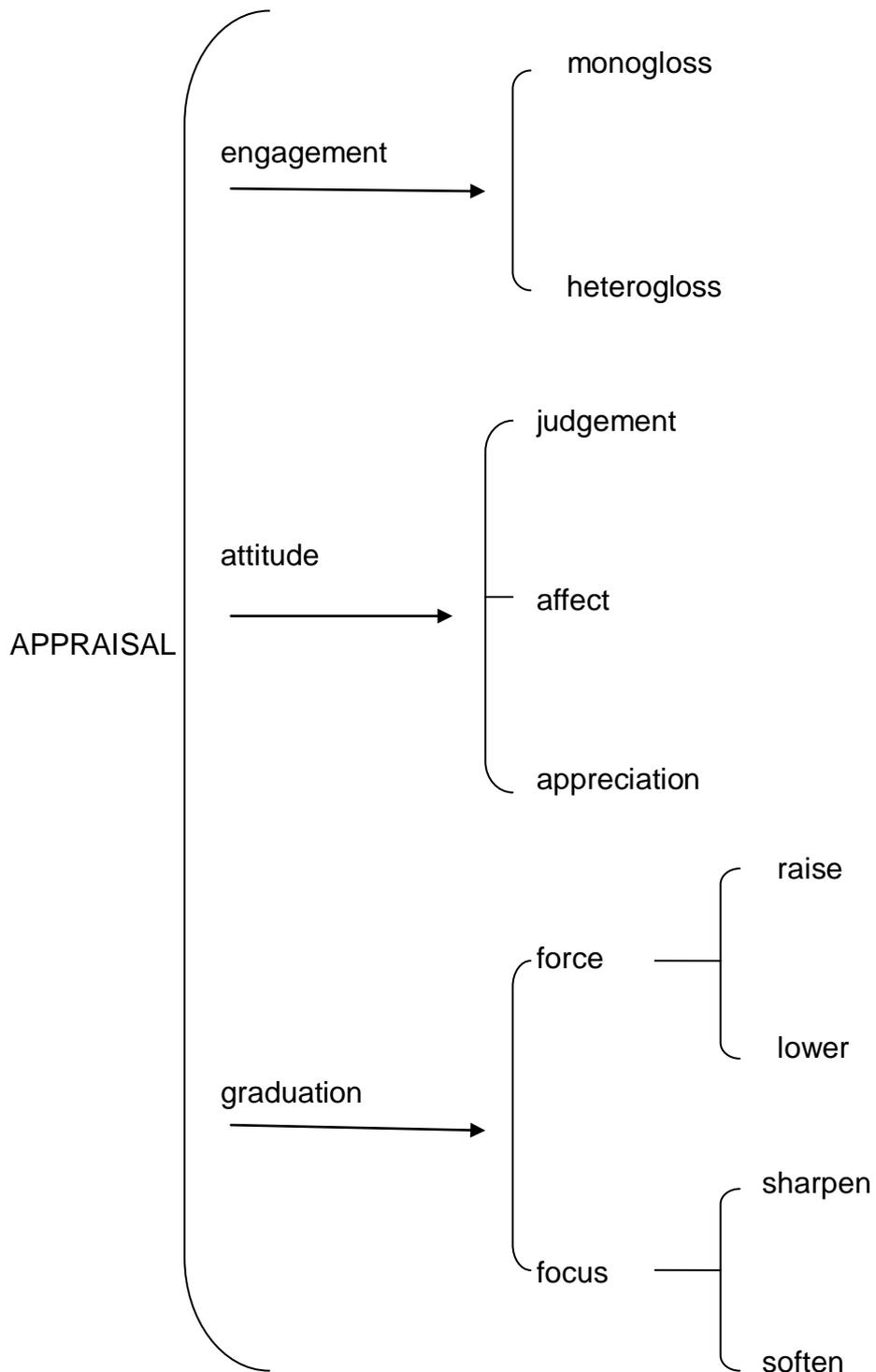
**Table 4.1**

<p><b>Language</b></p> <p><b>function</b></p> <p><b>Language strata</b></p>	<p><b>Ideational</b></p>	<p><b>Interpersonal</b></p>	<p><b>Textual</b></p>
<p><b>Register</b></p> <p><b>Discourse semantics</b></p> <p><b>Lexicogrammar</b></p> <p><b>Phonology or graphology</b></p>	<p>Field</p>	<p>Tenor – power / solidarity</p> <p>negotiation</p> <p><b>appraisal</b></p> <p>involvement</p>	<p>Mode</p>

**The Location of Appraisal in the Systemic Framework Described in J. R. Martin and White (2005)**

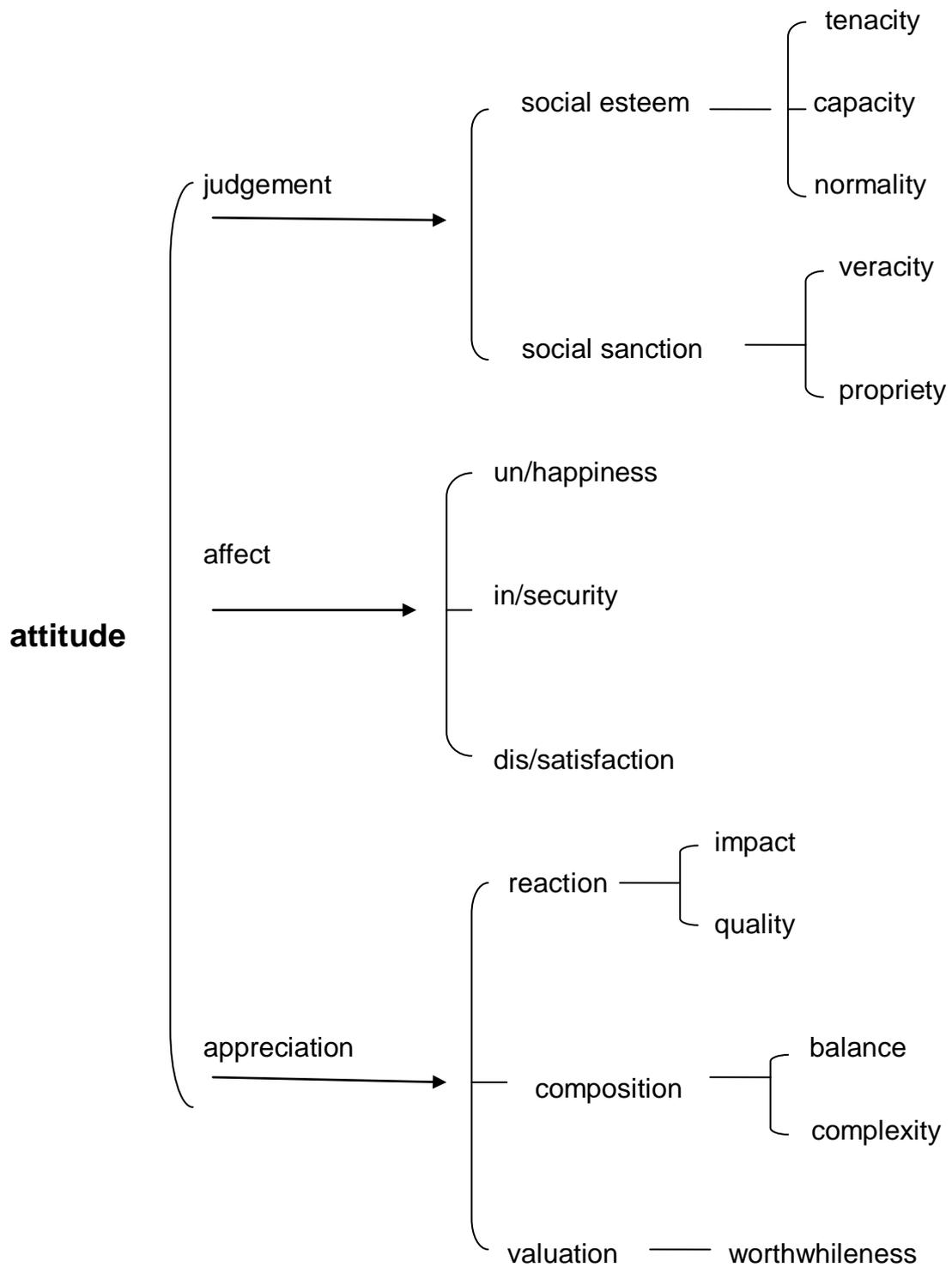
M&W proposed that *attitude* (the kind of evaluation being made) could be divided into three types: *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation*, where *affect* is concerned with feeling; *judgement* with appeals to normative principles; and *appreciation* with the value of things. *Engagement* is the description of how an evaluative perspective is presented and is divided into ‘monogloss’ whereby a single perspective is presented and a ‘heterogloss’ which incorporates multiple perspectives (even if they are subsumed within a single outlook). Since, as M&W acknowledge, all texts are effectively in dialogue with other competing voices (2005: 92-95) they propose a spectrum from what they call ‘dialogical contraction’ (2005: 102-108) (where the scope of these voices is limited) to ‘dialogical expansion’ (where competing voices are more developed). Finally, there are resources for *graduation*: gauging the relative impact of evaluation divided into *force* which can be raised or lowered through contextual linguistic choices and *focus* which can be conceptually sharpened or softened. This model of evaluation is illustrated in Figure 4.2 and an overview of attitudinal responses that I do not have space to elaborate on here is provided for reference purposes in Figure 4.3. This model, designed for critical deconstruction of the voices in written texts (mainly journalistic ones) through the analysis of evaluative resources, also offers potentially interesting insights into identity work in the context of oral interviews.

**Figure 4.2**



**Overview of Appraisal (J. R. Martin and White, 2005: 38)**

**Figure 4.3**



**Summary of Attitudinal Resources  
Based on J. R. Martin and White (2005: 42-91)**

### 4.2.3 *Us and Others*

The notions of monogloss and heterogloss included in the appraisal model introduced above make it possible to categorise texts into those which adhere more strictly to a single outlook (monogloss) and those which incorporate other viewpoints into their overall perspective (heterogloss). This potentially opens up a further area for description: the depiction of viewpoint. As I discussed in Chapter 2, while researchers have traditionally treated interviews as ways of accessing interviewee experience, recent approaches have increasingly recognised both the influence of the interviewer and the complexity and self-reflexivity of interviewees. The deconstruction of perspectives within the interview is therefore a particularly important area for consideration. One approach that I found helpful in exploring evaluative perspective in relation to identity is Duszak's (2002a) notion of Us and Others as a central dualism in the construction of identity. Duszak and the contributors to her volume (Duszak, 2002b) draw on sources such as the social psychology of Tajfel, Forgas and Turner (Tajfel and Forgas, 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 2004) to explore a linguistic conception of identity expressed through an *us-them* distinction. When an individual speaks, they are constantly aligning with, or disassociating themselves from, various propositions, people or groups. This process simultaneously serves as identity work in producing the

speaker (*I/we*) the addressee (*you/we*) and other unaddressed persons (*we/they*). Accordingly, the key linguistic features involved in this are indexicals such as pronouns which, as I explained in Chapter 1, are not as often used in Japanese and instead represented through use of humble or polite markers or implicit in other ways (Kozai, 2002). In terms of the Hallidayan framework, the *us-them* contrast is one way of incorporating the interpersonal concern with *solidarity* (*us*) versus *power-status* (*you/them*) opposition into the framework. Combining this *us-them* distinction with the notion of monogloss and heterogloss therefore offers a richer potential for the exploration of identity in narrative.

#### **4.3 Dialogic contraction – *A Half-half Child***

When I invited George to be interviewed he told me directly that he was not one to pull punches. I reassured him that I would greatly appreciate his honest input. He did not disappoint me. George needed little prompting and spoke eagerly and frankly about his experiences and beliefs about language learning and teaching. While some interviewees seemed reluctant to construe their experiences as in any way negative or conflicting, George had no such qualms. In Module 2, I introduced an extract from his interview as an example of monoglossic rhetoric. In this section, I explore an extract

where other voices are introduced but engagement with them is ‘dialogically contracted’. I argue that while a completely monoglossic representation of the self would be difficult, if not impossible, to maintain, George’s style of speaking tended in this direction. This effect was underlined by the raised ‘force’ (in appraisal terms). The extract begins with his lament on the failure of other foreign men married to Japanese wives to bring up their children as bilinguals; a failing which he described as ‘my number one pet peeve in the whole world’ a maximum expression of force compared with say ‘something I’m concerned about’. He then explained how he raised the matter of home language policy with his in-laws.

#### **Extract 4.1      A Half-half Child**

##### LEAD IN (PRELIMINARY ORIENTATION)

**George:**

- (1) I am willing to spend the money now (to travel to the US with my daughter)
- (2) because I see so many of my friends
- (3) whose kids are eleven and twelve
- (4) and they can only speak Japanese.
- (5) And I am like:
- (6) ‘How *motai-nai*<sup>1</sup> is that?’
- (7) ‘So let me ask you,’
- (8) I tell my friends,
- (9) ‘let me ask you a question.’
- (10) ‘If you go back tomorrow, what is going to happen?’
- (11) ‘Well, then they’ll learn English,

---

<sup>1</sup> *motai-nai* = ‘wasteful’ in Japanese

- (12) they'll go to school.'
- (13) 'Well what happened to (inaudible)?'
- (14) 'Well my wife thought it would be better,
- (15) if they learned Japanese first.'
- (16) 'Who's the English teacher?
- (17) Who learned that kids learn everything in the first five years?
- (18) Who's the one who did all the studying?'
- (19) I know what language development is.
- (20) I know what it means.
- (21) I'm never going to let my wife tell me.
- (22) Japanese think
- (23) because there are more Japanese than foreigners
- (24) they know what is best.
- (25) It drives me crazy.
- (26) My wife never read one book on development,
- (27) cognitive development.
- (28) And she is going to tell me?
- (29) How to teach language to my daughter?
- (30) No way!

**Pat:**

- (31) Right, yeah.

**George:**

- (32) Not because I'm a foreigner.

**Pat:**

- (33) Yeah, yeah.

#### ABSTRACT

**George:**

- (34) The whole family,
- (36) we had a family meeting of ten people,
- (37) everyone was going,
- (38) 'But in Japan we do it this way.'
- (39) 'But how many of you people are...?'

**Pat:**

- (40) So this was like to discuss,

#### ORIENTATION

**George:**

- (41) Oh, god yeah,

- (42) because for the first two years  
(43) my wife wouldn't speak anything but Japanese,  
(44) cause her mum kept saying, no,  
(45) Japanese only, Japanese only,  
**Pat:**  
(46) Oh, right, right.

#### COMPLICATING ACTION / RESOLUTION

- George:**  
(47) So I was divorced,  
(48) I said 'you start speaking English or I'm out,'  
**Pat:**  
(49) Right,  
**George:**  
(50) 'Keep your Japanese child,'  
(51) 'I don't want a Japanese child.'  
**Pat:**  
(52) Right, right.  
**George:**  
(53) 'I want a half and half child.'  
**Pat:**  
(54) Right, right,  
**George:**  
(55) No,  
(56) we had a huge family meeting  
(57) and I said  
(59) 'no more making a big deal when she says something in English'  
(60) that's the gap  
(61) 'Oh my god she said "red"'

#### EVALUATION

- Pat:**  
(62) Right, so now she is just completely bilingual,  
**George:**  
(63) Well, because I don't live by the family.

The lead-in to George's story (1-30) was difficult to classify as an abstract in the Labovian sense as it did not explicitly anticipate the telling of the narrative; instead it effectively set up the evaluative framework for the narrative. His friends' views on language policy in the home were presented in the form of an argument with them in which he disagreed strongly with their approach. His strategy was therefore apparently heteroglossic while actually closing down the space for dialogic perspectives. Instead of developing these voices, he set out the failing of his friends' language policy in straightforward (and monoglossic) terms: The kids are eleven or twelve (and so beyond the critical learning period for bilingual development) *and* they can only speak Japanese *so* what a waste (2-6)! George ironically used the heavily evaluative Japanese expression *motai-nai* to suggest that the Japanese parents should also recognise that they have wasted an important educational opportunity. The imaginary comments from his friend were represented as inadequate answers because they were followed immediately by his questions. The final questions: 'Who's the English teacher?'; 'Who learned that kids learn everything in the first five years?'; 'Who's the one who did all the studying?' were completely rhetorical as the answers were clearly 'I am', 'I did' and 'I did' respectively, and underlined the idea that he/they should know better than to defer to his/their spouse. As these questions applied to George himself, they also

served to shift consideration to his own situation which he marked out as differing from his friends only in his *response* to the situation: ‘I’m never going to let my wife tell me’. Part of the effect of beginning with the example of his friends was to set up a polarisation between the policies of Japanese wives and foreign husbands to which he aligned himself. Like their wives, his wife had no specialist knowledge of cognitive development, yet insisted on prioritising Japanese. His in-laws were aligned as ‘the whole family’ and ‘everyone’ but more generally as Japanese against foreigners (23, 32, 38) with the child implicitly in the middle. ‘Japanese’ was used effectively to denote both language (43, 45) and nationality (50, 51) implying that language was the defining feature of nationality in this context, hence the importance of a half-half child.

Over the course of the narrative he represented himself as (1) a parent concerned about his daughter learning English; (2) a foreigner married to a Japanese wife who favoured prioritising Japanese over English; (3) a language teacher and expert; and (4) somebody who was prepared to stand up for his beliefs to do what he thought was right. His power to stand up for himself was also indexed by the way he took charge of an uninterrupted speaking turn (1-30) and his use of ‘force’. Table 4.2 sets examples from this extract against made-up examples of moderate and lower force.

