Language, Culture and Ethnicity: A case of Japanese Mixed Heritage Youth

by

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Abstract

Japanese reportedly have the highest ratio of interracial couples in Canada, which has led to an increased number of Japanese mixed heritage learners at post secondary institutions. However, in the field of heritage language education there has been limited research that focuses on this segment of the population. In order to address this gap, the study attempted to provide an in-depth understanding of Japanese Mixed Heritage Youth (JMHY) by analyzing their daily language use and senses of ethnicity. Fourteen Japanese mixed heritage youths who possess a beginner's level of Japanese proficiency (with two exceptions) participated in the study and provided a multi-set of data, including interviews, short essays on language experiences, and photos.

The study is framed by Baumann's (1996) conceptualization of "ethnicity as culture" and JMHY culture is analyzed through the lens of "two cultural discourses" also promoted by Baumann (1999). The study avoids dichotomizing essentialized and non-essentialized views of culture and regards both views as a vital part of the culture-making process. The result of my analysis shows the complexity of the JMHY's relation to their language use and ethnicity. While the JMHY emphasize their Japanese "halfness", they acknowledge the coexistence of Japanese halfness with their other "half" in how they understand their ethnicity. With respect to the JMHY's Japanese ethnicity, their tendency is to reconnect to the past, the rather reified heritage culture, but at the same time they reinterpret Japanese heritage through their daily experiences in their present contexts. JMHY's daily language use is examined from both an intercultural competence and a multicultural competence perspective. This approach allows an investigation into how the JMHY's home environment, including their parents, who provide cross cultural situations in daily life, contributes to the JMHY's speech competence.

This study does not yield findings that can be readily transferable to cases of other mixed heritage youths, but it does demonstrate the importance of taking their mixed heritage background into consideration in the study of language and ethnicity. Finally, suggestions for language instructors at post secondary settings and parents of mixed heritage persons are presented along with directions for further research in the field of heritage language education.

Keywords: Heritage language; Japanese mixed heritage; language and ethnicity; intercultural competence; multicompetence

Dedication

To my mother who supports me from a distance.

To my participants for sharing their life stories.

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I also would like to express my gratitude to the fourteen participants who shared not only their precious time but also their personal stories with me. They have made my journey enjoyable and rewarding. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the encouragement provided by my mother who has allowed me to pursue my goal outside of Japan.

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List of Acronyms

HL	Heritage language
JMHY	Japanese mixed heritage youth
JSL	Japanese as a second language
JHL	Japanese as a heritage language
JFL	Japanese as a foreign language
L2	Second language

Preface

One of the most common questions that mixed heritage people encounter daily is "What are you?" It is also the question that inspired Kip Fulbeck, a professor at the University of California Santa Barbara to embark on the hapa project and publish the book called "Part Asian, 100% Hapa." Fulbeck himself is a hapa, a Hawaiian word meaning mixed heritage person. For his book, he gathered over 1200 self-identified hapas' photos accompanied with a handwritten response to the question: "what are you?" In that introduction he writes:

> What are you? I answer the question every day of my life - depending on the day itself, the location, my hair, or what I'm eating or doing. I get mistaken for Native American, Filipino, Hawaiian, African American (especially, when my head is shaved), Mexican, Cuban, Middle Eastern, Indian…. I've listened to a black woman chastise me for denying my African heritage and a First Nation member push me to register my status. I'm greeted in Spanish, Farsi, and pidgin, all the while being escorted to the various back tables in various Chinese restaurants and handed forks [….]. What's interesting is ambiguity. What's interesting is the haziness, the blurrings, the undefinables, the space and tension between people, the area between the margins that pushes us to stop, to question. Hapas know the question inside out. *What are you?* And we know we can't answer it any more than we can choose one body part over another, we love the question, we hate the question. And we know many times people aren't satisfied with our answers. (Fulbeck, 2006, pp.11-13)

I have asked the same question to fourteen participants in this study and in asking, discovered their love and hate relationship with the question: What are you? As a language teacher, I have modified the question in order to help me to understand the participants as language learners. Fourteen participants spent some time with me to share their life stories and gave answers to my questions. Interviewing the participants was the most exciting and enjoyable part of the long process of this study. However, to complete the research, I had to analyze and transfer their life stories into a social science text as ethnographic work. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) state that one of the major difficulties in such a transition phase is that the social world is not organized as coherently as it is in a social science text, which is commonly organized according to its analytic

themes. Moreover, academic writing itself creates extra distance and layers between the two social phenomena, the social world and the social science text (Freeland, 2006).

Fortunately, the phase of translating life experiences into an academic text became easier when I began to tune into the participants' voices and to capture the whole picture of their life stories. Their voices filled the gap between the meanings of words and concepts in academic writing and my life experiences, which eventually helped me to synthesize the scattered theories in my head. For me, their life stories are the vital part of the study not only as data, but also as a useful guide for academic writing, which taught me how to connect a social world and social science texts. To highlight the significance of the participants' life stories in this study, in Chapter 4, I provide the summaries of the stories in their direct voices. I hope that this also gives the readers a chance to reflect on the participants' life stories.

Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1. Background

A society that consists of many immigrants such as Canada not only becomes a multicultural society, but also many of its households become intercultural or multicultural. The data from Census Statistics Canada (2006) released in 2010[1] reported that the proportion of interracial couples in Canada is on the rise, with a third more than in the previous census taken in 2001. Among numerous ethnic groups in Canada, Japanese reportedly have the highest ratio of interracial couples. According to the report, there are 29,700 interracial couples of which three-quarters (74.6%) have one partner who originates from Japan. This percentage is remarkably high in comparison to the second largest group (47%) which is made up of Latin American and non-Latin American partners. The report explains that this high proportion may be due to the long residential history for many Japanese in Canada, as well as the low overall number of Japanese, which may have led to an increase in interaction with persons outside of their group.

This census report confirms my own observations. In my experience teaching Japanese as a second language (JSL) in university over the last ten years, I have noticed an increased enrolment of Japanese mixed heritage youth (JMHY) studying Japanese. The majority of the JMHY in my class start from the beginner's class as a result of not having attended formal Japanese language class previously. Given one of their parent's Japanese ethnic background, Japanese language could be recognized as their heritage language (HL). In such cases, JMHY who are in a beginner's class are possibly viewed

1 The census is conducted every five years and it takes several years before the public sees its results. The latest census took place in 2011, the results of which have been released only partially, by the time I wrote this dissertation in December, 2013.

as cases of HL loss or a failure to maintain HL. When JMHY claim their Japanese heritage background as the reason for studying Japanese, over other university language courses such as French, German or Chinese, this raises issues in terms of how they relate to JSL students. How are they different from JSL learners? At the same time, how do they differ from HL learners with parents from the same cultural background? Most importantly, how can a Japanese language instructor best respond to JMHY's needs as learners in a JSL class? In effect, we researchers have not investigated this segment of the population enough to answer these questions. Mixed heritage persons have not received adequate attention in HL studies (Noro, 2009; Shin, 2010), although in the fields of psychology and cultural studies scholars have conducted a great volume of research on mixed heritage persons and have analyzed their ethnicity (e.g., Bettez, 2010; Collins, 2000; Murphy-Shigematsu, 2000; Root 1997).

In the HL field, since Fishman's (1966) pioneering work, the importance of maintaining the HL of immigrants has been continuously promoted and studied in various contexts. While the work of Cummins (1979, 1991, 2000) emphasizes the cognitive and academic developmental benefits of retaining the first language of any immigrant, a large body of research (e.g., Cho & Krashen, 2003; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Mills, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1991) has shown that one of the personal benefits of language maintenance is to improve family relationships. In the Japanese heritage language (JHL) context, the main trend is in line with the rest of HL education, and many studies (e.g., Hayashi, 2006; Oketani, 1997; Sakamoto, 2006; Shibata, 2000) have documented the importance of the retention of JHL and have investigated key factors for HL maintenance in North America. Thus, the benefits of maintaining one's HL are well documented. The flip side of this story is not so celebratory: there is a negative view of those who cannot manage to retain their HL. They are not only perceived as disadvantaged, but are also often placed outside the scope of HL research. While heterogeneity among populations of JHL learners has been recognized (Kondo-Brown, 2006), in many studies mixed heritage persons are still treated the same as other JHL learners whose parents are both Japanese (e.g., Chinen & Tucker, 2006; Sakamoto, 2006). If their difference is mentioned in the studies, normally the researchers (e.g., Chinen & Tucker, 2006; Kondo-Brown, 2005, Sakamoto, 2006) attribute the difference to the relative lower Japanese proficiency of JMHY. In spite of the fact that

JMHY are one of the fastest growing segments of the Japanese-Canadian population, research focused solely on mixed heritage persons is extremely limited in HL studies.

Thus, I have addressed the gap that exists in research for JMHY. In my study the particular emphasis is placed on exploring the daily language usage and senses of ethnicity of JMHY whose cases are often recognized as instances of HL loss. As I have witnessed an increase in the number of JMHY who enrol in a beginner's Japanese language class at the post secondary institution where I teach, I see an urgent need to investigate an appropriate pedagogical approach for the JMHY in my classes and those in JSL classes elsewhere.

1.2. Culture of Japanese Mixed Heritage Youth

The initial step in the search for an appropriate pedagogy is to understand the learner. It is important to note that understanding the learner is not merely about investigating their sense of belonging, or identity, or what is typically studied in the HL research: ethnicity. Instead, drawing on Baumann (1996) who approaches "ethnicity as culture," this study considers that it is JMHY culture that shapes their sense of belonging, identity and the role of HL in that process. Therefore, to examine who JMHY are requires an investigation of JMHY culture, which assists me to comprehend two interrelated processes: how JMHY culture shapes the relationship between heritage language and ethnicity, and at the same time how their view of heritage language and ethnicity reshape JMHY culture (Baumann, 1996).

More importantly, this study also takes up Baumann's (1999) notion that regards both essentialised and non-essentialised views as "cultural discourses," instead of considering them as two oppositional theoretical standpoints. He explains the significance of this approach in the following manner:

> We have a lot to gain as soon as we theorize what people say and do about culture as two discourses, both of them rational in their different contexts. It opens up a whole new universe of study. By viewing culture as the object of two discursive competencies, one essentialist and one processual, we

> can study and appreciate the culture-making sophistication of exactly those people who are usually treated as the dupes of “their” reified cultures. (p.94)

The notion of two cultural discourses sets up the core theoretical framework for the study, which aims to gain understanding of JMHY’s sense of ethnicity from their cultural perspective. To investigate JMHY’s ethnicity, I pay particular attention to the meaning making process, as Street (1993) suggests that we should study culture as an action, not a thing, because the most important aspect of culture making is that it is “an active process of meaning making”. In Chapter 2, I will discuss the concepts of culture in Baumann (1996, 1999, 2001) and Street (1993) and their place in my theoretical framework in more detail.

Gaining a better understanding of JMHY culture is aided by a linguistic ethnography approach that views language as a social behaviour or as a cultural system, and that focuses on “functions of languages” (Hymes, 1980, 1996, 2010). Hymes claims that only when a language is studied as a cultural system in social life, can one understand the “functions of languages” within that culture, which may appear to be unintelligible to outsiders. Hymes’ conviction for studying language becomes especially important in the context where I examine JMHY as language learners and discuss JMHY’s communicative competence in relation to their cultural knowledge. Following this focus on the “functions of languages”, in the present study I investigate the communicative competence of JMHY from the perspectives of intercultural competence (Byram 1997,2000, 2012) and multicompetence (Cook 1991, 1992, 2005, 2011). The linguistic competence of JMHY is not considered in detail in the present study because a purely linguistic focus treats a language as a set of linguistic codes without considering the social dimension of language use and does not reflect my research interest. I will discuss Hymes’ approach in more detail in the methodology chapter.

1.3. Purpose and Research Questions

In light of the remarkable increase in the number of interracial couples among Japanese in Canada, the enrolment of JMHY in Japanese classes[2] at post secondary institutions has increased. Nevertheless, in the field of HL education, there has been a very limited number of research studies focusing on this group of youth, or in distinguishing them from HL learners who have two parents from the same cultural background. Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to fill this gap and to provide in-depth understanding of some aspects of JMHY culture by analyzing narratives of their daily language use. I am particularly interested in JMHY whose cases reflect what is considered HL loss in HL literature, as they are given a negative label and often are depicted as people who have failed to obtain the benefits of maintaining their HL. In this study daily language use is not necessarily understood only as verbal communication. Rather, daily language use encompasses any competencies, involved in communication, including intercultural competence, especially in a cross-cultural situation. Therefore, the particular focus is on JMHY's interactions in daily life where they encounter cross-cultural situations and show their understanding of these situations (Hammersley, 2006).

The study also intends to yield findings that might allow me to promote the importance and benefit in employing linguistic ethnography to better understand daily language use and one's communicative competence as a cultural system. A linguistic ethnographic approach urges the researcher not to prejudge language functions that may appear to be unintelligible or insignificant to outsiders. What ethnographers represent as a new discovery is often "new aspect of old data" (Hymes, 1996, p. 11); that is, the researcher should start with an open-mind, and a new perspective in order not to be blinded by what has been considered to be the norm in the past. Thus, the study demonstrates how Hymes' linguistic ethnography provided a new analytical lens to interpret meanings of HL use. Finally, it is my biggest hope that the results of the study could produce useful guidance to understand who JMHY are as language learners for both Japanese language educators and parents of JMHY.

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2 To my understanding, not many colleges and universities (with the exception of a few universities) offer a separate stream for JHL learners. Therefore, my assumption is that the majority of JMHY in the North American post-secondary context enrol in a course where Japanese is taught as a second language.

I used the following research questions to achieve the study purposes mentioned above:

Q 1: How is the sense of ethnicity of JMHY shaped by culture in their everyday lives, and what role does their heritage language, Japanese, play in this process?

Q 2: What are the implications of JMHY's lack of "linguistic proficiency" in Japanese in the post-secondary Japanese language classroom?

1.4. Research Approach

The linguistic ethnography approach in the current study draws on multiple data sources with fourteen participants. While the main data source is semi-structured interviews, the study also draws on short autobiographical essays written by participants or photos that they believe represent their culture. The data also includes participant observation where I had the chance to spend extra time with a few participants at social occasions. These multiple data sources, intended to reveal the complex and multifaceted lives and experiences of participants from multiple angles (Denzin & Lincoln 2005), contribute to the credibility of the study. For the analysis, I incorporated my own memos and short journals to weave in my own subjective stance.

Participants are aged between 19 and 28 years, with four males and ten females from seven families. Because I was able to recruit two participants from the same family, different perceptions of their contexts in the information they shared in the interviews could provide an interesting angle to the study. Even though my focus is on those whose self-identified level is "beginner" (equivalent to "novice low" on the proficiency guideline of the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages with respect to the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing), I invited two participants (from one family) who generally communicate with their Japanese mother in Japanese for the purpose of comparison. Their self-identified levels are advanced and intermediate but their writing and reading levels are "novice high" on the proficiency guideline of the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages.

As a researcher, I acknowledge both the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research. That is to say, the findings of the study cannot be considered to represent an objective reality, nor scientifically proven truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, Hammersley, 1998). The interpretative and inductive nature of qualitative research urges me to be flexible and to be fully aware of my own subjective stance in analysis. Thus, the findings should be regarded as my interpretation of what JMHY represented as their culture. Furthermore, the detailed discussion on how I dealt with my subjective stance in the analysis is presented in the methodology chapter and I will provide my brief personal profile below.

1.5. My Personal Profile

My personal history informs the motive for the current research and my subjective stance plays a key role in this study. Therefore, I provide a summary of my personal profile. I grew up in a rural area of Japan and lived there until I went to England to study English in my twenties. It was not too unusual to do so for girls from big cities, but it was unusual in my small countryside town. My mother, who grew up there and has spent all her life there, never understands what motivated me to go abroad alone, even to this day. However, in retrospect, foreign countries and people who appear to be different from me have always fascinated me. As a child, I remember that my favourite TV show was a travel documentary.

To study English was merely an excuse to get out of the small town and to see different parts of the world. However, by the time I had to leave England, my desire to master English had become serious and led to my second experience abroad in England between 1989 and 1991. Even though my financial situation was tight, I managed to travel around Europe. Towards the end of my stay in 1991, I became very curious about my own culture[3] and language, which led me to take a Japanese language instructor certificate course in London. What triggered this is the fact that I began to see my own language and culture from a different perspective after experiencing many languages and

[3] It may be worth noting that the use of the term culture in this section, 1.5.differs from the way I use it in the rest of the thesis. Here I use it in a more reified way, as I had a different understanding of the term culture at the beginning of my research.

cultures. After leaving England, instead of going back to my small home I settled in Kyoto, where I could find a Japanese language teacher's job. My first school had many students from countries like China, Korea, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, but no western students. I noticed different behaviours and learning approaches among the students, which I deemed to be the influence of their own culture. While I dealt with people from different countries every day at school, I kept studying about Japanese language, which resulted in pursuing an undergraduate degree in Buddhism. Studying the history of Japanese language, at some point I felt that Japanese Buddhism played a big role in the development of Japanese language and culture. In 1995 when I applied for a volunteer teaching position abroad, I chose China, where I thought I could find out something about the origin of Japanese language and its connection to Buddhism.

Between 1996 and 1998 I joined the volunteer program run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who provided me with everything including Chinese language training both in Japan and China. I conversed in Chinese with the local people but I spoke more English than Japanese in my daily life as my interactions were mainly with volunteer English teachers from the US and UK. Through English conversation with the other volunteer teachers, I observed the way they interpreted Chinese culture. The way I learned the Chinese language was smoother than how I had learned English. I believe it was not due to the linguistic and cultural similarities, but had more to do with the fact that Chinese was not the first foreign language I had learned.

Upon my return from China, I worked as a Japanese language teacher in Kyoto again but in 2000 I decided to obtain a Master of Arts (MA) degree in Canada. Even though it was not my original plan to find a job in Canada, the university where I currently teach hired me after the completion of the MA program. Canada has been my residence for the past 15 years but since I left my hometown in the 1980s, I have lived in 4 different countries. During this time, I was always either learning a new language or teaching my native language to non-Japanese persons. Encountering new languages and cultures has been a big part of my life and has given me a chance to see differences and similarities with my own culture. Possibly my personal reason why I was drawn to JMHY is that I was curious to see what it looks like to grow up in a bicultural environment and with parents who come from different cultural backgrounds. Also, in a way, I probably wanted to

explore the contrast to my own upbringing and my experience of traveling and living in different countries with the bicultural upbringing of JMHY.

1.6. The Terms “Heritage” Language and Mixed “Heritage”

“Heritage” language is a much-debated term, especially within US literature, since it emerged and the argument rests on the negative connotation of the word “heritage” (Baker & Jones, 1998; Cummins, 2000; Wiley, 2005; Wiley & Valdés, 2000). For example, Baker and Jones (1998) point out that the term implies the past or tradition rather than future, so “it fails the impression of a modern international language that is of value in a technological society” (p.509). Similarly, Wiley (2005) and Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) express their discontent with the term “heritage” because “past” and “tradition” could be translated as “primitive”, which people may associate with “immigrants” who relocate from “primitive” countries. Thus, Wiley (2005) suggests an alternative term, “heritage and community language”, explaining that “this expression has the advantage of focusing on the present and the future” (p. 596). Although I agree that the term “heritage” may tend to be associated with a rather negative connotation of the past, it appears to me that its association with “tradition” and “primitive” is overstressed. The weight of history on the present cannot be ignored, as Hall (1989, 1992) asserts, employing Marx’s well-known quote, “Men and women make history but not under conditions of their own making” (Hall, 1989, p19). This current study does not separate the present and the future from the past, but instead the study regards the link between them important.

Outside of North America, several different terms are employed when referring to heritage languages. For example, in the United Kingdom, the term “community” language is more prevalent, while in Australia the term “Language other than English (LOTE)” is used along with the term “community” language. It seems to me that the word “community” indicates more a sense of group property and divides people into two groups, outsiders and insiders. One generally has to show one’s community identification or provide proof of membership (Gee, 2004) in order to share a given property, which is not applicable to the JMHY’s case in this study. In the study, despite the arguable connotation of the word

“heritage”, I use the term “heritage” language as it is most commonly used in North America and in the Canadian context generally refers to language other than the two official languages of Canada, English and French, or aboriginal languages (Duff, 2008).

Who is a HL speaker or learner is another question, which seems to have no straight answer. Scholars, such as Valdés (2001) and Fishman (1991, 2001) provide comprehensive definitions of “heritage language”, but any definitions cannot catch up with the increasing heterogeneity among “heritage language” learners (Hornberger & Wang, 2009). The definition of HL learners has been varying depending on one’s disciplinary perspective (Kondo, 2003; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003; Wiley 2005). Also, Hornberger and Wang (2009) suggest that just examining linguistic ability and the relation between HL and English (mainstream language) does not help to advance pedagogy and theory for HL learners. More importantly, it is the ultimate goal of this study to gain a better understanding of JMHY culture that characterizes who these youth are, instead of following a narrowly defined notion of who HL learners are.

With respect to the research participants who have one Japanese parent, I describe them as “mixed heritage youth,” instead of “mixed race” or “biracial” which are terms commonly employed in the fields of psychology and cultural studies. The word “race” is another debatable term and my choice of using “mixed heritage” is to avoid the association of the term race with a purportedly biological category. Apart from terms like “mixed race,” “biracial” or “mixed heritage”, several different terms – Amerasians, Eurasians, Afroasians (e.g., in Murphy- Shigematus, 2000) and Hapa – have been created to describe children from a heterogamous marriage whose parents (one of them) migrated from Asian countries. According to Noro (2009), the term “Hapa,” which originates in Hawaii pidgin meaning “half” or “part”, has become more common and is used as “an emblem of solidarity and empowerment” (p.1). Now the Hapa population is big enough to establish the Hapa Issues Forum in the United States, but those who do not have Hapa persons within their immediate family may not be familiar with the term. Lastly, the rationale for the whole term “Japanese mixed heritage youth” should be explained. When

I use the word "Japanese" in this study as an adjective[4] in JMHY, it indicates all the participants in the study are "mixed heritage persons", are between 19 and 28 years of age, and have at least one Japanese parent.

1.7. Japanese Language Education in British Columbia

The history of Japanese language education in British Columbia (BC) is almost as long as the history of Japanese immigrants in Canada. Along this long history the purpose of learning and teaching the Japanese language has changed among the Japanese immigrants in BC. Moreover, the political, economic and social conditions of Japan have experienced several drastic changes that resulted in creating different values and attractions for Japanese language learners in general. Thus, I believe all the changes in Japanese language education in BC have contributed to the delineation of the present context where JMHY's daily interactions take place. Therefore, in order to place the upcoming discussion of JMHY's language experiences in a broader context, I provide a brief overview of the historical background of Japanese language education in BC. It is beyond the scope of the study to illustrate all of the details of a history of over one hundred years; thus only major historical events that changed the purpose and value of Japanese language education in BC are mentioned here.

1.7.1. Japanese Language Education 1900-1960's in BC

In the first half of the twentieth century the status of the Japanese language was changed not only by the demands of the Japanese immigrants in BC, but also by the

4 My use of "Japanese" as an adjective preceding the noun Canadian is informed by the interview I had with Dr. Ted Aoki for my MA thesis eleven years ago. At the beginning of WWII, he was on military training that his university offered. One day his professor invited him to discuss his attitude towards the war, asking him whether he was fighting for Canada or Japan. Without any hesitation Dr. Aoki replied " I'm a Japanese Canadian". To his surprise, the very next day this professor requested him to return his military uniform and not to come to training. In Dr. Aoki's view, "Japanese Canadian" means "he is a Canadian" who happens to have Japanese parents because "Japanese" was used as an adjective to modify the noun "Canadian". However, for his professor, "Japanese Canadian" was not patriotic enough to allow him to wear the Canadian uniform.

severe political situation of Japan. I identify three major shifts in what it means to be a Japanese language speaker during this period of time.

At the beginning of the Japanese immigration to Canada, the majority of the first wave of Japanese immigrants did not plan to become permanent residents of Canada. Wishing their offspring to be educated with the Japanese national curriculum in order to eventually migrate back to Japan (Ayukawa, 2004; Japanese Canadian Centennial Project, 1978; McAllister, 2010), the first Japanese school (Bankuba Kyoritsu Nippon Kokumin Gakko /the Vancouver National Japanese School, later called the Vancouver Japanese Language School) was built in 1906 to meet the needs of the expanding population of Japanese immigrants (Sato 1959; Sato & Sato 1954).

The second shift happened during the 1920's with the increase in the number of second generation of Japanese (Nisei) who received Canadian public education and intended to stay in the country. While the first generation (Issei) often struggled to learn English, the dominant language among the Nisei slowly became English (Ayukawa, 2004). Consequently many Issei parents saw the urgent need for schools that would help their offspring to maintain the Japanese language (Ayukawa, 2004). Thus, the schools began to serve as a language school rather than following the Japanese national curriculum to teach all subjects in Japanese (Ayukawa, 2004; Sato 1959; Sato & Sato 1954). The third change occurred when the Japanese military power threatened the relationship between Canada and Japan. As a result, Japanese language became a language of the enemy. By 1941 there were over 50 Japanese language schools built and run privately in Canada, but all of them closed their doors voluntarily (Yesaki, 2003) during WWII. In those days, even speaking Japanese was perceived to be an action of traitors, which made many Japanese feel unsafe to speak their HL in public (Japanese Canadian Centennial Project, 1978). The third change, internment, is undoubtedly the most forceful one that left an inerasable impact on the community of Japanese immigrants even through to today.

The end of WWII in 1945 did not result in the immediate release of the Japanese evacuees east of the Rockies, and they had to start their lives from scratch, since their confiscated properties were never returned to them (Japanese Canadian Centennial Project, 1978; Yesaki, 2003). In spite of the tough conditions, the Japanese community in BC gradually regained its pre-War vitality. At the same time, the relationship between

Japan and Canada improved rapidly[5]. In 1952 the oldest Japanese school, the Vancouver Japanese Language School, reopened and a few other schools followed suit (Ostuka, 1995). However, Japanese language education did not experience any real renaissance in the post-War period, as the majority of Nisei concentrated on re-building their lives, paying little attention to Japanese language training for their children (Otsuka, 1995).

1.7.2. Japanese Language Education in BC: 1970's to Present

The major shifts in Japanese language education in BC in the late half of the twentieth century were more to do with how Japan was perceived by the rest of the world and the impact of globalization. Again there were three remarkable changes that need to be mentioned. The first change occurred during the post war recovery when Japan emerged as a strong economic powerhouse. In the 1970's, the number of Japanese enterprises operating in Canada expanded, leading to a marked increase in the number of Japanese workers and families who were in the country for defined time periods on work-related sojourns. This in turn resulted in a renewed demand for Japanese education for the children of these workers, both the Japanese language and other subjects taught in Japanese (Ota, 1988). Apart from the number of privately run Japanese language schools, such as the Vancouver Japanese Language School, a public school was introduced in Canada as the Japanese Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs agreed to partially subsidize the costs of Japanese schools overseas. The school is called Hoshukou, or "supplementary school" and is designed to accommodate the demand for a Japanese education for the children of expatriate Japanese families (Ota, 1988). What is important to note here is that the Japanese economic power not only increased the number of overseas Japanese students, but also attracted non-Japanese people to study Japanese for economic benefit (i.e., finding a job that requires Japanese language ability).

The Cultural Enrichment Program in 1977, as part of the federal government's policies supporting multiculturalism in Canada, stimulated the second movement. The program led to the introduction of instruction in a wide range of heritage languages (e.g.,

5 Japan's first embassy after WWII was built in Ottawa, in June 1952 (Ostuka, 1995).

Mandarin, Japanese and Spanish) in public schools (Beynon & Toohey (1991).[6] This brought a great opportunity for heritage language students who had rejected learning their HL while they were young (Duff, 2008). The third movement came along with the slagging Japanese economic power. The strong Japanese economic power that used to attract people to learn Japanese was gradually taken over by the enthusiasm for Japanese pop culture in the 1990s (Fukunaga, 2006). As a result, the participants in this study who were all born in the late 1980's or 90's know Japan as a country of great video games or animations rather than an economic powerhouse. For example, a survey conducted in 2009 by the Japan Foundation across 14,925 institutions of all levels in 133 countries shows that more than half of the students selected as their purpose to learn Japanese to understand Japanese manga or anime (Japan Foundation, 2009). The popularity of Japanese pop culture is so significant that some instructors (e.g., Fukunaga 2006; Armour 2011) promote the use of manga or anime as a textbook.

With respect to the local Japanese language schools, the Hoshukou suffered because of a weakened Japanese economy, as the number of Japanese sojourners sharply declined (Mizuta & Takei 2009). On the other hand, the private language schools expanded their capacity. The Japanese private language school's enrolment has been maintained due to the fact that the number of Japanese immigrants who sought permanent residency did not decline, and their residency area began to spread to the outskirts of the City of Vancouver (Noro, 2006). According to Noro (2006), more than 50% of students who enrol in the Japanese private language schools are Japanese mixed heritage students. She also mentions that there are quite a few non-heritage students studying in these schools, who lived in Japan before moving to Canada. Many of them are young students originally from Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, and Korea who continue to take a Japanese language class at post-secondary school as well (Mizuta & Takei, 2009).

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6 Even though the public high schools received the incentive immediately, it took longer for colleges and universities to offer Japanese language courses. The university where I teach did not offer a Japanese course until 1992.

1.8. Overview of Dissertation Organization

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. In Chapter 2 I will provide a literature review that delineates the theoretical framework employed to address the research questions. In Chapter 3, I will present my methodological approach with detailed information on participants, data collection, data analysis and ethical concerns. Before discussing my analysis of data, Chapter 4 offers a summary of the life stories of all participants in order to bring their voices close to the readers. In Chapters 5 and 6, I will analyze the data I collected from multiple sources, referring to the research questions I posed. Finally, in Chapter 7, I will recapitulate the findings and discuss theoretical contributions of the study. This final chapter will also provide suggestions for parents of mixed heritage persons, as well as for instructors at post secondary schools. The remaining section of the final chapter will review limitations the study could not overcome and suggestions for future research in similar areas in HL education.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to situate the present study within the fields of literature and theory that are relevant to answering the two research questions. First, I provide an overview of theories relevant to language and ethnicity and their relationship in HL education. Then, I provide a discussion related to why studying one's culture brings new insights into a better understanding of our learners and the relationship between the learners and the languages they use. The discussion points out how combining the essentialized and non-essentialized views of cultures brings a useful analytical angle to scrutinize the relationship between language and ethnicity. Next I review key arguments in the discussion of teaching and learning culture in language education. I introduce the notions of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997, 2000, 2012) and multicompetence (Cook, 1991, 1992, 2005, 2011), which provide a foundation for my analysis of JMHY's daily language usage. The discussions in this chapter provide a backbone for the interpretations of data in subsequent chapters.

2.2. Heritage Language and Ethnicity

Since Fishman's (1966) pioneering work on heritage language research, learners' ethnicity is believed to play a crucial role in both attrition and erosion of HL. Thus, the discussion on how learners' ethnicity relates to their HL is a central issue in the field of HL education. For example, Giles et. al. (1977) introduce the notion of ethnolinguistic vitality[7] to analyze the socio-structural factors affecting the strength of minority language retention.

[7] Giles, et. al. (1977) define ethnolinguistic vitality as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations." They also suggest three factors that contribute to ethnolinguistic vitality: status factor (such as economic, political, and linguistic prestige); demographic factors (such as absolute numbers, birthrate, geographical concentration); and institutional support (such as recognition of the group and its language in the media, education, government) (Giles & Johnson, 1987)

It is suggested that the higher ethnolinguistic vitality is, the stronger intergroup collectiveness becomes and the higher probability there is for maintenance of the minority language. Their initial approach was widely accepted among other scholars (e.g., Allard and Landry, 1994; Giles & Jonson, 1987) who re-evaluated and further elaborated the theory. These scholars applied quantitative approaches to measure one's sense of ethnic belongingness in a questionnaire format (e.g., Allard and Landry, 1994; Feuerverger, 1989). In the case of Japanese heritage language, both Kondo (1998) and Oketani (1997) report a correlation between the proficiency level of Japanese and a sense of ethnic belongingness in a cause-effect paradigm. Similarly, with a comparison of Canadian communities, in Toronto, Victoria and Vancouver, Noro (2009, 2006)[8] suggests that locality affects the degree of Japanese ethnolinguistic vitality, which ultimately influences the vitality of the Japanese language in a given context. According to Noro, in Vancouver, where the participants in this study are located, there appears to be much more support and promotion of Japanese language maintenance than in Toronto and Victoria.

While considerable quantitative research on the effects of ethnicity on language acquisition and retention in Japanese heritage language research has been conducted (e.g., Chinen & Tucker, 2008; Noro, 2009), qualitative research based on non-essentialized views of ethnicity has gained more popularity recently. A major trigger of this movement came with the work of Norton (2000). In her research, she applied Bourdieu's ideas to the Canadian context, suggesting that learning languages is a social practice, and learners are social agents. Norton proposes the notion of investment to illustrate how learners contest or invest in an identity assigned to them within a relationship of power. Her focal argument is that identity is an ongoing process, which emerges through a learner's interaction with his/her sociocultural context, rather than a static entity.

2.2.1. New Ethnicities and Culture of Hybridity

Norton's emphasis on sociocultural aspects of language learning emerged from a post-structuralist perspective which has carried great sway in the field of second language education. Some academics in the field of HL education are also inspired by the Cultural

[8] Noro's recent work (2009) looks at the comparison between Vancouver and Victoria, whereas her former work (2006) compares Vancouver and Toronto.

Studies scholar Stuart Hall to explore learners' ethnicity from a non-essentialized perspective. Drawing on Hall's theory of new ethnicities and cultural hybridity, some scholars (e.g., Block, 2008; Harris 2006; Rampton,1995) have been engaged in an examination of the complex link between language and ethnicity. Before discussing these works, I illustrate how Hall conceptualizes his notion of new ethnicities to explain the construction of cultural identities in late modernity. First, Hall (1992) elucidates the inevitable emergence of new ethnicities, which he terms "translation":

> This describes those identity formations which cut across and intersect natural frontiers, and which are composed of people who have been dispersed forever from their homelands. Such people retain strong links with their places of origin and their traditions, but they are without the illusion of a return to the past. They are obliged to come to terms with the new cultures they inhabit, without simply assimilating to them and losing their identities completely. [….] They must learn to inhabit at least two identities, to speak two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them. Cultures of hybridity are one of the distinctly novel types of identity produced in the era of late modernity, and there are more and more examples of them to be discovered. (Hall, 1992, p.310)

Undoubtedly Hall's extensive work is influential in many disciplines, although it has changed its emphasis over the years. In his earlier work (1989), Hall places more weight on the impact of history: "the past is not only a position from which to speak, but it is also an absolutely necessary resource in what one has to say" (1989, p. 24), without implying that our identity is completely constrained by history. What he implies here is that the words we utter have pre-existing meanings because of their historical usage, but they are also changeable as history itself is a continuous dialectic (Bakhtin, 1981). Thus, in the same paper he states: "Those are the new ethnicities, the new voices. They are neither locked into the past nor able to forget the past. Neither all the same nor entirely different. Identity and difference" (Hall, 1989, p. 25).

In a later paper (1996), Hall puts less weight on historicity and more on future perspectives, as he takes account of the significant impact of globalization. The following paragraph is most often quoted to portray his main concept:

> …identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being; not 'who we are' or 'where we came from, so much as what we might become, how we have

> been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (Hall, 1996, p. 4, cited also in Block, 2006, p. 26)

His shift to the future, "what one might become," is grounded in the notion that identity is not a fixed phenomenon, since one joins in social discourse that consists of discursive cultural representations; however, social discourses are not static phenomena either. In Hall's later work (1996), complexity and incompleteness of identity formation are emphasized, which he attributes to the forces of globalization. Echoing Giddens' concept of globalization (1991, 2000), Hall does not see globalization as a one way push to erase all the borderlines among the nations but he recognizes the side effects of globalization; globalization also provides a chance for locals to revitalize their cultures and create new identities, which are "within the logic of time and space compression" (Hall, 1992, p. 306). It is important not to mix revitalized identities with old traditional ones, because they are new identities; "more plural and diverse; less fixed, unified or trans-historical" (p. 309).

Hall's work on new ethnicities is of great interest to my research because it encompasses both historicity and novelty in the identification of the JMHY's ethnicity. Looking at JMHY's history, one is reminded immediately that their past is already a history of cultural hybridity as their two parents carry different cultural histories. In this study, in order to understand the relationship between JMHY's language usage and their sense of ethnicity, investigating how they perceive or relate their histories that have brought them to where they are now becomes an extremely important analytical point. Also as Hall (1996) states that identities are "in the process of becoming rather than being", the study pays attention to the ways JMHY relate their history and connect their present, while forming their future perspective.

Applying Hall's notion in sociolinguistic research, Rampton (1995) and Harris (2006) demonstrate how new ethnicities are represented in the language use of British minority youths. Replacing the linguistic terminology code-switching, Rampton (1995) formulates the concept of "crossing" in order to capture "a distinct sense of movement across social or ethnic boundaries" (p.280) when people alternate linguistic codes in their speech. For Rampton, crossing is not simply a mix of linguistic codes, but a location in which speakers creatively or artfully negotiate their ethnic identities. Likewise, Harris (2006) illustrates "the linguistic dimension of the new ethnicities and cultures of hybridity"

(p.169) in the pattern of everyday language usage of south Asian youth in West London (Backhill). Harris explains that their identities are reflected in their daily language use and are constituted in "the densely entangled interrelationship between the young peoples' positioning on language and the intersecting communities of practice they inhabit, and the popular cultural tastes and practices with which they are involved" (p.170). Thus, while the daily communications of the Backhill youth are predominately in English, more precisely, the local London English, their heritage languages, such as Punjabi, Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu are ever present at specific moments and with specific interlocutors. Their connection to the heritage languages are embodied in their claims of "my language" or "my culture" to describe these languages, although the youth admit their limited usage of the heritage languages.

Harris (2006) emphasizes that the participants' new ethnicities are not constituted in the dichotomy between the new (British) and the old (heritage cultures), but through their engagement in local religious practice, diaspora South Asian pop culture (e.g., Hindi films and songs) and African American or London Caribbean pop culture. In other words, a culture of hybridity in the case of Backhill youth is generated through their participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff 2003). In communities of practice where Backhill youths "share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives" (Lave & Wenger 1991, p.98), their language use acts as a key marker (Harris, 2006, p.147). The generative function of communities of practice Harris identifies among Backhill youths could be helpful for examining JMHY's communities of practice in their daily lives. However, to do so would require an adjustment for this study because of the differences in context and community between Backhill youth and JMHY. Unlike the Backhill youth, the population of JMHY in Vancouver is not concentrated in a particular geographic area even though the population itself is growing. Additionally, the JMYH in this study normally do not have extended Japanese family members such as grandparents, uncles and aunts living in the same house or area. For the JMHY in most cases, their community is deeply rooted within their household as their parent and siblings become a key facilitator in their community.

Harris's endeavour to focus on everyday language use where a community of practice is generated can nevertheless be applied to this study. Harris analyzes the routine behaviour of ordinary youths to grasp insights into the nature of identity formation

in the framework of new ethnicities. Harris contends that the best way to convey the findings of this approach, while maintaining an non-essentialist gaze, is to apply the notion of "thick description" and "interpretation of interpretation" promoted by Geertz (1973). Harris attempts this by providing the findings from the participants' point of view, and their direct voice, which he describes "unmediated by analytic and interpretive interventions" (Harris, 2006, p.171). Following Harris's persuasion, this study also presents the unmediated voices of JHMY in Chapter 4 to provide the reader with a big picture of who JMHY are.

In Rampton and Harris's view the relationship between language and ethnicity is not fixed, but more discursive due to heterogeneity in language and ethnicity, which led them to question the notion of native speakers. Leung, Harris and Rampton (1997) rejected a tight connection between language and ethnicity, promoting a new concept to account for language learners' reality. What Rampton and Harris have adapted from Hall is not only the notion of new ethnicities but also Hall's resistance to the essentialized view of cultures. On the other hand, other scholars (e.g., Edwards, 2009; Fishman 1991; May 2000) do not readily agree with the claim of the discursive tie between language and ethnicity or the anti-essentialist gaze. For example, May (2000) does not overtly reject the possibility of new ethnicities and some degree of hybridity in culture, nor does he refute the indexical link between language and ethnicity. May (2000) uses Fishman's work to explain this dual stance:

> One way in which these apparent contradictions can be addressed is via Fishman's (1991) analysis of the links – indexical, symbolical, and part-whole, as he calls them – between identity and particular traditionally associated languages. Briefly, these may be summarized as follows. First, a language associated with a particular culture is at any time during which that linkage is still intact, best able to name the artifacts and to formulate or express the interests, values and world-view of culture' (1991: 20). This is the indexical link between language and culture (May, 2000, pp. 373-4).

May does not regard ethnicity as static or monolithic but the importance of historical continuities is stressed in his claim of the indexical link between language and ethnicity, which varies among various ethnicities. In effect, it is a crucial question: What are the languages under study? Whereas May's (2000) dispute stems from his discernment of endangered languages such as African tribal languages, Rampton (1995)

and Harris (2006) focus on immigrants' HL such as Punjabi, Gujarati, Hindi and Urdu. These are minority languages in England but not languages on the verge of extinction. Therefore, it is unsurprising that their different viewpoints have brought oppositional arguments. On the surface, the discursive link between language and ethnicity promoted by Rampton and Harris is more applicable to the case of JMHY in this study. Also as mentioned earlier, Hall's notion of "cultural hybridity" stemming from his anti-essentialist stance is relevant for this study of mixed heritage individuals. I do not imply, however, that the study should completely ignore the validity of the indexical link between language and ethnicity that May and Fishman promote. Thus, in the next subsection I will review where this study stands in terms of analytic gaze and how I resolve the gap between indexical link and discursive relation between language and ethnicity.

