

# Celebration of Multi-Ethnic Cultural Capital Among Adolescent Girls in Japan: A Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis of Japanese-Caucasian Identity

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This paper aims to contribute to the study of multi-ethnic identities using discourse analysis approaches through examination of a non-European/non-North American model: Japan. It also attempts to fill a gap in research on multi-ethnic identity in Japan by looking at multi-ethnic children who are not associated through the community of practice of an immersion school (Bostwick, 1999, 2001) or an international school (Greer, 2001, 2003). This study focuses on the construction of identity by six Japanese-Caucasian adolescent girls who were born and raised in Japan, who are all in the same grade at different schools, who have been associated through their foreign parents' network of friends and associations since preschool, and consider each other to be "best friends". Spread over a geographically broad community in northeastern Japan, all of these girls attend Japanese schools, which socialize them in Japanese customs, mores, language, and thought parallel to their Japanese peers. The study uses qualitative analysis of semi-structured group-discussion talk to examine how this network of multi-ethnic girls create identities for themselves through their discourse. It found that the participants work to re-position themselves away from ethnic discourses of powerlessness while simultaneously creating and celebrating multi-ethnic cultural capital for themselves within alternative discourses of empowerment.

## 日本における思春期女子のマルチエスニック文化資本の賞賛

— 「ハーフ」のアイデンティティについてのポスト構造主義談話分析

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本研究は、先行のヨーロッパおよび北アメリカのモデルとは違った日本でのアイデンティティ形成を研究することで、会話中のマルチエスニック・アイデンティティ形成の分析研究に貢献しようとするものである。また、これまでに日本で行われてきた、イマージョン学校 (Bostwick, 1999, 2001) やインターナショナルスクール (Greer, 2001, 2003) などの話し方を共有している共同体 (Community of Practice) に所属している子どもとは異なった、マルチエスニック日本人を対象にすることで従来の研究に欠けていた部分を補おうとするものである。この研究は、日本に生まれ育った10代の「ハーフ」(日本人・白人)の思春期の女子6人のアイデンティティの構築に焦点をあてる。それぞれ違う学校に通っている同年齢の彼女達は、幼児期から外国人であるそれぞれの親同士のつながりでお互いを知っており、そのためお互いを「Best Friends」としてみている。東北に地理的に広範囲に広がって居住している6人の研究対象者は、一般の日本の学校に通っているのも、日本人と同じように日本の習慣、価値観、言語、考え方などを身につけている。本研究は6人の女子による半形式化したグループ・ディスカッションの中で、このマルチエスニック日本人女子がどのように自らのアイデンティティを形成しているのかを質的に分析した。分析の結果、彼女らは、民族的な弱者という言説から自らを切り離して位置づけし、同時にその代替としてのエンパワーメントの言説の中で自らのマルチエスニック文化資本を構築し賞賛していることが分かった。

## INTRODUCTION

An overarching discourse of homogeneity in Japan has been identified as a dominant discourse having a broad effect on social, political and educational practices in Japan (Befu, 2001; Denoon, Hudson, McCormack, & Morris-Suzuki, 1996; Kamada, 2004; Lie, 2001; Maher & Macdonald, 1995; Miller, 1982; Noguchi & Fotos, 2001; Parmenter, 1997; Weiner, 1997). Underlying this discourse is the denial of the existence of ethnic diversity in Japan; in its place stands a narrowly defined standard of "sameness" in terms of both *enacting Japaneseness* in a performative sense and *looking Japanese* in appearance.

This study investigates how the identity of multi-ethnic adolescent girls in Japan is affected by this discourse, exploring how linguistic traces (Talbot, 1995) of this and other discourses, such as a discourse of diversity, might appear in their speech and examining how they position themselves within competing discourses.

In order to do this, I began a long-term project to explore the construction of identity of six early-

adolescent Japanese-Caucasian girls who were born and raised in Japan and attend Japanese schools. Being educated in Japanese schools means that these multi-ethnic adolescents are being socialized in Japanese customs, mores, and thought and learning Japanese language and history in much the same way as their Japanese peers. The six participants are all in the same grade at school and have been associated through their foreign parents' network of friends and associations since preschool. Although they go to different schools spread over a geographically broad community in northeastern Japan, they meet often and consider each other to be "best friends".

For this study, I organized semi-structured group discussions with the participants and then qualitatively analyzed their talk to examine how these young multi-ethnic Japanese create identities for themselves through their discourse. I specifically examined how these girls deal with ethnic "othering" and try to negotiate positive multi-ethnic identities for themselves. I analyzed how the participants use their talk to boost their self-esteem and demonstrate their ethnic worth by giving importance to their symbolic, cultural, social and economic capital as they work to positively position themselves within various discourses of ethnicity in Japan.

## **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Social Constructionism**

This study is premised on the social constructionist notion that our actions and identities are not fixed and static, but are contingent on local, cultural, and historical contexts within which they arise (Gergen, 1985, 1999, 2001; Harré, 1979, 1983; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In contrast to the cognitivist view of identity as fixed categories in the mind, constructionist-discursive approaches view identity as discursive actions which people construct in their talk. In this way, individuals, acting on their own agency, construct and change their lives constantly. What is key to constructionism is the idea that the language available to express one's world is handed down socially and historically in a fluid, non-essentialist manner in which meaning can be changed (Gergen, 1985; Harre, 1983). Gergen (1999) illustrates the constructionist view, contesting the Western Modernist notion of "the mind as mirror", in the following passage.

The world does not produce our concepts; rather our concepts help us organize the world in various ways. The botanist, landscaper, and real estate agent see my yard differently because they each approach the scene with different mental categories. (Gergen, 1999, p. 11)

Thus, ways of explaining the world are seen to derive meaning not from descriptions of the world, but from the actions performed in language. Language is considered to be a social action involving interaction and relationships made possible through communication between individuals based on a shared set of mental symbols emerging from a common historical or cultural past. We cannot have language without this give-and-take between individuals constituting each other. When people speak, they are seen to be constructing discursive representations of reality—their own versions of "the truth." Social constructionism therefore rejects any claim to an "absolute truth or knowledge", as no claim can be neutral and free of its historical and social context.

The social constructionist is less concerned with what actually happened than with how people construct versions of reality. Potter & Wetherell (1987) showed how, rather than there being a more “salient” version among varying or opposing accounts, all accounts serve important functions. People produce descriptions and representations of their world—constructions which are not “neutral”, but which serve functions such as blaming, praising, condemning, requesting, or apologizing. Thus, in their analytic constructions, even social constructionists need to reflect upon themselves in their own interpretations of events and speech acts.

### **Subject Positioning**

*Subject position* (or *positionings*) is another important analytical concept used in this study. Subject positions are unfixed, constantly-shifting identities taken up by people in their talk or “ways of being” (Davies & Harré, 2001). These positions that people create for themselves and others may be those historically available, or they may be newly created in their talk (Davis & Harre, 2001; Edley, 2001). What is most significant in subject positioning is what is actually being accomplished functionally. Also, by examining the range of positions which are taken up and ascribed, one can better understand the process of change in society based on the dilemmas created by ideological tensions and conflicts (Edley, 2001). Importantly, both the constitutive force of discourse as well as the exercise of personal choice make up individual positioned identities: People draw on the accumulated history of discourses available to them in their environments to position themselves as well as to position and reposition others (Davis & Harre, 2001; Edley, 2001).