**Table 4.2**

<b>Modality (attitude)*</b>	<b>Raised</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Lower</b>
<b>Positive response</b> (appreciation-reaction-impact)	Oh, god yeah (41)**	Yes, sure	I guess so
<b>Quantity</b> (judgement-social esteem-capacity +ve)	kids learn everything (17)	kids learn most things	kids learn many things
<b>Degree</b> (judgement-social esteem-capacity +ve)	I know what it means. (20)	I know a lot about it.	I know something about it.
<b>Emotional intensity</b> (affect-dis/satisfaction -ve)	It drives me crazy. (25)	It annoys me.	It bugs me.
<b>Judgemental weight</b> (judgement-social sanction-propriety -ve)	How <i>motai nai</i> is that! (6)	What a shame!	It can't be helped
<b>Probability</b> (judgement-social esteem-capacity +ve)	I'm never going to ... (21)	I'm probably not going to ...	I don't think I will ...
<b>Frequency</b> (judgement-social sanction-propriety -ve)	her mum kept saying ... (44)	her mum sometimes said ...	her mum occasionally said ...

\* Attitudinal categories in parentheses are based on J.R. Martin and White (2005) as illustrated in Figure 4.3.

\*\* Numbers in parentheses denote line number in Extract 4.1. Contrasting examples in this table were created for demonstration purposes.

### **Examples of Force in George's Narrative**

In addition to the use of force, the first column of this table includes parenthetical information on the categories of *attitude*. Prominent (in this table and in the extract) are *judgements of social esteem* and *social propriety* which reflect the fact that the evaluation at work in his extract is identity work in which he elaborates a social framework that supports a positive evaluation of his actions. Obstacles to his ‘English in the home policy’, whether the perceived failure of his friends’ children’s bilingual education (6) or his mother in law’s objections to his daughter using English (44) were judged negatively, while the potential language ability of young children was judged positively (17). This strategy contributed further to the ‘black and white’ effect of dialogic contraction. The combination of dialogic contraction and high force in this judgemental framework did more than put his story across in a particular way; they created the speaker and said who he was.

#### **4.4 Dialogic expansion – *The Tennis Player***

In George’s story the family conflict was brought to life through the representation of his own views in a prominent way that left little room for interpretive guesswork. He tackled the problem of his daughter’s language acquisition head on by calling a meeting with the family as he depicted his narrative in bold strokes. However, there are

other possible approaches to problems that are likely to be reflected in different styles of narrative and identity work. In this section, I turn to another story of conflict that was handled and recounted using quite different strategies than those employed by George.

Hiro was a public high school teacher in Tokyo. At the time of the interview, he was preparing for the opening of a new secondary school with an expanded English curriculum. Unlike most school English teachers, he did not go straight into teaching from university. After a short taste of school teaching immediately after he graduated, he worked in India and Canada for some years and came back to a job at an exclusive foreigner club in Tokyo. By his early thirties, he was encouraged to return to teaching as a more worthwhile and stable career. He therefore did so with some experience of the world, a degree of maturity and fresh enthusiasm. By the time I interviewed him, he had a decade of experience under his belt and he spoke with excitement about the new school. In the extract quoted below, I had asked him about his worst memory as a teacher. He described a prolonged dispute with a parent during a period where he was the school tennis club coach. The parent complained that her daughter was never chosen for the school team and felt that she was being discriminated against. Hiro

insisted that she wasn't good enough. The way he handled the situation and the way he told the story were quite different from George's approach but in both cases an adverse situation became an opportunity for some positive identity work.

## Extract 4.2 The Tennis Player

### ABSTRACT

- Hiro:**
- (1) *Saiaku no*, (laughs) The worst (laughs)
- (2) *saiaku no keiken*, the worst experience,
- (3) *saiaku no keiken wa*, *chuugakkou no* the worst experience (was) when (I was) at
- (4) *toki ni*, (the) junior high school
- Pat:**
- (5) *Hai*. Yes.
- Hiro:**
- (6) *Bukatsudou de*, As an extracurricular activity,
- (7) *ano tenisu bu ano komon wo* Um, (I) was responsible for the, um, tennis
- (8) *yatteitan desu kedo*, club
- (9) *maa oya kara sono bukatsu no* Well, regarding the extracurricular teaching,
- (10) *shidouhouhou*, (I received) a complaint about the way (I was)
- (11) *yarikata ni kujou ga kite*. running things
- Pat:**
- (12) *Hai*. Yes.
- Hiro:**
- (13) *De, sono oya to momemamshita*. And, I had a dispute with the parent.
- Pat:**
- (14) *Aa, kyouin no shigoto keiko taihen desu ne*. Ah, being a teacher is pretty tough isn't it.

### ORIENTATION

- Hiro:**
- (15) *Maa, sono naiyou to iu no wa*, Well, as for the content (of the dispute)
- (16) *Maa, hitori*, Well, there was one,

- (17) *joshi tenisu bu dattan desu kedomo,* It was the girls' tennis club as a matter of fact,  
*onnanoko ga ite,* There was a girl,  
 (18) *de mou, kanojo anmari kou,* And now, she didn't have a very like,  
 (19) *undounouryoku wa,* High level of athletic ability.  
*takakunakatta desu ne.*

**Pat:**

- (20) Ah, hai. Ah, yes.

**Hiro:**

- (21) *Maa, shiai toka ni mo,* Well, in matches and so forth,  
 (22) *Maa reguraa de wa, dasenai taikei* Well, (she) didn't have the physical ability to  
 keep a regular position.

**Pat:**

- (23) Aa, hai. Ah, yes.

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

**Hiro:**

- (24) *De maa, oya kara shite mireba,* And well, from the parent's perspective,  
 (25) *Jibun no musume ga sono,* Her daughter was,  
 (26) *Sabetsu sareteiru janai keredomo,* not discriminated against  
 but nevertheless,

**Pat:**

- (27) Aa, naru hodo. Ah, I see.  
 (28) *Erabarenakatta kara.* Because (she) wasn't chosen

**Hiro:**

- (29) *Sou, sou, sou. Dakara* Right, right, right. So  
 (30) *kouritsugakkou nan dakara, sono* Because it (was) a state school  
*kachimake janakutte,* (It should) not all (be) about winning and  
 losing,  
 (31) *'mou chotto kyouikuteki' to iu* (She) used the term 'a bit more educational'  
 (32) *iikatta shimasu kedo,* however,  
 (33) *ano,* Um,  
*musume mou chotto, kou,* (She) wanted her daughter to, as it were,  
 (34) *bukatsu no naka de katsuyaku sasete* Be made more active in (her) extracurricular  
 (35) *hoshii.* activity.

**Pat:**

- (36) Aa, hai. Ah, yes.

- Hiro:**
- (37) Demo koochi no tachiba chigau But the coach's position is different
- Pat:**
- (38) (Laughs)
- Hiro:**
- (39) Gakkou no daihyou de deru kara, Because (the team is) representing the school
- (40) Yappari tsuyoi jun ni Of course ability takes priority
- Pat:**
- (41) Naru hodo I see
- Hiro:**
- (42) Soko yappari oya no tachiba to maa That's why of course the parent's position  
kochira no kurabu komon toshite no and the position of the person responsible for  
(43) tachiba, the club (differ)
- (44) De, chotto iken kyouron ni natte And it led to clash of opinions.
- Pat:**
- (45) Ee Yeah
- Hiro:**
- (46) Zuibun momemashita The dispute really went on.  
(laughs).

#### RESOLUTION

- Pat:**
- (47) Sore de, kekkyoku dou nattan desu Then, what happened in the end?  
ka
- Hiro:**
- (48) Aa, kekkyoku toushimashita jibun no Ah, in the end my way of thinking prevailed.  
kangaekata.
- Pat:**
- (49) Aa, *naru hodo.* Ah, I see

#### EVALUATION

- Hiro:**
- (50) *Ano, hokano seitotachi mo nattoku Well, other students could never accept it,  
shinai desuyo ne.* right.
- Pat**
- (51) Naru hodo. I see.

- Hiro:**  
 (52) *Jibun ga tsuyoi no ni, kanojo wa, gakkou no daihyou shiteimasu.* Even though I' m better, she is representing the team.
- Pat:**  
 (53) *Sou desu ne.* That' s right.
- Hiro:**  
 (54) *Sou kangaeru to, dakara, bu de No renshuu wa,* Thinking in these terms, the club practice,
- Pat:**  
 (55) *Ee,* Yeah,
- Hiro:**  
 (56) *Ano renshu dakeredomo, Shiai de,* Well for practice, however,  
 (57) *Daimatsuri shiai to koto ni naru to* For a match,  
 (58) *yappari jitsuryoku* When it comes to a match for a major competition,  
 Of course (it is down to) ability,
- Pat:**  
*Sou desu ne.* That's right.
- Hiro**  
 (59) *De yaru to iuno wa, boku no kangaekata da.* This approach so to speak,  
 Was my way of thinking
- Pat:**  
 (60) *Ee, sou shinai to fubyoudou ni.* Yeah, if you don' t do that it' s unfair
- Hiro:**  
 (61) *Sou, kaette fubyoudou,* Right, not doing so would be unfair,  
 (62) *Maa, hontou ni undou no shinkei ga nai ko datta kara,* Well, (she) really was a kid with no athletic ability so,  
 (63) *Oya toshite wa, sugoku shinpai datta.* (It) was a big worry for her parents.
- Pat:**  
*Hai* Yes.
- (64) **Hiro:**  
*Un.* Mm.
- (65) **Pat:**  
*Naru hodo.* I see.
- (66) *Maa, shou ga nai desu ne, sore wa, (laughs)* Well, (it) can't be helped, can (it).

Like George, Hiro described a protracted dispute that shaped opposing evaluative frameworks. But where George was dealing with a family problem, for Hiro this was a work situation that was effectively thrust on him. A more fundamental difference between their narratives was the way they structured viewpoint. In the prelude to George's narrative about his friends' children who 'can speak only Japanese' he introduced his beliefs on language learning ('kids learn everything in the first five years') and anticipated the point of his narrative ('I'm never going to let my wife tell me [that speaking only Japanese is best for our daughter].') before his story even began. By contrast, Hiro revealed his evaluative framework gradually and only made it fully explicit after the narrative had been told (50-66). In George's narrative, despite representing the words of others, their way of thinking was never clearly shown. By contrast, he took great care to represent the view of the parent even though he made it clear that it was different from his own. It is therefore a good example of dialogic expansion.

In the abstract, he represented the incident from an official perspective by simply explaining that there was a complaint about the teaching. He used the expression

*'bukatsu no shidou houhou'* where *bukatsu* means 'extracurricular activity' and *shidou houhou* literally the 'educational method'. Like George, who underlined the failings of his friends' English policy through *judgements* of *social esteem* and *social sanction*, Hiro allowed no room for contention over his student's failings as a tennis player. Instead, his judgements were tempered by variable use of force. He began by alluding to her ability as *'anmari kou, undouryoku wa takkakunakkatta'*. In terms of 'force' this is the 'lowest' possible. *Anmari* means 'not really'; *kou* is a general indicator of vagueness which I translated as 'like'; 'undouryoku' means athletic ability and *takkakunakatta* is the past negative form of 'high'. So literally, 'she didn't really, like, have a high level of athletic ability'. The use of the polite 'desu' however, signalled that this understatement was a public *tatema*e formulation which he then reformulated in contextual terms as *'maa shiai toka ni mo, maa reguraa de wa dasenai taikei'* (well in matches and so forth she didn't have the physical ability to keep a regular position). Once again this was expressed with the minimum of force, but again too it allowed no room for dispute over this key point of evaluation that she was not good enough to play on the team. These statements in isolation are therefore monoglossic.

The complicating action then began with the representation of the parent's point of

view. He quoted the parent as requesting that the clubs activities be '*mou chotto kyouikuteki*' (a bit more educational) but he interpreted this remark to give a much fuller account of the parent's perspective. According to Yamada (2002: 37-51) *sasshi* or the ability to read beyond the actual words uttered to understand a person's point of view is a feature of Japanese communication. In this sense, Hiro's story could be seen as an example of Japanese communicative style and *sasshi* could be characterised as a habit of dialogical expansion. When he came to tell his side of the story, he expressed it as the viewpoint of the club coach, a hat he had to wear. Only when I asked him the result of the dispute did he forefront the views as '*jibun no kangaekata*' (my way of thinking—explicit point of view). In the post narrative evaluation he aligned his thinking with the other students in the tennis club who would potentially lose their place: '*Jibun ga tsuyoi no ni, kanojo wa, gakkou no daihyou ni shiteimasu*' (even though I am better she is representing the team). Finally, he ended his narrative on a note of sympathy for the parents who he suggested must have been worried by their daughter's poor athletic ability (judged with greater force as *undo shinkei ga nai* – no athletic ability). Where George's dialogic contraction and consistent use of *raised force* helped to characterise him as a person of action, Hiro's heteroglossic approach cast him as a highly rational person acting in accordance with his responsibilities to the

tennis club, the other students and the school he wanted to represent with the best players. He also made it clear that equal opportunity and ability were central values, illustrated in the space he gave to the agitated parent's complaint. One effect of his use of dialogic expansion was the extent to which he engaged me as the interviewer in his narrative evoking an evaluative judgement (social sanction-propriety) in his favour '*ee, sou shinai to fubyoudo ni*' (Yeah, if you don't it's unfair).

George's and Hiro's narratives differed in their use of 'force'—the strength of a proposition. As noted above (see Table 4.2), George's raised force contributed to the effect of dialogic contraction. In contrast, Hiro tended to use lowered force only strategically increased to underline two key evaluative points in his story: (1) that the dispute was particularly protracted (hence this is justified as 'worst experience'); and (2) that the student really lacked athletic ability (justifying excluding her from the team). Hiro's use of force is shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3**

<b>Modality (attitude)*</b>	<b>Raised</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Lower</b>
<b>Degree (ability)</b> (judgement-social esteem-capacity -ve)	<i>hontou ni undo no shinkei ga nai</i> (62)** (she had absolutely no athletic ability)	<i>Reguraa de wa dasenai taikei</i> (she didn't have the physical ability to keep a regular position) (22)	<i>anmari kou, undouryoku wa takakunakatta</i> (18-19) (she didn't really have, like, a high level of athletic ability)
<b>Quantity / frequency</b> (affect-dis/satisfaction -ve)	<i>zutto motto katsuyaku sasete</i> (much more involvement)	<i>motto katsuyaku sasete</i> (more involvement)	<i>mou chotto ...katsuyaku sasete</i> (34) (a bit more involvement)
<b>Emotional intensity</b> (affect-dis/satisfaction -ve)	<i>zuibun momemashita</i> (46) (argued a lot)	<i>momemashita</i> (13) (argued)	<i>Anmari momenakatta</i> (didn't argue so much)
<b>Judgemental weight</b> (judgement-social sanction-propriety -ve)	<i>hidoku sabetsu sareta toka</i> (severely discriminated against things)	<i>sabetsu sareteru mitai ni</i> (sort of discriminated against)	<i>sabetsu sareteiru janai keredomo</i> (26) (not exactly discriminated against)
<b>Frequency</b> (judgement-social esteem-capacity -ve)	<i>Hotondo dasu koto ga dekinakatta</i> (hardly ever played)	<i>anmari dasenakatta</i> (couldn't play very often)	<i>reguraa de wa dasenai</i> (22) (couldn't keep a regular position)

\* Attitudinal categories in parentheses are based on J.R. Martin and White (2005) as illustrated in Figure 4.3.

\*\* Numbers in parentheses denote line number in Extract 4.1. Contrasting examples in the table were created for demonstration purposes.

### **Examples of Force in Hiro's Narrative**

#### 4.5 The self through others – *Five Precious Hours*

The two previous sections explored narratives in which the narrators represented themselves directly as central actors. In this section, I consider a non-narrative extract in which the teller represented herself through the eyes of others, in this case her students. Yuri taught adult business students on intensive courses lasting one or two days and sometimes as short as five hours. She began teaching in language schools soon after she graduated from university and went to Canada to acquire her MA in TESOL on a course that incorporated teaching practice as well as theory. I first met her at a conference where she gave a lively presentation on English teaching with her husband, an American who also teaches English. Yuri had a remarkable memory and was able to recall and reproduce conversations from her school textbooks. In Extract 4.3, she explained how she put this talent to use by memorising names and other details about her students which she used in examples during class. She also demonstrated her memory by quoting student evaluation forms, apparently verbatim.

#### **Extract 4.3 Five Precious Hours**

##### ORIENTATION

**Yuri:**

- |     |                                 |                                      |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) | Ima wa, ano shuuchu kouza de,   | Now I am teaching intensive courses, |
| (2) | Ichinichi no seminaa deus toka  | One day seminars and so forth,       |
| (3) | Futsukakan no seminaa mo aru to | There are two day seminars too       |

	imashita ne	(I) told (you) right?
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(4)	Hai.	Yes.
	<b>Yuri:</b>	
(5)	De sono mijikai deai no naka nan desu kedo	An in that short encounter, anyway,
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(6)	Un,	Yes,
	<b>Yuri:</b>	
(7)	Watashi wa, kiokuryoku,	My memory,
(8)	Sanjuunin no kurasu demo	Even with a class of thirty people
(9)	Ichinichi no aida ni	Within the day
(10)	Namae oboeru you ni surun desu yo	(I) try to memorise their names (you) see
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(11)	Aa, subarashii	Ah, brilliant.
	<b>Yuri:</b>	
(12)	Dekiru dake,	As far as possible,
(13)	Sono honto ichido kiri dakedo	It is really just a one off, nevertheless,
(14)	Gojikan dake dakeredomo,	Even if it is only five hours,
(15)	Ano, sekkaku deatta hito	Well, having had the chance to meet a person
(16)	Nani ka no en de	By some chance of fate
(17)	Eigo wo manabou to iu ba de	In the context of learning English
(18)	Deatta hito	Such a person
(19)	No koto wo shiritai no de	(is someone I) want to know about, so
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(20)	Hai.	Yes,
	<b>Yuri:</b>	
(21)	Ano kiokuryoku	Well, (regarding) memory
(22)	namae oboeru no ga saiteigen ni shitemo,	If learning names (is) the absolute minimum,
(23)	Tatoeba saishou no jikou shoukai de itta	For example, from their self-introductions
(24)	shuumi toka	hobbies and things,
(25)	Shushinchi oboeteite	(I) remember (their) place of birth ...
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(26)	Hai	Yes.

