Negotiating Multicultural and Multilingual Identities
An Ethnographic Study of a Cambodian Boy in Japan

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This study examines the experiences of one Cambodian child's Japanese language learning and heritage language maintenance, and explores his emerging multicultural and multilingual identities. Studies in Western contexts claim that linguistic and social identities have a great influence on bilingual language use, and consequently influence second language development and first language maintenance. Other studies argue that in multilingual settings, individuals negotiate their identities through discursive practices when positioned in particular ways by others. Through longitudinal observation of the Cambodian boy, this study shows that the child's identities are multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change. This project contributes to the field of second language education and global education by bringing together these various strands so as to improve policies and pedagogies to provide educational equality for multicultural children in Japan.

本稿では、一人のカンボジアの子の事例に焦点を当て、彼の日本語学習、継承語保持、そしてアイデンティティ形成を考察する。欧米の文献では、言語的・社会的アイデンティティは、バイリンガルの言語使用に多大な影響を与え、その結果第二言語発達と第一言語保持にも影響を与えると主張されてきた。他の文献では、多言語の環境で個人は他人に特定の位置づけをされると、繰り返し起こる事象を通して、個人のアイデンティティを交渉するとも主張されている。本稿では、カンボジアの男の子を長期的に観察した結果、子供のアイデンティティがダイナミックで、かつ多様で、変化するものであることがわかった。この研究は、複数の視点を統合することにより、第二言語教育とグローバル教育の分野に貢献し、日本に住む多文化を持つ児童に公平な教育を提供できるよう政策や教育法を改善できる可能性を示唆している。

Introduction

In 1987, a tragic incident occurred in one Tokyo suburb. A Cambodian refugee who was suffering from difficulties in making a living in Japan killed his wife and three children. This incident is related on the website of Kanagawa Junior College,[1] the university where this study was conducted. The fact that the college has such an anecdote displayed on its website to introduce how their Volunteer Home Tutoring program was started reflects their commitment to making a difference in their community. Similar local volunteer groups exist in every city where there are a large number of foreign residents. Part-time Japanese teachers are also placed in public schools where there is an urgent need for language minority children's language support, often with one teacher commuting to multiple schools. If a school is 'fortunate' enough to have more than a

certain number of foreign students, it is granted funding to hire an extra teacher with proper teaching qualifications to offer a Japanese language class. However, the Ministry of Education and the local governments' efforts are still not always sufficient, and problems with school-aged children of foreign descent not enrolling in schools have emerged (Miyajima & Ōta, 2005; Sakuma, 2006), as well as other related problems such as crimes associated with foreign residents, as exemplified in the story above. Given such a state of affairs, local efforts to interact with and support foreign residents play a significant role in achieving a multicultural and multilingual society with equality. This paper is part of a broader longitudinal project whose primary aim is to examine the lives and linguistic experiences of the non-Japanese residents who learn Japanese through interacting with local people in such a volunteer program. In this article, I focus on one child from a Cambodian family residing in the Kantō region, and examine how he develops and displays aspects of his multicultural and multilingual identities.

Diversity in Japan

Japan is a nation accustomed to viewing itself as homogeneous, with many people maintaining that the society has just one language and one ethnicity. However, this is merely an ideological belief. With the repatriation of Chinese war orphans and their families, the largest minority group in Japan is now the Chinese community, surpassing the community of Korean descendants which continued to be the largest group historically up until 2007. There are also various communities of westerners, including those who have become naturalized Japanese citizens. The Ainu (a native ethnic group living mainly in Hokkaido) has always contributed to the diversity in Japan, although the number of speakers of the language is limited. Residents of Indian descent have reached 5,000 in metropolitan areas such as Kobe, Yokohama, and Okinawa (Long, 1998). Many refugees from Southeast Asia have been naturalized as Japanese citizens, contributing to the difficulty in estimating their number. Foreign workers who support the labor force in Japan are mainly Japanese Brazilians and Peruvians. Increasing numbers of Chinese and Filipina women are entering into international marriages with Japanese men. A summary of the most recent demographic figures is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Number of foreign residents in Japan (Ministry of Justice, 2007)