### **Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis (PDA)**

This study draws on the theoretical and methodological framework of Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis (PDA) (Baxter, 2002a, 2002b), including Feminist PDA (Baxter, 2003; Sunderland, 2004). PDA examines how people are “*multiply positioned*”, or “multiply position” themselves or others, in interconnected social discourses. It is concerned with the manner in which identities are enacted, displayed or performed with others co-constructively within everyday talk as people draw on various discourses available to them.

Coming from a feminist background, Sunderland (2004) defines discourses as “ways of seeing the world” (p. 6). Phillips & Jorgensen (2002) describe discourse within Post-Structuralism as “the fixation of meaning within a particular domain” (p. 26). The examination of “discourses” in Post-Structuralism traces back to Michel Foucault’s (1972) work on how “reality” is constructed, ascribed power and taken up within societies, and how power and knowledge are “joined together” in discourse. Power gives form to the production of “knowledge” and “truth”, which can never be accessed in an absolute form, as they are only representations of things and events in situated contexts. Foucault’s (1972, 1979) main contribution to discourse analysis is his examination of how power is enacted (and also contested) through the construction of knowledge by the means of language use.

Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA) grew out of PDA. Baxter (2003) defines FPDA as “a feminist approach to analyzing the ways in which speakers negotiate their identities,

relationships and positions in their world according to the ways in which they are located by competing yet interwoven discourses” (p.1). Through a process of examining the characteristics and social practices associated with relevant discourses, and the ways in which they are taken up or rejected in specific contexts, FPDA directs the focus on women and girls away from the “second wave feminist perspective” which sometimes views them as *powerless victims* and instead views them “as *potentially powerful* in terms of their multiple positioning within different discourses” (Baxter, 2003, p. 41, my italics).

In adapting Baxter’s (2003) FPDA to the study of the participants’ ethnicity, I propose a *multiperspective* theoretical framework (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002) which incorporates different approaches under the constructionist framework of allowing alternate forms of *truth* or perspectives to exist together. In this study I incorporate the notion of ethnicity (E) into (F)PDA, conceptualized as (E) (F)PDA. Embellishing Baxter’s notion of (F)PDA, in this paper I examine how multi-ethnic girls are “simultaneously positioned as relatively powerless within a range of dominant discourses . . . [of ethnicity], but [also] as relatively powerful within alternative and competing social discourses (Baxter, p.30; with my substitution of *ethnicity* for *gender* in Baxter’s original).”

### **Discursive Construction of Cultural and Symbolic Capital**

Bourdieu (1977) and Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) developed the concept that capital resources can take various forms, including *cultural capital* (cultural goods, services, educational credentials), *symbolic capital* (legitimation), *economic capital* (money, property), and *social capital* (acquaintances, networks), all of which can be accumulated, invested, exchanged and exercised, as well as converted into other forms of capital.

Several studies of ethnicity, language and gender (Eckert, 1993; Norton, 2000; Bloustien, 2001; Bucholtz, 1999) have referred to Bourdieu’s (1977) and Bourdieu & Passeron’s (1977) notion of cultural and symbolic capital in adaptations of the concept of gendered subjectivity of women and girls. Eckert (1993, 2000), for example, shows how high school girls increase their competitive power through their talk. She gives the example of *popularity* in high school as being contingent on the symbolic capital of “an individual’s good personhood” (1993, p. 36). In order to achieve a status of popularity, girls must not only be “likable”, but they must also be visible within the school community by virtue of their activities. At the same time, girls must be selective about whom they choose to associate with.

Also citing Bourdieu, Bucholtz (1999) showed how teenage “nerd” girls use language as a social practice to contribute to the display of intelligence or knowledge as their main symbolic capital. Nerds make a conscious attempt through their language and social practices to reject both “Jockness” (overachievers with middle class values) and “Burnoutness” (underachievers bound for work). Bloustien (2001) draws on Bourdieu in referring to *physical bodily praxis* as symbolic capital in her study of teenage girls and how they represent their physical bodies. Thapan (1997), similarly examining how the relationship between physical identity and forms of capital intersect, applauds Bourdieu’s (1977) incorporation of *the body* as the location of symbolic and physical capital in explicating human interaction. Norton (2000), too, makes reference to Bourdieu & Passeron’s (1977)

notion of cultural capital as *investment* in her study of English acquisition by immigrant women in Canada. She found that learners invest in language learning with the expectation of not only material recourses, but also of a return on their acquired symbolic capital, which will in turn increase their cultural capital.

Drawing on these notions of the various forms and uses of capital resources, I examine how the participants in this study discursively construct their own reservoirs of various forms of capital to enhance their identities.

### **Multi-Ethnic Children in Japan**

The identity of multi-ethnic children in Japan has been examined in studies exploring issues of both language (e.g., Kanno, 2004; Kubota, 1999; Noguchi, 2001; Noguchi & Fotos, 2001) and ethnicity (e.g.: Greer, 2001, 2003; Kanno, 2003, 2004; Murphy-Shigematsu, 1997). Kanno (2004) looked at how the identities of language minority children at an elementary school in Japan were “represented, nurtured, and oppressed by the policies and practices of the school” (p. 317).

Murphy-Shigematsu (1997) used semi-structured interviews to explore the identity of multi-ethnic older adolescents and young adults who had a Japanese mother and an American father (including African Americans) and lived in the U.S. or Japan. Although he did not use a discourse analysis approach, Murphy-Shigematsu was interested in examining the process of “identity assertions” of this group to see how they made choices about which ethnic identity to assert and how these assertions were received or reflected by others around them. He found identity assertion to be difficult for most of his 47 participants, although the situation differed depending on which country they lived in and other factors. In the U.S., for example, they were often expected to belong to a single ethnic group.

Greer (2003) examined the identities of a group of older adolescent bilingual multi-ethnic boys and girls attending an international school in Japan. Using Conversational Analysis, he analyzed whether they identified with the referent “*haafu*” (from the English “half”) in the negotiation of their identities. Greer concluded that his participants exhibited a variety of allegiances to this referent, ranging from acceptance to contestation. (See further discussion of the term “*haafu*” below.)

The present paper not only contributes to the budding research on discursive approaches to analyzing multi-ethnic identities through examination of the non-European/non-North American model of Japan, but it also fills a gap in such research in Japan by looking at multi-ethnic adolescents who are not associated through the *community of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) of an immersion school (see Bostwick, 1999, 2001) or an international school (see Greer, 2001, 2003). Spread over a geographically broad community, all of the participants in this study attend Japanese schools, which socialize and culture them in Japanese customs, mores, language, and thought in much the same way as their Japanese peers.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT DISCOURSES**

#### ***Dominant Discourses of Ethnicity Within Japan***

In order to understand the background of the discourses that the participants draw on in their talk

as they discursively create capital resources for themselves, it is first of all necessary to identify various relevant and significant discourses at work within Japan and the historical context from which they arise.