- Yuri:**
- (27) Maa, chotto shita bunpou pointo wo  
 (28) oshieru ni shitemo  
 (29) Reibun ni sou itta mono wo iretari
- Well, with teaching a small grammatical point  
 (I) include that kind of information in (the) example sentences.
- Pat:**
- (30) Hai,
- Yes,
- Yuri:**
- (31) Ano seito san no jouhou wo jibun no
- Well, the information about the students, I
- Pat:**
- (32) Hai,
- Yes,
- Yuri:**
- (33) Jibun no oshie 'teaching' no naka de  
 Ga kokorogaketerun desuyo
- I try to incorporate (it) into my teaching you see.
- Pat:**
- (34) Hai, hai.
- Yes, yes.

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

- Yuri:**
- (35) De sore ga,  
 (36) Yappari mijikai kenshuu demo tsujiru  
 toki wa,
- And that,  
 Of course, when even in (in a) short seminar course (I am able to) put the message across,
- (37) Ano honto ni tatta gojikandatta kedo,
- Well, really in (what) was just five hours, nevertheless,
- Pat:**
- (38) Hai.
- Yes.
- Yuri:**
- (39) 'Koko ni kitte,  
 (40) Eigo no benkyou no shikata ga  
 wakattan desu'
- 'Coming here  
 (I) learned how to study English'
- (41) Toka
- And so forth
- Pat:**
- (42) Aa
- Ah,
- Yuri:**
- (43) Nanka 'sensei to aete'
- Somehow 'since meeting my teacher'

- Pat:**
- (44) Ee, ee. Yeah, yeah.
- Yuri:**
- (45) Ano chotto Well rather,  
 (46) 'ima made eigo sugoku kirai dattashi, '(I) used to really despise English until now,  
 (47) Nigate ishiki attan desu kedo, And tried to avoid it, however,  
 (48) Dekirun janai ka na (I have) come to feel that perhaps (I) can  
 to iu kimochi ni narimashita kara' succeed'  
 (49) toka And so on.
- Pat:**
- (50) Hai, hai. Yes, yes.
- Yuri:**
- (51) 'Mochiron, ichinichi de wa, 'Of course (I) never thought it would be  
 (52) Eigo dekiru you ni naru to possible to learn English in a day'  
 omowanakattashi'
- Pat:**
- (53) Hai Yes.
- Yuri:**
- (54) 'Ichinichi de nandarou 'What is one day  
 (55) To omotte kita kedo' (I) thought (when I) came.'
- Pat:**
- (56) Hai Yes.
- Yuri:**
- (57) 'Aa, nanka yarikata ga mietekite, 'Ah, somehow (I) seemed to see how to  
 (58) Yokatta desu' learn. (It) was great.'  
 (59) Toka. And so on.
- Pat:**
- (60) Aa Ah.

#### EVALUATION

- Yuri:**
- (61) Sou iu comentto wo Comments like these
- Pat:**
- (62) Aa, hai, hai Ah, yes, yes.
- Yuri:**
- (63) 'Yarikata wakatta' to kiku to '(I) understood how to learn' when I hear  
 (this)

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| (64) | Yapari ichiban ureshii desu ne.              | Of course, (I) am the happiest, right. |
|      | <b>Pat:</b>                                  |  |
| (65) | Aa, hai.                                     | Ah, yes.                               |
| (66) | Toku ni sou iu mijikai kikande,              | Especially in such a short time        |
| (67) | Shourai ga aru de,                           | There is some future,                  |
|      | <b>Yuri:</b>                                 |  |
| (68) | Mijikai kikande hai                          | In a short time, yes.                  |
|      | <b>Pat:</b>                                  |  |
| (69) | Sore wa subarashii desu ne.                  | That is brilliant isn't it.            |
|      | <b>Yuri:</b>                                 |  |
| (70) | Sou desu ne.                                 | That's right.                          |
| (71) | Ichiban daiji na koto da to omoun desu<br>yo | The most important thing I think.      |
|      | <b>Pat:</b>                                  |  |
| (72) | Aa, hai.                                     | Ah, yes.                               |

This extract is not a narrative because it lacks any anchoring to time and place (a chronotope) of the kind discussed in Chapter 3. Instead this segment served as an orientational framework to encapsulate the student feedback which directly evaluated her as a teacher. She used the comments to show what she valued in teaching and thus show the kind of teacher she was. Interestingly, although she does not have access to full narratives, the examples she quoted could be summarised as depicting the following narrative transformations:

(1) (Before I didn't know how to study English effectively.)

I took Yuri's course for five hours.

I have learned how to study English effectively. (39-43)

(2) Before I hated English and tried to avoid it.

(I took Yuri's course.)

Now I feel like I can learn English after all. (46-48)

(3) I came thinking that I couldn't possibly learn English in a day.

(I took Yuri's course.)

Somehow she has helped me discover how to learn. (51-58)

In these examples, the positive feedback on the class was associated with a transformation brought about by taking her class. In each case, taking the course was represented as overcoming previous difficulties associated with learning English. Yuri's comment was that '*yarikatta wakatta*' (learning how to learn) was the comment that she appreciated most. By quoting these comments she also showed what she valued most about herself as a teacher: that she should play a transformational role in their English learning. The theme of teachers as agents of change was central to Kate's narrative in Chapter 3 (Extract 3.4). However, the scale was very different—perhaps Yuri's evaluation was more like a *haiku* than a narrative, since *haiku*, are very short Japanese poems that portray an instant of change. Moreover, here evaluation was

explicitly related to Japanese cultural ideas about human relationships. She underlined the importance of her relationship with her students with two Japanese words: *deau* and *en*. She referred to her students as *sekkaku deatta hito*. *Sekkaku* emphasises that something is an important opportunity not to be wasted. *Deau* means the chance meeting with a significant person, used both about romantic relationships and influential people in a person's life. *En* also means the chance by which things in life happen. Taken in the broadest sense, all human encounters are the result of *en* and should therefore be treated as meaningful *deau*. Yuri's quotation of student evaluations was a strategy for representing herself through others which (matters of form aside) was a quite different strategy from the more direct self-evaluation used by David and Hiro. In the next section, I turn to the representation of others as a device for representing the self.

#### **4.6 The self as outsider – *The Foreigners You Know...***

One key issue in the interviews with teachers from abroad was that of being a foreigner. In George's narrative discussed above, a sharp line was drawn between the interests of foreigners and Japanese, and most of the teachers I interviewed in English identified themselves as foreigners at some point. In addition, I asked these foreign teachers

about how well they had integrated into the community. Did they see themselves as outsiders or did the foreigner-Japanese divide soften with time? Kate offered an interesting anecdote in response to this question which revealed both a remarkable level of integration and an enduring awareness of her foreign identity. It also offered a glimpse into a mundane xenophobia. As with Yuri's feedback forms, the representation of herself through somebody else's eyes did more convincing identity work than a bland assertion could have done. Kate was modest and generally vague about her level of Japanese but, as she was a Japanese teacher in New Zealand and undertook further language study through the Kumon system, it is fair to assume that she was quite fluent.

#### **Extract 4.4      The Foreigners You Know ...**

##### INTRODUCTION

**Kate:**

- (1) So it was quite funny recently

##### ORIENTATION

- (2) I um, I had a Japanese lady here,  
(3) and we are going to go on a trip, in Europe

**Pat:**

- (4) Oh, that should be fun.

**Kate:**

- (5) During our summer holiday.

**Pat:**

- (6) Wow, excellent!

**Kate:**

- (7) Yes, and um,
- (8) I have to speak to her in Japanese,
- (9) Because she hasn't got any English.

**Pat:**

- (10) Great!

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

**Kate:**

- (11) But um,
- (12) We were talking about general things,
- (13) And she was saying
- (14) She was really worried about the foreigners in Japan

**Pat:**

- (15) Yeah, yeah.

**Kate:**

- (16) Yeah, and she was scared about what they might do.

**Pat:**

- (17) Yeah.

**Kate:**

- (18) And I sort of looked at her and I said
- (19) 'Foreigners?'
- (20) 'You mean like me?'

**Pat:**

- (21) Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Kate:**

- (22) But then she looked back at me
- (23) And went 'Oh no!'

#### EVALUATION

**Pat:**

- (24) No, no.
- (25) And I think there's a distinction there isn't there, yeah.

**Kate:**

- (26) Yes, yes.

**Pat:**

- (27) Between um, you know,

- (28) I don't know between, um, I don't know  
(29) One kind of foreigner and another perhaps, yeah?

**Kate:**

- (30) Yes, yes.  
(31) Or the people that you know and the ones that she doesn't.

**Pat:**

- (32) Yeah, yeah.

#### CODA

**Kate:**

- (33) Yes I think that um,  
(34) I think that I am fairly well accepted as just being here now

**Pat:**

- (35) Right

Kate's story encompassed two contradictory evaluations of her identity. On the one hand the story underlined her identity as a foreigner as it illustrated that even her closest friends were capable of xenophobic talk. Her friend clearly did not intend to include her in the category of foreigners, but the inability to be aware of such overt nationalistic thinking drew an obvious divide between them. Simultaneously though, the story was about the high degree to which she has integrated into Japanese society, as indicated by other details besides the focal incident. She referred to the conversation with the 'Japanese lady' as occurring 'here'. As the interview was conducted over the telephone, 'here' referred specifically to her house. Returning to the theme of the last chapter, 'place' helped define their intimate relationship. The importance of place in

their relationship was further enhanced by mention of their plan to travel to Europe together. Taking a trip together, particularly a major one to a foreign country is a strong indication of friendship in itself. Kate also made it clear that the conversation was in Japanese 'because she hasn't got any English'. This comment warded off the potential implication that the friendship was based on a language exchange; a chance for Kate to practice Japanese or her friend to practice English. More importantly, it characterised their relationship as a Japanese one that was conducted in Japanese and assumed Japanese norms which included gossiping about Japanese domestic concerns which happened to include the threat of foreigner crime. The story is a nice example of what McVeigh (2004) following Billig (1995) has dubbed the 'banal nationalism' pervading everyday life in Japan. As I noted in Chapter 1, nationalism is often associated with an extremist right-wing form of flag-waving, but as Billig has observed is a far more all pervasive and everyday phenomenon underlining the importance of nation states (and with it national identity) in the world today. 'Banal,' as Billig (ibid, p.7) explained, does not imply 'benign' and I find the implications of Kate's story somewhat disturbing. In my comment on Kate's story 'I think there's a distinction there isn't there yeah' I think I intended to suggest that racial distinctions are made between foreigners from Asia, who were highlighted as criminals at the time, and Westerners. Kate's final

comment, however, more straightforwardly underlined the ridiculousness of xenophobic notions altogether. In terms of identity work, Kate therefore represented herself as someone who, partly due to her fluency in Japanese, had been able to develop meaningful friendships and become a part of the community where she lived, yet retained a sense of herself as a foreigner living abroad. In spite of the potentially damaging nature of the gaff on her relationship with the woman, the story showed that she was not a person to easily take offence as she told the whole thing as a funny story.

#### **4.7 The Other and the self – *The Riff-raff***

Stories about others are often used to highlight what one is not. Typically these take the form of an extended negative evaluation of others who exhibit value systems that contradict one's own. Sometimes, such stories were told by Japanese teachers criticising foreign teachers or foreign teachers criticising Japanese teachers, but some of the most developed and interesting of these stories were evaluations of peer group members who were represented as flouting the value systems of the teller. Such stories performed identity work for the speaker by distancing them from those they criticised and in defining negative values. At the time of the interview, Lucy taught in an elite private school that prided itself in sending a large number of graduates to Japan's top

two universities: Tokyo and Kyoto. She had originally come to Japan as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme having already taught English in Mexico and acquired an MA in TESOL. In addition, as I mentioned in quoting from my interview with her in Module 2, she had a background in cultural anthropology and, as she explained, saw Japan as an opportunity for cultural anthropological fieldwork. She was also older at the time than the typical 20s age bracket of most JET participants and married. Other JET participants including Bruce (Extract 3.1) described the interview for the programme as an ordeal with faceless, intimidating or eccentric individuals. In contrast, Lucy identified what she felt was a particularly good question she had been asked and explained exactly why. She aligned herself more closely with the programme organisers than with her co-participants. In the extract below, she gave an example of the kind of participant she identified with least—what she called ‘the riff-raff’.

**Extract 4.5      The Riff-raff**

**Lucy:**

- (1) No, no they were great, they were fine,
- (2) The administration were super, but it was the
- (3) Um, the riff-raff (laughs).

**Pat:**

- (4) The riff-raff?

**Lucy:**

- (5) No, I have very strongly negative opinions about most ALTs.
- (6) This prefecture there were 80
- (7) there might have been like 5 people that were sort of ...

**Pat:**

- (8) OK, were there any things that,
- (9) Sort of memorable kind of experiences that stand out in that respect?

**Lucy:**

- (10) In terms of the negative things?

**Pat:**

- (11) In terms of what the um ...riff-raff were like, as it were.

#### ORIENTATION

**Lucy:**

- (12) Oh, well, let's see. Well, here's a guy.
- (13) That was, um you know, he had a masters in literature

**Pat:**

- (14) Right.

#### COMPLICATING ACTION

**Lucy:**

- (15) And working in a junior high school.
- (16) XX Junior High School.
- (17) And his work ethic, philosophy was well,
- (18) 'Look, if nobody is going to have the balls to stand up to me
- (19) and tell me that I can't go home if I am not teaching a class,
- (20) Well then screw them I'll go ahead and do that.'
- (21) Never mind that the man's contract declares that he has to be in school
- (22) at certain times when he's not teaching a class.

**Pat:**

- (23) Ah, ha.

#### GENERALISATION

**Lucy:**

- (24) There is a lot of that,
- (25) a lot of that in the prefecture
- (26) There were ALTs who would have a regular meeting

- (27) But then they would take an extra sort of elicited three hours off.  
(28) And you know, just a general lack of commitment to the job of teaching.  
(29) And I mean a lot of that is,  
(30) It goes both ways,  
(31) You know, people arrive at the (inaudible) for teaching  
(32) just a few days after summer vacation,

**Pat:**

- (33) Right.

**Lucy:**

- (34) You look like just the next *kaiten gaijin* face that comes in,  
(35) and although they, of course know that you are a different person,

**Pat:**

- (36) Yeah.

**Lucy:**

- (37) They don't know that you are a different person

**Pat:**

- (38) I see what you're saying yeah.

**Lucy:**

- (39) And it is not a totally blank slate for you.  
(40) To be a sort of a series of,  
(41) Like people arrive like really, really,  
(42) gung-ho about trying to get involved and do stuff,  
(43) but within two months they realise  
(44) they are being highly under utilised,  
(45) then they just become,  
(46) they sort of abuse the system and they feel abused themselves

**Pat:**

- (47) Right.

## EVALUATION

**Lucy:**

- (48) And it gets in a cycle of you know,  
(49) pretty intense un-productivity.

**Pat:**

- (50) Right.

Lucy explained the riff-raff first with a specific example (12-22), then with a more general one (24-28), and finally with a generalised depiction of the social dynamics at work in the generation of riff-raff attitudes (29-46). She also used this structure to present a true heterogloss that included not just two sides but a variety of perspectives. In this way she was able to both effectively depict the riff-raff phenomenon and through this depiction demonstrate the sophistication that she brought to her experience in Japan that allowed her to see beyond the vicious circle that she described. Hence, both her example and the way she presented it served to make her point. The identification of her first example as someone who had an MA in English Literature headed off the assumption that 'riff-raffery' may be a form of academic or class snobbery (a judgement of negative social esteem) and instead implied that the teacher ought to have known better (a judgement of negative social sanction). Even so, the pseudo quotation depicting his rationale for his irresponsible behaviour employed offensive taboo words 'balls' and 'screw'. Taboo words, generally used as negative evaluative terms, in Lucy's story imply a negative evaluation of the speaker. She also contrasted his perspective with that of his contract, implying that he was not simply taking advantage of soft employers but effectively in breach of contractual agreements. Going back to the concerns of the last chapter again, negative evaluation was brought

on by a breach of obligations to time and place. In her more general example she cited teachers taking ‘an extra sort of elicited three hours off’, implicitly stealing from their employers, but indicative of what she called ‘a general lack of commitment to the job of teaching’. In the final phase of the extract, Lucy began with a more sympathetic narration representing the situation the new JETs found themselves in with the generalised ‘you’. Meanwhile the Japanese expression *kaiten gaijin* indexed a superficial Japanese teacher’s perspective. *Gaijin* means ‘foreigner’ and *kaiten* means ‘revolving’ implying that foreign teachers are immediately stereotyped based on past experiences with other JETs. However, when it came to the unproductive responses displayed by the riff-raff and the resulting negative effects, she distanced herself from these foreign teachers with the use of ‘they’: ‘They sort of abuse the system and they feel abused themselves’. As I noted in Module 2, Lucy herself, overcame this potential conundrum by going out of her way to socialise with the other teachers at her school by holding tea parties at her house, a strategy which seemed to have been extremely successful. The account of the riff-raff was therefore a productive example of identity work based on a negative depiction of an Other.

#### **4.8 The Other as the self – *An Impressive Speech***

The representation of the Other need not be a negative and may indeed be highly positive. The final extract that I consider in this chapter is an example where the Other being described is represented as having desirable qualities to which that speaker implicitly aspired. At the time of the interview, Oliver was working for the Board of Education, but also participating in an MA programme in TESOL. He was full of bright ideas about language teaching in Japan and the story I discuss below nicely captures his ambitions and something about his philosophy of teaching English in Japan. Surprisingly, this story seemed to crop up as an unexpected bonus, and after listening to the recording several times I am still not sure whether or not he intended to tell this at the outset. I had asked him about what impressed him most when he arrived in Japan. He mentioned the welcome conference. He explained how impressed he was that three high ranking government ministers came to speak but how shocked he was to see that while one was speaking the other two went to sleep on stage in front of the assembled new recruits. Since this was framed by ‘and what really impressed me’ this seemed to be his story. He mentioned his surprise that even the minister in charge of the English programme could not speak English, before describing a speaker who spoke English well: the ambassador or vice ambassador to France.