Country	China	Korea	Brazil	Philippines	Peru	Others	Total
Number	606,889	593,489	316,967	202,592	59,696	373,340	2,152,973*
Percent	28.2	27.6	14.7	9.4	2.8	17.3	100

*1.69 percent of total population

This massive influx of people into Japan has created a crack in the myth of Japanese cultural and linguistic homogeneity (Noguchi, 2001). A number of studies have examined the linguistic experiences and educational needs of minority children in Japan (Noguchi & Fotos, 2001: Yamamoto, 2000). However, most of these are based on one-time surveys only and are therefore limited in depth compared to some of the longitudinal research conducted in US bilingual contexts (e.g. Schecter & Bayley, 2002; Zentella, 1997). A few Japanese researchers have, however, conducted longitudinal ethnographic studies on language minority students and bilingual education contexts in Japan (Kanno, 2007; Morita, 2002; Ōta, 2000), and such inquiries addressing more diverse population groups can contribute to achieving greater educational equality for multicultural and multilingual communities in Japan.

Learner Identity Studies

In order to achieve a harmonious multicultural and multilingual society, people must accept diversity along with different languages and cultures. Understanding identity issues, which are closely related to languages and cultures, can contribute to such a goal. A few researchers have explored the relationships between identity and language development and use in Japanese contexts (Long, 1998; Miyata, 1995; Oketani, 1999). However, 'identity' in their view is a belief and attitude possessed by the individual, and it is a self image. Such studies consider identity as fixed and rigid rather than fluid and multiple. Identity should be viewed in a different manner, especially to examine multilingual settings where groups and individuals "(re)negotiate their identities in response to hegemonic language ideologies which demand homogeneity" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p.5). Therefore, many researchers view social identities not as constants but as fluid and communicatively constructed through linguistic interaction (Gumperz, 1982; Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Weedon, 1987). In recent years, such research has led to a more ethnographically-oriented sociolinguistic approach toward the second language acquisition process, which has been examined in a variety of contexts (Haneda, 2005; Menard-Warwick, 2005, 2008; Norton, 1995; Ochs, 1993; Ogulnick, 1998; Siegal, 1996). Many of these studies claim that identities have a great influence on bilingual language use, and consequently influence second language development and first language maintenance. For example, some practices may position individuals in particular ways, even when individuals choose to position themselves differently (Davies & Harré, 1990), and this may place limitations on their 'right to speak' (Norton, 1995), either in their first or second language. This paper adopts such a view of identity as a flexible entity constructed and negotiated discursively in the process of second language development.

Research Questions

In addressing the questions of Japanese language learning and heritage language maintenance in relation to learners' identities, I formulated the following questions:

1) How and to what extent do multicultural children construct, display, and negotiate their multiple identities living in Japan?
2) Are there opportunities for children to express their multilingual identities and use their heritage language?
3) What roles do the volunteer home tutors play in the construction of children's multicultural and multilingual identities?

Description of the Setting

Kanagawa Junior College Volunteer Home Tutoring program began with students acting as babysitters or volunteer teachers at Sunday classes serving Indochinese refugees in the community. After a while, this evolved into a program where students would stop by the refugees' homes after their classes on the way home and help the children with homework and studying for school as well as teaching Japanese to their family members. In 1988, three Cambodian families living in the city participated, and the applications increased every year after that. In December 2005, 157 families, with a total of 291 family members, participated in this program. In addition, recently the program has been serving families who live outside the city. The participants' countries of origin reflect the recent Japanese immigration policy amendments of accepting foreign workers and refugees: Peru, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Brazil, Bolivia, and China (in

descending order). Junior college students are the main volunteer tutors in the program, and graduating students are replaced by incoming students. The program emphasizes the importance of personal and reliable relationships between the tutors and the family, and students are to take initiative in creatively teaching Japanese. Tutoring is available from Monday to Friday, with one hour sessions between 5 pm and 7pm arranged by consultation. Each one year term lasts for 9 months, with the first semester from April to July, and the second semester from September to January. Each family may have tutoring from one to five times a week. One-to-one tutoring is the program's principle teaching method, so many families have more than one tutor. In 2004 the program was chosen as a 'Distinguished Supporting Program for College Education' by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Furthermore, the program aims to play a role in bridging the gap between multicultural children's homes, schools, and the communities (Miyazaki, Miyamoto, & Arita, 2009).