Sunderland (2004) states that anyone can identify and name a discourse after a bit of analytic work, although she also makes the point that reflexivity is important in documenting discourses, since, from a constructionist viewpoint, names of discourses are arbitrary, unfixed and unclosed interpretations. Working under these premises, I have here attempted to identify and name discourses of ethnicity at work in Japan. I show how they were identified using the historical and social context as well as linguistic “traces”—features that suggest linguistic evidence of the existence of a certain discourse (Talbot, 1995, p. 24; Sunderland, 2004, p. 28).

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, a **discourse of homogeneity** is a dominant discourse in Japan today. As an example of this discourse and how it is put into social practice, Parmenter (1997) points out the (then named) Japanese Ministry of Education’s (“*Mombusho*”) negation of heterogeneous plurality in its teaching guidelines in the late 1980s. In reference to middle school students, one section of the 1989 *Mombusho* Guidelines on Moral Education states: “The students were born and have been brought up in Japan . . .” (translated and quoted in Parmenter, 1997, chap. 10, p. 13). This statement *denies the existence* of foreign-born schoolchildren in Japan, while also refusing to recognize the increasing number of Japanese children who have lived overseas for part or most of their life. Furthermore, the lack of recognition of the existence of Japanese citizens with non-Japanese ethnicity or with multi-ethnicity has brought about many common stereotypical repertoires used in Japanese people’s talk, such as “‘*gaijin*’ [foreigners] are not Japanese”, “‘*gaijin*’ cannot speak Japanese”, “‘*gaijin*’ speak English”, “‘*gaijin*’ can not use chopsticks” and so on.

The popular Japanese proverb “the nail that sticks up gets hammered down” (“*deru kui wa utareru*”) illustrates the main element of another important discourse in Japan: the notion of the disagreeableness of standing out or being different. In Japanese society, diversity is often seen as a challenge to the status quo. Conforming to group norms and using restraint in order to maintain group harmony have traditionally been highly valued social practices. LoCastro (1990) refers to this Japanese notion of restraint (“*enryo*” in Japanese) as one of “three characteristic behaviors of Japanese interpersonal communication” (along with moderation and empathy, p. 121). In a society governed by insider norms, individual actions outside of strictly defined behavior are often seen as acts of non-conformity. Thus, as expressed in the above proverb, individuals must constantly work hard to avoid allowing themselves to stand out in Japanese society; they must continually be conscious of exercising restraint within this discourse, which I have here named a **discourse of conformity**.

Even in recent times, traces of this discourse appear in the social and linguistic practices of prominent Japanese leaders and ordinary people alike. Recently, the Governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintaro, referred to the above proverb in a widely reported statement: “Whether or not to hammer Japanese nails is not the issue. The issue is foreign nails. These cannot be trusted and must be walloped flat at every opportunity” (translated from Japanese in Dillon, 2004). The governor’s statement not only contains traces of a discourse of conformity, it also blatantly introduces traces of a “foreigners

as cause of crime discourse” and “foreigners as untrustworthy discourse”.

To represent the discursively performative aspect of this discourse of conformity, I use the phrase “*enacting Japanese-ness*” in this paper. In this sense, “enacting Japanese-ness” involves a discursive action in which individuals position themselves within a discourse of conformity based on commonsense notions of “proper” Japanese behavior.

In present day Japan, the predominant word used to refer to Caucasian-Japanese multi-ethnic people is “*haafu*”. Greer (2003), in applying Membership Categorization Analysis (Sacks, 1972) to this referent, found his multi-ethnic Japanese participants both identifying with the label “*haafu*” and contesting it because it belongs to more than just one “standard relational pair” (category). Greer suggested that when the speaker is not Japanese, reference to “*haafu*” tended to belong to the category of “Japanese”, whereas it tended to belong more to a subset of the category of “*gaijin*” or foreigner when the speaker was Japanese. Taken in this way, the use of this word by Japanese often constitutes multi-ethnic individuals on the basis of foreignness, or of “half-Japanese-ness”, positioning these people in a subtractive manner. Although, as pointed out by Greer (2003), this is just one of the many ambiguous ways in which this term might be interpreted, depending on the interlocutor and the situation, I have identified this particular usage of the construction as a discourse and have named it a **discourse of multi-ethnic “halfness”**. Sunderland (2004) refers to this type of discourse, which positions others in a diminutive manner, as a “discourse of deficit”.

This deficit or “subtractive” discourse of “halfness” has, however, been contested and reconstituted in an additive manner by foreign-raised parents of multi-ethnic children within their communities in Japan through their production and usage of an alternate word, “*daburu*” (from the English “double”) in order to offer their children a more empowering discourse. This reconstituted **discourse of double-ness** grew up spontaneously within this community over the last couple of decades, although its usage has as yet remained limited in Japanese society, and as Greer (2003) points out, not all multi-ethnic children position themselves using the referent “*daburu*”.

Intersecting with a discourse of multi-ethnic “half-ness” is another discourse, which I have named a **discourse of foreigner (*gaijin*) “otherness”**, by which the multi-ethnic participants also find themselves positioned. While the word “*gaijin*” carries a rougher, less polite connotation, like “outsider”, a politer form, “*gaikokujin*” (person from a foreign country), also exists. However, as Darling-Wolf (2003) points out, even though “*gaikokujin*” is a politer form, “few Japanese use it, even to a foreigner’s face” (p. 169).

### **Ethnic Embodiment**

The word “embodiment”, as employed here, signifies how individuals make sense of themselves discursively through their positioning and “performativity” on the basis of their physical attributes. Bloustien (2001) refers to her investigation of “the intersection of *embodied* subjectivity, gender and (self) representation . . . providing insights as to the way gendered subjectivity is perceived, understood and performed” (pp. 99-100). Thapan (1997) designates the body as an important aspect of “embodied” human identity which is not simply a given, but something over which one can exert one’s own agency.

Budgeon (2003) conceptualizes the body as an *event* in an act of “becoming” through continuous and multiple practices and interactions with others, rather than as an object which is described. While embodied identity refers to subjectivities discursively enacted in language in relation to the body, I use the term *ethnic embodiment* to refer to an enactment of subjectivity with specific significance to ethnicity and embodied elements associated with ethnic features.

