

# Code-switching in Cross-cultural Interviewing: How Modern Japanese Women Utilize English to Express Issues of Hierarchy, Gender and Power

Susan K. Burton \*

## Introduction

Between 2000-2003, I carried out a qualitative research project examining the lives of Japanese women who were living or had lived in England long-term (defined as two or more years). It was based on a series of in-depth, longitudinal oral history interviews with 16 Japanese women ranging in age from 26 to 51, and categorized into four groups: students, career women, women married to or divorced from British men, and company wives (women who accompany their Japanese husbands on company postings). I also carried out informal interviews and attended gatherings, women's group meetings and expatriate associations. The project was entitled 'Japanese Women Residents in England: A Methodological and Cultural Study' and it was an interdisciplinary study of oral history, gender and migration. The data from the interviews was used to understand the shared experiences of modern Japanese female expatriates in England. An examination of the methodology and exploration of the cultural and linguistic issues involved in cross-cultural interviewing can be found in the second edition of the Oral History Reader (Burton, 2006: 166-176). This article will examine the two languages in which the interviews were carried out and consider to what extent switching between languages affected the data collected.

The interviews were carried out in the interviewee's preferred language, either Japanese or English, and I was surprised that 12 of the 16 chose to be interviewed in English. However, during the interviews, most of them switched to Japanese at least once or twice. Of the four who chose Japanese, as the interviews progressed, one occasionally used English whilst two regularly switched back and forth between the two languages. Indeed during one interview I realized that I was interviewing in Japanese and the interviewee was answering in English. Only one interview was conducted entirely in Japanese.

---

\* 准教授 / Oral History

What the women were doing was code-switching. Gal (1988: 247) states that “codeswitching is a conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries; to create, evoke or change interpersonal relations with their rights and obligations.” Reasons for a change of language in any situation may include the choice of topic, accommodation to the listener, expression of solidarity (with the listener or group) or an expression of social and/or cultural distance, expression of power/agency or the rejection of the power of another, or to remain neutral. With two or more languages and their concurrent cultures available, speakers may also have a wider range of behaviour patterns. Consequently, through choice of language, the speaker may indicate how they wish to be perceived by the listener and how they wish the listener to behave towards them. Code-switching therefore also allows the speakers to express identity or even identities.

Singapore, for example, has four official languages plus many regional and ethnic dialects, and its population will switch languages throughout the day depending on the situation and the people with whom they are conversing. Unlike most other Asian nations however the Japanese are monolingual; they speak only Japanese. With a severely restricted immigration policy and less than 2% non-ethnically Japanese population, other than regional dialects, linguistic code-switching is rare in this homogeneous nation. English is the compulsory second language, but in spite of six years of English language lessons in school most Japanese have almost no opportunity to use it in daily life after graduation and consequently their English language ability is poor (Kobayashi, 2007).

The choice of language by the Japanese interviewees in my study therefore gives a useful indication of how and why Japanese women may use code-switching, and what messages they may be sending through their choice of language which goes beyond their actual words. There are of course purely practical reasons for using English. One is simple accommodation to the listener. Since I was an English woman interviewing Japanese women in England, there was probably some element of pressure on the woman to ‘accommodate’ me through code-switching. One interviewee also noted that since she was telling me about her life in England, it was easier to recount events in the language in which they had taken place. However, closer examination of the interviewee transcripts and recordings reveals other apparent incentives. I would like to consider three other motivations for the women’s code-switching: their cultural perceptions of the English language, their views on gender and hierarchy within the home and host cultures, and their efforts to express agency or to reject the power of another. To do this, I use the women’s own words as much as possible and all the quotations in this article were made by the women

in the English language. (Please refer to the interviewee profiles at the end of this paper for biographical details of the interviewees.)

