COMPARISON OF MULTIPLE IDENTITIES: A POPULAR JAPANESE SINGER
TRYING TO MAKE IT IN AMERICA

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A comparison of multiple identities:

A popular Japanese singer trying to make it in America

"Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone" (2001). This quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson shows how much culture, society, and individual identity are connected to one another through language. By using language, humans can express themselves; they can communicate and share ideas and experiences. It is through language that humans discover who they are (Llamas & Watt, 2010). It is through language that humans interact with those around them. And, therefore, it is language which is at the heart of a human being’s identity, making them who they are (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Language is essential to individuals and culture, to societies and evolution. By using language, an individual can assert who they are, what they believe in, and what their place in society is (Joseph, 2010; Omoniyi, 2006). However, as human beings acquire fluency in more languages than just their native language, they are given the chance to recreate themselves through this additional language and find a place in the culture in which the language is used (Ros i Solé, 2007; Mantero, 2007; Byrd Clark, 2007). This paper will examine research in the field regarding the 1) formation and acquisition of multiple linguistic identities, as well as examine 2) differences in these identities that result from culture and societal expectations and 3) identity creation through the internet and in celebrities, with particular attention paid to the idea of performative, constructed identities giving a public persona. A case study is presented comparing multiple identities in an celebrity individual, contrasting identities in Japanese and English in a Japanese pop musician,
Akanishi Jin, who is attempting to break into the American music market. The comparison will note the differences between Japanese and English in language, politeness levels, and societal expectations, while the comparison of Akanishi’s identities will study his linguistic usage in his two languages and a linguistic biography analyzing his English song lyrics. By analyzing the linguistic constructions of Akanishi’s two performative identities, this paper will explain and show how Akanishi has had a second identity in English constructed that is more open, free, and uninhibited than his Japanese identity is.
Literature Review

Performative and constructed identities

Performative and constructed identities are those which are built for a specific purpose to display a persona. The notion of constructed identities builds on the idea that from socially accepted shared knowledge come discourses and communication, in which an identity is negotiated, and within the discourses are encoded meaning that contributes to the perception of the identity in question (Schöpflin, 2001). Identities can therefore be built deliberately so as to appear in a certain way and for a specific purpose. Stan (2011) talks about identity as a social construct, which draws references from other researchers who have coined the idea of performative identity and utterances (Austin, 1970; Butler, 2000). This idea claims that even if an individual does not recognize that he or she is doing so, by negotiating and constructing an identity, he or she is following a script with each discourse. A persona is being displayed and perceived by others (Stan, 2011).

Butler (1990), as quoted in Pennycook (2007), said, “identity is performatively constructed by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (p. 70). This identity is constructed through his linguistic choices and in turn, the constructed identity produces linguistic items – these aspects are what will be analyzed and provided in the case study presented later. An example of one of these linguistic items is the idea of politeness between Japanese and English, grammatically embedded and integrated into the Japanese language where the same cannot be said for English, and the study analyzes how different
the politeness level of how and why Akanishi Jin, the Japanese pop celebrity who is this work’s case study, corresponds between his two languages and constructed identities. More information on Akanishi Jin and the specifics of his career and situation will be presented later.

An identity is a production, and is, in turn, identified by what it is producing. Pennycook (2007) went on to say that “identities are a product of our ongoing performances of acts that are largely pre-scribed” (p. 70). This performance is an ongoing cycle. This aspect of performative identity relates back to the initial claim that identity is not something that we are, but rather a culmination of that which we do and say – the same concept applies here, to constructed, performative identities, which are the way they present themselves, and as such take their root in the linguistic manner of speech in which they communicate. The production of language is then, here, the base of these identities (Pennycook, 2007).

Burck (2011) says that language is “constitutive, performative and comprised of discursive practices which provide meanings and values” (p. 363). Burck notes that individuals position themselves as they wish to be seen and perceived, within the target culture or the culture in which the identity is being constructed within. This positioning is negotiated constantly, just as individual identities and social identities are, but the aspect of performance is again an undercurrent.

Norton (1997) reiterates the earlier link between language and identities, and expands that to the construction of identities, in saying that “identity constructs and is constructed by language” (p. 419). She also notes that identity construction can be effected by the perceived cultural identity of the L2. The power and relations between the
L2-learner and the L2 culture can either be “coercive or collaborative” (p. 419). Akanishi’s particular case indicates that the L2 culture has been collaborative in the construction of his performative English identity, by this second identity taking on familiar slang and linguistic patterns in order to self-identify with the market it is targeting, as will be shown in greater detail during the case study.

Because the nature of Akanishi’s identity is that those viewing or reading his productions towards the fans are dealing with a performative identity, constructed for specific reasons in order to achieve popularity and recognition, it is important first of all to establish what the idea of a performative identity is before moving on to discussing identity and how an individual’s own identity is constructed through language.

**What is identity? The link between language and identities**

In order to explain how identity and language are intertwined, one must first define *identity* as used in this context. Identity is, at the very simplest form, an individual’s self perception of himself or herself, and society’s own perceptions of the individual, or how others would assign a definition to the individual (Bailey, 2007). The facets that make up this perception are built up from a variety of sources: conversations, interactions, societal norms, and culturally acceptable behavior. According to Buckingham (2007), quoted in Greenhow and Robelia (2009), identity is a process, and “identity is something we *do*, rather than simply something we *are*” (p. 123). Human beings use language as the way to describe and define our own identities and others’, and this link goes so deep that we, both consciously and unconsciously, judge, label, and
assign others’ identities by the way they speak and use a language. Both the identity itself and the language we use to express it is in a constant state of development, shifting due to experiences, culture, and interactions (Llamas & Watt, 2010). This process of development takes place from birth to adulthood, and includes an aspect of performance, in which the individual adheres or acts along lines set up by the culture or society in which they are living. An individual’s identity is, then, something that the individual both creates and self-sustains through all interactions and discourses (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009).

Bailey (2007) states that “the constitution of identities – through the negotiation of congruent ascriptions – can be visible in the turn-by-turn talk of individuals” (p. 31). An individual’s identity is constantly being negotiated and changed through all of the interactions he or she has with others (Keim, 2007; Ros i Solé, 2007), because even the social identities to which an individual ascribes are being continuously revised, altered and adapted by the individual’s experiences with others and influences from surrounding sources (Bierbach & Birken-Silverman, 2007; Lauring, 2008).

Social identities, as mentioned above, also influence and shape the individual’s identity, and come from the groups or societal circles that the individual belongs to, such as ethnicity or gender. These social identities allow the concept of identities to have both an individual level and a collective, or societal, level to them (De Fina, 2007). Despite how simple the idea of a social identity may seem, particularly when broadly defining an entire group of people by something such as ethnicity, an emerging idea is that an individual’s social identity is anything but. This social identity is something that evolves and develops over a long period of time through a constant series of social interactions,
giving the aspect of identity a high degree of malleability, just the same as the individual’s own identity (Phinney, 2008). It is also influenced and determined through context, as an individual can selectively choose which aspects of the social identity – of which they may have several groups or circles they identify as being part of – to use in any given situation and in any given discourse (Bierbach & Birken-Silverman, 2007; Llamas & Watt, 2010).

This way of looking at social identity is a concept that has been studied and researched in the field of linguistics, resulting in what is known as social identity theory. The heart of this theory is the idea that an individual’s goal is to “maintain a distinct and positive social identity” (p. 95). This social identity is described as the individual’s self-definition when compared to a social group, specifically a group to which they claim or assume membership to (Llamas, 2006). An individual in question can be a member of any number of cultural or societal groups. Associations with such groups, which range anywhere from local circles such as family and friends, to national or even global circles, which can include nationality and gender, can intersect and overlap in any manner of ways that mold an individual’s social identity into a uniquely defined trait. Individuals can then, with this social identity making up a part of their own, draw upon certain aspects of each social identity they prescribe to at any given time, choosing their response or method of interaction based on the aspect or facet of their identity they wish to use to portray themselves (Llamas & Watt, 2010).

From this, we can see that an individual’s identity is in itself a complex and always changing self-projection and perception, and, because these identity-revising and constructing interactions most often happen using language, we can see how language
can and does affect both social and individual identities. In sociolinguistic research, it has been said by Tabouret-Keller (1997) that “language acts are acts of identity” (p. 12); in this sense, language behavior is constantly redefining and negotiating the individual’s identity, just as the identity is shifting and altering the language used to describe it (Omoniyi, 2006). Joseph (2010) says “people’s choice of languages, and ways of speaking, do not simply reflect who they are, but make them who they are” (p. 10). The dynamic and ever-changing nature of identity is influenced by language, but at the same time, the reverse is also true; people’s identities are also the reason that the language around them shifts and changes with time (Joseph, 2010). Examples of this phenomenon can be seen everywhere, from the increased use of commonly typed components netspeak that are shifting American English on a year to year basis, to the idioms we use daily that have evolved or been created by common American practices, such as gambling or sports. These facets of a language are defined by those who use it; they, in turn, define themselves by it, and such is the constant pattern of change and evolution within both the language and the individuals. Every year, Merriam-Webster adds words to the English dictionary that have been developed and integrated into the American vernacular, such as in 2006, when the verb google was officially added (Associated Press, 2006); words such as google are given social meaning and lasting power by those who call the language their own.