Given the hybrid ethnic background of JMHY, the notion of new ethnicities is useful in understanding how JMHY constitute their sense of ethnicity in relation to their everyday language use. At the same time, this study does not simply overlook the claim of the indexical link between language and ethnicity. May (2005) argues that hybridity in language and ethnicity is undeniable in this post colonial world; he states, "while language may not be a determining feature of ethnic identity, it remains nonetheless a significant one in many instances" (p.330). Baumann (1996, 1999, 2001) provides a useful justification to the polarized views: essentialized versus non-essentialized view. Baumann (1996) studies ethnic identities/ethnicities of people, Southallians, in a densely multi ethnic area of London, and analyzes the use of the word "culture" among Southallians. He identifies that Southallians use the words "culture" and "community" in two systematically different ways: "In our community, we don't have a culture; of course we have a culture, but we're not a community; that [other] community is really part of our culture" (Baumann, 1996, p.10). Baumann explains this contradictory and complex relation of culture and ethnicity in the most simplified and yet convincing way: "Culture= community= ethnic identity =nature =culture" (p.17). For Baumann, ethnicity as culture means that building a community gives a chance for community members to perform culture where the meaning of ethnicity is also established. The more elaborate version is:

> ethnicity is the product of people's actions and identifications, not the product of nature working by itself. This is why ethnicity is not about blood as such or ancestry as such. Rather, it is about the cultivation and

> refinement of all the possibilities first given by nature, but not finished by nature. (Baumann, 1999, pp.63- 64)

In this claim he represents his constructionist view of culture as processual, but stresses that it does not mean we can completely disregard essentialist perspectives:

> The rhetoric is essentialist, yet the activity is processual. [.....] all having of culture is a making of culture, yet all making of culture will be portrayed as an act of reconfirming an already existing potential. The two theories are thus not opposite. Rather, the processual theory is implicit in all essentialist rhetoric. (Baumann, 1999, pp.91-92)

Instead of considering essentialism and non-essentialism as two opposing theories, he refers to "two discourses of culture" to provide a useful analytical angle to the study of ethnicity as culture. I have already quoted his argument in my introduction chapter: "We have a lot to gain as soon as we theorize what people say and do about culture as two discourses, both of them rational in their different contexts. It opens up a whole new universe of study" (Baumann, 1999, p.94). In an explanation of two discourses of culture, Baumann (1996) points out that his informants, Southallians, often use the word "culture" to "describe the reified and stable heritage" in spite of the effort of anthropologists not to reify cultures. His claim allows me to examine how JMHY culture shapes the relationship between heritage language and ethnicity, and at the same time, how their view of heritage language and ethnicity reshape JMHY culture.

Baumann's account of ethnicity as culture also resolves my discomfort with the term "identity" and the notion of "negotiating identity" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Blackledge & Creese 2008). The concept of identity is not only ambiguous but also relatively new to me, as I had never encountered the word "identity" before moving to Canada. Scholars such as Chase (2005) and Wortham (2001) endorse my discomfort with the term as they explicitly criticise the lack of a more universal perspective on identity studies. For example, Chase (2005) who studies narrative analysis, points out the western concept of identity: "we need to understand more fully how our research is imbued with Western assumptions about self and identity" (p. 83). Likewise, Wortham (2001), who promotes a dialectic approach to narrative analysis, condemns research focused on "self-contained individuals, who allegedly construct boundaries to distinguish themselves from others and the world" (p. 161).

Similarly, some Asian American scholars (e.g., Kim, 2002; Kondo, 1990) call attention to the inadequacy in the assumption that the sense of self, which stemmed from the western philosophical tradition (especially Cartesian's dualism[9]), can be universal. They claim that in collective societies such as in East Asia, the sense of self is viewed in relation to others, rather than separating an individual from society. They further claim that the interdependent self in East Asian cultures does not aim to represent "who I am" but rather is a sign of acknowledgement of others, "who they are", and the relation with them. Kim (2002) and Kondo's (1990) claim suggests that the concept of identity could be found in all societies but its understanding and function cannot be shared among them because of different understandings of the boundaries between a society and individuals (Chase, 2001).

Some empirical research demonstrates the notion of relational self among Japanese speakers as well. Kanno's (2000) study, examining Japanese returnees from Canada, suggests that the identity of Japanese returnees is contingent on with whom they interact and where the interaction occurs. Nishimura (1992) reports how the bilingual Nisei (the second generation of Japanese) juggle the choice of languages (Japanese, English and mix of both) according to their perception of their interlocutors' identities. The language choice of the Nisei poignantly portrays the relational sense of self where language is used to represent one's acknowledgement of others and their relationship with them. Kanno and Nishimura's relational identity view makes an interesting contrast to the notion of negotiating identity (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001), where individuals constantly negotiate between "self-chosen identities and other's attempts to positions them differently" (p. 249). In effect, a relational identity is one of three situations that Blackledge and Pavlenko list as a case in which identity negotiation is not applicable: "it is possible that the notion of identity, predicated on the individualistic view of the self, may not even be a relevant concept for analysis of interaction" (p.250). Interestingly they do not specify which societies these cases represent, although the word "individualistic" indicates that their intention is to contrast against "collectivist" societies. Blackledge and Pavlenko (2001) maintain that in societies where a difference is drawn between societies and individuals their theory of negotiating identity is comprehended differently. Whereas the

[9] Hall (1992) states that the Cartesian subject is still influential but also claims that "that great dualism between 'mind and matter', has troubled Western philosophy ever since" (p.282).

concept of negotiating identity is based on the rather clear boundary between a society and an individual, the interdependent (Kondo, 1990, Kim 2002) or relational identity (Kanno 2000, Nishimura, 1992) perspectives do not draw a clear boundary between an individual and a society.

Chase, Wortham, Kim and Kondo's argument certainly compensates for my discomfort, but their emphasis on the dichotomy of the west (individualism) and the east (collectivism) does not offer much help to my study in which an Asian background researcher investigates youths who have grown up in Canadian society. Where can I find a solution for my discomfort and an appropriate theoretical framework for this study? If the terms are an issue, then indeed, the solution should be found there as well. Baumann (1990) recommends that when we wish to distinguish meanings of terms, we should see where they overlap. Kondo (1990) claims: "selves are rhetorical assertion, produced by our linguistic convention" or "the culturally shaped narrative conventions that constructed the self (p.307). The terms ethnicity, identity and selves all have one thing in common: these concepts are trapped in linguistic conventions and are a cultural production, while they all concern our sense of who we are. Even though I had not considered my own "identity" as analyzed above before moving to Canada, I must have had the same experiences that the term identity signifies in western academic discourse. In western philosophy or thought my experience could be referred as to as an identity crisis, but within my linguistic convention, the term identity did not appropriately convey my experience. For me, Baumann's notion of ethnicity as culture shows where all the terms ethnicity, identity, or self overlap. Therefore, it adequately guides me in my inquiry into the relationship between JMHY heritage language and ethnicity. So far I have illustrated the analytical angle of my investigation of the JMHY's everyday language use. However, the study of JMHY culture could be still very vague, as it encompasses basically everything JMHY do in their life (Scollon and Scollon, 2012; Williams, 1976). The study of JMHY culture has to be endorsed by a more feasible and concise analytical lens, which I demonstrate next.

As discussed above, Baumann's (1990, 1999, 2001) views in the study of culture are of great interest to this study, but at the same time his anthropological look into ethnicity as culture brings fundamental epistemological questions: Why do we study the formation of ethnicity in language education? What can we learn from examining the

relationship between language and ethnicity? To answer the questions, we have to look at Baumann's claim regarding "the product of people" (Baumann, 1996), and how it is constructed For Baumann, "making a culture" means the "act of being performed (p. 26)." During the performance, people do not simply repeat culture, but actually remake it, which inevitably involves changes. His view of culture as action is closely related to Street's (1993) claim of "culture as a verb." In effect, Street's claim is helpful in understanding what is made during the "act of being performed." Street suggests that the meaningful question to be asked is, not what culture is, but what culture does, because:

> We all live our lives in terms of definitions, names and categories that culture creates. The job of studying culture is not of finding and then accepting its definitions, but of 'discovering how and what definitions are made, under what circumstances and for what reasons'. These definitions are used, changed and sometimes fall into disuse. Indeed, the very term culture itself, like these other ideas and definitions, changes its meanings and serves different, often competing purposes at different times. Culture is an active process of meaning making and contest over definition, including its own definitions. This, then is what I mean by arguing that culture is a verb. (Street, 1993, p.25).

Street (1993) does not simply condemn the reification of culture, but explains why researchers could easily stumble over all definitions, names and categories. Thus he goes on to say "culture is not a thing but has to be dressed up as one in social scientific discourse in order to be defined" (pp. 25, 42). Combining this with Baumann's claim of ethnicity as culture, we should be able to observe "the active construction of meaning" (p. 23), when the term ethnicity is undressed, seeing it as actions. That is to say, in this study I regard artfully creating ethnicities (Rampton, 1995), and self-representations of ethnicity (Harris, 2006), as well as the significance of the indexical link between language and ethnicity, as sites of JMHY culture where they actively engage in processes of making meaning.

2.2.2. Youth and Popular Culture in the Globalization Era

In an era of globalization the most important and remarkable phenomenon to be discussed with respect to youth culture is the growing interaction through the worldwide web. Fairclough (2003) points out that the discourse of popular culture is one of the influential factors that contributes to and shapes processes of globalization. The studies

of UK youth by Rampton (1995) and Harris (2006) have provided evidence of this phenomenon in their claim of new ethnicities among the UK youth. I have already discussed that Backhill youth in Harris's (2006) study indicate their daily language use is shaped through their participation in several communities of practice not only locally, but globally. The worldwide web does not only permit many youth in any part of the world to access a vast trove of information instantly, but also allows them to form new types of online communities.

Examining such communities, Gee (2004) suggests the concept of "affinity identity" to explain how people can construct a new identity with others who share the same practices and a common endeavour online (e.g., online games), even though they may not be located in physically or geographically shared space or they do not know the other people's personal profiles, such as age, nationality, occupation or gender. They also do not need to share such personal profiles. According to Gee, the formation of affinity identity takes place in affinity space where knowledge is built by people who share the same practice or experiences, and that knowledge is equally distributed across people, regardless of their personal profiles. People join an affinity place because of their shared interest, not because of their physical location or commonality in personal profiles. Affinity identity or space is a concept Gee finds useful when approaching teaching literacies, as an elaboration of the concept of communities of practice. (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff 2003)

Both affinity space and communities of practice are grounded on the premise of "situated learning," where members contribute to the construction of community knowledge through social activities. Emphasizing the mutuality that activities and people who are engaged in the activities generate, Lave and Wenger (1991) claim all learning is situated, as "there is no activity that is not situated" (p. 33). On the other hand, the key concept of affinity space (Gee, 2004) reflects the shared practices and experiences that brought members together who created the space where the knowledge is established by doing or by experiencing the shared interest. Also, in order to indicate the importance of openness, as opposed to the closeness or tightness the term "community" may convey, Gee intentionally employs the word "space," which is generated globally through the prevalence of the Internet.

The application of affinity space is significant in this study as Japanese pop culture and online games have replaced Japanese economic power as a main motivation for learning Japanese in many cases (Armour 2011; Fukunaga 2006). As previously mentioned, pop culture and online games have become a common, shared motivation for joining a Japanese language class in recent years at any level of educational institution in the world (according to the survey conducted by the Japanese Foundation 2009). There is a chance that JMHY join an affinity space of Japanese pop culture, which seems to form a particular affinity identity among learners of Japanese language, but their participation depends on how JMHY relate to or are influenced by Japanese pop culture. The sway of Japanese pop culture in JMHY's daily life might play a role in understanding the outcomes of interactions they engage in a Japanese language class.

Furthermore, there are additional important premises on which Gee grounds his discussion of affinity identity and space that are applicable to this study of JMHY's culture. First, Gee suggests that what is generated in affinity space is shared experiences and distributed knowledge using a language people share. For Gee, to learn a new word, learners have to have actual experience of what the word refers to, since words "do not have just general dictionary-like meanings. They have different and specific meanings in different situations where they are used and in different specialist domains that recruit them" (Gee, 2004, p.41). These learning processes are generated through interactions with others inside of situated contexts and thus should be regarded as a "cultural process" that varies from community to community (Heath, 1983). Gee separates cultural process from "natural process" where, for example, one learns how to walk. Cultural process, unlike natural process, is not supported by one's biological inheritance. With respect to JMHY's situated learning, I pay attention to JMHY's interactions with their Japanese parent who is deemed to be a key facilitator in cultural processes in their lives. For that matter, I also examine any circumstances where JMHY can engage in learning Japanese language through cultural processes in their daily life.

According to Gee (2004), "people learn best when their learning is part of a highly motivated engagement with social practice they value" (p. 77). Thus, I will also extend Gee's notion to include JMHY's personal interests, hobbies or even occupations, apart from Japanese pop culture, to grasp how their "highly motivated engagement with social practice they value" contributes to their cultural process. For example, one of the

participants shows a great interest in Japanese fashion, in spite of her rejection of any connection to Japanese culture at her early age. Her initial motivation could have been instigated by the mother, who is also interested in fashion, but her own interest has gradually grown as she began to establish her own values and perspectives of life as a young adult. It is worthwhile investigating how her interest in Japanese fashion reflects on the way she has developed different perspectives on Japanese culture in general.

2.3. Culture in the Language Class

In the previous section the discussion focused on the idea that the study of JMHY's culture can provide a better understanding of the relationship between their HL and their sense of ethnicity. In this section, I will focus on a discussion of culture located in language classes. I consider the participants as language learners, and I discuss culture as an integrated part of language learning. In this regard, the term cultural knowledge of a target language or people who speak that language might be more suitable for this study. While the two contexts differ from each other, my central argument on culture presented in the previous section still underscores the discussion of culture in this section. The discussion, particularly pertaining to Baumann's concept of the two discourses of culture, to encompass both essentialized and non-essentialized views of culture, is very relevant here as well. When I introduce the notion of intercultural competence, essentialized views cannot be completely discarded and at the same time the discussion of processual discourses is significant.

In language classes, teaching culture has always been part of language education as it is considered to be necessary for smooth communication (Kramsch, 1993). Teachers are encouraged to use authentic materials, such as newspapers, magazines, and television shows to provide first-hand cultural knowledge of the target language culture. However, post-structuralist perspectives challenge the teaching of culture as a piece of knowledge. From a poststructuralist view, for example, the dynamic of power relations is not only seen in the fluctuating cultural landscape of societal change, but also in the social actors and individuals who shape the power relationship (Bourdieu, 1991). In this sense, Kumaravadivelu (2008) explains that Bourdieu's "habitus" "functions as a prism through which individuals see themselves and others. It conditions their words, their deeds, and

their attitudes." (p.14). Discussing culture in language education, Kumaravadivelu puts more emphasis on pluralism or hybridity in culture and claims some cultural traits are accentuated or romanticized (e.g., Said 1978) by certain historical forces or oversimplified by the political climate at a particular moment (e.g, Fanon, 1967). Thus, he warns of the danger of falling into the dichotomy of "our culture" and "their culture" when the awareness of similarities and differences in each language community are highlighted without the consideration of power relations among communities.

Kubota (2004) raises a similar criticism of how cultural difference is treated in three different approaches[10] in language education. Kubota argues that each approach misses what she calls "politicizing difference" which is produced in discourse:

> To put this discussion back into a cultural context, it is necessary to politicize cultural difference and move beyond dualism and essentialism. Poststructuralism encourages us to view culture and cultural difference as discursive constructs rather than as objective and permanent truths. The particular meanings and images given to cultures are produced within various institutionally located discourses seen in literature, teaching materials, advertising, media, art, and politics, constructing commonly accepted knowledge about culture and cultural difference and legitimating the knowledge as truth. (Kubota 2004, p.30)

Kubota explains cultural difference as exemplifying characteristics of Japanese written communication styles (indirect, inductive, non-logical and ambiguous), which are demonized as the source of a Japanese low English proficiency. Kubota points out that this only comes to the surface because of the exclusive comparison with western culture. If Japanese language were compared against another culture (e.g., Arabic or Russian) then different Japanese characteristic writing patterns would have been portrayed.

What both Kumaravadivelu and Kubota condemn is the essential view that considers culture as monolithic or fixed, because for them culture is fluid, woven through the net of power dynamics. Hence, cultural differences do not simply exist in reality and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003) is required to identify how cultural differences are created in social discourse. Both Kumaravadivelu and Kubota's criticism are from the teacher's perspective, referring to the way culture is taught in a language class.

[10] Kubota's (2004) divisions of the different approaches are; contrastive rhetoric research, national standardized language learning, and culturally relevant teaching.

Consequently, they condemn teachers who regard the goal of teaching culture to provide a piece of cultural knowledge with textbooks that portray cultural difference as fixed truths. While their arguments provide useful advice for teachers not to be trapped by fixed cultural differences, the goal of education has to be investigated from the learners' points of view as well (Ilieva, 2001). Teachers know too well that often the curricular message is not delivered to students as intended. For this study it is crucial that the investigation takes place where learners' perspectives are taken into consideration. In other words, this study should explore how JMHY would treat cultural difference regardless of their teacher's intentions. Thus, next I look at work that examines how culture could be learned in a language class from a learner's perspective.

2.3.1. Intercultural Competence

The initiative of teaching or learning culture is grounded in the notion that understanding the cultural aspects of a target language and people who speak the target language is essential for successful communication in a cross cultural situation (Kramsch, 1993; Scollon & Scollon, 2012). Thus, if the ultimate goal is for learners to become successful communicators, one may ask: Who is a successful communicator? What could be criteria for a successful communicator? A successful language learner, or communicator, according to Byram (1997), is someone who has excellent "intercultural communicative" competence. Byram's concept of intercultural communicative competence is built on five different factors: knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relation, skills of discovery and interaction, and political education including critical awareness. He also describes persons who possess intercultural communication competence as follows:

> Someone with some degree of intercultural competence is someone who is able to see relationships between different cultures - both internal and external to a society - and is able to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people. It is also someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other cultures - someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural. (Byram, 2000, p. 10)

In his more recent work, Byram (2012) emphasizes the need for "critical cultural awareness": an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in our own and other cultures and countries (Byram, 1997, p.53). He suggests that without critical cultural awareness, it is difficult to acquire a new analytical lens to recognize diversities within culture and to view language use as a social act. Byram's intercultural competence model is widely accepted and has contributed to the Common European Framework of the Council of Europe (i.e. Council of Europe 2001). In addition, Byram's model has inspired other scholars to add another dimension of skill (Sercu, 2002, 2004), to develop assessment criteria (Deardroff, 2006) or to emphasize the symbolic dimension of intercultural competence (Kramsch, 2010) for the further elaboration of his model. However, scholars like Kumaravadivelu (2008) and Kubota (2004) do not directly criticize Byram's model (the criticism is more towards the interculturality promoted by the Council of Europe in 2001) but claim that the intercultural competence approach overlooks the pluralism perspective in culture and thus results in the dichotomy of 'us' and 'them,' a seed that leads to cultural stereotyping.

While I concur with Kumaravadivelu and Kubota, who warn of the potential danger of an "us" and "them" dichotomy in the model of intercultural competence, I argue that their criticism of an essentialized view of culture has a number of blind spots. First, the term "Interculture" itself may be misguiding because it seems to imply that "inter" combines a learner's culture and the target language's culture and cultural differences can emerge between these cultures. In effect, this term disguises the fact that learners belong to more than one culture simultaneously. For example, when a Canadian student learns the Japanese language, the cultural difference he or she may face is not necessarily between Canadian culture and Japanese culture. If that student is a male who enjoys online games, he may have a lot in common with a Japanese male student who also plays online games frequently. On the other hand, if this Canadian student communicates with a middle aged Japanese woman who has never played any computer games, the cultural difference he is most likely to encounter is a generation gap. At the same time, they may share other hobbies, like photography, love of food etc., or personal traits, such as being an only child, the oldest child, or having been raised by a single mother. As Gee's (2004) affinity identity theory suggests, people can form a community regardless of their physical

or geographical location, and cultural differences could emerge regardless of which language they are learning.

Scollon and Scollon (2012) also use the term “intercultural” but examine “intercultural communication” with a discourse approach. They emphasize that “intercultural communication” is not necessary only between people, but could be within people: individuals can “simultaneously be members of various discourse systems, other than the system that may seem most relevant to that particular communicative situation” (p.270). Their claim reminds me that miscommunication is not necessarily caused by a lack of language ability, but possibly by the absence of a shared cultural discursive system. The opposite should be true too; successful communication could be achieved by not only the mutually understood language code, but also by sharing membership in a cultural discourse system. Therefore, to examine JMHY’s cultural knowledge, one must consider JMHY’s possible memberships, not only their language group membership.

Returning to Baumann’s (1991) notion of two different cultural discourses, I would suggest that what Kumaravadivelu and Kubota regard as an essentialist view of culture can be a necessary part of culture-making for learners. First of all, why does Baumann regard an essentialized view of culture as legitimate? Studying the different communities in Southall, London, Baumann (1996) reports that people in all communities reify their culture while making culture, and on what occasion or how they reify their culture varies among the communities. He recounts that while he observed the process of culture-making, the people in the communities saw that as developing the community, referring to their culture to “describe the reified and stable heritage that manifests the existence of a recognizable community” (p.196). Therefore, Baumann emphasizes that ethnographers should make every effort not to essentialize their observed culture, which does not mean that the observed should do not essentialize or reify their culture. Baumann’s emphasis is useful in exploring JMHY’s cultural knowledge or their awareness of cultural difference, where they may, or may not, bring their reified view of what Japanese culture is and what Canadian culture is.

Finally, Kumaravadivelu and Kubota do not seem to take into consideration our fundamental human nature – that we are not always aware of our culture and cannot explain why we do what we do (Geertz, 1973; Hymes 1980). That is to say, we do not

start with the clearest idea of what “our” culture is, before we view “their” culture. Also they only rebuke the negative effect of the awareness of difference, believing it could lead to the division between “us” and “ them,” and to not noticing diversity within cultures. However, they fail to see another possible consequence of noticing difference and to acknowledge the long process of gaining intercultural competence. For example, Korne’s collaborative work with Byram and Fleming (2007) illustrates how awareness of cultural difference can work as a vehicle to build critical cultural awareness. By studying immigrant women who have lived in the UK or USA for at least 20 years, they claim that awareness of difference does not only widen the gap between the “us” and “them” paradigm, but also “balances a great proportion of similarity and difference, with a greater reciprocal tension as the result” (p.296). They further refer to the un-linear and unpredictable consequences of awareness:

> Difference is not a curable or linear condition, rather it fluctuates in relation to internal attitude as well as external influence. [....] Difference is not a predictable variable in bicultural identity, as it does not consistently decrease through contact with a dominant culture, and it may not be experienced at all in relation to a new culture. (Korne, Byram, & Fleming, 2007, p. 297)

For this study, Byram’s intercultural competence, which focuses more on the process of acquiring a cultural skill than linguistic proficiency, is a crucial lens to employ as it allows me to study people with a beginner’s level of proficiency. Intercultural competence also allows me to explore how JMHY’s cultural awareness evolves in a long process, which encompasses both essentialized and processual cultural discourses. I thus focus on how JMHY treat cultural differences in their environment where parents come from two different cultural backgrounds, and how their cultural awareness develops or ‘fluctuates’ through their daily interactions.

Another benefit of Byram’s model is to create distance from the comparison with a native speaker of a HL. In the field of second language education, setting a native speaker as a goal of learning has been contested (e.g., Kramsch 1993, 1997; Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997; Pennycook, 2001) and its validity is seriously questioned. In the same vein, drawing on intercultural communication competence, Álvarez (2007) discusses how the notion could be used to establish a new goal model for second language learners instead of the native speaker model. In his view, intercultural communication competence

“is not necessarily present in so-called ‘native speakers’ (p.127), and he also supports Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey’s (2002) study that claims, “An individual native speaker cannot be an authority on the cultures of a country and cannot give an authoritative view on what is “right “ and “wrong” as might be possible with language”(p.17, also quoted in Álvarez, 2007 p.132).

The native speaker model is hardly problematized in Heritage language education, but Takatomi (2010) points out in her ethnographic study the contradictory position of Japanese Americans in their parents’ country, Japan. Investigating the life experience of Japanese Americans residing in Japan, Takatomi reports on one of her participant’s disappointment in not attaining native speaker status despite his advanced level of Japanese proficiency. In interactions with Japanese native speakers, this participant was constantly reminded of his heritage learner’s status. A compliment on his good Japanese is a sign to him that he is a good Japanese language learner. At the same time, an excuse given for his misuse of the language indicates a lower expectation from Japanese speakers, which normally non-Japanese residents receive. Because of the hegemonic belief in Japanese homogeneity (Befu, 2001), Japanese people tend to regard non-Japanese residents as outsiders who are not expected to speak Japanese too well (Kanno, 2008).

Takatomi argues that the significance of speaking HL (Japanese) is recognized differently between Japan and the United States. In order to avoid such a stigma stemming from the comparison of HL learners with native speakers, it is important to be aware that HL learners’ intercultural communicative competence is not necessarily measured against that of Japanese speakers who are born and raised in Japan.

2.3.2. Multicompetence

Cook (1991, 1992, 2005, 2011) also points out the inadequateness of the native speaker model through the concept of multicompetence. When first introduced, the concept of multicompetence appeared to be antagonistic to Chomsky’s Universal Grammar approach, which is only concerned with linguistic competence. Cook defines multicompetence as “the compound state of a mind with two grammars” (1991, p.112; 1992, p.557), which he later redefined as the “coexistence of more than one language in

the same mind" (2005, p.1). Like other scholars (e.g., Kramsch, 1993 1997), Cook registers the diversity in native speakers and variation in one language, but his argument differs from the other scholars on the point where he acknowledges particular competence in second language learners/users. Interestingly this is where Cook's multicompetence intersects with Byram's intercultural competence. Both Cook and Byram believe that these competencies are not generally present in native speakers or monolingual speakers (Cook, 2005, 2011) and attribute these competencies to the influence of the exposure to target language cultures.

Cook draws on numerous examples of empirical research (e.g., Cummins, 1979, Nicoladis & Genesee, 1996. Pavlenko, 2003) to endorse his notion of multicompetence. Several scholars (e.g., Li, Wei, 2011) conduct research from a multicompetence perspective to present examples of multicompetence in different language learners. However, other researchers point out drawbacks in the concept of multicompetence and attempt to re-conceptualize it. For example, Franceschini (2011) points out "the lack of social embeddedness" as one of the criticisms of multicompetence and explains that it is a result of psycholinguistic oriented studies, which look at more mental aspects of language use. In a similar vein, more fundamental criticism is expressed in Hall, Cheng and Carlson (2006). They argue that Cook's multicompetence notion overlooks assumptions such as the view that the L1 and L2 knowledge are discrete systems, and that there is a clear distinction between monocompetence and multicompetence. Proposing a usage-based view of language, Hall et. at. (2006) state that language knowledge is "socially contingent and dynamic" so multicompetence is not "based on number of languages but amount and diversity of experiences and use" (p.229). Hence, they elaborate the notion of multicompetence to apply to monolingual situations that also require a variety of linguistic repertoires for appropriate situations.

Cook (2011) responds to these criticisms by restating his definition of multicompetence: "the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind or *the same community***"** (p.1). His most recent work clearly indicates that multicompetence should be examined only in light of the social use of language. The evidence could be found in his choice of words. In discussing the concept, he speaks of an L2 "user" and two "communities". In my study, L2 "user" is translated to heritage language "user," whose self-claimed level is a beginner, but acquires a command of meta linguistics, including

silence, codeswitching, or an ability to make decisions on which language to speak. Within the limited amount of research that investigate multicompetence in the field of HL education, Li Wei (2011) points out creative and critical abilities in multicompetence demonstrated by Chinese British children in complementary school classes. He suggests that these children do not simply accept their HL but also creatively challenge the boundaries between English and their HL. Li Wei also suggests that the children's challenge is supported by their critical ability to assess the situations systematically and insightfully. One of the benefits in applying a multicompetence perspective in HL education is that it promotes "a holistic way by accounting for all of the languages he or she knows as well as knowledge of the norms for using the languages in context" (Li Wei, 2011, p. 371). Following suit, the current study also explores the way JMHY insert Japanese words or phrases in English sentences from a multicompetence perspective.

Multicompetence does not only share common ground with intercultural competence, but also endorses the notion of intercultural competence from a psycholinguistic perspective. In other words, given the social aspect of multicompetence, what its model explicitly describes is the consequences of intercultural competence on a linguistic mental map. It could also embody what actually happens in the psychological dimension of successful and smooth communication in cross cultural situations. As mentioned earlier, Cook's multicompetence concept was initially presented to refute Chomsky's Universal grammar approach. Hymes (1980, 1996, 2010) is another scholar who also opposed such an approach that ignores the functions of language in a social context. Blommaert (2007, 2009) suggests that the work of Hymes is consistent with that of American pioneer linguistic anthropologists, such as Sapir and Whorf, who studied language and culture as one single object. Blommaert believes that the intricate relationship between language and culture sometimes misleads us to view language and culture as two objects. According to Blommaert, Hymes' greatest contribution to linguistic ethnography is his emphasis on the functions of languages to understand a bridge "between language structure and socio-cultural patterns" (Blommaert, 2007, p.687). He goes on to say:

> It is this emphasis on function that sets ethnographic approaches to language apart from many linguistic approaches to it, and as mentioned earlier, a focus on function is one of the things that one should no longer have to argue for in an ethnographic perspective. It is our quest for

> functions of language-in-use that has made all of us turn to context (how does language actually work in a specific set of socio-cultural circumstances?). (p.687)

For my study examining functions of languages I draw on three theoretical frames with respect to the concept of culture: intercultural competence, multicompetence and linguistic ethnography. All three underscore Blommaert's question, "how does language actually work in a specific set of socio-cultural circumstances?" and his question is a crucial one for building a principled framework for this study. A more detailed discussion on linguistic ethnography promoted by Hymes will be offered in the next chapter.

2.4. Summary

In this chapter, I centered the discussion on culture in separate contexts: one in relation to one's sense of ethnicity, and the other as an integrated part of language learning. In both cases, I do not regard an essentialized view of culture is an oppositional theory to a non-essential view of culture; as stated by Baumann: "processual theory is implicit in all essentialist rhetoric" (Baumann, 1999, p.92). In the first section, drawing on Baumann's notion of ethnicity as culture, the term culture was described to elucidate how culture may shape JMHY sense of ethnicity in relation to their language usage. In this regard, the ultimate goal of this study, to examine JMHY, has become the study of JMHY's culture as well as their languages/ethnicities. When people are engaged in culture-making, they also join an active process of meaning making. Therefore, this study pays particular attention to how JMHY make sense of their daily experience in relation to their language use and their sense of ethnicity. That is to say, I am interested in examining how JMHY define an ethnic term like Japanese people or Canadians and under what circumstance they assign these definitions.

In the second section, I discussed culture in language classes and found that the notions of intercultural competence and multicompetence are appropriate perspectives to examine JMHY's use of language. Nonetheless, I acknowledge the validity in Kumaravadivelu's warning to avoid the dichotomy between "us" and "them" to ignore diversity within cultures. As Kubota suggests, such a dichotomy tends to overlook the fact that cultural differences can be the reflection of the political conditions of societies.

However, these criticisms toward interculturality also miss out the positive effect of awareness of cultural differences and the fluctuating process of being aware of differences. According to Byram, critical cultural awareness provides a new analytical lens to recognize diversities within cultures and allows people to balance the differences and similarities they find among cultures. Therefore, the perspective of intercultural competence allows me to explore how JMHY become aware of cultural differences and how that awareness would develop in their daily lives, particularly through/in interactions with their parents. Furthermore, applying the multicompetence concept, the study puts a focus on JMHY's use of HL, which cannot be measured in comparison to that of native speakers of Japanese. Using both intercultural competence and multicompetence notions, the study attempts to shed light on the language experiences of JMHY whose case is often portrayed as a negative consequence of HL loss, and has received very little attention in the field of HL education.

Chapter 3.

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide a description of my selected methodology, which provides the structure for my research. This chapter is also an important road map for me to conduct the study in order to illustrate the culture of JMHY. Thus, in this methodology chapter, I demonstrate how my road map was constructed and also how it guided me through the study. First, I explain the rationale of the selected methodology for the study, including a discussion of criticisms generally targeted towards qualitative research. I also present the advantages and suitability of linguistic ethnography for the study that focuses on the JMHY's language experiences. I provide the information and criteria for selection of participants, followed by information related to data collection. In the data collection section, I illustrate not only the process of data collection, but also how I collected multiple sets of data (interviews, essay photos, participant observation, email exchanges, and researcher's memos) in order to reveal the complex, multi-layered nature of participants' experiences. I provide the details of the data analysis process in a diagram, as well as a discussion around the issues surrounding the credibility of the findings. In the last section, I deal with ethical considerations that I faced in my study. To frame the rest of the chapter, I restate the research questions of this study:

Q 1: How is the sense of ethnicity of JMHY shaped by culture in their everyday lives, and what role does their heritage language, Japanese, play in this process?

Q 2: What are the implications of JMHY's lack of "linguistic proficiency" in Japanese in the post-secondary Japanese language classroom?

3.2. Qualitative Research: Suitability and Shortfalls

I employ a qualitative methodology in this study with the desired goal of interpreting and understanding the JMHY's culture-making process that shapes their sense of ethnicity and the functions of their daily language use. A qualitative research approach allows me to explore my questions more freely and inductively (Creswell, 2009; Hammersley, 1998) and enables me to engage in a more interpretive process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). More importantly, what I seek through using a qualitative approach is not simply to describe a person's life, but to show that their realities are culturally shaped, which cannot be presented in quantifiable terms (Creswell, 2009). The inductive and interpretative nature of a qualitative approach is essential in order to unfold the complexity of the JMHY's culture and meaning making process.

I address both the advantages and disadvantages of a qualitative research approach. In other words, I am fully aware of the weaknesses of this approach, so instead of ignoring them, I used this awareness to guide me through the study process without falling into pitfalls inherent to qualitative research. There are two most often discussed criticisms against qualitative research.

The first criticism is the lack of objectivity in qualitative research. Because of the interpretive nature of qualitative research, researchers cannot completely eradicate their subjective stance that influences data. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), researchers must reflect on this subjective stance and adapt different paradigms to their investigation because the subjective stance changes as they interact with the participants. They explain the interactive process as follows: "research is an interactive process shaped by [the researcher's] personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting" (p. 3). As mentioned in the Preface, the interactions with my participants were a key moment in this study and I made an effort to tune into their voices as an insider. In order to achieve that, I intentionally present their stories "unmediated by analytic and interpretive interventions" (Harris, 2006, p.171) in Chapter 4 in order to allow JMHY to represent their culture in their own voice. This process was crucial, as Harris (2006) claims:

> [Participants' stories] were meant to offer the reader a deep 'feel' for the nature of the kinds of social formation under investigation, prior to the making of strong and neat interpretive judgments, which perhaps constitute a more customary, and I would argue, premature procedure. (p.171)

Additionally, Geertz states: " Understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity. […] Our formulations of other people's symbol systems must be actor-oriented" (Geertz, 1973, p.14). If culture is explained in the words of the people who practice it, it is less likely to reduce its particularity. Thus I attempted to moderate the influence of my own subjective stance by focusing on JMHY's view and respecting their own words to describe their culture. Taken all together with the analysis chapters where I present my interpretation of JMHY representation of their culture, the study encompasses all the processes of the interactions between the researcher and the researched.

The second criticism is qualitative research's perceived illegitimacy as a science, which instigates the following more fundamental but critical questions: What constitutes a science? Denzin, Lincoln and Giardina (2006) respond to the recent promotion of scientific based research, claiming that it underestimates value-laden evidence existing in all research, and ignores the politics of truth. They go on to say that narrowly defined science does not allow asking questions such as: True to whom? or How can objectivity be measured? In contrast, qualitative research is concerned with lived human experience, which is not constituted on the premise that there is only one truth, but rather invites various theoretical perspectives on lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005): even it is not necessary that participants always keep consistency in their answers or perspectives in their stories. However, the inconsistency should not be a problem, as Atkinson and Coffey (2006) claim, people's accounts "are not treated 'at face value' as if they revealed a consistent and coherent representation of a reality that is independent of the accounts themselves" (p.167). The result of this study is not scientifically proven truth, but I aimed to present the researcher's interpretation of what the JMHY have represented as their daily culture (Geertz, 1973).

3.2.1. Ethnography

Ethnography is one of many qualitative methods in social science research, and it shares rather fuzzy boundaries with other qualitative research methods such as case study or narrative inquiry (Hammersley, 2006; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In the latter half of the twentieth century, ethnography as a qualitative method experienced a major development and its usage became more interdisciplinary (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Additionally the recent globalization movement has made the borderlines of nations and cultures more blurred than before, and ethnography can hardly investigate a single isolated culture. Thus, in the era of globalization, ethnography is to be re-shaped according to more multilingual and more multicultural contexts (Marshall, 2014). Also the growing popularity of ethnography across different disciplines has invited a different interpretation of ethnography and the different philosophical paradigms (e.g., positivism or naturalism) have questioned the legitimacy of ethnography as a qualitative method. Nevertheless, one of the inherent criticisms of ethnography is the question of transferability: to what extent can a research finding in the particular context be transferred to another context? The question stems from the use of a relatively small sample that makes the findings particularly context sensitive (Eisenhart, 2001; Heller, 2008). Hammersley (2006) contends that the ethnographic method with a small group of informants can only study people's behaviour in a particular setting, rather than examine the wider understanding of a social phenomenon that influences the whole society. However, he also points out that because of the increase in the use of audio/video recording devices, today's ethnographers tend to carry out a more detailed micro analysis to focus on what happens on particular occasions. The ethnographic method as suggested by Hammersley is well suited to the present study as a detailed micro approach to better understand JMHY culture.

There are fourteen participants in this study and all of them live in the Greater Vancouver area. Thus, the transferability of the study may be limited but to gain a wider perspective of social phenomena is not an ultimate goal of this study. Hammersley (2006) suggests that to understand people's perspectives, ethnographers should examine the participants' daily context by focusing on their interactions in social activities since participants would act upon their own understanding of the contexts. Taking on Hammersley's suggestion, I focused on JMHY's reflections on their interactions in their

daily settings, where they acted upon their understandings of contexts. The primary data collection method is semi-structured interviews, but I also used essays and photos submitted by participants. Data collection also includes participant observation, as some of the participants gave me a chance to observe their interactions with their Japanese parents in a casual setting. As a secondary data source, I also incorporated my own essays and random memos from the data collection period. Multiple data sources allowed me to gain more insight into how the participants interpret their daily contexts. Furthermore, including multiple data sources has increased the interactions between the data and the researcher and has provided me different angles to examine and analyze the data. Despite the limitation of potential transferability, it is possible to say that the findings of the present study convey a detailed analysis and an in-depth understanding of the JMHY's culture in this specific context.

3.2.2. Rationales for Employing Linguistic Ethnography

Among various ethnographic approaches, I employed linguistic ethnography[11] promoted by Hymes (1980, 1996, 2010) because the aim of this study is most appropriately accommodated by his propositions for the study of language on three points. First of all, pointing out the limitations in both conventional linguistics and solely ethnographic approaches, he proposes the importance of studying language as a social behaviour or cultural system in the following manner:

> At the same time the approach does not stop with linguistically codified systems, nor does it identify the theory of a culture with verbal formulations of such a theory by natives. Analysis is extended to all aspects of the cultures, including those which may not be verbalized or are inaccurately verbalized. (Hymes, 2010[12], p.572)

[11] The term linguistic anthropology was more commonly used in the North American context in earlier years. In effect, Hymes himself titled one of his papers "Linguistic Anthropology." Copland and Creese (2015) explain that linguistic ethnography has been established on the interdisciplinary frameworks of linguistics and sociolinguistics. Rampton (2007) gives more details on how the concept of linguistic ethnography in the United Kingdom has come about. Also " Text and Talk" (2010) volume 29, issue 3, provides a special edition on Hymes' work.

[12] The paper is the script of a radio talk where Hymes discussed anthropology, which was broadcast on the Voice of America in 1963, later published in the Voice of America pamphlet. The current version was reprinted in "Journal of Sociolinguistics" nearly 50 years later. I retrieved the online version in May, 2013 which has been corrected on 17th February 2011.

Hymes' view implies that language and social life mutually shape each other and thus only linguistics with an ethnographic approach can examine the complex interplay between language and social life (Copland & Creese, 2015, Rampton, et al, 2004). Hymes (2010) repeatedly emphasizes the danger of judging speech with preconceived notions. Thus, he explains that it is important to consider "not only the makeup of acts of speech, but also the general role of speech activity" (p.577). He also suggests the duty of an ethnographer is that he or she "must begin, not with the function of language in culture, but the functions of languages in cultures" (p.577). His claim applies suitably to this present investigation of youth who do not demonstrate an advanced linguistic proficiency in their HL. Outsiders who do not share the same cultural code may not recognize any functions of JMHY's non-verbalized behaviours, but there could be an important function in these behaviours for those who share the same cultural code. The core of the investigation in this study is precisely the analysis of such functions shared among the JMHY, which might appear to be unintelligible or irrational to others at first (Hymes, 1980, 1996).

Secondly, to understand the functions of languages, Hymes (2010) suggests the first step is "the realization that cultures may differ not only in the ways they categorize and segment some aspects of experiences, but also in the very aspects of experience they select and group together for categorization" (p.573). In a similar vein, according to Hymes (1980), when we think of people, what makes us who we are is "not the intersection of vectors of age, sex, race, classes, income, and occupation alone, but also making sense out of disparate experiences, using reason to maintain a sphere of integrity in an immediate world" (p.94). Our experience makes connections between language and social life, and only that realization allows us to study the functions of languages. This is an important starting point of this study, as the study takes on Baumann's notion of "ethnicity as culture" and explores the daily language use of JMHY whose group is formed not based on the shared sense of ethnicity but culture among them.

In the previous chapter, I described why this study employs the notions of intercultural competence and multicompetence to explore JMHY's daily language use. Byram and Cook examine communicative competence by focusing on the relationship between language and culture, which has led to the development of intercultural competence and multicompetence. As mentioned earlier, Blommaert (2007) regards one

of the most important contributions of Hymes' work to be the view of language and culture as one object instead of two objects. Likewise both intercultural competence and multicompetence are formulated on the idea that language use should be studied as a cultural system. Like Hymes' ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1974), both intercultural competence and multicompetence focus on communicative competence and reject the view of communication as simply an exchange of information. In this sense, I believe that linguistic ethnography provides the most suitable methodology for investigating JMHY daily interactions from the perspectives of intercultural competence and multicompetence.