#### **Extract 4.6      An Impressive Speech**

**Oliver:**

- (1) There was one guy for example who was a,
- (2) I believe ambassador,
- (3) or vice ambassador to France,

**Pat:**

- (4) Right.

**Oliver:**

- (5) Whose first second language was French,

**Pat:**

- (6) Mm, mm.

**Oliver:**

- (7) And he spoke excellent English.
- (8) His English was impeccable

**Pat:**

- (9) Right.

**Oliver:**

- (10) And his speech was brilliant.

**Pat:**

- (11) Yeah, yeah.

**Oliver:**

- (12) I don't know if he wrote it himself but,
- (13) I was so impressed by that,

**Pat:**

- (14) Right, right.

**Oliver:**

- (15) And he was basically,
- (16) he gave us,
- (17) he gave a speech on,
- (18) 'remember that the students are children,
- (19) remember that English should be fun,
- (20) learning a language should be fun.'

**Pat:**

- (21) Right, right.

**Oliver:**

(22) Just some really,

(23) A really cool perspective, on language learning.

**Pat:**

(24) Yeah, yeah.

**Oliver:**

(25) Especially to a bunch of people that,

(26) no training, many of them are very young,

**Pat:**

(27) Right, right.

**Oliver:**

(28) Going to a foreign land for the first time,

**Pat:**

(29) Right.

**Oliver:**

(30) This guy knew exactly who he was talking to.

**Pat:**

(31) Right, right.

**Oliver:**

(32) And he wasn't,

(33) he knew his audience so well, that I was,

(34) for me that left probably the greatest impression,

**Pat:**

(35) So it was a really well,

**Oliver:**

(36) He was just, he was just, smart.

**Pat:**

(37) Yeah.

**Oliver:**

(38) He was just a very smart guy.

**Pat:**

(39) Right, right.

In remarkable contrast to all the extracts I have considered so far, this anecdote consisted almost entirely of positive evaluations expressed with the force turned up to full volume. In spite of the fact that English was the ambassador's third language, it was described as 'excellent English' which was then further upgraded to 'His English was impeccable.' Moreover, 'his speech was brilliant' and this too was effectively upgraded by suggesting it was too good for anyone but a professional speech writer to have put together: 'I don't know if he wrote it himself, but I was so impressed by that.' The speech was then evaluated as both 'a really cool perspective on language learning' and a speech perfectly addressed to his audience 'this guy knew exactly who he was talking to'; 'he knew his audience so well.' Not only did he then evaluate this as something 'that left probably the greatest impression' thus answering my question perfectly, but he then evaluated the speaker as 'just smart' and, again raising the force, 'a very smart guy.' Such a clustering of positive evaluative judgements of *social esteem*, particularly *capacity* expressed in monoglossic terms is best described as admiration. But just as the strongly negative evaluations in other narratives I have considered were effectively evaluative strategies for elaborating speaker identity, so in Oliver's account this ambassador brings together a number of qualities he aspired to himself: his multilingualism, his perceived ability to communicate effectively with the audience and, more generally, simply being smart.

More importantly the actual message of the ambassador, whatever he actually thought of it at the time was one that related very closely to Oliver's values in teaching as he expressed them over the course of the interview. When he delivered the three key lines from the speech, he did so with conviction, as if they had been his own: 'remember that the students are children, remember that English should be fun, learning a language should be fun.' Oliver believed strongly that a fundamental problem underlying English education in schools was that it was treated in an overly dry, academic and uninspiring way sapping any initial interest the students may have had in the subject. He noted that the first year students were full of enthusiasm for English until as he put it 'they learned that English is boring.' The full significance of this speech then was perhaps only felt in retrospect. Oliver's narrative illustrated that identity work based on Others need not always be negative but otherwise drew on similar evaluative resources to the other examples considered in this chapter.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored evaluation as a means for expressing identity. I have suggested that this can be done through evaluative narratives of self and others. Narratives of the self can be opportunities for reflection on past and present selves,

drawing on resources in time and space, as I illustrated in the previous chapter. Narratives of others can focus on negative Others from whom speakers wish to distance themselves. In this case evaluations may delineate a negative value system. Alternatively, Others shown in a positive light can serve as reflections of one's aspirations in a way that would be difficult to achieve if talking about oneself. The unreserved praise for the ambassador, if applied to himself, would be immodest and unlikely to impress a listener in British or Japanese and doubtless in Oliver's Canadian culture too. Drawing on J. R. Martin and White's (2005) notion of engagement I have suggested that tending towards the representation of a narrative from a single perspective, and playing down or ignoring other possible views of a situation can serve as a fairly forceful way of asserting one's identity. In contrast the use of a more dialogically expansive 'heteroglossic' rhetoric that incorporates other potential perspectives can suggest a more broad-minded or community-conscious outlook by engaging with other possible viewpoints. Although it seems reasonable to suppose that speakers vary in their use of monoglossic and heteroglossic rhetoric according to the situation, the extracts that I have looked at with this in mind suggest that it may be personality related, or at least a habit to fall into one mode or another. Perhaps more importantly for my concerns in this thesis, the examples discussed in this chapter

illustrate how this kind of analysis of evaluative language can show up cultural and linguistic differences in narrative constructions of identity. Where George adopted a direct evaluative strategy by using dialogic contraction and raised force and setting up an evaluative framework prior to the narrative, Hiro's narrative was dialogically expanded, outlining the perspective of the student and her parents before clarifying his own. Such examples give shape to the generalised contrast between American directness and Japanese indirectness that permeate the literature on intercultural communication. Rather than simply supporting this literature though, such data offers the potential for more nuanced accounts of identity work in practice, with cultural or linguistic patterning as factors. I also drew attention to the role of lexis that takes on cultural evaluative meaning that is not readily accessible through word-for-word translations. These observations would benefit from more detailed research. In the meantime a more pertinent concern is how the approach to exploring identity outlined so far can be applied in practical research. The following chapter illustrates how the approach could be used to explore professional identity in English language teaching.

## CHAPTER 5

# PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN ELT

*While teaching English, some of the roles I feel I have been assigned include: kindergarten teacher (“everyone sit down and be quiet”); jail warden (enforcer of administration rules); prison guard (“just look like you’re going along with the program for four years and you’re out”); drill sergeant (“roll call!”); babysitter (“everyone please be good”); parent (wondering if sleeping students ate breakfast); big brother (“I’m here to help you develop your abilities”) coach (“just don’t sit there, repeat after me”); entertainer (I know how to grab their attention: “hey, look how funny I am”); counselor (“you haven’t come to class in one month; is there something wrong?”); and therapist (“why do you stare back at me without answering when I ask you a simple question?”). But the one role that I often have trouble convincing myself that I am really performing is English instructor at a university (though of course, there were a few times when I felt as if I was “really” being an English instructor).*

(McVeigh, 2003: 138)

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on the analytical approach developed so far to explore the issue of professional identity in English language teaching (ELT) in Japan. In order to be a professional, one must belong to a profession, and a profession is normally recognised as what the *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines as ‘a paid occupation...that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification’ (Soanes and Stevenson, 2005). ELT in Japan as elsewhere is an occupation where native English teachers typically start out with little training and no qualification. Accordingly, there have been voices calling for

a more accountable professional practice (Farmer, 2006). Japanese teachers of English normally begin by acquiring a teaching license while studying education, linguistics or English literature at university. However, even qualified teachers do not begin as professionals but rather acquire a professional identity through ‘experience’ over time, performing being a teacher in appropriate contexts (such as classroom, staff meeting or conference). McVeigh’s quote above illustrated that the experience of teaching may involve taking on a variety of roles closely related to non-teaching discourses, but there are also a range of discourses of professional identity available. In order to explore professional identity in ELT, I focus on narratives concerning career choice and developmental changes associated with teaching. These changes involved the adoption (and adaptation) of a discourse of professional identity. I highlight contrasting perspectives of foreign and local teachers and reconsider the native/non-native English teacher divide introduced in Module 2. I suggest that foreign-local and native-non-native imply opposing power relationships between insider and outsider that are vital to English teacher identity. I argue that identity is central to these divisions and that raising awareness of identity issues may be a constructive step towards bridging such divides.

## 5.2 Identity research in language teaching

There is an accumulating body of research into identity in ELT that explores either student or teacher identity through narrative. These studies include interview based projects and collections of autobiographical papers by language teachers. Some of these collections consist of papers by established ‘names’ in ELT (Casanave and Schechter, 1997), representing ELT in a slightly glamorous light. In contrast, papers in Bueno and Caesar (2003) represented ELT in Japan as a sham. The editors explained:

On the evidence of the essays collected here, English in Japan is a foreign language (not to say, *the* foreign language) that is very carefully and systematically *kept* foreign. (Bueno and Caesar, 2003: 21)

Keeping English foreign means that it is to be studied rather than acquired. Consequently the professional identities of these native English speaking teachers are riddled with contradictions, and a sense that professional identity is something of an illusion. In this chapter, my aim is to explore experiences of professional identity that are neither glamorous nor cynical but work to produce a positive sense of professional identity. To save space, Table 5.1 summarises some prominent studies published over the last decade. Below, I introduce the two most explicitly concerned with professional identity and closest in approach to mine: Johnston (1997) and Simon-Maeda (2004),

**Table 5.1**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Theoretical model</b>	<b>Identity focus</b>
Casanave & Schecter (1997)	11 male native English teachers 9 female native English teachers	Autobiographical narratives of teaching experience	Narrative Inquiry	Native, professional
Duff & Uchida (1997)	2 Japanese female English teachers 1 male native English teachers 1 female native English teachers	6 month ethnographic study	Sociocultural identity: J. K. Hall (1995)	Professional, English teacher
Johnston (1997)	4 male & 8 female polish; 3 female & 2 male native English teachers	1-2 hour semi-structured life history interview	Discourse analysis: Bakhtin (1981)	Professional, teacher
Braine (1999)	9 female non-native English teachers 6 male non-native English teachers	Autobiographical narratives of teaching experience	Linguistic imperialism: Phillipson (1992)	Non-native teacher
Norton(2000)	5 female immigrant learners of English in Canada	Essay, questionnaire, diary, and interview over 2 years.	Cultural studies, feminism, critical ethnography	Female, migrant
Johnson & Golombek (2002)	8 female native English teachers 4 male native English teachers 1 Chinese English teacher 1 Japanese English teacher	Autobiographical narratives of teaching experience	Narrative inquiry as professional development	Professional, English teacher
Bueno & Caesar (2003)	3 female native English teachers 11 male native English teachers (Japan)	Autobiographical narratives of teaching experience (negative perspectives)	None mentioned (Critical/Postmodern?)	Native English teacher

**Studies of Identity and English Language Teaching**

**Table 5.1**

Reference	Participants	Method	Theoretical model	Identity focus
Kanno(2003)	4 Japanese <i>kikokushijo</i> (returnees)	Interviews over 10 years	Narrative Inquiry	Returnee
Kanno (2004)	Teachers, administrators & bilingual aides at Japanese elementary school	Ethnographic interviews and class observation	Identity negotiation: Cummins (2000)	Immigrant children
Simon-Maeda (2004)	7 female native English teacher 1 Japanese English teacher 1 Korean English teacher (Japan)	Life history interviews 2½hours and follow-up.	Narrative analysis: Polkinghorne (1988) Ochs & Capps (2001)	Female, professional
Block (2006b)	5 female Japanese graduate students studying TESOL in London	Life story interviews 1-2 hours / multiple	Sociocultural, anthropological	Migrant students
Senior (2006)	101 native English teachers qualified in Communicative language teaching	5 studies over 12 years Questionnaire & interview	Grounded theory: Strauss and Corbin (1998)	Not specified but communicative language teacher experience
(1)	28 teachers (Perth)	45 min interview		
(2)	8 teachers 100 students from 6 classes (Perth)	10 x 45 min interview 1 x 20 min interview		
(3)	39 teachers (Perth)	45 min interview		
(4)	10 teachers (UK)	45 min interview		
(5)	16 native English speakers teaching other languages (Perth)	45 min interview		

**Studies of Identity and English Language Teaching**

### *5.2.1 Johnston – Do EFL Teachers Have Careers?*

Johnston's (1997) study was conducted in Poland in 1994 and addressed the question of whether or not English foreign language (EFL) teachers have careers through life story interviews. The 17 teachers he interviewed in a Polish city included both local and foreign 'native speakers.' Some of his interviews with local teachers were conducted in Polish, the rest in English. His analytic framework was narrative and discourse based and associated with Bakhtin (1981). He considered the presence (or lack) of a narrative of professional identity as critical to answering his question about EFL careers in the context of Poland. As such, though smaller in scale, Johnston's study has a number of parallels with the present one. Like this study, he used teacher interviews, analysed them narratively and explored the professional identity of both local and foreign teachers. However, the much worse economic circumstances of Polish teachers at the time of his study (particularly for local teachers), from those in Japan at the time of my study, meant that teaching offered a less stable and financially viable career. Accordingly, he found that 'teachers do not tell teacher life stories and do not rely on teacher identity' (Johnston, 1997: 705), a conclusion that conflicts with Simon-Maeda's (2004) emphasis on the importance of professional identity.

### 5.2.2 *Simon-Maeda – The Complex Construction of Professional Identity*

In her study of female ELT educators in Japan, Simon-Maeda (2004) focused on how (in contrast to Johnston's paper) her participants 'constructed their identities as educators, and mobilized available resources to contest oppressive forces in their professional lives' (Simon-Maeda, 2004: 405). She dealt with teachers at the upper end of the educational hierarchy (including those like her who had become professors in universities) but underlined the role of discrimination in undermining professional identity. Although her focus was on female educators, and she discussed deeply ingrained discrimination against women (reflected among other things in the extremely low number of tenured women in Japanese universities), Simon-Maeda also explored race, ableism, class, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation as relevant identity features in her interviewee's narratives. In contrast to Johnston's participants for whom 'ELT teacher' was not an attractive feature of identity, and who instead appealed to identities derived from other areas of their lives, Simon-Maeda indicated that professional identity in ELT in the more prestigious world of university posts in Japan, particularly when achieved through the acquisition of doctoral degrees, may be a way of validating other aspects of identity that are the target of discrimination.

### **5.3 Why English teaching?**

Why become an English teacher in Japan? The answers to this question varied considerably, but in relation to some concrete factors about the Japanese educational context. English is an important part of education from junior high school to at least the first year of university (even for non-English majors) and has recently been introduced into elementary schools. In addition, there are English language schools catering for children and adults of all ages. In the song I quoted at the beginning of Chapter 1, one of the six roles Dad performed was ‘student’—as the video showed: an English student. This example is indicative of the popularity of learning English in Japan which translates into a lot of jobs for English teachers. As I pointed out in Module 2, the opportunities for native English speakers have made Japan a popular destination for English teaching abroad. It is also home to a much larger population of local English teachers. Moreover, Japanese teachers of English are far more likely to have stable career positions. This difference can be illustrated by considering the situation in public schools. The JET programme hires foreign teachers to visit schools in the prefecture on annual contracts normally renewable up to three years. By contrast, full-time teachers are permanently employed and stay at a given school until they are reassigned. Table 5.2 shows the number of English teachers in public schools.

**Table 5.2**

	Lower secondary schools	Upper secondary schools	Total
Schools	10,992 (10,079)*	5,385 (3,779)*	16,367 (13,858)*
Full-time teachers total	248,280**	247,804**	49,684**
Full-time teachers female	102,244**	69,091**	171,335**
Full-time teachers male	146,036**	178,713**	324,749**
<b>Full-time English teachers total</b>	<b>29,569</b>	<b>24,682</b>	<b>54,251</b>
Licensed teacher	24,927	22,574	47,481
Assistant teacher	523	20	543
Contract teacher	4,119	2,115	6,234
<b>Full-time 'native' English teachers total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>243</b>
Licensed teacher	28	6	34
Assistant teacher	32	3	35
Contract teacher	124	50	154
<b>Percentage of 'native' English teachers</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

Source: Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT): <http://www.mext.go.jp/>

(1) (MEXT, 2007b)

(2) (MEXT, 2007a)

\* Numbers in parentheses indicate numbers included in source (2) survey

\*\* Figures not included in source (2) survey

### Full-time teachers in Japanese schools (2006-2007)

Table 5.2 shows that men dominate the teaching and language teaching positions in Japan, a pattern which becomes more pronounced the higher the grade of school. It also shows that (in 2006-2007) foreign or ‘native’ teachers also worked as full-time teachers but represented only 0.4% of English teachers in public schools. Whereas the vast majority (87.5%) of English teachers in public schools were licensed teachers, only 34 ‘native’ teachers, compared to some 47,481 Japanese teachers, occupied such a position. As mentioned above, teaching licenses are acquired by undergraduates at Japanese universities majoring in relevant fields. By contrast, jobs on the JET programme or in language schools target native English speakers with an undergraduate degree in any field and hire on the basis of an interview. Accordingly identity positionings for foreign and local teachers are quite different.

#### **5.4      *Becoming an English teacher in Japan – A Logical Choice***

In the interview segment I quoted in Chapter 2 (Extract 2.1), I asked Osamu why he became an English teacher. His answer included the quip *ichiban kuipagure ga nai* (the one I would be least likely to starve)—a joke, but one with some truth to it for reasons I have emphasised above. The teachers I interviewed became teachers out of a wide range of circumstances, and with varied motivations (see Table 5.3 and Table 5.4).