Lauring (2008) says that language is the reason behind social interaction and provides the opportunity for it, and that through it, individuals are integrated into cultural and social groups. In regards to ethnic group identification, it has been proposed that an individual uses languages as the most important aspect of discovering and identifying
oneself within a social network framework (Laroche, 2009). The two aspects of language and identity, both individual and societal, are locked in a circular structure that is never-ending. This is, perhaps, the best way of describing how and why language and identity cannot be separated from each other, for they are too irrevocably tied.

The idea of identity and how it is negotiated and formed can then be applied to the original theory presented about performative identities; the same practices and discourses are used to construct a persona that are used to develop an individual’s identity. Language and linguistic productions are produced to negotiate a performative identity in the same way, along the same framework.

To sum up, language behavior is what drives an individual’s identity, because it is through communication and language that an individual negotiates his or her way into a societal and cultural group, creating and refining his or her own identity; it is through language that individuals find their own places in society and how they present a construction of themselves that becomes who they are. Just like an individual’s identity, culture as a whole is negotiated in the same way, on both the individual and group levels, which is explained next.

**Negotiation of culture and identity through language use**

Since the link between identity and language has been established, it is now important to look at the link between language and culture. Culture itself, in regards to linguistics, has been defined as beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviors and social habits that belong to a group or society in particular (Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung & Ying-Chien
Even one single language, such as English, is not used the same between all English-speaking countries; instead, these *versions* of English, such as American English or British English, have their own systematic and unique rules, patterns and utterances. These versions of the language are shaped by the culture that uses them, and therefore, a culture can, in essence, take a language and alter it to make it that culture’s own.

Communication within a culture is a means to share beliefs and ideas with other members, often within the same society or group. Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung and Ying-Chien (2010) point out that it is through communication that culture is learned, acted out, transmitted and preserved. Some scholars, such as Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), have indicated that things as simple as the style and form used in communication, in terms of social identity, especially, are important and meaningful concepts that identify a person and their role. They argue that due to the high complexity of communication in terms of culture and sociolinguistics, all vocal and verbal interactions are embedded in cultural meaning, because these interactions are, by nature, socially organized. It is through culture that communication finds meaning, understanding and necessity. Schieffelin and Ochs go on to argue that without socially negotiated discourses, a culture effectively has no meaning; each member of the culture who communicates within it is shaping it through their own individual negotiations with one another. These aspects of *reality*, which they define as both concepts of self and social roles, are all constructed through this method of interaction.

Ideas such as *stock knowledge* and *typifications* are pieces of information among a culture that are embedded and shared. When communication happens within a culture, both parties rely on this background information being used, unconsciously, to fill in the
gaps; as such, both parties share what Schieffelin and Ochs call *overlapping realities*. They argue that even with parties and the culture itself negotiating roles and identities, these common realities “maintain a sense of social understanding” (p. 165). It is these shared backgrounds that unite individuals and give them a feeling of belonging (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

It is safe to say that while culture shapes and determines language, the language then also shapes and determines culture. The two are entwined, and one cannot exist without the other. However, in terms of L2 learners seeking to be part of the L2 culture, this can be a difficult process. L2 speakers must negotiate their right to be a part of the L2 culture just as an identity is negotiated through communication; they must be seen as legitimate speakers of the target L2 before they can be seen as being part of the society that uses it (Ros i Solé 2007).

Kramsch (1998), as quoted in Li (2007), said, “language is the most sensitive indicator of the relationship between an individual and a given social group” (p. 26). Language use is how individuals prove themselves to be part of a society or culture – members of a particular group identify others from the same group based on cultural indicators within language. These indicators can be anything from the individual’s accent, marking him or her from a specific area and, therefore, from a specific culture, to the grammatical variations within the individual’s speech patterns. Furthermore, individuals can alter and change their own speech patterns to assimilate into patterns and word choice that the culture they are part of uses; in this way, collective identities can exist and change over time (Li, 2007). For these reasons, learners who hope to be accepted into the fold of an L2 culture must overcome a variety of adversities, and, quite possibly, forever
be marked by the aforementioned indicators such as their accent, no matter the level of near-native fluency they eventually obtain.

Cultural identity, or a nation’s centermost agreed upon culture, is negotiated in the same way that an individual’s identity is, only on a much larger scale. Hall (1996), as quoted in Tsui and Tollefson (2007, p. 9) said, “national cultures construct identities by producing meanings about “the nation” with which we can identify; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, images which are constructed of it.” Culture and cultural identity is decided upon by those who are a part of it and also by those who are outside it – there are aspects of a nation, both good and bad, that are recognized and identifiable by members of it and non-members looking in on it. It is, at the heart, a community, though one that is largely imagined and constructed by those living within it (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). The most common and universal method of constructing imaginary bounds for a culture or nation are to look at commonalities in language; a language can, does, and will unite a culture, because it is through the language that they find the methods to discuss and negotiate the culture itself. It is no coincidence that, in American English, at least, the languages used by various cultures are similar if not identical to the name of the nation itself. This is our primary way of identifying one another as being a citizen of a certain country or national identity, but as globalization expands and the number of global inhabitants who learn to speak multiple languages grows, this method of identification will become less and less reliable.

Culture and language, then, are just as interwoven as language and identity are; through discourses and negotiation, culture is constantly changing just as an individual’s
identity is. Through shared experiences and a shared language, members of a cultural
group identify and interact with one another, drawing upon and creating shared social
identities that integrate and overlap with an individual’s own identity. This concept
extends to include more than one identity and culture, as an individual achieves a degree
of fluency in a language other than their first language, and from this, we get the
linguistic concept of multiple identities.

The concept, formation and juggling of multiple language identities

Because language, identity and culture are so intertwined, we must then look at
the idea that learning a second language involves taking on, creating, and shaping a new
identity using that language and culture. There is a belief that an individual is not
replacing their old identity with this new one; instead, these two identities exist side-by-
side, for use when the language associated with the identity is used. The second identity
is created, not by eliminating the first, but as a means of existing alongside it (Ros i Solé,
2007). This second identity is not simply a part that makes up the whole context of the
individual’s identity – such as specific social contexts or the individual’s role within a
particular social situation, as spoken about earlier when looking at the concept of social
identities – but rather an entirely new identity created through the L2 and taking into
account aspects of the L2’s culture and society. The difference between a social identity
and a personal identity and multiple personal identities must be established.

Mantero (2007), said that “…language learners are able to help construct
themselves as they wish to be perceived by others” (p.4). This construction of identity is
done through language and discourses with members of the second language (or L2) culture and community. This second identity is negotiated just as their first is, allowing the individual to shape it as they wish, taking into consideration certain imposed identities that the L2 culture and community compels on those within it – such as gender roles or social status (Mantero, 2007). While there has been some research into the constant and difficult negotiations that go into multilinguals’ identities, there is still much unknown about the subject. Byrd Clark (2007) describes the process as “complex and unequal” (p. 94), noting that both sociopolitical and socioeconomic issues go into both sides of the equation. It has been noted that “language is an identity marker” (p. 20), and when a bilingual chooses which language to use in a given situation, that individual has effectively chosen which identity of theirs best fits the context or discourse (Omoniyi 2006). Omoniyi (2006) also says, however, that rather than viewing identities in such a black and white way, researchers should instead look at the language choice process as an overarching idea that all of the identities are still a part of, with varying degrees of importance – each identity is still there and still being used, but at different levels. Identity levels, Omoniyi states, are “always co-present” (p. 30).

Within dual identities and languages, there is the linguistic phenomenon of code-switching, where an individual effectively switches between languages, often to add emphasis or intensity to what was spoken (Koven, 2004). While early linguistic analyses thought of code-switching as simply a mash-up of two languages that was, in the end, neither, research from Gumperz in the 1980’s contradicted this. Gumperz showed that code-switching was done intentionally, rather than something that early linguists had thought of as a phenomenon that happened due to lack of fluency in both languages being
used. He found that code-switching was not simply two codes mixed together without grammatical rules, but instead a deliberately used method of communication which acted as an additional resource, in that it offered a larger range of meanings, expressions, and possibilities. In this way, code-switching was not an accident, but instead a calculated reaction used to perform a specific function (Milroy, 1995). Koven (2004) explains that the same method of research used for whole cultures could also be applied to a single individual who is fluent in at least two languages, and how the code-switching displays and produces the desired effect by using both at certain points, for certain reasons.

The reasons why individuals use code-switching are far beyond the scope of this analysis, but it warrants mentioning when looking at the larger idea of multiple identities resulting from fluency in more than one language. Code-switching in a single discourse will not be analyzed in this project, but some of the theories concerning it can be applied in a wider scope than a single negotiation. In his research into Korean singers’ use of English for specific purposes, Lee (2007) made the striking note that Korean entertainers’ use of English is driven, in part, by the ability to use English to create “sexually liberal, socially less inhibited, and politically more vocal identities” (p. 289). In this way, Korean entertainers code-switch between their native Korean and English to express ideas or sentiments that may not be deemed socially acceptable by their native culture. The idea, which was mentioned previously, of a language being shaped by the culture that uses it manifests itself here; by using English and adopting a more English or American identity, Korean entertainers can express themselves in ways they could not, should not and would not in their native language (Lee 2007). This idea factors in quite heavily to this project’s hypothesis that a second identity in a second language can be quite a bit freer and more
open than the first—though this depends on both the first language and the second language in question. It is worth mentioning that Korean entertainers have, in a large part, many commonalities with the subject of this project’s case study, who is a Japanese entertainer, and the noted usage of English by Korean entertainers, or K-pop stars, as they are often referred to, can be considered when analyzing this project’s case study.