As mentioned earlier, ethnography itself has been reshaped since societies have become more multicultural and multilingual (Marshall 2014), which Hymes' approach may not cover adequately. With the current climate of poststructuralism in socio- and applied linguistics, the reified or essentialized view of language does not effectively examine the complex relation between language and culture. The new phase of linguistic ethnography has begun to play an important role in the deconstruction of social categories, such as language and ethnicity (Copland & Creese, 2015). This study does not underscore the diversity and changes emerging in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Given the hybrid cultural background of JMHY, I found useful to combine Hymes' approach with Heller's (2008) ethnographic approach to bilingual and multilingual communities which is helpful for analyzing JMHY's language use, even where participants were not bilingual. Heller illustrates ethnography's two steps in the following manner:

> The first ethnographic commitment is to discovering what is going on (without assuming beforehand that we know). But it is important not to stop there; the second key dimension of data collection has to do with what will help us explain why things happen the way they do, in the circumstances in which they occur. (Heller, 2008, p.255)

To accomplish the second step, Heller emphasizes the idea that boundaries among languages and the people who use them are socially constructed, and therefore, should be analyzed as such. In bilingual or multilingual contexts, where languages and cultures share fuzzy boundaries, the way people in general distinguish one language from another is linked to the way they perceive the categorization of groups of people. Most of the participants in this study possess a beginner's level of Japanese proficiency, but they insert single Japanese words or phrases into their English sentences occasionally during

the interviews. To examine why JMHY insert Japanese words and phrases in English sentences, and in what circumstances, is one of several aspects of their language use that will greatly help me gain insight into the functions of language use in their culture.

3.3. Participants

Participants were recruited through two kinds of personal networks. The first group of participants was found through my Japanese acquaintances that are married to non-Japanese persons. It was more difficult to find participants than I had expected, even though it is common nowadays to encounter Japanese/non-Japanese couples in the town in which I live. The reason for this was, I deem, because of the age criteria I set as I wanted to work with individuals who are between eighteen and thirty years old. The number of interracial couples increased significantly in the past ten years, so the majority of their children are younger than eighteen years old. Also, while parents were willing to help me, actual participants who are over eighteen years old were often too busy to find time for an interview. Thus, even though it was not my initial plan, I decided to include some of my former students who meet the criteria. These are individuals who have taken one or two classes with me at the university where I teach, but they either have graduated or are close to graduation so that they have no intention of taking another Japanese language class at the university. To avoid a potential negative influence from a teacher and student relationship, I made sure to include only those students who have no chance to be my student again. The biggest advantage of the first group was that I could interview two or more youth from the same family because their parents had explained my study to all of their children. Through this process, I managed to find 8 youths from 4 families[13]. Fortunately my three former students, whom I interviewed, introduced their siblings before I requested. In the end, the total number of participants was 14 youths from 7 families (three males and nine females), who met all the following criteria:

- Be between 18 – 30 years of age
- Have one first generation Japanese parent (born and raised in Japan) and have one Canadian parent (born and raised in Canada)

13 I interviewed one more girl who is not included in the final version of the study, because her siblings were not over eighteen years of age. Since I could not interview any other of her siblings, I have decided to exclude her case all together from the study.

- Have grown up (or have spent significant time) in Canada
- Speak English fluently

The youngest age was set to be eighteen in order to recruit persons who have more than high school students' experience. It is expected that youth over the age of eighteen can provide a beginning of adulthood experience as opposed to a student's life, which is often influenced by peers (Tsu, 2000). The upper age limit is defined by the assumptions that the older generation experienced a different educational system (e.g., no heritage language program, or no Japanese course available at college) and had a different perception of mixed marriage (Roots, 1996), as in the past it was not as common as in recent years.

The choice of working with only those with a first generation Japanese parent is based on the considerable evidence of the generation gap among Japanese immigrant families in Canada. Previous research (Makabe, 1998; Nishimura, 1992; Padilla, Wagatsuma & Lindholm, 2001; Shibata, 2003) has suggested that each generational group exhibits its idiosyncratic behaviour. The identified difference is significant not only between post–war and pre–war immigrants, but also between each generation (Shibata, 2003). Defining a non-Japanese parent is much harder than defining a Japanese parent because of the long history of Japanese immigration to British Columbia. The first challenge was whether a Japanese parent who married another immigrant should be included or not. The family's linguistic environment could be multilingual, instead of bilingual between Japanese and English. My initial thought was to exclude them as the house language environment might create a significant difference in data, but in the end I have decided to include them as long as that parent was born and raised in Canada. Another difficulty was related to the treatment of the older generations of Japanese in immigrant families. During my pilot test, I encountered an interesting case where a third generation (pre-war) Japanese was represented in two different ways. In the first case, one participant claimed he had a mixed heritage background because his third (pre-war) generation Japanese parent married a Caucasian Canadian. In the second case, the participant regarded her third (pre-war) generation Japanese parent as a Canadian. This participant claimed her mixed heritage status because her third generation Japanese mother married a first (post war) generation Japanese man. Given the main theoretical approach of this study, ethnicity as culture, the participants' own claims of ethnic groups

had to be taken into consideration. For this study, in fact, no family includes the older generations of Japanese immigrants. To summarize, for the purposes of this research project, the participant must have one first generation Japanese parent born and raised in Japan and have one Canadian parent born and raised in Canada.

The participants were also limited to those who were either born in Canada or born somewhere else but were raised in Canada from an early age. These criteria define the degree of their experience in the Canadian education system and their exposure and familiarity with Canadian society and culture. It is assumed that the criteria help to select people who have similar education and multicultural experiences. While Canada is a country with high levels of immigration and is thus highly multicultural, many Japanese are still blinded by the "hegemony of homogeneity" (Befu, 2001) and practice a limited form of multiculturalism (Kanno, 2008; Kubota, 2002). While most of the participants are beginners, the study includes one advanced and one intermediate speaker (with a beginner's level of reading and writing proficiency). The comparisons among the participants, with their different proficiency levels, could provide an interesting angle to the study. Fluency in English is required for the interview process, as the interview attempts to elicit the fullest description of the participants' daily experiences, which is not possible without a language in which participants feel comfortable to express their nuanced ideas. The language choice and the level of proficiency of participants are essential analytical points (Pavlenko, 2007). Appendix. A provides detailed personal information of the fourteen participants with detailed family background information. The participants' names used in this study are pseudonyms.

3.4. Data Collection

Given the inductive and interpretative approach aiming to understand one's daily language use, a single source of data would not be sufficient to produce a "thick description" of JMHY culture. Thus, the study involved the collection of various empirical materials, which included the researcher's own random memos as well as self-reflexive journal entries. As mentioned already, researchers have to be sensitive to the presence of the researcher's subjective stance throughout research, particularly when it comes to analysis of the data. Therefore, how my presence affected the analysis process will be

illustrated in the next section of data analysis. Here I describe the details of the sources of data collection and what kind of information each source produced.

i) Interviews

I interviewed fourteen JMHY individually for approximately one hour each, with the exception of Sachi who spent almost three hours in the first interview. As Sachi and Rina were daughters of one of my acquaintances, they came to my personal residence for an interview, but all other interviews took place in my office at the university. I hoped to conduct a second interview with all the participants, but Ana and Erica did not reply to my email request for the second interview. Also the father of Mari and Andy passed away seven months after the initial interview with Mari, and to respect the family mourning time, I refrained from contacting the family for a while. Only two years later did I manage to have the first interview with Mari's younger brother, Andy, who had just started his new college life at the time of the interview. I communicated with both Mari and Andy after their initial interview but neither could find time for the second interview. Because of the limited contact with Ana, Erica, Mari and Andy, their detailed personal profiles are omitted in Chapter 4, while the final analysis included their stories.

The time between the first and second interview was between four months and one year, which were the result of both the participants' and my own time constraints. All the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed later. The interview questions were rather general (e.g., Could you describe what your home language environment looked like when you were small? See the sample of research questions in Appendix B). The questions were prepared so as to capture a broad view of the participants' daily activities, with prepared prompt cues (e.g., Japanese books, DVD or visitors from Japan) to gain insight into specific experiences. The first interview questions were formulated to help participants explain their language experience as fully as possible in their own words. I concentrated on factors such as who did what, when, where, and why, which was the core of the interview (Dilley 2010; Heller, 2008). As a result, the interviews had a natural flow and developed more spontaneously.

The transcribed interviews should be read as if I had observed the JMHY daily experience with my own eyes, even though some details were inevitably left out. The

relevant detailed information of participants' daily experiences was captured as people can generally reveal many details in their life stories that are significant to them (Bell, 2002) and recall past memories that are very much a part of their current experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). More importantly, interviews in ethnography do not target objective factors, but rather open up a channel to view what underlies one's perception of the world (Hammersley 1998, 2006). Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) emphasize that the purpose of interviews is to understand the "theme of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspectives" (p. 3). It is, however, important to be aware that participants' subjective perspectives are not necessarily always consistent, as "what informants say in an interview context is always socio-discursively constructed in a context-sensitive fashion" (Hammersley, 2006, p.9). That context includes the presence of a researcher, that is to say, what is produced through an interview is not simply a "subjective view" but rather an "intersubjective and social" one as it is co-constructed [14] between the interviewees and the interviewer (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In the Data Analysis section, I will discuss how I treated intersubjective or co-constructed factors from the interviews during the data analysis.

ii) Autobiographical essays

Initially all the participants agreed to write an autobiographical essay, but only six of them actually submitted their essays. I deem that this was mostly due to their busy schedule at work or between studies and several jobs. The submitted essays were on average three pages long. As I had wished them to write freely, without instruction, no deadline was given. Alex and Ikuko submitted their essays soon after the first interview, since they were on a summer break at the time of the first interview. Joseph submitted his essay on the same day of the second interview. The rest of the submissions came much later because the participants claimed they waited until they had sufficient time to fully commit themselves to write. The styles and content of the essays were varied, but the essays all added extra layers of understanding to the study. Unlike interviews, where a researcher's influence is inevitable (Hammersley, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), an essay can avoid such interference and provide direct access to the participants' subjective

14 I further explored this notion and discuss how it influenced the way I present the findings of the study in a later section in this chapter.

view (Pavlenko, 2007). It can be also assumed that the essays gave the writers more time and freedom to organize and reflect upon their language experiences, and encouraged the writers to explore their experiences more fully (Tsu, 2000). Coffey and Street (2004) analyzed an autobiographical essay of two older language learners in order to explore their learning trajectory. There they explain the structural differences between a written account and a spoken narrative: "whereas the written accounts, following the rubric, enumerate a sequence of formal learning and professional contexts, the interviews are characterized by more flashback and flash forward" (Coffey & Street, 2004, p. 456). There is an additional advantage when a written account is used along with a spoken narrative, particularly when so-called discrepancies merge. For an ethnographic approach, these discrepancies are not problematic, but rather relevant variables in order to look at the link between what the participants say and what they actually do (Coffey & Street, 2004; Heller, 2008).

iii) Photos

Eight participants submitted several photos along with or instead of their short autobiographical essay. Many of the participants claimed that they were too busy to write an essay, so indicated their preference for a photo submission over an autobiographical essay. Apart from this practical reason, the submission of photos was in effect deeply rooted in the methodological approach. First, with the remarkable increase in the use of digital photography in our daily lives, photo images as data have gained in popularity and legitimacy in ethnography (Pink, 2007). In sociolinguistic circles these images are thought to provide a linguistic landscape that presents a visual linguistic voice (Shohamy, 2007) reflecting power relations and identity marking in a society (Ivkovic & Lotheringtion, 2009). When participants take photos of their daily lives, the pictures capture daily experiences that could be missed during an interview (Pink, 2007). Images represented by participants require an ethnographer to take a reflexive approach to focus on participants' subjective view of reality rather than how the ethnographer sees the phenomenon (Schembri & Boyle, 2013). Thus, one of the strengths in utilizing photo images created by participants is when the images are combined with an interview where participants verbally represent their interpretation of the photos (Brace-Govan, 2007).

Additionally New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1990; Street, 1996) played an important role in the use of photographic data. In this line of work, literacy is seen as a social activity, culturally specific, and diversified ways of literacies form are recognized. Hence, I treated the photos submitted by participants in the same way I recognized their essays as data as both gave me access to an interpretation of JMHY culture.

iv) Participant observation

I did not intend to employ participant observation as part of my data collection until later in the study, when I spent extra time with some of the participants apart from the interview sessions. At the interviews, many participants expressed their interest in Japanese food and indicated an interest in visiting a Japanese restaurant with me. It was a natural sequence of events that led me to dine at a Japanese restaurant with some of the participants. Additionally, since I had known some of their Japanese parents beforehand, the dining included their Japanese parent. I wrote a short observation note right after the meal together. The observation note captured a natural dialogue between the participants and their parents, and was also used to record "back stage talk" (Goffman, 1959). Since this part of data collection was not included in my initial application for the ethical review, I consulted the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University first and received the amendment approval. The data I used in this section of the study is limited to the participants and parents from whom I have received a consent form. For ethical concerns, any cases involving a third party, apart from the participants and their Japanese parents who signed the consent form, are not included.

v) Email / Text message /Mail exchange

Including an email exchange as data has two purposes. First of all, it was necessary because through email exchanges, the questions I had after the second interview were clarified. These questions were more fact based, such as the number of times the participants went to Japan, or when and with whom. The second purpose emerged rather naturally; therefore, it could be called "naturally occurring speech data"

(Harris, 2006, p. 25).[15] In order to set up the interview meeting, I had to exchange a couple of emails with the participants. Interestingly, some used their Japanese name or wrote in Chinese characters in the emails, while in the interview they addressed themselves with their English name. Another interesting phenomenon I observed was the usage of Japanese words or phrases in their emails. These are, for me, a good example of their daily language usage, and will be analyzed in the upcoming chapters.

vi) Researcher's field notes and journal

I have kept my thoughts in a memo or journal style since taking a methodology course in the spring semester of 2010. During the course, the journal was required to conduct a small pilot research project. Through my pilot research project, I have noticed the inevitable researcher's bias in the analysis process; thus I began to write my related thoughts. Some of the entries are only a few phrases, while others are two to three pages long. I also reread my autobiographical essay submitted in one of my Masters degree courses in 2003 during the analysis process. Reflecting on the road map metaphor I discussed earlier, my own writing is not on the map. Rather, my writing helps me to identify from which direction I'm looking at this map. My writing reminds me of who I was, and what I was thinking at the time of the events, so rereading my thoughts was as if I was looking through an old album to have a flashback memory. The old notes were particularly useful because they created a distance for me to recognize who I was and how I have become who I am now. In this process, both intentionally and unintentionally, I contrasted myself to JMHY to see if something overlapped between us, or what differentiates us from each other. The realization of who I was or who I am now provided me a way of understanding why I analyzed the way I did.

vii) Triangulation

As described above, the study drew on various sources in order to triangulate the data. The use of different data sources helped to address the limitations inherent in any one data source. Figure 3.1.depicts how the multi-set of data (essay, photo, email exchange, participant observation) and interviews with two participants from the same

15 Harris asked his participants to record their daily language use by a digital camera in order to capture "naturally occurring speech data" with the help of their family members.

household compensates for the shortfalls of one data collection method. The interviews and written essays provide different accounts and descriptions of daily activities as mentioned above, while the photos bring a visual image of JMHY daily life, which cannot be described in words. For me, the most important triangulation of data was having two participants from the same family. Even though this was not my initial intention, as it turned out I interviewed seven pairs of siblings who grew up in the same household. This added a great complement to the study as I could obtain different views from one home environment. Accessing the parents' perspectives definitely adds an interesting angle to the study, as it provides a contrast between the views of youth and their parents. On the other hand, to hear the same home language experience from siblings is more like interviewing several different students in the same class. I could hear different interpretations of the same experiences. What is worth noting here is that my triangulation approach is not aimed to judge what is true or untrue, or who is correct. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) remind us: "triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of a validity, but an alternative to validation" (p.2). Therefore, any "discrepancies" in the interpretations between two siblings, or something one sibling mentioned but the other sibling did not mention, became an important factor to investigate. It is useful to explore what separates the one from the other sibling, and what they share in common.

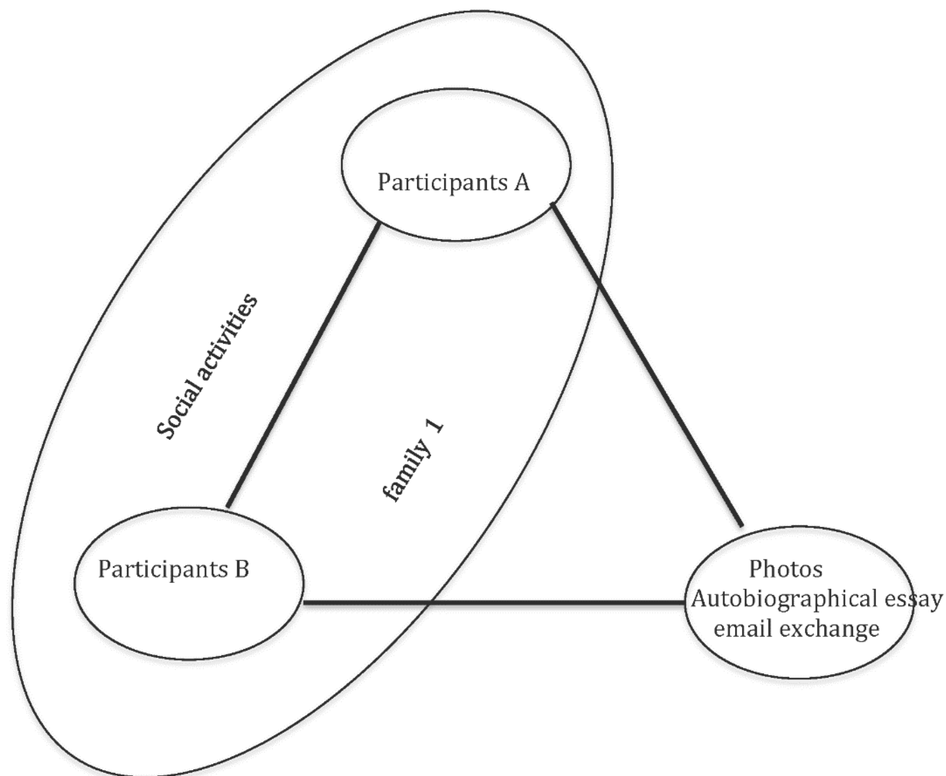

Figure 3.1. Triangulation

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. Process

If I were on the road map analogy I have been describing here, data analysis is where I had to move back and forth or sometimes take side roads and move back on track again. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) describe an analysis process as "interactive between data and researchers, where ideas are used to make sense of data, and data are used to change our ideas" (p.159). They also point out the benefit of a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2008) in order not to be trapped by pre-existing theories. Hence, even though I had revisited the research questions to review the study focus before coding data, I was not always swayed to seek answers to the research questions. In effect, I listened to the interview recordings not to lose any details and nuances in participants' life stories first, instead of reading the transcribed interview. Some of the recordings were more than one year old by then, but they were so vivid that all the

memories came back to me. By the time of the second interview, there was a certain level of familiarity in the participants' voices as well as their stories. Parallel to coding, I kept my random thoughts on the interview transcripts on a separate note occasionally. I also continued reading some related articles and my own previously written journal entries. At the very primary stages of my findings, I shared my initial analysis and sought feedback and input from some of the participants who showed a keen interest in my analysis. The data analysis process is depicted in Figure 3.2 below.

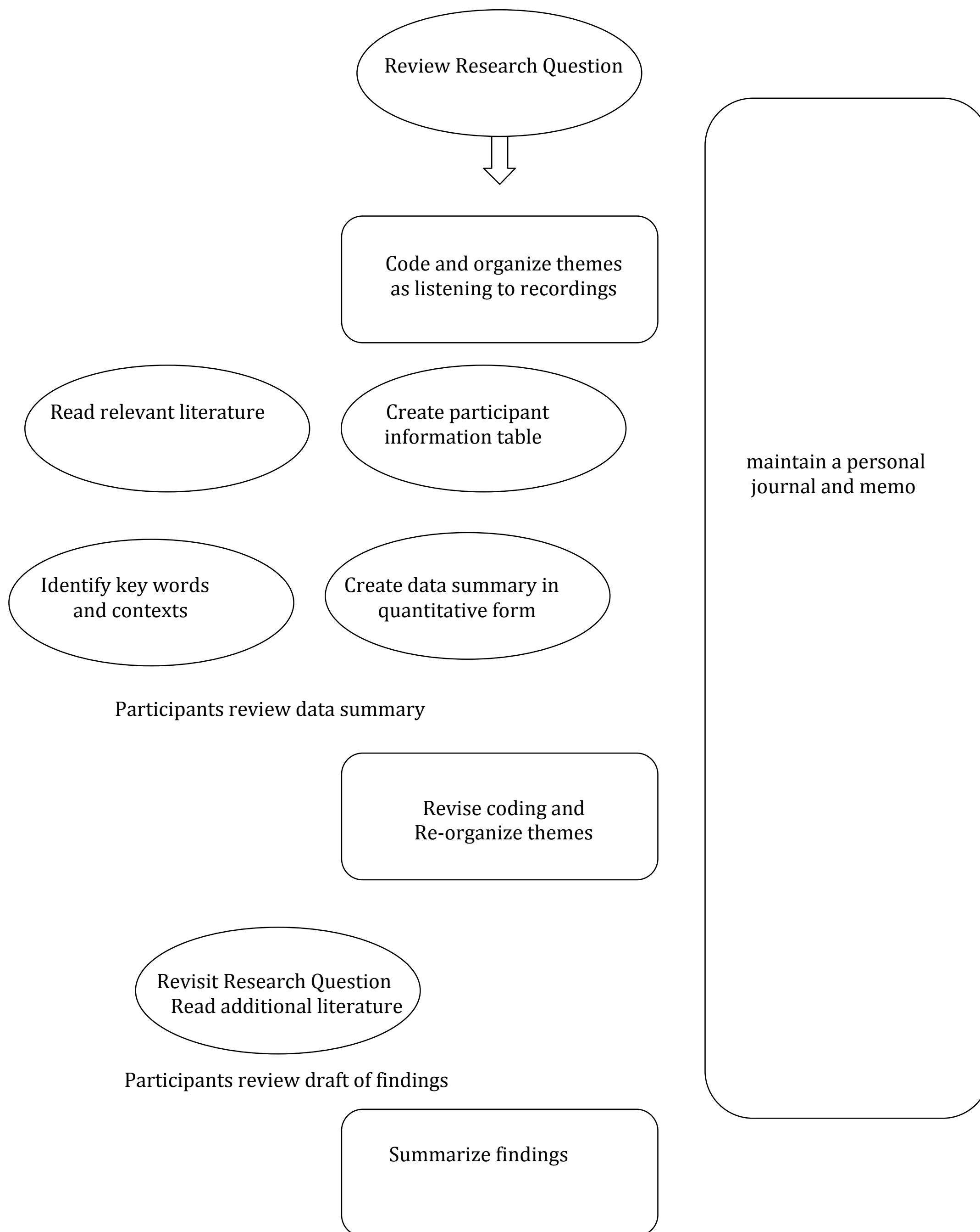

Figure 3.2. Road map of analysis

3.5.2. The Researcher’s Role in the Study

As mentioned above, ethnographic research is structured around researchers’ subjective stances, or their epistemological and ontological stances. How we deal with them determines the credibility of the research (Heller, 2008). In my attempt to make sense of the data, I could not help but notice that I was juxtaposing the JMHY’s life stories with my own personal experience. At that point it became quite clear that my personal life history, and even my moods were all incorporated into the analysis. Creese and Blackledge (2012) metaphorically describe this phenomenon: “as we tell our stories in the voices of others inevitably we perform them, speaking in and through the words of our characters” (p.318). Also the JMHY’s stories described the ways they had tried to make sense of their experiences, so what I present here is my interpretation of the JMHY’s interpretation of their experiences (Geertz, 1973). I provided my brief personal profile in the introduction chapter to help readers grasp the role of my subjective stance in the data analysis process

When we consider researchers’ subjective stance in relation to participants, one important question to be asked is whether a researcher is an insider or outsider in relation to the group of participants. This becomes particularly crucial where research subjects have been mistreated and were in an oppressed position in the past (Harris, 2006). In such a case, research by an insider from the researched group can not only contribute to build knowledge of the group, but also give the group of people a chance to reorganize their social life (Smith, 2005). In this regard, my outsider status to the JMHY is less advantageous and there is a risk that I might misinterpret their story. Nevertheless, an insider status does have a disadvantage as well, because “all of us are only partly able to articulate analysis of our lives” (Hymes, 1980 p.94). Insiders may be unaware of their own behaviours and unable to explain why they do what they do. The researcher as an outsider has the advantage of being able to observe the phenomenon from a distance. Again, in the study I present my interpretation of the JMHY’s stories from a perspective

where I attempted to obtain the insider view, while observing distantly (Hammersley, 2006)[16].

It may be worth mentioning that at some points of analysis, I realized I was not a complete outsider to my participants. Because of participants' mixed heritage background, my assumption was that their sense of being Japanese could not have been the same as mine. However, there were some cases where I had to ask myself consciously: "is it really different?" This encounter led me to the realization that it was not the participants who considered me as an outsider, but I myself categorized JMHY as non-Japanese and thus regarded myself as an outsider to JMHY. Inevitably, my assumption had to be reshaped[17] (Shao-Kobayashi, 2014) and I took into consideration that our experience or meaning making process might have a common ground regardless of how different we were from each other in terms of our personal backgrounds. I began to make an intentional comparison between participants' understanding of who is Japanese and my understanding of who is Japanese. Second of all, my exposure to different cultures is one of the similarities I shared with my participants. The length of time I have lived outside of Japan has become as long as the time I lived in my hometown, which is equivalent to my participants' average age. My lengthy experience of living abroad was a useful tool to get closer to the insider view of the JMHY who have grown up in a multicultural society.

I was also concerned about the asymmetrical relationship between the participants and myself because of my position as a teacher, as a native speaker of Japanese, and being older than the participants. No matter how I represented myself to the participants, I could not have any control over the way they perceived me. Therefore, it is hard to deny that my status was a factor not only during the interviews, but also throughout the study. Nevertheless, over the course of time, participants shared some very personal stories with

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16 Hammersley suggests that in ethnography, in order to gain an insider view, the researcher must do what everybody else in the community does, examine to learn. Having an insider view is not a goal, but the goal is to keep that tension between trying to gain an insider view and staying at a distance from the researched.

17 This was my assumption but at the same time it is an important hypothesis that this study was structured on. As mentioned in the previous chapter and here, the research questions were formed on the premise that when people make sense of their experiences, they assign their own meanings to particular events. This foreground is not changed, but the change is in accepting the possibility that the JMHY may have the same sense of being Japanese as I, or any Japanese who were born and raised inside Japan.

me. There were some informal situations where we interacted together casually; I felt that I established a good rapport with them. The participants seemed to feel freer to discuss their personal stories with me and at the same time what I felt to be our good relationship allowed me to get closer to their view of everyday experiences. Thus, I believe this establishment of rapport contributed positively to the richness of the results of the study. Furthermore, I consider the way the participants perceived me (as a researcher, a friend, an instructor, a Japanese person) contributed to how they positioned themselves in our interactions, which is an important analytical point (Hammersley, 1997, 2006; Heller, 2008).

3.5.3. Analysis of Interview Data: Knowledge Constructed or Discovered?

Here I provide an explanation of how two theoretical orientations, i.e. views of knowledge as constructed or discovered in interviews (Hammarsley, 2006, 2009; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009), guided my analysis of the interview data.

Those who take a constructivist stance view the interview itself as a social event where people produce and share personal stories in a social context. For example, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that interviews are a site where knowledge is constructed in the interaction between interviewers and interviewees. For them, knowledge is not a mirror of reality; it exists neither inside a person nor out, but is found in the relationship between individuals and their world. It is only in the interactive process that knowledge is constructed. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) define the difference between the concept of co-constructed knowledge and discovered knowledge by using the metaphors of "miner" and "traveler". The researcher as "miner" believes that there exists a truth underlying the interviewee's own subjective perceptions of reality, and thus they must carefully extract the truth without damaging it. By contrast, a traveler freely wanders around unknown territory, conversing with local people. At the end of the journey, the traveler would give their interpretations of the stories they heard while noticing that they themselves had been transformed by their travels. The traveler's metaphor leads us to view "interviewing and analysis as intertwined phases of knowledge construction" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 49).

Building on Kvale and Brinkmann's concept of co-constructed knowledge, Tanggard (2011) also argues that the interview should be viewed as a dialogical context to produce knowledge about personal narratives and social life. Interviews do not simply uncover factors underlying language, but provide a context for revealing how language evolves in the interaction. Drawing on Bahktin's dialogical (1981) approach to discourse and heteroglossic language, Tanggard claims that interview data cannot produce something purely private or subjective.

On the other hand, scholars such as Hammersley raise scepticism over the constructivist view of constructed knowledge, and the relativist's [18] claim that the validity of knowledge is relative to sociocultural contexts. Here, what is considered to be the relevant contrast is broadly termed "realism". Realism is grounded in the assumption that real phenomena exist independent of their accounts in research and knowledge can be discovered without having access to reality (Hammersley, 2007, 2009; Sealsy, 2007). Hammersley (2009) argues that some degree of universality in the 'truth claim' must be recognized, but the question is "a matter of degree" (p. 24). By contrast, relativism, in a strict sense, claims that we can never judge what is true or not with absolute certainty because we cannot really know reality beyond our interpretation of a socially-constructed reality (Tanggard, 2011).

At first glance, these two orientations represent the different ends of the analysis spectrum. However, these orientations share common ground, even though relativists do not acknowledge it. Realism underpins the idea that data is not just there to be extracted, and knowledge is not just a matter of uncovering reality. Realism supports the notion that our interpretation of the world is socio-culturally constructed, and that knowledge claims are always subject to the possibility of being proven wrong (Hammersley, 2009). The aim of social inquiry should be to examine the mechanism used to generate socio-culturally constructed interpretation. Hence, what appears to be at issue is a complete rejection of realism, which makes the relativist's claim indefensible. If, as relativists claim, we cannot claim any knowledge with certainty, then their claim cannot be valid either. Accepting the socio-culturally constructed orientations, relativists should recognize realism as a

18 Hammersley (2009) specifically critiques the relativism claim suggested by Smith and Hodkinson (2005).

legitimate orientation, which is affected by a different socio-cultural condition. Insofar as subjective perceptions are understood as socio-culturally constructed, we could comprehend the mechanism of how one's realities are linked to the way they describe their social world. The point is, as Hammersley claims, that discovery and construction of knowledge are metaphors, thereby caution is required in interpreting these metaphors. In other words, the concepts of discovery and construction, or relativism and realism, do not necessarily contradict each aspect of their orientations.

Both relativism and realism are relevant for my ethnographic approach and can complement each other. In my view, interviews should be an effective data collection method as long as we avoid the extreme claims presented by these two orientations. A fact-focused interview does not aim to simply elicit what underlies the participants' stories, but to investigate the link between what they say about everyday activities (accounts) and what they actually do (practice) (Heller, 2008). I agree with the co-constructed process to some extent. During the analysis, I noticed that my participants could articulate their answers better at the second interview and in their essay than they did at the first interview. Many participants expressed that the first interview brought questions they never had thought of before. I acknowledge the role of our interactions on me as a researcher as I realized these interactions challenged my previously held assumptions about JHMY.

There is sufficient evidence that the participants and I have been transformed by the journey of this study. However, what I present here is my analysis and my interpretation of the data. The participants and I co-constructed knowledge through our interaction, but the present analysis rests squarely on the shoulders of the researcher. Secondly with respect to our cultural differences, Kvale and Brinkmann's claim overlooks the possibility that we might have exchanged a different "contextualization cue" (Gumperz, 1999) which resulted in misunderstandings. It was a researcher's duty to examine such misunderstandings during the analysis, but that may be unknown to my participants. Thus, at some parts of the interviews, we may have contributed to the co-construction of knowledge equally. However, even when the knowledge is co-constructed, this study is my work and I make claims that I am responsible for (Heller, 2008). Similarly, when somebody else applies that knowledge in their context, their words carry their interpretation of this current study and my analysis, but may not match with my intention. Because as Bakhtin (1981) states; "The word in language is half someone's else's. It

becomes “one’s own” only when the speaker populates it with this own intention, his own accent” (p.293), I cannot have control over other people’s intentions and interpretations. When other people quote my work, they inevitably add their interpretation of my work.

Concerning the context sensitive nature of the ethnographic approach (Heller, 2008), particularly for the approach employed in my research, I hesitate to accept the “universality in truth” claim (Hammersley, 2009). It may be possible that some of the outcomes of my research can apply to the context of wider society, but the purpose of this study is not to produce generalizability. My aim is to employ an analytical scope to inspect a particular group’s everyday life activities in terms of their language usage, but not to reach universal knowledge, true for everybody.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research, I have had to be mindful of ethical issues, even from the very beginning when I selected this particular social phenomenon for investigation (Creswell, 2009). Researchers must be fully aware of the potential risks of intruding into private matters and remain cognizant of a possible asymmetrical power relationship between the researcher and the researched. It cannot be presumed that participants, upon signing a consent form, acknowledge all possible disadvantages inherent in taking part in research, as there are no universal rules governing ethical concerns in research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mason, 1996). With respect to a relationship with participants, ignoring the interviewees’ vulnerable position does not only decrease the validity of interview data, but also touches upon a moral issue (Hammersley, 1997). At the same time, while it is imperative to build rapport with participants, how far or how close the researcher can get is a different question (Katz, 2000). A researcher’s attentive and empathic attitude can lead to a quasi-therapeutic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), and/or misguided intimate relationship (Hawkins, 2010).

Keeping in mind all those possible negative impacts on both the participants and the resulting study, in the end we should rely on our own sensibility to these moral issues (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Thus, throughout the study, I have carefully followed the professional advice from the ethical review office and my supervisor. First of all, after

receiving an approval from the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University, I began to recruit participants. Upon the first meeting with prospective participants, I ensured that they clearly understood the nature of the study, as I walked through the important sections of the consent form with the participants. At several stages, participants were reminded of their rights to withdraw from the study and given an opportunity to read my analysis. Building a good rapport with participants created enough comfort in our relationship in order to have casual conversations that were not related to the study at all. Some of the occasions could be described as an exchange of friendship, but I kept my researcher's stance when it was necessary.

When participant observation as an additional data source was considered, I consulted with the Office of Research Ethics to receive another approval for the amendment. The consent form is included in Appendix. C. I shared my findings with a few, but not all participants, to confirm their consent regarding their photos and the information that I had gathered from the social encounters. These data sources were used for analysis upon confirming permission and agreement from the participants.

Transcribing interview data does not involve personal interaction with participants, but this does not mean that there are no ethical issues to be considered. An important consideration is to assess whether non-verbal features, (i.e. silence, facial expressions, body language, etc.) have been captured adequately or accurately (Pavlenko, 2007). Nevertheless, transcribing is not merely a transactional process from a spoken language to a written form, but a representation of another's voice, which cannot be natural and objective (Green, Franquiz, & Dixon, 1997; Roberts, 1997). In order not to miss the nuance and to be sensitive to the participants' feelings, during the analysis process I listened to the digital recordings instead of only reading the transcript. At the second stage of the analysis, I listened to the recordings again to see if I perceived a different interpretation of the interviews. As mentioned in the Preface, this process was extremely helpful as I literally heard the participants' voices and felt a good rapport with them, which made a positive contribution to the study.

3.7. Summary

The study was designed around the inductive and interpretive nature of qualitative research. Unlike a quantitative approach, the aim of the study is not to obtain objective reality, but instead to incorporate the researcher's subjective stance to present a deep understanding of the JMHY's culture and the way they make sense of their experience. Similarly, the study is not grounded in a search for objective scientific truth, as I present merely the researcher's interpretation of what the JMHY represented as their culture. Along the process, the participants and the researcher contributed to the co-construction of knowledge, but the final form I present here is my work and I claim responsibility for it. My interpretation should contain a thick description of what the JMHY culture looks like. My study may be transferable to other contexts depending on how other researchers interpret the findings.

Linguistic ethnography appeared to best suit the study focusing on people who do not possess a advanced proficiency in their HL. Because Hymes' central argument is the importance of examining the way language and social life interact mutually with each other, this study paid full attention to the functions of languages that JMHY use which may be unintelligible to others. To take account of JMHY's cross cultural home environment, the study also draws on Heller's ethnographic approach to bicultural and multicultural contexts where languages and people share fuzzy borderlines. Before turning to a discussion of the findings in Chapter 5, the next chapter provides a detailed description of each participant's life story focusing on their language usage. It is hoped that the chapter brings the closest and clearest voice of the JMHY participants, as if they are actually speaking to the readers.

Chapter 4.

Voices of Japanese Mixed Heritage Youth

4.1. Purpose and Rationales

In this chapter I have attempted to reconstruct the participants' life stories in their own words. Before proceeding to the subsequent chapter, where I provide a deeper analysis of their language use, the reader is invited first to hear the participants' direct voice. As described in the Preface, the voices of my participants are a key element of this study because their voices helped me to identify the common threads in my research and build a coherent understanding of JMHY. Throughout the interviews with all the participants, I endeavoured to maintain my role as a researcher. However, while my eyes and brain tried to act like a researcher, my emotions were tuned into the participants' stories. I laughed with them, got excited about their adventurous stories, and I felt sad for painful events in their lives. Kouritzin, (1999) who studied language loss and HL, eloquently describes the climate of the interviews she had in her research, using a French horn metaphor, the musical instrument she learned to play:

> A French horn player must be able to hear music in her mind that isn't there, but is forthcoming, and then strive for those strains in order to blend herself into the rest of the band, creating harmony rather than discord. But, what is truly unique about the French horn is its magic. When two French horns are perfectly in tune, and when they play two notes of a chord, you can hear a third horn sounding triumphantly between them. And, between each horn and imaginary horn is the echo of yet another horn, resonating and ethereal. [….] But, you cannot effortlessly hear the third horn; you have to listen carefully, adjust your breathing, strive to be one with the other horn player, taste her spit. You have to let go of your ego, to give up your own pace, and dwell within the performance of others. (Kouritzin, 1999, p. 27)

The goal of this chapter is to keep "creating harmony" with the participants' voices in order for me and the readers to hear the third horn. Also in my attempt to "let go of my own ego" I strove to reconstruct the participants' life stories in their own words[19] as much

[19] To indicate their own words, I use different fonts. Their essay is written in Verdana, whereas the interview excerpt is in Arial Narrow

as possible, but my bias is inevitable in the process. As I have mentioned already in Chapter 3, Harris (2006) suggests that one of the most effective ways to interpret the significance of one's daily language use is through "the accumulation of formally unanalyzed detail" (Becker, 2001, p.72; also quoted in Harris 2006, p. 41). Harris believes that the accumulation of details of everyday life can assist researchers to scrutinize cultural formation. What follow in this chapter are the "unanalyzed details" of the participants' daily lives and the way they describe their everyday experiences. Thus, I deliberately defer to a later chapter my detailed analysis of the participants' description of their everyday experiences (Geertz, 1993). It is hoped that this approach creates a bridge as I transform "our (participants and myself) experience of the social world into a social science text" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.191).

4.2. Alex and Ikuko: English as a Family Language

4.2.1. Alex's Story (age: 21, university student)

Alex describes his home language environment in his essay as follows:

> My mother immigrated from Tokyo, Japan when she was young (first generation) and my Dad was born here as a Chinese-Canadian (second generation). So I fall somewhere between a second/third generation Chinese-Japanese-Canadian but for many unfortunate reasons, including my own laziness, I never learned my ethnic languages. The most likely reason would be because my parents would communicate through English, so that was the family language and only one I would learn fluently.

Alex believes the father's Cantonese is only conversational, without much reading and writing skills, as the father never had a formal Chinese language education. He also thinks his mother's primary language is English, although she is a former ESL student and reads and writes well in Japanese. His mother tried to read a Japanese children's book to him but he did not enjoy it because of his lack of Japanese proficiency.

His maternal grandmother used to babysit him and his younger sister, Ikuko, when his mother was working at one of the Japanese travel agencies in town, but he was too young to remember any details. He saw a video clip that shows him speaking Japanese

to his grandparents. Unfortunately soon after, all communication stopped completely between his family and the mother's side of the family because the mother had a dispute with her own parents. On the other hand, he still meets his father's side of the family occasionally, for example on Chinese New Year's Day, and he hears his father speaking Cantonese with some of the relatives. Around age 7, at his father's suggestion, he started taking a karate class with Ikuko and his mother. He thinks the karate class was his first exposure to Japanese culture and he picked up a few karate-related Japanese words. In the class his mother sometimes worked as an interpreter for their instructor, who was a person from Japan. There he also met another Japanese mixed heritage person whose mother is the third generation (Sansei) of Japanese immigrants. Later Alex's mother began to teach the Japanese language to him and his sister and friend who took the karate class together. He neither liked nor disliked it but doesn't think he learned very much from it. In fact, it didn't last too long, while he continued taking the karate class until the age of 14.

Because of his distant Japanese family connection, his Japanese cultural sources are similar to those of many other children in Canada. He played many Nintendo games, collected Pokemon cards and watched some Japanese animations. In his essay he explained how his interest in Japanese popular culture actually made a connection to his heritage:

> I remember trying to watch some anime in Japanese to see what it was like, but it was all gibberish to me without the English subtitles sadly. But I still remember it gave me a sense of pride to be part Japanese, as very beautiful works of arts had been created by the Japanese artists.

In high school, he became serious enough to take a Japanese language course, which didn't work out in the end but he tried it again at university. During the interview he mentioned his motivation:

> **Alex:** Umm, I guess it was more like a heritage thing. I just wanted to learn the language now. Umm, I remember thinking part of it was like, uh, I-I was trying to get into programs too. So, uh.

Interestingly, he also shows an interest in learning Chinese but for a different purpose:

> **Alex:** Yeah, well from a business perspective since my dad's working in China everyone speaks Mandarin, so he thinks it's, like, the most powerful kind of language in terms of business, uh, connections. Cause there's, I like, Chinese people in, like, every country now! So, it's good for networking. Uhh, I guess Japanese more for, like, just trying it out. And heritage. I wanna try it.

Even though the university offers Chinese language courses, he has not taken any Chinese courses yet. He fondly remembers his first Japanese class at the university because mainly it was quite different from his major (computer engineering) classes, and also he met many friends who have the same interests in Japanese animation and video games. He also felt comfortable sitting with students whose Japanese language proficiency was at a beginner's level. In the Japanese course he took with me, he did not use his Japanese name, but on the examination or quizzes he wrote his Japanese name. Altogether, he completed the first two elementary levels of the Japanese courses, but he is not planning to continue taking Japanese courses at the university. Instead he is looking for an opportunity to go to Japan as an exchange student or to work.