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**Table 5.3**

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<b>Jim</b>	Taught English for two years in Czech Republic then came to Japan on the JET programme. 'Well, actually another friend of mine who was in the Czech republic teaching at a university was applying for it, she had an extra application and she said "Why don't you fill it out?" (laughs) And I said "Sure."'
<b>Lucy</b>	Studied museology and anthropology then began teaching English on a study trip to Mexico. 'I realised that a lot of the cultural anthropology that I had done could be used...Teaching is something that I had always liked doing...It seemed like the logical next step.'
<b>Bruce</b>	Working in London to JET programme. 'I'd been working in London for a couple of years and I was ready to go off travelling somewhere so, I thought try the Siberian railway, end up in Japan, teach for a bit and move on somewhere.'
<b>Andrew</b>	Came to Japan after completing grammar school to study at university in Tokyo. 'I basically, if you can call it, fell in love with Japan...I believed at that particular time, that ...the spirit of the gentleman had been lost and I wanted a spirit that could guide me in my future life...and I thought through all these things I had been learning about Japan, the bushido (Japanese warrior) spirit and everything, maybe Japan...still had that spirit of the gentleman.'
<b>John</b>	Came to Japan to work at an English language school 'Japanese pop culture was coming in, in like trickles. And there was the robots and stuff... And the tech stuff. And all the ... electronics that... they marketed to the world. People thought this was really cool ...people that make this kind of stuff ...they have got to be really cool.'
<b>Kate</b>	Japanese teacher in New Zealand to English teacher in Japan. 'I separated from my husband and I thought "Oh good, now I can go to Japan"'
<b>Helen</b>	Began teaching while travelling during MA in marketing and decided to make an EFL career. First taught in London. 'you really have to go abroad if you are going to move anywhere in the profession'

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### Reasons for Getting into Teaching – Native English Teachers

**Naomi** Majored in Spanish and got English teaching licence at university but went into real estate business. Loved reading and wanted to change her career to something where she would have more opportunity to read. Related this to experience at university where she had been moved to tears while reading 'Graduation' in English.

*'watashi wa, hokano gengo yonde kando suru koto ga dekirun da, to iu no wa sugoku okiikatan desu.'*

(The fact that I was able to be moved by reading something in a foreign language was really significant.)

**Yoshiko** Father was an English teacher and spent second year of university at an American university. Wanted to be interpreter or teacher.

*'Shikaku wo tottemo tsugakka toshite kou, seibutsuteki to iu, tekisei ni aru no wa, 30nin ni hitori to iwarete, mou ninenkan no ko-su wo owatte, tekisei ga nakatta kara...'*

(Even if you are qualified, actually becoming an interpreter, biologically as it were, it is said that only one person in thirty is really suited. After taking a two year course I realised I wasn't suited to it.)

**Ai** Inspired by English language courses on the radio decided to be an English teacher, but disliked her English teachers at school.

*'Sugoku osewa ni natta sensei nan desu kedo, honto ni sensei no okage de, eigo ga suki ni natta, to iu no ne, ano sore ga nakkatan desu keredomo...mou rajio no hou ga netsu ga atte.'*

((My English) teacher helped me a lot (with correcting my speech for the speech contest), however, I cannot really say that it was thanks to my teacher that I came to like English, it wasn't ...I was much more passionate about the radio (English language broadcasts.))

**Kenji** Interest in English culture, and pop music led to study English literature at university where he obtained his teaching licence.

*'Eibungaku dakeredomo, betsu ni shigoto wa kankei naku to iu hito to, eigo ikaseru shigoto ga nai kana, tatoeba shousha kankei ka, kyouin ka, to iu futatsu ga ookiku deteimashite, ja toriaezu wa, ma jibun no oya mo ne, ano eigo janai kedo, kyouin datta mono desu kara, sou ja mazu jibun ga kyouin no hou...'*

(In English literature there are those who choose jobs regardless of their major and those who try to use their English in their work, for example in a trading company or as an English teacher, those were the two main possibilities, so since my parents were also teachers, though not English teachers, I thought to begin with I would go for the teaching side.)

## Reasons for Getting into Teaching – Japanese Teachers of English

<b>Jiro</b>	<p>Majored in English due to interest in English movies and decide to become a teacher at university when he realised he could use English to understand movies, communicate with his lecturers and when travelling abroad.</p> <p><i>'daigaku de eigo senko shitan desu keredomo...sono toki ni, hajimete jibun no yatekita eigo...konanni subarashii koto wo ne, benkyou shiteita nona, toku ni tanoshikunari, issou ni benkyou shite, sore de daigaku de kono subarashisa wo ne, tsutaitai na to iu koto de.'</i></p> <p>(I majored in English at university however, it was then that I first realised what a wonderful thing it was that I had studied, it became really enjoyable, and I studied all the harder, and I wanted to be able to communicate the wonderfulness of English.)</p>
<b>Hiro</b>	<p>Taught English briefly at the age of 23 as a part-time teacher then worked abroad in business in India and Canada. Returned to teaching, this time making it his career, in his early 30s.</p> <p><i>“ja ima kara shigoto wo kaete, nani ga dekiru ka na”, to kangaeta toki ni, maa daigaku sotsugyou shite, ichinenkan eigo no sensei mitai na koto wo yateteita no de, aa eigo no kyouin ga front desk clerk yori zutto shigoto suru no yori ii na to omotte...'</i></p> <p>(At the point where I was thinking “Right if I’m going to change my work, what can I do?” I thought When I graduated from university I had done some English teaching and being an English teacher would be much better than carrying on as front desk clerk.)</p>
<b>Jun</b>	<p>Studied French at university but interested in education and wanted to be a teacher and took an educational seminar course</p> <p><i>'koukou no toki jibun wa eigo ga tokui to omotte, daigaku ni haittemitara, so janai toiu koto wakatte...kou kiku toka, hanasu toiu no wa dekinakatta no de...sou iu chanto eigo oshieru ni natte mirtai na to iu no wa, kanari ookii.'</i></p> <p>(At high school I thought I was good at English, but when I entered university I realised this was not the case...I couldn't listen or speak so...wanting to try teaching English properly was an important factor.)</p>

### Reasons for Getting into Teaching – Japanese Teachers of English

While some of my Japanese interviewees had decided to become English teachers in junior high school, others like Hiro (Extract 4.2) came to it as a second career. Native English teachers represented the move to Japan as spurred by a range of circumstances from something as random as the availability of an application form to a deep interest in Japanese culture, or even the perception that coming to Japan would further their career as an English teacher. Varied as these accounts were, there was also a noticeable rift between the opportunistic moves made by native English speakers and the Japanese teachers' choice of a career closely related to experiences of learning English. For Japanese people with the right educational background, becoming an English teacher is a sensible career choice; a point captured by Taka's story where he characterised his choice of becoming a teacher as an inevitable choice in his situation, based on a process of elimination.

### **Extract 5.1      A Logical Choice**

**Taka:**

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| (1) | De siasho wa shakai kyouin ni naru to omotta, | And first I thought I would become a social studies teacher, |
| (2) | Tokoro ga shakai no kyouin wa,                | However, social studies teachers                             |
| (3) | Kokuritsu daigaku datta no niiji              | had (to attend) a national university                        |
| (4) | shiken no kamoku ga kokugo datta,             | which had a secondary exam with Japanese                     |

**Pat:**

- |     |     |      |
|-----|-----|------|
| (5) | Hai | Yes, |
|-----|-----|------|

<b>Taka:</b>	
(6) De boku wa, anmari kokugo ga tokui	And (I) wasn't so good at Japanese so,
(7) janai kara eigo de (laughs)	English (it was) (laughs)
<b>Pat:</b>	
(8) Aa, haa, haa, haa.	Ah, ah, ha, ah
<b>Taka:</b>	
(9) Eigo wo ukeru no wa you suru ni eigo ga senmon ni nacchaou	Taking English meant that it would become your major.
<b>Pat:</b>	
(10) Sono, ano naze kyouin ni naritaika.	That, um, why did you want to become a teacher?
<b>Taka:</b>	
(11) Un, maa, ...	Um, well
(12) son...kazoku kousei de,	That was, because of my family,
(13) Boku wa, chounan nannode,	I am the oldest son so,
(14) Ryoushin de seiwa shinakya ikenai	I had to take care of my parents
(15) Jimoto de, suun to naruto	If (I was going) to do this at home
(16) kenchou iin tsutomeru ka	Working as a committee member at the prefectural office or
(17) kyouin ni naruka	Becoming a teacher
(18) koumuin ni naruka dore ka, shikanai	Or becoming a civil servant (were) the only possibilities.
<b>Pat:</b>	
(19) Aa, hai.	Ah, yes.
<b>Taka</b>	
(20) De sono naka ichiban nan to iu ka naa, Jibun ni teki shiteruno wa,	And of those the one, how can put it, Suited to me,
(21) Kyouin datta node,	Was (being a) teacher so
(22) Sore de kyouin ni narou to.	That's why (I decided to) become a teacher.
<b>Pat</b>	
De souiu imi de wa, michi wa aru imi wa,	
(23) Kimatta	So in this way, your route was, in a sense decided (for you)
<b>Taka</b>	
(24) Mou sakujouhou de kono michi shikanai	By process of elimination this was the only route,

- (25) De nokottano wa kyounin All that was left was teaching.  
**Pat**
- (26) Naru hodo I see.  
**Taka**
- (27) Shiakusho de mainichi onaji shigoto I didn't want to work at the city office  
(28) shitakunakattashi, where work was the same every day.  
**Pat**
- (29) Hai Yes.  
**Taka**
- (30) Ginkouin de hito ni atama wo sagete Working at a bank and having to show  
(31) okanawazu, batsu dashi, deference to the customers was out.  
(32) de nokoruno wa hitotsu shikanai. And there was only one choice left.

Taka represented English teaching as a serious career choice that would allow him to fulfil his filial obligations to his parents as the oldest son by remaining nearby. He framed his decision as an obligatory duty as *chonon* (the eldest son). His choice of jobs related to the local government (as he explained on another occasion) was partly due to the fact that he had his education paid for by the government which, if he had worked for a private corporation, he would have been required to reimburse. In this sense, choosing to teach English was bound up with a sense of duty to the state as well as his parents. His choice was bound by his physical and social place. Having framed it in this way, he highlighted teaching as a personal choice, avoiding what he saw as the monotony of administrative work and the demeaning nature of customer oriented bank work. Notably though, this was a negative choice, as indeed was his ultimate

preference for English over social studies which he attributed to his lack of confidence in the Japanese required for the social studies entrance exam. His explanation made his decision into a logical process of elimination, showing himself to be a logical person. A point his account did not include was any sense of English teaching as having intrinsic attractions as a vocation. It was simply the logical choice.

### **5.5      *Becoming an English teacher in Japan – You Must be Crazy!***

The demand for English teachers in Japan and the belief that native speakers have a unique role to play in English education has created many jobs exclusively for native English speakers, though such positions do not offer the long term stability or benefits local teachers take for granted. Indeed in September 2007, when the largest language school hit bankruptcy, almost five thousand foreign teachers lost their jobs simultaneously, most of whom had not received a salary for the last two months (Stubbings, 2007). Some even found themselves homeless, and ‘teaching for food’ programmes were set up to help these unemployed teachers (Yoshida, 2007). Some of my interviewees did consider coming to Japan as a move to develop their career as TESOL teachers, but for most coming to Japan was more of an adventure enabled by the availability of English teaching jobs for native English speakers. The kind of

choice that foreign teachers made coming to Japan was nicely illustrated by Ray's story.

Ray had a degree in finance and before coming to Japan he was working in an office in London.

### **Extract 5.2      You Must Be Crazy**

**Pat:**

- (1) Was there something that
- (2) kind of interested you about it in the first place?
- (3) Because,

**Ray:**

- (4) In the teaching?

**Pat:**

- (5) Well, you suddenly got to know lots of people.

**Ray:**

- (6) Not really,
- (7) um, it was more of maybe
- (8) after one year and a half of working
- (9) I was thinking, you know,
- (10) I am thinking about teaching abroad,

**Pat:**

- (11) Right,

**Ray:**

- (12) And I said to someone, you know,
- (13) 'I am thinking about going to Japan, to teach'
- (14) or something,
- (15) and he said 'You must be crazy.
- (16) Why would you want to do that?'
- (17) So yeah,
- (18) I wasn't perturbed by it, so I,
- (19) and then during that time I was trying to build up some knowledge of,
- (20) what to do.
- (21) But not really any specific,

(22) country information,

**Pat:**

(23) No, no.

**Ray:**

(24) Just, talking to students,

(25) or the guys who were doing it in England almost.

(26) And just from friends.

(27) You know, it is a great experience, and

**Pat:**

(28) And that was the general word was it,

**Ray:**

(29) Yeah, I just wanted another challenge,

(30) something kind of different from kind of steady,

(31) sometimes stressful,

(32) well paid job in England, right.

(33) And er, so I did not that much research,

(34) I almost wanted to go and do something,

(35) and find out and make a success when I go there,

There are some similarities with Taka's account in so far as by becoming a teacher, he was choosing to escape a 'steady' job (often an attraction) or what Taka called '*mainichi onaji*' (same everyday) and 'sometimes stressful' perhaps implicit in Taka's avoidance of a job where he has to defer to his customers or *atama wo sagete* (literally 'lower his head'/'bow') to the customers. More noticeable though, is the very different way in which Ray framed his story. Where Taka explained his decision as a logical and inevitable choice defined by his physical and social space, Ray represented it as an unconventional choice, and 'a challenge'! He was 'not perturbed' by the suggestion

that it was a ‘crazy’ idea. He gave up a ‘steady’ and ‘well paid’ job for a new challenge. Moreover, he saw English teaching as offering ‘a great experience’, a dimension that was not even hinted at in Taka’s account. This experience implicitly derived from breaking the bonds of his place (being tied to London) and facing the challenge of a new one: Japan. These two accounts are indicative of two different choices made by a Japanese teacher going into English teaching and a foreigner planning to teach English abroad that begin to illustrate why the professional identities of foreign and local teachers of English may be very different.

## **5.6      *Becoming a professional (1) – The Difficulty of Teaching***

The belief that ‘teachers are born and not made’ may have some truth to it in the sense that some people take to teaching and others who experience it quickly seek to escape it. On the whole though, the narratives of the teachers I interviewed indicated that teachers are ‘made and not born’ and that this making involves constructing a personal narrative discourse of one’s own teacher identity from discourses about teaching present in society at large, in professional literature or among teachers. In this and the following section, I consider two ways that teachers told narratives of personal development within teaching. This section focuses on professional identity as evolving

classroom skills, the next one on professional identity as career development.

Jiro had spent his career to date teaching junior high school students at public schools in the Tokyo Metropolitan area. He greeted me with a warm smile and soft handshake, and spoke in a clear, measured way. His air of kindness and wisdom made me think of Kimpachi Sensei a fictional school teacher in a long running popular television drama in Japan. Kimpachi Sensei's role as a teacher seemed to be more about teaching his students about life than about covering topics on the curriculum. Like Kimpachi sensei, Jiro underlined the importance of understanding the individual students as opposed to teaching at a class. Jiro also emphasised conveying the 'joy of learning English' that he had experienced as a student as central to his philosophy of teaching.

### **Extract 5.3      The Difficulty of Teaching**

**Pat:**

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| (1) | Hajimete kyoin ni,                          | When (you) first became a teacher,                  |
| (2) | Jissai jugyou ni natta to omoimasu<br>kedo, | And you were actually teaching in the<br>classroom, |
| (3) | Sore wa dou iu keiken deshita?              | What was (your) experience?                         |

**Jiro:**

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| (4) | Yahari saishou wa , oshieru koto no<br>muzukashisa, | Of course at first, how difficult teaching<br>was, |
|-----|---|--|

**Pat:**

- |     |          |          |
|-----|----------|----------|
| (5) | Aa, hai. | Ah, yes. |
|-----|----------|----------|

	<b>Jiro:</b>	
(6)	Eigo wo manabu tanoshisa toka	The joy of learning English
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(7)	Hai,	Yes,
	<b>Jiro:</b>	
(8)	Eigo wo, jibun de	English for me,
(9)	hijou ni tanoshikatta na' tte,	Was something that I had really enjoyed
(10)	Sou iu omoi wo	That experience
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(11)	Hai	Yes,
	<b>Jiro:</b>	
(11)	Seitotachi ni mo,	For (my) students too,
(12)	Motte hoshii to omotte,	Was something (I) wanted (them to experience) more,
(13)	Iroiro ganbarun desukeredomo,	Though (I) tried all kinds of things
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(14)	Ee, ee	Yeah, yeah.
	<b>Jiro:</b>	
(15)	Nakanaka umaku ikanakatta desu,	It never seemed to go well,
(16)	Saisho wa.	At first.
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(17)	Aa, hai, hai.	Ah, yes, yes.
	<b>Jiro:</b>	
(18)	Douchira ka to iu,	More than anything else,
(19)	Sora mawari shiteru tokoro Jugyou ga	The lessons were just going round and round in circles
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(20)	Aa, hai, hai.	Ah, yes, yes.
	<b>Jiro:</b>	
(21)	Sou iu no wa,	That sort of thing
(22)	Iwareta ne,	(I) was told
(23)	Are keiken ga nakatta,	(I) had no experience,
(24)	Oshieru gijutsu mo mijuku daroushi	And my teaching skill was undeveloped,
	<b>Pat:</b>	
(25)	Hai	Yes.
	<b>Jiro:</b>	
(26)	De nakanaka,	And (I) never seemed to be able to get

- (27) Jibun ga omotta you na seika wo the results I wanted from my class  
jugyou de
- Pat:**
- (28) Aa, Ah,
- Jiro:**
- (29) Ageru koto ga dekinakatta, (I) wasn't able to improve,  
(30) Toiu kanji desu ne. It felt like, right,  
(31) Ee. Yeah.
- Pat:**
- (32) Sore wa, dou iu fuu ni, How did you get over that?  
Nanka, norikoeta toka,
- Jiro:**
- (33) Sono tame ni ne, In order to do that,  
(34) Yappari benkyou shimashita. Of course (I) studied.
- Pat:**
- (35) Aa, hai. Ah, yes.
- Jiro:**
- (36) Un, ii jugyou shiteru sensei wo chotto, Mm, (I) had lots of teachers who were  
(37) Takusan misete moraimashitashi giving good classes show me their  
classes.
- Pat:**
- (38) Aa, hai. Ah, yes.
- Jiro:**
- (39) Sore kara, And also,  
Iroiro hon wo katte (I) bought various books,
- (40) **Pat:**
- (41) Ee, Yeah.
- Jiro:**
- (42) kore wo oshieru toki wa, When you are teaching such and such,  
(43) kouiu kufu shite apuroochi de iin da you should try this trick or this approach  
toka, or whatever,
- Pat:**
- (44) Aa, Ah,
- Jiro:**
- (45) Sou iu no mo benkyou shitashi, This kind of thing (I) studied too,  
(46) De sono kiku koto ga hazukashii koto And (I realised that) asking is not a  
de wa nakute, matter of embarrassment,

- Pat:**
- (47) Hai Yes.
- Jiro:**
- (48) Wakaranain dattara, If (you) don't know,  
 (49) Dondon kiite, Ask away,  
 (50) Jibun no mono ni shite And make (the knowledge) your own.
- Pat:**
- (51) Hai, Yes.
- Jiro:**
- (52) Kappatsu ni, Proactively.
- Pat:**
- (53) Ee, ee Yeah, yeah.
- Jiro:**
- (54) De umaku ittara, And when it went well,  
 (55) Sore mata daiji ni sodatteiru Refine and improve those (points)
- Pat:**
- (56) Aa, hai. Ah, yes.
- Jiro:**
- (57) To iu koto de, In other words,  
 (58) Kurikaeshi, kurikaeshi yatteiku nakade, By going through this again and again,  
 (59) Seichou shitan janai ka na, (I) developed  
 (60) To omoimasu ne. (I) think
- Pat:**
- (61) Hai. Yes.

