

**Half, Double or Somewhere In-Between?  
Multi-Faceted Identities Among Biracial Japanese**  
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This paper is primarily a literature review of research into biracial identity, with particular reference to those with Japanese and English speaking parents. It takes the position that the identities of biracial people exist on the ever-changing middle ground of a continuum rather than at the polarized ends, meaning that they have access to both their mother's and father's cultures, as well as a third identity unique to themselves. Initially, the discussion tackles issues which are especially relevant to biracial Japanese people, such as the use of terms like 'half' and 'double' and the *nihonjinron* myths of Japanese homogeneity and uniqueness. It then goes on to discuss the topic of their identity with wider reference to studies in the areas of bicultural, biracial, bilingual, and diasporic identities. The paper finishes by suggesting areas for further research, in particular the author's interest in the link between language use and identity.

ハーフか、ダブルか、それともその中間か？

バイレシヤル日本人の多様なアイデンティティ

本稿は、バイレシヤル (biracial) のアイデンティティに関する先行研究のうち、特に日本語と英語の二言語を話す親を持つ人を対象とする研究を扱う。バイレシヤルアイデンティティという概念は二文化の連続体の両極に存在するのではなく、常に流動的で、それらの中央部分に存在する。すなわち、バイレシヤルの人は、父の文化、母の文化、そして自分独自の第三文化にアクセスするアイデンティティを持っている。本稿は、まず「ハーフ」や「ダブル」などの呼称の問題、そして日本人論にみられる単一民族神話について論じ、次に、バイレシヤルである日本人のアイデンティティに関して、二重文化、バイレシヤル、バイリンガル、ディアスポラとしてのアイデンティティといった様々な領域における研究を吟味する。最後に、著者が関心を持つ言語とアイデンティティの関連について、今後の研究課題を提示する。

*"This is our logic. Being biracial isn't hard because we're confused about our racial identity. It's hard because everyone else is confused. The problem isn't us – it's everyone else."*

Chela Delgado (14)

*"It made me realize, 'If I'm in Japan, no one is ever going to accept me as Japanese.' It made me think, 'Okay, check that off the list – I'm definitely not Japanese.' ... At other times, I thought about experiences where I didn't fit in here and I thought, 'Okay, I'm definitely not American either.' That made me gravitate to what I am, which is a mixture. You lean one way and then the other. You try different things and then you find a medium where you realize the truth."*

Brian Colwell, (23) Japanese-American, reflecting on a visit to Japan as a teenager.

(Interview excerpts from Gaskins, 1999, pp. 14 and 173).

## INTRODUCTION

Personal identity is made up of many parts. We identify with others of the same age, class, gender, race, ethnic heritage, occupation, language ... the list goes on. These factors combine to make up each individual's unique identity. However, in the case of "biracial" people, the lines that would at first appear to be clear choices often become blurred; these individuals find themselves moving between their parents'

cultures, as well as occupying a middle ground. In this sense, they are not exactly "biracial", "bicultural", "bilingual" or "bi" anything else, because such traits exist on an ever-changing continuum that enables people of mixed heritage to have multiple ethnic identities, adaptable to suit the variety of situations in which they find themselves (Stephan and Stephan, 1989). Forced binary definitions of dual cultures, whether assimilationist or pluralist, are therefore inadequate models to describe the complicated mix that makes up a "bicultural" identity.

Given the rapid increase in the number of "biracial" individuals in Japan in recent years, issues surrounding "bicultural identity" have taken on added importance. The number of international marriages in the country has risen from 5,546 in 1970 to 28,372 in 1996 (Kawai, 1998). Based on statistics from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Lee (1998) compiled figures that suggest that one in thirty-seven babies born in Japan (2.7%) has at least one non-Japanese parent. In central Tokyo, the figure is one in fifteen (6.8%). While issues of bicultural identity are naturally of great importance for those families directly concerned, these challenges are increasingly being acknowledged by many other Japanese, as more children with multiple ethnic identities attempt to fit into an education system that has traditionally dictated assimilation and homogeneity over multiculturalism (Okano and Tsuchiya, 1999; Takahashi and Vaipae, 1996). A review of research into the way cultural identities are constructed is therefore not only important to those directly involved, but will further add fuel to the growing recognition that Japan is not nearly as monocultural as has been popularly projected.

Defining "identity" is not a simple task, so to a certain extent, this paper can be considered an extended discussion of the multitude of factors that make up the concept of identity. The following definition by Tajfel (1978), although somewhat dated, is a helpful starting point. Tajfel sees identity as:

that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership in a social group (or groups), together with the values and emotional significance attached to that membership (p. 63).