Alex has been to Japan twice on family trips, at ages 14 and 16. Both times he felt he was a tourist there, with no feeling of coming home. On the other hand, on those trips he noticed his mother acting differently from when she is in Canada, which he describes in the essay as "a new side of her I was seeing. I never really got to hear her speak Japanese often at home, so I thought it was cool." On his summer break in 2013, he also went to China with his father (without his mother and sister). His impression of China is the same as when he went to Japan, he was merely a tourist there.

He usually introduces himself as a half Japanese and half Chinese, but hardly says "I'm Canadian" unless he meets someone from outside of Canada. When he worked as a volunteer to look after Japanese university students on the exchange program, he told them he is Canadian but never mentioned his Japanese ethnic background. He explained that the reason was not to confuse them, and he did not see any necessity to mention his Japanese connection to them. That attitude was the same when he was taking the Japanese class. As for his friends, he tends to keep company with many Asian friends because, he thinks, his Asian friends have more of the same interests (such as Japanese pop-culture) as he does. At the third meeting (a casual situation, when we went to a Japanese restaurant with his sister, Ikuko), he told me of his future plan to live in Japan,

through the Japan co-op program while he is still a university student. At both interviews he did not mention this, but it seems that he was inspired by one of his close university friends who had just returned from the one-year co-op program in Japan. This friend is from Alex's first Japanese language course and now speaks better Japanese than Alex does.

4.2.2. Ikuko's Story (age: 19, university student)

Even though she grew up in the same language environment at home as Alex and with a similar amount of exposure to Japanese culture, Ikuko shows a much more serious desire to obtain an advanced level of Japanese proficiency and has a strong tie with her Japanese heritage. Whereas Alex did not recall how their Japanese lessons with their mother started, Ikuko vividly remembers how she asked her mother to teach them Japanese. Jokingly she blames her brother for the discontinuation of the lessons because she thinks Alex upset their mother by not studying seriously. She also remembers the karate class, and how proud she was of her mother, a native speaker of Japanese. Also, she blames her parents more strongly than Alex does for not speaking their ethnic languages to their children.

Many other participants show their desire to have Japanese language ability but none of them are as dedicated as Ikuko, who has completed four intensive Japanese elementary levels at the university within four months. In her essay she describes this experience as follows: "I felt very emotionally content while taking these courses; I finally felt like I was becoming more of the Japanese person that I could have been if my mother had taught me Japanese as a child." However, she knows her Japanese is still basic, so she doesn't think she is confident enough to converse with a Japanese native person. She expresses her frustration in her essay: "I finally feel like I can be accepted as a Japanese person, but I can still feel and see the distance between actual Japanese person and myself." She demonstrates a strong association only with her Japanese connection, but not with the Chinese side. At both interviews and in the essay, she mentions several times that she has no interest in Chinese language or culture. On the other hand, she not only wishes to develop Japanese language ability, but also wants to be recognized as a Japanese person. The following interview excerpt illustrates how important it is for her to receive this recognition by others:

> **Ikuko**: Sometimes I wish that, like, my dad was Japanese and that my mom was Chinese, so then I could have, like, that's how my friend is, uh, her parents are, like, dad is Japanese and her mom is Chinese. I wish that I was it 'cause then I could have a Japanese last name and I would feel, like, better because, like, my last name is Lee, so it's just like, yeah. You're Chinese. But my-my friend's last name is like Suzuki, so I'm like, oh! You know, like, if my mom-if my dad was like my mom it would be, like, my last name would be like Honda. So, yeah.

Since she was small, she always had regular contact with her father's Chinese side of the family and now she is living with her father's brother, in her uncle's house during the school semester. All her close friends are of Taiwanese or Hong Kong background, which makes her feel Chinese in spite of the fact that her Chinese language ability is lower than her Japanese: " I'm not Japanese. Like, at all. But like, Chinese, like, yes probably I felt that before because all my friends, like, just being around them they're very, like, Chinese people. So, being around them just automatically makes you feel like, like, oh! I'm Chinese." At the first interview, Ikuko kept saying she doesn't know why she has such an imbalanced view about her ethnic background, but in her essay she indicates that the unequal exposure to her parents' families made a difference.

Unlike Alex, Ikuko has never become a fan of Japanese pop culture, although she recognizes that the popularity of Japanese pop culture among her friends increases her positive connection to her Japanese heritage. Talking about her lack of interest in pop Japanese culture, she emphasizes her difference from the majority of students in her Japanese class. She insists that she doesn't study Japanese to understand Japanese anime or manga, but she provides the following reason in her essay:

> But when I was actually in Japan, standing in front of a Japanese person who was trying to talk to me, it was impossible to pretend. Moments like that make me feel very out of touch with my Japanese roots and that depresses me. It's because I'm already trying to hold on to this part of my life, so moments like that make me feel like I'm chasing a shadow. This feeling will always be embedded in my memory. I felt useless and like a failure. But I channelled that bad energy and used it to motivate myself to improve my Japanese.

Ikuko's third trip to Japan is a good example of how she gained more motivation to learn Japanese. She made the third trip to Japan with her mother in 2012 when she graduated from high school. Even though Ikuko felt she was still a foreigner there, being with her mother and her mother's Japanese friends made her feel close to her Japanese

heritage. The mother's friends (elderly couples) did not speak much English, but made so much effort to explain everything to her in English while everybody else there understood Japanese. She felt so moved by their effort because now she knows how hard and intimidating it can be to speak to native speakers of a language with a beginner's level of language. In Japan she is surrounded by all Japanese people and feels more Japanese, but her lack of confidence in her Japanese language skills stands in her way, thus creating a distance from the rest of the Japanese people.

The other evidence of how strongly she wants to be seen as Japanese, or in her words "to be accepted as a real Japanese", is her usage of Japanese name. At the first interview, she introduced herself as "Ikuko" to me although she has an English name that all her friends use. According to her, she prefers to be called Ikuko only by a Japanese person, but not by non-Japanese:

> **Ikuko**: Um, I actually don't really like using my Japanese name with, um, people, like, that aren't Japanese really, like, I only really use it with Japanese people. So, like, with my mom's, like, side of the family, like, I don't talk to them at all, but like if I did I would be, like, yeah. This, like.

Therefore, while her mother calls her "Ikuko" most of the time, her father and brother never call her by her Japanese name. At the second interview, she mentioned her name preference again and said she gets annoyed when people pronounce her Japanese name with English accent because it doesn't make her feel she is Japanese. She also explained how she uses her mother's Japanese language ability to impress her friends about her Japanese heritage.

> **Ikuko**: Sometimes like, if my mom is picking up me and one of my friends sometime driving us to somewhere, I tell my mom to say "hi to them in Japanese."
>
> **NT**: To your Japanese friends?
>
> **Ikuko**: No no just my regular friends
>
> **NT**: Oh, someone who doesn't understand Japanese?
>
> **Ikuko:** Yeah, Sometime coming to the car, I'd be like Mom, this is my friend, hi this is my mom, My mom is Japanese, Then I'd be "Mom, say something in Japanese, and she says something like "hi what are you going to do today? then I laugh because they don't understand it, right, stuff like that.

In the future, her desire for her children to speak Japanese is as strong as she longs for her own Japanese language ability. To respond to my question "what do you want to pass on to the next generation?" instantly she says: " I would send the kids to mom and TEACH Japanese, don't let turn out be like us." Even though she herself cannot speak Japanese well, she thinks her children should have an opportunity to learn their heritage background. Otherwise, Ikuko thinks that the Japanese heritage would be lost.

4.3. Joseph and Holly: Bilingual Life

4.3.1. Joseph's Story (age: 25, graduate student / youth priest)

The following passages from Joseph's essay best describe who his parents are and his home language environment:

> My dad immigrated from England as a boy of ten years, and his subsequent childhood involved a great deal of moving from community to community. I don't know a great deal about what sort of boy he was, but the man I know him to be is one who is proudly English. He eats and cooks English food, reads and teaches British literature, watches English television, and supports (some) English soccer clubs. A favourite sweater of his is one that reads, "British by birth, English by the grace of God." Interestingly, he has all but lost the thick Yorkshire accent of his childhood, and few would recognize him as English solely from his accent.
>
> My mom immigrated from Japan in her late twenties, when she got married. I wouldn't describe her as proudly Japanese, and it seems almost silly pointing to aspects of her that are Japanese; she just is Japanese, in every way. Describing ways in which my mom is Japanese would be like describing ways in which a lobster was a lobster.
>
> My mom and I always conversed in Japanese; I never tried to do otherwise. Initially, I also spoke Japanese with my younger siblings (I'm the eldest of four); but as we entered grade school, we children increasingly spoke to each other in English. At first, my mom tried to fight this; she would deduct money from my allowance every time she caught me speaking English with my siblings. Eventually, however, she realized the inevitable and gave up. And yet, she and I never spoke to each other in anything but Japanese.

The result of his mother's hard work is that Joseph is the only participant who indicates satisfaction with his level of Japanese, although he claims a lack of writing and

reading ability. Also Holly, his next younger sister, admits that Joseph speaks better Japanese than any other siblings (four all together). In fact his Japanese was good enough to be hired by one of the Japanese furniture companies in British Columbia. Also he recalls that before going to kindergarten, his Japanese was much better than his English. Because of his advanced level of Japanese proficiency, he understood Japanese TV shows, video and children's books better than Holly so he seems to remember better and enjoy them more than Holly did. While Holly could only name one of her favourite Japanese TV show's names, Joseph mentions quite a few of them and implies they left some impact on him, even though he doesn't have any interest in current Japanese popular culture. The next excerpt from his essay shows his tight connection to the Japanese culture he experienced as a child:

> Though I'm virtually illiterate, I'm happy with my Japanese proficiency with the Japanese language. I don't seek out Japanese television or films – except those that I watched as a child, which afford me a sense of nostalgia.

Another area where Joseph demonstrates his extensive Japanese vocabulary range is when he speaks of his experience in Japan. It is only natural because he is describing things that he saw in Japan, but the interesting fact is that he mentions a Japanese word first and the English translation afterwards.

> **NT**: That's where your mom was born?
>
> **Joseph**: Yeah, so not like in the city centre but, um, so like my-my grandparents had a couple *Hatake* vegetable gardens.
>
> **NT**: Real countryside!
>
> **Joseph**: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, and there was like *Tanbo*, you know, rice paddies, and stuff like that around so it definitely was the countryside.

Apart from these two Japanese words, he uses words, like *koinobori* (carp – shaped burner used for a boy's day), *natumatsuri* (summer festival) *onigiri* (rice ball), and *okashi* (snacks) to describe his experiences in Japan. In spite of his fluency in Japanese, he noticed a certain limit on his Japanese vocabulary, when he was working at the Japanese company:

> **Joseph**: I was only ever in Japan, um, in the summer growing up cause, uh, during the summer holidays, um, so when my co-workers were celebrating New Years they were quite surprised that I didn't know anything about New Years customs, um, about the kanji that you write. I don't know what you write out and stuff. Those are-that was the first time I'd seen a lot of that, so they were explaining to me but I think they were a bit surprised that I didn't know anything.

Oshougatsu, Japanese New Year, is the most important holiday in Japan. In a sense it is equivalent to Christmas in North America. It is a family oriented holiday and family members get together and cook special foods. Many Japanese visit shrines or temples during New Year holidays; otherwise they never visit such places. Therefore, it is the most commonly mentioned and celebrated Japanese holiday among participants in this study, who possess much lower Japanese proficiency than Joseph's advanced level of Japanese, but his family never celebrates it, neither here nor in Japan. He attributes this family practice to his family religious background, Christianity. Even though he made a regular family trip (almost every other year until he finished his high school) to Japan, none of his family went to shrines or temples and never participated in any religious events except non-religious festivals in Japan. Therefore, in spite of his advanced level of Japanese, he is not familiar with any Japanese religious vocabulary. In fact he doesn't think his family practices much Japanese culture or traditions at home, and even his mother never explicitly taught Japanese values or mannerisms. If his mother did, he thinks he has naturally learned it while speaking to his mother in Japanese. Here he describes how he learned how to bow:

> **Joseph**: Like, when you-like I'm-even when you're talking I know, like, you're supposed to bow your head and stuff like that. That wasn't anything that I was taught not-I don't remember being scolded for not doing it. It's just that's what you do when you talk to a Japanese person. That's just what I know. I've always done it or what.

He believes that his first job at the Japanese furniture company gave him confidence in his Japanese and helped him feel more comfortable with talking to Japanese people in Japanese. As most of his colleagues are Japanese men, he learned more masculine words, such as "*ore*" (in regular Japanese "*watashi* meaning "I") or *meshi* (in regular Japanese "*gohan*" meaning "rice" or "meal"), which his mother would never use. He also thinks he has learned a great deal of *Keigo* usage, honorific language even though he is not entirely confident that he knows when to use it. It seems that he is quite

comfortable with his Japanese and being with Japanese people, even though he feels he sees situations differently while talking Japanese with them:

> **Joseph:** I just-I think people perceive me more as Japanese than I perceive myself as Japanese.
>
> **NT:** That's very interesting. Can you give me a little detail as to why you think that way?
>
> **Joseph:** Cause well like in day to day, like, interactions and stuff I don't see anything from a Japanese perspective. When I look at, like, some Japanese situation then I see that from a completely Japanese perspective, I think.

Interestingly, people who see him as Japanese are his non-Japanese friends, whereas his Japanese colleagues see him in the opposite way:

> **Joseph**: Well, like, there's a couple times at work where, like, um, so we-I worked for this company where we would deliver furniture and so we'd be going to people's houses and, um, like, sometimes they would ask like, oh, are you all Japanese for the group of us and I would say yeah and they're like no he's Canadian. We're Japanese. Sometimes it'd be like that. And then I think about-I guess I am more Canadian.

The most noticeable difference between Joseph and Holly is his preference for British culture over Japanese culture. His lack of interest in Japanese culture is clearly stated in his essay:

> I don't seek out Japanese friends or a Japanese community. I don't find Japanese women particularly attractive. I don't have a desire to visit Japan itself, except for my mom's hometown, which I miss dearly. I don't have a desire to pass on anything Japanese to my daughter.

And, in the very next paragraph, he expresses how he is attracted to British culture:

> I prefer British literature to American. I prefer English television (especially British humour) to American. Restaurants and pubs that label themselves as 'English' appeal to me. I enjoy British beer because it's British (I'm not sure that it's actually better than European beer; though I can say categorically that it's better than the bathwater American beer). I recognize the silliness of it, but I think that the assorted English accents are more pleasing than anything on this side of the Atlantic. I even bought myself a flatcap the other day.

He thinks several factors contribute to his preference for British over Japanese culture, but in fact he writes the paragraph above to explain how some Japanese Canadians feel about Japanese culture. What he writes between two paragraphs is;

> I do, however, understand the feelings of second-generation Canadians who wish to pursue their Japanese heritage; and I understand it because that's how I feel about my English background.

It is ironic that he is the only participant who would be able to converse with his own family in Japanese daily, but at the same time he is the only participant who shows no desire to pass on that skill to the next generation ("I don't have a desire to pass on anything Japanese to my daughter"). In the second interview, his attitude was the same towards his future intentions, but he believes, as do his non-Japanese friends, he is more Japanese than he thinks and his daughter might naturally pick up some aspects of his Japanese culture he exhibits without noticing it.

4.3.2. Holly's Story (age: 23, student at a nursing school)

Joseph's essay summarizes their home language environment well, but what it fails to mention is that their mother only spoke to the children with the *hyojungo* (standard Japanese) instead of *Kansaiben*, one of the Japanese dialects, which is the mother's "native" language. Both Joseph and Holly knew from an early age that there is more than one kind of Japanese spoken in Japan, since they heard their mother speaking the different Japanese to her family members:

> **Holly**: kansaiben**,** right. Um, but when she became my age, I think she became stewardess and they forced her to learn proper Japanese, I think. Hyujugo (standard Japanese) I think. Is that what it's called? So then she decided well I'm going to teach my kids hyojungo**,** the proper one. But when we'd all go back to Japan and she'd look at her mom and speak kansaiben look at us and speak hyojungo look at my dad speak English, it just gets so mixed up that she's just like.

Holly knows that she is speaking a standard Japanese, but at the same time she is conscious about her inability to use "polite Japanese" in public: "um, it-called, like, the polite Japanese that you would use in a professional setting, professional Japanese maybe? I have none of that 'cause my only Japanese again is what I learned from my mom." In Japan when making an inquiry

to Japanese people in a public setting, she avoided speaking Japanese because of her consciousness of not be able to use polite Japanese:

> **Holly**: Like, um, like something like that. Or if I would go up to maybe the train station, I didn't know how to get somewhere and go up to the train booth and I'm at the train station, they probably speak English, might be better for me to just pretend I'm a tourist and ask where something is in English then to, um, come off just sounding so rude. Like, which I feel like-I don't know exactly what my Japanese is compared to them, but I just feel like it's rude because I'm not using the (desu, desuka) and stuff very well.

Speaking to her mother in Japanese is so natural, thus Holly doesn't even think her mother has taught Japanese to any of her children, saying: "to teach us Japanese? Um, yeah, well, I mean she didn't teach us Japanese we knew Japanese right from the start, she always spoke to us in Japanese." Speaking Japanese with her mother is so natural that she felt awkward communicating in English with her mother through a text message, before the mother installed a Japanese font on her cell phone: "then texting would be a little bit awkward because it's English and it's almost awkward speaking English between two people whose relationship is Japanese. I feel. Because our relationship has been nothing but Japanese." At the same time, she naturally speaks English with her father: "when we'd look at my dad one language would come out and we'd look at my mom another language would come out." She says she was doing this, even before she knew they were two separate languages. Holly calls this natural shift between two languages "two different mindsets." The following two excerpts illustrate how her two different mindsets work:

> **Holly**: I've never been into anime or, like, much into, like, if you asked me who's famous in Japan right now, I wouldn't know the answer to that, you know? But like when I watching their shows and stuff I don't feel like I'm watching a foreign film, I don't feel a disconnect, my mindset-it's almost like I have two totally different mindsets. I'm a Japanese person. I'm sure if we were having this exact interview in Japan you might see a bit of a different me, you know what I mean?

Here she is talking about her two names:

> **Holly**: In-in any world many situations I would just say Holly. I'm always Holly. Unless I meet a Japanese person. And then I'll say Kaori depends on if-if the language that we're speaking is Japanese or dominantly Japanese I'll just say Kaori. If it's my mom's friend I'll just say Kaori cause if my mom's talking in Japanese and referring about me she'll refer about me as Kaori. So, it's easier if they know me as Kaori as well. Does that make sense?

These two names do not only bring two different mindsets, but also come with different feelings. Since only her close family members and her mother's close Japanese friend, call her "Kaori," she feels more at home to be called "Kaori" whereas "Holly" is her public self.

As noted above, Holly is aware of her limitations in "polite Japanese" but otherwise she seems to be content with speaking Japanese with her mother. Therefore, I asked her if she ever felt any language barriers while speaking to her mother, and her answer was;

> **Holly**: I've never had that. Never had that because we've always just had, um, I don't know-we've, like, developed our own language almost. I know exactly what she's gonna understand what she's not gonna understand. Um, the exact amount of English-she's become so used to that the language that I use and I don't know we just never, ever had the disconnect. Sometimes, let's just say, when we're arguing and-and the speech is moving much faster and-and that kind of becoming more heated and stuff and the focus moves away from the language, then I'm sure I'm-I'm I do it so not consciously, I'm not thinking about it, but like, I know that my English probably is increasing more English in the sentence but the structure is still Japanese.

Holly thinks that her brother Joseph overcame his limited ability to speak "polite Japanese" while he worked at the Japanese furniture shop. Otherwise, their speaking ability was almost parallel. However, there is a big difference between their views of their paternal culture. In the previous section I have noted Joseph's strong ties to British culture and how he gravitated overwhelmingly to everything about British culture. During both interviews, Holly hardly uttered the word "British" or "England" unless I asked her about her views on that matter. Compared to the way Joseph emphasizes the father's "Britishness," Holly's description of her father rather focuses on his "Canadianness." A few times Holly mentions "language is a big part of me" or "I relate to a language," so she tends to view people through the languages they speak. For example, she seems to have a hard time seeing her father as British because he never spoke to her in British English, definitely not as much as Joseph sees him as British. Using the mindset example, Holly says "I cannot get into British mind" in the way that she switches to her Japanese mindset, as soon as she hears Japanese.

Holly's school experience also differs from Joseph's experience. Whereas Joseph does not claim any discomfort fitting in the school environment, Holly claims three

separate incidents where she felt different from the rest of her classmates. The first one is from her elementary years:

> **Holly**: Well, I was very conscious of much more when I was in elementary school, because the elementary school that I went to, they wanted to send me to private school and my parents are Christian and there's a Christian private school just near my house, but it was a Dutch Reform school, so everybody I mean, like, nine out of the ten students were blonde haired, blue eyes, so what-in my elementary school then I felt very different. I felt very Asian. I was, like, embarrassed to bring Japanese food to school. I felt very different. And I used to say to my mom things like I remember I was so little and I'd say, like, if I had one wish come true, it'd be that I could have blonde hair. That was like my experience when I was little. I wasn't proud of it or anything, you know?

Holly remembers this discomfort did not last too long and now she is more proud to have Japanese language ability than blond hair and blue eyes. Then the second time was when she went to a Japanese high school as an exchange student for two months. Overall her school experience in Japan was positive because of her remarkable improvement in Japanese, but she felt she didn't fit in. She didn't have any problem in communicating with her classmates, but she was actually given a different task from her classmates as she couldn't read or write as well as the other students in class. Her third experience is when she attempted to take my Japanese language class at university. Unfortunately the difference she sensed there was so great that she decided to withdraw from the course after attending two classes. First Holly noticed that she couldn't follow the conversation where her other classmates talked about Japanese pop culture, and then everybody was speaking in a "polite Japanese." She explains how she felt in my Japanese class at the university, compared to her experiences in Japanese high school:

> **Holly**: Not at all. That's exactly what it was. Like, when I was in the Japanese school it was very clear what I was. You know, "gayjin," exchange student who was there having fun and they were already excited that there's a "gayjin" exchange student there and the fact that I could speak Japanese made me connect with them very well like, they're like oh, they could speak Japanese to me but at the same time, like, almost kind of like I said, a bit of a celebrity, that sort of thing, right? Whereas like in this class I feel like their Japanese is better than mine but they feel like my Japanese is better than them I'm not at all on the same level but we're all there to learn the exact thing, we're in the exact same position, you know? And I just like didn't feel connected at all.

In my Japanese language class, many students exhibited their extensive knowledge of Japanese pop culture through their self-introduction, which is normally one

of the tasks on the first day of class. That was precisely the moment when she felt disconnected to the rest of the class because that was not an element of Japanese culture with which Holly can connect. Instead, she feels her idea of Japanese culture is outdated because it comes from her mother, who has been living outside of Japan for so many years.

4.4. Jess and Stacy: Having a Japanese Father

4.4.1. Jess's Story (age: 27, chef)

Jess's mother was an English teacher when she met his father in Japan. To seek a more relaxed education environment for the children, his parents decided to move back to Canada when Jess was only two years old. He does not remember Japan at all but his mother told him that he started speaking early and spoke a good bit of Japanese by then. Immediately after coming back to Canada, everybody at home spoke Japanese to each other, except Stacy who was only several months old at that time. That home language environment had to be shifted when his maternal grandparents began to visit them frequently. Their grandmother requested that they only speak English because they were back in Canada and otherwise the grandmother could not understand what was happening. As a result of this shift, today Jess can utter a very limited number of Japanese words; *oji-chan* (grandfather), *oba-chan* (grandmother), *okonomiyaki* (a name of food), and a few other Japanese food related words. Due to his familiarity with the few Japanese words and sounds, he claims that he can tell whether people are speaking Japanese or other Asian languages, such as Chinese or Korean, even though their appearances are similar. Jess still hears both parents talking to each other in Japanese from time to time, although his parents stopped talking to him in Japanese completely:

> **NT:** Because your mom is fluent in Japanese. Does she still communicate in Japanese with your dad?
>
> **Jess:** To my dad. Yeah.
>
> **NT**: 100% Japanese?

Jess: Uh, no. She talks to him in English but if he doesn't understand then she'll switch to Japanese to explain it to him. So, I've just grown up with that and them speaking Japanese like that.

In grade 6, he had a friend who was very interested in Japanese anime and language so his mother started teaching Japanese to Jess and his sister, his friend, and, the friend's sister. The Japanese lessons lasted only a few months. He remembers that his friend was much keener on learning Japanese than he was. In middle school in grades 9 and 10, he selected a Japanese course to take because he thought his parents could help him get through the course. Language wise, he didn't feel any personal attachment to the Japanese language so he started taking Spanish from grade 11 for the same reason (his mother also speaks Spanish well):

NT: How was your experience?

Jess: Um, it was okay. I was like any other kid in the class 'cause I didn't know anything. So, you know, the only advantage was having my mom there. So, that helped. But, I felt like any other kid who was taking Japanese.

NT: Would it be the same if you had taken Chinese or French?

Jess: Oh, I took French in grade eight, um, I think I was most comfortable with Japanese- actually no, I was most comfortable with Spanish. I took Spanish in grade eleven.

He went back to Japan twice at the ages of 4 and 10 with his family and spent some time with his close relatives. There, he didn't feel he was an outsider since he was born in Japan, in spite of the fact that he had lost all his Japanese by then. Stacy, his sister who is two years younger than him, remembered many details of the second trip. Jess remembered very little about the trips. He explains that because he was still young, he could only recall the candies and snacks he had there, rather than the places he visited or the people he met. He thinks his mother translated everything for him so he didn't have any language problems. Although now he wishes he could speak Japanese well, he doesn't show a strong desire or motivation to learn the Japanese language, which is quite similar to his attitude towards Japanese culture. He claims he has a general interest in Japanese culture, but he is more interested in other cultures because he feels he knows Japanese culture:

NT: In general are you interested in Japanese culture?

Jess: Yeah. I'm interested in it.

NT : What aspects?

Jess: Like, I would like to go visit Japan again and learn the culture and more food and everything. But, I mean, it's not a top priority. I wanna visit a whole bunch of places and learn a bunch of cultures not just Japanese. But, see the-the world. So, I don't know. Out of ten, maybe, like, a four, five. I wanna go see Japan.

NT: It's not your first priority?

Jess: Yeah. I would go to Europe probably. United Kingdom and then maybe another time go to Japan.

With respect to his own perception of his ethnicity, he demonstrates a mixed view. He doesn't simply claim Japanese or Canadian. Furthermore, he never uses a hyphenated term, Japanese-Canadian, but uses two ethnic terms one after another almost in one sentence.

NT: you can't make any connection to it (Japanese culture)?

Jess: Well, maybe I can a bit because I am Japanese. Like, I could go over there and maybe try but I'm pretty Canadian. So, I-I've grown up with all this Canadian stuff around me. So, going-it would be a change for me to go over to Japan and see all this stuff. It'd be-it'd probably be weird for me to see because I didn't grow up that way.

His view of his own father appears to be a key element, when he describes who he is. He thinks that his father is "very Japanese" who is always pro Japan and seeks to buy a Japanese product and refuses to go to a sushi restaurant owned by non- Japanese. The following interview excerpt is a good example of his view of his father, while he still shows a mixed view of his ethnicity:

NT: Anything in particular makes you feel that you are definitely Canadian or the other way I'm definitely Japanese?

Jess: I would say I'm definitely Canadian but I have a Japanese background.

NT: What kind of occasion do you feel that you are Japanese?

Jess: When I'm with my dad. Cause he's so Japanese! So, but, um, everything I do pretty much is Canadian.

At the second interview, he added more reasons why he sees his father as "very Japanese." Jess has noticed that his father does not show much emotion and is generally quiet, so that the father doesn't explicitly express his opinions even to his own family members. Seeing how his father communicates with others, he comments: "Canadians are polite too, but Japanese are quietly polite, that's how I see it." When three of us (Jess, Stacy and myself) had dinner at one of the Japanese restaurants, he provided me an example of how he had to comprehend his father's non-verbalized language. His father did not ever teach the children explicitly not to leave any food[20], but he sensed that message and so he used to eat everything he was given at the dinner table. Regarding communication with his father, he told me that in spite of his lack of Japanese proficiency, he indicates that he can see things from both Japanese and Canadian perspectives so the language barrier is not an issue for him:

> **Jess**: Maybe, I don't think the language barrier for me and him isn't really the issue. I think that for me and him, he holds onto his Japanese roots so tight and strong like that. To the point where nothing Japan ever does is wrong, that's more the issue for me. Because I feel like I can see both sides of being Canadian and Japanese, where he can only see a side of being Japanese. So the relationship with my dad and I, I don't think, language, learning Japanese would really help us.
>
> **NT**: hum, interesting, you say you don't speak Japanese and don't know much about Japanese culture, but you think you can see things from Japanese perspective?
>
> **Jess**: Well, I can pick up certain things, you know, that are inherently Japanese. Just from hearing my dad say stuff, I can kind of tell.

As for the photos he deems represent his culture, the first photo is his hockey team with members all in their uniforms. The second photo is yellow falling maple leaves, while the third photo is Jess with his relatives on his Canadian side. None of the photos show his connection to Japan or Japanese culture. However, on my request he sent me his tattoo photos. This is an event that he did not mention at the two interviews, but Stacy mentioned it. At the very beginning of the second interview with Stacy, she told me that Jess had an argument with his father the night before over Jess's tattoo. Apparently, without any explanation as to why, Jess asked his father to write some kanji, (Chinese characters) for him. These are, in fact, the characters Jess used for his tattoo. All his four

[20] To my knowledge or from my experience growing up in a Japanese household, it is one of the important table manners. I was told not to leave any food on dishes at each meal.

tattoos are Kanji. The one on his left ankle is read " family" while the right side says "friend."

There is one more event Jess didn't mention, but at another dinner occasion, his father told me. When Jess was still in elementary school, he requested the father not to pick him up from his school. Later the father found out that Jess's classmate had teased him about the father's broken English. In fact, Jess mentioned very little about such an experience as he feels that it only happened in the past; you know, kids are going to be kids and they bug you. But, you know, I'm-I grew up and it's nothing, you know." Now only his close friends jokingly tease him saying "you're the worst Japanese" because he doesn't match their image of a stereotypical Japanese person, while his appearance doesn't indicate even he is a mixed heritage person. He looks to me more Asian than any of the other participants, except Alex and Ikuko who have two Asian parents.

4.4.2. Stacy's Story (age: 25, university student)

Stacy was only a few months old when her family moved back to Canada, so she doesn't have any memory of being in Japan, but she believes that her Canadian grandparents played a big role in the change in language environment at home:

> In fact, my Canadian grandparents would be a huge part of our upbringing and serve as a portion of my dad's explanations as to why I am not bilingual. As the move was relatively sudden, especially for a man who did not speak English, transitioning from life in Japan to that of Canada was difficult and arduous for my father. During my childhood, especially during the early years (the language forming years!), my father worked and studied unfathomable hours in order to start this new life. Consequently, my Canadian grandparents often helped raise us as my parents worked hard to give us a good life. According to my dad, he left early in the morning to go to a long day of school, work, and commuting, only to return home late at night - too late for either of his young children to be awake.

Since maternal grandparents live close by, they still frequently visit her family and the family also visits the grandparents' home regularly. On the other hand, the Japanese relatives visited her family only once, since their departure from Japan. Both of her Japanese grandparents passed away while she was still young, so Stacy had very little contact with them. However, even now she (and Jess) affectionately refers to them with

a Japanese word, *oji-chan* (grandfather) and *oba-chan* (grandmother), saying "as far as I can remember. Like, they were never referred to as, like, your Japanese grandparents, or your dad's dad. It was always just Ojichan obachan."

While Jess could mention very little about his childhood, Stacy remembers many more details about their childhood, including their second trip back to Japan. In one of the most memorable incidents, she provides good detail on how her mother dealt with their delayed flight in Japan. In fact, observing this incident, she sensed the cultural difference between her Canadian mother and other Japanese customers who had the same problem:

> **Stacy**: I remember that clearly. But, um, a lot of it I don't remember a lot of. I remember our flight being delayed and then missing our train when we got to Tokyo and then my mom getting us a hotel room for free cause she's very Canadian that way, which I-I think I'm quite clearly remember it striking me as funny because I know that Japanese are so reserved and the person in front of her was Japanese and was-had the same problem, she missed her train and they were like, sorry, and she was like, okay and then my mom came next and like, no, you're gonna have to give me something free! And I remember quite clearly seeing the-the juxtaposition of cultures there.

Stacy's good memory helped fill in all the missing information Jess could not provide, but neither of them could remember much about their first Japanese language learning experience at one of the local language schools. Now, admittedly she regrets that she had very little interest in learning Japanese then. This is how she felt towards studying Japanese when she was younger:

> **Stacy:** Yeah. 'Cause then after that it was, like, those, like, you know, you're nine or ten and you don't wanna go to Japanese school after school and you don't-you know, none of your friends speak Japanese, you don't wanna learn it. And, like, your dad can kind of speak English, but you're like embarrassed cause you're a teenager and you're like, oh, he can't speak English very well, 'cause you're a stupid teenager. So, I was like, very-in those years, from, like, when I was,-when I was a younger kid, I think I was more open to learning it and then when I was like

In spite of her lack of interest in the language, she mentions that she never tried to disassociate herself from Japanese culture, or hide her Japanese background. On the contrary, she often uses the phrase "I'm proud to be Japanese":

> **Stacy:** We definitely grew up with a lot of Japanese food. A lot of fish and rice! (laughs) Umm, uh, I had a couple kimonos that my relatives had sent over to me. I clearly remember

those. Umm, it's always been, like, we've always been very proud to be Japanese. Like, I've always felt very proud to be Japanese.

NT: Even though you rejected learning the language!

Stacy Yeah. I think I just maybe I was just too lazy and I was, like, it's not something I care about doing even though I was very, like, when people ask me, like, what am I, I'm very proud-I've always been very proud to say, like, I'm half-Japanese. If I'm, you know, sports-it's always rooting for Japan. Even if, like, in baseball if it's Canada versus Japan, I'll usually root for Japan. I don't know why! I just never was receptive during those years to learn the language. Because everything else I was very proud to be Japanese. But I don't know why I was very, like, I don't know. I just would-wasn't interested in learning the language and I don't know why!

During both interviews, on a number of occasions on different topics, she repeatedly claimed her pride in being Japanese. "Embarrassed" is another word she often uses during the interviews, as Stacy feels embarrassed to reveal her lack of Japanese language ability:

Stacy: It's the first thing that people ask me, when they find out I'm half Japanese, is do you speak it-it's always the first thing. And I always feel like it's a really big embarrassment, when I'm like, no! I don't speak it! And I always feel really, like, I don't know-I feel embarrassed and maybe probably feel a little ashamed that I don't really-I don't know it because, well, I know it just feels like I'm the only one who's got, like, two parents who speak it and I was born there and I just don't speak it and I don't know why. Yeah.

Now Stacy shows a great desire to speak Japanese and regrets her decision to refuse learning it at an early age. Thus, when she decided to take my Japanese class at the university, she told me that her motivation was to reduce this "embarrassed" feeling and her ultimate goal is to be able to speak Japanese because she believes: "I feel like I would be more, like, complete. Like, I would be more of a complete Japanese but then like, yeah, I'm a 100% Canadian in a lot of ways. You know, Canadian culture, obviously the language, like, everything." In her view even though she becomes "complete Japanese" by speaking the Japanese language, she will still be 100% Canadian.

Unlike her Japanese language ability, Stacy shows a strong connection to and expertise in Japanese culture, especially in food, which is explained in the following passage from her essay. Here one can *feel* her pride:

One area that I am undoubtedly biased is when it comes to food. Another thing that many people ask me, albeit half-jokingly, is if I eat a lot of sushi. Their joke is usually meant to highlight a stereotype, but imagine their surprise when they find out my father is, in fact, a sushi chef. Consequently, I do eat a lot of sushi. Not only that, but I am a bit of a snob when it comes to Japanese cuisine - not because I have some sort of extraordinary palate, but because I do feel that Japanese pride resonate in me. It is safe to say that many of my (Canadian) friends have no idea what good sushi is, and I rarely believe their recommendations of a sushi restaurant, until I have judged it myself. Sushi restaurants in the lower Mainland are easier to come by, than Starbucks, and the fraction of which that I would regularly patronize is very small.

She feels such a strong confidence in her expertise in Japanese food that she makes fun of the way Canadians pronounce the names of Japanese food:

Stacy: I don't think so. She knows some things. We (Stacy and her friend who is also Japanese mixed heritage person and possesses a similar level of Japanese proficiency) were talking the other day how we-about pet peeves about certain words in Japanese that Canadians pronounce that we don't I like the way they pronounce it.

NT: Can you give me some examples?

Stacy: Like whenever I'll-okay, when I was working at the restaurant how many times people ask for "*Raymen*", "*Eedamamee*" and "*Sahkee.*" And well I (laughs) I know I don't speak Japanese that well, but I was like, whoa. Yeah. So we were joking about that.

Stacy shows a similar attitude, when she talks about Jess's Tattoo:

Stacy: I see people who get Japanese tattoos and like, why do you get Japanese tattoos, you're not even Japanese! I almost feel like you're ruining it for people like me, who if we were to get a Japanese tattoo then it just looks like oh, it's a Japanese tattoo. It's just, you know, just another Japanese tattoo. So, it loses its significance, whereas, it would be very significant to someone like me, but now it's less significant 'cause so many people have it.

Her embarrassment of her inability to speak Japanese and her strong pride in Japanese culture create an interesting contrast. Nevertheless Stacy cannot recall how she became so familiar with Japanese culture. Her mother points out that Stacy acts "like Japanese" sometimes, particularly when she is at work. Stacy seems to have a hard time to speak back to her boss at work:

Stacy: I'm-I'm working with a TOC for the summer and-and she's not-she doesn't do things well and I feel like she's doing things in the class that are kind of, like, really bad and stuff.

> My mom is always like why don't you say something to her? And I'm like, because I'm Japanese! And there's a very fine line and she does that. Even if I know she's doing it wrong I am technically below her and you know? So I-I don't know if I'm born with this or I just slowly adopted of my dad's mentality of things. I don't know.

At the second interview she reflects on her own attitude towards Japanese culture and mentions:

> **Stacy**: It might be because-it might be because, like, I don't speak the language maybe I try to make up for it in other ways to try and bring out, like, those very Japanese things. Well, I don't speak the language, but, you know, I'm very Japanese because, you know, I-I do this, or I'm very Japanese because I do that or no one knows what good sushi is!

4.5. **Sachi and Rina ---- Growing up within a Tight Knit Family Unit**

4.5.1. Sachi's Story (age: 26, part-time librarian/ amateur musician)

The first interview with Sachi is one of the most remarkable events in my research because all together we were talking for over five hours, even though it was our first encounter. I recorded only the first three hours, which gave me enough time to complete the interview questions. Here, I draw on various interview excerpts that indicate her unmistakable awareness of the social discourse surrounding her. At both interviews she provided her analytical points of view instead of a simple description of her life events, as if she had been prepared for my questions. In effect, Sachi has been questioning her sense of ethnicity or belonging, as she has encountered ample situations where other people questioned about her ethnicity as well as encountering unpleasant bullying experiences. She writes her essay in a letter style addressing me, and it begins:

> As you may have already gathered, the subject of language is, for me, very much a subject of loss and recovery: I have spent the better part of my life navigating a certain ambivalence towards my biracial/cultural identity, and have only recently begun to accept the possibility of finding other ways of looking at it.

The tale of Sachi's family journey resembles that of Jess and Stacy's family. She was two and Rina was a few months old when the family decided to leave Japan to care

for their sick grandfather in Canada. Even her Japanese neighbours remember Sachi conversing with them in Japanese when they started a new life in Vancouver. That became merely a past memory as she completely switched to English. As far as she remembers, her household language environment is described in her essay as follows:

> Among my family members, our communication in Japanese was largely limited to small vocabulary for meals, greetings, prayers, or household items. At home in Vancouver, my mother would speak 日本語(Japanese) during phone calls with relatives in Japan, or during visits with Japanese-speaking friends. Otherwise, we almost exclusively spoke English at home. Given the general circumstances, I imagine it must have been very challenging for my mother to make 日本語 more of a presence in our household, and sending my siblings and I to 日本語学校 (Japanese language school) was subsequently important for her.

Her father was an English teacher in Kyoto when he married her mother. Even though he lived there more than five years, he did not learn much Japanese so the mutual language between the parents was always English. However during the first interview Sachi also mentions; "ironically I think it was my dad who tried to-or maybe unconsciously incorporated Japanese vocabulary into our daily life. Using scattered Japanese words." Sachi is familiar with several Japanese words for household items and some phrases the father picked up while living in Japan. For example, her Japanese grandfather was strongly against Sachi's parents' marriage, which her family believes shortened the grandfather's life (he died from a heart attack). From this experience, Sachi's father always uses "*hantai*" (to disagree or go against in English) to describe his marriage story and his feelings when he disagrees with someone strongly. At the interviews Sachi uses the word "*hantai*" in the same way, and told me that she feels that word always gives her a strong sense of someone's anger and hopelessness at the same time, which she cannot express in English.

Upon their return to Canada her family spent significant time with the paternal grandparents, which gave her a chance to be exposed to Italian culture, as her Canadian grandfather married a woman from Italy. Interestingly, Sachi uses three different languages to call her grandparents; while her Japanese grandmother is always "*oba-chan*", the Italian grandmother is "*noni*" but "grandfather" in English is used for both Canadian and Japanese grandfathers. Her maternal grandfather passed away just before she was born, and the paternal grandfather died soon after they moved back to Canada.

She was sent to a Japanese language school from kindergarten, but there she was badly bullied by one of her classmates and it left a rather negative impact on her. As a result, she moved to another language school, where she spent her Saturday mornings until the age of thirteen. Her reflection of this school is as follows:

> At that age, I didn't feel the incentive to study throughout the week, which made it difficult to remember certain vocabulary, verbs, and kanji. In order to pass my tests, I began cheating by writing the answers lightly with my pencil on my binder so that it was barely visible. I wasn't thinking at the time about how the whole experience could have been better, but clearly, it was not working out for me.