### Japanese Cultural Perceptions of the English Language

When I asked Sachiko Adams if she would have agreed to an interview if I had been Japanese she replied:

Yes, but we have to speak Japanese. If I have to talk to a Japanese woman in Japanese, different, because some kinds of things at the back of my brain like have to be modest all the time and have to be polite, so those things are part of my education ... So English speaking is good for me to express my real, natural thinking. (Sachiko Adams - Interviewee)

There is a Japanese view that English speakers are direct and very open, frank and plain-speaking, not secretive and do not have *tatemae* and *honne* (a general, public truth versus private opinions). In actual fact, *tatemae* and *honne* certainly do exist in the English language, a fact that some of the interviewees only came to realize after several years and numerous misunderstandings. For example, Sakai in her own research project notes her frustration when British contacts did not refuse requests for interviews directly:

The Japanese are often discussed as people who hide behind *tatemae* (ideology or official saying) and *honne* (practice or real feeling), but I felt that the British people are more sophisticated in terms of hiding their real feelings when they want to say no. For the British, it appears too embarrassing to refuse directly and they find it more acceptable to refuse by the implications which lie behind their words and behaviour. In this sense, they are using *tatemae* and *honne*, as the Japanese do. (Sakai, 1997: 28)

What is relevant here is that this is not generally realized by Japanese learners of English. Consequently, when choosing the English language, the women were taking on its linguistic and cultural rules, or rather what they as Japanese perceived English linguistic and cultural rules to be.

[English is] evidently associated with an informal level of communication, perhaps influenced by the idea that Westerners, typically Americans, are supposed to be frank with each other ... [This] may explain the phenomenon several foreigners visiting Japan have noticed, namely that Japanese friends sometimes reveal the most intimate secrets about

themselves when they are speaking English. (Hendry, 1993: 143)

The language speaker takes on the cultural rules with the language. And the informal and open nature of English encouraged the women to utilize it to speak more openly than perhaps they would have done in Japanese.

I asked some of the interviewees, especially the ones I interviewed in both languages, how they felt about both English and Japanese.

I think partly the language, English, makes me act in a different way, yeah, act more freely and say what I like to say because English itself is much more direct than Japanese language so it's difficult to kind of hide my opinion with English while in Japanese it's much easier to be vague and ambivalent about things [laughing]. Yeah, so partly because language affects how you behave and what you say. (Naomi Yamamoto - Interviewee)

At the same time I had to understand that what the women said to me in English might well have differed from what they would have said to a Japanese interviewer in Japanese. In her famous 1960's study Susan Ervin-Tripp (cited in Gudykunst, 1994) asked bilingual Japanese women the same question on different days in Japanese and English and received different answers depending on the language spoken. In effect she claimed they were utilizing different 'mental channels'. This, Gudykunst (1994: 55) notes, "clearly indicates that different approaches to the world emerge when Japanese bilinguals think in Japanese and English." Ervin-Tripp's study raised the linguistic question of whether bilinguals think in language specific mindsets. When I asked the interviewees about this, they answered that they were not consciously thinking in a different way but were adapting to the cultural rules of what is acceptable and unacceptable to say in the host and home languages.

I don't know if it's more to do with culture or with language, they are anyway inseparable, but one thing that struck me was the way you say, 'Hi, how are you?' When someone asks me, 'How are you?' I would stop and try to answer the question but people sometimes walk away without waiting for my answer. And people here generally don't say negative things, don't give negative answers to 'How are you?' whereas in Japan people would say, 'Oh, I'm tired, I'm knackered, I'm depressed.' That's probably one of the common replies. (Atsumi Mori - Interviewee)

In England, “How are you?” is a greeting, not necessarily a genuine enquiry. We do not want to hear details of others’ misfortunes which may be embarrassing. Except amongst family or close friends our replies will always be upbeat. The interviewees had to learn this English cultural rule. Whereas in Japan:

In Japanese society I don’t think they are so protective about themselves. They can say they are weak but here [in England] I think people don’t really want to say they are weak either because they don’t think they are weak or because they just don’t want people to know unless they are very close to them. And also in Japanese society it’s probably a good thing if you show somebody that you have some weak points, like you can sympathise. If you think somebody’s perfect you can’t really speak to them. Like, for example, if you drink alcohol in Japan they make a fool of themselves and that’s a way of communication in a way, by showing that you aren’t perfect. (Atsumi Mori - Interviewee)

Takeo Doi (1973) demonstrated that one could not fully understand a culture without a knowledge of its language. It could equally be suggested that gaining knowledge of a language leads to an understanding of a culture. One may therefore be giving a ‘cultural response’ in one language which may differ from that in another. As the interviewer I therefore had to be aware that by adopting second language cultural rules, they would be giving second language opinions. This seemed to affect the interviews particularly when negotiating the cultural and linguistic rules concerning hierarchy and gender.