Studies recently centered on the possibility of multiple linguistic identities have described the idea of identity in an increasingly multilingual world as hybrid, intentional, and flexible; the global village the world has started to become has opened up the possibility for the negotiation of identities simultaneously, but identities still have a social base (Li, 2007). As explained earlier, this social base is the culture that the L2 language is formed from; for instance, a learner who is studying English with an American professor, at an American university, or being given content centered around American culture, is going to, in turn, negotiate an English-language identity that borrows and shapes itself heavily around American-accepted cultural norms.

While identity is both individual and societal, the invention of the internet and social networks within in the internet, identity formation has, in itself, been affected and changed by this. Because social networks and online interactions have, in some ways, taken the place of face-to-face discourses, an individual’s negotiation of identity has shifted over to social networks and can largely take place online. These online interactions are still discourses and media through which an individual continues to reform and sustain his or her identity, but the internet, due to its relative anonymity, has given this idea of identity formation a new light. The opportunity to create a new name, or online handle, and to immerse oneself fully in a new social environments allows a user
to move in and out of varying identities in *shared-mediated environments*, in which simply being there and becoming a part of it can be the only *entrance* that a user needs in order to consider oneself part of the community. In this way, an individual can, in essence, become anyone they want to be – and the internet has opened up a way to shape and create multiple identities in whatever way the individual wishes to. People are also given the chance, through electronic media that connects them virtually to any region or culture they want, to experience things they would not have had the chance to experience before the creation of the internet. These experiences, though online, are still shaping their first identity when they walk away from the computer; these experiences are opening their identity up to interactions and negotiations that are outside their geographic areas (Ribeiro, 2009). In this way, creating another identity within another culture is becoming easier than ever before.

In Greenhow and Robelia (2009), the idea is presented taken from Slater (2002), in which “you become what you type” (p. 124). Many of the social identities that an individual is perhaps automatically associated with – most notably gender and ethnicity – are not immediately recognizable and visible during online interactions. Rather, an individual can create an identity for his or herself almost from scratch, including identities that may not even be realistic or usable offline during face-to-face discourses. This “online identity” gives a great deal of freedom to individuals, allowing them to act and interact in ways they would not necessarily be able or allowed to in their offline counterparts (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). In a sense, the internet and the global village have let individuals create another identity without necessarily having another language in which to do so; this *digital* identity gives them the freedom to choose their identity in a
way that traditional discourses have never allowed. How this digital identity factors into the idea of multiple identities is slightly different from having an L1 identity and an L2 identity, however. The individual’s digital identity is conducted online, and while the internet does, in a way, have its own culture, this culture is not directly comparable to cultures as defined earlier as centering around a nation or group of people. An individual does not necessarily need to create a new identity when using the internet, because they do not need to acquire a second language to communicate (whether or not they choose to do so, such as an individual choosing to learn English due to the high volume of web pages today written in English, is different from having to learn an L2 in order to function at basic levels within a society).

Multiple identities, therefore, are separate identities that have been negotiated and shaped around and by the culture of the language in question. This culture can offer a degree of freedom or, possibly, a tighter restriction on linguistic etiquette, depending on the languages in particular. Code-switching is used by individuals with fluency in multiple languages as a way to add emotion or to express something specific when interacting with other bilinguals, often chosen based on context and circumstance within a specific discourse. Digital identities open up a greater freedom to individuals looking to create a new version of themselves on the Internet, but do not compare to the necessary addition of a second identity in a new language and culture that many individuals find themselves faced with. Differences between identities due to cultural and societal factors, specifically between the two languages compared in this case study, Japanese and English, is explained in more detail next.
Variations in language use and social identities between Japanese and English

The connection between language, culture and identity has been established, and the concept of multiple linguistic identities has been explained. Because culture and language are so connected, we can look at language use within a culture to examine, in a simplified way, what factors are considered important enough to a society to merit having linguistic devices within the language. One example of this is the concept of politeness.

Politeness can be explained as consideration, courtesy, and tact, or the way that members of a society use language to communicate with one another. English does not have a developed honorific system; the same word you is used to address another person, regardless of the speaker’s social standing in relation to the listener. Japanese, however, has a highly developed honorific and politeness system that is a central part of the language itself. Taking the same example of the word you, which is used in English for nearly everyone who is not the speaker in direct conversation, the following table explains how a Japanese speaker would refer to the other person, with notes on the politeness level that each form falls into (see table 1.1).
Table 1.1 Japanese addresses for the English word “you”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese form</th>
<th>Corresponding politeness level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anata</td>
<td>Polite (to someone of equal or lesser status)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name + honorific</td>
<td>Polite (to anyone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimi</td>
<td>Familiar (used with family or close friends)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omae</td>
<td>Familiar, often derogatory (towards an inferior), sometimes a familial nickname</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The honorific described above is a suffix added to the end of a name that shows a level of politeness and respect. The *Genki Japanese Integrated Course Book* (1999) describes honorifics as ways of showing and establishing social power spheres among speakers. The honorific in question here is normally *-san*, which is the polite equivalent of Mr. or Mrs., explained in more detail later during the case study. This concept of changing verb forms depending on the speaker and listener’s relationship and politeness level has been referred to as *deferential language* – a means to display respect and politeness through language communication (Salzmann 2004). This is not done only through honorifics added to the end of names, though this is done both when addressing the person in question and when speaking about another person without them being present. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs all take on separate conjugations and changes according to the speaker’s relationship to the listener and vice-versa. This reference point between the two is used for determining nearly all choices in language construction pertaining to politeness. The Japanese language allows and expects users to
employ special vocabulary and specific word changes at the various levels of formality (Goldstein, 1975). This process can also be called *linguistic etiquette* (Coulmas, 1987).

An example of verb conjugations and linguistic choices along politeness levels is shown in table 1.2.

**Table 1.2 Japanese verb conjugations for *kuru* (to come)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb form</th>
<th>Corresponding politeness level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuru</td>
<td>Casual (plain) form, present tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimasu</td>
<td>Polite form, present tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mairimasu</td>
<td>Kenjougo (humble) language, present tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oideninarimasu</td>
<td>Sonkeigo (polite) language, present tense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verb conjugation in Japanese is split into three groups: plain form, which is the casual form, polite form, and the advanced polite form, called *keigo*, which is itself split into two parts, *kenjougo* (humble) and *sonkeigo* (polite). The difference between kenjougo and sonkeigo is that kenjougo is used when referring to or talking about oneself or someone of a lower status, and sonkeigo is used to refer to or talk about someone of a higher status (Banno, Ohno, Sakane, & Shinagawa, 1999). As shown above, a Japanese speaker adjusts all conjugations in a conversation to reflect the level of politeness they feel is correct.

Verb choices, honorifics on names, and means of expression are all ways that the Japanese language displays and adheres to the level of politeness expected in Japanese society. In this way, Japanese society uses languages to mark the differences between people, whether they be age, profession, or social status. Because of the link between
language, culture, and identity, this marked separation in society translates directly to identity within the Japanese culture and seeing oneself in a much more role-driven way. American culture, in contrast, can be seen as a constant struggle to suppress or eliminate differences between people, from the broad use of personal terms such as you and we regardless of gender, status, or roles of the groups, to the American concept of unity as a nation; this, in the same way, affects identity within the American society (Goldstein, 1975). Identities within the two societies, then, are created, negotiated and developed quite differently.

The use of honorifics and politeness levels correctly by Japanese speakers is, according to some, seen to be an indication of intelligence and higher class; thus the ability to use the linguistic etiquette system of the language well can be seen to elevate one’s social status. The politeness system in the Japanese language is so ingrained in the societal norms of the culture that the use of it, by native speakers, is seen as something worth aspiring for (Okamoto, 2004). It is therefore impossible for speakers of Japanese – and, by extension, their identities – to forget their place in the social scheme and their status amidst their culture. Their identities are more permanently fixed to act in a certain way that is deemed acceptable and appropriate by their culture and the given situation. A speaker of Japanese always has a concrete role in both the discourse and society as a whole (Suzuki, 1978).

It has been noted that to use the honorifics and understand the relation between the speaker and the listener in order to choose the correct level of politeness, the speaker must already have and know his own role within society to determine the changes that need to be made – this is an interesting concept towards how the Japanese language may
be considered insular (Coulmas, 1987). This also relates back to the earlier explanation of societal roles, in which an L2 speaker must negotiate for his or her right to speak and exist within the L2 culture in the first place; in the case of those learning Japanese as their L2, this means correct use and utilization of the forms and variations of polite speech.

The idea of self or the individual, specifically the individual’s role within the target culture, is quite different between Japanese and English. The idea of being Japanese and the Japanese concept of self focuses on the individual’s role and identity in relation to the culture or group – in contrast, the American and Western concept of individualism is largely centered around the individual in contrast, or as opposed, to the group (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). Because Japanese culture views self and individuality much different than American culture does, the expression of oneself as such varies drastically between the two cultures and languages. In fact, the American idea of individualism, as defined above, is seen not as a positive trait in Japan, but as a negative one. What Americans see as uniqueness and strength, the Japanese view as self-centeredness; it is the individual’s contributions to the group, rather than their competition with it, that is defined as individuality within Japanese culture (Hashimoto, 2007).