Her attitude towards Japanese language has completely flipped now:

> **Sachi:** I wish-if I could make a single wish by rubbing the genie's lamp it would be to speak Nihongo just for the sake of understanding my mother. I think, um, my mother and I are-are quite close in a lot of ways but there's a lot there that I don't understand about her purely because of, um, um, the language barrier.
>
> **NT**: I don't think your mother has any difficulty expressing her thoughts in English??
>
> **Sachi:**That's very true. I think she's perfectly fluent in English and, um, maybe when I say language barrier I mean more in terms of what the language can bring to your understanding of this person as a whole

In her daily life, Sachi doesn't think that she has any difficulty in understanding her mother but she is fully aware that her mother is not expressing all her feelings and ideas as comfortably as the mother can do in Japanese. Another reason she wishes to speak Japanese is less explicit because it happens at the subconscious level. Due to her Asian appearance, she senses that sometimes other people expect her to behave like a Japanese woman or to speak Japanese.

> **Sachi:** you know, sometimes, like, I'd casually talk about my background with someone and then I would always get the impression after a while with certain men that I dated especially, um, that, uh, they would dwell on that fact a lot. And as a result in our conversations I tended to inadvertently emphasize my Japanese heritage more than was really representative.

However, it's important to note that she becomes agitated when only the stereotypical image of Japanese is emphasized:

> **Sachi:** I was dating a guy for a couple years, before my current boyfriend, and his family, you know, they're very well intended and everything, but clearly had not traveled much ever and they used to really exoticise me. And, you know, like, uh, the mother, she-she was so sweet I hate talking this way about her but, you know, she said, I bought this fan for you 'cause you're Japanese! Or, just like, oh my god! Get over it, you know? Like, it-I found it really kind of exasperating having to explain myself all the time.

The French language is also a part of her language experience. French is the first fluent foreign language that her mother learned. After Sachi left her second Japanese language school, she started a French immersion program and practiced speaking French with her mother occasionally. She has a dual undergraduate degree in Anthropology and French. In fact, I interviewed her when she had just come back from France, having completed a one-year English teaching job. It appears that Sachi is deeply committed to learning French, but I received the most unexpected response from her, when I asked her the reason of her dedication to French;

> **Sachi**: French? That's a very funny question! Um, I think I'm a total product of Trudeau's ideology. I-I was stuck in the program, I learned it; I don't have any particular, um, reason to speak it aside from just being a Canadian.

As mentioned earlier, when it comes to her belonging, she is very cautious and indicates her clear awareness of the social discourse surrounding her. In effect, she never uses any ethnic categorizations such as "I'm Japanese," "I'm Canadian" or "I'm half Japanese", to describe her sense of ethnicity. I missed a chance to clarify whether she deliberately makes this choice or not. The following excerpts illustrate how her political awareness pushes her to not fall into the conventional categorizations as she tries to internalize her personal experiences:

> **Sachi**: I think that the fact that I'm mixed visibly has prevented me for better or worse from belonging to these different contexts. I mean, let's face it if I go to Japan people won't say I'm Japanese, or maybe they will but they won't acknowledge me as a real person in the same way. And here, people always say, oh you're Japanese! You're Japanese! It's like, well, yes, but no. You know? And as a result, you know, I can't rely on these notions of identity and nationality the way other people do. **[….]** But I-I think the way I've been treated on some level has made me look at my family in a colonized way and I really have had to change the way I perceive that, right? Um, and I don't know where it comes from or maybe it-I don't-I also don't want to assign blame on to any particular cultural group for this; I just think that we're, like, very ignorant about the politics of, um, of multi-racial identity.

Sachi often attempts to discuss this with her younger sister, Rina. However, she acknowledges that their physical appearances have brought different experiences. Sachi believes that she has encountered a few unpleasant incidents as a result of other people's perception of their appearance. Unfortunately she experienced this at an early age when she looked more Asian than she does now. Also it is ironic that now she embraces her Japanese connection more than before, but now she claims that she looks more Caucasian than when she was bullied.

I believe that one of the reasons we talked for such a long time is because she was comfortable showing her emotions to me. At one point she broke down, as she recalls her memories with her *Oba-chan* (Japanese grandmother): "During my last trip in 2008 she actually, um, wrote-she had someone translate a postcard into English for me, so I could read it and I just cried, I could not stop, right? It was like, sorry, I'm getting all sad. Um, it's a huge loss not being able to-to speak to them." Apart from the two interviews I have met Sachi at several different occasions, including one of the Japanese restaurants in town or at her gigs where she performed with a Japanese Canadian singer. There I heard Sachi playing a few old Japanese folk songs. It was the Japanese Canadian singer who sang it in Japanese, while she played guitar since Sachi cannot sing in Japanese very well. After the gig, she told me that these old Japanese folk songs make her feel nostalgic, and it's her dream to sing in Japanese one day.

4.5.2. Rina's Story (age: 23, shop assistant /English teaching in Japan)

As soon as one begins to talk to Rina, one can get a sense of how friendly and easy-going she is. Right from the beginning of the first interview, she beamed with a kind and friendly smile, which made it easy to talk to her even though it was the first time I met her. Apparently she does not have much hesitation in talking to people she meets in public. Rina believes she has received this personality from her father whom she describes, "my dad who talks to anyone. He'll say something to anyone. He'll be like, "Hey you! Did you hear about this?! " She claims it's not random when she speaks to Japanese people in Japanese. Rina describes to me how she started talking to two Japanese students who spoke to her in broken English with random Japanese words for hours:

Rina: I just sat down on the bench and I was like, "So!" *Nihonjin desu ka* (are you Japanese?) That's kind of like a pick-up line, I guess for them 'cause- well, I shouldn't say pick-up line; it's a conversation starter. And so I was like, oh *nihonjin* (oh, I see you are Japanese)

NT: What was their reaction at first?

Rina: For them? Well, because I don't look half- because I don't look Japanese at all, they're more surprised. They're like, ah! She knows Japanese! And it's like no! no! no! *Gaijin (*foreigner) speaks Japanese. *Oka-san wa nihonjin* (My mother is Japanese)**.**

Her self-introduction does not start with "*watashi wa nihonjin*" (I'm Japanese), instead she generally says "*oka-san wa nihonjin*" (my mother is Japanese). She claims her appearance does not indicate her Asian background at all, so "my mother is Japanese" is a more believable sentence to someone who speaks to her for the first time. Here she mentions the reaction she often receives from Japanese people in general:

Rina: I think the main reaction is: you're huge! (laughs) Like, 'cause, a lot of my mom's friends range from the five foot two to the five foot five range in height, so then they see me, I'm five ten, like, whoa! Jumbo!

Understandably she receives the same reaction in Japan, but in fact it is more upsetting for her, as she feels like she is "connecting back to my roots" in Japan, rather than just being a tourist. Here Rina describes how she felt on her last trip to Japan with her older sister Sachi:

Rina:I got-I got really excited when I was able to-like when my conversation improved, it's like yes! That's what I wanted to do! Because I think when I go back to Japan-every time I've been back to Japan, at least by myself, I've felt myself connecting back to my roots. [….] I mean, a month isn't that long, obviously. It will to ref-I mean, of course through a lot of people's eyes I was still a stranger. 'Cause at least a lot of Japanese people didn't really take me seriously because of my appearance. [….] First they called me, like, a "*gaijin* (foreigner)" and it's like I'm not!! (laughs)

NT: Oh, you felt that way.

Rina: Yeah. A little bit 'cause-'cause there were times where-where I felt very confident in the fact that I was-and very proud that I was Japanese. So, when I was in Tokyo, someone said that to me and I stopped them; I was like, NO!

NT: Really?

Rina: And then the person was very apologetic afterwards 'cause they saw that they had hurt my feelings, but at that point it's like I was-I'm proud to be-I mean I'm still proud to be

Japanese, but when I went back there I was particularly proud and I was like I'm able to speak Japanese; I'm connecting back to my roots slowly, but surely!

At the age of five she started going to one of the Japanese language schools in town once a week with her sister and in high school she also took a Japanese language class. Thus she has almost 7 years experience in learning Japanese. In spite of such a long learning period, she thinks she cannot speak the language well because "my sentences are very scattered; they're horrible!" On the other hand, she speaks of her confidence in food vocabulary, which she learns from her mother's cooking and the packages of Japanese food she buys from one of the local Japanese shops:

> **Rina**:I may not know-I may not know much with Japanese, at least carrying a conversation, but at least I know food! That's the one thing I pride myself on. When I go back over there- because at least when I go back to Japan if my aunt's speaking Japanese to her friend about some-some-some sort of dish, I'm like, oh, I know what that is! I know what that is! Like, if they're having a full conversation about food I know almost everything in the sentence.

She discontinued her study of the Japanese language against her will. There were two factors that pushed her to end her 7-year long learning experience. First and foremost is that Rina had to focus on overcoming her academic struggle in high school. She also mentions; "I have a speech impediment, so it made things a little bit harder cause it's-it's hard enough speaking English with a speech impediment. It's twice as hard speaking another language." The second reason is that she didn't think her classmates shared her goals as "the students who were in there, weren't really there to learn; they were there to make their parents happy." In contrast Rina was there for a different reason:

> **Rina:** It was kind of on and off. Like, just 'cause, um, yeah, 'cause I know that for sure I-I-I will go back and learn Japanese again. Like, it's kind of one those things that's like kind of under the surface and it's like-but I know that one day if-I know that if I don't do it then I'm gonna regret it for the rest of my life. So, possibly within the next year or so, when I have a bit more money, then I'll-then I'll invest in that- to a Japanese second language course. Especially 'cause seeing now that I have family on the other-in Japan, it's like, I'd like to be able to communicate with them. Like, a- my aunt, my mom's sister knows-knows a bit of English, but even then I can tell that she's struggling to speak English. And my grandmother and I-the first time I went back there she would say something and I would just give her blank look. So, of course we'd both laugh 'cause it's, like-'cause she's probably thinking, oh, you're a lost cause! (laughs)

Rina kept her word and a year after the first interview she went to Japan to teach English. Her younger brother was there first and she was his replacement. The second interview took place when she came back briefly for her best friend's wedding, after living in Japan for 10 months. Prior to that interview, I was invited to her family's Thanksgiving dinner. When her mother opened the door for me, the first thing the mother told me was, "*Rina-chan nihongo hanashimasu yo* (Rina speaks Japanese)." Rina was too embarrassed to speak to me in Japanese after that introduction, but we conversed in Japanese a little. Her amazing improvement in Japanese is apparently a result of the effort she made from day one, the very first day she arrived at her grandmother's house in Kobe. From the house rules, to the daily schedule, and activities she spoke nothing but Japanese with her grandmother for the first three and a half months at the beginning of her stay in Japan (now she lives on her own near her aunt and grandmother's place in Kobe). Because of Rina's new life experience, at the second interview my questions were more inclined to compare her experiences in Japan and here, and now and before. She seems to enjoy her teaching job and working atmosphere, although there are some bad days at work. To my surprise, Rina mentions she hasn't made a close friend yet, and the major change from living in Japan is she "got used to be alone." It was totally unexpected, so it made me ask her why she still wants to stay there:

> **NT**: Oh, really so what keeps you there then?
>
> **Rina;** What 's really keeping me there is I guess I'm trying to make up for lost time.
>
> **NT**: What do you mean by that?
>
> **Rina:** What do I mean by that? Well, growing up here, it's like, the example of my grandma, like I grew up with grandma, my dad's grandma around, Noni. So, of course, I didn't get to experience that with my mom's family. […] even for myself, even just being in her presence maybe just one or twice a month I feel, it's like, I'm slowly making up for lost time

In effect, Rina has extended her visa to stay in Japan longer than her initial plan. When I asked her whether she has confronted any culture shock or disappointments in Japan, her answer was rather short, "not really" even though there are few surprises and new discoveries Rina has experienced in Japan. Through her interactions with the Japanese grandmother, she has noticed that many things her mother does or used to do are actually what her grandmother does too. In Japan observing how a Japanese mother overprotects and over controls her children, Rina feels that her mother was more lenient

and gave her more freedom. However, it is still one of Rina's vivid memories that the mother was very strict when she tried to teach something to her children, about which even the father complained:

> **Rina**: Some of my grandmother's quirks, like I look at her and say oh, that's where my mom gets that from, things like that, I'm just trying to think of a good example. Actually, something that's really apparent with my mom and my grandma, is their teaching styles […] When she's correcting my Japanese and stuff, like when she was with me trying to learn the language, they're the same, they're brutal, they're cold.
>
> **NT**: Hope that's not a typical Japanese way.
>
> **Rina**: They crack the whip. When it's like I'm tired, "NO!" says both my mom and my grandma.

Even though she hasn't made a good close friend, she meets other English teachers from Canada or America. She told me some of them speak Japanese much better and know so much more about Japanese culture, in particular Japanese pop culture, than she does. Thus, I asked her if her experience of living in Japanese is different from other English teachers. Her answer is that she believes that her experience is much smoother than her co-workers. While many other English teachers found it difficult to adapt to the Japanese way of teaching, or working, Rina felt that many things the other English teachers complain about are something she has experienced with her mother.

Since Rina has gained much better proficiency in Japanese, I asked her if she feels more Japanese, and her answer was; "I wouldn't say I feel more Japanese, but it made me feel more close to my Japanese heritage, getting close to my Japanese side." And later at the interview she also mentions:

> **Rina:** 'Cause I felt more connected to my roots when I was over there. But I-I still feel for the most part, connected here. Particularly when I'm able-when I'm able to speak with-with Japanese people and then, like, the Japanese people, at least in the East Vancouver area come into the community. And so it's like, I feel like I'm actually fitting in somewhere. At least-at least-at least heritage wise. So, I do feel that here as well. It's just it doesn't come out very often.

Instead of emails, as Rina requested, we have exchanged a few letters between Japan and Canada. Her letters are mostly written in English, but each letter starts off with a few Japanese sentences written in Japanese and her address in Kanji (Chinese

characters). Rina mentions in her letters about a private Japanese language lesson she has a few times a week, and that she was happy to show off her Japanese skill to her Canadian boyfriend who visited her there. She also writes that she was happy to see her boyfriend enjoying Japanese food, particularly traditional dishes that her grandmother makes. Now she has decided to come back here soon, saying she would stay much longer if her Canadian boyfriend did not ask her to return to Canada.

4.6. Cathy and Amy: Growing up in a Strict Household

4.6.1. Cathy's Story (age: 21, waitress / part-time DJ)

Cathy grew up in a household in which her parents spoke to each other in Japanese occasionally. Her father lived in Japan for two years as a youth missionary, but he met Cathy's mother in Vancouver. Her mother is originally from central Tokyo and moved to Canada to work. By the time Cathy was born her maternal grandmother had also moved to Vancouver so the Japanese grandmother used to come and babysit for Cathy and Amy. In the house, Japanese videos, DVDs and books were always present. Cathy also remembers that she used to spend a lot of time with her mother's Japanese friend and her daughter, who used to live in the same apartment since the two children were born in the same year. It is not Cathy's writing, but Amy's essay that describes the house language environment nicely:

> My parents both speak English and Japanese. My mother's second language is English and my father's is Japanese. My mother wanted to get better at English so growing up that was the language I grew up speaking and mostly hearing. Japanese would be spoken whenever my parents had things they didn't want the children to understand. My grandmother on my mother's side spoke Japanese but around her grandkids she stuck to her broken English.

Cathy's family moved many times and she was also sent to many different schools. Interestingly each school had a different ethnic dynamic, which gave her a different perception of herself. At preschool her family lived in Vancouver and on weekends she went to one of the Japanese language schools in Richmond. The city has always had a close tie with Asian communities as it was where many Japanese fishermen settled at the beginning of the twentieth century and now is populated by thousands of

Chinese immigrants, known as a new China town. Because of Richmond's history, the area always had a Japanese language school that still attracts new Japanese immigrants. Cathy studied there for one year but stopped because her classmates were much more advanced than she was, and it became harder to commute to the school after the family moved. Her family moved to New Westminster where the Asian population was insignificant at the time, so she sensed the difference:

> **NT**: Your mom said you can't speak any Japanese, but you think you kind of have some Japanese!
>
> **Cathy:** I think, yeah. I think she thought-I think-she still thinks that I, like, blocked it out when I was younger 'cause, um, 'cause when we were growing up in-in, uh, New West and Coquitlam, just because it was very Caucasian and, like, no Asians I remember I didn't want to be Japanese. I wanted to be, like, white.
>
> **NT:** Why's that?
>
> **Cathy**: I think it's because I wanted to fit in with everyone 'cause, like, being Asian was so different and so.
>
> **NT**: But before you didn't feel the same way when you were a kid?
>
> **Cathy:** When I was little-when I was very little, no. Didn't really cross my mind. I think once it-I started going to school and I realized, oh, I'm a little different.
>
> **NT:** That's around six and seven?
>
> **Cathy:** Yes. Yes. I started, yeah, realizing, oh my goodness, my mom looks different than, like, my other friends' parents. Yeah, I remember that, yeah.

Cathy has a good reason to notice the difference in her mother first while she tried to "pretend to be white" (in her own word). It is her facial appearance, which apparently helped her "pretend to be white" and she claims: "like, a lot of people wouldn't notice until they met my mom they're like oh you're, like, you're half Asian! (laughs)"

When she started high school, first she was sent to a private school where she was surrounded by many Filipinos, and later moved to a very ethnically diverse high school where she began to meet many students from different ethnic backgrounds, including mixed heritage persons:

> **Cathy**: I think I started realizing, oh, I am half Japanese.

NT: When did that happen? Or how did that happen?

Cathy: Yeah, I think, actually, when I went to high school 'cause that's when I, um, it was bigger. There was more ethnicities there.

NT: Didn't you say 90% is Filipino?

Cathy: Oh, that was when I moved to private school. Oh yeah, sorry. I went a big, big public high school. There was, like, 2100 people, so that's when I experienced oh, wow, like, there's different cultures than just Italian and European and that which I was used to and so, I was like, oh I am-I'm not full white. Like, I'm-I'm half Japanese!

At the private school she was introduced to K (Korean)-pop culture for the first time and later her interest shifted to Japanese pop (J-pop) culture. She claims that whereas her Filipino friends' influence was a major trigger that drew her to Asian culture, her mother's introduction to J-pop also led her to develop an interest in Japanese culture. She also realizes that she could understand the lyrics of J-pop better than with K-pop:

NT: So, when did you start leaning towards learning Japanese and showing interest in the culture?

Cathy: When did it happen? Ah, it's funny. Actually, it's when I moved to a private school in, uh, Vancouver and everyone there is, uh, like, ninety five percent Filipino, so. That school's a small school. Five hundred students. Um, and it's completely changed 'cause I-I went in grade eleven, actually, so I went to, um, like a big huge, uh, high school, public school, uh, North Hill until grade ten and then grade eleven my parents decided they wanted to switch my surroundings a little, so they put me into private school and then there that's when I was like oh, I was surrounded by, uh, like, I guess Filipinos and at that time Korean pop culture was really popular around everyone. **[…]**

NT: K-Pop was the influence of your Filipino friends. You shifted to Japanese J-Pop. How did that happen?

Cathy: How? Um, I think it's-it was.

NT: Your friends were still into K-Pop?

Cathy: They're still K-Pop, yeah. But I was-I-I just honestly was getting bored of K-Pop. There has to be something else that's new and then, so I-I-I, like, looked up?? some Japanese artists and it was very similar to K-Pop and I was like I like the-the lyrics and, like, the sound of their voices a little more

NT: You understood better?

Cathy: I could understand, yeah, a little more. (laughs)

NT: you felt closer?

> **Cathy**: Um, I feel culture-well, 'cause, actually yeah. During that time my mom was, like, really listening to J-Pop too, I remember that. So, maybe that's why! Yeah. She had, like, so many CD's and then she'd play it on TV, like, when we got home there'd be, like, music videos playing. (laughs)

According to Amy, Cathy used to dye her hair lighter, when she wished to "pretend to be white" and dyed her hair darker when she was surrounding by many Filipino friends at the second high school. On the other hand, when she visited Japan, her Caucasian looks apparently separated her from the people she met there, so she "didn't feel part of it 'cause I felt like I stood out so much, but I wanted to be part of it." Because; "I think probably my, like, the way I looked! (laughs) Yeah". Interestingly, even though her appearance stands out in Japan, culturally she feels that she can easily adjust herself in Japan because she eats the same food here in Canada as well.

Food is only one aspect of culture, but for Cathy it is a big part of her experience with Japanese culture. In effect, she describes her connection to Japanese culture as: "I think the only-the one thing I can really relate to is food! (laughs)" , which reflects on her extensive Japanese vocabulary (e.g., *soba, omochi, karei, udon, okazu,* all names of Japanese foods). The other moment she feels more Japanese is when she is with her mother and her Japanese grandmother:

> **NT**: Were there any particular events that made you feel "I am Japanese"?
>
> **Cathy**: Umm, may—mm, no-mm, not a major event, um, but, like, if I am hanging out with, like, like, my grandma or something I do feel like I'm Japanese 'cause. yeah she is Japanese.

As Amy's essay (at the beginning of this section) describes, the grandmother converses with her grandchildren mainly in English, but Cathy always listens enviously to her mother talking in Japanese with the Japanese grandmother. At the second interview, I asked who she views as a Japanese person: "Um, hmm, someone who's really Japanese, um, I don't know! Like, eve-even my grandma I wouldn't say she is because she's like really westernized." She perceives her mother and Japanese grandmother as Japanese, which reminds her of her Japanese connection. On the other hand, she doesn't think both her mother and

Japanese grandmother match with the putative description of Japanese people. Cathy believes that's why both of them decided to move to Canada.

4.6.2. Amy's Story (age: 19, waitress / part time student at a vocational school)

After meeting her mother and her sister, Cathy, I was surprised by Amy's height. In effect she worked as a fashion model for a short period of time between the ages of 16 and 17. As for her facial appearance, she is more like her mother, which used to bother her. Because people surrounding her talk about her facial appearance to point out only negative (in Amy's opinion) Asian features, such as smaller eyes, shorter eyelashes and flat nose. However, the irony is that Amy perceives that Cathy acts more like an Asian woman, inclining to follow her mother's values and tastes, while she views her younger brother, Joseph as western. Because of their close age and shared gender, Amy talks with her sister Cathy often and shares her similar experiences. In contrast, there is a six-year difference between Amy and Joseph, and he is the only boy. Thus, Amy believes that whereas Amy and Cathy could talk about their experiences of being a mixed heritage person, Joseph is figuring out who he is on his own.

Their close relationship does not mean that they share the same taste in many things. In fact, the reason Amy sees more Asian traits in her older sister is that Cathy is closer to their mother, while Amy feels she takes more from her father's character. On the other hand, Amy had more disagreements with her father than Cathy did. The father's religious background never came up during the two interviews with Cathy, but Amy mentioned it at both interviews and wrote about it in her essay. For her, the father's religion and the mother's Asian culture have similar conservative values and morals that she was strongly against when she was younger:

> My father is highly religious and raised all the kids up with his standards. My mother raised all of us with her conservative standards. I was rebellious and did not want people to tell me who to be when being raised. Perhaps that is why I tried to avoid my Japanese heritage, and tried to distance myself from my father's religion.

At the first interview, she said how she noticed that her parents tried to raise her in a certain way, which she perceived to be different from her friends:

NT: Do you think your parents were so different?

Amy: Yes. Yes. Because, my friends didn't have to go through a lot of the things that she (her mother) was telling tell me to do and I, um, well there's a lot of stereotypes too that you grow up with and you become more and more aware of and so, yeah, I think that even just friends pointing out certain things and-and I-I was around my friends a lot because I danced growing up, so I would see them doing things different ways and then-then I was doing them and I was supposed to be doing them, so.

At the age of 17, her parents sent her to their friends' place to do a homestay in their neighbourhood. Amy does not talk much about the details of this event but says it was "an eye opening experience" and "now I feel like I can differentiate between how I thought then and how I think now and I can actually see how things were". Apparently she went through many changes during her high school years. She even started going out with a different group of friends:

Growing up my friend group changed a lot and with them I did too. I have a tendency to change to fit in with whoever my peers are. Growing up I mostly hung out with Caucasian friends, but through the end of high school I started to hang out with more Asian friends. Perhaps this was another factor of me becoming more accepting of my heritage.

Like Cathy, through her Asian friends she was introduced to K-pop and J-pop. Her dance group also changed from her ballet friends to break dance friends, which included her many Asian friends. According to Amy, her biggest turning point is when she became interested in Japanese fashion. She used to wear coloured contact lenses and fake eyelashes, copying how K-pop and J-pop singers wear their makeup. Every time her mother goes back to Japan, Amy asks the mother to bring back her favourite Japanese fashion magazine, and if she goes there, she buys many Japanese clothes, which receive compliments from her Asian friends:

Amy: When I got back from Japan, um, I had so many new clothes' cause we went, um, shopping after New Year's, so I got a ton of new clothes! And, um, when I got back I had a lot of comments from my boyfriend about like, you're dressing really Asian and I was like I don't think I am. I'm dressing fashionable. And then like I said, the year after people started wearing the things that I was wearing. But at the time it was dubbed as Asian by my white friends and then-but then I would go to, you know, dance or whatever and then I'd have all my Korean friends and-and things be like oh, I love what you're wearing and so. Where'd you get that?

She believes she has a great expertise in Japanese fashion so that even though she cannot read any writing in Japanese magazines, she could tell whether it's a Japanese

magazine or not just by looking at how models are dressed up and wearing makeup. In her essay above she does not mention how she does this: "I have a tendency to change to fit in with whoever my peers are", but at the interview she mentions, "I dress how my friends dress." She selects her clothes according to whom she is going to hang out with on that day. Her admiration of Japanese fashion helped her establish a positive view of Japanese culture and even made her say that "my culture is ahead of you guys" as she has noticed a Japanese fashion trend moves to North America a year later. She does not use the first pronoun to refer to Japanese culture in general, but Japanese fashion is "my culture" to her.

Clearly during her high school time she went through many changes, but when it comes to Japanese language, she still avoids learning it. Throughout her middle school to high school, her choice of second language is always Spanish, although she did not particularly enjoy learning it. Upon reflection, she writes;

> I feel as if I really wish I could learn the language but I do not know why I do not have enough drive to actually attempt to learn the language. Maybe it is the fear of failing and not being able to learn the language from the heritage that makes up half of me. [……] I learnt Spanish from middle school through high school, even I started liking my Asian heritage.

At one time she was strongly resisting her conservative upbringing, but after her homestay experience she began to appreciate how she was raised. At the same time she is slowly discovering how much she has received her mother's influence unconsciously, even on the way she speaks English.

> **Amy:** Yeah, maybe-or I'll mess up a sentence or something and I think it just has to do with having grown up with someone who has English as a second language. I think so. Maybe I just am not the best at speaking! I-I do think that. And I have one more story, I'd also-I was working at a shoe store once and it was really interesting the person was able to tell that I was half Japanese and he said the reason why I knew you're half Japanese is 'cause you always say mm-hmm. I didn't know that that was a Japanese thing until he mentioned it and he said-he lived there for a few months and he said that everyone would always say mm-hmm. Just to greet. That's how I knew, like, you must have grown up with a mom who speaks Japanese, yeah.

Just like the other participants, except Joseph and Holly, whose Japanese mother spoke to them in Japanese, she bitterly regrets that she didn't learn Japanese while she

was younger: "I wish that I'd been more accepting of learning it." She reproaches herself for not showing an interest in learning Japanese language, but also blames her parents: "if they had just talked to me all in it time in it I would have been able to pick it up but they didn't." This complaint is also commonly shared among the participants. A majority of participants seem to find it difficult to learn a language at school, so they wish that the effort could have been made much earlier and put blame on their parents who didn't speak to them in Japanese.

4.7. Summary

I have attempted to present the life stories of ten participants in their own words with the hope that the reader can hear their voices as directly as I did. Their stories are "formally unanalyzed details" (Harris, 2006, p.41), but the aim was that through this process, I could create harmony with the participants and let go of my ego and my bias. I believe that it is a crucial process before proceeding to a more detailed and deeper analysis in the subsequent chapters. For the analysis, I will include four more participants with whom I had only one interview, thus I was not able to provide details about them in this chapter due to the limited contact with them. The personal profiles of Mari[21], Andy, Ana and Erica can be found in Appendix A: Participants' profiles.

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[21] Mari is the first participant I have interviewed through my personal connections. Her father introduced her to me. Very unfortunately her father passed away in January 2012 after making an initial contact for me earlier in 2011. In order not to disturb the family members, I didn't interview Andy, her younger brother until January 2014. Then, their mother warned me that their father's death is still very painful for them.

Chapter 5.

Culture of Japanese Mixed Heritage Youth 1: Sense of Ethnicity

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reconstructed the ten JMHY's life stories in their own words in order to present a holistic picture of who they are. The purpose was to provide for the reader a chance to hear the voice of JMHY directly, seemingly unanalyzed, although it has been mediated through my own perspective. In Chapters 5 and 6, reorganizing JMHY's voice under the analytical themes, I report on my analysis and interpretation of JMHY's representation of their culture to me. Most of the excerpts from the interviews and essays in these analysis chapters do not overlap with those presented in the previous chapter with a few exceptions. The excerpts in Chapters 5 and 6 are selected and organized for the purpose of analysis, whereas the excerpts in Chapter 4 are related to each participant's personal background. As discussed in Chapter 2, this study recognizes culture as an active process of making meaning (Street 1993), insisting that a better understanding of JMHY culture brings insight into the relationship between language and ethnicity and HL learner's communicative competence.

These two chapters include the interview data from four additional participants who are not mentioned in the previous chapter, as the one interview with them did not provide me enough information to rebuild their detailed life story. All together fourteen youths share their daily experiences, each representing idiosyncratic and unique life stories around language and ethnicity. Every story is different, even between two siblings who grew up in the same household. While each story is as unique as each individual personality, I could identify the consistent repetitions in their stories, as their echoed voices urged me to listen.

Chapter 5 provides a response to the first research question: How is the sense of ethnicity of JMHY shaped by culture in their everyday life, and what role does their HL, Japanese, play in this process? In this chapter, I mainly discuss the way JMHY strive to

make sense of their experiences and to establish personal meaning of their ethnicities. Chapter 6 is a response to the second research question: what are the implications of JMHY's lack of linguistic proficiency in Japanese in the post-secondary Japanese language class? I present JMHY culture from a language learner's perspective. With respect to the organization of Chapter 5, first I present their echoed voices in which JMHY try to describe their sense of ethnicity in relation to their daily language usage. The focus in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 is to offer an analysis of their claims: "I'm half Japanese" and "it's part of me." I have paid particular attention to the contexts where these claims are uttered to scrutinize the active process of making meaning. In sections 5.5 and 5.6, I discuss other factors, apart from their language usage, that are contributing to their sense of their ethnicity. Finally, in section 5.7, I briefly describe the effect of Japanese pop culture in relation to JMHY's sense of belongingness and ethnicity.

5.2. The Meaning of "I'm half Japanese"

A main goal of this study is to obtain a better understanding of who JMHY are through their daily language use. To achieve this goal, I have set up the first research question to focus on JMHY culture in which they actively engage in the process of making meaning. In examining this process, I do not assume that everybody shares the same definitions or categorizations of terms such as "Japanese people" or "Japanese culture." Instead, as Street (1993) suggests, in order to study culture one should consider "discovering how and what definitions are made, under what circumstances and for what reasons" (p.25). I pay full attention to the contexts where JMHY discuss their sense of ethnicity and their relation to the use of Japanese language. This approach allows me to go beyond the question of whether language and ethnicity are indexically related (May, 2000, 2005) or more discursively linked (Harris 2006; Rampton 1995), and thus I can analyze what Japanese language, ethnicity or heritage mean to JMHY and the language and ethnicity relations in their context. First I provide my analysis of the term "half Japanese" which JMHY use commonly and preferably.

None of the interview questions directly ask about JMHY's sense of ethnicity, but the discussion of their own, or other people's perceptions of their ethnicity came up on numerous occasions. The participants do not simply describe their ethnicity as either "I'm

Canadian" or "I'm Japanese." JMHY in this study are often aware of the fact that these answers do not satisfy their interlocutors so they often provide more details:

> **Cathy:** I would say if someone asked me though I would say I'm Canadian. 'Cause, 'cause usually if-if you're like oh, what are you? Oh, I'm Canadian. They'll be like, yeah, but, like, that's not what I meant! Well, what are you actually?
>
> **NT**: That's the question you get! What are you? What's your answer?
>
> **Cathy:** That's not what I mean, yeah, yeah.
>
> **NT:** so people keep asking you?
>
> **Cathy**: They keep asking until you tell them, like, okay, well my mom is this and my dad is, yeah. Then they get-yeah, oh yeah, that's what I meant.

They also change their own perception of ethnicity depending on with who they are and where they are:

> **Ana:** Ye-it's usually like I'm Can-Canadian. Um, but if I meet somebody with an Asian background I would probably actually say I'm-I'm Japanese-and usually they would-they would wonder because they're like you kind of look Asian. So, yeah. That's kind of a weird situation.

> **Holly:** […] If I'm in Japan they say what's your nationality I'd say, well, I'm from Canada. I don't know if I'm here and they say what's your ethnicity or nationality I'd say, well, oh, I'm half Japanese half English.

Holly is not the only person who uses the phrase "I'm half Japanese"; in effect many participants seem to feel more comfortable to describe themselves as "half Japanese." One of the main reasons is that they use this phrase to make a comparison to "Japanese people" and highlight the difference:

> **Cathy:** Um, I would never just say I'm Japanese. I always just say I'm like half Japanese, 'cause like if I said oh, Japanese people would be like oh, you're not 'cause I don't look like it.

> **Joseph:** I am Canadian. I'm-and I don't know whether I'm Japanese or not.
>
> **NT**: Are you 100% Canadian?
>
> **Joseph**: Uh, yes.

NT: You said you're proud to be Japanese in our last interview.

Joseph: Yeah. Again, but I still-I-like, I do have Japanese aspects of who I am. Facets of who I am that are Japanese for sure. Like, I also recognize that I'm not certainly as Japanese as Japanese people, right?

Cathy went to many different types of schools and each time she identified herself differently in accordance with her surroundings. While she was at a private school where the majority of the students were Caucasian, she felt her darker hair stood out. For her high school she went to the Filipino Catholic School, where she slowly began to embrace her Asian heritage because many others there were Asian. Therefore, two years later when she changed her high school to a more ethnically diverse environment, she felt, "I was like, oh I am-I'm not full white. Like, I'm-I'm half Japanese! " The physical appearance of JMHY certainly plays a key role in the way they identify themselves ethnically, which I will discuss later. However, it seems that their consciousness of their lack of Japanese language ability weighs more heavily when they consider their ethnicity in contrast to the "Japanese people" whose parents are both Japanese:

NT: In Japan you felt that you stood out and didn't belong?

Alex: Yeah, uh, yeah I don't fit in there because I can't speak Japanese, so that's the main issue.

Ikuko: Yeah, um, I don't-'cause, uh, I'd rather be, like, like, part of the Asian community, I guess. So, I just-I just say, like, yeah. I'm-I'm half Chinese and half Japanese. So, I'm, like, Asian. But in reality, since I was born here and I don't really speak any (Asian) language, I technically am just, like, Canadian.

In the following interview excerpts Ikuko, Cathy, and Sachi are talking about their school experiences. They use different terms to describe "Japanese people," from whom they distinguish themselves. It appears that the JMHY do not only use these terms to point out "Japanese people" whose parents are both Japanese, but also to highlight that "Japanese people" are those who can speak Japanese:

Ikuko: Yeah, so, we-in my high school there was only, like, me and that other, like, half girl that was my friend and these two boys are Japanese in our grade and they were the only-we were the only, like, they were the only two, like, real Japanese people in my grade.

NT: Real Japanese people? Do they speak English or Japanese?

Ikuko: Yeah, they can actually, like, talk to each other in Japanese.

Sachi: Yeah, I think so. I believe. Um, although there probably was some sort of, you know, exercises involved. I remembered, um, the social elements of that the most. Um, the kids were all of Japanese background. Like, pure Japanese. Many of them were fluent in Japanese.

Cathy: Mmm, yeah. Yeah, my, um, in, uh, preschool my mom sent me to Japanese school for a year and I remember that I was-I was very different because everyone in Japanese school was full Japanese and they could speak it very well, cause they had all grown up with Japanese parents and then I was, like, struggling, I guess.

It could be said that the source of their feeling of being “half” stems from the contrast to “Japanese people” whom they consider to be Japanese language speakers. They see more differences than similarities with “Japanese people”, because, for the JMHY, their Japanese language level is not as high as they wish it to be. In Palmer’s (2007) study where he investigates the identity formation of two different groups of Korean Americans – Korean born Korean-Americans (KBKA) and American born Korean-Americans (ABAK) – he presents a similar phenomenon when KBAK contrast themselves with ABAK. Instead of noticing the similarities or commonalities shared between the two groups, KBAK tend to highlight the differences when they feel they cannot assimilate to American society as much as ABAK do. While aspiring for recognition as Americans, they begin to form “affinity identity” (Gee, 2004) only among KBAK students by accentuating their strong ties to Korean heritage.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2008), in postmodern and multicultural societies people tend to understand one’s identity by “recognizing and highlighting one’s difference in relation to others” (p.145). For the JMHY, the most significant difference they recognize is their level of Japanese language proficiency, which separates them from “Japanese people.” In other words, whether they speak Japanese or not becomes “a contingent marker of identity” as a result of “inevitably, an essentialized and reified view of language-identity” (May, 2000, p.373). Japanese language is not an endangered language, but for the JMHY in terms of their sense of ethnicity, Japanese language shares a sense of vulnerability, as do the minority languages referred to in May (2000, 2005).

However, when it comes to Japanese culture or Japanese language itself, regardless of their level of Japanese language proficiency, the JMHY exhibit the opposite reaction. While Japanese culture or language is the topic of conversation, they often refer to these elements as "part of my heritage" or "part of me":

> **NT**: But do you have a different feeling when you go to a Japanese class?
>
> **Alex**: Oh yeah. I guess so. I guess I'm a little bit more interested. 'Cause it's more part of my heritage than some of the other languages.

> **NT**: Do you ever wish you could speak or read Japanese better?
>
> **Jess:** Uh, yeah. I guess I wouldn't mind. It's my-it's part of my culture. So, I'd like to learn it more.

If it was not "part of me," they refer to Japanese language as "my culture" or "my heritage." While "Japanese people" are referred to as "they" or "them," the JMHY in the study preferred to view "Japanese culture" as "part of their own culture" claiming their connection to it, instead of distancing themselves from it. It is paradoxical that the JMHY participants feel the Japanese language itself is part of their culture but the people who speak it are people from whom they distinguish themselves. It seems to me that their claim "I'm half Japanese" indicates their acknowledgement of the connection to Japanese language and heritage, regardless of their level of HL. Then, if Japanese heritage is only "part" of them, what about the other parts? In the case of Alex and Ikuko, they include their Chinese culture, but for most of the JMHY in this study, the other parts mainly consist of their connection to Canadian or Western culture as opposed to an Asian one. The partial connections to the different cultures do not exist in absence of the other, but coexist closely. Thus, it is hard for such participants to choose one ethnicity or the other. This can be seen in the first interview excerpt below, which shows how Jess struggles to separate his Japanese connection from his Canadian one. As soon as he claims he is Japanese, in the same breath he adds his claim to be Canadian. Stacy and Erica also indicate their difficulty in choosing between "I'm Japanese" and "I'm Canadian":

> **NT**: Is there anything in particular that makes you feel that you're Canadian or the other way I'm Japanese?
>
> **Jess**: I would say I'm definitely Canadian but I have a Japanese background.

NT: What kind of occasion do you feel that you are Japanese?

Jess: When I'm with my dad. 'Cause he's so Japanese! So, but, um, everything I do pretty much is Canadian.

NT: When you're with your dad and working?

Jess: Just, like, around my dad I feel more Japanese because he's Japanese. So, if we went out somewhere, you know, we're going to go somewhere where it's more Japanese maybe, like, to a Japanese restaurant or a Japanese market or something like that 'cause he's Japanese, right? He wants to keep his culture, so he wants to probably go somewhere Japanese.

NT: When you are with your dad in a public place and he behaves like a Japanese man?

Jess: I don't-I don't feel more Japanese. I just realize, like, oh, like, it's-it's hard to explain. Like, I still feel Canadian, but I know I'm Japanese when I'm with my dad.

Stacy: I remember growing up my mom said, oh, when you turn nineteen you're gonna have to pick. You can't be a dual citizen anymore. You're gonna have to pick which one! I always had trouble being like, oh, why do I have to pick! I like being both! But, um, in certain things I felt very Canadian and in other things I felt very proud to be Japanese and maybe, like, when the-when things suited me right, like, oh well, yes 'cause I'm Japanese. Or, oh yeah, it's because I'm Canadian.

Erica: Mm-hmm. Mm, I don't think I'm completely Canadian or completely Japanese. Like, I'm a half and a half you know? Like, it's hard to, like, totally, like, label yourself as like either Canadian or Japanese. I don't think it's really possible.

Participants' claim of being half Japanese suggests that the JMHY shift between unfixed ethnicities (Bhabha, 1993). At the very moment they recognize their Japanese half, their other half also stands side by side. It also could be said that their acknowledgement of inseparable halves is the JMHY's form of "new ethnicities" resulting from not only mixing of old and new (Harris, 2006) but also "the product of several interlocking histories and cultures" (Hall, 1992, p.310). With respect to JMHY's new ethnicities, given Hall's strong conviction to maintain an anti-essentialist gaze, the indexical link between language and ethnicity stemming from an essentialized view of culture cannot account for JMHY's "culture of hybridity." In effect, the interview excerpt below shows how gaining a Japanese proficiency can shape JMHY's sense of ethnicity. Stacy often mentions the embarrassment in her inability to speak Japanese and the

hesitation to claim "I'm Japanese." When I asked her whether she would feel more Japanese if she became fluent in Japanese, her answer was as follows:

> **Stacy**: Yeah, 'cause I-I think maybe, like, personality-wise I have a lot of my mom in me and I-I'm very outspoken sometimes and I feel like that will never go away. Like, it's not like okay, first I'll learn a language and then I'll be more, you know, reserved and, you know, more Japanese and that would never happen. I think at the most if I learn the language I will be, like, a very Canadianized Japanese person, or a very Japanese-Canadian person. But, I don't think I would fully become-'cause I just-I-I don't know. I guess it's kind of a stereotype. I don't know.