### Using the English language to avoid Japanese Linguistic Hierarchy

Japanese is a hierarchical language. For example, as one interviewee noted:

In Japan, if I talk with an elderly man, if the elderly man is a very traditional Japanese man, I have to be careful because if he says, ‘This is black’ [pointing to something white] I have to say, ‘Maybe.’ (Sachiko Adams - Interviewee)

You do not openly contradict someone of a higher rank than you, particularly a man.

Many of the interviewees mentioned the hierarchical natures of their relationships with other Japanese. Several of the interviewees stated that they had always to be aware of “other people’s eyes”. Other people’s opinions of you and those with whom you associate are vital to your reputation, and consequently to your ranking within the community and/or company hierarchy.

This applies as much to the expatriate Japanese community in the UK as it does in Japan. And it applied particularly to company wives, who are considered non-salaried employees of their husbands' companies. During my research, I heard several stories of women avoiding Japanese *fujinkai* (company wives' meetings) or other Japanese gatherings because they could not know beforehand the ranking of the other wives and consequently they risked embarrassment and loss of face, for both themselves and their husbands, if they used the wrong level of Japanese language. Moreover women carry their husbands' ranking even within the wives' community.

All the Japanese wives are ranked according to their husbands' job ranking. So the manager's wife is always sort of bossy and when she has to bake a cake or something and can't be bothered she orders the junior wife, 'You do it for me', and she has to do it. (Rimika Toyoda - Interviewee)

To refuse to was to risk ostracism from the Japanese expatriate community and to endanger one's husband's career. This was another reason why the women may have felt less anxious talking to an outsider; I was separated from their hierarchical community and anything they said to me was risk-free.

In such a hierarchical society, how do Japanese people maintain good relations? As a Japanese colleague noted:

Don't be too factual or direct or even clear when speaking to someone supposed to be superior to you. (Personal communication with a Japanese academic colleague - September 2000)

Indirectness is a common component of polite language, for example, in English "I wonder if you could possibly tell me the time" is less direct and more polite than "What's the time?" Indirectness is more common in British English than American English. However, the Japanese language can be even less direct.

Perhaps Japanese language itself is not cut out for direct way of communication. As you know, we traditionally don't present any key ideas or issues, let alone your view of it, at first; instead, we have to pick up some irrelevant topics to create a certain mood which the audience can easily share. Then we go on to get close to the topic we want to talk about, trying all the time not to sound aggressive, without thinking a bit about logic or coherence.

In English, you must try to present your main point clearly; but in Japanese, you must try to evoke some emotions. So I would not read this paragraph in Japanese, because it may sound too 'direct' - I might begin with safer topics such as weather. (Personal communication with a Japanese academic colleague - September 2000)

Vagueness, known as *aimai*, is useful in order to maintain group harmony and interpersonal relationships. In business meetings and in personal relationships, a general consensus by all parties is desirable. Such a consensus may only be arrived at if no-one expresses a strong, opposing view. So in Japanese one must be able to read between the lines and to pick up the tone of the conversation.