Ethnographic Methods

From October 2007 to April 2008, I participated in the Volunteer Home Tutoring program as a tutor to four families. Two of the families were Peruvian, one was Vietnamese, and one was Cambodian. I made weekly visits to each of the families, and during each visit I spent one to two hours studying with the children and a parent. The focal participants of the broader project were the children in the families and in this paper I focus particularly on the Cambodian family.[2] The family had four children; three daughters and a son. The first daughter, in her twenties, was married to a Cambodian man. The second daughter spoke both Japanese and Cambodian well, and the third daughter was stronger in Japanese but spoke a little Cambodian. The six year-old son, 'Taro', was also stronger in Japanese than Cambodian.

Overall, those who came to Japan at a young age and those who were born in Japan spoke better Japanese and were on the verge of losing their heritage language. Besides the fact that these four families reflected a diverse distribution of countries, they were particularly interesting to study since their children had struggles balancing their bilingual identities, according to the staff of the program.

Following the principles and guidelines of ethnographic research (Merriam, 2001; Spradley, 1980; Watson-Gegeo, 1988), I focused on a few individuals' behavior as representatives of the group. Also, their behavior in micro-contexts was seen as being embedded in larger macro-contexts. Finally, although my data collection was guided by a theoretical framework directing my attention to certain kinds of research questions, each situation investigated was understood in its own terms to generate grounded theory (Strauss, 1987). Following these principles, I wrote expanded notes after each tutoring session, took detailed fieldnotes while observing participants' schools and classes, and conducted informal and formal interviews with participants, family members, and school staff. I also collected relevant documents and other materials from the settings. I continued tutoring through April, 2008, and paid follow-up visits in the fall of 2008. On-site research over a total of eight months was conducted for this ethnographic study in order to understand the participants' cultures and lives, in which language learning and expression of identities can be observed.

Expressing Multicultural and Multilingual Identities

The multicultural children in this study all had truly unique characteristics and backgrounds. For this article, Taro was chosen as representative of the sort of child I worked with—one who expresses aspects of his multicultural identity while speaking his

heritage language. As noted above, Taro was a six year-old Cambodian boy who was born in Japan. At the time of the data-collection he was in the final year of pre-school, starting Japanese elementary school in the spring of 2008. His father, Ryo, came to Japan as a refugee in 1990, and later arranged to have his wife and three daughters come to join him in 1995. Taro's parents were in their forties, the two elder daughters were in their twenties, and the youngest was a teenager. The eldest daughter was married and her Cambodian husband was living with them. The family had been participating in the Volunteer Home Tutoring program since 2005, and two to four student tutors came to their home three days a week. On the days I visited the family, Taro's mother, Botum, studied Japanese with me while Taro played games or read books in the same room. The family had many Cambodian visitors who lived in their neighborhood. Botum's neighbor and friend, Samnang, frequently joined in the Japanese study, and her daughter, Kolab, often took care of Taro. He called Kolab 'Mama' because she often took him to and from nursery school, to the extent that other people thought she really was his mother.