One such discourse, which I have named a ***discourse of foreign attractiveness***, was identified, but not named, by Darling-Wolf (2003). Darling-Wolf examined, from a feminist perspective, how 29 Japanese women in Japan negotiate and construct attractiveness as influenced by Westernized media representations. She found all of her Japanese women participants positioning white Westerners as more physically attractive than Japanese. She quotes her participants:

“Westerners have a very nice [body] style . . . “ (Takako); . . . “They have good appearance, big eyes, high noses” (Reiko); “Westerners are more beautiful, they are tall, have high noses, big eyes, and a good sense of style” (Nishimura-san); “compared to Japanese women, they are more elegant, they look more excellent than the Japanese” (Chieko); . . . “They have good [body] style, you know, compared to Japanese models, they have nice breasts, nice hips, longer legs” (Abe-san). (Darling-Wolf, 2003, pp. 165-166)

Many of Darling-Wolf’s (2003) Japanese participants constructed a hierarchy in which they placed “whites” at the top, “halves” in the middle, and Japanese at the bottom. A phrase commonly used in Japanese to refer to facial features which are considered attractive (and “Caucasian”) is “*hori ga fukai*”. This literally means “deeply sculpted”, but could also be translated into English as “prominent facial features” or “deep-set eyes”. Another related, commonly heard description of attractiveness that is associated with “western” facial features is “*hana ga takai*” (in English, a “high and prominent nose”, which also implies “deep-set eyes”). This phrase was used by both Reiko and Nishimura-san in the above data from Darling-Wolf (2003).

“Nice body style” (*sutairu ga ii*) is another related descriptor that occurs in the above data. It is a positive description of a “foreign” (Western) female’s shapely figure and large breasts, and is also used for a “foreign” male’s broad chest and shoulders and tall stature. While these representations of the exotic white person “beautify” the “foreigner”, they also serve to objectify (Foucault, 1979) the foreign (often female) body. They may also serve to marginalize the Japanese speaker—at least in the context of a white interlocutor.

### ***Peripheral Discourses***

Within Japan, along with the above dominant discourses, there are also several peripheral (and often missing) discourses which have had to struggle to be heard. Some of these are identified below.

One peripheral discourse, which I have named a ***discourse of diversity***, competes with the *discourse of homogeneity* described above. Where the latter constitutes ethnic (and other) differences as *bad*, a discourse of diversity allows for the positive constitution of difference as enhancing and valuable. Recently in Japan, standing out as superior, creative or unique has come to be heard as a *good* difference in certain *communities of practice*. For example, in the nation’s elementary schools the

*Monkasho* (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) has recently been promoting the slogan “*Minna chigatte, minna ga ii*” (“Everyone’s different and everyone’s OK”). While this discourse allows for the acceptance of social diversity as enhancing and valuable, the *Monkasho* has not yet provided educators with training or curricula to actually implement this discourse into viable educational practice.

In recent years, another discourse, which I have named a ***discourse of interculturality*** has emerged in Japan. “Interculturality” is a word I use to represent a quality, consciousness, or proficiency which enables people to understand and communicate well with peoples of other “different” cultures from outside Japan. The high social value placed on interculturality in modern-day Japan has given rise to this discourse, which has historical roots in the earlier discourses of “openness to the outside world”, which emerged during the Meiji Period (1868-1912), and “internationalization” (“*kokusaika*”), which gained currency during the 1980’s economic boom. Throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, this discourse of interculturality has been advanced through institutional top-down promotion and practices via such mediums as the *Mombusho*’s Guidelines on Education.

The mass media has also drawn on and promoted this discourse in advertising. In a recent television commercial advertising a language school, for example, the Japanese word for intercultural—“*ibunka (no)*”—is invoked as Japanese and non-Japanese people are shown speaking in various languages (not their own). The commercial concludes with an alien from outer space saying, in the Kansai dialect, “*ma, ibunka chu no ka na?*” (“well, ain’t that intercultural?”).

## **EXAMINATION OF JAPANESE-CAUCASIAN IDENTITY THROUGH POST-STRUCTURALIST DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

### **Participants**

Nearly twenty years prior to the commencement of this study, I lived in the community in northeastern Japan where the data was collected before I relocated elsewhere in Japan. During my residence, I came to understand the local culture as well as the foreign community there. In 2000, I moved back into this community for one year and renewed my friendships with some of my former foreign friends and acquaintances who had remained there since the 1980s. One of them, a British woman, later introduced me to her multi-ethnic daughter Rina, who became the pivot of my research. Rina then introduced me to five other multi-ethnic girls comprising her network of friends.

The current study focuses on this group of six Japanese-Caucasian adolescent girls. As mentioned above, each of the participants is the child of a Japanese parent and an English-speaking Caucasian parent from Britain, America, or Australia. The girls are roughly the same age and are in the same grade at school, although they attend different Japanese schools in the area. They have known each other since before they began school, having met through their foreign parents’ network of friends and associations. The six consider each other to be their “best friends”.

Background information about the participants and their families, as well as the degree of their bilinguality and biliteracy, is presented on the next page in Table 1. This information was gathered during interviews with the girls and their parents. I further assessed the participants’ language proficiency by listening to their ability to express themselves in English. As language was not a major

concern of this study, I did not use any other particular language evaluation tool.

**TABLE 1: Participants' Background and Language Ability\***

Siblings	Foreign Parent: Nationality / Japanese Proficiency	Types of Schools Attended	Degree of Participant's Bilinguality and Biliteracy / Language Used at Home
<b>Rina</b>			
One younger brother	Mother: U.K. Fairly good Japanese proficiency	Public elementary school. Private Japanese middle school: 90-min. commute. Strong emphasis on English (PE, art, music taught in English)	Nearly balanced bilinguality and biliteracy proficiency. Always uses English with mother.
<b>Naomi</b>			
One younger brother	Mother: U.S.A. Fluent in Japanese	Public elementary and middle school in a rural village. Total of only 11 students enrolled in the school	Nearly balanced bilinguality and biliteracy proficiency. Always uses English with mother.
<b>Sara</b>			
Two younger brothers	Mother: U.S.A. Fluent in Japanese	Public elementary and middle schools in neighborhood	Receptive bilingual: Comprehends English but speaks Japanese. Attended evening English classes for a few years. Uses Japanese at home.
<b>Hanna</b>			
No siblings	Father: U.S.A. Not highly proficient in Japanese (came to Japan after age of 30)	Private Japanese Catholic elementary school. Private Japanese Protestant middle school	Can express herself in English if pressed. Father always uses English with Hanna, but she answers in Japanese.
<b>Anna</b>			
One younger sister	Father: Australia Fluent in Japanese	Public elementary and middle schools in neighborhood	Receptive bilingual: Comprehends English but usually speaks in Japanese. Uses Japanese at home.
<b>Maya</b>			
One older brother	Father: U.S.A. Parents divorced, with father living in U.S. since Maya was six years old	Lived in U.S. for 3 years (ages 1 - 4). Public elementary and middle schools in neighborhood in Japan	Can express herself in English somewhat, but speaks slowly and uses limited vocabulary. Uses Japanese at home.

\* Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of the participants.