Asking Jiro about his early experiences as a teacher served as an opportunity for him to narrate how he had developed as a teacher. Through this narrative, he established himself as a professional by highlighting growth in his teaching brought about through developmental activities such as class observation, reading up on relevant educational

literature and improving on his classroom technique. As such, his approach resonated with Western ELT notions of professional growth through reflective practice (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). Yet his narrative was similar to accounts by Japanese teachers of English (and unlike those told by native speaker teachers) both in drawing attention to his development in the classroom and relating it to his own experience of learning English. His account also drew on an evaluative framework in Japanese that has no exact equivalent in English. The original problem he faced was described as being unable to convey *Eigo wo manabu tanoshisa* (the joy of learning English). In Western ELT terms he faced a problem with ‘how to motivate the students.’ Motivation is a much analysed concept, central to Western ELT (Brown, 1993: 152-157), so it surprised me at first that he avoided mentioning it. However, motivation differs from Jiro’s ‘joy of learning’ because motivation is located in the student and not in the subject matter. ‘Motivating’ students is about ‘making them want to learn’, whereas conveying the joy of learning can only happen once learning is taking place. This ‘joy of learning’ was a personal choice of expression. He had explained earlier in the interview that he discovered this joy as a university student when he realised that he was beginning to understand films in English and was able to communicate with foreign professors and when travelling abroad. It was this that made him decide to

become an English teacher. This sense of wanting to convey an experience of language learning is indicative of a non-native speaking teacher's perspective which allows for a genuine empathy with the students. Moreover, this emphasis on a subjective experience 'joy', rather than the objectified force 'motivation' may be indicative of a more general linguistic and cultural difference between Japanese and English. He therefore appealed to a notion of professional identity as an English teacher that is both non-native and Japanese.

Using the same grammatical structure, Jiro also talked of '*oshieru no muzukashisa*' which literally translates as 'the difficulty of teaching'. Unlike the English phrase though, this construction is not used to pinpoint a difficulty (as in 'the difficulty of teaching English is ...'), but rather to acknowledge or declare that teaching is difficult. His words reminded me of the phrase '*Aikido wa muzukashii desu ne*' (Aikido is difficult isn't it!) which I often hear at the Aikido headquarters in Tokyo where I train. Aikido practitioners use this expression to remind themselves that what they are doing is physically and mentally challenging but, partly for this reason, worthwhile. I felt that Jiro represented his teacher development as a similar kind of path. For me, this was reinforced by other expressions he used such as *oshieru gijutsu mo mijuku daroushi*

(my teaching technique was undeveloped). *Mijuku* (undeveloped) literally means ‘unripe’ so it is a biological metaphor suggesting that one’s teaching skill will develop naturally over time. My Aikido teacher once explained to me that if, when you are struggling, you say to yourself, ‘I’m no good’ or ‘I’m finished’ then you can never progress. But if you say to yourself, ‘I am *mijuku* (unripe)’ then you will continue to grow. Jiro’s narrative alluded to a similar discourse of education and growth through concerted effort over time and the maintenance of a modest outlook and a willingness to learn as a teacher. Difficulty therefore became the catalyst to growth. Other expressions that contributed to this discourse included *iroiro ganbarun desukeredomo* which although translatable as ‘I tried all kinds of things’ uses the word ‘*ganbaru*’ (try) which always includes the ideal of putting in one’s utmost efforts, an attitude that is highly respected in Japan; as indeed is the idea of ‘*benkyo*’ (study) which Jiro used to embrace reading up on relevant literature and learning through observing other teachers. Finally, the phrase (44) *kiku koto ga hazukashii koto de wa nakute* (it is not embarrassing to ask questions) prioritises the notion of teaching as growth over the normal Japanese expectation that the teacher is an infallible fountain of truth.

Jiro described a unique experience of professional development that was nevertheless

couched in terms that drew on a discourse of personal development that resonated with a discourse of educational development that is widespread in Japanese education discourses and other related discourses such as those found in Japanese martial arts. His narrative of professional identity was based around metaphors of personal growth that I have characterised as particularly Japanese and resonated with the narratives of other experienced Japanese teachers who also made reference to their inexperienced selves to underline their growth as teachers. Another aspect of development, not discussed by Jiro but present in the accounts of Japanese teachers working with more advanced students, was the development of the teacher's English ability over the course of their career. Some Japanese teachers also expressed critical appraisals of colleagues who failed to either attain a reasonable level of English or continue to further their English studies, both highlighted as important. Factors represented as impeding professional development for Japanese teachers included low-level, unmotivated and poorly disciplined students as well as apathetic colleagues or the increasing bureaucratic demands made on school teachers by the Ministry of Education. Rather than pursue these issues, the remainder of this chapter considers alternative notions of professional identity suggested by native English speaking teachers.

## 5.7 Becoming a professional (2) – *An Ambitious Career*

Only two teachers in my English data used the word ‘professional’ in the course of the interviews. Both of these teachers came to Japan with teaching experience and qualifications in ELT. One of these teachers, Helen, offered a quite different idea of professional identity expressed in terms of career development. Helen had originally taken a masters degree in Trade and Industrial Relations but during her studies travelled to Nepal where she taught English. She graduated during the late 80s, a time of high unemployment in Britain, and decided to take up English language teaching seriously. After getting qualified, she worked in London but felt she needed to teach abroad to develop her career and came to Tokyo.

### **Extract 5.4**      **An Ambitious Career**

**Helen:**

- (1) And, er, so I started looking around,
- (2) and I applied,
- (3) and got a job at a school called S Language School.

**Pat:**

- (4) Ah yeah, yeah.

**Helen:**

- (5) Ah have you?

**Pat:**

- (6) Yeah, yeah.

**Helen:**

- (7) Yeah. So I ended up working there for over 10 years.

**Pat:**

- (8) Wow!

- Helen:**
- (9) Yeah! (laughs)
- Pat:**
- (10) So that was a good situation?
- Helen:**
- (11) That was a good situation. They,
- Pat:**
- (12) So, they specialise in quite high level learners,  
(13) is that right?
- Helen:**
- (14) Yes, yeah.
- (15) So most of our students were,  
(16) upper intermediate or advanced learners,
- Pat:**
- (17) Right, right.
- Helen:**
- (18) And most of them had some hope to become interpreters or translators.
- Pat:**
- (19) Wow, yes.
- Helen:**
- (20) And we had a very strong interpreting and translation course,  
(21) there.
- Pat:**
- (22) Right.
- Helen:**
- (23) And I kind of worked my way through the system.  
(24) I started out as a full-time teacher,  
(25) and then I er, became an assistant um,  
(26) chief instructor and then chief instructor,  
(27) and eventually I became the director of studies there.
- Pat:**
- (28) Oh did you?
- Helen:**
- (29) Yes, I did. (laughs)
- Pat:**
- (30) Oh right, OK!

**Helen:**

(31) So um, yeah.

**Pat:**

(32) So that was nice,

(33) it was,

(34) you had,

(35) a sort of sense of,

(36) kind of your career progressing there,

**Helen:**

(37) Yeah,

**Pat:**

(38) As well then,

**Helen:**

(39) Yeah,

(40) 'cause I was ambitious and I wanted to move up,

(41) and I was interested in all different aspects of the job.

(42) We had a very strong in house materials development,

**Pat:**

(43) Right.

**Helen:**

(44) Um kind of program.

(45) So I was very interested in that,

**Pat:**

(46) Oh, OK.

**Helen:**

(47) And so I got involved with development of materials.

The educational environment in which Helen built her career was very different from Jiro's. Where Jiro probably taught 40-45 students in a class, Helen would have had half a dozen or less. The students at her school did not need motivating. They were already motivated. Instead, they needed a demanding English curriculum to push them further

forward with their English skills. Helen clearly had the talent and energy to provide this, as well as the managerial skills needed to act as Director of Studies. Moreover, her school was a business. Eventually, this school went bankrupt due to financial mismanagement, and Helen and her colleagues found a backer and started a new school, refining the curriculum based on what they had learned. Teachers in Japanese schools, by contrast, have little if any control over the curriculum as this is prescribed in detail by the Ministry of Education. Teachers can request a transfer to another school but such moves will be planned and decided by the local education committee. Helen was in her early thirties when she became pregnant, effectively retiring to look after her child having completed a successful career. It was not surprising therefore that career development was central to her professional identity. Whereas Jiro's teaching centred around the goal of conveying the joy of language learning that he felt as a student, Helen had no such identification. Indeed she explained that (unlike for example, the JET programme teachers) she had had little opportunity to learn Japanese, partly because of work demands but also because most of the Japanese people she met, including her husband, were fluent speakers of English. Instead she told a revealing anecdote which underlined the importance of her identity as a native English speaker.

Helen had an acquaintance that had come to Japan and taught English conversation to low level learners in a remote area where she had almost no contact with native speakers. After several months the acquaintance returned home to attend a family wedding where she presumably spoke to many people. To her shock, the woman heard from her sister that one of the people she had spoken to for the first time mistook her way of speaking (that she had presumably acquired during her time in Japan) for a handicap. Accordingly, Helen emphasised the importance she placed both on staying in touch with current British news, and things like pop music, as well as spending time speaking English ‘not just conversation with your friends, but talking about something that is going to challenge you a bit more, ‘cause you suddenly can’t express your ideas.’

The eloquence that Helen showed in expressing her thoughts during the interview made it clear this was not a danger for her, but her words struck me as an extension of the kind of discourse associated with advising advanced students. Helen’s emphasis on her career and her native speaker identity are two discourses of professional identity that have currency among foreign English teachers in Japan, but there are other possibilities.

## 5.8 Getting involved – *Diversity or Swimming Instructor*

Japan remains a popular temporary destination for travelling English teachers, and many teachers who came to Japan for other reasons find themselves taking up teaching to get a visa and make a living or just to save a bit of money and move on. Even so, the range of possibilities for doing this means that some foreigners are making more or less permanent homes here with a career either partially or wholly based on teaching. Jim, who combined teaching English part-time at university with a career as a professional singer and work as a voice actor for English language audio materials, explained that it was the diversity of opportunity rather than English teaching per se that attracted him.

### Extract 5.5 Diversity

**Jim:**

- (1) I think if I was working in America,
- (2) maybe I would just have to teach
- (3) and it would be my life
- (4) and there wouldn't be a lot of time to do my other kind of music and

**Pat:**

- (5) Right,

**Jim:**

- (6) Like I feel I can actually keep music a major part of what I do with my life,

**Pat:**

- (7) Yeah, yeah.

**Jim:**

- (8) Whereas in America I would have to make a decision,

**Pat:**

(9) Right.

**Jim:**

(10) Between like shall I do music or shall I teach.

For Jim and teachers like him who combine English teaching with other careers, Japan offers the freedom not to commit to a single career or single professional identity. The pursuit of hybridised career paths ‘English teaching plus ...’ is perhaps easier as an ex-pat and foreigner which is itself a hybrid identity, but it is not the choice of all foreign English teachers. In contrast to the ‘English teaching plus ...’ of ex-patriot residents in Japan like Jim, there is an emerging discourse among foreign English teachers who make English teaching their sole career and settle in Japan, seeking positions of responsibility and status on a par with their Japanese peers. Accordingly, they are also likely to place importance on acquiring and using Japanese and on professional qualifications; and are likely to be found working in private schools (particularly academic high schools) and in universities. Such teachers typically find a Japanese spouse or life-partner, apply for permanent residency, take out a mortgage on a home in Japan, and set a great store by involvement in their school and community as well as any official recognition of this. While retaining a sense of identity as foreigners, such teachers, I believe, seek to invest in their professional identity as English

language teachers through integration into their place of work. Andrew, who came to Japan after leaving high school and graduated from a Japanese university, taught at a private school where he rotated through the three levels of elementary, junior high and high school teaching offered the following reflection on his voluntary appointment as swimming instructor in his school.

### **Extract 5.6      Swimming Instructor**

**Andrew:**

- (1) One other thing that I have found very important is,
- (2) that I have tried to get myself involved in not only,
- (3) the decision making,

**Pat:**

- (4) Yeah,

**Andrew:**

- (5) Or learning what's going on,
- (6) but is to get oneself into the normal run of the school.

**Pat:**

- (7) Right, yeah.

**Andrew:**

- (8) And to be accepted as not, the foreigner,

**Pat:**

- (9) Right,

**Andrew:**

- (10) In the sense that the foreigner will teach English
- (11) and the foreigner will possibly type up the letters
- (12) which we need in English,

**Pat:**

- (13) Right,

**Andrew:**

- (14) I mean that's not,

(15) that's not the way you are going to integrate into a system.

**Pat:**

(16) Ah, yeah.

**Andrew:**

(17) I mean you have got to be the person,  
(18) and I mean many foreigners do do this  
(19) and they realise this,  
(20) you have got to be part of the cleaning staff.  
(21) Um in elementary school, for example,  
(22) because of my swimming background,  
(23) I am one of the pool staff,

**Pat:**

(24) Ah, OK,

**Andrew:**

(25) And when it comes to the summertime,  
(26) I mean you have to volunteer,  
(27) I mean force your way into,  
(28) um well,  
(29) 'I can look after that too,'  
(30) and of course I can use my English there too,  
(31) so instead of saying,  
(32) er 'stand up, sit down'  
(33) in Japanese,  
(34) I mean I can get them to say it in English,  
(35) 'I want you to swim two laps of the pool,'  
(36) and 'I want you to put your arm in this way,'  
(37) and 'I want you to pull' and 'I want you to push,'

**Pat:**

(38) Right,

**Andrew:**

(39) These are things that the children,  
(40) 'Oh, I learnt that in my lesson'

**Pat:**

(41) Right,

As indicated at the start of the extract, the role of swimming coach is one of several ways Andrew recommended becoming involved in the school. He emphasised that such responsibilities were not simply a case of cooperatively complying with requests but rather of seeking out involvement. Moreover, he underlined his commitment to English teaching by representing his pool duty as an opportunity to create a place for pupils to use the English they have learned in class while interacting with him.

One feature of interest in Andrew's speech was the way he managed viewpoint and in doing so created for himself a particular kind of identity as interviewee. In describing his approach to integrating into the school he used 'I'; 'oneself'; the generalised 'you'; 'the foreigner'; 'we' and 'many foreigners' / 'they' to represent hypothetical perspectives as I have illustrated in Table 5.5. 'I' placed him as the subject of his narrative but was also used in the phrase 'I mean' which occurred six times in this short extract mainly in combination with the 'you' meaning foreign teachers who are presumed to seek integration into the school as a goal. At lines 18-19 'foreigners' is used to refer to other teachers who adopt an integrative strategy similar to his own. The use of the word 'foreigners' itself perhaps underlines the idea that becoming a meaningful part of the school system is not something that can be taken for granted.

**Table 5.5**

<p><b>'I' denoting personal experience</b></p>	<p>I have found it very important (1)          I have tried to get myself involved (2)          I am one of the pool staff (23)</p>
<p><b>'oneself' = myself + foreign teachers in Japan</b></p>	<p>to get oneself into the normal run of the school (6)</p>
<p><b>Generalised 'you' = a foreign teacher in Japan</b></p>	<p>that's not the way you are going to integrate into a system (15)          you have got to be the person (17)          you have to volunteer,          you have got to be part of the cleaning staff.</p>
<p><b>'foreigners' = foreign teachers viewed from the perspective of Japanese school administration</b></p>	<p>To be accepted as not the foreigner (8)          the foreigner will teach English (10)          and the foreigner will possibly type up the letters (which we need) in English (11)</p>
<p><b>'we' = Japanese school administration</b></p>	<p>which we need (11)</p>
<p><b>'foreigners / they' = other foreign teachers who</b></p>	<p>many foreigners do do this (18)          and they realise this, (19)</p>

**Nouns and Pronouns Used by Andrew in Extract 5.4 to Denote Point of View**

His way of speaking gave his speech an air of conviction befitting a teacher who had been teaching English in Japan for two decades, but it struck me as remarkable that somebody who has lived his entire adult life in Japan (more time than he had spent in his 'home' country Britain) should (like all the foreign teachers I interviewed or appear in the literature) see himself so unquestionably as a foreign ex-patriot. This situation offers an obvious contrast with Kanno's (2003) study of returnees who spent several years of their childhood abroad and (she argued) grew up with double identities with a foot in each of the two worlds they were brought up in. This may be age related or a reflection of the fact that he came to Japan as a (white) foreigner and like everyone else was never able to forget this because he was always treated as a foreigner.