Taro's heritage language, Cambodian, was close to his heart. When asked how important his language was to him he responded, *"Daisuki de, dakedo shaberenai. Dakara, neru toki ittsumo naiteru."* [I love it, but I can't speak it. So when I'm in bed I always cry.][3] However, he did not always feel this way toward Cambodian. Ryo and Botum recalled the days when Taro came home and said, "I don't want to speak Cambodian":[4]

Ryo:	*Yoku aru no wa hoikuen ni itta toki ni tatoeba, Kambojia-go hanasu to, kodomo ni, tomodachi wa 'e? omae, nani shaberu no? Wakan nai yo.'*[5]
	[Often times when he went to nursery school, for example, when he spoke Cambodian, to our children, his friends (said), "What? What are you speaking? I don't understand."]
Botum:	*xxx[6] tara xxx Kambojia-go no shaberu kara, demo ne tomodachi, 'nan de o-mae Ei-go shaberu no?'* (laugh)
	[If xxx because he speaks Cambodian, but his friends (say), "Why are you speaking English?" (laugh)]

<One turn omitted>

| Ryo: | *Sō, dakara kekkō tomodachi ga iwareru to hazukashii naru n desu ne. Amari hanasanai mitai desu yo, Kambojia-go. Kekkō, kono koto wa (shōgeki o) uketa rashii desu yo, kore wa.* |
| | [Yes, so when his friends say that sort of thing, he becomes pretty embarrassed. He does not seem to speak much Cambodian. It seems like (he) got quite a shock from that.] |

Not only did Taro's friends question his multilingual identity by asking "Why?", but they asked the wrong question: "Why are you speaking *English*?" This incident discouraged Taro from further speaking Cambodian and therefore prevented him from expressing that aspect of his identity. When asked which language he was better in, he responded, *"Nihon-go? Dakedo mae wa, Kambojia ga tokui datta. Suggoi, san-sai…yon-sai made. De, go-sai ni nattara Nihon-go ni nacchatta."* [Japanese? But before, Cambodia(n) was better. Really, until three…four. And, when I turned five it became Japanese (regretfully)]. It was unclear whether this age period, which Taro perceived as his shift of language proficiency from Cambodian to Japanese, coincided with the time when the incident mentioned above happened. However, he was socialized into the norms of a monolingual context, where

he felt that the choice to speak his heritage language and express his multicultural identity was being invalidated by his peers.

Contrary to this past incident, at the time I observed him Taro was highly motivated to speak Cambodian and express his multilingual identity. During the sessions with the Japanese tutors, he shifted between various roles as a Cambodian language learner/expert and Japanese language expert/novice learner. The following passage from my fieldnote entry, dated October 25, 2007, gives a hint of what the tutoring sessions were like, and how Taro displayed certain aspects of his multiple identities.

> I was tutoring Botum and Sann, Taro's brother-in-law, while Taro practiced Cambodian with Kolab using an animal picture book. After I finished tutoring Botum and Sann, I read the book 'Frog and Toad are Friends' with Taro, and everyone else listened to the story. I asked him if he wanted to explain it to Botum, Sann, and Kolab, who did not understand. However, he did not want to. "*Kibishii toka iu kara.*" [Because you say like (I am) tough (on them)]. Apparently, he did not like it when I said "you are tough" when he corrected Botum reading hiragana with inappropriate pronunciation the week before. However, he remembered that there was a similar picture in the animal book, and showed it to me. Everyone else was curious to know what it was in Japanese. I said, "*Kaeru.*" [Frog]. However, they did not agree that it was simply a 'frog.' "*Gamagaeru?*" [(Is it) a toad?] They all nodded in agreement. I asked Taro how to say 'toad' in Cambodian. With Kolab's help, he pronounced the Cambodian word. When I said I wanted to learn Cambodian too, he suggested I come on Saturday mornings when Botum taught Cambodian to him and other children in the neighborhood.[7]

Here Taro openly practiced Cambodian with his neighbor friend in front of a Japanese tutor. He played the role of a 'novice Cambodian speaker' being helped by an expert Cambodian speaker. Once the tutor introduced the Japanese book, he switched his role to a 'fluent Japanese reader', and his identity as a 'fluent Japanese speaker' was validated by the tutor's request to explain the story to the rest of the 'novice Japanese users.' However, he refused to play a language broker's role[8] not wanting to be positioned as a 'tough expert.' With the tutor's next request to say the word in Cambodian, he switched back to his 'novice Cambodian speaker,' and accepted Kolab's help in pronouncing the word accurately. Learning of the tutor's wish to learn Cambodian, Taro gave out information on his Cambodian language maintenance class without hesitation. In the following excerpt, dated January 17, 2008, Taro tried to play an 'intermediate Cambodian speaker' role by engaging in language brokering, but without much success.