It is when the badges of membership to these social groups are at odds with each other that identity on the borders becomes an important topic for linguists, social psychologists, educators and parents.

The aim of this paper, then, is to examine some of the ways in which mixed-race people develop a sense of multiple identity in Japan, where the pervasive dogma tends to encourage homogeneity over difference. Initially it will address the problem of what to call such people, an issue that stands at the heart of identity construction. It will then detail some of the background that is particular to the Japanese situation, especially the prevalence of *nihonjinron*, with their tendency to emphasize the uniqueness and purity of the Japanese. It will go on to review previous studies into cultural, racial, lingual, and diasporic identities, especially as they apply to "biracial" Japanese. Finally, it will suggest areas for possible further research, outlining in particular investigations into the link between language use and identity which the researcher plans to pursue in future publications. It is hoped this paper will provide the reader with a broad overview of the concept of identity through an eclectic review of the literature from a variety of academic fields.

## JAPANESE ISSUES

### What Should I Call You? Towards a Nomenclature for Biracial Japanese People

Terminology is often problematic for racially mixed people. Murphy-Shigematsu (1997) indicates that "biracial" people in Japan have benefited from sociocultural changes which have positively affected their ethnic identities, but their position on the boundary of ethnic groups leaves them open to definition by others in ways that they do not necessarily perceive themselves.

In Japanese, biracial people are most commonly referred to as *haafu*, a word taken from the English "half". While many parents take issue with this term for its negative connotations in English ("half-breed" or "half-caste") and for its connotations of incompleteness, in Japanese it enjoys many positive nuances, inferring cosmopolitan qualities of internationalism, bilingualism and worldly experience. Interestingly, biracial Americans in Hawaii, many of Japanese-American heritage, have embraced the term *Hapa*, also originating from the English "half" (Maeda, 1996). Perhaps the pronunciation in the Hawaiian case is different enough from the original word that the negative nuances do not become readily apparent.

McCarty (1996) and Moriki (2000) note that many English-speaking parents of bicultural Japanese children feel that terms like *haafu* or *konketsuji* ("half-breed"; literally "mixed-blood child") deny their children access to one of their cultures. Some of these parents therefore prefer the use of the term *daburu* ("double") in order to give a fuller description of their children's bicultural experience. Life (1998) appropriated this term for the title of his excellent documentary "Doubles", which records the thoughts and impressions of biracial Japanese. Although *daburu* has yet to gain general usage among most Japanese, it is not difficult to either pronounce or understand, and most accept it fairly readily once it is explained. Singer (2000) warns, however, that biracial children in Japan have to "tread the fine line between self-confidence and conceit" (p. 77) in using the term, because by overusing it they risk sounding arrogant or boastful in front of their classmates, an unforgivable sin in the Japanese schoolyard. There are also those such as Craig Smith who regard the term "double" as counter-productive because of the unfair pressure it places on children to be "double good and talented" (quoted in Singer, 2000, p. 80).

In reality, however, most biracial children are commonly referred to as *haafu* in Japanese, and to varying degrees most learn to live with this categorization from others, particularly those they don't know well. Like the word *gaijin* ("outsider" or "foreigner"), the intention is usually not derogatory, although it is often taken that way.

In English, common descriptors for biracial children include "dual heritage", "bicultural" and "international". In a recent internet discussion group (Laszlo, 2000), one parent even proposed using the term "hybrid", perhaps unaware of its post-colonial connotations. Young (1995) actually warned against the indiscriminate use of the term "hybridity" because of its roots in turn-of-the-century imperial and colonialist discourses, where it was a racist term used to refer to people of mixed heritage. However, Bhabha (1994) used the word in his explanation of cultural identity to represent Third Space, an in-between place where the meaning of culture is negotiated and redefined. Another term that might also be appropriated from post-colonial literature to express this kind of cultural middle ground is "transcultural" (Pratt, 1992).

Pollock and Van Reken (1999) also dealt with this type of cultural middle ground in their extensive writing about the experience of the children of expatriates growing up in cultures different to their parents', whom they dubbed "Third Culture Kids" (or "TCK's"). Although their coinage does not encompass the element of race, it is an effective term which clearly recognizes that such individuals possess not just their host culture or home culture, but also a third in-between culture that they share with peers who come from similar backgrounds. Perhaps there is some value in adopting the phrase "biracial TCK" in the present discussion.

Other terms, more specific in nature, exist for some groups of "biracial" children. In Okinawa (and earlier in Vietnam) the large number of children born of relationships between American military personnel and local women gave rise to the term "Amerasian" (Nakamura, 2000). Gaskins also introduced the term "blackanese" to refer to those of mixed Afro-American and Japanese heritage (Gaskins, 1999).