Written Japanese is OK but spoken language is little bit more problem. My friend said that Japanese language is more contextual ... I think you need to locate a particular expression in the context so in order to specify this meaning you cannot lose the context any time, so it could be interpreted in maybe three or four ways so you always need to check it with the listener. (Mitsuko Sato - Interviewee)

One thing you find with Japanese people is that we can't label our emotions ... you sort-of know from the tone of their voice that they're very upset or they're very angry. But they won't ever say, 'I'm really cross because ...' or 'I'm really hurt because so-and-so said something' so you sort-of have to read between the lines. (Sayuri Kawakami - Interviewee)

The style is not like, not directly, ... like, 'give the possibility'. (Sachiko Adams - Interviewee)

It was therefore very interesting to hear the women's opinions about switching to English:

Japanese language is very vague. They do not say straight and clearly. But here [in England] I can ask straight and clearly and I can speak as well. In that case not a lot of misunderstanding. That's much better. And when I communicate with English people I can ask clearly but when I speak Japanese language I can't be clear because maybe it works like, 'Oh it's not polite I ....ask **this** way. I'd better ask **this** way' but that means sometimes this person makes a misunderstanding. (Sachiko Adams - Interviewee)

Some interviewees got so used to a more direct way of speaking that they had problems on

trips home. Mitsuko spent some years back in Japan working for a company but found she couldn't understand what she was supposed to do since she expected colleagues to tell her directly.

Japanese style is very fuzzy and you need to interpret what he is or what she is actually expecting you [to do, to say] but I get used to more direct ways of addressing things ... I sometimes thought it's so straightforward dealing with foreigners but why it's not the case with Japanese people? (Mitsuko Sato - Interviewee)

In Japan, she worked for a time for a Japanese press club.

Many questions are too direct or a little bit embarrassing for business executives to say something ... For example, once I organised a meeting between a group of English journalists and a group of Japanese CEO's ... but Japanese business people are not really used to that kind of structured questions ... So when we were preparing some answers to the questionnaire I think we might have adjusted - we didn't directly interpret the given questionnaire into the Japanese version. (Mitsuko Sato - Interviewee)

Direct questions often do not translate well within either Japanese language or culture. They are considered rude and make Japanese people uncomfortable. Therefore Mitsuko translated the questions in a less direct, more polite way. In effect she was translating the language and the cultural context as well.

Within my own project interviews, answers to interview questions in the Japanese language tended to be long and vague, often rambling stories with no clear conclusion. In fact, with the Japanese transcripts I sometimes had to go back and listen to an excerpt whilst I read it, as I could only pick up the speaker's meaning from the tone and context in which it was expressed. In the English-language interviews the women voiced stronger emotions and gave more definite opinions. Indeed, I used many more excerpts from English interviews in my study because they tended to be more succinct and definite.

The one interview that was conducted completely in Japanese was the exception which proves the rule. The woman, a high-ranking company wife in her fifties, had spend more than twenty years living in the UK and the USA with her husband, the owner of a successful company. She apparently spoke fluent English, however, our interview was conducted entirely in Japanese.

Why? I had been introduced to this woman by a lower-ranking Japanese wife. The lower-ranking wife pointed out that if the higher-ranking wife had spoken to me in English in front of her and had made a mistake, she would have lost face. Therefore both in the interview and in social situations she spoke to me in Japanese, and consequently hierarchical rules applied. She spoke to me in very polite Japanese and the atmosphere was very much that of a young woman being taught by a senior. I found it impossible to guide the interview or to challenge her opinions any way. The interview was in fact a lesson.

Adopting the cultural rules of English along with the language allowed the women to distance themselves from the hierarchical rules of Japanese language and culture. In terms of code-switching they were using language to express an in-group solidarity with myself and/or the host culture in what they perceived as a less stratified society. (In fact English is neither totally gender nor hierarchy-free. In England, it is a prime indicator of class.) But as they were evading one linguistic hierarchy, they were also accessing a new one.

#### Using the English Language to combat Gender Discrimination

All languages exist in a linguistic hierarchy. Language and dialects suggest certain values, with their speakers expressing their backgrounds, their politics and their perceived identities. What values are attached to the English language?

In many parts of the world, English is the official trade language, the language in which Christian services are conducted, the language of government especially in former British colonies, and also the language of education in schools. In colonized nations, use of English suggested a link to the colonial government and conferred status and wealth on its speakers. Even today the English language has high status in the world linguistic hierarchy. It is a symbol of a professional, international outlook. It represents a 'high-prestige' language, one which may confirm status on the speaker. As Heller (1982: 109) notes, language plays a symbolic role in our lives, and a "negotiation in conversation is a playing out of a negotiation for position in the community at large." One of the factors in the choice of a language is how we expect to be treated by the listener especially in connection with the identity we are presenting. My Japanese female interviewees seemed to be utilizing this 'prestige' to fight gender discrimination in their professional lives.