With respect to the level of Japanese language proficiency, JMHY participants who were particularly conscious of their deficiency in Japanese language ability tended to view their halfness as an unfulfilled part. In this regard, their sense of being half is strongly associated with their feelings of something being "lost" or "incompleteness" in their ethnicity, which I will discuss in more detail later in this section. On the other hand, as people could see a glass either half empty or half full, their sense of being half can be interpreted as half full. In other words, their sense of being "half Japanese" does not mean that JMHY are supposed to have half of what "Japanese people" have. If this concept is difficult to comprehend, it is possible to consider the sense of being "double," which means everything is actually two sets of 100 %. In the following interview excerpt Holly, who claims to be an intermediate speaker and who claims she has two different mindsets, explains the sense of being half, but double:

> **Holly**: I see myself very half. It's almost like-but then nothing-there's not very much about me that's, like, half. Everything is, like, double. I have like a full Japanese-like, I don't wanna say a personality but a Japanese me where I'm called Kaori, I speak Japanese, I feel Japanese culture, mannerisms. I fit right into that. I feel like that's natural. But then when I'm looking at this side I'm Holly, you know, I'm speaking English, I'm whatever and, like, my mannerisms and such and the culture that I see is natural and normal and stuff, so I'm totally different.

To sum up, the phrase "I'm half Japanese" is commonly used by JMHY in the study, first of all, because they make a comparison to "Japanese people," whom they often perceive to be Japanese language speakers. While they firmly differentiate themselves from "Japanese people," the JMHY regard Japanese culture and language as "part of them" even if they do not fully practice them. Their feeling of being half is the recognition of their connection to Japanese heritage and the acknowledgement of the coexistence of

the other half at the very same time. Therefore, they cannot separate their Japanese connection from their Canadian one. When the JMHY felt their Japanese half to be fulfilled, their halfness was converted to a sense of being "double" instead.

JMHY participants' paradoxical claim is similar to that of Harris' (2006) Blackhill youth who identify their HL as "my culture" or "my language," while they are dissatisfied with their HL level. Harris asserts that the youths articulate their identity positions through "everyday practices of subcommunities" (p.118) such as diaspora community and religious groups:

> It is in the operations of these and other communities of practices that 'new ethnicities' and 'culture of hybridity' can be glimpsed. The Blackhill youth ethnicities develop through their fluid, continuous and nuanced participation in the practices of a series of highly specific and interwoven social, cultural and ethnic communities both local and globally diasporic.
> (pp. 146-147)

Unlike the British youths in Baumann (1996), Harris (2006) and Rampton's (1995) studies, the population of JMHY that I studied is smaller and their Japanese extended family members normally do not live in the same area. Often a community HL school or supplementary HL school is regarded as a safe spot for students to negotiate their ethnic identity (Blackledge & Creese, 2008; Creese, et.al, 2006; Doerr & Lee, 2010; Oriyama, 2010; Otcu & College, 2010; Yamasaki, 2010), but none of the JMHY in this study reported that they managed to establish a sense of belonging to their HL school or stayed long enough to experience it. This finding, in effect, likely explains why they had introduced me to their siblings when I was searching for more participants, and why they impressed me with their close sibling relationship. JMHY's siblings in this study are often the most important and sometimes the only member of their community with respect to their sense of ethnicity, as even their parents cannot share their "halfness" (Nakazawa, 2003).

5.3. Assuring Japanese Heritage

Above I have discussed that JMHY's claim of being "half Japanese" highlights a difference from "Japanese people" and is associated with a sense of incompleteness because of their awareness of a lack of Japanese proficiency, which supports May's claim

of language as "a contingent marker of identity" (May, 2000, p.373). At the very same time JMHY's sense of halfness suggests their acknowledgement of the inseparable other half and thus they exhibit a "culture of hybridity" with regards to their sense of ethnicity. Interestingly though, none of the participants use the phrase "I'm half Canadian" to point out a feeling of incompleteness. It appears that JMHY's sense of being Japanese is more vulnerable than their sense of being Canadian and as a result they feel a need to assure their connection to Japanese heritage. In this study I have identified several ways that the JMHY thrive to assert or are assured of their connection to their Japanese heritage, which I will discuss in the following subsections.

5.3.1. Connecting to Japanese Heritage Through a Japanese Parent and Tradition

In section 5.2, I discussed how JMHY's sense of being half could be accentuated when they make a comparison of themselves to "Japanese people." However, apparently they demonstrate a different reaction to the presence of a particular "Japanese person": their Japanese parent who is often regarded as key factor for maintaining HL (Kondo, 1998).

Jess (quoted above already), Cathy and Amy claim that they feel more Japanese when they are with their Japanese parent:

> **NT**: What kind of occasion do you feel that you are Japanese?
>
> **Jess**: When I'm with my dad. 'Cause he's so Japanese! So, but, um, everything I do pretty much is Canadian.
>
> **Cathy**: I think, yeah, no when I'm with my mom I do feel more Japanese just because, like, I don't look so Japanese. Like, some people can tell right away, oh, you're half. Others are like, they don't know. I look really white! And so, like, if I'm with her, actually, I feel more Japanese.
>
> **Amy**: I think when I went around with my dad it was different than when I just went with my mom. One year me and my mom just went together and so that was a different experience 'cause when my dad's walking around this big six foot guy who's you know, blue eyes, "gaijin", everyone's kind of-you know, kind of looking at him.

Cathy also mentions she feels the same way when she spends time with her Japanese grandmother who lives in Canada, saying: "because grandma acts like a Japanese." I was puzzled by their responses simply because I never had that consciousness that my Japanese roots came from my parents. However, for JMHY who live outside of Japan, surrounded by all the different cultures in Canada, their Japanese parent inevitably becomes a crucial source of their connection to Japanese heritage. It means also that losing such a source disrupts their heritage connection, which I found in Andy's case:

> **NT**: So did you feel totally a foreigner in Japan?
>
> **Andy**: Actually, not, I felt more Japanese in Japan, surrounded by my dad's family members.
>
> **NT**: Really?
>
> **Andy**: Yeah, here I almost forget I'm Japanese, since my father passed away.

Andy cannot feel the presence of his father in his day-to-day life any more due to the father's sudden death, and sometimes he forgets he has a Japanese connection. Nevertheless, going to Japan with his father's ashes and meeting his father's relatives, reminded him of his Japanese connection.

While some JMHY clearly distinguish themselves from "Japanese people" who are speakers of Japanese in their eyes, the presence of their Japanese parent seems to assert for JMHY participants their origin or roots, where they came from (Hall, 1996). Recognizing the impact of globalization, in his notion of new ethnicities Hall emphasizes the future perspective, "what we might become" more than the present and past ones, "who we are" or "where we came from." With regard to the whole picture of JMHY's ethnicity, combining a half and a half, Hall's claim strongly supports the direction that these JMHY seem to be heading to because the direction cannot be "the so-called return to roots, but a coming-to–terms with our routes" (Hall, 1996, p.4). However, JMHY who have to assert their Japanese heritage, so as to balance their sense of being half, are inclined to "return to roots." It appears to me that JMHY participants with their feeling of ethnicity as reflecting being somewhat half empty are not secure enough to create new Japanese

ethnicities. Hall's (1989) earlier concept of ethnicity might better fit in the case of JMHY's sense of halfness, as he claims:

> They need to honor the hidden histories from which they come. They need to understand the languages, which they've been not taught to speak. They need to understand and revalue the traditions and inheritance of cultural expression and creativity. And in the sense, the past is not only a position from which to speak, but it is also an absolutely necessary resource in what one has to say. (p.24)

JMHY's tendency to cling to their roots for their assertion of a Japanese connection also echoes the phenomenon Baumann (1996) identifies in his Southallian informants. He explains that "the meaning of culture is not nearly as negotiable as the meaning of community" (Baumann, 1996 p.196) as Southallians tend to use the word "culture" to describe "the reified and stable heritage" (p.196). Drawing on Baumann's two cultural discourses, it could be said that with respect to JMHY's sense of being half Japanese, they are more inclined to be engaged in the essentialized view of culture. More importantly, to rely on the essentialized view of culture is merely a part of the culture making process, even when only JMHY's Japanese connection is concerned. Next I discuss how JMHY's engagement with the essentialized view of culture to "return to roots" is not a one-way direction.

5.3.2. Validation of a Past and a New Interpretation

In this study I have also noticed that another way the JMHY pursue an essentialized view of culture is to maintain an intact Japanese heritage. For example, Ikuko and Stacy cannot accept an English influenced pronunciation of Japanese words to which they personally feel attached, while neither of them is confident in their Japanese language proficiency. Ikuko does not feel like herself when she is called by the English accented version of her Japanese name. Likewise, Stacy ridicules people who pronounce the name of Japanese dishes with an English accent, because she has a strong pride in her expertise in Japanese food so that she feels that the English accented names do not carry the same connotation (or taste). Ikuko and Stacy's effort to keep the Japanese language intact implies their provision to "the revival of local cultural identities" (Giddens, 2000, p. 13), in spite of the significant physical distance from the original place. In effect, numerous researchers (e.g., Suzuki, 2010; Taketomi, 2010; Yamasaki, 2010) who studied

Japanese diaspora report that sometimes "old tradition" is maintained by people who left Japan or by their descendants. Nevertheless, there is an interesting twist to their effort to connect to Japanese tradition. Taketomi's study (2010) mentions one anecdote where one young Japanese American was praised by a cabdriver in Japan for his "traditional" Japanese mannerisms, perceived to be rare behaviour of young Japanese there, and he was told he is "more Japanese than Japanese" (Taketomi, 2010, p.235). It appears that what is perceived as "intact culture" to Japanese diaspora could be regarded as a vanished tradition in their native land.

Sometimes JMHY's way to reach out to tradition appears in an unexpected way. Jess, who shows very little interest in his Japanese heritage, has all four tattoos in Kanji. Cathy's first tattoo on her left shoulder is a picture of the most famous Japanese origami figure: a crane. Hiramoto (2014), who studies Japanese Hawaiian's tattoos, reports that many Japanese Hawaiians have tattoos in Japanese language, sometimes their Japanese name in Kanji, while they do not possess any proficiency. According to her, their "inked nostalgia" has a value in the immigrant community that draws on Japaneseness without sharing native Japanese values (Hiramoto, 2014, p.14). Given the fact that the notion of a tattoo is rendered differently in Japan (generally people in Japan are inclined to associate tattoo with Yakuza, a Japanese gang group, even though the view of younger generations may differ from that of older generations), it is very understandable that Jess had a big dispute with his Japanese father over his tattoo. Nevertheless Jess's sister Stacy says "it was the most Japanese thing my brother did." While for the JMHY, the tattoo with a Japanese traditional figure is to assure their Japanese connection, it merely suggests their own interpretation of Japanese traditional culture, which is not necessarily shared with people in Japan or their parents.

JMHY who have a rather fragile connection to Japanese heritage because of their sense of being half tend to rely on a rather essentialized view of culture to assert a sense of Japaneseness. Nevertheless, as seen with some participants (i.e. Ikuko, Stacy, Jess and Christy) the very action to maintain tradition represents a re-interpretation of "tradition" in their own right and context, thus reflecting their own meaning making (Street, 1993). Drawing on Baumann's two cultural discourses notion, here we can see the evidence that the process of culture making involves essentialist rhetoric to reify Japanese traditional

culture in JMHY's view while they are actively engaged in establishing their sense of ethnicity:

> Yet cultures, even in their most individualized practices, result also from validation of a past. Culture-making is not an *ex tempore* improvisation, but a project of social continuity placed with, and contending with, moments of social change. They (Southallians) reify cultures while at the same time making culture. (Baumman, 1996, p.31)

So far I have looked at JMHY's efforts to connect to roots so as to assert Japanese heritage. However, next I will show how they use other sources to assert their Japanese connection.

5.3.3. Connecting to Japanese Heritage Through Personal Interests

As JMHY grow older, just like any other youth, they develop their own personal interests in their lives. Sometimes that personal interest brings a new perspective on Japanese culture or their connection to Japanese heritage. Amy's interest in Japanese fashion is a good example of such a case. Amy once had a strong abhorrence towards her upbringing and she explained this was a result of her father's religious belief and her mother's Japanese values. Thus, she did not wish to associate with any connections to Japanese culture when she was younger. The aversion has slowly faded away, as her interest in Japanese fashion grew important while she escaped from the conservative religious household, living with a different family:

> **Amy**: But, um, and I got really involved with fashion when I was, you know, 16-17, and so, that's when I started to, I think appreciate the culture more and I started getting "Vivi" one of my favourite magazines so I would always get my mom to get them. Um, I love-I love it, so I fell in love with just how people dress there and the stores there and that was-yeah, that was a huge turning point I think in my eyes.

Japanese fashion was a key trigger for Amy to connect with her Japanese heritage as well as a big part of what Japanese culture is to her, which she refers to as "my culture." The following excerpt (where Amy talks about how Cathy used to dress) shows that her expertise in Japanese fashion is equated to the knowledge of Japanese culture for her:

> **Amy**: Mm-hmm. She (Cathy) had-she was dying her hair more blonde and she, um, she'd wear, you know, just-in my opinion, very Caucasian outfits and things like typical high school girls would wear and then when she went, um, when she changed schools I was more aware of Japanese culture at the time too. So then I was, like, oh well, you know, she's like starting to dress more like what my magazines look like and, um, and yeah, her hair she dyed it darker and then-so it was.

In Amy's case, the positive link to Japanese fashion motivates her to expand the meaning of "my culture" to include Japanese fashion. In her meaning making process (Street, 1993), instead of reinterpreting what Japanese fashion is, Amy changed her perspectives on Japanese culture and termed Japanese fashion "my culture."

For Sachi, one of her interests is music. Sachi plays music semi-professionally and participates in gigs. I went to one of her gigs where she played a few Japanese songs with a Japanese Canadian[22] man. After the gig she told me that she feels different when she plays a Japanese song, even though she cannot sing in Japanese. Sachi does not describe Japanese music as "my culture," in the same way Amy equates Japanese fashion to Japanese culture. Nevertheless both Sachi playing Japanese songs and Amy wearing Japanese clothing are actions where they feel their Japanese connection. As an analytical framework Scollon and Scollon (2012) take up Street's (1993) theory of "culture as a verb" to elucidate what should be examined through this approach: "What we mean when we say "culture as a verb" is that culture is not something that you think or possess or live inside of. It is something that you do" (Scollon & Scollon, 2012, p.5). Amy and Sachi's cases remind us that an active meaning making process does not only stimulate people to interpret their experience but also more importantly involves actual experiences. Thus, the meaning making process cannot be completed, and more precisely cannot begin, without actual experiences, because actual experiences stimulate the meaning making process: "Meaning is not about definition, it is about simulations of experience" (Gee, 2004, p.51). By wearing Japanese clothes, or playing Japanese songs, Amy and Sachi feel that they "do" Japanese culture and learn and establish the meaning of "Japanese culture" to them. Their experiences through their personal interests provide

[22] Sachi's band mate, a Japanese Canadian man, is fluent in Japanese so that he sings in Japanese. As far as his Japanese language proficiency is concerned, he is a "Japanese person" to Sachi, but she mentioned that their same music interest bands them together. Sachi also told me that she belongs to more than one music band and with the other band she normally does not play Japanese songs.

them not only with a chance to create a positive link with Japanese culture, but also with a situated learning opportunity to define what Japanese culture is to them. Another sample of JMHY's situated learning can be found in the way they relate to Japanese food and cuisine.

Reading through Chapter 4, the readers might have noticed that many JMHY mention their familiarity with, even extensive knowledge of, Japanese cuisine. Stacy, whose father is a sushi chef, demonstrates not only her knowledge of Japanese cuisine, but also insists on her ability to distinguish authentic Japanese cuisine. For Rina, Japanese food is her motivation to learn the language and it becomes her learning tool as she tries to learn from the Japanese food packages she sees at home or at Japanese shops:

> **Rina:** Umm, I would try-I'd try my best to read Japanese. Like, when I went to Fujiya I'd just skip out on the-on the English labels and I'd try to read the Japanese and eventually I'd be like, "Don't understand that! Don't understand that! Don't understand that! I think I-yeah, that's a type of fish. I don't understand that! That's like a type of miso paste and that-that-don't know anything else." Then I'd eventually look over, which is what I try to do usually

Rina says that in spite of her limited grammatical knowledge of Japanese, she knows enough of the names of Japanese food and cooking methods that she can figure out what kind of Japanese dishes people (often her mother) are talking about. Her enthusiasm about Japanese food and her eagerness to gain knowledge of it locates her in "situated learning". In Rina's case she mainly learns by herself rather than by sharing a mutual interest with other community members, but her extensive vocabulary in Japanese food is closely related to her actual experience. JMHY's situational learning experience will be discussed further in chapter 6 where their intercultural competence and multicompetence are examined.

Living in Canada and speaking English daily, it appears that JMHY's sense of being "half Japanese" is not as secure as their other half. Thus, JMHY exhibit several ways to assert their connection to Japanese heritage. Examining the way they do this, it is evident that they practice both essential cultural discourse and processual discourse to engage their active meaning making process. On the one hand, JMHY participants choose to reconnect to their roots (Japanese parent) or tradition to feel reassured of their

Japanese connection. In other words, in JMHY participants' effort to follow Japanese tradition, they actually reinterpret the tradition in their own context, which is not merely a copy of the tradition. On the other hand, through their personal interest, participants gain a situated learning experience and become actively engaged in a meaning making process. Therefore, the definition of the term "Japanese culture" used by JMHY changes from one context to another, but these are all part of their process of culture making as well as an active process of making meaning (Street, 1993).

5.4. Sense of Loss or Incompleteness

For this linguistic ethnographic study that embraces both essentialist and anti-essentialist approaches, identifying a cause and effect relation between language and ethnicity is not a focus. Nevertheless, my analysis of the data suggests that for JMHY participants, an advanced level of Japanese language proficiency does not equate to a strong sense of Japanese ethnicity. The analysis of their life stories suggests that their sense of loss or incompleteness plays a more crucial role in their relationship to their ethnicity. All participants, except Joseph who claims to be an advanced speaker, demonstrate a desire to obtain Japanese language ability. Joseph's proficiency is advanced, so naturally he does not have a strong motive to further improve his Japanese. However, he is also the only one who does not have a particular desire to pass on his Japanese heritage to his offspring and now he is not speaking Japanese to his daughter, despite his ability to do so. On the other hand, Alex and Ikuko, particularly Ikuko, show a strong desire to speak Japanese while they have the least exposure to Japanese culture and language. Alex writes in his essay the reason he has less exposure to Japanese culture:

> Due to a financial disagreement, my family cut off contact with my mother's side of the family when I was very young. I don't remember much about my mother's family and I think this is one reason I lost a lot of the Japanese exposure in my early life.

On the one hand, Joseph went to Japan every summer until adolescence and he communicated in Japanese with his extended family members there, but he cares remarkably little about his Japanese heritage. On the other hand, Alex and Ikuko do not have any Japanese family members to communicate with in Japanese, including their own

mother, whose dominant language is English. While Joseph displays very little interest in Japanese culture, he expresses his tendency to gravitate to his British side, admitting that he has never been to England, and even saying, "I think I have this idealized version in my head of what it's like." Here he talks about his imbalanced interest in both of his heritages:

> **Joseph**: No. And so I-I love watching British shows and reading British literature or, like, um, like if I meet someone British I'm interested to hear where they're from or what their area is like and, um, so things like that I-I would-so, I'm a lot more interested in my English side than my Japanese side. But the thing is I know a lot more about Japanese culture or what Japan is like than I know what England is like

Ikuko also demonstrates a very imbalanced view regarding her two different parents' ethnic backgrounds. In her essay, she self-reflected in the first interview as she tries to explain how her imbalanced view came about:

> Even though I am equally Chinese and Japanese, I don't feel the same affection toward my Chinese heritage as my Japanese heritage. This probably would have been a different case if my father's parents had been around to influence me as a child. But as I mentioned earlier, they were not around to watch me grow up, so I didn't have that strong influence of an older and more traditional generation. I realize that this same story can be used to argue against why I'm so interested in my Japanese heritage, but it's not exactly the same. The difference is that I'm still in touch with my Chinese family. I saw my Chinese side of the family a lot when I was growing up and even more now that I'm living with my uncle. I can look at my Chinese family and understand that this is who I am and where I come from. But I never interact with my Japanese family. To this day, I wouldn't recognize any one of my Japanese relatives even if I passed them on the street. So I see my Japanese heritage as a part of myself that I lost and never got a chance to know when I was growing up.

Japanese for Joseph and Chinese for Ikuko are the cultures to which they feel they have sufficient exposure, so that they did not develop a strong sense of loss or incompleteness. In contrast, the British connection, for Joseph, is something he feels more distanced from, since he does not have an actual experience of being there or surrounded by his English family members regularly. That is precisely how Ikuko views her lost family connection with her Japanese mother's family members. Joseph's and Ikuko's cases suggest that a sense of absence, more than a level of HL proficiency, can prompt some JMHY in this study to nurture a stronger tie to the heritage culture.

While some previous quantitative studies (e.g., Chinen & Tucker, 2008; Noro, 2009) point to a correlation between the level of HL and ethnicity, Oriyama (2010) suggests that the level of Japanese proficiency does not always correspond to the degree of positive attitude towards Japanese heritage. She suggests that one possible reason is that since those who are fluent in Japanese have a deeper knowledge of Japanese culture, they make a better judge of where they belong. I concur with her, but I would add that the sense of loss or incompleteness, which results from the limited exposure to heritage culture, may drive some HL learners to forge a stronger connection to their missing heritage culture.

Jess and Stacy exhibit a significant difference in the degree of their interest in Japanese culture and language. Additionally, one of the most obvious differences between them is their appearance. As Jess claims, most of the time people cannot see his Caucasian features and perceive him as Asian. Therefore, for Jess, his missing part might be a Caucasian appearance, which led him to distance himself from his Japanese heritage. It is also possible that his experience of being teased by his peers, regarding his father's English, sways the way Jess views Japanese people. This assumption cannot be confirmed as Jess did not discuss many details of these negative experiences.

JMHY participants' sense of loss can be seen to hinge on the level of cultural exposure they experience in their life and is swayed by how fulfilled they feel. Even though not all fourteen participants explicitly exhibit a sense of loss or incompleteness, it is evident that those who indicate a desperate desire to speak Japanese also display a rather painful sense of loss or incompleteness. Next I will discuss how their sense of loss or incompleteness plays out in their view of ethnicity in relation to their daily language usage.

5.4.1. Feeling a Sense of Loss with Japanese Language Ability

Among fourteen participants, I felt that Ikuko, Stacy, Sachi and Rina expressed the most desperate desire to obtain Japanese language ability. At the very same time, they emotionally express their sense of loss or incompleteness with respect to their lack of Japanese language proficiency. In effect, I found it even painful to hear their comments on being lost or not complete. The striking part is when they reveal a hopeless feeling of not being accepted by "Japanese people." In Section 5.2, I have discussed their self-

consciousness of not being able to speak Japanese, heightening their sense of emptiness, but here the following quotes present more concrete evidence of that feeling. Ikuko writes about the reason for her continuous effort to keep her Japanese ability she has gained through the four intensive courses at her university:

> But I know that if I don't keep practicing, I will forget everything I have learned, so I'm trying to be persistent. I finally feel like I can be accepted as a Japanese person, but I can still feel and see the distance between actual Japanese person and myself. My motivation to learn Japanese comes from my deep-rooted desire to close this distance.

Stacy also expresses her hope to be accepted by speaking Japanese in the interview:

> **Stacy**: I think so, maybe. I think maybe I feel more comfortable kind of going into that culture. Like, I-if I don't speak Japanese I don't fully feel accepted in that culture by, like, my standards or by theirs. Like, I don't feel, like, I belong. But if I spoke Japanese fluently I would feel more like well, I can communicate with them and more of a part of it.

Sachi and Rina grew up in a tight-knit family unit and thus it is evident that their sense of loss does not only stem from the loss of HL, but also from the loss of family contact. Sachi's essay starts with, "the subject of language is, for me, very much a subject of *loss* and *recovery"* and the following interview excerpt shows how she tries to retrieve her sense of incompleteness:

> **Sachi**: I started to tune into the fact that, um, um, I was missing something. So, I think there was that. Um, I also think part of it had to do with being identified by others as a Japanese all the time. I think on some level I felt the need to legitimize myself by speaking Japanese.

During the first interview Sachi told me that she was even told this by her mother:

> **Sachi:** Now that I mention it the other day I said to my mother I want to learn Nihongo and she said if you learn Nihongo you're-I'm sure your Obachan will accept you, which implies that she doesn't accept me on some level.

Sachi speaks to me very emotionally about the letter that her Japanese grandmother had somebody translate into English in order for Sachi to understand it. When she thinks about her offspring, it is distressing for her to imagine, but admittedly she says: "I don't speak it currently. That's unfortunate. That's where the loss occurred. The moment I did not learn Japanese is the same moment that I could not pass it on." Similarly, Rina also says that the

main reason she stays in Japan is "to make up for lost time." She enjoys being with her maternal family members and in fact speaking to them in Japanese. Now with her Japanese language ability, she feels: "it made me feel more close to my Japanese heritage, getting close to my Japanese side."

Given the tight link between sense of loss or incompleteness and the desire of JMHY to obtain Japanese language ability, I uphold the indexical link between language and ethnicity as suggested in May (2000, 2005) and Fishman (1991) but without an actual ability to speak that language. In the case of JMHY participants, the desire to learn the language is inspired by their wish to fill their loss or rebuild their missing part. In other words, the indexical link between language and ethnicity is tightened when the historical continuities of HL and HL speakers are about to be lost. The findings of this study give rise to empirical evidence that endorses May's claim (2000): "to say that language is not an inevitable feature of identity is not the same as saying it is unimportant" (p.373). In effect, language is extremely important because May (2005) also states: "after all, being unable to speak a particular language places immediate restrictions on one's ability to communicate and by extension identity" (p.331). Here it becomes obvious and inevitable to think that language cannot be taken at face value as a linguistic code or even as a communication tool. Because it is not only a language you speak that makes you who you are, but also language that you cannot speak inescapably influences your sense of who you are. The influential American anthropologist Edward Sapir (2003) confirmed that "language, race and culture are not necessary correlated" (p.32), but also claimed:

> I am convinced that it is futile to look in linguistic structure for differences corresponding to the temperamental variations which are supposed to be correlated with race. In this connection it is well to remember that the emotional aspect of our psychic life is but meagrely expressed in the build of language. (Sapir, 2003, p.33)

In the case of the JMHY in this study, the absence of the language for which they yearn appears to influence the way they connect themselves with Japanese culture and language.

5.4.2. Compensating for the Lack of Japanese Language

While JMHY participants make an effort to obtain Japanese language ability to fulfill their sense of loss, sometimes they seek an alternative way to compensate for the lack of Japanese language. The excerpts I extracted from the interviews with Stacy and her essay unmistakably illustrate her eagerness to gain Japanese language ability. Simultaneously her great interest in Japanese culture, particularly in Japanese food, is evident in these excerpts. The next excerpt reveals her possible and concealed reason behind all her enthusiasm about the Japanese connection:

> **Stacy:** It might be because-it might be because, like, I don't speak the language maybe I try to make up for it in other ways to try and bring out, like, those very Japanese things. Well, I don't speak the language, but, you know, I'm very Japanese because, you know, I-I do this, or I'm very Japanese because I do that or no one knows what good sushi is! […] so maybe I try to compensate for the fact that I don't speak the language, but I feel like I'm very Japanese in other ways. Or it's like maybe when-you know when you get, like, a fortune told or you get, like, your horoscope and you're like yeah, yeah, that totally makes sense, but it's because you're trying to make it make sense. Like, maybe I do that with being Japanese. Like, oh well, I guess I'm hardworking because I'm Japanese, so I must be hardworking and that's why I do this or maybe I do this because I'm Japanese or whatever.

Stacy alludes to the uncertainty of her claim in this excerpt and therefore I approach an interpretation of her statement with caution. In effect, this excerpt is parallel to the situations when Stacy exhibits her pride in being Japanese explicitly to cover her lack of Japanese language ability. By the same token, she might display enthusiasm of Japanese culture to compensate for her inability to speak the Japanese language.

Even Sachi, who does not uncritically accept social discourse surrounding her, reveals her unconscious reaction when others are informed of her Japanese connection in the interview: "I tended to inadvertently emphasize my Japanese heritage more than was really representative." What is particularly remarkable here is that Sachi firmly resists the rather fantasized view of Japanese women but still occasionally follows the putative Japanese culture to highlight her Japanese heritage to fulfill her sense of loss. The unconscious level of action to emphasize Japanese heritage relies on the dominant discourse that creates and disseminates the putative Japanese culture, otherwise others cannot see Stacy and Sachi's efforts to represent their Japanese connection. The Southallians in Baumann's (1996) study take a similar strategy to highlight their differences from the other

communities. Thus Baumann claims that Southallians do not totally ignore the dominant discourse to engage in the demotic discourse. This is one of the examples that Baumann (1996, 1999, 2011) uses to endorse his claim that both the essentialist rhetoric and non-essentialist rhetoric are two different cultural discourses in the process of culture making.

5.5. The Role of Physical Appearance

The reference to physical appearance is, if not central, still an essential topic in the life story of JMHY. As noted in Chapter 4, as well as in some of the sections in this chapter, JMHY participants frequently mention their physical appearance. They often mention their physical appearance in reference to specific incidents as a result of their and other people's perception of them based on their physical appearance. In this section I present a synthesis of the incidents that JMHY participants mention and discuss the effect of their physical appearance in relation to their sense of ethnicity.

In this study Sachi seems to struggle with her sense of ethnicity more than other participants as she has experienced exclusion as both Japanese and Canadian due to her physical appearance. According to Sachi, to western people's eyes Sachi appears to be more Asian, and thus she experienced discrimination against her Asian looks here in Canada, particularly when she was small. On the other hand, she often senses exclusion from "Japanese people" as well. Apparently she thinks that her sister Rina has a different experience as a result of Rina's appearance:

> **Sachi**: That was, you know, a very negative part of my experience being around other people who didn't understand my-my upbringing and my history. And for some reason I-I think it came up more with me than it did with Rina and it's because she-she just looks more white than me and she can mix better into that world without people questioning her.

On the other hand, Rina, who has a more Caucasian appearance and is much taller than the average Japanese woman, complains that her appearance always prevents her from being recognized by her Asian features. She feels particularly frustrated when she wishes to connect to "Japanese people" by talking to them in Japanese:

> **Rina:** Yeah. Whereas to my sister they would speak Japanese to her off the bat because she looks-she has more Japanese features. But-I mean, at least for-for myself, I felt like

> we're connected to my roots. But the fact that other people were not able to see that made things a little bit difficult.

None of the participants mention an easy access to other ethnic groups even though their appearance should work in both directions. A considerable amount of research by psychologists (Ahnallen, Suyemoto, & Cater, 2006; Collins, 2000; Root, 1998; Suyemoto, 2004) who study the identity of multiracial individuals has pointed out that physical appearance has a strong effect on self-identification of multiracial individuals. For example, Ahnallen, Suyemoto, & Cater, (2006) did a study on ethnic identity of multiracial Japanese European Americans[23], and they suggest that a sense of exclusion more forcefully influences the way multiracial individuals associate with a specific ethnic group than their sense of belonging.

Holly and Cathy also report the feeling of exclusion when they describe their school experiences. For them, their social contexts assigned a certain ethnic identification. In a sense, it was more of an internal process of identification but the source stemmed from their external environment. When Holly was still in elementary school, the city where she lived had a small Asian population and she attended one of the private schools there:

> **Holly**: […] it was a Dutch Reform school, so everybody I mean, like, nine out of the ten students were blonde haired, blue eyes, so what-in my elementary school then I felt very different. I felt very Asian.

When Cathy's family moved from Vancouver, a more multicultural city, the same city where Holly grew up, the first thing Cathy noticed was:

> **Cathy**: Yes. Yes. I started, yeah, realizing, oh my goodness, my mom looks different than, like, my other friends' parents. Yeah, I remember that, yeah.

The difference she observed in her mother's appearance came first before she realized that she was different from her classmates because to Cathy's eyes she is not as Asian in appearance as her mother and her sister, Amy. Then later she changed her high school again and noticed the difference again, but this time she drew attention to her Asian side in comparison to her European friends.

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[23] This term is used in their study.

> **Cathy**: Oh, that was when I moved to private school. Oh yeah, sorry. I went a big, big public high school. There was, like, 2100 people, so that's when I experienced oh, wow, like, there's different cultures than just Italian and European and that which I was used to and so, I was like, oh I am-I'm not full white. Like, I'm-I'm half Japanese!

Apart from Alex and Ikuko, Jess has the most full Asian features more than any other of the participants to my eyes, and he mentioned that most of the time people perceive him as Asian. Jess doesn't report any discrimination or negative experiences due to his appearance. In fact, he doesn't talk much about his appearance, as he briefly mentions: "I don't think a lot of people know that I'm half, that I'm a mix. I think most people think I'm just Japanese, which I don't mind, so I don't care." It is hard to draw any conclusion when the information is limited. Nevertheless, based on his photos (maple leaves, his hockey teammates and his Canadian cousins), I had the impression that he wishes to emphasize the connection to his Canadian half, as all his photos highlight his Canadian connection. He sent me his tattoo photos only as a response to my request. If Stacy hadn't mentioned it to me, I never would have found out about Jess's tattoos. As mentioned earlier, I can only speculate that a more Caucasian appearance might be the part that Jess feels is missing from his identity and as a result he is inclined to emphasize his Canadian connection more.

In this study, I identify many incidents reported by the participants that support Collins's (2000) claim that physical appearance is an "obvious identifier" (p.123). The ethnicity of these JMHY is judged by others based on their physical appearance, before they utter any words, or no matter how well they speak any languages. Ahnallen, Suyemoto, & Cater, (2006) suggest that a sense of exclusion from a group to which they wish to belong leaves more negative impact on multiracial individuals. The JMHY in this study struggle and feel more frustrated when their aspiration to belong to either Japanese or Canadian is unrecognized due to their physical appearance.

5.6. Personal Development: From Aversion to Acceptance

While all JMHY participants in this study exhibit a positive view of their Japanese connection, the level of interest in Japanese heritage varies among the participants. However, if I had had an interview with them five years earlier, they could have given me

a completely different response because their attitudes towards their Japanese heritage have not always been the same. At some point in their lives, the JMHY developed almost an aversion to Japanese culture and language, which is apparently a transitional phase, as it changes eventually. Stacy and Amy's interview excerpts below demonstrate their transitional phases:

> **Stacy**: Yeah. 'Cause then after that it was, like, those, like, you know, you're nine or ten and you don't wanna go to Japanese school after school and you don't-you know, none of your friends speak Japanese, you don't wanna learn it. [....] like, 'cause you're a stupid teenager. So, I was like, very-in those years, from, like, when I was,-when I was a younger kid, I think I was more open to learning it and then when I was like, maybe, ten to, like, fifteen or sixteen, I was like no I don't wanna know-I don't care about knowing Japanese. I took Spanish in high school.

> **Amy**: When I was growing up I lived-like, when I was in elementary school for the beginning part I lived in Coquitlam there weren't a lot of Asian families there. Or, I didn't have any Asian friends, so I didn't necessarily want to be more involved than I had to be in my heritage which-it wasn't-I don't think it was consciously that I was making an effort or anything, but subconsciously I was just-I didn't want anything to do with it for a little while and, um, but, yeah, then I –I visit it every couple years and so I think I started to grow more and more appreciative towards everything.

The transitional stage can start when JMHY reached school age and peer interactions became a crucial source for them to figure out their sense of belonging (Tse, 1998). Holly and Cathy were sent to a Caucasian dominated school first and both of them felt they "stood out" and wished they looked more "white." Holly mentions that she tried to disregard her Asian connection but it didn't last too long:

> **Holly**: Yeah. Oh yeah. That was-when I went to that I felt very much more like I'm the Asian. My identity was almost like I'm one Asian among a sea of blonde hair and blue eyes but then that was only until, like, grade two, right? So that was-that's very small experience almost where I started to resent-not resent but like I didn't really look at my Asian side as much of a positive at all. And that's around the age where my mom was really pushing Japanese, Japanese, Um, and then I went to the other school then that just melted right away.

Cathy explains why she wished to assimilate with the rest of her classmates in elementary school:

> **NT**: How was it different from your earlier experience?

> **Cathy**: I think it's 'cause I-I wasn't very confident. I didn't-I didn't know exactly. Like, in-I didn't, um, yeah. I-I didn't know who I was, I guess. So, I felt it would be easier to just kind of ignore that side of me and just pretend to be, like, white. (laughs)
>
> **NT**: But you don't feel the same way now?
>
> **Cathy**: Oh, not at all! I embrace my Japanese culture a lot more than I did.

In some cases, a particular unpleasant incident left a strong negative impact on these JHMY that led to their aversion towards their Japanese heritage. Like Jess, Mari's friends teased her because of her father's broken English when she was young. She attributes that incident to her decision to ignore her Japanese connection then:

> **Mari:** No. A lot of my friends, like, when I was in elementary school made it seem like my dad was stupid for not being able to speak English very well, so it made me not want to learn Japanese kind of.

However, that phase seems to have ended when:

> **Mari**:[…] And so I went through a whole phase where I, like, defended him against everyone I felt like! And then I just got, like, super embarrassed and was like, well, why isn't he learning English better? And so then it flipped and then I was like, I don't want anything to do with it. And then now I just, like, grew out of all that and I just don't really care!

Both Ana and Sachi have their own experiences of discrimination due to their mixed heritage appearance. Ana was badly bullied in her Japanese school, so she was much happier at a Canadian school even though she had difficulty following school work. In spite of being teased or bullied, neither developed a permanent aversion towards their Japanese connection. Instead, they turned this experience into an opportunity to re-evaluate their sense of ethnicity and became sensitive to other people's isolation and bullying experiences. I believe that this is a crucial process in gaining intercultural competence, which I will address in depth in the subsequent chapter.

Many participants in this study experience what Tse (1998) refers to as Ethnic Ambivalence or Ethnic Evasion. It typically occurs during adolescence when children begin to have their own judgement or value, which conforms more with that of their peers than their parents' values. Also Rampton (1999) states that adolescence itself is a 'liminal' phase when adolescents try to come to terms with their transition from childhood to

adulthood. How they came out of this stage is not clear, but in Amy's case, I believe that her personal interest in Japanese fashion drove her to establish a positive connection to her heritage.

The biggest JMHY's change in attitude would be their attitude towards learning the Japanese language. Probably not many of the JMHY's parents could foresee the day their children would say:

> **Ikuko**:[…] I have, like, two parents that speak different languages and I only got to learn one and I feel like that's kind of, like, why didn't you just teach me! It would have been so easy 'cause, yeah, when you're small you learn really fast.
>
> **Stacy**: [….] I lost a lot of it and then I told my parents and I'm bugging my parents; I'm like, why didn't you speak to me when I was a kid?
>
> **Sachi**: As far as learning the language goes, um, I think-I-I do think that, um, an effort was made during my childhood to encourage my siblings and I to learn.
>
> **Cathy**: Yeah and I probably would've wanted to continue Japanese school too even though I said no! I-I wish my parents had kind of forced me to stay. (laughs)
>
> **Amy**: I-growing up, um, I've asked my parents that before. I've asked them why didn't you teach me. Both of you speak it. They're both fluent in it, but they told me that growing up I didn't want to learn.
>
> **Mari**: I know! That's what I said. I was, like, why didn't you just speak it around me when I was a baby? 'Cause I would have picked it up.

Statements about learning or not learning Japanese are one of the most common claims I heard during the interviews. Based on these claims it is tempting to make a suggestion that parents should force children to learn their HL even though the children resist it. However, a solution to raising a bilingual child cannot be that straightforward, even though I witnessed ample regrets in my study. As discussed in this section, the crucial part of parenting is dealing with a children's 'liminal' phase, when they begin to question their ethnicity. This study already witnesses a significant difference in attitude toward Japanese language among siblings despite growing up in the same household. Thus, parents have to be aware of the idiosyncratic personality and interests of each child, particularly when they reach the 'liminal' phase. This suggestion echoes Wang (2008) who has documented the progress of her two sons growing up as trilinguals (Chinese, French and English) in the USA. She claims that parents need to understand the

“developmental characteristics” of each child so as to adequately adjust the parenting strategies during the ‘liminal’ phase. I will provide further elaboration and suggestions to parents in the concluding chapter.

5.7. Pop Culture and Affinity Identity

In the final section of Chapter 5, I will briefly discuss the effect of widespread Japanese pop culture in relation to these JMHY’s sense of ethnicity. JMHY in this study are generally familiar with the Japanese movies or children’s TV shows they have watched since they were small. However, this familiarity is not limited to the participants in this study. These movies and TV shows are widely shared among many young people in the world, because the popularity of Japanese pop culture is a world-wide phenomenon similar to Disney and Hollywood movies (Fukunaga 2006; Armour 2011). Sachi describes this as: “it’s not a Japanese thing, but more a generation thing,” since children from the same generation could communicate through this same cultural entertainment without a mutual language. Here Sachi explains how she bonded with a child of her parents’ friend in Japan:

> **Sachi**: […], I remember I think it was maybe my first time I went to Japan, my dad’s friends invited us over to our old house where I-I was raised for those first two years and, uh, um, I guess my dad’s friend had a little girl about the same age as myself and, uh, I distinctly remember bonding over Pokemon cards and loving it, but, um, but, uh, but yeah, I-I felt, uh, when I came back to-to Canada with these new cards I had to show them off to everyone: look at my new toy! This and that! It-it was a source of pride for me and I-I think, um, um, whenever my-my mother’s sister, my aunt, sent us stuff from Japan I would also try and bring it to school and flaunt it! (laughs) So, that was my memory of the toys at least.

This is her fond memory of a childhood memory, but she has a completely different view on Japanese popular culture now:

> **Sachi:** You know, we had a Pokemon blanket and, um, things of that sort. And then at the same time, um, it was very much part of my-my environment in Vancouver growing up a lot of the kids were equally interested, but definitely more, um, more people were interested in manga and anime and I wasn’t into that. In fact, I-I-I think I developed an aversion to it for a long time because I felt every time I said I was half Japanese, people would automatically start talking about manga and it really annoyed me, it’s like, oh, stop it! You know?