**Data Collection**

Although the participants are good friends, there is no established setting where they meet regularly, so the data was collected in arranged venues: in restaurants, a community center, and overnights at the home of one of the girls. The main data used for this analysis is taken from six tape-recorded sessions with the participants: one individual semi-structured interview, four semi-structured group-interviews, and one spontaneous conversation without my presence. The sessions were conducted over the course of several years, covering four grades of school, from the girls' sixth year of

elementary school (age 12) to their final year of middle school (ages 14 & 15). The name I gave each session, plus information about it, including the date, number of participants and their age(s) and grade in school at the time are presented in Table 2. All names of participants and place names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

**TABLE 2: Data Collection Sessions**

No.	Interview Name	Date	Number of Participants	Participants' Age (No.)	School: Grade
1	Rina's House	March 2001	1	12(1)	Elementary: 6th
2	Ethnic Diner	November 2001	3	13 (3)	Middle School: 1st
3	Hot Springs	March 2002	6	13 (6)	Middle School: 1st
4	Hanna and Anna	September 2002	2	13 (2)	Middle School: 2nd
5	Birthday Party	September 2002	2-4-5-6 (4 stages)	13 (2), 14 (4)	Middle School: 2nd
6	Last Reunion	May 2003	6	14 (5), 15 (1)	Middle School: 3rd

While the first individual interview was conducted totally in English with a highly proficient English speaker (Rina), my intention was to use Japanese for the following group interviews. However, a mix of both English and Japanese came to be used in the group interviews, with some girls expressing themselves consistently in Japanese and others in English, and only occasional codeswitching. Japanese was used more than English, and I generally addressed the girls in Japanese when speaking to everyone, as some of the girls were not very proficient in expressing themselves or understanding English, while all of them were fluent in Japanese as their first (or one of their first) language(s).

These interviews were supplemented with other ethnographic data compiled in field notes, individual interviews with participants and their parents, and over one hundred exchanges of e-mail correspondence gathered as part of a larger study. I also collected, but in the end did not utilize, the following data for the study: communication via a private yahoo e-list, diaries, and data on a number of multi-ethnic adolescent boys.

I transcribed all of the spoken data from the six data sessions. Next, I translated the Japanese segments and had the translations proofread by a native Japanese speaker to check for mistakes and clarify sections that I could not decipher on my own. Finally, I coded, grouped and analyzed the data according to my research questions.

## **ANALYSIS**

In order to address the questions of how these multi-ethnic girls discursively position themselves and others within the various discourses available to them, several excerpts from the data are examined.

## The Discursive Construction of Bilinguality as Cultural Capital

The first two excerpts from the data sessions are examples of how two of the girls, Sara and Maya, discursively place value on the cultural capital of their bilinguality, with the other girls and myself “co-constructing”. It should be noted that the six girls almost exclusively use Japanese to converse among themselves when I or other native English speakers are not present.

The first excerpt was taken from the discussion at the Ethnic Diner meeting, where three of the participants were present: Rina, Naomi and Sara. The first two are highly proficient in English, while Sara, as noted in Table 1, is a receptive bilingual. Although I had started out the discussion using Japanese, Naomi and Rina, began to respond to my (mostly Japanese) questioning in English, while Sara used Japanese. Throughout the discussion, I had continued using Japanese to address Sara and I (along with the other two girls) worked to keep her included in the talk as much as possible whenever it switched into English. Late into our session, however, during a discussion of dating among girls and boys at their school, I inadvertently addressed Sara in English instead of Japanese. The following excerpt shows how Sara suddenly and unexpectedly entered the conversation using English for the first time that day. (See the Appendix for notes on the transcription conventions used in the excerpts.)

### Excerpt 1—Bilinguality as Capital: Ethnic Diner (Age 13)

- 1 L: how about your school?  
2 S: yeah, lots  
3 L: mmm  
4 S: (?) together and  
5 L: a lot?  
6 S: yeah, and always together  
7 L: really, a lot in your school?  
8 S: umm  
9 R: there are some people that are really sick, like they go to the cafeteria together like, oh  
10 (makes imitation like a couple are brazenly holding hands)  
11 Gs: (laugh)  
12 R: then all these people try to um,  
13 L: (laughs)  
14 R: “sorry, excuse me, I’m on my way to the (?)”  
15 Gs: (laugh)  
16 R: **sore wa omoshiroi**  
17 *that’s funny*  
18 Gs: (laugh)  
19 L: so they date, they go dating and stuff

After I inadvertently addressed Sara in English (line 1), she began to give very short replies in English for several turns (2-8). In line 9, Rina re-entered the talk, but instead of following Sara’s turn in Japanese as she had previously been doing, she now followed Sara in English, in what might have been a discursive gesture to relieve tension and to acknowledge Sara’s English proficiency. After a few turns continued with me and Rina speaking in English, Rina switched into Japanese, but even that failed to bring Sara back into the talk.

Sara’s sudden use of English was unexpected by all of us present, and I felt a twinge of

astonishment among us around our lunch table when she suddenly broke into English for the first time that day. My sense that this switch into English was unanticipated by the other girls was confirmed directly after the lunch meeting when the three girls and their mothers and I assembled at Rina's house for tea to discuss my project. Rina's mother mentioned to me that while we were all traipsing into the house, when she had asked Rina, "How did the lunch meeting go?," Rina right away mentioned her surprise at Sara's unexpected use of English.

I felt that this exchange was significant in that Sara was not only displaying her ability to use English (albeit, in a very limited demonstration), but her venturing to use her weaker language amongst highly proficient peers also served the discursive purpose of demonstrating her trust in the supportive context of her multi-ethnic peers in a potentially risk-taking situation. Rina's and my discursive work to try to support and keep Sara in the talk, while not totally effective, helped to constitute Sara as an "owner" of bilinguality as cultural capital. Significantly, we were all left with the "big news" at the end of the day of Sara's spontaneous use of English.

Another time when the high value of the cultural capital of bilingualism was discursively demonstrated came with Maya's turn to speak during the first group discussion she participated in. That exchange is presented below.

#### **Excerpt 2—Bilinguality as Capital: Hot Springs Interview (Age 13)**

- 1 L: **OK, chotto matomete**, English
- 2 *can someone summarize that—English*
- 3 N: um
- 4 R: **Ma, Maya shaberareru no ne**
- 5 *Ma, Maya can speak English*
- 6 L: **ah, Maya, ja Maya**
- 7 *Maya, well then, Maya*
- 8 R: **Maya, du yua besuto** (*do your best*)
- 9 L: OK, do your best
- 10 M: **iyaa**
- 11 *yuk*
- 12 R: **gambaru**
- 13 *try hard*
- 14 L: OK, **gambaru** (*try hard*) just sort of say a little bit
- 15 M: um, there's a girl
- 16 L: uh-huh
- 17 M: everybody thinks that she's so different

Just before this exchange, Maya had been telling a narrative in Japanese when I asked if someone could give an English summary of what she had said. Until then, Naomi and Rina had been serving this function during the interview. In line 3, Naomi responds with "um", a filler that reserves the turn, but what is significant at this point in the sequence is that it is an *English* filler, which denotes that Naomi is self-selecting to fulfill my request for translation. Before she can do so, however, Rina announces that Maya can speak English (4 & 5), positioning Maya as bilingual and implicitly selecting her as the one to perform the translation.

It takes several turns of encouragement (6 – 14) by myself and Rina to finally get Maya to speak in English. Rina starts off in Japanese (4, 5). Then I also address Maya in Japanese (6, 7) and follow

Rina's lead by asking Maya to summarize herself in English. Next, Rina lends further encouragement to Maya (8) by use of a phrase (*du yua besuto*) that has been appropriated into Japanese but is very clearly derived from an English phrase ("Do your best"). I then repeat Rina's words, but use the English pronunciation (9) to further encourage Maya. She falters at first (10, 11), but in the end, Maya begins to speak in English (15, 17), taking up for herself the position of Japanese/English bilingual.