Roles are viewed differently between the two societies, and as such, identities are constructed to fit within these socially demanded roles. Due to the often pronounced differences between American society and Japanese society, individual and social identities from these two can often be very diverse. An individual who has fluency in both languages then can, due to the negotiation of a second language identity with an L2,
develop two identities that may be quite different from one another. This theory is the basis of the case study presented here.

**Japanese pop culture: Music, performance and identity**

In this case study of Japanese pop singer Akanishi Jin, it is important to look at the pop culture of Japan and how those placed in the spotlight are suggested, encouraged and, at times, expected to act. The popular culture of Japan as a whole varies across the board, but there are a few strong characteristics that are almost universally applicable to it. Pop culture in Japan had a strong sense of realism and innocence – it is often positive and empowering, while not glossing over the unattractive or darker sides of life. It also tends to emphasize the normality of routine and everyday actions; illustrated stories (*manga*), television shows, and movies often center around normal people with normal lives, and very often these characters are teenagers (Craig, 2000). While this may not seem striking, this sense of *normalcy* and realism is an important factor to identify on the subject of *aidoru*, or idols – the common term for Japanese pop singers.

When beginning to talk about popular music in any society, a few things must first be mentioned. As Stevens (2008) pointed out, music that is *popular* is not necessarily all about the music. Instead, factors that make music enjoyable or popular to groups of people is largely made up of what humans consider to be important – and this can be anything from the structure of the pieces, the content, or the sociohistorical content. Stevens also went on to say that the cultural identity within popular music is
constantly evolving, often due to the increasing effects of globalization. Music from any society, such as Japan, can now be shared and distributed all over the world, without demanding that consumers set foot inside the country. And this, too, effects the cultural identity of the music; fans outside the society will form their own ideas and perceptions about it, which will vary from the perceptions that the Japanese audience has on the same subject. These differing or shared cultural positions create a framework for the media being consumed, whether it be negative or positive (Stevens, 2008).

*J-pop*, the term that is applied liberally to popular music that stems from or has roots in Japan, is the most broad word used to describe the whole. The idea of a cultural identity in J-pop can be traced to a few key points that make up a performer’s sense of *Japanese-ness*. The most important factor is having Japanese blood, or at least being able to trace Japanese ethnicity in the immediate family, followed by fluency of the language and residency within the country. The construction of this cultural identity is created and marketed by Japanese agencies – *jimushō*, as they will be called hereafter – and is a cycle that, above all else, serves to promote the idea of a Japanese identity. Even the use of the *J* at the front of the J-pop term, which is done in *romaji*, or Roman letters, keeps the idea of the Japanese cultural identity at the forefront of productions within Japanese popular culture, even those, such as *anime*, that eventually become popular globally (Stevens, 2008).

Japanese pop culture, as a whole, has a tendency to take something from another source – such as taking hip-hop music from America – and make it inherently *Japanese* rather than simply the imitation of something else. An example of this can be see in the Japanese hip-hop culture; while American hip-hop started with African-Americans in the
inner-cities and has grown to be something of a cultural society on its own, giving rappers and listeners something to belong to. Japanese hip-hop was adopted and adapted as a way to set musicians and listeners apart from the mainstream, middle-class Japan. By interspersing Japanese raps with English words and utilizing the same beats and rhythms, Japanese hip-hop artists were able to take an American music style and create something that is uniquely theirs (Condry, 2000). In this way, even Japanese hip-hop music is still Japanese. The same way that Japanese pop music is referred to as J-pop, Japanese rock is generally nicknamed as J-rock. The idea of cultural identity and Japanese-ness is always present in the music.

While the history of Japanese pop music can be traced back to post-World War II time periods, the topic of this research begins in the 1990’s, when the idea of idols hit the popularity boom that it still boasts today. Johnny’s Jimusho, an all-male talent agency that focuses on the production of idols – which can be described as highly produced singers with a “high level of commercial exposure” (Stevens, 2008, p. 55) – became one of the most important standards in popular music in this era and in the subsequent decades. Talent signed to Johnny’s Jimusho are groomed and produced to appeal to the female population, usually the younger ones, within the country, using television appearances, image songs – songs tied to a drama that one of the idols is usually acting in – and highly stylized concerts (Stevens, 2008). Talent within the agency are recruited typically as juniors and usually spend time, sometimes up to years or a decade, back-dancing for other established groups. As juniors, the budding idols are routinely showcased in popular magazines and on television shows devoted solely to those within the agency who have not yet debuted with a group, such as Shounen Club Premium.
Should the talent be chosen for inclusion in a group, they are then aggressively marketed by the agency following their debut (Darling-Wolf, 2010). These idols, known as *jyōniizu-kei* or Johnny’s idols, are often marketed with *larger-than-life* or boy-next-door personalities. The contrast between the two marketing strategies is worth noting; it is unclear why the agency itself chooses a particular strategy for each idol or group (Shu Min, 2011). This paper’s case study, Akanishi Jin, was part of a group called KAT-TUN (the name of the group being taken from the first letter of each of the members’ last names) that was established to be back-dancers for an established, older group called Kinki Kids. The marketing for KAT-TUN was often substantially different from the marketing for other groups. Instead of being given a clean, boy-next-door image, KAT-TUN, and Akanishi Jin, were often labeled as the agency’s *bad boys*. This image is noted by even seniors in the agency, as shown by an interaction between Nakai Masahiro of the long-debuted and popular Johnny’s group SMAP and KAT-TUN’s Kamenashi Kazuya, when KAT-TUN attended SMAP’s television show SMAPxSMAP in 2010 (translation only):

Nakai: Is it okay? Image-wise. You’re kind of the bad boys of Johnny’s, right?

Nakai: “We don’t care if it’s left or right…”

Kamenashi: That’s just our image. It’s just an image. (SMAPxSMAP, 2010)

This image is important to note when looking at Akanishi Jin’s constructed identities in both English and Japanese, as his language choices indicate a rebellious nature to his performative identity in English compared to his persona in Japanese. The *bad boy* image that the agency has allowed him to keep may have been done because
Akanishi refused to adhere to the other, cleaner images kept by other agency members, though this is only speculation. An example of KAT-TUN’s marketing is shown here:

Figure 1.1 KAT-TUN’s *Queen of Pirates* concert pamphlet

From left to right: Akanishi Jin, Kamenashi Kazuya, Taguchi Junnosuke, Tanaka Koki, Ueda Tatsuya, Nakamaru Yuichi

The agency keeps the idols at the forefront of society’s attention by arranging for them to appear on many media outlets, from newspapers to variety shows to commercials for nearly every product imaginable. The combination of exposure and near-constant music releases keeps them at the top of the charts (Shu Min, 2011). However, with such heavy moderating comes a price: the talent within Johnny’s Jimusho are given little options or decisions on how and when they will be marketed, giving the agency a large portion of the power in determining their own performance identities. While much of the agency’s rules are unknown, it is common knowledge that the agency has a strict no-dating policy, and it is speculated by many fans (AsianFanatics.Com Forum, 2011) that there are rules as to what the idols are allowed to talk about in interviews and on
television programs. For this reason, the identity presented in the case study is a performative, constructed one, as we cannot be sure if Akanishi himself is behind it or if there are several members of the agency determining how it will be constructed and portrayed.

Earlier, the differences between individuality in American (Western) civilization and in Japanese was discussed – this idea is paramount in the explanation of why idols, like Johnny’s idols, are developed, marketed, and consumed the way they are. Because the idea of individuality in Japan is so different from its American counterpart, idols in Japan are often very normal or average-looking, so they do not serve to put themselves above their fans. The idea here, as explained by Judith Herd and referenced in Aoyagi (2000), is referred to as tōshindai, meaning life-sized, and the feeling that this evokes within fans and audiences is that the idols are not extraordinary, and that the fans, too, can reach a similar level if they try to. This life-sized feeling is used to promote solidarity between the idols and their fans, as explained by Sun Music Productions President Hideyoshi Aizawa (Aoyagi, 2000). As such, the identities cultivated and promoted by Johnny’s idols are often those stressing the normal characteristics of the idols – fans of Johnny’s talent often get to see their idols partaking in embarrassing situations, participating in routine activities, and failing miserably, all on national television and official videos. Rather than hide the talent’s own quirks and failings, Japanese culture embraces them due to the feeling of closeness they evoke in the fanbase, who can relate because they, too, have faults of their own. This is a unique facet of idols in Japanese pop culture that is seldom mirrored in Western culture, but that allows the idols to show
perhaps more of their true identities without sugar-coating the parts that are perhaps considered sub-par.

While Johnny’s Jimusho does put the idols’ flaws on display, there is a limit to what they will show; the no-dating rule, as mentioned previously, is a long-standing rule that pertains to Johnny’s idols in order to preserve the idols’ perceived availability to the fans. However, availability is not the only thing that the agency wishes to keep open; public drinking, arrests, and fraternizing at clubs or bars are all behaviors that the idols are perhaps discouraged from partaking in, and are all regarded as scandals, along with being seen dating publicly, that the gossip magazines in Japan will report on. While their public identities can be perceived as edgy, their private lives are expected to remain clean. Morris (2006), speaking about an Italian actress, mentions that it was important for actresses during the early years of Hollywood and all the way up to the 1950’s to keep their “private lives scandal-free” (p. 43). Any behavior that was a deviation from “acceptable behavior” (p. 43), Morris claims, needed to be hidden in order to continue cultivating a correct public image. This same concept applies to idols in Johnny’s Jimusho, over fifty years later. This, too, is important to note in regards to this paper’s case study, as Akanishi Jin’s seeming rebellious personality has often landed him on the scandal pages of the gossip magazines when he engages in behaviors that the agency – and, perhaps, the Japanese public – find to be unacceptable.