In this paper, the terms "bicultural" and "biracial" will be used to refer to individuals of dual heritage, chiefly those who were (or are being) brought up in both Japanese and English speaking environments. The term "double" will also be employed in the hope that it will continue to gain wider popularity among Japanese speakers. However, the reader is reminded that these terms all contain some element of binarism and (perhaps unintentionally) place too much emphasis on the polar extremes rather than the ever-changing middle ground of the continuum that is likely to be closer to the real experience of mixed-race people. Further, it should also be recognized that the term bicultural does not necessarily refer exclusively to people of mixed race. Naturally, monoracial people who have proficiency in more than one culture should be called bicultural regardless of their heritage. However, most academics in the field of bilingualism in Japan appear to use the term bicultural as a euphemism for biracial, so this paper will respect that convention.

### **The Question of Japanese Homogeneity and Uniqueness**

Although most observers now recognize that race is a social construct and that at a genetic level the difference between races is minuscule (Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Luke and Luke, 1998; Root, 1992; Zack, 1995), race is still undeniably one of the greatest determinants of discrimination, precisely because societies have made it so. Japan is no exception, traditionally attempting to preserve its homogeneity by making its citizens conform to multifarious cultural rules, while at the same time discouraging outsiders, either explicitly or implicitly, from becoming members (Yoshida, 1999).

During the Meiji Restoration the Japanese government instated the Tokyo dialect as the standard "national language" (*kokugo*) (Noguchi, 2001), forcing the Ainu minority in Hokkaido to assimilate and collectively down-grading the Ryukyuan languages under the term "Okinawan dialect" (Coulmas, 1999), even though they are virtually unintelligible to mainland Japanese. The outcome of the government's nation-building drive was an all-pervasive cultural myth of uniqueness and homogeneity that links language to race and dictates a monocultural Japanese ethnic identity, despite the fact that regional differences are self-evident. After World War II, this nationalism was transformed into an ostensibly apolitical ideology known as *nihonjinron* (literally "theories on being Japanese") which set about contrasting the aesthetic,

sentimental expressionism of the Japanese with the cold, power-fixated nature of Western discourse (Dale, 1986). An extensive body of *nihonjinron* which affirm Japanese uniqueness by constructing us-and-them dichotomies on a wide variety of topics, including intellectual style, geo-climatic features, sociocultural mode and social and productive bases, was eventually amassed. Authors used key words (e.g., *ie*, *ki*, *amae*, *tate*) to mystify and deify the Japanese language with long-winded diatribe that was based more on the authors' feelings than any hard data (Miller, 1982). Unfortunately, some Western academics took the bait, accepting, echoing and even adding to the *nihonjinron* line. Those who questioned it were met with the perennial argument that they couldn't be expected to understand because they were not Japanese.

As many Japanese came to believe that they were a unique society with a homogeneous and distinctive character, the world at large also came to perceive them in this way. The Japanese establishment cites Japan's homogeneity as the reason for the nation's outstanding success in overall development as well as the relative absence of crime, revolutions and major social upheavals that have affected other major powers during the last few centuries (Hicks, 1998), and the world generally accepts this assessment because it has no information to lead it to believe otherwise.

The myth of Japan's homogeneity and uniqueness becomes particularly noticeable in situations where borders between Japanese and non-Japanese nationalities overlap. Widely accepted popular definitions of Japanese identity are based on racial characteristics, effectively limiting possession of cultural knowledge to those who appear Japanese (Yoshino, 1992). For this reason, biracial Japanese pose a particular threat to the *nihonjinron* assertions of homogeneity. By their very looks they are seen as a curious anomaly that challenges long-established assumptions of racial purity and uniqueness, which causes Wagatsuma (1982) to note that Japanese possess mixed attitudes towards the physical features of Caucasians, often expressing a kind of dual bias within the same breath. He feels that while most envy the fair skin, pronounced nose and shapely legs of the stereotypical Westerner, they also believe that Japanese skin is smoother in texture and has less wrinkles and blemishes.

This attitude — maintaining a Japanese "skin supremacy" while at the same time admitting the desirability of the Caucasian facial and body structures — is exemplified by a widely held notion that a Eurasian child will be very attractive if it takes the Japanese parent's skin and the Caucasian parent's bone structure, but that the result of the opposite combination could be disastrous (Wagatsuma, 1982, p. 311).