I feel that the importance of this exchange was that, when given the opportunity, Maya took the chance to discursively demonstrate her English proficiency and thereby create for herself bilinguality as cultural capital within a discourse of interculturality in much the same way Sara did in the first excerpt.

### **Capital Resources of English Language Literacy & Possession of English Books**

While some multi-ethnic children who attend Japanese public schools in Japan become (nearly) balanced bilingual speakers of two languages, a much smaller percentage reach a level of (near) native-like *literacy* proficiency in their minority language (Kamada, 1995a, 1995b, 1997; Noguchi, 1996; Yamamoto, 2001). Rina and Naomi are among the exceptional examples of multi-ethnic bilingual children attending Japanese schools who have been able to reach very high levels of English reading and writing proficiency, thus becoming biliterate. Both of these girls discursively not only show pride in their possession of many English books as a form of economic capital, but also vigorously create for themselves the cultural capital of biliteracy as they boost their self-esteem by placing value on their ability to read such English literature. This is expressed by Rina in the following exchange.

#### **Excerpt 3—Biliteracy as Capital: Rina's House (Age 12)**

- 1 L: but you do read? do you pick up English books sometimes and read them?  
2 R: not SOMETIMES, I much prefer English books  
3 L: do you?  
4 R: to Japanese books  
5 L: really? why?  
6 R: somehow the Japanese books are very hard to get stuck into  
7 L: just the, why? because of the content you mean?  
8 R: content and how they have written the first page kind of counts too, it's not that  
9 L: literature, you can get a hold of better things, you think for young kids?  
10 R: yeah, yeah because most of my books upstairs, I've got are English  
11 L: kind of, what are some of your favorite things that you've read, that are English?  
12 R: recently I've read a very interesting, I wouldn't say it's my favorite, but it's not  
13 meant to be a favorite, but it's called, it's a book called, um, "The Giver" by Lois  
14 Lowry, Lowr, Lowry, I like her books  
15 L: what's it about?  
16 R: oh, it's very complex, but it's about, it's in the future, and, in this, and its, there is this  
17 community and they are made all equal and um, they go through school until twelve  
18 and then, after twelve, they're assigned their jobs or work, they still go to school, but they  
19 go in their recreation time and free hours and to um, the jobs to um, be taught, how to do  
20 L: that sounds interesting, is that a new, is it recent?  
21 R: I don't know if it's a new or very old book, but it's very difficult, and it's very long,  
22 it's not LONG, but it's very complex and  
23 L: uh-huh

In line 2 of this excerpt, Rina emphasizes that it is not just *sometimes* that she reads English books, but that she *prefers* to read English over Japanese. She places the literature of her home

language (English) above that of her school and societal (and home) language (Japanese), disfavoring an important aspect of her Japanese-ness and positioning herself outside of Japanese norms. Instead of emphasizing conformity, she privileges her capacity to choose from more than one option, drawing on a discourse of diversity and interculturality.

Rina discursively demonstrates her knowledge and pride in her possession of English literacy as a cultural resource. The reality that she constructs not only signifies her possession of English books (line 10: “because most of my books upstairs, I’ve got are English”), but she also exalts her arduously learned ability to read them. Rina produces several descriptive adjectives regarding a book that she has recently finished reading, “interesting (12) . . . complex (16, 22) . . . difficult (21) . . . long (21),” which function to discursively position herself as not only having acquired the highly-valued cultural resource of biliteracy, but also of having acquired the ability to concentrate and persevere (complex, long) and the intellectual capacity to comprehend profundity (difficult, complex) through the means of her learned ability to read in English. Here Rina uses exaggeration to build up a colorful and rich version of reality, which she then retreats from (21-22), “and it’s very long. . . it’s not LONG, . . .”. While her initial exaggeration accomplishes the function of embellishment, Rina’s immediate retraction helps to maintain her reliability and also to emphasize the more challenging aspect of complexity over length.

In several other instances, Rina suggested that possession of English books is highly valued and is sometimes related to maturity. The following excerpt is one example of this.

#### **Excerpt 4—Biliteracy as Capital: Rina’s House (Age 12)**

When I asked Rina if she speaks in English with Naomi, she replied:

R: no, we speak Japanese, but sometimes we speak in English because we all have, we both have about the same amount of English books as well

This excerpt is interesting because on the surface, Rina’s logic seems rather odd, in that she cites the possession of English books as the reason or cause of the girls’ use of English with each other. Here, she discursively creates capital resources for herself and her friend as she draws a connection between the economic capital of owning English books and the cultural capital of being able to speak English. In addition, Rina implies that these owners of English books also possess the ability to read them and to speak about them in the language in which they were written. While Rina says, “sometimes we speak in English”, she implies that “some of us [participants] speak in English, some of the time,” as revealed by her backtracking from “we all have” to “we both have”, referring to just two of the girls, instead of to all of them.

Later in the same conversation, Rina elaborates on this point, as seen in the following excerpt.

#### **Excerpt 5—Biliteracy as Capital: Rina’s House (Age 12)**

431 R: I don’t know why, but I feel that, Naomi and my friend and I feel more mature than the  
432 others and also we feel more fluent in English and we have many more English  
433 books, but, um Hanna whose father’s American, she seems to be fluent enough to  
434 understand what we’re talking about and she speaks English and she can write

Here, Rina discursively links the possession of English books and fluency in English with maturity. She takes up a position for herself, while also positioning two of her multi-ethnic friends, as being “more mature” (symbolic capital), more fluent in English (bilinguality as cultural capital), as well as literate in English (biliteracy as cultural capital), and as rich in the possession of many English books (symbolic & economic capital).

Rina’s repeated emphasis on the possession of English books and the skills of literacy—such skills as being able to read books and appreciate them and the ability to write in cursive (a writing skill generally introduced at a somewhat more advanced stage)—serves the function of discursively positioning herself and other biliterate multi-ethnic girls who possess this resource as being privileged or superior (more fluent, more mature) than those without this resource, within a discourse of interculturality.

Naomi also places a high value on English literacy ability and emphasizes her preference for English literacy in the following two excerpts.

**Excerpt 6—Biliteracy as Capital: Ethnic Diner (Age 13)**

N: I don’t find a lot of Japanese books interesting.

**Excerpt 7—Biliteracy as Capital: Birthday (Age 14)**

N: I would rather um write in English

In these two excerpts, Naomi disfavors her societal/school and home language, Japanese, much as Rina did in the earlier extracts, thus positioning herself in a stance of non-conformity with Japanese common values by not favoring an important aspect of Japanese culture: Japanese literature and Japanese writing. Instead, she favors English and takes up a position as an intercultural biliterate with the ability to choose which of two languages she prefers to use for reading and writing—a choice not generally available to her Japanese peers.