Many of the interviewees in my study had originally come to England on student visas to study at language schools and universities. Most had worked for several years but continuing

gender discrimination in Japan tends to place women in low-level, short-term jobs from which they are expected to quit at marriage (Lam 1992; Hunter 1993; Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda 1995; Ogasawara 1998; Habu, 2000).

Because when the economy was good, [my] company had to advertise itself as a very progressive, liberal company and then the economy Psht! just went down and then they had to protect themselves and now they are saying they can't hire women. Typical, isn't it? ... When female students contact them, they say on the phone, 'Oh, sorry, the places have already been filled. We are recruiting only ten people this year but they have been filled.' When male students ring, they say 'Yeah, send us an application form or CV.' So it's still a kind of male chauvinistic attitude, isn't it? (Rimika Toyoda - Interviewee)

Many of the women felt that going abroad to study was the best way to continue their careers.

I knew that compared to Britain or the States [and] European countries, [Japan is] more conservative and then there are discriminations against female workers. (Naomi Yamamoto - Interviewee)

Naomi felt discriminated against because she was female. Her salary was different from that of her male co-workers, and she was denied a promised posting abroad. She started to think about going abroad because she was denied the career she badly wanted.

The English language can be an especially important tool for Japanese women, a means to combat some of the discrimination in the workplace. With education Japan's standard means of improving one's status, an overseas qualification in English language proficiency can help to give women an academic edge over male colleagues.

Especially for women I think because their opportunities to get a good job is, I think, more limited than men so English is one of the like tangible ... good tool, good arm to have. It is a good way to broaden your opportunities for hunting job, especially for women ... Generally speaking especially the business men, I think, want to be able to speak and read and write English but I think more women are interested in English because of this limited opportunity. (Naomi Yamamoto - Interviewee)

Japanese women are increasingly looking to internationalization to help them fight gender

discrimination in the Japanese workplace by increasing their skill set in comparison to the male workers, or to give them an escape route to a *gaiishikei* (a foreign company) or to a foreign country. Foreign-owned companies in Japan hold a special attraction for career-minded Japanese women since they are generally believed not to discriminate against women who are therefore able to gain promotion and build careers that would not be open to them in Japanese-owned companies (Ogasawara, 1998: 63)

The same is true for academic careers. Mamiko, a mature postgraduate student at university, became aware that a career in academe was impossible for anyone who has not graduated from an elite university and did not have access to male-dominated hiring networks known as 'waiting circles'.

[A] new professor came and new professor was in the same age as me. And he came through Tokyo University waiting circle so he didn't understand me. He himself told me, 'You are beyond my understanding. Why are you studying?.' Beyond my understanding? I think I can now understand their feeling because they went to Tokyo University and they were expected to become professional historians and they were exchanging their ideas and their information within the circle and then they saw me and I was at that time already in my mid-thirties, and I was trying to read feminist history on my own and then I wanted to continue but to their eyes I was strange. 'What does this woman want?' ... I wasn't able to say anything. I just [thought], 'Strange. Why is this man saying this to me?' But I didn't have words. I was just unhappy. (Mamiko Akiyama - Interviewee)

She decided that her only option was to pursue an academic career abroad.