The idea of showing the idols’ flaws corresponds to the previously mentioned marketing strategy of showing them as the boy-next-door; in contrast, the idea of being larger-than-life is generally displayed during things such as concerts and performances. It seems that the feeling the agency wishes to convey at the particular moment changes
depending on the context, and this is perhaps the explanation behind how such opposite marketing strategies can be used on the same idols.

The feeling of closeness that develops between fans and their idols in Japanese popular culture is described by Aoyagi (2000) as a “virtual sense of intimacy” (p. 311). Because Japanese pop culture displays so much of the idols to their fans – from their faults, their mundane home lives, and their aspirations and dreams, fans feel as if they are close to their idols. Sociologist Hiroshi Ogawa, in Aoyagi (2000), stated that this feeling of obviously superficial intimacy is perhaps greater than a similar feeling shared between close friends, because there is no chance for conflict. While the possibility of fighting or losing face with real friends is always there due to the nature of human relationships, the intimacy between idol and fan has stripped this away, and the fan can always count on the idol to be there in the capacity that they have always been. As such, many of the aforementioned activities and others are used systematically to continue to build and maintain this feeling of closeness between the idol and their fans (Aoyagi, 2000).

This feeling of intimacy is in direct opposition, perhaps, to the polite way that the idols speak to their fans and viewers – this politeness will be addressed later during the case study, when Akanishi’s linguistic forms in Japanese are presented and studied, but it appears that while the idol is meant to appear close and friendly with fans, the linguistic etiquette in the Japanese language requires them to address their fans with respect in order to not appear overbearing, unappreciative, or egotistical about their positions and successes. While this is only speculation, the idols’, and particularly Akanishi’s, linguistic norms imply that either they or their management are constantly aware of the
divide between them and their fanbase even when they are marketed in such a way as to bridge it within their fans’ minds.

Television, in particular, has served as a large contribution for idols in Japanese popular culture to develop and promote identities – through talks on programs and variety shows, they are given the chance to create an identity or persona of themselves that they present to the public. The star is given the chance to present a “multilayered public image” (Stevens, 2008, p. 55), though, as previously noted, the idols within Johnny’s Jimusho have less control over this than their peers in the same genre.

As mentioned earlier, the use of English, particularly in regard to Asian music and singers, is widespread and often follows particular patterns. Earlier, Lee (2007) gave several reasons for why Korean singers use English rather than their native language, and it is important to revisit this idea now while applying it directly to Japanese. Stanlaw (2000) pointed out that compared to normal Japanese conversations, including loanwords that have been integrated into the vernacular, English is particularly common in Japanese songs. While Stanlaw made his observations about female Japanese singers and musicians, the same point remains true throughout Japanese pop music, regardless of the gender of the singer. Stanlaw ventured the hypothesis that Japanese songwriters use English to get around the “linguistic restrictions” that the language imposes on them (p. 88). This, along with Lee (2007)’s observations, make the same point – that if one’s native language has a set of rules on what is allowed to be said and how to say it, English can open up a freedom that the musicians do not have in their native tongue. As we have already looked at the ways that the linguistic norms and rules, including etiquette, differ between Japanese and English, we can see that the lack of similar restrictions in English
could be seen as very freeing for a singer hoping to express him or herself through lyrics. Stanlaw also mentioned that it is common for English teachers in Japan of Western origin to note that their Japanese students learning English will speak about things, using English, that they will not speak about in Japanese; Stanlaw’s point here was that “using a foreign language lifts them out of a Japanese context, liberating them from some of the conventions and discomfort that are attached to certain words or subjects in Japanese” (p. 96). This carries through to Japanese musicians, who use English – varying from a single word to whole songs – to express ideas and thoughts in ways they feel they cannot in Japanese (2007). Johnny’s idols are no different; English is used often throughout the songs and lyrics, with the singers themselves often having English abilities far below the level used within. Because many Johnny’s idols do not write their own music, part of this can possibly be attributed to the fact that English, as a global language, is the easiest link between them and their fans in non-Japanese speaking countries, where the idols frequently hold concerts and events. For those idols that do write their own music, such as Akanishi Jin, use of English may be from a marketing standpoint and may also relate back to the desire to use the language to explore more linguistic freedoms while constructing a second performative identity within the American English culture. A closer look at this in regards to Akanishi’s performative identity is discussed and analyzed later.

Moody (2006) notes that J-pop music has a large amount of English in it, fulfilling two specific functions: loanwords that are written out in Roman letters and code ambiguation. Moody describes the theory of code ambiguation as a system that utilizes the idea of code-switching, so that “social functions may take place without the
interference of ethnicity” (p. 218). In this way, Japanese pop songs can evoke meanings or express ideas that escape the constraints of Japanese etiquette; an example is that by using English rather than Japanese, an element of “playfulness” (p. 220) can be inserted into the lyrics to mask or mislead the audience as to what the singer is truly expressing through the song (Moody, 2006). This ties directly to the idea at the base of the case study’s linguistic biography of Akanishi Jin’s English lyrics, and the constructed aspect of his second identity that expresses things he or his management would not do in Japanese.

In regards to why Akanishi or his agency chose English as the language in which to market his second identity and career, Honna (2008), said, “English is practically indispensable in disseminating information beyond the national border” (p. 5). Due to the highly and increasingly globalized nature of the world, English has become the first and most natural choice for many non-English companies when aiming to expand their market into countries other than their own (Honna, 2008; Pennycook, 2007). By using English to market Akanishi, the agency has shown a willingness to push into markets beyond the Japanese and surrounding Asian markets they had already been advertising to and targeting with their talents. Through English, Akanishi’s second identity is given the opportunity to diversify English, as his first language background contributes to the way his identity uses and produces the language. Non-native English speakers are increasingly taking English and developing their own version of it (Honna, 2008).

Japanese society does, as a whole, show a reluctance to take English and integrate it into their cultural norms. Despite requiring English to be taught in schools, Japanese speakers do not often achieve fluency in English, and Moody (2006) notes that it is only
media in Japan – and more specifically television – which achieves a state which could be called multilingual. English is used more to show a specific image of a cosmopolitan state of being than to appeal to Japanese audiences. Moody goes on to say that in Japan, English is largely seen as a way to communicate between countries and between cultures, and not for communication within Japanese society between native Japanese speakers. It is also worth noting that most Japanese media that uses English focuses on American English (Moody, 2006), which is also what Akanishi uses as his second identity’s dialect.

Pennycook (2007) claims that English is a byproduct and an instigator of cultural flow around the globe, and that “English is a translocal language” (p. 6). English as a language has the ability to embed itself within a culture, and brings with it aspects of the English-speaking culture that can then be used and adapted by the first non-native English speaking society in question. Specifically, Pennycook mentions that hip-hop, as a culture that spans beyond just the American music market, has become its own global subculture. Condry (2001), as quoted in Pennycook (2007), said, “Japanese hip-hop and other versions around the world are interesting in part because they help us understand the significance of what seems to be an emerging global popular culture” (p. 8). Music genres have created culture that transcends one society; rather, these cultures unite artists and performers all over the world in similar musical styles that are able to bridge gaps such as language barriers (Pennycook, 2007). Akanishi has self-declared that he produces hip hop music, though much of what he creates is identified simply as pop (see Appendix B for transcription). Therefore, Akanishi and/or his agency have seen fit to use his second identity in English to tap into the market held within this global subculture, and have used his constructed English identity through linguistic choices to try to become a part of that.
Identities constructed within the L2 framework often exist and emerge as “reactions to available identity options, reproducing some and rejecting or reimagining others” according to Pavlenko (2004, p. 35). Though Pavlenko here was focusing specifically on narrative identities in immigrants through memoirs, this same concept can be applied to the specific situation at hand with Akanishi’s performative and constructed identity in English; Akanishi’s linguistic choices reflect what he or his agency believes are preexisting identities in the American English context – and perhaps specifically the global hip-hop subculture – and reproduces those that have been selected or chosen to construct the identity in a very specific way. Through the construction of a second identity and the performative aspect of everything that he does as a singer and actor, his English identity’s linguistic choices indicate an attempt to recreate acceptance and group membership into the American pop culture scene. As Moody (2006) says, English can be used as a vehicle to intercultural communication and extend Japanese culture and music across borders otherwise impassable.

The popularity of Japanese popular culture media – and, by extension, its Korean, Taiwanese, and Chinese counterparts – has the internet to thank for much of its cross-cultural popularity. Everything from television dramas, movies, songs and music videos are regularly uploaded onto cyberspace and then translated into another language, with subtitles in the second language placed on the videos – a process referred to as fan-subbing in online communities. It is partly because of the internet that Japanese popular culture has been translated and consumed by viewers and speakers of languages other than Japanese, and it is this very fandom that has allowed the idea of the Japanese identity to be shared all over the world. Fans of dramas, movies, or J-pop idol groups can gather
together on the internet and unite in an interest made possible, often, by the wide-reaching range of the internet itself (Beng Huat, 2006). While this study is focusing on the idol’s identities across communication, it is worth noting that this *fandom* mentality can be linked back to the information presented earlier on online identity formation; members of the fandom are united by a common interest in a group, television show, or interest in a particular singer, and through interactions with other similar fans, are given the chance to then form their own virtual identities in the context of the fandom or culture in question. When fans believe a constructed identity and perpetuate the characteristics of it, the persona is given validity; this has been done by fans of Akanishi’s, who accept his constructed, performative identity as who he really is, and react accordingly.