## **5.9 Maturity and reward – *A Moment***

The stories that my interviewees told about their entry into teaching were framed as belonging to circumstances of that time and place, and indeed a former self. They served as entry points for narratives of professional transformation. In some cases becoming a teacher met practical needs, in others the attraction grew out of the situation at the time. To those who came to teaching as a second career, teaching was represented as potentially offering advantages over their job at the time. Sometimes these

advantages were realised, but sometimes not. Instead, a number of my interviewees, particularly among those who had been teaching for spans as long as 10 to 20 years or more, highlighted attractions of a quite different nature from the opportunistic or career motivations that had initially attracted them. These narratives were of maturity and reward in teaching, an example of which is Joe's account of what he called an inspired 'moment' in the classroom. Joe taught at a private high school that catered to wealthy, though not always academically gifted students.

#### **Extract 5.7      A Moment**

**Joe:**

- (1) After 13, nearly 14 years of teaching,
- (2) you know,
- (3) it is what I'm doing
- (4) it's my life's work,

**Pat:**

- (5) Right,

**Joe:**

- (6) And I stumbled across it, but I enjoy it,
- (7) it is a big,
- (8) it is my life, it is what I want to do.
- (9) I want to do it good and I want to, you know,
- (10) I also believe that these kids,
- (11) I don't give up, I never give up on a kid,

**Pat:**

- (12) Right,

**Joe:**

- (13) Although it sure is, you know, so easy.

- Pat:**
- (14) Sorry can you tell me,  
(15) do you know where the enjoyment comes from then?
- Joe:**
- (16) For me?
- Pat:**
- (17) Yeah,
- Joe:**
- (18) In teaching?
- Pat:**
- (19) Yeah,
- Joe:**
- (20) Yes, it comes from when I,  
(21) there are moments, but sometimes everyday,  
(22) well not everyday of course, when I see my students like doing,  
(23) what I am trying to get them to do,  
(24) and just their, the way they do it,  
(25) I mean they are so fired up about it,
- Pat:**
- (26) Right,
- Joe:**
- (27) And they are so psyched up that they can do it,
- Pat:**
- (28) Right,
- Joe:**
- (29) And they are doing it for me,
- Pat:**
- (30) Right.
- Joe:**
- (31) And I can see them like their future lives,  
(32) and they are going to become, you know,  
(33) really good people,
- Pat:**
- (34) Right,
- Joe:**
- (35) And they will be able to speak English,  
(36) and they'll keep in touch with me,

**Pat:**

(37) Yeah,

**Joe:**

(38) Of course this is just wicky (?) dreaming there,

(39) but no it happens this is what I enjoy,

(40) I like being,

(41) there's plenty of kids, you know,

(42) I might moan, I moan a lot about, you know, the bad ones but,

**Pat:**

(43) Right,

**Joe:**

(44) There is heaps of them, just, this is what teaching is about isn't it?

**Pat:**

(45) Yeah

**Joe:**

(46) Just that personal, you know, satisfaction,

(47) that sometimes just my eyes are watering,

(48) and I can't,

(49) you know my respiration's up,

**Pat:**

(50) (laughs)

**Joe:**

(51) I am having like a moment there. Really.

**Pat:**

(52) Excellent.

**Joe:**

(53) And it doesn't happen everyday,

**Pat:**

(54) No,

**Joe:**

(55) But almost, at least once a week.

**Pat:**

(56) OK,

**Joe:**

(57) And more,

**Pat:**

(58) Yeah,

- Joe:**  
(59) And the better, the better my attitude is  
(60) the more it seems to happen.

- Pat:**  
(61) Oh, OK.

- Joe:**  
(62) Depending on my energy level.

- Pat:**  
(63) Yeah,

- Joe:**  
(64) Frustration, anxiety,

This extract came from the latter part of Joe's interview. In it, he described moments of inspiration where he sensed that his teaching was connecting with the students. These moments were related to a deep sense of commitment that he felt to English teaching 'my life's work' as he called it. As this extract illustrates, his enjoyment rather than being blissful contentedness embraced contradictions. His 'life's work' grew out of a chance encounter with English teaching as he had recounted in more detail in the opening phase of the interview. Joe had found himself between jobs working 'in the hospitality industry' as a personal butler when an invitation from a friend brought him to Japan. During his visit, he had met some English teachers, one of whom was returning home and passed on classes to him, allowing him to extend his stay (a section of this was quoted in Module 2). His expression 'I stumbled across it' acknowledged these unlikely circumstances through which he became an English teacher. Joe's career path

was not one that fitted easily to the goal oriented model of teacher development implicit in TESOL qualifications. Instead, he emphasised that the career he got into by chance was immensely rewarding to him in many ways. On the one hand, he had highlighted the stable employment and salary that allowed him to live what he felt was a comfortable lifestyle; including opportunities to travel abroad that he could only have dreamed about otherwise. He also valued his involvement with the school, particularly the opportunity to be entrusted with the position of homeroom teacher which, he explained, was critical in shaping the students' behaviour and futures. On the other hand, he had underlined the challenge of teaching students with low academic ability with little outside support from the school in terms of disciplining troublemakers. He mentioned a particular group of girls at that time that were testing patience and classroom management skills. But as he pointed out, the fact that this issue loomed large in his concerns was perhaps a sign that his life was otherwise 'pretty good' and, as he explained, without this problem things would be 'too perfect.' Joe's satisfaction derived from moving beyond adverse and contradictory circumstances. Joe's life story was one in which he had 'made good' (by becoming an English teacher) out of relatively unpromising circumstances and included such dramatic turns as being deported, and ending up penniless while his wife was pregnant. Finding a way to return and continue

his life as an English teacher was therefore felt to be something of a miracle. For Joe, his students becoming remarkable success stories of the kind described by Kate in Extract 3.4 in Chapter 3 may be ‘just wicky (?) dreaming’, yet some sense of progress with a challenging group of students provided him with regular ‘enjoyment’ in his teaching. Joe’s anecdote like Jiro’s underlined the challenge of motivating students but also the satisfaction.

## **5.10 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have considered some examples of how teachers constructed narratives of professional identity for themselves in the course of the interviews. I have introduced a Japanese junior high school teacher who highlighted the development of his classroom skill; a British language school teacher who developed a detailed curriculum for advanced learners who highlighted both her career progress and belief in keeping her language and culture alive; an American who combined teaching English with professional singing; a Brit who found that positively working to break out of the ‘foreigner’ role to integrate into the school was the key to professional development; and a former butler from California who found satisfaction in motivating seemingly unpromising students. I have suggested that rather than seeking to define themselves as

particular kinds of teachers, interviewees, worked with the interviewer to construct narrative conceptions of themselves as professionals which drew on available discourses woven together in terms of personal experiences felt to be relevant to their narratives. Although the narratives recorded in my data are doubtless unique tellings in that they reflect particularities of the time and place of the interview and the interaction between myself and the interviewee, they were, I believe, more than simply creations of the moment. In order to be able to answer my questions my interviewees had to draw on memories and evaluative frameworks already in play in their daily experience and appealed to an evolving sense of professional identity. I have suggested, with my examples, that an important basic resource for identity development is the language that one is speaking. When speaking in Japanese, the use of words such as *ganbaru* (try), *muzukashisa* (difficulty) or *benkyo* (study) make it possible to evoke a discourse of professional development that has no precise equivalent in English. Furthermore, and in a way, barely separable from language specific discourses, Japanese and foreign teachers drew on very different kinds of professional discourses that reflected their quite different status as native and non-native teachers and as foreigners and local teachers. These two oppositions are important ones because they reflect spectrums in which the power status is completely opposite. Whereas the native speaker is the owner of the

language the non-native is the learner, the outsider. In contrast the local teacher not only knows the terrain of Japanese education and how to learn English as a foreign language through personal experience but also generally occupies a higher position in the educational hierarchy. The local teacher is therefore the insider while the foreigner is the outsider. Professional identity like other abstract notions of ‘foreigner’ and ‘non-native’ are in and of themselves abstractions for a multitude of individual experiences and a range of discourses associated with them. Identity work, as can be seen from the examples in this chapter as well as previous ones, is about drawing on available discourses to create a positive sense of self. Doing this also involves creating lines of exclusion and opposition either implicitly, or (as I illustrated in the previous chapter) explicitly through the creation of an Other. One important consequence of this is that while there are elements of professional identity perhaps shared by all, identity is also implicitly divisive. In my view, language teaching is an area where these differences are particularly pronounced and unavoidable since the aim is to learn a foreign language. Foreign language teaching is about crossing spaces. Indeed, what is needed is the ability to see beyond discourses and recognise individuals. In this chapter I have introduced some individual narratives of professional identity to illustrate the nature of such divisions but also to give them voice. But what are the implications of all this for

language teaching? What can the voicing and analysis of English language teachers do to inform language teaching or applied linguistics in general? These are topics for discussion in the next and final chapter.

## **CHAPTER 6**

# **CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

At the beginning of Chapter 1, I outlined the overall aims for this short thesis. In this chapter I return to review these aims and assess the ways in which the analysis and discussion in the intervening chapters have contributed to furthering them. This also involves some glances back to the two previous modules and leads onto discussion of the potential implications of the project and proposals for further cross-linguistic narrative identity research. To recap, the three applied linguistic issues that concerned me were methodological, theoretical and practical: methodologically I was interested in the potential for the linguistic exploration of the narrative interview used as a research tool. I elaborated on this concern in Chapter 2, arguing that interviews have not been given the attention they deserve by applied linguists due to a preoccupation with ‘naturally occurring’ conversational discourse. I proposed that a narrative based analysis would serve as a useful tool for exploring interviews in qualitative research and the intervening chapters have offered a framework for such an analysis. The principal theoretical interest for me was the exploration of the relationship between narrative and

identity and the way in which language choice (Japanese or English) was a factor shaping life story narratives and in doing so shaping identity itself. This theoretical interest was the main focus of Chapters 3 and 4 which explored different aspects of narrative identity: Bakhtinian chronotopes and evaluation. My principal practical concern was with English language education in Japan. For this reason, Chapter 5 focused on professional identity in English language teaching, considering the interview content and revisiting the native-non-native divide introduced in Module 2. A further practical concern which I consider in this chapter, and which returns to the focus of Module 1, is the consideration of the implications of cross-linguistic narrative analysis for English language pedagogy.

## **6.2 A linguistic approach to research interviews**

Interviews have not been a favoured object for linguistic analysis, but as I argued in Chapter 2, deserve to be, since they are widespread in social science research and occupy a central role in modern societies more generally (P. Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Gubrium and Holstein, 2001a). Even the final evaluation of this thesis will be determined through an interview of sorts—the *viva voce*. In this module, I have proposed a way in which life story narrative interviews can be analysed. In particular, I

have outlined four different angles from which one might go about deconstructing identity. The first approach, illustrated in Chapter 2, involved exploring the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. Building on the Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) exchange model, I argued that there is a need to translate the jargon traditionally used in discussing the organisation of the interview into linguistic terminology. I also proposed that interviews be described in terms of a transaction which consists of framing moves, prompts and probes; incorporating the language of interviews into the model. I suggested that the interactive role taken up in the organisation of exchanges is effectively what defines the speaker as interviewer or interviewee and provides the most basic resource for the enactment of identity. Looking at the organisation of interaction between interviewer and interviewee offers a more concrete picture of the kind of interview that is taking place because classification is based on the interactive function, rather than the grammatical form that is typically discussed in interview research (e.g.: Gillham, 2000).

The second direction I proposed (in Chapter 3) for the deconstruction of identity in interview discourse was the consideration of time and place. Following Bakhtin's (1981) approach as he applied it to the analysis of novels in which he posited time and

space as central and interrelated dimensions of meaning, I provided examples of how time and place served to shape identity (sometimes restricting identity options) in the course of narrative segments occurring in the interviews. More specifically, I highlighted the notion of focus as a generic variant across narratives occurring in these interviews. Closely related to this, but representing a third angle for the deconstruction of narrative, was evaluation. In order to consider how evaluation shapes identity, I brought together elements of J. R. Martin and White's (2005) model with a notion of Othering developed from Duszak's (2002b) approach to textual viewpoints. I showed how the conceptualisation of viewpoint is an important evaluative resource in constructing identity. Finally, in Chapter 5 I illustrated how a narrative analytic approach could be used to explore themes across whole interviews or an interview project and contextualised in relation to discourses in society at large. These methods of analysis provided me with a tangible focus for exploring narrative identity through interviews. They enabled me to see how the interviewee (and to a lesser extent the interviewer) shaped a sense of self. I think there is potential for expanding the analysis of narrative identity to include, for example, multimodal analysis based on videos of interviews looking at clothing, gesture, physical interaction and voice quality. Another area which I have not explored here which may yield useful insights into identity is a

lexical approach of the kind outlined by Coulthard (2008). According to Coulthard, individual speakers and writers develop a personalised habitual use of lexis that serves as an identifiable linguistic signature. This proposal accords with my observation that such features as George's use of raised force and a dialogically contracted perspective were not only consistently used throughout the interview, but could be seen as having resonances in the way he lived his life as depicted in his narratives.

### **6.3 Teacher research and ELT**

Applied linguistic research relevant to English language teaching has been dominated by linguistic description and second language acquisition as obvious sources of potential solutions to the teacher's two most immediate problems: what to teach and how the students are going to learn it. As I argued in Module 2, there is also a need for more research into teachers. In classroom teaching, the teacher cannot be left out of the equation any more than the interviewer out of the interview. The teacher shapes opportunities for learning in the classroom and even 'learner-centred' teaching is orchestrated by the teacher. For this reason, Chapter 5 considered one important teacher focused issue: professional identity.

Through specific anecdotes from the interview data, I illustrated in Chapter 5 how professional identity is not so much a single concept but rather embraces a plurality of discourses brought together in narrative form to give shape to a sense of self as teacher. Where Jiro (Extract 5.3) brought into play a discourse of teacher development that I characterised as particularly Japanese, Helen (Extract 5.4) emphasised career progress and the importance of keeping in touch with native English language and culture. Whereas Jim (Extract 5.5) valued the freedom that teaching allowed him to pursue a second career as a tenor singer, Andrew (Extract 5.6) stressed the importance of taking on responsibilities within the school. There was little space for me to do justice to the rich variety of discourses of professional identity to be found even in my own data. These examples of differing characterisations of teacher selves are nevertheless potentially indicative of a divided profession. Both in Module 2 and here I drew attention to the native-non-native or foreigner-local divide which I see as the deepest rift among English teachers in Japan. There are also other divides marking off school teachers from language school teachers; public school from private; high school from university; and full-time from part-time teachers. Kenji (Table 5.4), who drew my attention to the career path divide for English literature majors between business and teaching, suggested that he would be interested to see how the perspectives of English

literature majors differed from linguistics majors. This is an interesting question that I am unfortunately unable to answer with my current data, but a division that would no doubt yield meaningful differences. Even so, attempting to reduce professional identity to the sum of such divisions—the mosaic model (Benhabib, 2002: 8)—is a fruitless exercise since there will almost always be a range of features and more than one identity discourse for any given feature. Nevertheless, one cannot simply adopt any identity discourse. Individuals work within available discourses associated with social divisions but also reinforce and create divisions. A prominent example of divisionism through Othering was Lucy's concept of 'riff-raff' (Extract 4.5). Riff-raff was not a social category in the ordinary sense but rather a label for those who failed to conform to the value system she felt befitted their identity as teachers. Such Othering is an important way in which social values are reinforced and bonds with those who share these values strengthened.

The other side of this interpersonal divide implicit in identity construction is solidarity and the search for commonalities which are established through the sharing of narratives. As I listened to my interviewees recount their experiences, I realised that many of them had very different backgrounds from my own, yet found myself

empathising with them. Partly this was due to parallels in my own experience or echoes from others I had interviewed. For example, many of the teachers underlined the centrality of their students to their sense of professional identity. Kate (Extract 3.4) focused on a particular student that ‘gave a real boost’ to her teaching; Joe (Extract 5.7) associated his joy in teaching with the feeling that ‘they’re doing it for me’; Yuri (Extract 4.3) quoted her students’ feedback as confirmation of her own identity and made it clear that both her teaching philosophy and methodology were based on building relationships with them; Hiro (Extract 4.2), on the other hand, showed that one of the hardest things for him was handling a complaint from a student, while emphasising that the reason he did not give in to it was the need to consider other students. These examples suggested to me that it is not the student in the sense of ‘student centredness’ that is important, but rather (as Johnston, 2003 has observed) the relationship between teacher and student. Besides the sharing of common themes, personal narratives also have the power to evoke sympathy, by sharing a personal perspective on experience with the listener that may be quite unfamiliar. I hope that readers of this thesis too may also have gained some sympathetic insight into the lives of these teachers.

This power of narrative to speak across differences is, I believe an important one for English language teaching both because it is a profession that by its nature involves people from varied backgrounds and perspectives, but also because learning a foreign language itself necessitates encountering the perspective of a cultural and linguistic Other. For this reason too, I think that foreign language pedagogy would benefit from drawing on cross-linguistic narrative analysis which acknowledges difference rather than focus only on the target language.