I don't think people here [in England] really understand gender discrimination and ageism in Japan. When I said that, how I felt in Japan, I think most people here think that I'm telling the stories for gaining attentions from them. (Mamiko Akiyama - Interviewee)

One barrier to gaining authority in the workplace is Japanese women's speech. Japanese is a gendered language with male speech normally more authoritative and female speech soft, polite, indirect and, generally, powerless (Smith 1992: 59). Japanese women tend to use more polite, more honorific and humiliating (that is, more hierarchical) forms than men and it is still the case that some women can find it difficult to express themselves freely in Japanese - to defeminize their speech - without sounding rude or odd (See also Bornoff 1991: 131, and Endo in Fujimura-

Fanselow and Kameda 1995, on women's language). Smith states, "Japanese women who acquire positions of authority in nontraditional domains do, indeed, appear to experience linguistic conflict" (1992: 79), and she notes their attempts to empower (and defeminize) their speech through verbal strategies such as Motherese (talking to younger colleagues as if they were addressing children) and the Passive Power Strategy in which directives are given using polite language that would be used between those of a similar age (therefore lacking hierarchy). Neither of these strategies is used by men. There is another option: code-switching to English. This does not only apply to Japanese women overseas. Stanlaw (2000) notes that Japanese female songwriters tend to use English loanwords in their lyrics to express strong emotions that they feel unable to express in Japanese. Japanese women he believes, "will say certain things in English that they would hesitate to say in Japanese, at least in part because using a foreign language lifts them out of a Japanese context, liberating them from some of the conventions and discomfort that are attached to certain words or subjects in Japanese (Stanlaw, 2000: 96)."

It is well known that there are marked linguistic differences between men's speech and women's speech in Japan. Because of these differences, there are some things that are simply quite difficult for women to express using "pure" Japanese. In such cases, English or English loanwords offer a way to circumvent some of the sociolinguistic limitations of Japanese. They provide Japanese women not only with another "voice", an additional and different symbolic vocabulary with which to express their thoughts and feelings, but also with a rhetorical power that was unknown to them previously, and that is suited for the growing power and stature that women are gaining in Japanese society. (Stanlaw, 2000: 99)

Speaking English therefore gives women a tool to fight gender discrimination in two ways; by giving them an extra skill set that men (who must go straight into jobs from university and are unable to spend any length of time abroad for fear of losing ground in their careers) may not have. This may also gain them access to *gaishikei* where women suffer much less discrimination. Secondly, in conversation with others in English, they can talk as equals without considering gender rules.

So English is a prestige language and one which benefits Japanese women because they can gain agency by utilizing it, in particularly in academe and in the workplace. But I also noticed Japanese women using English to right the gender balance in their daily lives, in particular in public conversations with Japanese men. Japanese men and women who live long-term in England lead very different lives. Most men are sent to universities or to work in overseas

offices by their companies. They are often paid double salaries and all expenses, including top of the range cars, are paid (Hasegawa, 2007). Women, who as previously noted are unlikely to be sent abroad as company expatriates, must travel to England as individuals and pay all their own expenses (Habu, 2000). Since this often means getting comparatively poorly-paid jobs, living in shared accommodation and taking public transport the women are often “twice marginalized” (a term originally used by Ben-Ari and Yong, 2000, meaning they are marginalized both by their home and host cultures. See also Thang, MacLachlan and Goda, 2006 on the marginalization of Japanese women abroad). On the other hand they adapted more to the host culture and spoke much better English than the Japanese men. Many also had English boyfriends whereas the Japanese men, in line with company policy and their own personal needs, tended to be married.

I said ‘Look, I have decided to quit my job and then I’m going to England to study for two years’ and then that *Todai* (Tokyo University) [guy], said ‘Oh, Ri-chan, that’s bullshit. You know if you really want to go abroad, I can introduce any of my friends, colleagues from my bank because they are, within three years, going abroad and we all don’t want to go abroad on our own. Because we will be very lonely.’ Cowards, aren’t they? ‘So we need a wife. So I can introduce you to anyone. Just tell me who you like.’ And then I said to him in front of everyone, ‘You know what? You are such a nasty person.’ (Rimika Toyoda - Interviewee)

Consequently relationships between Japanese men and women in England were not always as friendly as one might expect of a group-orientated nation in a foreign country. Speaking English with and in front of Japanese men, the women could avoid the use of gendered and hierarchical language and did not have to behave towards the men as they would have had to if they had been in Japan. Sometimes it even suggested a form of revenge. At a party in England I came upon two Japanese female friends speaking in English, in conversation with a Japanese man. The women said they preferred English because they could speak more clearly, especially about academic matters. When I later mentioned this conversation to the Japanese man he snorted with derision. It was simply a power game, he said. English is a form of brand goods, like a Prada bag or a Rolex watch. Since English is associated with a progressive, attractive, open, international culture, those who can speak it gain status, and status is an important issue for many of the female interviewees. The women were able to speak with the Japanese man in a less polite, more direct way, a way which gave them more power, especially as the man (a company worker with a new car and a house paid for by his company) was struggling with the English language.