The idea of a pre-existing fanbase overseas through the fandom culture and capabilities of the internet is of particular import here in regards to Akanishi, who already had a fanbase in Japan and other Asian countries that are routinely marketed Japan’s idol groups, but who also, arguably, had an already present fanbase in America when he started his debut into the American music market.

Research has therefore shown that language and identity and culture and identity are intertwined, and that individuals with fluency in multiple languages can create and negotiate a second identity in the same way that they do the first. While this identity is similar to the idea of an online identity, it is markedly different in that it is created around and including sociocultural norms based on the culture of the language in question. When the cultures of the languages compared are quite different, the second identity can be, as in the case noted between Japanese and English, more open and free linguistically due to the individual not having to follow strict conventions that are woven into the first
language and, therefore, first identity. In the case of Akanishi Jin, celebrity status and his unique role as a Johnny’s idol has further altered and changed his identity, and this case study will analyze how the use of English has allowed Akanishi to construct a second identity that can be less inhibited and more open than his first identity in Japanese. Due to the nature of pop and idol culture in Japan, there are a number of factors that have effected the negotiation of his identities, and these, too effect the way that he presents himself in both languages, though his presentation in English indicates the ability to express more displeasure and animosity towards the restrictions put on him in Japan, as this paper will discuss and present in detail later.
Case study: Identity in Japanese and English in a Japanese Pop Musician

Method

In order to analyze and compare the idea of multiple identities within a single person, a number and variety of sources have been collected and used, including song lyrics in English, written correspondence with fans in both Japanese and English, and video correspondence with fans in both Japanese and English. These sources all have the shared characteristic of being something that was intended to be consumed and disseminated to the fanbase of the musician in question; therefore, the sources collected are all available to any member of the public who wishes access to them and can understand the language in which they were released, or has a method of translating them to the language that person is fluent in. By doing this, the case study kept the materials relating to public identity that is designed and produced to be given to fans and viewers (see table 1.3).

Table 1.3 Sources used in the linguistic analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted Audience*</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese and English pop music listeners</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Song lyrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese concert attendees, purchasers of Japanese region coded concert DVD</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spoken lyrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency J-web subscribers in Japan, subscribers via international smartphones</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Written language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Followers on Twitter, fellow celebrity friends on Twitter  
Subscribers to Johnny’s Jimusho official website  
Subscribers to Youtube, viewers at official website  
Viewers at UTB website  

*all sources are expected to be consumed by fans of Akanishi*

As noted by earlier, the use of English here as the second language in which Akanishi interacts and presents himself may be linked back to English’s ability to breach international borders and reach a larger audience (Honna, 2008; Pennycook, 2007). Because all of the sources are intended to be viewed or read by fans of Akanishi’s, the idea of a fanbase and fandom mentioned earlier is important, and contributes to the construction of Akanishi’s performative persona. The fans receive their correspondence in English or Japanese, coming supposedly from Akanishi himself, and then have an idea of who Akanishi is as a person in their minds. In this way, the fan’s acceptance, promotion, and redistribution of Akanishi’s performative identity gives it validity. By accepting the persona as true, fans have created the degree of legitimacy to both his constructed identities in Japanese and English.

The sources themselves cover both spoken and written language, in both Japanese and English. Because spoken language can vary highly from written language, it was necessary to use both in the analysis for a complete look at the idea of identity as a whole. When possible, sources have been studied in both Japanese and English, and compared
within the same genre, so that the purpose and production of sources are closely related even across the difference in the language used within. In this way, comparisons can be done by keeping the rest of the differences – other than language – to a minimum.

When presenting information that was spoken or written initially in Japanese, the original Japanese will be given along with the translation beneath it, so that the linguistics of the original language can be preserved and displayed. Because it is the original language that is being studied, direct translations or definitions will be added when necessary, and the original characters will be marked. Both bold and underlines are used to draw attention to specific parts of the language that are of particular note. In all cases, the emphasis is my own.

An example of the presentation of emphasis in both the original Japanese and in English:

昨日は LANDS のライブイベントにたくさんの方に来ていただきました。

Kinō wa LANDS no raibu ibento ni takusan no kata ni kite [VERB]

(itadakimashita) [VERB + polite ending].

Yesterday a great many people came to the LANDS live event.

The first line is the original Japanese text, the second line is the phonetic reading of it, and the third line is the English translation. In all three lines, the emphasis is on the verb – in this case, the verb conjugation form for “to come” or “kuru” in Japanese. In the phonetic reading, notes on where the particulars of the conjugation have also been added, so that the original verb and the politeness marker can be noted.

The translations from Japanese have been done with much help from Olivia Sommerlot, who is in the field of translation study. O. Sommerlot has near-native Japanese language abilities as assessed through the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency
Test) N1 language examination. The principles behind the translation were to focus on the levels of politeness, the specific words chosen in relation to these levels, and the way in which the language was presented. Transcriptions from video sources were done by O. Sommerlot and myself in cases when the words were not provided at the bottom of the screen.

Because Japanese names are given with the family name first, followed by the given name, all Japanese names in this paper are written following this convention. For the case study, I will refer to Akanishi by name, and when doing so, I am referring to the constructed, performative persona that he is using as a public identity.

Case study subject overview

This case study is a unique and interesting individual: Akanishi Jin, former member of a Johnny’s idol group, who branched out on his own in an attempt to break into the American music scene as a solo act. Akanishi’s interest in America started at an early age, and in 2006, he took a hiatus from his group KAT-TUN to study English in Los Angeles for six months. It is this language study that gave him the degree of English fluency that he has today – a fluency that he is using to sell himself, his identity, and his music in a country that does not speak his native tongue. Though what happened during his time in Los Angeles is largely unknown, it is assumed that it was during this six months that Akanishi developed, to some extent, most of his English proficiency. It is worth noting that during high school, which he did not finish, Akanishi would have had only the normal English education required by Japanese law. It is an assumption that his
time in America is what helped him gain the English usage he has today, though I would also think, due to his proficiency, that he also continued to study after returning to Japan from Los Angeles.

As a group, KAT-TUN had achieved a popularity unheard of before them: a concert tour before they had officially debuted together as a Johnny’s group. As noted earlier, idols within Johnny’s Jimusho spend time, often many years, as juniors before they officially debut. KAT-TUN, as a group, was an undebuted group for over 5 years by the time they were officially debuted. The years Akanishi spent in the group allowed him to build his own fanbase among not simply Japanese, but fans in other Asian countries and around the world, thanks to the internet’s rapid ability to spread information other fans had translated and subtitled into local languages. By the time he announced his official graduation from KAT-TUN in order to go solo and pursue a music career in America, Akanishi had a fairly large fanbase within America itself, as evidenced by the fact that he held concerts and a concert tour in America prior to releasing any American singles or albums of any kind. Helpful, no doubt, is the fact that Akanishi had been writing his own solo songs within his group for years, and that his English was fluent enough to pen many of his songs entirely in English since returning from Los Angeles.

Idols within Johnny’s Jimusho regularly keep correspondence with fans, in the form of j-webs, or messages by the idols sent out through a subscription on Japanese mobile phones, and “Johnny’s Fan Club Messages”, which are video messages posted on the official agency website. It is assumed, though not known, that this is required according to agency rules. Johnny’s Jimusho is an exclusively Japanese agency, though it has held concerts and promotions in other Asian countries as the idol or group’s fame
permits. It wasn’t until Akanishi went solo that he began corresponding with fans in English as well as Japanese – he created a public Twitter that is nearly entirely in English, and his label Warner Bros. assisted in the creation of a Youtube channel and Facebook account where videos showing behind the scenes footage and interviews with Akanishi are regularly published. Akanishi is the first member of Johnny’s Jimusho to do both of these things, and the first to try and break into the American music industry. It is through these sets of material– for the Japanese fans in Japanese and for a more far-reaching global audience in English, though specifically aimed at his target market in America – that Akanishi and/or his agency forged two separate identities. How he expresses himself in his native Japanese compared to how he regularly converses with fans in English is quite different, in linguistic forms from politeness to context and from subjects to word choice. This case study will compare related materials to one another across the languages, as well as look at Akanishi’s lyrics in English, which, as stated earlier, indicate a willingness by him or his agency to express ideas in English that Akanishi’s Japanese identity would not.

Akanishi has an identity that has been constructed in such a way to appeal and claim group membership with what he or the agency perceives as the common American young adult culture, by accessing shared cultural knowledge, linguistic norms and social expectations, relating back to how performative identities are constructed (Schöpflin, 2001; Stan, 2011; Austin, 1975). The performative nature comes from the persona that Akanishi is displaying as a celebrity appealing to fanbase; with each utterance and linguistic choice, he is, in essence, acting, and he is doing so in order to construct an
identity that he or his management feel will be well-received by the target audience (in this case, the American music market).