> Botum brought me green tea and homemade spring rolls. They were delicious and I asked what was in them. Botum did not know how to say the ingredients in Japanese and asked Taro in Cambodian. He said, "*Sōmen.*" [(Japanese) thin wheat noodles.] "*Chigau. Bīfun, jagaimo.*" [No. (Chinese) Rice noodles, and potatoes.], Botum added. Taro kept on going, "*Ninjin!*" [Carrots!] Botum asked another word in Cambodian. "*Buta no mimi!*" [Pig's ears!] No. "*Buta no o-heso!*" [Pig's belly button!] Taro showed his belly. Botum laughed and explained to me in Japanese. "*Kambojia-go de 'nezumi no mimi.' Demo, yasai. Sensei, shitteru?*" [In Cambodian it is 'Mouse's ears.' But, (it's a) vegetable. Teacher, do you know it?] She went in the

kitchen to show me what it was. She took a big bag out of the cupboard. It looked like dried *shiitake* mushrooms to me. She also had a bag of pickled vegetables for me to take home. Botum asked me if it was '*kusai*' [stinky]. (Several lines omitted) She put it in another bag for me. Taro explained to me, "*Ninjin toka kyūri toka haittete oishii yo!*" [There are carrots and cucumbers in it and it is yummy!] It is called '*cherowa*' in Cambodian. I wrote it down in my notebook.

Often times, Botum treated Taro as an 'expert Japanese speaker' and asked him for help to translate Cambodian words into Japanese for me. Similarly, in the above example, Botum asked Taro for his help to find the Japanese translation of a Cambodian word for a vegetable which was in the spring rolls Botum made. He playfully engaged in our conversation, and gave the tutor possible translations of the vegetable in question. Not only was he unaware of the appropriate translation of the vegetable, he incorrectly translated 'mouse' as 'pig' and 'ear' as 'belly button'. However, the fact that he could not give an accurate translation in Japanese did not discourage him. He went on to explain the next Cambodian food item Botum had offered me, 'pickled vegetables.' I wrote it down in my notebook, and the following week when Taro introduced me to another food item, he encouraged me to continue this practice, saying "*Nōto ni kakeba?*" [Why don't you write it in your notebook?] Now Taro was playing the role of a 'Cambodian language expert.' On January 24, 2008, when I wrote the following fieldnote entry, Taro spoke Cambodian in a much longer sentence level, this time clearly a successful example of playing a language brokering role.

> Botum and I were practicing progressive forms when the word '*niwa* [garden/yard]' appeared in the text. She did not know what it meant and I tried to explain it to her in simple words, "It's outside the house with trees and flowers…" Taro who was playing a game next to us was actually listening, and started to explain the word 'garden' in Cambodian. This was the first time I had heard him speak such long sentences in Cambodian. When he finished explaining, I said to him, "Did you just explain (the word) in Cambodian? Wow!" He showed a proud face, and leaned closer to us to look in the textbook. Botum looked delighted too, and a big smile came to her face as she looked at Taro. That night Taro corrected Botum's pronunciation or grammatical errors a few times more than usual.

Unlike the previous examples where he simply gave a word to word translation, in the above instance Taro explained a Japanese word through the extended use of Cambodian. It was clear from the context that he was trying to help Botum comprehend the meaning of 'garden' in Cambodian. Why did Taro not give a simple translation of 'garden' in Cambodian? Later I learned that the word for 'garden' and 'park' are the same, which was causing a little confusion for Botum's comprehension of the text. Therefore, Taro's attempt to provide an explanation for this specific word was certainly a success, and my exaggerated praise and Botum's proud facial expression encouraged Taro to further play a 'Cambodian-Japanese expert' role that evening. However, as his first day at elementary school approached, Taro became anxious about how his Japanese study would affect his Cambodian. I noted his anxiety about losing Cambodian in the following fieldnote excerpt, dated February 12, 2008.