As many JMHY told me they enjoyed watching Japanese children's TV shows as children and also because of the proliferation of Japanese pop culture, I had expected they still related to these cultural icons positively. It came as a surprise when quite a few JMHY showed little or no interest in Japanese pop culture now:

> **Ikuko**: Well, I-I did, I think around, uh, grade 12, like, maybe from, like, for a couple years up until grade 12 I watched anime, so, like, I do know, like, some anime and, like, I have watched, like, a few, but, like, right now, like, I can't say that I've watched any recently. But like, I did, like, read manga and stuff for a while, but not anymore 'cause I don't know. I have better things to do.
>
> **Joseph:** Well yeah. Um, yeah, when-in grade 10, 11, 12 I-my friend who became more Asian, like, I-I've more Asian friends Korean and Chinese and things like that and they were interested in anime I was the one who was less interested than anyone else in manga and stuff like that. So, they were a lot more interested than me.
>
> **Jess**: Uh, I-I respect it and I like what-how advanced Japan is with technology but I'm more into sports and playing outside. So, I-video games and-and-and pop-that pop culture is not really-I'm not really into that.

Although they admit that the popularity of Japanese pop culture can contribute to their positive connection to Japanese heritage, they feel more distanced from this pop culture now, except Alex. Alex is a big fan of Japanese video games, and animations that he shares with his friends. He writes in the essay that Japanese pop culture was in fact an initial source of his Japanese pride:

> Strangely around this time I also recall becoming quite interested in some of Japanese culture, particularly the anime and motion pictures by Hayao Miyazaki. My most fond movies that I remember included *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Spirited Away*. Something seemed to separate them from regular cartoons and movies I would see in America and there was no specific reason for me. I just liked it. I remember trying to watch some anime in Japanese to see what it was like, but it was all gibberish to me without the English subtitles sadly. But I still remember it gave me a sense a of pride to be part Japanese, as very beautiful works of arts had been created by the Japanese artists.

Alex also felt that his interest in Japanese pop culture was shared among his classmates in his first Japanese language class that he took with me at the university. The composition of the Japanese language classes that I teach follows the recent trend reported by the Japan Foundation (2009). More than half of the students in my classes

claim their purpose in learning Japanese is to understand Japanese manga or anime. In the essay Alex also writes his reflection on that class:

> For the first time I was with a bunch of students that were commonly interested to learn Japanese, and it was a very entertaining class to learn together. I think the experience was much better compared to what I learned with my mother due to that fact that the people around me also made it more enjoyable. I thought it was pretty cool to see so many people of different university majors unite and study Japanese together as a common interest. Therefore I was very satisfied with what I learned in the course.

Through an email exchange Alex further clarifies that the common interest he sensed is not only to learn Japanese, but also to share a general interest in Japanese pop culture because he enjoyed exchanging information on Japanese pop culture with his classmates. While Alex's case presents a successful attempt at gaining HL ability in a JSL class, Holly's story points out a critical dimension of a HL learner's challenge in the JSL setting. In Chapter 4, I mentioned that Holly withdrew from the course in the second week. Since HL learners tend to have an imbalanced language proficiency, high in speaking and listening, but low in reading and writing, they are often misplaced in a JSL class (Oguro & Moloney, 2012). The following excerpt shows how Holly compares her Japanese to that of her classmates:

> **Holly**: I felt like all the students were using that ("polite Japanese"), so even though they had much less Japanese than when they spoke in the Japanese they'd use this very nice, professional Japanese and it just made me feel like, oh my god! But then it's, yeah, like, *(desu desukara*) things like that. Like, I just didn't grow up using it. I don't know it. And to me it makes it sound like oh my gosh they're so much better Japanese than me. Even though they only know those two sentences, you know what I mean? Whereas I don't know if I could write the essay just like just every day casual language.

Holly also mentions another reason why she felt so distanced from other classmates:

> **Holly:** I don't know for pop culture, I honestly don't really know much about it at all. I'm not into it, I don't-I'm not even exposed to it, so I don't really have an opinion on it. Now, when I see anime and stuff I feel a huge disconnect to that because when I think of, like, anime then I think of, like, it's weird that kind of culture-Japanese culture I don't feel a part of it at all and I just think of like really in my mind really distant Asian that kind of thing, you know what I mean? Um, I don't feel any connect to it at all. I just, feel nothing. In the class, other students are all talking about pop culture.

Unfortunately Holly's consciousness of not being able to speak "polite" Japanese made her feel inferior in the class. Then she also felt a huge gap between herself and those students who demonstrated an extensive knowledge and passion about Japanese pop culture. Alex could fit right in the course, whereas Holly couldn't find a comfortable spot because she felt so disconnected from the rest of her classmates. Holly also mentions that "my Japanese culture is not modern, I don't get Japanese television, so the culture of Japanese I understand is what has been provided to me through my mom, and she has been out Japan twenty some years, so my idea of Japanese culture might be out dated." When Holly started at university she stopped watching Japanese dramas with her mother, even though these dramas were her mother's choice. It seems that Alex and Holly have a different cultural resource; for Alex who has minimal Japanese cultural exposure at home, the Internet and his peers became a central medium. In contrast, Holly's mother is her only or main Japanese cultural source in her opinion. Thus, both of them refer to different Japanese cultures, as they have not participated in the same "affinity space" (Gee, 2004). The notion of affinity identity or space foregrounds the idea of common activities and interests stemming from shared experiences. Gee (2004) particularly emphasizes that "words do not have just general dictionary–like meanings" but words can be learned only "by having actually experienced the 'worlds' to which these words refer" (p.40-41). I contend that Holly's unfortunate case is not only triggered by her different linguistic level, but also promoted by her inability to develop affinity identity with her classmates because she had brought a different language learning experience. Not all the students in the class share the same affinity identity, but both the different linguistic and cultural experiences Holly sensed from her classmates made it difficult for her to stay in the course. For this study Gee's (2004) concepts of affinity identity and space encourage me to examine more fully how individuals develop their knowledge through their actual experiences rather than the level of knowledge they bring to class.

5.8. Summary

Drawing on Baumman's view of ethnicity as culture, in this chapter I have attempted to analyze these JMHY's relationship with the Japanese language and their sense of their ethnicity. Following Street's claim to view culture as an active process of making meaning, I have paid full attention to the context where JMHY discuss their sense

of ethnicity in order to examine how they make definitions such as "I'm Japanese" or "Japanese culture."

JMHY in this study prefer to describe their ethnicity as "half Japanese" which indicates their recognition of their Japanese heritage and acknowledges the coexistence of the other half. When the JMHY compare themselves to "Japanese people," who they perceive to be Japanese language speakers, they accentuate their sense of being half empty. Interestingly, even though their lack of Japanese language ability can emphasize a sense of absence or loss, fulfilling this loss by speaking Japanese does not erase or reduce their sense of being half, which indicates their acknowledgement of the inseparable other half. Moreover, whereas the JMHY use "they" or "them" to describe Japanese language speakers and to distinguish themselves, they claim Japanese language and culture as "part of my culture" or "heritage." When it comes to the ability of Japanese language, they identify themselves by highlighting the halfness in comparison to Japanese language speakers, but they feel that the language itself is part of their culture or heritage.

The analysis also indicates that JMHY participants demonstrate several ways to display their Japanese connection to others and to themselves. Probably because of their feelings of loss or incompleteness, the JMHY appear to reinforce a more reified Japanese culture or tradition, "going back to their roots" to reassure their connection to Japanese heritage. However, the definitions of Japanese culture and traditions for the JMHY are not necessarily shared with people in Japan. The cultural and traditional practices of JMHY and of Japanese people living in Japan can be quite different. Thus, while they tend to rely on traditional or "pure" Japanese culture to hold onto their Japanese ethnicity, they are actively engaged in their own culture-making process as they live, create and recreate their own interpretations of Japanese culture.

Physical appearance was also a crucial element of JMHY participants' ethnicity. Their perception of exclusion from a desired group seems to create a bigger impact on the JMHY than their feeling of inclusion. With respect to their personal development, although they rejected learning Japanese at an early age, all the participants (except Joseph and Holly) claim they regret missing that opportunity and some blame their parents for not being persistent. Their claim has an important message to parents who are raising young Japanese mixed heritage children, which I will discuss in the concluding chapter.

At the end of this chapter I included a discussion of the impact of the world wide spread Japanese pop culture on JMHY participants' daily language use. Globalization, and the readiness of the world wide web provide many benefits for JMHY, because they feel closer to Japan. It should, however, be noted that those who gain ample exposure to Japanese culture through interaction with their Japanese parent may have difficulties in joining a JSL class where affinity space is created around the common interest in Japanese pop culture. The difficulties do not stem from not having the same interest, but they emerge because the actual experiences attached to words they use in class are different. The study finds it beneficial to apply Gee's affinity identity or space theory, as it allows me to examine how people develop their knowledge through their actual experiences before coming to class.

In Chapter 6, I will provide my interpretation and analysis of JMHY's echoed voice, focusing on their cultural knowledge. Chapter 6 is another element of the investigation to gain a better insight into JMHY and their culture. In the final chapter, I will revisit the findings I have discussed in both Chapters 5 and 6 in order to make suggestions to parents of Japanese mixed heritage children and instructors of JSL.

Chapter 6.

Culture of Japanese Mixed Heritage Youth 2: Implications of the Lack of Japanese Language

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I continue to discuss the culture of JMHY, but shift my attention to an examination of the implications of their lack of Japanese language proficiency. The previous chapter illustrated that for some JMHY, their self-consciousness of a lack of Japanese language proficiency could accentuate their sense of being half empty, which sometimes leads to a sense of loss or incompleteness. In other words, the discussion was focused on how the lack of HL proficiency influences the way in which JMHY perceive their sense of ethnicity. In this chapter, I respond to the second research question: What are the implications of JMHY's lack of "linguistic proficiency" in Japanese in the post-secondary Japanese language classroom? I pay particular attention to an examination of participants' cultural awareness in relation to their HL use, as many participants indicate their familiarity with and ample exposure to Japanese culture. In spite of the fact that they do not necessarily share the same definition of Japanese culture, I contend that this cultural awareness could be a key element of their intercultural competence (Byram,1997, 2000, 2012). Thus, in section 6.2, I will discuss how and from what resources these JMHY develop cultural knowledge as well as cultural awareness in their daily context. In the next subsection, 6.2.1, I will illustrate that their awareness of cultural differences does not necessarily distinguish one culture from another; instead it works as a vehicle to bridge different cultures, which is considered to be the core element of intercultural competence. In the final section 6.3, I provide an analysis of the use of Japanese words and phrases that JMHY inserted into their English sentences in the interviews and their essays. In the analysis I will focus on JMHY'S daily language use applying the notion of multicompetence (Cook, 1991, 1992, 2005, 2011), as this approach allows me to investigate how two different languages interact and perform different functions in the minds of JMHY.

6.2. Intercultural Competence Without Linguistic Knowledge

The second research question arose from my actual interactions with JMHY or other HL learners who came to my class as JSL at the university. The question concerns the similarities or dissimilarities that JMHY share with non-HL learners in class as a learner of Japanese language. I was particularly interested in examining the impact of JMHY's interactions with their Japanese parent on learning the Japanese language, even though the Japanese language is not the mutual language between them in their daily lives. I contend that the JMHY's familiarity with and exposure to Japanese culture through interactions with their parents separate the JMHY from non-HL learners.

Through an examination of JMHY participants' statements, I show how the interaction with parents helps the participants in this study to gain cultural knowledge in Japanese, as well as cultural awareness, which are critical dimensions of intercultural competence. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the concept of intercultural competence as suggested by Byram (1997, 2000, 2012) is concerned more with sociolinguistic competence. In particular, intercultural competence emphasizes cultural knowledge and skills rather than linguistic knowledge, which provides for smooth interaction among people from different cultural backgrounds. While focusing on JMHY participants' cultural awareness, I examine the ways in which they feel they know Japanese culture, and how that affects their interaction with both Japanese and non-Japanese people. Byram's notion of intercultural competence raises an important point: a native speaker of any language does not necessarily have intercultural competence. In my analysis of JMHY's daily language use, I would like to extend that notion to suggest that intercultural competence could be acquired regardless of the level of linguistic ability. That is to say, the participants may not be intercultural speakers, but alternatively they could be considered listeners with intercultural competence, or "intercultural mediators" (Byram et. al., 2002, p.9). At the same time this suggestion raises the question of what should be exchanged and communicated, and what needs to be established for communication among people from different cultural groups.

First, I look at several ways that JMHY demonstrate their knowledge of Japanese culture, which I consider a seed for cultural awareness. For example, Jess shows only a

little interest in his Japanese heritage and even claims "I'm not good at being Japanese," but suggests that he is familiar with "Japanese culture." According to him, having a Japanese father gave him a chance to become familiar with "Japanese culture" so that he wishes to try something new to him:

> **NT**: So, what is Japanese culture to you?
>
> **Jess**: Well, because my dad is Japanese I've already-I-I get it-I get the-I'm more, uh, influenced, I guess now, because I have-I am half Japanese. So, I wanna learn new things. You know, because I'm around.
>
> **NT**: New things?
>
> **Jess**: About other cultures.
>
> **NT**: Other cultures too.
>
> **Jess**: Yeah. I wouldn't mind learning more Japanese things more, um, of my heritage but I-I'm more-I'm fascinated as well with, like, my Canadian side who's, like, Scottish. I wanna go to Scotland and I wanna go to England and I wanna go to France and Italy and more because the food-I'm in the food industry and I wanna learn that side of the food industry too. But I-I do wanna go see Japan.

Sachi reports having developed a sense of loss as a result of the loss of her first language, and she regrettably admits that she won't be able to talk or teach Japanese language to her children. However, the following interview excerpt shows that she has something else to pass on to the next generation because of her cultural knowledge:

> **Sachi**: I have a cultural reference through other things, other ways of communicating. You know, language is-is just one, you know, I-I guess some linguists like to consider speech as just like a small percentage of the way we communicate and-and, you know, maybe I have a relationship with the other ways of communicating and I might be in a better position to convey that to my children.

Her comment is particularly interesting in the way she views cultural knowledge as a communication tool instead of relying on verbal communication.

Here Sachi does not explicitly describe what aspect of Japanese culture she would communicate, but in her essay she writes how her familiarity with Japanese food made traveling in Japan easy:

> What we learned as children revolved around basic things like eating, and it goes without being said that sharing food is one of the most effective ways to relate to people in the instance of a cultural/language barrier. The fact that my sister and I both really enjoy Japanese food has made it much easier to travel and socialize with people in/outside of Japan, compared, for example, to someone who can't fathom eating raw fish, seaweed, or natto (fermented soybeans).

"Knowledge," as one of five elements of Byram's (1997) intercultural competence, has two broad categories: "Knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country; knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels" (Byram, 1997, p.35). The purpose of including knowledge of "the process of interaction" is that knowing about the interlocutor's country or culture is merely the initial step towards smooth communication in cross cultural situations and one has to apply the knowledge to understand one's communication process. Thus, the first category of knowledge "needed to be complimented by procedural knowledge of how to act in specific circumstances" (p. 36). Combining Sachi's comments in the interview and her essay, I see that Sachi does not only know about Japanese food but also knows how that knowledge could be applied to an interaction with Japanese, even though she does not communicate in Japanese language.

A similar example could be found in Cathy's comment in the interview. She always feels she "stands out" while visiting in Japan, but claims that she doesn't face any issues culturally, simply because having Japanese foods regularly at home made her feel she is familiar with "Japanese culture" :

> **NT:** How about the culture? Any difficulties?
>
> **Cathy**: Culture, I think it was-it didn't really stand out too much to me because food wise, like, I had-that's what I always ate anyways.
>
> **NT**: The food was nothing foreign to you.
>
> **Cathy**: Nothing new, yeah. That was really nice that I could have the same food enjoy here and there. Um.

It has been mentioned in this and in previous chapters that some of the participants associate Japanese culture with foods and claim their expertise in Japanese food to affirm their connection to their Japanese heritage. Japanese food is merely one aspect of Japanese culture, but for many participants who associate their Japanese heritage

through food, it is significant, even in terms of communication. Sachi claims it allows her to relate to other people, and the dearth of such knowledge could lead to a miscommunication or possibly discrimination. Joseph, who never felt a complete exclusion from either the Canadian or the Japanese community, mentions that the only discrimination he experienced in regard to his Japanese ethnic background is food related. In elementary school when he used to bring onigiri (rice ball) to school for lunch, he was badly teased by his classmates who had never seen such food. Living in a Caucasian dominated city, the strange and unfamiliar food conveys a low status, correlating with an immigrant culture (Palmer, 2007). Even though strangeness and unfamiliarity with an interlocutor's culture do not necessary associate with a low status, these feelings can be a cause of miscommunication (Byram, 1997, 2000, 2012). Intercultural competence includes an "ability to step outside, to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange, and to act on the change of perspective" (Byram, 2000, p.11). Becoming familiar with the strange culture assists language learners to develop a new perspective and avoid disdaining other cultures and miscommunications with interlocutors coming from different cultures.

Japanese food is not the only thing that a majority of JMHY claim they have ample exposure to, but they also suggest their familiarity with other aspects of Japanese culture, including mannerisms and values. The next excerpt is Stacy's response when I asked her whether her parents taught her Japanese mannerisms or not:

> **Stacy**: Mmm, no. All-it's hard to say. I don't quite-I don't quite remember anything, like, when my parents brought me up I don't quite remember them saying, oh, it's good to behave this way, because it's a very Japanese or a very Canadian thing. Like, now that I'm older, I-I definitely understand, like, the ways, like, Japanese think [….] I don't know. I was definitely brought up in certain Japanese ways, but I don't recall when those were instilled in me. Like, I know what's a very Japanese way to do something or other. Like, and my mom will sometimes point it out and go, like, that's very, like, the Japanese will do that. But I don't ever recall them being, like, this was-this is how it's done in Japan, or you should do it this way because, you know, we're Japanese and that's how.

In this excerpt, Stacy refers to her whole family as "Japanese," maybe because she notices that some of her upbringing could be as a result of being raised by a Japanese father and a Canadian mother who lived in Japan for more than seven years. While growing up, she didn't recognize which was the Japanese way or the Canadian way, but

as a young adult now, she has become aware of cultural differences and attributes of some of her mannerisms acquired during her upbringing. An awareness of cultural difference is a central theme in the subsequent section and I will provide a fuller analysis later in the chapter.

In the following excerpt Amy explains how her mother's view of Japanese culture influences her own views. Here Amy refers to Japanese culture or people as "they" but I have already mentioned that when it comes to Japanese fashion, it becomes "my culture" and she claims "my culture is ahead of you":

> **Amy**: Not too much. Just, you know, when I was there and we were sitting in my uncle's car and stuff, like, ah! This GPS is really cool! 'Cause you didn't really have a lot of, um, things that-I think my mom also would-things that she would say would kind of raise me to be a little bit more inclined towards Japanese culture. Just she's make little comments, um, so, I would just be like, oh yeah, Japan's like a couple years ahead of us here, you know? And she usually says things like, fashion, yeah, she's like-would say to me, you know, when I lived in Tokyo and came here, we were like 5 to 10 years ahead in fashion and you come here, so that was-and I thought that with most people they would say things like that including the technology and just they're more innovative. That's how I was brought up to think of the culture. Where they're just ahead of us here. So, that was instilled upon me.

What Stacy and Amy share is that both of them say these mannerisms or values are not taught, but "instilled" in them. In other words, they are not simply a piece of knowledge, but they are practicing the knowledge by interacting with their Japanese parent. To further support their comments, I also quote Sachi's comment: "I think, um, behaviour is something that is largely just absorbed. So, I don't think my mother ever explicitly tried to teach me anything." Sachi also told me the following:

> **Sachi**: I had one such friend tell me once that despite not speaking the language, she felt that there was something *Japanese* about my mannerisms, which made her feel comfortable in my presence.

It seems that mannerisms and values are instilled or absorbed rather than taught, thus sometimes they could also come out naturally and in an appropriate situation. Thus, the way these JMHY acquire Japanese mannerisms and values suggests that it was a result of what Gee (2004) describes as the "cultural learning process." In a criticism of the "instructed learning process" that is traditionally and still commonly employed in school systems, Gee promotes the efficiency of a cultural learning process to help children's

literacy. Gee insists that a cultural learning process differs from a "natural process" because "there are some things that are so important to a cultural group that the group ensures that everybody who needs to learn them[24] (p.12). Whereas through natural processes people may simply copy what other people do in a specific situation, with cultural process people learn what is important to be acquired as a member of a cultural group. Sachi does not know what made her friend make such a comment, but she takes it as a compliment because of the comfort that the friend expressed, even without verbal communication in Japanese. It is evident that Sachi not only observes how her Japanese mother behaves, but also recognizes the significance of her mother's behaviours as a key communication skill in her mother's cultural group. I also view that friend's comment as a sign of one of the fundamental and necessary conditions to succeed in smooth communication in intercultural situations. Byram et. al. (2002) suggest that intercultural competence involves not only a capacity to convey information successfully, but also to establish a good relationship with interlocutors from different cultural groups. I believe that before any information is exchanged between speakers, it is necessary for speakers to eliminate fears that miscommunication might happen as a result of cultural or linguistic barriers. I also contend, as Scollon and Scollon (2012) propose, that people belong to multiple cultural discourse communities simultaneously. Therefore, Sachi and her friend might have communicated through shared cultural discourses. Unfortunately without the actual recording or observation of how Sachi interacted with her Japanese friends, it is difficult to determine what was exchanged between them and exactly what made her friend make such a comment.

Although Joseph does not lack Japanese language ability, his following comment reinforces the other participants' comments on instilling culture from a parent's perspective. He mentions this after telling me that he is not interested in passing on his Japanese language skills to his daughter:

> **Joseph:** Like, I-I just think that the aspects of what's Japanese in me will hopefully come out naturally and if it's important it will come out in who I am and she'll pick that up like it is

[24] Gee (2004) points out the limitation of the concept of "community of practice" promoted by Lave and Wenger (1991) but acknowledges that the notion "situated learning" are commonly shared between his idea of affinity space and community of practice.

> important, you know? Like, I don't think culture is something you intentionally give your children.

I found these comments striking, as it is what I always hoped to hear from students who enrol in my Japanese language classes. Instead of explicitly teaching Japanese cultural knowledge, I have been trying to introduce Japanese cultural aspects through learning or speaking Japanese language to my students. However, these participants demonstrate that Japanese culture can be naturally instilled in them or absorbed without conversing in the Japanese language with parents. The subsequent sections will further investigate the possibility of acquiring intercultural competence without an advanced level of Japanese proficiency. My analysis so far suggests that through interactions with their Japanese parents, the JMHY feel they possess knowledge of Japanese culture, which comes along with their actual practice through cultural learning process (Gee, 2004). Through interactions with their Japanese parent, the JMHY gain a cultural awareness that helps their communication in intercultural situations.

Before closing this section, I would like to briefly mention Alex and Ikuko's case, which emphasizes their limited exposure to Japanese culture at home, more than their familiarity with Japanese culture. At the beginning I had hesitated to include their participation in the study as their cases differ significantly from the rest of the participants. However, in the end I thought that their experiences might bring an interesting contrast to those of the other participants in this study. Alex and Ikuko are the only participants who have two parents with Asian backgrounds. Second, their mother immigrated to Canada at the age of 10, which made English her dominant language and they missed an opportunity to interact with their Japanese relatives. The second factor affects the way they developed cultural awareness. They were the only participants to comment on their mother's Japanese proficiency:

> **Alex:** So, when we-I went, uh, trip to Japan. We went twice. Uh, I heard-I heard her speak a lot and pretty surprising 'cause she can-she can converse, uh, very well.
>
> **Ikuko**: she's good at speaking Japanese, she just doesn't, like, like to, like, if she doesn't have to.

None of the other participants comment on their Japanese parents' proficiency in Japanese language. Due to the infrequent opportunity to hear their mother speaking

Japanese, Alex describes the mother's behaviour as "the new side of her" and Ikuko found it strange when they saw the mother speaking Japanese all the time in Japan. Also both of them claim that going to the karate class was their first exposure to Japanese culture in spite of the fact they have a Japanese mother at home. It wasn't until their karate class that they heard their mother speaking in Japanese. Their comments on the home language environment made an interesting contrast to Sachi and Rina's case. Sachi claims, "I would say my perception of the Japanese language came from listening to her (mother) talking on the phone" and for Rina:

> **Rina**: hearing my mom speak Japanese, even to this day, she'll-my aunt will call her from Japan at night time and sometimes I'll, like, come home and I'll hear her speaking Japanese, and it's like huh? This is home. This is nice. You know? Being able to hear her-hear her speak comfortably. I thought was-I-I think is really nice and it's like I wish I understood-I wish-I really wish I understood what they were saying. Or most of it.

Hearing her mother speaking Japanese on the phone is very much part of Rina's daily life, and she knows that her mother does not feel as comfortable with English as she feels with Japanese. The difference in their cases is not only the amount of Japanese they hear at home, but also the number of opportunities to observe how Japanese people communicate with each other regardless of the language they use in daily interaction. Additionally, Alex and Ikuko's mother's long immigrant experience, combined with not communicating with her Japanese family members, may highlight her Canadian connection more strongly than her Japanese connection. Alex and Ikuko claim that the karate class was their first exposure to Japanese culture, on the other hand, for the other participants their Japanese parent is the most important and crucial cultural source for them.

The participants' (except Alex and Ikuko) claim of familiarity with and exposure to Japanese culture indicates knowledge of Japanese culture that they gain through cultural process (Gee, 2004). Nevertheless, in the next section I illustrate how their cultural knowledge can lead to or help develop critical cultural awareness to become;

> Someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) their own and other cultures - someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural. (Byram, 2001, p 10)

6.2.1. Awareness of Cultural Differences

In the previous section, I showed how these JMHY's claim of familiarity with and exposure to Japanese culture is mainly the result of interaction with their Japanese parent in daily life and observation of how they interact with others. At first glance, their familiarity may only suggest knowledge of Japanese culture, but it can be transformed into cultural awareness that guides them to establish smooth communication with Japanese speakers in intercultural situations. In this regard, their cultural awareness is one of the fundamental but necessary elements of intercultural competence. Due to their lack of linguistic knowledge of Japanese, they cannot be considered "intercultural speakers" but possibly "intercultural mediators" (Byram et. al., 2002, p.9). In order to claim their intercultural competence in the absence of Japanese language ability, in this section I further examine how having parents coming from different cultural groups creates a bicultural environment in daily life that assists them in developing "critical cultural awareness", emphasized in Byram's model (2012) of intercultural competence. Thus, for this study I use awareness of cultural difference as a key term to investigate JMHY's intercultural competence.

First of all, I have noticed that the participants often attribute the difference between their parents to the influence of their cultures, which is congruent with a rather stereotypical view of Japanese and Canadian cultures which could lead to the "us and "them" dichotomy (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). That could be found in the following interview excerpts from Cathy and Stacy:

> **Cathy**: So, just like stuff like that and just like, um, I was definitely, like, when we-were in public her mannerisms, um, she's very-how do you say? Japanese people are very respectful, like, not loud, quiet and they really care about being polite in their manners and she's very like that.
>
> **Cathy**: Yeah! My dad is, like, opposite. Complete opposite. 'Cause he's so loud and he's really funny and like, um, like, not as-not as aware of being polite.
>
> **Stacy**: Yeah. For sure. Yeah. I-I-I mean, I've always sensed the culture difference between my mom and my dad too. Like, there has been one where as my dad will be very reserved and very, um, laidback or very polite about things. My mom's more outgoing and will kind of say what she wants and anything that comes to her mind she will say and if she has a problem with something she'll deal with it.

Their perceptions may have been influenced by the social milieu, but in their case they have witnessed these traits in daily life as a result of having parents coming from different cultural backgrounds. The other important point to be mentioned is that Cathy and Stacy do not simply discuss the cultural difference between their parents, but also the cultural influence on the way the parents interact with others. When Byram (2012) discusses the aspects of "knowledge" in intercultural competence, he stresses that "knowledge" should involve an ability to identify how cultures influence the way in which people communicate with each other. In other words, the JMHY are exposed to at least two different cultural resources and they observe the two different ways their parents interact or communicate with others in their daily lives. Here, Cathy explains how the bicultural environment gives her a chance to compare the differences, which she sees as a learning opportunity:

> **Cathy**: […] Yeah. Um, I guess growing up it's-it's nice to be able to have, like, two different-completely different cultures. Um, like, with me, like, I can go to my dad's side of the family and, like, experience that and then, like, go to my mom's side and it's completely different. Like, I feel like I'm always learning in that sense.

By noticing cultural differences one cannot avoid referring to stereotypes as it is one of the negative outcomes of noticing cultural differences (Scollon & Scollon, 2012); or it is merely part of the process of developing a more critical awareness of cultural differences (Byram, 2012). In other words, the JMHY participants may reify culture first, which appears to be the sign of their essentialized cultural discourse while they also speak from/for processual cultural discourse (Baumann, 1999). As mentioned in Chapter 2, with reference to one's intercultural competence, in the process of gaining this competence, some processes are more based on an essentialized cultural discourse, but some are not. That is to say, the bicultural experiences of the JMHY are not constrained by the frameworks of stereotypes all the time. When they have a chance to interact with other Japanese people apart from their Japanese parent, they may notice differences within Japanese people. Here both Sachi and Ana mention that their Japanese mother's actions do not reflect the stereotypical Japanese type:

> **Sachi:** I think that's it. My mother's a very unusual, um, person compared to other Japanese people I've met. I think she's extremely European in certain ways. Or, maybe-I shouldn't say she is European; she spent a lot of time in Europe in an English speaking context as well, so just because of that alone she's-she's not typical Japanese,

Ana: She is. She's very funny. She's not-I wouldn't say she's-she's not typically Japanese, like, very different. Um, and I think that's why she's always had an interest in coming to Canada since she was, like, a teen-like, quite young. She's always wanted to come to Canada or United States.

Interestingly they also observe differences when their Japanese mother interacts with Japanese people. Sachi and Ana noticed that difference when they were in Japan. For Amy, she notices the difference while her mother is talking on the phone in Japanese:

Sachi: That's different yet again. And my mother-her behaviour really changes when she's there. In a-in a way that's beautiful. She comes alive in a way that is rare here.

Ana: Mmm, She, um, like, when-when we would go visit back to Japan I think I would see her doing things a lot different than what she does in Canada.

Amy: I also find that when my mom talks on the phone in Japanese or her voice- her tone changes.

Here, JMHY participants demonstrate that their cultural knowledge becomes more of a critical awareness of cultural differences since they show an ability to recognize diversities with a culture and different communication styles that their Japanese parent exhibits. Their Japanese parents' experiences are similar to those of the participants in the work of Korne et al. (2007). Their participants are immigrant women who have lived outside of their home country for more than 20 years and Korne et al. find that the awareness of cultural difference that these women have developed guides them reflexively and helps them critically engage with the difference. Awareness of cultural difference does not mean to choose either assimilation or rejection to a new culture, but it allows them to balance the difference. I did not interview the participants' Japanese parents, although I had a chance to meet some of them in person or knew them as a friend. Based on JMHY's descriptions of their parents, I maintain that JMHY participants' parents not only create a bicultural environment, but also can act as models as intercultural speakers or mediators. This is because they have crossed their ethnic boundaries and helped their JMHY place a high value on multiculturalism (Wallance, 2004). The parents' attitude towards cultural difference is a crucial resource for JMHY's cultural awareness as well (Nakazawa, 2003).

Awareness of cultural difference may have a negative impact (Scollon & Scollon, 2012), such as reinforcing stereotypical confrontations or misunderstandings (Kumaravadivelu, 2008), but also being open to cultural difference can bring a positive outcome. A positive awareness of cultural difference (Byram, 1996, 2000, 2012) can be a new lens to critically look at your own culture as well as that of others. Instead of letting the awareness build a wall between or among cultures, individuals can use it as a vehicle to bridge between cultures. Byram's (2002) work with his colleagues states that cultural knowledge can be assessed in a yes and no question style, but for the assessment of intercultural competence, what needs to be assessed is the "ability to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange (savoir être)" (p.29). Also according to Korne's work with Byram and Fleming (2007), one of the main characteristics of being bicultural is to understand cultural differences and to process familiarity with strangeness. JMHY's interaction with their parents, who provide a bicultural environment at home and act as models of interculturally competent speakers, assists them to obtain a positive awareness of cultural difference (Wallance, 2004). It is hoped that the ordinary everyday life experiences described in the interviews have brought ample evidence that JMHY participants' cultural knowledge is not merely a collection of discrete pieces of knowledge. Rather, their cultural knowledge provides a seed for a positive awareness of cultural difference, which is the core of intercultural competence.

6.2.2. Reflecting on Their Own Experiences

The cultural resources of JMHY are deeply rooted in their family background. These cultural resources include their parents, who are also exposed to at least two cultures and who can act as models of intercultural speakers (Wallance, 2004), and also their own experiences as mixed heritage people. In the previous chapter I illustrated how JMHY participants make sense of their daily experiences to establish their sense of ethnicity. During that process, they encountered differences, such as feeling different from Japanese people and feeling not 100% Canadian. Their perceptions of Japanese people did not match those of other people. Or who JMHY participants thought they were, changed over the time. Some of their experiences were associated with their rather

unpleasant or painful memories. When I asked what it's like to grow up as a mixed heritage person, Mari's response was:

> **Mari:** Umm, I don't know. I feel like because I have, like, the two different races I know more than other people do about-not the world, but I just feel like my eyes are more open to things.

She also mentions that she becomes very cautious about the way people view other cultures, because of her early experiences of being teased by her friends about her father's limited English. It left a negative view of Japanese people initially but as she got older, she thinks it taught her to be open to accepting cultural differences. At the time of the first interview, she was taking training to become a hairdresser, but now she is back at college to become a social worker, in order to help people in need. Ana's reason to become a teacher is similar. Because of her bullying experiences in Japan, she wishes to become a teacher to deal with school bullying. Cathy hasn't had a particularly negative experience in being a mixed heritage person, but explains why all her close friends are also mixed heritage people in the following manner:

> **Cathy**: Yeah, I've actually-I've thought about it, um, and we've talked about it and when we realized that we're like wow! This is so weird! 'Cause it wasn't on purpose! Um, but I don't think it was coincidence. I think, um, I think being half you're-you're exposed to a lot more and you have to be more open. Um, so, I think that helped us connect and, yeah.

Cathy is the participant who went to several different schools and each time she identified herself differently according to her surroundings. At elementary school she pretended to be white, while noticing the difference in her mother from the classmates' parents, but not herself. At the Filipino dominated high school, she saw the differences as well as the similarities with her classmates, and she began to embrace her Asian connections. Cathy believes that through this process she has learned to be open to accept differences, and not to be constrained by the prevailing notion of who is Japanese or who is Canadian. What she once thought to be her own culture wasn't completely hers, and what she deemed to be another culture was part of her own culture. This experience, I believe, made her realize that it's not easy to draw a boundary between your culture and my culture (Hall, 1992, 1996), while she still exhibits her awareness of cultural difference. Next, I will discuss how all these experiences aid her in interactions with Japanese people.

In the previous section I discussed how the JMHY's awareness of cultural differences developed in daily life and how it assists them to develop a new lens to view both their own cultures as well as other cultures. Here I will discuss the JMHY's interaction with Japanese people to examine how their awareness of cultural difference works out in real situations. First of all, it should be noted that not many participants mention their interaction with Japanese people except with their Japanese parent or extended family members. Thus, I include their interaction with me, since I sensed all my participants see me as a Japanese person in our interaction, even though it might be merely my personal opinion.

First, some of the participants gave me an impression as if I was talking to a Japanese person. For example, during my email exchange with Stacy, she kept an apologetic tone, containing many apologies in the text of her emails. I do not see too many apologies in emails written in English, and felt that it would have made more sense if it had been written in Japanese because on some occasions, "sorry" or "excuse me" in Japanese do not mean an apology, but a sign of appreciation, more like "thank you." I also felt I was talking to a Japanese girl during the interviews with Cathy who kept smiling and laughed more often than any other participants. When I mentioned this to her sister, Amy, she agreed with me as she also noticed Cathy's different behaviour with "Japanese people." Cathy herself said:

> **Cathy**: Yeah, I think I did. I would-I would act differently, like, the way I spoke-the way I spoke. Like, more polite to my mom and actually that's to this day too, I think everyone in our family is just like speaks a lot more nicely to our mom than our dad.

Cathy works at a Japanese restaurant owned by a Japanese and explains that her work experience is different from the one she had in a Canadian owned restaurant where she worked before, saying "the vibe of everyone is different and, like, the way the restaurant's set up it's very Japanese." Then, she mentions:

> **Cathy**: We have-we have some people, yeah, it's so funny 'cause like they-it takes a little while 'cause we have to yell, like, irashaimase (welcome) when we walk in, like, it's It's just like, when you see, like, the, like, someone who has no knowledge of Japanese and they're just like, can't speak, and they just get, like, really scared sometimes to, like, yell out things.

According to Cathy, many people were fired quickly because they could not follow the Japanese work ethic. She could see why they were fired and why these workers had difficulties working in a Japanese working environment as well. She often hears her co-workers' complain about yelling and strict mannerisms.

Rina is another participant who has working experience with Japanese people in Japan. She meets foreign teachers (many of them are, like herself, English teachers) and has noticed that some of them speak Japanese much better than she does and show a greater knowledge and interest in Japanese culture. At the same time Rina listens to the culture shock experiences and difficulties these foreign teachers face in Japan, despite their better knowledge of Japanese language as well as familiarity with the culture. Thus, I asked her if or how Rina's experience differs from that of other foreign teachers:

> **Rina**: I think, well, if my mom's mannerism did come out like the Japanese. Like, I would see it and then I'd go back to Japan and be like, okay, this is kind of like cultural practice. It's okay, I've gotten used to it, I'm okay, some other people might not be, but again one of the parts of that being brutal, as well as, like communication.
>
> **NT**: Communication?
>
> **Rina:** I think I'd understand why my mom is like this. And understand why other people don't get it.

Before working in Japan, she had believed that the strict teaching strategy her mother used to use with her was her mother's own way. Nevertheless, spending some time with her Japanese grandmother and working at an educational institute in Japan, she has realized it wasn't simply her mother's way, but it's a teaching strategy that was influenced by her mother's culture. Therefore, she could see where the foreign teachers' difficulties came from because she had already experienced strict teaching strategies with her mother. The important issue here is that Rina says she can communicate better with Japanese people while other foreign teachers, with better Japanese language proficiency, express difficulties in communicating with Japanese people. I contend that it is not the language ability that reduced Rina's cultural tension, but it is rather Rina's awareness of cultural difference that made her communication with Japanese people easier. Rina's ability to appropriately interpret the communication from both sides differentiated her cultural experience from that of the other foreign teachers. Like Sachi's comment earlier about her Japanese friend who finds comfort in her presence, Rina's case suggests that

establishing mutual cultural understanding seems to be a precondition to successful communication in an oral language. In other words, awareness of cultural difference has a function in an intercultural situation, for example, in the absence of linguistic competence.

Byram's (1997) discussion of intercultural competence without actual linguistic competence is limited. However, he does suggest that when intercultural competence is looked at from psychological perspectives, as Gudykunst (1994) points out, "a sense of a common shared world" (p.159) is a necessary component of intercultural competence. Not only does that shared world rely on a mutual linguistic code, but more crucially depends on whether people share the same cultural discourse or not (Scollon & Scollon, 2012). With respect to cultural discourse, Scollon and Scollon maintain:

> No individual member of a group embodies all of his or her group's characteristics, and no participant in any discourse system is really anything but a partial or "peripheral" participant. As we have said, we all are simultaneously participants in multiple discourse systems, none of us is fully defined by our participation in any single one. (Scollon and Scollon, 2012, p. 273)

Scollon and Scollon (2012) remind us that awareness of "cultural difference" discussed here is not only about differences between Japan and Canada, or Japanese and English, but it is critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2012) to notice diversities within the cultures. In the previous chapter, I illustrated that some JMHY attempt to develop the meaning of what Japanese is by clinging to a sense of traditional Japanese culture or engaging with their personal interests, such as Japanese fashion, music or food. This finding suggests that they partially or peripherally participate (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in multiple cultural discourses. In the case of linguistic competence, as is the case of JMHY in this study, their participation in multiple cultural discourses should be one of the preconditions for a smooth communication under cross cultural situations.

By focusing on JMHY's awareness of cultural difference, I have attempted to illustrate that to be aware of cultural difference doesn't necessarily lead to negative effects; instead it could work as a vehicle to bridge the differences to conduct smooth communication in intercultural situations. For JMHY participants, they seem to have acquired this awareness from having parents who come from two different cultural groups,

from observing the way they interact with others, and from their own experience being a mixed heritage person. Because of their beginner's level of Japanese language proficiency (with the exception of Joseph and Holly), JMHY participants in this study cannot be called "intercultural speakers" but they could be "intercultural mediators" as they are able to establish the precondition for a successful intercultural communication.

To close this section, I should note that I'm aware that Byram's intercultural competence model aims to encourage language teachers to look at the importance of sociolinguistic competence, assuming learners are simultaneously acquiring linguistic competence. To apply his model to JMHY who are beginners of Japanese certainly requires cautions. Nevertheless, it is fair to state that Byram does not suggest that linguistic competence is an essential element for intercultural competence. Byram (1997) points out that when psychological factors are taken into consideration, communication in general involves many dimensions of non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions and bodily contacts. In summary, I argue that JMHY participants demonstrate their intercultural competence, in spite of their lack of Japanese language ability, because their family environment, as well as their own mixed heritage experiences, assist them in obtaining awareness of cultural difference.

6.3. Heritage Language Learner as L2 User

All participants in this study sometimes insert Japanese words or phrases into English sentences both during the interviews and in their essays, regardless of the level of their Japanese proficiency. This appears to be happening randomly at first, but the use of Japanese words and phrases is consistent. For example, Sachi says or writes a Japanese word, nihongo or 日本語 to describe "Japanese language" but never uses the English words. In this section I will focus on Japanese words or phrases JMHY use in their speech or writing and I will explore the functions of the use of Japanese words or phrases in JMHY participants' English sentences. I will show how the use of these words and phrases are signs of linguistic competence, when the concept of multicompetence is applied.

In a recent paper, Cook (2011) states that multicompetence is "the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind or the same community" (p. 1). This competence is, like intercultural competence, absent in a monolingual speaker. Thus, Cook warns of the inappropriateness of the model of monolingual native speaker for second language learners, and instead he introduces the term "L2 user" to discuss a language learner's ability. By analyzing JMHY participants' use of Japanese vocabulary in their English sentences, I aim to demonstrate that the concept of "L2 user" might appropriately account for the linguistic competence of JMHY who show a beginner's level of Japanese proficiency, but with the consistent use of a few Japanese words and phrases interspersed into English sentences.