Akanishi’s English use includes slang, metaphors, and colloquialisms that go far beyond English instruction mandated in Japanese high schools. The first part of this study will focus on his song lyrics written in English, in the form of a linguistic biography. Due to Akanishi’s bilingualism, a look at his linguistic usage in English helps to add details to the makeup of his English identity and how and when he uses it. Verschik (2002) describes a linguistic biography as “an empirical term designating the dynamics of language choice, linguistic preferences, and competence in a multilingual individual” (p. 40). By using this method of analyzing Akanishi’s linguistic choices in his English songs, which he writes himself, though sometimes with help from native English-speaking friends, this study can present the differences and reasons behind why he chooses to express certain things in English rather than in Japanese, and thus can start to build and compare the differences between his two identities.

As a musician, Akanishi uses popular music and culture to display and construct this persona. Trudgill (1983), said that popular music allowed a singer to develop an individual identity while, at the same time, accessing common symbols and attitudes of the popular culture as a whole; in this way, a persona could be altered through speech styles, pronunciation and linguistic choices to better appeal and integrate with the cultural and societal expectations of the targeted audience.

**Akanishi’s music and lyrics in English**
Aoyagi (2000) pointed out that idol songs in Japanese are usually “romantic fantasy” (p. 313), with love and desire playing central thematic roles. Often, they stress determination and struggles, stemming from the idol’s position as a companion to the fans. This companionship is created through showing, through lyrics, how the singers have gone through the same things that their fans have, most notably difficulties in romantic love. It is therefore interesting to note that Akanishi’s songs, at least those penned in English, have strayed from this norm to tackle more far-reaching topics.

Akanishi wrote most of his own solo songs (and sometimes lines of lyrics in KAT-TUN’s group songs while he was still part of the band) since the group debuted in 2007 – once he went completely solo, he began writing nearly all of his music, sometimes with help, as stated by Akanishi himself, from various English-speaking friends – friend and music producer Josh is credited with the lyrics of two songs included here in the study, “Paparats” and “A Page”. This study’s look at his English lyrics will begin to form the foundation of the fundamental differences between his Japanese identity and his English identity by showing how he utilizes slang, metaphors, and colloquialisms to mark himself as having group membership with the American culture and to express his displeasure towards things he is restricted from doing or saying with his Japanese identity. None of Akanishi’s English songs have ever been translated to Japanese for rerelease; they remain as they are, in English, if they are included on one of his Japanese music releases.

Akanishi has had, at times, a turbulent relationship with the Japanese paparazzi. The tabloids have frequently caught him out at clubs, drinking and mingling with women, publishing pictures that have somewhat damaged his reputation. As noted earlier, the agency requires that the idols keep their private lives clean. In response to this, Akanishi
wrote a song titled “Paparats”, which addresses directly the issue with them and his response to what they have published about him. What’s particularly interesting is that Akanishi’s “Paparats” song is entirely in English, and was performed at his American concert tours; an interesting choice for a song penned in response to a series of specific situations that took place in Japan. The question is then why would Akanishi, who is a solo artist in both Japan and America and has been writing his own songs since long before he went officially solo, write a song to the Japanese paparazzi about their portrayal of him in the tabloids, and do it entirely in English rather than Japanese? The lyrics of the second bridge show Akanishi’s feelings and attitudes towards the media’s perhaps incorrect portrayal of his life (emphasis mine):

Paparazzi snapping shots
Writers making stories up
The proof they have is not a lot
I'm living life you all forgot just taking it
Day by day can you hear the things they say?

**This is how I do it**

When I do it cuz it's my way
I can live and you can talk
I can run and you can walk

**Nobody can make a me** nobody can make me stop

**You can't be replacing me** (Paparats, 2011)

Linguistically, there are several parts here that speak strongly of identity creation and negotiation – the bold emphasis has been added to note the use of language. Akanishi,
in just the bridge quoted here, makes several references to how other people, in this case the paparazzi themselves, cannot create his identity for him through the things they publish. Here, it is apparent that he is fighting the image the media has created for him by saying that they “can’t make me”, and that his identity negotiation is his own (or at least his agency’s, and not in the hands of the media), and he will not let them influence his own self-perception. Whether or not they can influence the perception others have of him is a different story, and one that Akanishi speaks openly about in an English interview, to be discussed later.

It is possible that Akanishi’s Japanese identity, bound by rigid Japanese politeness and cultural rules, cannot say the same things in Japanese as he can in English, where he can express more linguistic and creative freedom. It is also important to note that “Paparats” as a song contains English cursing – the lyrics include the word shit twice – as many of Akanishi’s English songs do. This relates back to Lee (2007), who, when examining Korean singers’ use of English, noted that the cursing was often done in English rather than the singers’ native language of Korean as a way of displaying and expressing extreme emotions, because it was considered coarse and politically incorrect to do so in their native tongue. Through the obscene language linguistic word choices, Akanishi can express more intense and far-reaching displeasure with the situation – and he does so in English, even when addressing the Japanese media, in a song that they, perhaps, will never hear and understand. The root of “Paparats” is truly Akanishi’s performative identity, which he feels has been perhaps threatened and undermined by what the Japanese tabloids have printed about him, but rather than re-assert his own
control over his identity in Japanese, he chooses to do so in English, where he has the ability to recreate in himself a new identity within the American English culture.

“A Page” was one of Akanishi’s solo songs while he was still a member of KAT-TUN; as such, the song was released on Japanese music releases with one of the group’s singles. However, as Akanishi penned the song himself, the lyrics are, again, entirely in English. The concept of cursing in English comes into play here again. It is interesting to note that this song was likely never intended to be released in America, and though it was included in Akanishi’s American concert tours, will likely not see a re-release for American music audiences.

I've got 2, 5 years to tell y'all about the 25 years I cried and set aside for a bitch that lied

Now I'm sick inside can't believe that I tried

But I'd let it all go just to know

Did you really trust in me or was it just a show

Now the shows that I go get a little bit longer

And the motivation gets a little stronger (A Page, 2010)

It is interesting here to see the way Akanishi uses language to compare the situation he is talking about – a woman, one can assume, with whom he had some sort of relationship that did not last – with his career. He uses the same word “show” twice within two lines to describe the falsity of this relationship in relation to his own job, the shows and concerts that he does related to his music. While “A Page” was not intended for American release, the song itself hints at the future of Akanishi’s career by asking for a blessing as he “expands his territories”. If Akanishi had complied to the Japanese pop
music norm, this song would fall well outside the normal subject and genre, since it was explained earlier that in order to portray a sense of companionship between the idol and the fans, lyrics tend to talk about shared experiences such as love and desire. Akanishi’s repetition of the word show and the lines about his career make it more specific and less of an experience that many other listening could have shared.

Again, by writing the lyrics in English, Akanishi indicated a desire to break free of the restraints of Japanese etiquette and sing about something that sounds more personal – allowing him to use coarse, unrefined language to talk about someone he is hurt and upset by and make the feelings seem, when presented in the song, that much stronger and more intense. Further lyrics in “A Page”:

Easily you understand
Easily I had a plan

**Even if you make me fall**

**Just know I'm gonna take a stand** (A Page, 2010)

Again, Akanishi is, according to the song, speaking about a woman. We can assume this from the derogatory English slang term *bitch* used in the first sample shown, which is almost exclusively used to describe women, according to Sutton (2001), who noted through a research survey that it seemed to be one of the only words that women use to insult other women, making it a term that largely is used in reference to females. However, throughout the song, the lyrics make it sound more like Akanishi standing up to someone who has stood in the way of his career. The metaphor here may be that Akanishi is not speaking about a woman at all, and is instead speaking out against those who have influenced or controlled his identity so that he no longer had complete control
over it. Though the emphasis is mine, the lyrics speak strongly of his desire to stand up and reassert his own authority over his identity, even if it is a performative one – it is still the one that he presents to the fans in order to attract attention and fans. This assertion of power and control has been done, in perhaps the only way it can be, by writing the lyrics in English.

When Akanishi had his first set of American concerts in 2010, the majority of his music had to be written before it so that he had enough songs in English for a full concert. “Yellow Gold” was one of them, and the song that Akanishi named the tour for (“Yellow Gold 3010” was the official American Tour name). With “Yellow Gold” being largely the title song of the set, Akanishi did several interesting things with his own identity and the language. By using the color yellow, he was making an obvious statement about his racial background; he was taking his identity and keeping it close while still expanding in the other direction using his English. Akanishi used this song to make it quite clear that he is Japanese, and that he will always be Japanese, but by writing it in English, it seems that he has been given the opportunity to express his thoughts in ways he has not been allowed to previously. This idea of being able to be more open with his thoughts and feelings in English is the base of the linguistic biography presented here.

So now foresee it's you and me

Pulling inside of me

Gonna give you what you need

This life like that only I should be

So dangerous with this yellow gold thing (Yellow Gold, 2010)
The repetition of “yellow gold” throughout the song is a good metaphor – combining his racial identity that he defines himself as and the idea of gold, which is a symbol for money and success in both English and Japanese. Akanishi implies through the language that there are other types of gold and success – for not all gold is yellow – all while reasserting his identity as a Japanese. He is displaying his racial identity so that one cannot miss it, while doing so in English, which has allowed him to make a second linguistic identity. There is a distinct reason that “Yellow Gold” was picked to be the title song that it was, and the same reason that the tour itself was named for it. Still, throughout the song, Akanishi uses English to make several mentions of being himself, being who he is, and how it is “his life” and no one else’s – an overarching theme in his English music that may give some insight into how stifled and controlled he felt in Japanese.