"*Shōgakkō ni haittara Kambojia-go wasurechau.*" [When I start elementary school, I will forget Cambodian (regretfully).] I asked him about the Saturday study session. "But you are studying Cambodian on Saturdays, right?" "*Un, demo…*" [Yeah, but…] He did not sound very confident about maintaining his heritage language. Botum wanted to study some Kanji characters off a document to fill in personal information such as name and address, and said something in Cambodian to shoo him off. I pointed at the characters 電話(*denwa*) but she did not know what they were. I told her that the word meant 'telephone' and she wanted to copy it in her notebook. It was too small to see, so I wrote how to write it bigger and step by step on a different sheet of paper. Taro was watching me writing the character carefully. "*Boku mo benkyō shitaku nacchatta.*" [Now I want to study too.] He left the room and came back with a magazine and opened up a page with math problems. (Several lines omitted.) Taro still could not add large numbers in tens, so I taught him how. "Add the right side first, and then…" Taro asked me, "*Migi tte docchi?*" [Which is right?] Botum needed my attention too, and I looked into her notebook to make sure had she copied the characters for 'telephone' correctly. Taro called me to ask for further instructions, "*Sensei? Sensei!*" [Teacher? Teacher!] Now Botum said something in Cambodian, perhaps telling him that she was the one studying with me now. Taro complained. "*Mō ichi-nensei da mon.*" [But I will be in first grade (soon).] I consoled him by saying, "Let's study after Mom." He agreed and remained quiet until Botum finished copying the characters she wanted to learn.

From this extract we can see that Taro was beginning to show more interest in the sort of things that were taught at school, and was eager to make an early start with it. He competed with Botum to get the tutor's time and attention, and reasoned with them that he 'will be in elementary school soon,' and should be the one receiving the tutor's instruction. He often talked about starting elementary school, and was looking forward to it. However, he had some anxieties about it too. He had already experienced 'forgetting Cambodian' as he grew older ('when I turned five' in Taro's words), and in his mind, 'starting elementary school' meant he would be 'forgetting Cambodian' even more. From his experience in nursery school, he understood all too well that "*Nihon-jin Kambojia-go wakan nai.*" [Japanese people don't understand Cambodian],[9] and he would not be speaking Cambodian at school. However, despite his anxieties, he sought opportunities to speak Cambodian even at school.

Taro's public elementary school serves a large population of foreign descent students (16% of the total school population). I visited his class one day in April on the first day that the Cambodian language assistance teacher was introduced to Taro's class. When she came over to him, he asked her directly, "*Kambojia-go, hanaseru no?*" [Can you speak Cambodian?] When she nodded quietly, he said to her, "*Daijōbu da yo. Ore, wakatteru kara.*" [I'm all right. I understand (Cambodian).] as if she was worried about his Cambodian. Later, again, he proudly repeated to her, "*Ore ne, Kambojia-go, shabereru yo.*" [I can speak Cambodian, you know.] After her observation of Taro and during the interview,[3] she noted that he was an exceptional child in terms of his attitude toward speaking Cambodian. She told me that when she tries to talk to other Cambodian children in their language, normally they respond in Japanese just by saying "*A, sono kotoba shitteru.*" [Oh, I know that word], whereas, Taro actually responded to her in Cambodian in class. Even though the Cambodian language assistance teacher's responsibility was to aid children who are weak in Japanese and can benefit from