The fact that Japanese intellectuals have spent time on such detailed analysis of physical features may in itself be considered evidence that the Japanese are sensitive to external appearances, and perhaps also attests to their belief that they harbor feelings of both inferiority and superiority towards Westerners: the so-called "*gaijin* complex" (March, 1992). However, Nakashima (1992) believes that similar stereotypes concerning the physical appearance of biracial people exist in the United States, even though such judgements about racial features have no objective basis. Even when a physical trait is designated as positive, a distinction is nonetheless being made. Nakashima therefore contends that being seen to possess

"the best of both worlds" is just as "other worldly" as the hybrid degeneracy "worst of both worlds," leaving people of mixed race as the perpetual "other" (Nakashima, 1992, p. 172).

Recently, *nihonjinron* assertions of homogeneity have been challenged by some writers (Kanno, 2000; Kikkawa, 1998; Maher and Yashiro, 1995; McCormack, 1996; Noguchi, 2001), who instead urge a shift toward a multicultural view of Japan. In fact, Ito (1999) suggests there is undoubtedly an element of hybridity to the Japanese themselves, as they see their identity as neither Asian nor Western, but something in between.

## IDENTITY ISSUES

### Biracial and Bicultural Identity

In the United States there have long been laws that determine people's race by their lineage. The so-called "one drop rule" means that even a person whose family tree is white except for one black great-great-great grandparent is considered to be black under law in some states (Zack, 1995). Pinderhughes (1995) points out that such hypodescent is a strategy used to "preserve the purity of the White race, along with its power and domination in (that) society" (1995, p. 76).

While not institutionalized in law in Japan, such thinking could be said to prevail on a social level among many Japanese people, who tend to fear the mixing of blood not only because blood is assumed to give exclusive ownership to cultural knowledge (Yoshino, 1992), but also because of the threat mixed blood makes to social myths of homogeneity and uniqueness. The doctrine of hypodescent and the Japanese version of the "one drop rule" can be seen in the fact that biracial children are often labelled *gaijin* or *haafu* rather than considered to be Japanese. Pinderhughes (1995) believes that this kind of attitude "may prevent racially mixed people from moving back and forth between color lines, a process which is now seen as necessary for adopting a healthy, biracial identity" (p. 77).

Early studies of biracial adolescents focused on clinical psychologists' reports of individuals who experienced feelings of anomy and emotional hardship due to their mixed status. However, Tatum (1999) felt that these cases do not give a fair view of the real situation because they also involved additional hardships such as family break up, abuse or neglect — conditions that are more likely to contribute to identity problems. The first study to compare biracial students to a monoracial control group (Cauce, Mason, Aguilar, Ordonez, and Gonzales, 1992) found that biracial adolescents differed little from other people of color. Although it was previously thought that biracial people should choose either one or the other culture on which to base their identity, researchers such as Minoura (1987) and Sarrup (1996) have asserted that ethnicity is unfixed and that people consciously re-examine and redefine their cultural identities and adapt interpersonal behavior according to the multiple contexts in which they find themselves.

Although there is some overlap in the ways identity development takes place among both biracial individuals and other racial minority groups, the fact that biracial individuals occupy a place on the boundaries of race presents them with their own set of problems. Kich (1992) maintains that the development of a biracial, bicultural identity takes place over three stages: the first characterized by feelings of

difference and discrepancy, the second in which individuals search for acceptance from others, and the final stage when they reach an understanding and acceptance of their biracial identity. In addition to coping with externally prescribed identities, people of dual heritage must come to terms with loyalty conflict, a condition in which some children become confused over which parent to identify with, causing them to reject one parent and over-identify with the other (Pinderhughes, 1995).

Perhaps the biggest challenge, however, comes not from within, but from the ways in which society views mixed race individuals. This struggle is suggested by the biracial teenager quoted at the start of this paper, who insists, "The problem isn't us — it's everyone else." While children of interracial marriages learn to live with their racial ambiguity, the common reaction from those around them that manifests itself in the bewildered inquiry "What are you?" causes them to wrestle with their identity.

In the second or so that it takes to ask that question, biracial people must try to judge the inquisitor's motives — societal racism, bias against interracial marriage or just plain curiosity — and then attempt to formulate an answer that will satisfy both speaker and listener: "My father's British and my mother is Japanese." (Doesn't answer the question.) "I am *haafu*." (Half what? And what did you do with the rest?) "I am double." (What's that?) "I am human." (Don't be stupid.)

In essence, societal expectations play a large role in how biracial children label themselves and their families. Their identities may seem fluid, changing according to the context and the interlocutor: sometimes English speaker, sometimes Japanese, sometimes both, sometimes neither.