**Choice as Symbolic Capital**

Another form of cultural and symbolic capital that these girls construct for themselves is the notion of having more choice and opportunity available to them than their Japanese peers. At the end of the Last Reunion meeting, I asked the girls to take on the role of the interviewer by having them each ask questions for all of the girls (including themselves) to answer. The following extract is a discussion based on responses to Hanna’s question, “What is special or good about being *double*”?

### Excerpt 8—Choice as Capital: Last Reunion (Ages 14 & 15)

- 1 A: **hajime kara, kimatteiru ja nakute, futatsu kokuseki ga aru kara, nanijin (?)**  
2 **nareru ka eraberukara, sentakushi ga atte, toku ya tto omou**  
3 *from the beginning, it's not already decided, because you have two nationalities,*  
4 *because you can choose which nationality you want to become, you have a choice, I*  
5 *think it's an advantage*  
6 L: OK, good, Hanna  
7 H: **etto, nanka Anna to issho de, nn, sono gaijin nareru ka (?) eraberu no mo aru shi,**  
8 **ato etto mm, nanka ironna, nanka daburu de, chicchai toki wa daburu de nanka, iya**  
9 **ya to iuno shika nakatta kedo, nanka, shorai no koto kangaete, ippai chansu ga aru**  
10 *um, like, the same as what Anna said, um, you can choose if you want to be a foreigner,*  
11 *and also, um, mm, like, various, like, with double, when I was little, like, the only thing I*  
12 *thought was that I hated it, but, like, if you think about the future, you have a lot of*  
13 *opportunities*  
14 L: uh-huh  
15 R: **chansu aru yan** (you do have a lot of opportunities)  
16 H: **futsu no hito yori wa** (more than the average person)  
17 G: **sore meccha** (a lot more)  
18 H: **zettai ni chansu ga aru shi, toku ya to omou, so iu men de**  
19 *you definitely have a lot more opportunity, I think it's advantageous, in that sense*

In lines 1-5, Anna positions herself and the other girls as privileged in having access to greater choices as a result of their multi-ethnicity. By claiming to have “two nationalities” to choose from, Anna implies a contrast with the situation of their Japanese peers who are simply Japanese with no other options available, revealing a linguistic trace of a discourse of interculturality. Anna creates the notion of there being more fluidity to their lives, “it’s not already decided” (1, 3). A linguistic trace of an intersecting discourse of diversity is also evident as these girls position themselves as privileged in having a special “advantage” which their Japanese peers do not enjoy.

Through this positioning, Anna constructs for herself and the other multi-ethnic girls the notion of the cultural and symbolic capital of choice and greater space for the development of a multitude of identities. Something as basic as Japanese-ness to the Japanese people is not something that Anna has to accept straight out, like her peers, although that, too, is one option open to her, if she desires to act upon that choice. But the symbolic and cultural capital of “choice” is a form of capital which she can “cash in” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) if she so desires, a privileged resource that her Japanese peers do not have access to.

In lines 7-13, Hanna helps to co-construct Anna’s position with her opening, “um, the same as what Anna said . . . ,” but instead of positioning herself precisely as Anna does in terms of nationality, Hanna constructs this notion of choice within the situated context of “foreigner in Japan” in her words: “you can choose if you want to be a *gaijin*” (foreigner). Hanna uses the pejorative “*gaijin*” here in order to “reclaim” this “otherness” which the word *gaijin* implies, as she has taken it up within a discourse of foreign “othering”. The option, or choice, of constituting herself as a “foreigner” is one that is open to her as a multi-ethnic girl in Japan, while being closed to her Japanese peers.

However, Hanna is unable to totally throw off the positioning of herself as “marginalized” within a discourse of homogeneity. Concerning the time when she was “little”, she states (8-13), “the only thing I

thought [about being ‘*daburu*’] was that I hated it”. Framed within the past, Hanna constructs her “double” identity as something that was only negative.

However, framed in terms of “the future”, Hanna positions herself and other multi-ethnic girls as having “a lot of opportunities” within a discourse of interculturality and diversity, much as Anna did earlier. Thus, Hanna does not have to allow herself to only be positioned as powerless within a single discourse of homogeneity; she is able to exercise *agency* to “multiply position” herself (Baxter, 2002a, 2002b) within alternate empowering discourses. In lines 15-19, the other girls, by virtue of their ethnicity, also join in to further co-construct this notion of the advantages that opportunity affords them as ethnic cultural capital.

### Ethnic Embodiment as Cultural Capital

The participants also discursively constructed cultural capital for themselves in terms of appearance. An example of this occurred just a few turns after the previous extract during the Last Reunion discussion, when the participants were responding to Hanna’s question about the advantages of being “double”. There was a shift from the notion of choice and opportunity to that of *ethnic embodiment* as a form of cultural capital. Maya introduced this new topic in the next excerpt.

#### Excerpt 9—Ethnic Embodiment as Capital: Last Reunion (Ages 14 & 15)

- 32 L: did you answer yet? (to Maya)  
 33 M: **hori ga fukai, kawaii ga deru (?)**  
 34 *nicely sculpted face, makes you cute?*  
 35 L: huh?  
 36 M: **hori ga fukaku natte** *(a nicely sculpted face)*  
 37 L: **ah, hana ga takai?** *(ah, a prominent nose?)*  
 38 M: **etto, Nihonjin dattara kou** {gesture} *(um, if [they’re] Japanese, [they’re] like this)*  
 39 S: **amari suki ja nai** *(I don’t really like that)*  
 40 M: **hori ga fukaku naru, nan to ittetara ii** *(deeper set eyes, how can I say that)*  
 41 R: because, just,  
 42 **nan to iu ka na** *(what do you say)*  
 43 people in Japan always like deep set, deep set  
 44 **de yo ne, hori ga fukai to iu no wa** *(isn’t it so, “hori ga fukai” means)*  
 45 deep set, they think that’s beautiful so  
 46 R: **hori ga fukai to iu ii imeji de ya** *(a well-sculpted face has a good image)*  
 47 L: uh-huh  
 48 R: **hori ga aru, hori ga fukai mon ne** *(having prominence, someone with a deep [facial] prominence)*  
 49 Sara has got beautiful deep-set eyes so

Maya’s use of “*hori ga fukai*” (33) brings to the discussion a “discourse of ethnic attractiveness” as she positions herself and other multi-ethnic people as exotic. In line 35, my appeal for clarification with “huh?” prompts a more detailed discussion of the meaning of “*hori ga fukai*” by Maya. She gestures to show how Japanese people, who are not fortunate enough to have this kind of face, might look. In this way, she positions herself away from Japanese-ness and instead, takes up a position as an “exotic multi-ethnic” person with a deeply sculpted face. Sara helps to co-construct this positioning by offering her support of Maya in saying, “I don’t really like that” in reference to the gesture.

In lines 41-45, Rina offers an account of how “*hori ga fukai*” is perceived “in Japan”. She confirms that having a “deep cut” face or deep-set eyes is considered a sign of beauty in Japan within a discourse of ethnic attractiveness—in Rina’s words (43), “people in Japan always like deep set, deep set. . . deep set, they think that’s beautiful so.” Traces of a discourse of diversity, in which ethnic difference is positively valued, are also seen in her speech.