#### **6.4 Cross-linguistic narrative analysis**

Rather than employing an experimental design suitable for a clear cut contrastive analysis between Japanese and English such as Watanabe (1993) or Chafe (1980), the project described here used authentic interview data (more like Yamada, 1991) that made it possible to observe contextualised differences between autobiographical narratives recounted in Japanese and English. In terms of the main points—the representation of time and space and the evaluative representation of viewpoint—the narrative data I have discussed above showed considerable variation from speaker to speaker as well as across languages; contextual and individual narrative skill, style and situational factors proved significant. Nevertheless, I observed some important

differences, which, though in need of verification, have potential implications for cross-linguistic description and any pedagogy that is to be based on this.

A feature that was common to all narratives, whether in Japanese or English, was reference to, or depiction of, a focal incident, which was often highlighted through the use of direct speech to bring alive the specific moment. The main observable differences occurred in the way the incidents were presented. In English narratives such as Bruce's account of his interview for the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme (Extract 3.1), descriptive details of place were included to dramatise the scene. By contrast, the descriptions of locations in Japanese narratives were limited to defining their institutional social role (such as the government department who sponsored Ai's Asian youth boat tour (Extract 3.3) or the school visited by Taro (Extract 3.2)), without any sense of a need to evoke the scene. On the other hand, Japanese narrators took time to embellish psychological details, such as Hiro's description of his student's parents' logic in complaining to him. This observation resonates with the notion of *sasshi* the ability and communicational habit of looking beyond the actual words of the speaker to understand the feelings of the speaker (see Ch4: 167). This cultural habit of reading what is not stated presumes knowledge of the psychological state of the interlocutor of

the kind made explicit by Hiro. Even so, I posit this apparent contrast with some hesitancy as there was considerable descriptive and organisational variation across my data. There were many examples of narrative segments that did not fit the Labovian narrative (Labov and Waletzky, 1967) or variants of it (Eggins and Slade, 1997; Plum, 1988) in Japanese, but also in English. Moreover, the chronotope framework and the strategies for positing viewpoint outlined in Chapters 3 and 4 were applicable to narrative episodes in both languages. The areas where I feel it is possible to make a more confident distinction are in terms of language specific mechanics on the one hand and appeal to cultural narratives on the other.

In Chapter 1 (Section 1.7), I summarised the different ways in which viewpoint is realised in Japanese and English. I pointed out that whereas English references to protagonists in the narrative are diligently marked with pronouns, they are left largely implicit in Japanese. To compensate for this, the use of personal names (even as a self-referent) is more common in Japanese. Other nouns, such as '*oya*' (parent), are used which from an English perspective may seem ambiguous since it is impossible to tell whether this refers to the mother or father or both. From a Japanese viewpoint, such a distinction would seem pedantic. The use of different verbs and verb endings in

Japanese to denote respect or allegiance are also important for implicit references to individuals in polite registers (Kozai, 2002; S. E. Martin, 2004). In the translations for the transcript extracts appearing in this module I indicated required pronouns in English that did not appear in the original Japanese in parenthesis. These extracts show that pronouns (introduced into Japanese as a result of Western influence) are rare in this interview data. What is lost through the lack of a mandatory use of pronouns in Japanese, besides occasional ambiguities about sex or plurality, is not the ability to follow protagonists in a narrative (which would be a serious failing!) but rather the ability to indicate subtle shifts in allegiance of the kind noted in my analysis of Andrew (Section 5.8) and George's (Section 4.3) narratives. This difference also helps explain why inexperienced Japanese writers of English (such as the Japanese undergraduate students I teach) tend to over rely on passive sentences (with the subject omitted) both in writing and speech. The current grammar translation method is based on matching equivalent sentences (as I explained in Module 1) which I think could benefit from incorporating a discourse oriented description of pronouns.

Another dimension along which the narratives of Japanese interviewees varied from their counterparts was in the reference to Japanese cultural discourses and ways of

behaving. Osamu (Extract 2.1), while open about relating his choice of English teaching as related to his desire to enter a prestigious university, holds back from declaring his success in entering it, modestly suggesting that he was barely able to enter (even though he later went on to graduate school there). I do not think this was due to a lack of pride; rather, the topic was introduced in a way consistent with the dignity associated in Japanese with maintaining a degree of modesty. I see such modesty as a cultural Japanese habit which, as I suggested in Chapter 1, extends the patterns of use of humble and honorific language into a more general politeness strategy that includes praising others and speaking modestly about oneself.

In Jiro's account of how he overcame difficulties faced during his early years as a teacher (Extract 5.3), I said that he used value laden lexis to appeal to a Japanese cultural discourse of educational development. His account was comprehensible when translated into English but, as I tried to illustrate by relating his choice of lexis to my personal associations with Aikido, something of the cultural evaluative meaning seemed to me to be lost. One implication of this for language teaching is that vocabulary learning needs to be done through a context that allows for the observation of cultural patterns of usage. An example sentence is better than a translated equivalent and a

complete text better still; ultimately contextualisation through a range of texts is desirable. This point has already been picked up by those who advocate a corpus based approach to vocabulary analysis and teaching (Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992).

In this section, I have brought together a number of observations made over the course of this module to suggest that while sharing much in common, there are a number of ways in which narratives of identity in Japanese and English differ. If this is the case (and as I have made clear some points are more in need of further research than others), then they also offer some interesting implications for language teaching pedagogy.

## **6.5 Implications and applications for language teaching pedagogy**

What are the implications of cross-linguistic narrative analysis for English language teaching? What relevance might the analytical approach to interview analysis outlined here have for foreign language teaching? These questions deserve a separate research project and report in their own right. Nevertheless, they are important to address here, however briefly, both because it was questions like these that formed the impetus to undertake the present project and because as an English language teacher, I feel that the most real and immediate fruits of applied linguistics are to be found in the furthering of

language teaching pedagogy. In Module 1, I made a case for the development of a contrastive analysis that embraced discourse and narrative analysis as sources for the refinement of descriptions of the spoken word. I also identified task-based language learning as a suitable methodology for getting low-level learners, such as the engineering major undergraduates I was teaching at the time, to develop their English speaking skills through narrative. Rather than repeat these proposals here, I consider other directions for pedagogical application.

#### ***6.5.1 Some implications for teacher education***

One area that would benefit from the kind of cross-linguistic analysis of teacher interviews described in this module is teacher education. Courses aimed at educating language teachers specifically concerned with teaching English as a second or foreign language such as the Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA) and MA programmes in TESOL have seen considerable improvements over recent decades reflecting an overall expansion of applied linguistic research. Nevertheless, in my view, such courses remain overly preoccupied with a methodological principles associated with the Communicative Approach on the one hand and linguistic descriptions of English that do not take into account the learners'

first language on the other. Senior's (2006) study of English language teachers educated on such courses is a testimony to the prevalence of this educational ideology among Western teachers. In contrast to Senior's study, this project has drawn attention to the more heterogeneous nature of the English language teaching in non-Western contexts such as Japan in a way that I believe would be instructive to those teaching or intending to teach in such contexts. Trainee teachers would benefit from being introduced to a variety of teacher narratives of the kind discussed in this module in order to begin visualising their own potential identities as teachers. Including the narratives of local teachers would also help raise awareness of the fact that native English teachers are not simply linguistic evangelists (or imperialists) but rather participants in an educational context which may embrace educational norms quite different from those espoused in Western educational institutions. More experienced teachers, such as those studying at MA level, would benefit from undertaking some cross-linguistic analysis that explores the relationship between the language they teach and either their learners' first language or a language which the teachers have studied or learned. Besides these general proposals for teachers derived from my focus on cross-linguistic narrative analysis I also have a number of quite specific suggestions for pedagogical application derived from my exploration of 'viewpoint' as a central feature of narrative identity.

In this module, I have been concerned principally with personal narratives expressed in the course of research interviews. In the meantime, I have changed jobs and teach students with different needs. I currently teach a range of majors at a private university in Tokyo with a much higher general level of English proficiency, including advanced learners such as ‘returnees’ who spent periods of their childhood abroad in English speaking countries. These students are generally good at speaking English but have considerable problems with learning to research and write academic reports.

#### **6.5.2 *Teaching viewpoint as a way to overcome plagiarism***

One serious problem encountered in teaching English writing at tertiary level in Japan is how to overcome plagiarism. The range of resources available on the internet means that it is easier than ever before to plagiarise, but equally easy for teachers to detect and locate. The problem is not how to detect it, but how to prevent students from doing it in the first place. For foreign teachers, particularly those from the US, where referencing systems are taught as early as high school, the solution is sometimes thought to be stiffer penalties. Yet while there are cases of students blatantly taking shortcuts and hoping to pass off something they discovered on the internet or elsewhere as their own

work, Japanese undergraduates generally lack a clear understanding of plagiarism and why it is considered an academic crime. Plagiarism among students has only really been taken as a serious issue in recent years and is still not explained at high school. It may also be that a tradition of learning through imitation of classical works encourages copying. Where I have explained to students how to use quotations, I have sometimes found lengthy quotations interspersed with text but no commentary on what has been quoted. At the other extreme 'paraphrasing' occasionally turns into an expression of the students own views. Such problems with referencing and identifying plagiarism are part of a more general problem with handling competing voices in a text. For this reason I propose introducing activities such as those outlined in Table 6.1 which are designed to raise awareness of how to handle viewpoints in text and use pronouns effectively in context.

**Table 6.1**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>
Reporting shared experiences (a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Students prepare to talk in a small group about an experience that everyone in the group has had. (e.g. taking an entrance exam)</li><li>(2) Students describe their experiences in turn. Others students make notes then ask questions for clarification.</li><li>(3) Teacher introduces phrases for comparing and contrasting perspectives in a text.</li><li>(4) Students write a report of their group's experiences.</li></ol>
Reporting shared experiences (b)	Same as (a) but exchange copies of written accounts and teach the language of quotation and paraphrasing.
Debate memos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Organise class into debate groups, and divide each group into 'for' and 'against'.</li><li>(2) Students prepare points then debate.</li><li>(3) Teacher introduces phrases for comparing perspectives.</li><li>(4) Students write a report of the debate noting who said what.</li></ol>
Written debates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Organise class into debate groups, and divide each group into 'for' and 'against'.</li><li>(2) Students write short reports outlining their arguments.</li><li>(3) Students share their reports</li><li>(4) Teacher introduces phrases.</li><li>(5) Students write a report of the debate noting who wrote what.</li></ol>
Group literature review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Students choose a debate topic (e.g. current news controversy).</li><li>(2) Each student researches and brings to class an article and summary of the writer's main point.</li><li>(3) Students share their reports</li><li>(4) Teacher introduces phrases.</li><li>(5) Students write a literature review based on all the articles</li></ol>
Detective work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Teacher provides students with heteroglossic texts. Illustrates examples of the viewpoints.</li><li>(2) Students list different viewpoints.</li><li>(3) Each student given one viewpoint and find parts of the text supporting it.</li></ol>

### **Pedagogic Activities to Promote Awareness of Viewpoint**

### **6.5.3 *From reading comprehension to critical thinking***

A problem related to my observations regarding plagiarism also applies to the reading of written texts in English. In discussion classes based around readings, I have often found students who are able to understand the content of the text but unable to distinguish the author's viewpoint from other views presented in the text. This problem is largely caused or exasperated by overall language ability. It is one thing to piece together the overall message of a text in a foreign language, but another to follow the turns of a writer's argument. Even so, activities such as those described in Table 6.1 would serve to draw attention to textual voices so that learners become aware of how writers create voices. Besides helping learners get more out of a text, this focus would also pave the way to a more critical analysis of the construction of identity in texts. Through looking at how identity is constructed, the temporal and spatial world in which it exists and the values on which it is based can be questioned, and other obscured possibilities can be brought out into the open. Group discussion of this kind can also help, both with building a community of learners (Allwright, 1984; Curran, 1976) and learning to appreciate perspectives different from one's own.

**Table 6.2**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
School experiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Students choose a topic related to experiences at school and prepare 5 'open' questions.</li><li>(2) Divide class into A and B and seat in rows. A interviews B for a few minutes then makes notes. Next, all change partners. After A has interviewed five people B begins interviewing.</li><li>(3) A and B write up reports of their interviews.</li></ol>
E-mail interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Teacher introduces students to internet sites where they can contact English students in other countries. Students set up potential contacts.</li><li>(2) Students prepare open questions about the other students' experiences of learning English and send to the contacts.</li><li>(3) The student writes a summary of the interviews including quotations.</li><li>(4) The report is sent to the contacts and if possible shared with other students online.</li></ol>
Learning histories	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Teacher introduces some good and bad experiences of language learning.</li><li>(2) Students interview one partner and try to find out the details of their experiences as a language learner.</li><li>(3) Students write a preliminary report based on the first interview and give the report to the interviewee to read.</li><li>(4) In a second interview the learners discuss each other's reports, suggest revisions and introduce other experiences.</li><li>(5) Students write revised report.</li></ol>
Life history interview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Students find a person they know who has had an interesting life.</li><li>(2) Students interview the person about their life history from early memories to the present. (The interview may be in the student's first language).</li><li>(3) Students write a summary of the person's life history in English. (For a larger project other people who know the main interviewee could be interviewed).</li></ol>

## **Interview-based Projects for Language Learners**

#### **6.5.4 *Qualitative research as 'projects' for English language learners***

In a typical single term English course (14/28 weeks of 90 minute classes) at Japanese universities, it often seems desirable to make the course or some part of it into a 'project'. A 'project' is an assignment that requires a substantial amount of independent research by the student culminating in a product like a paper or presentation. Projects offer the advantage that students have to do work outside the classroom and can gain a sense of achievement in the foreign language over a period of classroom hours that is relatively short for achieving meaningful gains in language acquisition per se. Table 6.2 lists examples of interview based projects using interviews ranging from those suitable for general English classes to those designed for preliminary training in research. I have not yet had time to evaluate the effects of using these tasks or analyse recordings of student interviews but this is an important next step in developing student interviews as a classroom activity.

#### **6.5.5 *Intercultural linguistics for language learners***

Another way of handling short courses in English adopted by many Japanese universities is to make the course *content* rather than *skills* based. A popular approach to this is to teach courses in British or American culture, or even World Englishes. The

rationale behind such an approach is that it is desirable to know about the target culture. Such courses may stimulate interest but are not necessarily useful for language learners preparing to, say, study abroad or use English in business. There is also a danger, as I argued in Module 2, that English 'culture' lessons (particularly when taught by native speakers) turn into a kind of cultural propaganda. Another potential criticism is that learning about foreign culture could be thought of as reinforcing the foreignness of English (McVeigh, 2002). Although, several of the Japanese interviewees mentioned English pop culture and movies as more important for learning English than classes at school. One solution is to instead explore intercultural communication. This is an approach taken by the university where I currently teach. On such courses students typically study simplified versions of intercultural communication theory through English. Student projects may focus on one area of the theory and compare Japan with some other country. Intercultural communication (Samovar et al., 2008) has become popular as a practical way to frame cultural difference and overcome problems such as the culture shock experienced when encountering an unfamiliar culture. More importantly, if done in the right way, English courses in intercultural communication can serve as an opportunity for students to reflect on their own identity. Rather than falling into the trap of exaggerating cultural contrast (a tendency I associated with

*Nihonjinron* in Module 1) such courses would ideally focus on deconstructing cultures and cultural relationships. Given that such an approach has already become an acceptable, and (according to feedback from students at the university where I work) even popular way of conducting English classes, I think there is potential for developing a more linguistic focus to intercultural communication (Scollon and Scollon, 2001) for English language students. A course in intercultural linguistics based around the exploration of cross-linguistic narrative might explore cultural and linguistic identity through anything from pop culture lyrics or films to media reporting of political events. This would both reintroduce a more language focused curriculum and offer a more concrete way for language learners to investigate identity. Where students participate in study abroad programmes they may be encouraged to share their journals and analyse them as narratives of personal identity.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

At the end of this third and final module I have found myself, coming full circle, returning to the concern with which I began: how to improve English education in Japan through the application of cross-linguistic descriptions of language. In so doing, I sense a danger that I may just be going around in circles or as Jiro put it Japanese: *sora*

*mawari shiteru* (literally ‘circling sky’). Jiro’s escape from this was *benkyo* (study) which for him embraced class observation, reading and trial and error in his own classes. For me, the completion of this thesis perhaps marks a beginning of this process. More generally, both in applied linguistics and language teaching there is a need for more study at a practical and theoretical level into cross-linguistic narrative and identity in relation to language teaching. With its roots in Britain, applied linguistic theory inevitably began as a largely monolingual discipline, but now with ever increasing numbers of fluent bilinguals taking up applied linguistics, including those drawn from among the ranks of non-native English teachers around the world, an expansion in cross-linguistic research seems eminently feasible as well as desirable. As I have argued throughout these modules, both for language teaching and other applications such as translation, a desirable direction for this expansion is the description of larger units of discourse including narrative. The evidence presented in this module points to narrative principles of organisation in terms of time and place and viewpoint as relatively stable in languages as notoriously different as English and Japanese. Moreover, I have illustrated ways in which linguistic, cultural and individual circumstances shape narrative and with it notions of cultural and linguistic identity. In addition to theoretical developments, English language teaching would also benefit from incorporating

narrative into the curriculum. In Module 1, I argued the case for using narrative tasks to help low-level learners expand their discourse range beyond question and answer exchanges. A more profound and useful effect of a narrative-based curriculum is that it allows for the development and exploration of identity, an important aim which I see as at the heart of foreign language teaching and learning. How this can be done most effectively is an area for pedagogical and classroom research and contextual application.

During the time that it has taken me to complete these modules, my wife has given birth to two children, one now two years old, the other four months. The two year old already shows signs of trying to piece together a sense of narrative identity, play-acting his daily routines some of which are Japanese, others English but most a mix of the two. He seems to be telling me that the process of narrative identity construction begins earlier than I had thought; a reminder also that language acquisition research too may benefit from investigating narrative identity. Reviewing the aims that I set out with in Module 1, I feel I have not so much arrived after a voyage of discovery as, to borrow Joe's words 'stumbled across' something worthy of further investigation but, like Joe, feel that this potential research has become 'big' and 'my life' and 'something I want to do' –alongside my role as an English language teacher.

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