## Conclusion

Wardhaugh notes, “Your language choices are part of the social identity you claim for yourself (2002: 95).” Kelsky (2001: 87) and Bailey (2006: 109) discuss the *atarashii jibun*, the ‘new self’ that can be accessed through the English language. Speaking English, I was told time and time again by interviewees, is like wearing a mask at a masked ball, not for the purpose of concealing your identity but to give you the freedom to be **more** yourself, to express sides of your personality that must generally remain hidden within your native culture. English may be spoken without consideration of gender (the speaker’s or the listener’s) so those gender rules may be ignored, as may hierarchical rules since English is viewed as a language in which one speaks with directness and equality, looking the listener in the eye. Ability in the English language also gives the speaker access to an international culture with different cultural and behavioural rules.

Through my oral history study I came to understand how the cultural and linguistic rules unique to every language affect what you say and how you behave. Having ability in more than one language brings greater freedoms because it encourages adaptation to more than one culture and more than one sense of identity. As an English person, I was concerned with what my interviews with Japanese women might be lacking, a concern that a Japanese interviewer would not have. However, I came to realize that the interviews which crossed languages and cultures were more representative of the women’s actual migration stories. Their migration experiences in England, their efforts to adapt and their moments of resistance, were talking place in two languages and two cultures, in effect a ‘Third Culture’. Interviewing cross-culturally was an ideal way to express it. I believe the true strength of cross-cultural interviewing is that it can help to represent the real cultural and linguistic contradictions of the Japanese women’s migration experiences.

### **Interviewee Profiles of Women quoted in this Article**

All names are pseudonyms.

SACHIKO ADAMS (born 1959) married her Japanese husband after graduation from university. After eight years she gave birth to a daughter, Rumi, and then divorced. She began teaching English at a language school where she later became president and met her second husband, Malcolm, a British man. The couple decided to move to England in 1995 for her daughter’s education. She is currently self-employed, teaching Japanese and Japanese culture in schools and colleges, and is also studying for an MA in Asian religions.

MAMIKO AKIYAMA (born 1951) is an academic and lecturer from a city in central Japan. She

entered university in Kyoto in 1970 at a time of student demonstrations, in which she took part. After graduation in 1974 she married and had two children. When she was 32, she took another degree, this time in British history, followed by a master's degree in British Women's History and began a doctorate in women's history. Feeling she was getting little academic support because she was a housewife and mature student, she applied for a scholarship and came to England in 1991 to take a master's degree and then a doctorate.

SAYURI KAWAKAMI (born 1964) is a full-time housewife and mother of two married to a Japanese man who works for a finance house in London. Her parents were also expatriates and she was brought up in New York, England and Hong Kong. After graduation from an English-language university in Tokyo, Sayuri worked for three years. Following her marriage, she accompanied her husband to New York and then to London in 1990. Wanting to remain in England, her husband switched companies. Whilst in New York she completed an MA in Art History at Columbia University.

ATSUMI MORI (born 1970) is a doctoral student from Tokyo University, interviewed whilst doing another MA in England. She worked briefly for a *gaishikei* (a foreign company) before becoming a postgraduate student. Having spent time in England as an exchange student in her high school days, she returned on a postgraduate scholarship, motivated by the fact that no-one in her Japanese faculty seemed to have a serious attitude to doing a PhD. She is single with no children.

MITSUKO SATO (born 1967) is an university graduate with a BA and MA from elite universities in Tokyo who, after working at a Japanese company, came to England in 1995 on a scholarship and gained another MA and a PhD. She is single with no children.