instruction in Cambodian, and she evaluated Taro as not needing such assistance, he sought every opportunity to speak Cambodian to someone legitimate who understood his language, even in the realm of his Japanese classmates, classroom, and school.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on excerpts from the fieldnotes of my visits to the Cambodian home and the child's school, and responses from interviews conducted between October 2007 and April 2008 I have presented a variety of evidence that helps address the study's research questions. In the beginning I was told about the episode of Taro telling his father about not wanting to speak Cambodian after coming home from nursery school. During my first several weeks of observations, Taro gave me the impression of being able to speak Cambodian only in one word utterances. However, in my later observations, I realized that he could actually speak in extended sentences at the discourse level. When he started going to nursery school, he might have been discouraged from speaking Cambodian, realizing that none of his peers spoke any language besides Japanese. Perhaps due to his parents' extra effort in teaching him Cambodian on Saturdays with his Cambodian friends, fortunately this rejection of his heritage language did not persist. He even expressed his anxiety about maintaining his Cambodian once he started elementary school. These observations show the dynamic and multiple nature of Taro's identity, and the struggles he went through. Not wanting to speak Cambodian at nursery school, or being anxious about speaking Cambodian at elementary school might tend to lead him to express (or profess) a monolingual identity at school. On the other hand, when he was at home he could safely express his multilingual identity, even in front of the Japanese tutors who were outsiders to his Cambodian community. Taro's identities are also subject to change. Before the incident at the nursery school, he did not have to think about when and with whom to use Cambodian. However, after being socialized into Japanese nursery school, he had to think about when to perform his multilingual identity versus his monolingual identity. Now he expressed his multilingual identity freely at home. Starting school in April 2008, he even sought opportunities to speak Cambodian and express his multicultural identities to a Cambodian language assistance teacher. These instances show how Taro's identities are constructed discursively through participation in various discourses. In sum, Taro sought opportunities to display his multicultural identities and speak his heritage language at home and at school to different degrees due to various constraints. Hence, his identities are multiple, a site of struggle, and are subject to change (Weedon, 1987).

Finally, opportunities for Taro to express his multicultural identities at home in front of the Japanese tutors are invaluable. As illustrated above, the Japanese tutor[11] engages Taro in his multilingual identity performance by encouraging him to speak Cambodian, by asking him for Cambodian-Japanese translations, by praising his Cambodian speech, and by eliciting his attitudes and beliefs toward his own language learning. Japanese tutors who visited his home regularly gave opportunities for Taro to comfortably and safely express his multicultural identities without worrying about anyone accusing him of speaking a language unfamiliar to Japanese people. Perhaps these discursive practices gave Taro confidence to carry on his multiple identities beyond the realm of his home, to his school environment. How and to what extent he will negotiate his multiple identities through his experience of participation in Japanese public elementary school, and how his heritage language will develop, are questions that must be left to future longitudinal observations of Taro.

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Notes

[1] The name of the college and all names of persons in this paper are pseudonyms.

[2] The Peruvian family had a daughter in college who was stronger in Japanese but spoke Spanish fluently and a son in first grade who was stronger in Japanese than Spanish. The second Peruvian family had a son who was a third year junior high school student who spoke better Japanese than Spanish, and a daughter who went to nursery school. The daughter was stronger in Japanese but spoke a little Spanish. The Vietnamese family had a daughter in second grade who was stronger in Japanese than Vietnamese and a son in first grade who spoke Japanese better than Vietnamese.

[3] From interview dated April 3, 2008. All translations from Japanese to English are mine.

[4] From interview dated April 5, 2008.

[5] Non-native sounds are edited to Japanese sounds in Romanization to the extent of comprehensibility with my best judgment. However, non-native grammar is not edited.

[6] *xxx* indicates inaudible speech.

[7] The language maintenance classes were supported by the Refugee Assistance Headquarters. However, they were offered sporadically, some years offered and other years not offered.

[8] When the family members require assistance in situations where translation is needed, children who are more proficient in the target language help by engaging in language brokering, translating one language to another (Lotherington, 2003).

[9] From interview dated April 17, 2008.

[3] Dated April 21, 2008.

[11] However, the Japanese tutor was the researcher, a 'participant observer.' Therefore, the discussion must be interpreted cautiously.