Interestingly, during her explanation of the meaning of “*hori ga fukai*” Rina starts out in English and then proceeds to switch codes between English and Japanese four times. In these five lines (41-45), Rina formulates her message in English and uses Japanese for the function of self-clarification and also perhaps to maintain the attention of the girls who are less proficient in English. She reveals her proficient intercultural ability to switch languages for the discursive purpose of including both Japanese monolingual interlocutors and an English-speaking interlocutor (myself). Rina’s codeswitch here can be explained by Gumperz’ (1982) notion of a “we” and “they” code which serves the function of marking and managing identity.

Up until line 49, the girls have been discussing the topic of *ethnic embodiment* in general terms instead of referring to themselves personally. Rina then suddenly specifically brings up Sara, one of the girls present among us, when she abruptly states, “Sara has got beautiful deep-set eyes so” (49). Rina here positions Sara personally as exotic within three discourses: a discourse of diversity where *being different* is taken as good, a discourse of ethnic attractiveness, and a discourse of interculturality where Sara’s exoticism is placed within a context broader than just Japan.

Rina’s switch into English is significant here (49), perhaps because complimenting someone directly in this manner in the context of Japanese society would come across as an interpersonal *faux pas*, a violation of the “moderation” and “*enryo*” (restraint) which have been documented as characteristic behaviors in Japanese interpersonal communication (LoCastro, 1990, p. 121). The function of the final switch into English (49), allows Rina to draw on her available intercultural knowledge of the accepted western use of direct compliments. In the context of her multi-ethnic peers, Rina is comfortable drawing on this intercultural form of interpersonal communication, but switches into an English frame to do so.

As the participants enter into adolescence, more ethnic discourses of empowerment have become available to them, allowing them here, in the final meeting, to discursively take up their physical embodiment positively as *exotic* and self-enhancing. These girls have identified themselves in terms of their ethnic embodiment, which they construct as cultural capital for themselves. They construct and, at the same time, delight in this multi-ethnic attractiveness, to which they are personally privileged, as a cultural resource which they can draw on in the positive constitution of their multi-ethnic identity.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

As I analyzed the data I had collected in this study, my role in the co-construction of “contextualized constructed truth” with these girls became apparent. Where my voice appeared in the data, I have tried to disclose myself as a co-constructor as much as possible in my analysis and not ignore the significance of my influence. Perhaps the girls would have expressed themselves differently had I

stayed out of the interaction more. Nonetheless, my role in this co-construction cannot be dismissed, and thus, my input becomes a part of the data itself. Throughout, I, myself, become the seventh participant of this study.

The question of reflexivity is essential in a qualitative study such as this (Charmaz & Mitchell, Jr., 1997; Wasserfall, 1997). Hertz (1997) emphasizes the importance of reflexivity in not only reporting “what I know”, but also “how I know it” throughout the entire process of research (1997, p. viii). I acknowledge that the interpretations that I draw from this data are contextualized not only by circumstances occurring at the moment in which they were collected, but they are also influenced by my own positioning and historical background, which I have brought to the research.

One of my main purposes has been to give voice to the participants in order to show how they position themselves and others in their discursive constructions. I have tried to show how they themselves create their own various forms of accumulated, convertible, exercisable and investable capital resources (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) through the discursive celebration of their ethnicity.

While to a large extent they take their Japanese-ness as unremarkable and ordinary, it is their multi-ethnicity (including its non-Japanese exotic white-westerness) which they celebrate as exceptional and unique, by virtue of the various forms of capital resources to which they have privileged access. They are Japanese, but they are also more than just Japanese. They position their multi-ethnic selves not as being deficient in ethnic cultural capital, but as being abundant in it.

Even though many of them are not particularly proficient in English, they nevertheless position themselves as privileged in possessing the cultural capital of English proficiency and its attendant high-status position and take the chance to demonstrate their abilities when given the opportunity among their multi-ethnic peers. They work to constitute themselves and each other as “owners” of this capital, which is more than just knowledge of entrance-examination skills; their English ability gives them access to information, knowledge and literature which is not available to most of their Japanese peers. The cultural capital of bilinguality and biliteracy that they claim for themselves allows them to positively position themselves as special, more fluent, and more mature. Rina was shown to extend her cultural capital to connect bilinguality and biliteracy with higher thinking skills, such as the ability to comprehend difficult and complex stories in a second language.

It was shown how the cultural and symbolic capital of having greater choice and future job opportunities is created by these girls as they position themselves as having a choice of “two nationalities” and of being in a situation where things are “not already decided”. These girls also create the cultural capital of exotic *ethnic embodiment* as they co-construct discourses of diversity and “foreign” attractiveness in their positive positioning of themselves based on their physical appearance. They position themselves, each other, and other *haafu/daburu* girls in general, as ethnically attractive with a nicely sculpted face (*hori ga fukai*).

These girls worked to contest ethnic marginalization—which sometimes constituted them in ways they “hated” during their elementary school years (Excerpt 8, lines 7-13)—within more limited discourses of homogeneity, conformity, “foreignness” and “halfness”. However, during the Last Reunion discussion, we examined how they position themselves within a wide array of more empowering

discourses of diversity, interculturality and ethnic attractiveness, by which they are able to create and celebrate positive cultural capital on the basis of their ethnicity.

In conclusion, this study showed how the participants maneuver within various discourses of ethnicity in order to construct and celebrate the notion of cultural capital as a self-enhancing discursive resource. They discursively celebrate their multi-ethnicity through their positioning within major discourses available to them. They celebrate various forms of cultural, symbolic, social, linguistic, physical, and economic capital on the basis of their access to the high status (and highly pragmatic) foreign-language, English; intercultural savvy; greater access to choice and opportunity; and “embodied” ethnic attractiveness and exoticness.

Applying Baxter’s (2003) FPDA framework, we can say that instead of allowing themselves to be positioned as powerless victims within limited discourses, they instead create and celebrate their multi-ethnic cultural capital within multiple, alternative discourses of empowerment. Not only do they create forms of capital resources in a general sense in their categorizations of multi-ethnicity, but they also co-constructively and personally position themselves and each other in positive discourses of ethnicity, while at the same time disassociating themselves from the “ordinariness” of “Japanese” people who do not enjoy this *special* capital.

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## APPENDIX

### Transcription Key

(?)	inaudible speech
(laugh)	nonverbal elements presented in parentheses
CAPITALS	loud enunciation
,	commas used to indicate continuing tone
<b>bold print</b>	Japanese utterance (actual spoken words), transcribed using Hepburn System of romanization
<i>italics</i>	English translation (by author) of the previous Japanese utterance which appears in bold print on a separate line above the italicized English
<i>(italics)</i>	English translation of the Japanese on the same line (for the purpose of saving space)
regular print	the actual words as they were spoken directly in English (not a translation)

Pseudonyms are used for names of the six girls. Likewise, pseudonyms are used for all names of family and friends' names and identifying place names.

Also: L = Laurel (researcher), G = unidentified girl, Gs= unidentified girls