Some authors conclude that interracial families are emerging as key sites where new forms of cultural identity are being constructed. Stephan and Stephan's study (1989) found that 73% of the biracial Japanese they surveyed listed a multiple identity on at least one measure of ethnic identity, a fact the researchers believe demonstrates a potential erosion of ethnic boundaries through intermarriage. Luke and Luke (1998) discuss the possibility that the interracial relationship developed by the partners in mixed marriages gives them the opportunity to re-evaluate and reinvent their own ethnic identities, making it likely that such flexible attitudes towards biculturalism will be passed on to their children — either explicitly or implicitly. Such parents encourage in their children an ability to operate under multiple reference points, not only in order to function in the parents' cultures, but also because the parents themselves have developed a hybrid world view in their relationship as a couple, blending the practices and beliefs of two cultures within their family. Schwartz (1998) concludes that such

[i]ndividuals who are socialized as multiracial usually benefit from their heritage. Their families provide them with a cultural education that is broader than that of monoracial children, giving them both a larger knowledge base and a more well-rounded sense of the world. They have an enhanced sense of self and identity, and greater intergroup tolerance, language facility, appreciation of minority group cultures, and ties to single-heritage groups than do monoracial people (Schwartz, 1998, Advantage section, paragraph 1).

However, Moriki (2000) and Yamamoto (1995) both note that some parents in Japan choose to bring up their children monoculturally in order to avoid having the children feel different. Murphy-Shigematsu (1997) believes that biracial Japanese are likely to regard a monoethnic identity as normal and desirable,

but when they attempt to assert such an identity they are often met with a lack of acceptance from those around them. In this respect Stephan and Stephan's (1989) notion that ethnic identity is selected rather than assigned is only partly true. Perhaps a more accurate statement might be that biracial children select their ethnic identities and then continually adjust them based on the perceptions of those around them.

Identities are formed (at least partly) through socialization (Murphey, 1998) and as biracial children find themselves in a variety of situations, it is likely that they will develop the ability to operate under social rules that may sometimes conflict. In places where there are large numbers of biracial Japanese existing in a community, such as in an international school (Ochs, 1993) or on an American army base (Williams, 1992), a transcultural world view develops, and usually results in an eclectic mix of language, tastes and pursuits. However, children of dual heritage who are taught solely in Japanese schools can be very much in the minority, lacking both a group identity and a physical space in which to form one. Okano and Tsuchiya (1999) point out that the Japanese education system has always assumed that its students are "Japanese", and assimilated anyone who was "a little different". Families in which the children attend a regular Japanese school must seek alternate opportunities to experience the English-speaking parent's culture in order to maintain a bicultural heritage.

### **Bilingual Identity**

Language is one of the most apparent manifestations of biculturalism in Japan. Part of the *nihonjinron* myth asserts that the Japanese language is too difficult and too subtle for a non-Japanese to comprehend, effectively instituting a link between race and language (Miller, 1982). This may manifest itself in situations where certain Japanese feel they must speak in English to a double because the child's physical characteristics suggest that s/he is not "Japanese". Most international families can tell stories of Japanese strangers talking in English to their children, either to "test the child's level" or to publicize their own language skills. English in Japan does enjoy a definite prestige (Loveday, 1996), but this comes as a mixed blessing to biracial Japanese, as they may be held in distant awe or jealous contempt, or be expected to be capable of linguistic competence beyond their development level.

Because many Japanese fall into the trap of inferring Japanese linguistic ability based on physical features, children born to international families (who defy definitions of homogeneity by their very existence) can sometimes face rejection from society. Some therefore try to minimize their distinctiveness by behaving like the majority population. "One way is to refuse to speak the minority language, at least in public and sometimes in private as well" (Yamamoto, 1995, p. 80).

However, refusal to use the minority language is accompanied by the risk of losing an understanding of the minority culture, since "language infiltrates so intensely the social experience within a culture that neither language nor culture can be understood without knowledge of both" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 93). A survey by Yamamoto (1991) found that over 80% of her sample of English/Japanese speaking international couples living in Japan were in favor of bringing up their children bilingually and were making efforts to provide them with a bilingual environment. Although the families experienced varying degrees



of success, there seemed to be a general trend in which native English-speaking parents who spoke in Japanese or a mixture of Japanese and English to their children were (perhaps predictably) less likely to have children who were active bilinguals.

It has long been understood that bilingual people can change their identities according to the context and the language they are using (Ervin-Tripp, 1973). Kramsch (1998) further recognized that by changing languages, bilinguals can demonstrate their right to a multiple cultural identity.

Language crossing enables speakers to change footing within the same conversation, but also to show solidarity or distance toward the discourse communities whose languages they are using, and whom they perceive the interlocutor as belonging (Kramsch, 1998, p. 70).

Spolsky (1998) backs up Kramsch from a sociolinguistic point of view, claiming that

(t)he selection of a language by a bilingual, especially when speaking to another bilingual, carries a wealth of social meaning. Each language becomes a virtual guise for the bilingual speaker, who can change identity as easily as changing a hat, and can use language choice as a way of negotiating social relations with an interlocutor (p. 50).