First of all, the most common Japanese words used by JMHY in this study are either kinship terms or names of Japanese food:

> **Stacy**: Yeah. But he-he didn't go to university 'cause he didn't have money and he had to, I guess, support the family, 'cause my, um, my Ojisan was a mining engineer, or something to do with mining, so he was away all the time.
>
> **Sachi**: No and I think, uh, um, my mother would have been translating most of the time. My Obachan, however, um, I-I think I developed a very interesting rapport with her because basically I-I think I mentioned to you earlier, my grandfather passed away right after I was born […]
>
> **Cathy**: I remember. Um, and then during New Years, um, we would try to, uh, celebrate-I remember when I was younger we celebrated, like, more Canadian New Years and then when we got older, uh, we started going to, like, a Japanese Buddhist Temple at New Years. Yeah, so that was-I actually really enjoyed it 'cause completely different. You get to ring the gong and, like, have the soba and it was lots of fun. I enjoyed that, yeah.

These usages are consistent with the findings of Kang (2013), who observed that her Korean-American participants used Korean words to talk about their family members and home food. In her analysis, she suggests that while Korean Americans use English as a primary communication tool, they feel that Korean is a more private language, "occupying a different function and carrying a separate meaning from English in their daily communication practice" (p.255). These Japanese words cannot be replaced by English words, because the use of English cannot achieve the function that these JMHY wish to project. Sachi's use of Japanese loanwords to describe her Japanese grandparent is a good example. From two interviews with Sachi, it could be assumed that she feels very

close to her Japanese grandmother whom she prefers to call her “obachan” in Japanese, which is a language her Japanese grandmother understands. On the other hand, her Japanese grandfather is someone she never met and there was no chance for Sachi to develop the kind of intimacy she has with her Japanese grandmother; thus he is always referred to with the English word, grandfather. Here Sachi’s purpose to use the Japanese word seems to be to covey the close relationship with her Japanese grandmother, and as well as the different intimacy she has towards her two grandparents. Knowing the words in both languages allows her to achieve these purposes.

Most of the participants have both a Japanese name and an English one, but they use only one of them regularly in their daily lives, except Ikuko and Holly. Ikuko introduced herself to me with her Japanese name, even though all her friends call her by her English name. One of the important reasons why Ikuko chose her Japanese name to introduce herself could be to indicate to me her Japanese heritage connection, but also it is a sign that she perceived me as “Japanese person” who could pronounce her Japanese name with a Japanese accent, as she does not like her Japanese name English accented. Holly mentions a similar distinction between her Japanese name and her English one:

> **Holly:** [….] everywhere I am outside there’s always like white but like when I come home that’s when like the part of me, like Japanese, it feels very intimate just like my close relatives are the only people that I spoke to purely in Japanese. Um, Japanese is when I’m at home so part of me, like Japanese is very much, like, I feel like-I’ve a soft spot towards it because of that. So, I feel a kind of like a certain connect to them. Like, even like with you I see you as kind of like my mom, mom’s peers. Like, kind of that’s how I view them. Like, everyone who looked Japanese your age woman whatever they saw me they were my mom’s friends like ahh, Kaorii-chan that to me which is very, like.[25]

Apart from her mother, her maternal family members or mother’s close Japanese friends speak to her in Japanese and they are also the people who call her by her Japanese name. Thus when she hears her Japanese name, she feels at home and relaxed, whereas she thinks her English name represents her very public side, even though all her friends call her Holly. Her two sets of names seem to give her a different sense of who she is, contingent to social contexts (Marshall & Mossman, 2010). Holly often describes these two disparate feelings as “two sets of mind,” which might indicate

[25] Our first encounter was at a formal setting where she came to see me for a placement interview. She introduced herself to me with her English name.

that she has two different sets of language systems. However, Cook (1992) insists the L2 users are not “simply equivalent to two monolinguals but are a unique combination” (p. 557), so it is someone who can actively use more than one language for their own needs. This is Cook’s central argument to refute the native speaker as an ideal goal for L2 leaners. This argument is shared with Byram with regards to the notion of intercultural competence. The two ideas share the recognition that a distinct competence exists in people who have been exposed to more than one culture or more than one language, but is not available to a native speaker or monolingual person. As seen in the previous section, awareness of cultural difference is a key concept to bridge different cultures, instead of separating one from another. In this regard, the evidence of JMHY’s intercultural competence can support the multicompetence of these JMHY as L2 users who appear to have “two sets of mind.” For example, I consider Holly’s claim of having “two sets of mind” as evidence that she is aware of linguistic differences; therefore she can combine the differences, while distinguishing the different functions of the languages. She is someone who ”uses language appropriately for their needs, not for those of a native speaker group to which they can never belong” (Cook, 2011, p. 10).

In the case of Joseph, who also possesses an advanced level of Japanese proficiency, he can project a good example of how two different perspectives, a Japanese one and an English one, could bring the differences together. The following excerpt is Joseph’s response when I asked him why he feels he has two different perspectives:

> **Joseph**: Let me think for a second. In general, for example, like, in general I think on the skytrain if, um, two people are speaking their language really loudly I find that rude, right? But, when I’m on the skytrain with a Japanese friend I just do it and that’s normal and that’s just what we do, right? And so, like, when I-so if I see a situation from my own, like, non-Japanese perspective I’m looking at it as a Canadian I think but if I’m interacting with a Japanese person I see it as from the Japanese way. Or like if I’m-if I even see two Japanese people talking on the skytrain or something, um, I don-I wont think-I’ve never thought oh that’s rude that they do that or something oh, they’re Japanese that’s interesting or something like that. So, it’s very hypocritical I think but I see it like-like different ways of seeing things

In the excerpt above Joseph explains how his awareness of cultural differences contributes to his intercultural competence; in his words, “different ways of seeing things.” He can see why a non-Japanese person might feel it is rude when two people are speaking loudly on a train, but in effect he would do the same if he were with Japanese people and

speaking Japanese. While he knows his action would be regarded as rude, he would speak that way with interlocutors who are culturally similar. His thinking and acting are happening in one body, one person, and one mind. What makes this possible is his intercultural competence that bridges the cultural difference, which he has gained through the daily interaction with others, including his parents.

Another factor that contributes to the JMHY's multicompetence is the way they learn these Japanese words and phrases. Unlike a "regular" second language learner who might use a dictionary to learn the meaning of the vocabulary or through exposure in a classroom setting, JMHY participants learn the Japanese words or phrases from actual use through interaction in their daily life, often with their Japanese parent. Their use of Japanese words or phrases is gained through cultural process, which is deeply rooted in their actual experiences (Gee, 2004). For example, when Joseph talks about his memory of his visit to Japan, he suddenly inserts more Japanese words into his English sentences. On the other hand, since he has been to Japan only during his summer holiday, he learned very few Japanese words to describe any events happening at the other times of the year, until working at the Japanese furniture company. In his work with his Japanese co-workers, a different situation from his family environment, he learned more vocabulary. As he experienced all these situations in which he used the Japanese language, the meanings of the experiences are attached to the use of the Japanese language (Gee, 2004).

Alex and Ikuko's karate class was a similar experience of situated learning through cultural process (Gee, 2004). As their teacher was a "Japanese person," all key movements and karate techniques were taught in Japanese. Without any English translations (unless the detailed instructions were needed), the teacher could show these moves and techniques. Alex and Ikuko learned the Japanese vocabulary by watching their karate teacher's actions or by actually performing the karate. The Japanese vocabulary learned from their actual experiences did not require an English translation, or more precisely the English translation would bring a different function from what the Japanese vocabulary could achieve. Promoting a usage-based view of multicompetence, Hall, Cheng and Catlson (2006) emphasize the tie between language and actual experience as linguistic knowledge. Regardless of how many languages one can speak, when all language knowledge is seen as sets of patterns of language use which are rooted

in one's daily experience, the notion of multicompetence is fully explained (Hall, Cheng & Catlson 2006). The JMHY's situated learning assists the development of their multicompetence and suggests a link between their intercultural competence and multicompetence. It appears that the recognition of JMHY's multicompetence can support their intercultural competence.

Most of the time, JMHY participants' use of Japanese language was limited to a word or phrase, but Rina was able to conduct a simple self introduction in Japanese, and her favourite sentence was "watashi no okasan wa nihonjin desu" (my mother is Japanese)." As Rina describes it as her open line, one of the purposes of the Japanese sentence is to start a conversation with "Japanese people" who cannot see her Japanese connection in her appearance. If this phrase were uttered in English, it would carry less validity because of her appearance. Rina told me that people normally judge her ethnic background based on her appearance. Her interlocutors are already doubtful about her Japanese connection, and by using Japanese to make this statement she can highlight her Japanese heritage. In this regard, the other purpose or function of the Japanese sentence is the reflection of the relationship between her choice of language and her ethnicity. However, I argue that this is only one of the functions the use of Japanese language could achieve. Ignoring the other functions of language to focus solely on the relation between language and ethnicity could diminish the capacity of the JMHY's multicompetence.

The Japanese words or phrases (occasionally sentences) that JMHY participants insert in English sentences suggest that they possess multicompetence by using two separate languages to achieve different functions. Their usage of two languages is facilitated by their "knowledge of more than one language in the same mind or the same community" (Cook, 2011, p. 1). In this regard, to describe JMHY's linguistic ability from a multicompetence perspective, the study participants could be viewed as L2 users of Japanese. Whereas this study acknowledges that one of the functions is to highlight JMHY's connection to their Japanese heritage, it takes a holistic approach to take all the functions into consideration and identifies evidence of multicompetence in the participants of this study. Furthermore, I would like to suggest that by viewing JMHY participants as L2 users, their intercultural competence used in a cross-cultural situation can be explained by their multicompetence. By the same token, JMHY participants' awareness of cultural

difference provides evidence of their multicompetence. The investigation of the relationship between these competences could further advance the study of HL learners who are often treated as a case of language loss but who have ample exposure to their heritage culture. However, it is beyond the scope of this current study to pursue that goal, and a different methodology is certainly required for further investigation.

6.4. Summary

The goal of this chapter was to gain a better insight into the implications of the lack of HL among the JMHY in this study as language learners. Particular attention was paid to their familiarity with and exposure to Japanese culture, while at the same time exhibiting a beginner's level of Japanese language proficiency (with the exception of Joseph and Holly). I maintain that JMHY participants are different from other students who study in JSL class because they: (1) have a Japanese parent, (2) grow up in a bicultural home environment, and have an intercultural speaker at home, and (3) are a mixed heritage person. All of these elements are crucial for the JMHY to develop their awareness of cultural difference. This awareness provides a new lens, which works as a vehicle to bridge the differences, and helps the JMHY successfully conduct smooth communications in cross-cultural situations. Because of their beginner's level of Japanese proficiency, their success rests on their ability to establish the precondition for intercultural communication, more than what is exchanged verbally.

The parents of the JMHY provide cultural knowledge and act as role models for intercultural competence. In the case of Alex and Ikuko, whose mother speaks English as her primary language, their interactions with their mother seem to create a different outcome, as they do not experience ample exposure to Japanese culture through the interaction. Unfortunately this study did not produce enough findings to make their case definitive.

In the latter half of this chapter, section 6.3, the focus was placed on the analysis of JMHY participants' use of Japanese words or phrases in English sentences. This phenomenon is often investigated to see the relationship between language and ethnicity in HL education. Instead I applied a more holistic approach, using Cook's

multicompetence to examine what their use of Japanese words or phrases in English sentences tries to achieve. My analysis suggests that JMHY participants possess the linguistic competence to achieve different functions by using two separate languages, which is only present in "L2 users," not in a monolingual person. By identifying JMHY's multicompetence, I point out that the concept of the L2 user appears to be more appropriate to describe the linguistic competence of the JMHY. The close relationship between the Japanese vocabulary JMHY participants insert into English sentences and their actual experiences as a result of situated learning indicate JMHY's intercultural competence. In turn, his intercultural competence that allows JMHY participants to bridge cultural differences can support JMHY's multicompetence as well.

Chapter 7.

Conclusion

The current study was instigated by the realization that an insufficient amount of attention has been paid to mixed heritage individuals in the field of HL research despite their fast growing numbers in the Canadian population. To fill in this gap in the literature I set up the goal of this study to investigate JMHY culture in order to gain a better comprehension of their sense of ethnicity and language use. The analysis of JMHY's daily language use has produced the insights that helped me answer the research questions. In this chapter, I will first recapitulate the findings responding to the two research questions. Based on the findings, I will include suggestions for instructors and parents of JMHY. The limitations of this study are stated later in the chapter, along with recommendations for further research. The chapter ends with a brief coda in response to the preface.

7.1. Recapitulating Findings

I will recapitulate the findings of this study in this section to provide answers to my two research questions. With respect to the first question (How is the sense of ethnicity of JMHY shaped by culture in their everyday lives, and what role does their heritage language, Japanese, play in this process?), the study identified the complexities that characterize the way the JMHY in this study attempt to establish the meaning of their ethnicity. I will explain these complexities under three categories: how JMHY participants describe their ethnicity; resources of JMHY participants' ethnicity; and characteristics of JMHY participants' sense of ethnicity. It should be noted again here that Baumann's notion of ethnicity as culture is a core theoretical framework for this study, and thus JMHY participants' ethnicity under these three categories is investigated as culture. Next, to respond to the second question (What are the implications of JMHY's lack of "linguistic proficiency" in Japanese in the post-secondary Japanese language classroom?), I will illustrate the characteristics of intercultural competence and multicompetence that I have found in the case of JMHY participants' everyday language use.

7.1.1. How JMHY Participants Describe Their Ethnicity

My analysis of the data suggests that the most common way JMHY participants describe themselves is to state "I'm half Japanese" as they make a comparison to "Japanese people" from whom they clearly distinguish themselves. When the JMHY are conscious of their lack of Japanese language proficiency they tend to view "Japanese people" as people who are not only born and raised in Japan, but a Japanese language speaker. To separate themselves from "Japanese people," some JMHY use the terms "full Japanese," "real Japanese" and "pure Japanese" where they acknowledge a difference in their level of Japanese language proficiency. Their intentional separation from "Japanese people" endorses the indexical link between language and ethnicity promoted by May (2000, 2005). Interestingly though, while JMHY participants purposely emphasize the difference between themselves and "Japanese people" by utilizing the pronoun "they" or "them," they use phrases like "my culture" and "part of my heritage" to signal their sense of comfort with what they perceive to be Japanese culture. I believe that JMHY's sense of being half Japanese does not necessarily mean that they have everything half of what "Japanese people" have. Even though the JMHY could perhaps overcome that feeling of "half empty" by acquiring a high proficiency in Japanese language, it would not erase the Canadian half and make them 100% Japanese. Stacy, who currently possesses a beginner's level of Japanese proficiency, describes herself as "a very Canadianized Japanese person" or "a very Japanese–Canadian person" when one day she attains an advanced level of Japanese proficiency. For Holly, owing to her intermediate level of Japanese (except her beginner's level of reading and writing proficiency), she rather feels "double," feeling wholly Japanese and Canadian.

The term "half Japanese" might allude to or highlight JMHY participants' half empty feeling especially with regard to their beginner's level of Japanese linguistic proficiency, but it can suggest their recognition of their connection to Japanese heritage. At the very same time it could be understood as their acknowledgement of the coexistence of the other half, as JMHY participants demonstrate their difficulties in separating the feeling of being Canadian from being totally Japanese:

> **Erica**: Mm-humm, Mm. I don't think I'm completely Canadian or completely Japanese. Like a half and a half you know? Like, it's hard to, like totally like, label yourself as like either Canadian or Japanese. I don't know it's really possible.

Thus, I conclude that while language as a contingent marker of ethnicity is evident in the case of JMHY's sense of being "half" in this study, the inseparable two halves or the sense of being double also confirms JMHY participants' new ethnicities and a culture of hybridity (Hall, 1992).

Other studies (Harris, 2006; Palmer, 2007) suggest that through participating in several "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003) or sharing "affinity spaces" (Gee, 2004), diaspora youth develop ethnicities. For JMHY in this study, it is not so common and easy to find other community members in their daily lives apart from their siblings. As a result, their siblings become important members of their community even if they meet other mixed heritage persons regularly (e.g., Chinese and European, or Filipino and Latin Americans). While JMHY participants claim some level of closeness to other mixed heritage persons, the close sibling relation I observed in the youths may not be a coincidence. One of the strongest indications is in the fact that they introduced me to their sibling upon my request to find other prospective participants for this study. Instead of participating in the social communities where the JMHY could explore their sense of ethnicity, they may rely on their home environment to develop their sense of ethnicity.

7.1.2. Resources of JMHY's Ethnicity

Whereas JMHY participants' use of the term "half Japanese" indicates their acknowledgment of one half of their sense of ethnicity, they do not refer to the other half with the term "half Canadian." The findings suggest that JMHY participants interpret the common question "what are you?" (Fulbeck, 2006; Gaskins, 1999) as an inquiry into their ethnicity that does not meet the general perception of being a western-looking Canadian. Thus, they focus on the Japanese connection to explain their ethnicity. The study identified several ways the JMHY explicitly display their ties with Japanese heritage. First, the JMHY assure and are assured of their Japanese heritage by connecting to their roots or traditions. Baumann (1990) claims "[t]he weighing of legitimacies of the past and these of the future must thus differ from one community to another, and from one time and place to another" (p.195). For JMHY whose ethnicities are questioned often by others, they tend to attach to the past to reassure their ethnicities, more than to the future. JMHY in this study tend to judge who is Japanese through a sense of the reified and stable heritage of

Japanese, as I found in the evidence in Jess' and Chris' tattoos. For them, their choice of tattoo (origami figure and Kanji) is to appeal to their Japanese connection publicly but they may not realize that the meaning of their tattoos is interpreted differently in Japan. Their intention is to respect reified culture and stable heritage, but in Jess and Chris' practice of Japanese culture, they create their own culture. This example provides evidence of Baumann's notion that the process of cultural-making involves essentialist and non-essentialist discourses in the way JMHY participants make meanings of their ethnicity. The second way JMHY participants assure their Japanese connection is through the development of their personal interests. When some JMHY develop an interest in a particular aspect of Japanese culture, that becomes "my culture" rather than a culture, and they share the meaning of that particular Japanese culture with other members in the cultural community (Gee, 2004).

7.1.3. Characteristics of JMHY's Ethnicity

The study supports the indexical relation between HL and ethnicity, but a high HL proficiency in Japanese is not a key indicator for a strong tie with Japanese ethnicity in the case of the JMHY in this study. Their sense of loss stemming from the lack of advanced level of Japanese language proficiency is outweighed by an aspiration to gain recognition as Japanese. Most participants in this study seek a solution by attempting to gain Japanese language proficiency to fill this sense of loss. Joseph, who possesses the highest Japanese language proficiency of any participant in the study, shows less interest in Japanese heritage than any other participant. On the other hand, with respect to his British connection that he sees as his missing part, Joseph overwhelmingly emphasizes his connection to British heritage. Ikuko exhibits a strong desire to be recognized as Japanese and a belief that it is Japanese language that makes her feel more Japanese. Stacy, Sachi and Rina also demonstrate a serious eagerness to learn Japanese language and strive to fill their missing parts through Japanese language acquisition. Thus, based on the data, I surmise that a high level of HL proficiency is not an emblem of JMHY ethnicity. However, one's conviction that a lack of HL proficiency creates a distance from their heritage can result in a strong desire to obtain recognition as a member of HL community.

The JMHY's vulnerable link to Japanese language seems to share more commonality with that of minority language groups than that of diaspora youths as suggested in Harris (2006) and Rampton (1995). May (2005) states;

> After all, being unable to speak a particular language places immediate restrictions on one's ability to communicate – and, by extension, identify – with those who speak that language and any ethnic and/or national identities with which it is associated. This process of demarcation may be more salient for minority groups since such groups are likely to be more conscious of the need for clear linguistic boundaries in relation to a surrounding dominant language and culture. (p.331)

While most participants in this study claim that language proficiency reinforces the link between language and ethnicity, only in a few cases do the participants communicate that they do not acknowledge a connection between their proficiency and their sense of ethnicity. It appears that what triggers the link between language proficiency and their sense of ethnicity is the development of a sense of loss or a feeling of incompleteness. In other words, if JMHY never develop such a sense of loss, the level of Japanese proficiency may not correlate to their sense of ethnicity. On the other hand, in many cases in this study, some JMHY attribute their sense of loss to a lack of Japanese proficiency and convey a belief that Japanese language proficiency makes them feel more Japanese.

With respect to JMHY's sense of ethnicity, the majority of participants mention the influence of their physical appearance. Regardless of the level of their Japanese proficiency, their physical appearance works as an "obvious identifier" (Collins, 2000, p.123) by which JMHY's ethnicity is judged, or which invites a common question "what are you" (Fulbeck, 2006; Gaskins, 1999) to clarify their ambiguous ethnicity suggested by their appearance. Due to JMHY's physical appearance, when they feel excluded from a group which they wish to belong to, they tend to struggle and become frustrated about establishing their sense of ethnicity (Ahnallen, Suyemoto, & Cater, 2006).

Lastly, an overwhelming number of JMHY in this study exhibit serious remorse for their rejection to learn Japanese at an early age. Tsu (1998) suggested that it is not uncommon for HL learners to develop ethnic aversion during adolescence. In this study JHMY also admit that not only did they avoid learning the Japanese language, but also they developed an aversion to and rejected any association with Japanese culture and

heritage. Upon entering adulthood, the participants gradually began to form their own understanding of who they are, as they also began to establish their own values and perspectives of their life. According to Rampton (1999), it is not limited to HL students but typically adolescence is a liminal phase when adolescents try to come to terms with their transition from childhood to adulthood. Along the way JMHY participants rediscovered or established the value of Japanese language and their connection to Japanese heritage, which often led to their regret for rejecting the opportunity to learn the language earlier. Their regret sometimes extends to blaming their parents who did not force them to learn the language when the JMHY couldn't see any value in having Japanese language proficiency.

7.1.4. Intercultural Competence in JMHY's Case

The findings of the study suggest that the interactions JMHY experience daily with their parents create a great opportunity for them to develop communicative competence in cross cultural situations. From these experiences, they obtain critical cultural awareness, an important element of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997, 2000, 2012). The analysis of JMHY's daily language use indicates that their Japanese parent provides access to Japanese culture and allows them to claim that they know Japanese culture. In spite of the fact that their interactions are mainly conducted in English, JMHY still have ample opportunity to hear Japanese daily. The most important resource for JMHY's communicative competence is that they regularly have a chance to observe how their Japanese parent interacts with others in cross-cultural situations, regardless of the language used in interactions. The accumulation of these opportunities allows the JMHY to cultivate sensitive eyes to see cultural differences, not necessarily only between Japanese and Canadian. Thus, while the JMHY often attribute the difference they have found between their two parents to the rather essentialized view of Japanese and western culture traits, they recognize differences within cultures.

In effect, the crucial resource for JMHY participants to nurture critical cultural awareness is to have parents coming from different cultural backgrounds, which creates cross-cultural situations at home. More importantly, their parents are not only important cultural resources but the parents could act as role models of intercultural speakers or

mediators. The parents themselves have crossed their ethnic boundaries and assisted the JMHY to place a high value on multiculturalism (Wallance, 2004). The JMHY's daily lives consist of numerous encounters of cultural differences. For JMHY to embrace both parents' cultures or bi/multiculturalism, instead of rejecting one to accept the other, they accept the differences and balance the differences (Korne, Byram & Fleming, 2007). In the process, JMHY participants acquire a new lens to see both cultures (Byram, 1996, 2000, 2012). In addition, because of JMHY's personal experiences as a mixed heritage person, they seem to learn how to be open to cultural differences, as Mari states: "the two different races I know more than other people do about, not the world, but I just feel like my eyes are more open to things." On the basis of these findings, I conclude that JMHY participants' awareness of cultural difference does not set up a wall between cultures to distinguish one culture from others; rather it works as a vehicle to bridge the differences.

Byram's notion of intercultural competence sets a clear objective for language teaching and learning; thus he assumes that linguistic competence is an integrated part of intercultural competence. He is not too explicit about whether, or to what extent, that intercultural competence works in the absence of linguistic competence. However, Byram et al. (2002) suggest that intercultural competence involves the ability to establish a good relationship with interlocutors from different cultural groups, and in a recent paper Byram (2012) emphasizes the psychological aspects of language and cultural awareness by examining speaking as a social activity. In the case of JMHY whose HL proficiency is limited, they cannot rely on their linguistic competence to conduct effective and smooth communications. However, the present research suggests that some JMHY show their ability to allow Japanese speakers to feel connected to them in spite of their limited Japanese language proficiency. Therefore, with the evidence this study has brought, I would like to suggest that the effect of intercultural competence should be recognized even in the absence of linguistic competence when one can establish a precondition for smooth communications in cross-cultural situations.

7.1.5. Multicompetence in JMHY's Case

An examination of JMHY participants' use of Japanese words or phrases in English sentences indicates that in spite of their limited Japanese proficiency, they use the two

languages in a “well-formed, contextually appropriate way” (Li Wei, 2011). Thus, I argue that JMHY’s multicompetence, “knowledge of more than one language in the same mind and in the same community” (Cook, 2011, p.1), allows them access to a level of communicative competency that monolingual speakers cannot achieve. For example, Sachi’s use of three different languages presents the different level of intimacy she had with her four grandparents. While English words are always used to refer to both of her grandfathers, Sachi uses the Italian “noni” to refer to her paternal grandmother and the Japanese word “Obachan” for her maternal grandmother to indicate her close relationship to them. Holly goes by both her English and Japanese names and almost presents two separate identities as she claims to have two sets of mind. In effect, it is her multicompetence that controls her two sets of mind to achieve her language functions, as Cook (2011) insists that multicompetence is not simply two sets of monolingualisms, but a unique ability that separates the “L2 user” from monolingual native speakers.

An important factor that supports JMHY’s multicompetence is the way they have learned Japanese words and phrases. JMHY participants acquire the words and phrases from actual use through interactions in their daily life, in “cultural process” (Gee, 2004). That is clearly evident in Joseph’s range of vocabulary. Despite his Japanese being good enough to be hired at a Japanese company, he lacked even basic vocabulary to describe Japanese festivals and holidays that his family never participated in or celebrated. What could be concluded from JMHY participants’ cultural process is that learning of these Japanese words and phrases is connected to the way JMHY participants acquire their cultural knowledge and critical cultural awareness, which in turn endorses their intercultural competence. Also, with JMHY’s multicompetence in mind, my analysis offers a new perception of HL learners as “L2 users,” even though the term is not widely recognized in the field of HL education. The most important conviction Cook (2011) tries to promote with the concept of multicompetence is the idea that:

> The move away from the native speaker target affects research design and methods. If the monolingual native speaker is no longer the only true owner of a language, research needs to investigate L2 learning and use as properties peculiar to L2 users. They are not failed native speakers, but L2 users in their own right, successful in the second language to a greater or lesser degree. (p.12)

Although many scholars (i.e. Kramsch, 1993, 1997; Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997; Pennycook, 2001) in second language acquisition have challenged the status of the native speaker, such an argument in the field of HL is relatively rare. Nevertheless, my analysis of JMHY's daily language use points to their intercultural competence and multicompetence through their daily interactions. HL scholars could adapt the concept of "L2 user" to recognize HL learners' competences in their own right.

7.2. Suggestions for Parents of JMHY

Based on the findings of this study, there are several suggestions I can offer to parents of JMHY or to parents of any other mixed heritage individuals. It is, however, important to note that the purpose of my suggestions here is not to provide guidance for parents to raise bilingual or multilingual children. Rather, my intention is to share the key findings of this study that may help parents understand their children as language learners. In this study participants express and confirm their positive association with Japanese heritage, describing it as "my culture" or "my heritage," and a majority of JMHY participants claim their familiarity with Japanese culture. Interestingly they also say that their parents never explicitly and intentionally taught Japanese culture to them, but claim it was instilled in them naturally. This suggests that in ordinary daily life and through daily interactions with parents, children observe their parents' behaviours and learn a great deal of the parents' culture regardless of the language of communication in the family. In other words, parents become an important cultural resource for their children. Parents of mixed heritage youth should be clearly aware that children learn even what the parents do not intend to teach. JMHY's parents can act as a great model or supporter of multiculturalism, as Wallance (2004) suggests that mixed heritage persons value the "transgressive quality of their parents' relationship and challenges they faced from relatives and strangers" and they view their parents "as interracial and interethnic trailblazers" (p. 208). In this regard, the parents' strong marriage also contributes to a positive view of multiculturalism (Nakajima, 2003).

Likewise siblings play a role in building mixed heritage persons' sense of ethnicity even though their experiences and attitude towards their heritages vary among siblings. JMHY need a community where they can comfortably explore their ethnicity and share the

experience of being a mixed heritage person. Thus, it would be helpful for these children to have access to such a community or affinity space (Gee, 2004) where they can share activities, interests and goals. I t is also important to remember that when children feel excluded from a group they wish to belong to, that undesirable feeling can negatively impact children's self-esteem (Collins, 2000).

This study has reported that all participants who rejected learning Japanese at an early age express a great deal of remorse and some of them even put blame on their parents who did not force them to learn Japanese. This finding might suggest the conclusion that parents should insist on speaking to children in their HL and force them to speak the HL with their parents. While a positive outcome of this approach is conceivable, a risk of permanent aversion to the HL and heritage culture should not be overlooked. The very important fact that all JMHY in this study show their pride in having a Japanese heritage might be the result of their parents' effort to respect the children's choice, despite the parents' strong desire for their children to master the Japanese language. As Wang (2008) suggests, parents should carefully observe each child's developmental stages, and adequately adjust their approach to meet each child's developmental needs. The findings of this study also indicate that JMHY's personal interests, such as fashion, music and food, strengthen their positive connection to Japanese heritage, and thus parents can introduce different cultural heritage activities to their children. These may not directly help children learn the HL but could assist them to nurture a positive view of their heritage culture.

7.3. Suggestions for Japanese Language Instructors

Given the range of ages among the participants in this study and my actual teaching experience, my suggestions here are specifically for Japanese language instructors teaching at postsecondary institutions. My suggestions are targeted particularly to instructors who meet JMHY students in their JSL classes, because several previous researchers have pointed out different linguistic skills (Kondo, 2005), and different learning patterns (Kondo, 2001; Matsunaga, 2003) between JHL learners (including JMHY)[26] and JSL learners. These researchers call for a better understanding

[26] As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the majority research on JHL does not separate JMHY from JHL students whose parents are both Japanese.

of the needs of JHL students in JSL classes and an adequate pedagogy for them. While I support their argument, I would also point out that these quantitative research studies only focus on JHL students' linguistic deficiencies and learning difficulties to highlight the difference between the two groups of learners. However, the important findings of this study suggest that JMHY whose parents come from different cultural backgrounds exhibit communicative competence that is identifiable from intercultural competence and multicompetence perspectives despite their beginner's status in class.

To recognize a learner's weakness and learning difficulty is an essential step for developing an adequate pedagogy for JMHY in JSL classes. Nevertheless, in the case of JMHY who often negatively evaluate their HL proficiency, it is extremely important to acknowledge their communicative competence, which cannot be easily measured by a conventional language test. In this study Amy said that she intentionally avoided taking a Japanese course in her high school as she feared failing the course. Her reason was that receiving a bad mark for a German course was not as disgraceful as failing in the Japanese course. Similarly Potowski (2002) reports a negative reaction of Spanish HL students, when their instructors corrected their errors in their Spanish as a foreign language class. To help HL (including JMHY) leaners reach their full potential, instructors should acknowledge the emotional challenges they face in second language class as well as their strengths, such as intercultural competence and multicompetence, to overcome their weaknesses.

To develop a specific curriculum for JMHY, I cite Douglas (2008) and Matsunaga (2003), who attest to the effectiveness of individualized curriculum to accommodate the needs of JHL students in JSL classes in their research. One of the strengths of this approach is that each student's progress is recognized and evaluated individually. Thus, students are not compared to other students and their linguistic performance correlated with their final grade. Also based on the finding that JMHY participants' intercultural competence and multicompetence are the result of cultural learning process (Gee, 2004), to facilitate such a learning atmosphere with a content based learning approach might be useful. By the same token, creating an affinity space (Gee, 2004) for HL students, instructors can group HL students with students who share the same personal interests to engage in class activities. Lastly, as I have witnessed JMHY's keen interest in going to

live in Japan, instructors can recommend JMHY to participate in a language exchange program or a short work experience program in Japan.

7.4. Limitations of the Study

The study took full advantage of the inductive and interpretative nature of qualitative research to unfold the complexity of JMHY's culture and meaning making process, which cannot be presented in quantifiable terms. However, it is also necessary to recognize the disadvantages and limitations associated with this type of method. One such limitation that I could not overcome is my subjective stance. As a researcher, I cannot eradicate it. Furthermore, I do not have control over the way participants perceived me in the research process. There was ample evidence in the data to suggest that the participants perceived me as a Japanese person, and a Japanese language teacher. Even though I gradually established a good rapport with the participants and sensed that they were comfortable telling their personal stories to me, there appeared to be very little change, if any, in the way they perceived who I was over the course of time in this study. I cannot deny the possibility that the participants might have selected facts to share in our interviews and conversations that they thought would please me. In other words, at the unconscious level they may have selected what to tell or what not to tell based on their interlocutor. In effect, I did not come across any criticisms that the participants raised toward Japanese people or culture, except the aversion towards Japanese language or culture that they expressed sometimes in their earlier lives. The extent to which they monitored their view regarding their language experience would be unknown to the researcher as well as to them.

With respect to the data, while I could work with multiple sets of data, the study was limited where I failed to access more "back stage talk" (Goffman, 1959) that could have been collected through participant observation. To eschew a potential ethical concern, I did not plan to conduct participant observation unless it occurred "naturally." I admit that obtaining such data could have enhanced the rigour of this study with more details of JMHY's daily language use. My status as a novice researcher and interviewer could have negatively impacted on the collection of data as well. I discovered this only

when I felt my interviewer's skill improved in the second round of interviews, which I had found out as I listened to the interview recordings.

7.5. Directions for Future Research

One of the goals that I had set for this study is to fill a specific gap in the field of HL education, but it is only one of many still unresearched areas. Thus, there are many other questions that deserve to be explored in order to provide necessary assistance for HL learners to realize their full potential and for second language instructors to develop an appropriate language curriculum. The current study is limited to focusing on mixed heritage persons who have a Japanese heritage, but more research is needed on the mixed heritage persons from different ethnic groups, as they are a fast growing segment of the population in Canada. With respect to their HL, each heritage group faces different issues, contingent on their immigration history and social and political position in Canada, which cannot be simply over generalized. At the same time collecting enough samples from different ethnic groups should make an important contribution theoretically to the understanding of a mixed heritage individual.

As suggested by this study, it is not rare for HL learners who once refused to study their HL to enrol in a second language class to learn their HL as they value their heritage background later in life. Research on these HL learners in a second language class would challenge the boundary between theories in the fields of HL education and second language acquisition. Valdés (2005) suggests that it should bring valuable understanding of language issues among minority children in the world if the field of second language acquisition broadens its field by employing works from other areas of language education. The same suggestion could be made for researchers in the field of HL so as to contribute to a development of language education at postsecondary educational institutes.

Lastly one of the most important directions researchers should consider is team research consisting of several researchers who come from different ethnic groups and institutions. As Hammersley (2006) and Eisenhart (2001) advise, we could partially overcome a researcher's subjective stance by forming a multiple researcher group. Blackledge and Creese worked with other teams of researchers to investigate a

community of complementary schools in the United Kingdom and have reported the outcomes of their work in several papers (i.e. Blackledge & Cresse, 2008; Creese, et al., 2006; Creese & Martin, 2006). In one of their studies (Creese & Blackledge, 2012), they provide details of their team research and they emphasize the great benefit and strength of forming a group of researchers coming from different ethnic groups, as the interactions and negotiations among the researchers enrich "the analysis of the relationship between the reporting and represented voices" (p.318). However, this type of team research in the field of HL is rare in Canada, where multiculturalism and the diversity in the population are equally explicit to that of the United Kingdom. As multiculturalism expands under the climate of globalization in the world, research teams that consist of multicultural and multilingual researchers can greatly contribute to knowledge construction for language education.

7.6. A Coda

> What am I? Shouldn't you be telling me that? People tell me "I'm white" because I "look white." But then others say they can see the Japanese in me after I tell them. They say, "oh, I can see it in your eyes." Where does that leave me? No one questions my father's race or ethnicity. But suddenly, one generation later, I'm not "Asian." (Fulbeck, 2006, p. 146)
>
> What am I? How would I know? I'm only 17. I'm not one thing. I'm many all rolled into one. (Fulbeck, 2006, p. 106)
>
> I am millions of particles fused together making up a far less than perfect masterpiece. I am the big bang. (Fulbeck, 2006, p. 164)
>
> I am many little bridges joined. My parents and grandparents have many stories of making paths, and following paths, and crossing paths. I come from whalers, trappers, adventures, nomads --- all trails led to a point: me (Fulbeck, 2006, p. 78)
>
> What am I? I'm exactly the same as every other person in 2500. (Fulbeck, 2006, p. 24)

The quotes above are from Kip Fulbeck's hapa project, where his participants reply to the question; "What are you?" Their responses echo the voices of the participants in this study, even though my question was not as direct as "What are you?" As a language instructor, I have modified the question so as to understand how JMHY perceive their

ethnicity and who JMHY are as language learners. The responses in Fulbeck's book, like the life stories of fourteen participants who shared the experiences of their daily lives with me, clearly suggest the complexity of their senses of ethnicity. Even within a concise sentence, their words indicate that their senses of ethnicity are products of the intersection of past, present and future, the tension between denial and acceptance, and uncertainty around their own perception of themselves and the perceptions of others. JMHY participants' ordinary everyday life stories also vividly illustrate the density of their sense of ethnicity emerging from their daily encounters.

It was hoped that without distorting their stories, I could present my interpretation of their answers in this thesis. For my own benefit, the study has helped me build more confidence to teach other JMHY who come to my class to enrol in a Japanese beginner's course. I feel I have a better sense of the other sides of their lives, which they may not exhibit in a class setting.

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Appendix A. Participants' Information

Name	Sex	Age	Occupation	Birth place	Parents
Alex	M	21	University student	Canada	Father – Chinese Canadian Mother – Japanese, moved to Canada at age of 10
Ikuko	F	19	University student	Canada	
Joseph	M	26	Graduate student/ Youth pastor	Canada	Father – English Canadian, moved to Canada at age of 10 Mother- Japanese,
Holly	F	24	Student at nurse school	Canada	
Jess	M	27	Chef	Japan, moved to Canada at age 2	Father – Japanese Mother – Canadian
Stacy	F	25	University student	Japan, moved to Canada at few months old	
Cathy	F	21	Waitress/ DJ	Canada	Father – Canadian Mother- Japanese
Amy	F	19	Waitress / part time student	Canada	
Sachi	F	26	Part time Librarian / armature musician	Japan, moved to Canada at age 2	Father – Italian Canadian Mother- Japanese
Rina	F	24	English teacher in Japan/ shop assistance in Canada	Japan, moved to Canada at few months old	
Mari	F	22	University student/ Hair dresser before	Canada	Father – Japanese Mother – Canadian
Andy	M	20	University student	Canada	
Ana	F	21	University student	Japan, moved to Canada at age 6	Father – Canadian Mother- Japanese
Erica	F	19	University student	Japan, moved to Canada at age 4	

Appendix B. Sample of Interview Questions

- Personal background
  - Would you mind telling me your birth place and your parents' birth places?
    Prompts: Parents, siblings, residential place (if different from birth place)

- Home Language experience
  -Can you describe your home language environment when you were growing up in as much details as possible?
    Prompts: interaction with grandparents, siblings, frequent visitors, Japanese books, video, or DVD

  -Were there any events that made you feel uncomfortable because you did not understand Japanese at home?
    Prompts: Do you remember why you felt that way?

- Language experience outside home
  -Can you tell me about your friends who you hang out with often?
    Prompts: any Japanese friends, other mixed heritage friends

  -Have you been to Japan?
    Prompts: when, how long, with whom, language experience there, interaction with their Japanese relatives

- Learning Japanese experience

  -Have you taken any Japanese language classes? If so, can you tell me about your experiences with the classes?
    Prompts: type, location of school, length of learning experience, teachers, classmates, struggles, enjoyment
  -If you never attempted to learn Japanese, can you think of any reasons why not?
    Prompts: any relation to their Japanese parents, sense of their ethnicity

- Mixed heritage

  -Can you describe what it was like to grow up as a mixed-heritage person?
    Prompts: self-consciousness, other's perception, their views on other mixed heritage persons
  -Were there any incidents that made you feel or not feel a sense of national belonging?
    Prompts: any relation to language proficiency

- Perspectives for future

  -If you could relive your childhood, is there anything you wish you had done differently, in terms of language?
    Prompts: any other languages, why

Appendix C. Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for "Unlearning" a language: The case of Japanese mixed heritage young adults in British Columbia

Study name: "Unlearning" a language: The case of Japanese mixed heritage young adults in British Columbia.

Researcher: Naoko Takei, graduate student, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University.

Purpose of the Research: The aim of this research is to examine personal perspectives on language experiences among Japanese mixed heritage young adults in British Colombia.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: For your participation in this project, you will be asked to have two one hour long interviews. During the first interview, you will be asked to explain your Japanese learning experiences. Prior to the second interview, you will be asked to write a short autobiographical essay focusing on your Japanese learning experiences, or Japanese language usage in your daily life. The purpose of the second interview is to discuss your essay with the researcher. A third interview may occur so as to verify the analysis of the essay, or as the result of a re-submission of your essay. All the interviews will be recorded.

Risks and Discomforts: I foresee no risks to participants.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: Participation in this study may help to raise your awareness of your own cultural position in your every day life.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study, including submitting your essay is completely voluntary, and you may choose to stop participating at any time, for any reason.

Withdrawal from the Study: You may withdraw from this study at any point and your data will be destroyed.

Obtaining Study Result:
Should any participants like to obtain copies of the result of this study, they may do so upon its completion by contacting the investigator.

Confidentiality: The identity of all participants will be kept strictly confidential. Participants, their family members and friends, will not be identified by name and pseudonyms will be used in any reports of the completed study. The transcribed interviews and your essay, both a hard copy and an external drive, will be safely stored in a locked facility for two years. Data will only be accessed by the researcher and confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.