RIMIKA TOYODA (born 1964) is an academic at an English university. After graduating from an elite university in Japan, she worked for several years before quitting and moving to England in 1990 where she gained a postgraduate diploma, an MA and a PhD. She now works in London as an academic researcher. She is single with no children.

NAOMI YAMAMOTO (born 1968) is a graduate of a Japanese university for foreign language studies. She quit her job at 28, did voluntary work in Africa for six months and came to England in 1998 to do an MA. She is single with no children.

## References

- Bailey, Keiron (2006). Marketing the Eikaiwa Wonderland: Ideology, Akogare, and Gender Alterity in English Conversation School Advertising in Japan. *Society and Space*, 24 (1), 105-130.
- Ben-Ari Eyal and Yong Yin Fong Vanessa (2000). Twice Marginalized: Single Japanese Female Expatriates in Singapore. *In Japan in Singapore: Cultural Occurrences and Cultural Flows*. Eyal

- Ben-Ari and John Clammer (Eds.), (pp82-111). London: Curzon.
- Bornoff, Nicholas (1991). *Pink Samurai: An Erotic Exploration of Japanese Society*, London: Harper Collins.
- Burton (2006). Issues in Cross-Cultural Interviewing: Japanese Women in England. In *The Oral History Reader*, Second Edition. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (Eds.), (pp166-176). London: Routledge.
- Doi, Takeo (1973). *The Anatomy of Dependence*, Tokyo: Kodansha International.
- Fujimura-Fanselow, Kumiko, and Kameda Atsuko (1995). *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the Past, Present and Future*, New York: The Feminist Press.
- Gal, S (1988). The Political Economy of Code Choice. In *Codeswitching*. Heller, M, (Ed.), Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Gudykunst, William B, and Nishida, Tsukasa (1994). *Bridging Japanese / North American Differences*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Habu, Toshie (2000). The Irony of Globalization: The Experience of Japanese Women in British *Higher Education*. *Higher Education*, 39, 43-66.
- Hasegawa, Eiko (2007), Reconfiguring Boundaries: Expatriate Japanese Women in Shanghai. *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, 15. (Electronic journal).
- Heller, Monica. S. (1982). Negotiations of Language Choice in Montreal. In *Language and Social Identity*. Gumperz, John, J. (Ed.), (pp.108-118), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hendry, Joy (1993). *Wrapping Culture: Politeness, Presentation and Power in Japan and other Societies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hunter, Janet (Ed.) (1993). *Japanese Women Working*, London: Routledge.
- Kelsky, Karen (2001). *Women on the Verge: Japanese Women, Western Dreams*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kobayashi, Yoko (2007). Japanese Working Women and English Study Abroad. *World Englishes*, Volume 26, Issue 1, 62-71.
- Lam, Alice (1992). *Women and Equal Employment Opportunities in Japan*. Nissan Occasional Paper Series No 16, Nissan Institute of Employment Studies, Oxford.
- Lam, Alice C. L. (1992). *Women and Japanese Management, Discrimination and Reform*. London: Routledge.
- Ogasawara, Yuko (1998). *Office Ladies and Salaried Men: Power, Gender and Work in Japanese Companies*. California: University of California Press.
- Sakai, Junko (1997). *Narrating our Cultures in the Floating World: Working Lives in Japanese Banks in the City of London since the 1970's*, PhD Thesis No. DX201697, University of Essex.
- Smith, Janet S. (1992). Women in Charge: Politeness and Directives in the Speech of Japanese Women. *Language in Society*, Volume 21, 59-82.
- Stanlaw, James (2000). Open Your File, Open Your Mind: Women, English, and Changing Roles and Voices in Japanese Pop Music. In *Japan Pop! Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture*, Craig,

Timothy J, (Ed.), (pp. 75-100). New York: M E Sharpe.

Thang, Leng Leng, MacLachan, Elizabeth and Goda, Miho (2006). Japanese Women Working in Singapore. *In Japan and Singapore: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Tsu, Yun Hui (Ed.). Singapore: McGraw-Hill.

Wardhaugh, Ronald. (2002). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, Fourth Edition, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.