So how do these multiple identities manifest themselves in the Japanese situation? Williams (1992), herself an American-Japanese brought up bilingually on an army base in Japan, conducted interviews with 43 doubles in Japan to examine their bicultural lives. She maintains that the biracial Japanese have created their own blended culture and customs through their language to produce a "third culture":

Code-switching, which was originally a matter of family communication, became the unofficial language of the Amerasian – an inseparable part of his or her psyche. Many also learned when to keep quiet about their knowledge of the other language and when to disclose it. Sometimes Amerasians pretended they could not speak either language, to get special attention or for mere convenience .... Amerasians took on many worlds: the Japanese-speaking world of their mothers, the English-speaking world of their fathers, and the marriage of two (or more) languages in which they created their "half-and-half" world. As a system of symbols with socially governed guidelines, bilingual code-switching allowed Amerasians to relate to their parent groups, to express their sense of self, and to formulate a group solidarity and belongingness to their very own multiethnic group. Through their languages, they thought, spoke and lived in multiple consciousness (Williams, 1992, p. 295).

In a similar fashion, Ochs (1993) also found that the students at the international school he studied were able to "assimilate linguistic and cultural elements from Japanese society, and incorporate them into a pupil language that is a rich mosaic of lexical diversity and code-switching" (p. 452) in order to express their cross-cultural existence.

This mixture of Japanese and English is known in Japanese slang as *champon*, a term appropriated from a word meaning to mix drinks or foods in an unlikely combination. The use of *champon* during in-group communication has also been noted among Japanese returnees (*kikoku shijo*) who have been raised and educated overseas (Kanno, 2000). Returnees are often chastised by monolingual Japanese

for allowing English expressions to intrude into their conversations because it is perceived that they are showing off or that they don't know the proper Japanese word. However, Kohri (1996), herself a *kikoku shijo*, argues that the use of *champon* by transcultural people is a means of fully expressing their identities, not something to be embarrassed or ashamed about. Nishimura (1997) found that Japanese-Canadian *nisei* changed the degree of their codeswitching depending on the nationality of the interlocutor. They used more Japanese when a native Japanese speaker joined the conversation, even when it was known to all that that person spoke English.

Thus, hybridized language becomes a means for bicultural people to strengthen group ties and express both their cultures among people who are capable of comprehending. Papademetre's (1994) study of self-defined and other-defined bilingual group membership reveals the important point that "self-defined cultural identity on the basis of bilingual competence is not something static and it is still subject to further modification by the members of an in-group." Thus, bicultural adolescents in Japan, by using *champon* among themselves, are asserting a cultural identity that is neither that of an English-speaker nor that of a Japanese, and are reinforcing this third mid-way culture among their peers.

Pan (1995) acknowledges that codeswitching is sometimes spontaneous and automatic, but she also infers that mixing languages can be a hindrance to the full development of two languages. For this reason, parents and teachers may try to encourage the use of only one language in order to ensure mastery of that language. Yet, as Papademetre (1994) asserts, in situations where speaker and interlocutor understand both languages, codeswitching may serve to affirm shared cultural knowledge rather than merely indicate inaptly acquired linguistic ability. Thus, for bicultural children, knowledge of both Japanese and English linguistic conventions and non-verbal communication cues, as well as of how to mix them properly, is seen as proof of the right to bicultural group membership. Ochs (1993) notes that when teachers' and bilingual adolescents' attitudes to language use are at odds in this way, the students are likely to reject the pure form of the language because of its link to authority. The dilemma for English-speaking parents, then, is whether to risk such rejection or to use Japanese and possibly end up with children who are monolingual Japanese speakers.

For biracial children themselves, the question of language mixing tends to be determined by their educational and community setting. Those who are brought up on American armed forces bases or who attend international schools naturally develop a third culture through contact with other bilingual Japanese, but in contexts where the minority cultural identity is not valued by the school, children are unlikely to make public the fact that they have access to a second language (Oliver and Purdie, 1998). Biracial Japanese who are educated in a monolingual Japanese school are far less likely to feel comfortable speaking English outside (and sometimes also inside) the home. This kind of situation, by its nature, is difficult to quantifiably research, so to date, there have been very few studies done on this topic within the Japanese situation. There is an obvious need to look further into the cultural development of these "isolated biculturals".

## Diasporic Identity

The post-colonial concept of diaspora has been widely examined during recent years by academics in the field of cultural studies. This term refers to the voluntary or forcible movement of groups from their home countries into new places (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 1998) and was originally used to express the scattering of the Jewish peoples throughout the world. Its meaning has since been broadened to include other groups who have been culturally displaced due to movement from their original countries, including the Chinese (Ang, 1994; Chow, 1993) West Indians (Braithwaite, 1971; Ifekwunigwe, 1999) and African Americans (Gilroy, 1993). Ashcroft et al. (1998) note that as minorities, the descendents of such emigrant groups create a creolized version of the dominant culture by both modifying it and combining it with the culture of their parent(s). To many, their diasporic identity becomes a positive affirmation of their hybridity. In this section it will be argued that the identities of biracial people in Japan are, at least in part, influenced by a similar diasporic sense of loss of place that serves to both preserve and extend their hybrid minority culture.

Diasporic identity is often influenced by the assumptions and imaginations of the majority group. Ien Ang (1994), an Indonesian of Peranakan Chinese descent living in Holland, emphasizes that her identity is formed at least in part by the expectations of others, who imagine her to be fluent in Chinese because of her physical characteristics. She rejects their assertions about her, stating that "[i]t is a condition that has been hegemonically constructed as a lack, a sign of loss of 'authenticity'" (p. 11). Other people's belief that she must have come from China has forced her to identify with a self-constructed image of a "Homeland" in which she has never lived.

In a similar way, dual heritage Japanese are expected by the people around them to be "internationally aware" and "Western". To many Japanese, having a biracial Japanese friend is a means to prestige through association.

The strategy of Westernizing is intimately connected with the strategy of upgrading ... [and] seeks to fuse and blend foreign derivations into the native matrix in order to express and symbolize a new, internationalized Japanese identity that superficially appears to have much in common with the admired and idealized aspects of the prestigious, external model-culture and its members (Loveday, 1996, p. 202).

Being caught in the middle has its drawbacks as well as its rewards. Living up to their socially prescribed image as symbols of "internationalism" can prevent some from expressing the Japanese identity which is often closer to their reality. Moreover, for those children whose English-speaking parent is not from the United States, others' expectations can be problematic because, to the Japanese, *Western features* usually equates with *North American*. Those biracial Japanese children who have no direct experience of life in America may attempt to construct one for themselves based on what they see on TV, trying to act like the Americans they are expected to be (Arboleda, 1998). At the same time, biracial Japanese are often the victims of "othering" from both directions, on occasion being burdened with the responsibility for loose American gun laws from one direction and Japanese whale slaughter from the other. But whether the reactions from those around them are xenophobic or xenophilic (Bammer, 1995),

ultimately it is their difference from the group that prevents them from acquiring an identity in the same way as their peers.

In particular, a diasporic loss of homeland emerges for bicultural Japanese when they face the difficult decision of how to express their pluralistic world view despite regulations that do not allow dual citizenship for adults. Under Japanese law, a child's nationality is determined according to its parents' nationality, but while it is permissible for a child to hold two nationalities, the law states that an adult must have only one. When they reach the age of twenty, biracial Japanese are therefore urged to choose one nationality over the other. Those who do not report their choice to the Legal Affairs Bureau by their twenty-second birthday may have their Japanese citizenship revoked by default (Mizu, 1999). For biracial Japanese adolescents, this can be a heartbreaking dilemma. They may have been brought up bilingually and biculturally, learning the social rites of two different communities and feeling both Japanese and Western at the same time. For some, being told they must give up one of their nationalities means in effect losing part of their cultural identity, part of what makes them who they are. For others, it means choosing between their parents or electing to favor one "home" over another. It seems that institutions have little tolerance for racial ambiguity. In perpetuating binary thinking that equates citizenship with race, the Japanese government is denying biracial individuals the right to possess their hybrid cultural identity (Bhabha, 1994; Jeater, 1992; Ryang, 1997).

The traditional relationship between space and culture is no longer a certainty. Clear connections which used to exist between a nation and a culture can no longer be assumed. Non-Japanese in Japan have not only adapted their culture to their new surroundings, they have also changed the Japanese way of thinking, and a once isolated people have become more cosmopolitan. "Multiculturalism" is both a recognition that cultures have lost their links to definite places and an attempt to work this plurality of cultures into the national identity (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). The Japanese policy of "Internationalization", on the other hand, appears to recognize other cultures only with respect to the place that they traditionally belong.

Although hybridity is a given in all post-modern cultures, biracial people are forced to carry theirs more visibly than the rest of us. Maybe it is that they are in fact less ambiguous in their affiliations than those of us who have the privilege of identifying with another culture without having to wear it as a mask in every public situation. Lavie and Swedenburg (1996) outline a paradigm shift in which "us and them" dualisms are giving way to "historically grounded multiple subject positions". Binary notions of self/other, *nihonjin/gaijin*, *uchi/soto*, are no longer appropriate to describe the wide variety of identities that exist within each of us.

Identity defined as "other" in relation to a dominant class, culture, or gender order, suggests an identity defined by what one is not. Such terminology does not have the conceptual capacity to signify mixed and hybrid self- or identity- presence, or the dynamics, productive tensions and contradictions that emerge from the everyday lives and practices of blended and malleable cultural identities" (Luke and Luke, 1998, p. 733).

Monoracial no longer means monocultural to the increasing number of non-Japanese who "talk the talk" and "walk the walk" in Japan, but according to *nihonjinron*, this counts for very little if they don't have the DNA to back it up. Their children, however, do have a right to be called Japanese, even if they don't always look the part. These children are challenging traditional Japanese notions of purity and creating their own means to traverse and operate under multiple world views.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

What is clear from the literature is that bicultural identities are best understood as continually changing self-constructions, which are rarely located at the polar extremes of a binary continuum, but instead tend to occupy the middle ground. They are often reconstructed according to the opinions of others. In Japan, international families are creating new forms of identity through their visible hybridity.

Further investigation needs to be carried out on the ways this third "in-between" culture manifests itself among biracial Japanese. As a starting point, a sociolinguistic analysis similar to those carried out in Australian situations by Pan (1995) and Luke and Luke (1998) may provide useful data in order to address the question of which languages are used in the home and how these affect the child's identity. To a certain extent information on bilingual trends in Japanese/English households has already been collected by Yamamoto (1991, 1995), but her data is based on a simple questionnaire completed by one of the parents in the international families she surveyed. What is needed is raw linguistic data in order to determine in further detail the ways in which Japanese/English codeswitching is used to reinforce in-group bonds among biracial Japanese and how language is appropriated (*champon, haafu, double*) and used to create a new (sub)culture. A small number of such language samples were collected by Ochs (1993) to back up his thoughts on multiple identities in Japanese international schools. Japan's international schools, or perhaps a dormitory attached to one, would seem to be an ideal place to start such research because of their relatively high number of biracial students.

Rampton (1995) completed an extensive sociolinguistic/ethnographic analysis of language crossing and interracial Creole in British schools that may prove helpful in establishing procedures for collecting data on codeswitching. Lee's (1996) ethnographic study of Asian students in a Californian high school also stands out for its similarities to the case of the bicultural Japanese. Like the students in Lee's study, Japan's doubles generally enjoy a favorable image as an overall stereotype, but often actually have a fairly hard time coming to terms with their identity on an individual basis in an otherwise exclusionary society.

However, an increasing number of parents, such as those interviewed by Singer (2000), are choosing to educate their children in mainstream Japanese schools because they want them to have a solid knowledge of the Japanese language, something that is difficult to achieve at an international school. Other families who cannot afford the high fees charged by international schools or those who live in outlying areas also tend to put their children into Japanese schools. The problem here lies in the fact that there are unlikely to be large numbers of bicultural students, so it becomes difficult for the children to maintain their Western identity outside of the home. Some international families have formed social

groups or Saturday schools (Pauly and Yamane, 1999) that meet on weekends to provide their children with the additional emotional and linguistic support they need. This would be another potential site to gather data from children who do not have links with the U.S. army or international schools. In fact, a comparison between the education delivery modes of English-centered international school and Japanese-centered local schools would be of great interest to the increasing number of international families in Japan.

An investigation into the languages chosen by bicultural Japanese in a variety of situations would also prove useful in further determining how this affects their identity development and in-group affiliations. Perhaps equally important would be to document monoracial Japanese reactions to biracial Japanese in first-time situations or in classroom conversational discourse, especially in relation to tolerance, recognition, and empathy.

Pinderhughes' (1995) review of biracial identity studies recommends using "normal" populations, not just "problem" adolescents, and conducting research based on ecological, non-Eurocentric models, such as the Logan group's "genograms, eco-maps and cultural continuum". Interview techniques like those employed by Gaskins (1999), Murphy-Shigematsu (1997) or Luke and Luke (1998) should also ideally be incorporated.

Finally, one area of interest that deserves further investigation is the issue of what to call the children of international families in Japan. It is clear from this literature review that binary notions such as "half" and "double" are inadequate to describe the multiple selves that make up their multi-faceted identities. Although this topic has been covered previously by academics (McCarty, 1996; Singer, 2000; Yamamoto, 1995), there has been little documentation of how these children and teenagers concerned refer to themselves. Rather than directly asking them in an interview and getting the answer they think the interviewer wants to hear, there is a real need to gather data from peer group conversations that can help shed light on this question.

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