At the beginning of 2011, Akanishi took his Yellow Gold Tour back to Japan for the first time, performing a series of concerts in his home country. He kept the English songs in the set-list and added several of his Japanese solos as well, but the most interesting part of the concert came from the introduction, which was done in spoken word lyrics by Akanishi himself before any of the music had begun and was not included in the American versions of his concert sets. The concert in Saitama was chosen to be the Yellow Gold concert DVD footage, and as such, this spoken introduction was included. It was also transcribed on the DVD, in English, without Japanese subtitles – an interesting move for a DVD that was marketed and sold only in Japan, as region 2, which will not even play on American DVD players. The spoken lyrics are being included in their entirety, exactly how they were written on the screen in English (emphasis mine):
I'm sitting here today because of the decisions I've made.
So these are my last words for all of you I've "betrayed".
The ones who love it, when I fit their mold,
who scream and cry now, saying "he's out of control".
Since I can remember you've told me what to do.
The way I talk, the way I act, the way I tie my shoe.
But even then I knew I had the right to decide.
Scared of punishment I hid it deep inside.
And if I'm exiled for my sins then fxxk it.

**Cause I no longer what to be anyone's puppet.** (Yellow Gold 3011 DVD, 2011)

Linguistically, this is the least subtle and most obvious direct response Akanishi has given towards societal norms and pop culture in Japan. The line about the people he has “betrayed” (it needs to be noted that the quotation marks are included in the transcription of the lyrics on the DVD) comes, most likely, from those who were upset and hurt when he chose to leave KAT-TUN to go solo. It is interesting because these people are almost overwhelmingly fans of the group and fans of Akanishi’s, and it is one of the only times in which he offers a response as angry as this towards those who have supported his career. The rest of the introduction indicates a strong desire to continue identity construction and reaffirm control over his performative persona.

Within the language itself, Akanishi uses a strong shared understanding to describe how he has felt out of control in terms of his own identity and life decisions. Through the use of the term *puppet*, Akanishi has drawn upon a metaphor clear to those who speak English. The idea of puppets and the metaphor within is a distinctly Western
idea, conjuring up immediately the image of a doll with strings attached to its body for the puppeteer to control. English, as a language, has a number of idioms that draw directly on this idea of having another person in control of one’s actions, that stem from puppetry – such as the idea of “pulling one’s strings” and the nickname of “the puppetmaster” that can be given to those who influence and control others’ actions. The idea of “man is a puppet” translates directly to the statement of “man has no free will” and also to the literal explanation of “man is controlled like a puppet” (Kjærgaard, 1986, p. 72). This metaphor is linguistically understood to speakers of English. Cutler Shershow (1995) described two aspects of the puppet metaphor in English: the figurative one, in which the puppet is a tool, instrument, and slave to the one in control, and the underlying, abstract one, where the puppet is an inanimate, “artificial” object. Both of these metaphors are immediately understood by English speakers, because they are built-in to our shared understanding and use of language (p. 211). It is worth mentioning that both of these metaphors are also largely negative in connotation. It is through this metaphor that Akanishi has linguistically shared an easily understood and imagined experience; it is very interesting, however, that the audience in which he performed this introduction to was unlikely to understand the message done in English. There is, in Japanese, a noun used for both a puppet or marionette and a person who follows orders blindly, karakuriningyō, and therefore the metaphor does exist within the language. Akanishi still chooses to express this in English – the reason to which points to his linguistic freedom when using English as opposed to Japanese. When creating Akanishi’s linguistic biography, it is important to note the times in which he could have used
Japanese, or it would have been appropriate to, such as here, with a Japanese audience, but did not.

Why Akanishi chose to perform this opening only in Japan – where the meaning of his message was going to reach far fewer of the fans sitting in the audience – is interesting and telling. Although he had a premade fanbase in America in which he could hold tours prior to an English release, the American music scene was not what he was railing against, and therefore, this introduction was not needed in the American concerts. However, saying what he said in Japanese would be a huge breach of etiquette, despite that it was the Japanese agency, the pop culture scene, and, to an extent, the Japanese fans that he was speaking to. So, Akanishi chose to write and perform the introduction in English to a Japanese audience, because it was only in English that he would be allowed to express these thoughts and feelings. Again, his use of English profanity – particularly the use of one of the most offensive words that English has – is done for a specific reason. The fact that the introduction is not translated to Japanese, even on the Japanese DVD, where they would have the opportunity and need to, is also a statement. It is only with his English identity that Akanishi can express his unhappiness and desire to be free to make his own choices; it may also be with his English identity that Akanishi feels he has the ability to express these things, as his Japanese identity cannot or will not. This idea is the base of his linguistic biography, and the research noted earlier reinforces that there are many things that Akanishi says in English – for example, his use of profanity highlighted in this section – that socioculturally he is more restricted from doing in Japanese. From here, this study builds upon the idea of two separate identities by comparing and contrasting his language use across the languages in similar situations.
In addition to regular J-web entries to Japanese fans, disseminated via Japanese mobile phone – and more recently, to any international smartphone which has been signed up for the service, Akanishi also holds a public Twitter account that is used to correspond with his English-speaking fans. The Twitter account, which has most likely been allowed through his American music label, Warner Music, makes Akanishi the first member of Johnny’s Jimusho to have a public Twitter, the reasons for which most likely going back to the agency’s tight control over the idols and their interactions with fans. Akanishi’s Twitter was self-declared as English only, and he has yet to use any Japanese characters while updating, though he has spelled out Japanese in romaji (using the Roman alphabet) in multiple Twitter updates, many as replies to other friends and coworkers also using the service publicly.

**J-webs.** Akanishi’s J-webs address his fans in a humble, thankful manner. Linguistically, his language stays consistently polite, using the neutral polite verb and adjective conjugation patterns; this level of Japanese is commonly referred to as “polite” form or “long” form while teaching Japanese to non-native speakers. The *Genki Japanese Integrated Course Book* (1999) explained the use of long forms of verbs and adjectives as what you would use if you are not on a first-name basis with someone – for instance, anyone that you would address by “Mr.” or “Mrs.”, which is normally everyone outside of close friends and family members (p. 8). This is traditionally the first conjugation taught to Japanese learners as it is almost always appropriate and it is better to be too
polite than not polite enough in Japanese society (Banno, et al., 1999). For more information on the specific levels of politeness and the contexts they are used in, please refer back to table 1.1.

Akanishi’s j-webs are consistently written politely, as if addressing someone he would need to be formal with; considering that these are messages written directly to the fans, linguistically, Akanishi seems to be speaking to them as if he is humbled and honored by their interest in his career and music. While it has been noted that this divide between his status as an idol and the fans is supposed to be lessened by the agency’s marketing, Akanishi always appears to be hyperaware of his status and how he should speak to those listening or reading. Some examples of his linguistic forms are below, with the original Japanese text and the English translation. The bold sections are the polite conjugations:

昨日は LANDS のライブイベントにたくさんの方に来ていただきました。

Kinō wa LANDS no raibu ibento ni takusan no kata ni kite [VERB] itadakimashita [VERB + polite ending].

Yesterday a great many people came to the LANDS live event. (Jan. 20, 2010)

映画前売り券とのキャンペーンとか、いろいろありますが、とりあえず聴いてみてください。

Eiga maeuri-ken to no kyanpēn toka, iroiro arimasu [VERB + polite ending] ga, toriaezu kiite [VERB] mite [VERB] kudasai [polite request marker].

I know there were a number of pre-order campaigns in coordination with its release, but for the time being I just ask that you please listen. (Jan. 13, 2010)

In the first example, the verb to come (kuru) is given in past form – kite – and Akanishi has added on to this the verb itadaku, which is used in humble language to
show that something was received. The verb *itadaku* has been conjugated to its polite past form, *itadakimashita*. The literal translation of this would be “I received fans who came”, though the addition of *itadakimashita* here is done to add additional politeness and humbleness to the statement and one would not translate this to its literal equivalent. In the second example, there are multiple verbs in the complex sentence. At the end, Akanishi makes a request of his fans to please listen to the music to support him. (The addition of *mite* between the verb and the polite ending *kudasai* is to imply a meaning of “please try to listen”.) This is done not through the imperative form, but through the polite way of requesting a favor from someone in Japanese, which includes the addition of *kudasai* to the end of the verb, as indicated above in bold. For example, shown here is a comparison between the imperative form in Japanese, which as seen as demanding and often rude, and the polite way to request an action or item (see table 1.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese verb form</th>
<th>Corresponding translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Kiku</em></td>
<td>To listen (dictionary form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kike</em></td>
<td>(You) listen (imperative form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kiite kudasai</em></td>
<td>Please listen (polite request)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the J-webs are one of the only ways that idols in Johnny’s Jimusho are allowed to speak directly to the fans – taken with a grain of salt, since all messages are likely looked over before being published – there are no other direct ways in with Akanishi has written correspondence with his fans. He does not speak to them like close friends, but instead like those he needs to show gratitude and respect towards, which is
reflected in his language. The level of politeness that he uses stays consistent. Another example is shown below (again, with highlights indicating a polite language use):

アルバム、映画 47RONIN とこれからも色々な物が発表できると思うので、楽しみに待っててください！

Arubamu, eiga 47 RONIN to korekara mo iroirona mono ga happyō dekiru to omou node [sentence marker], tanoshimi ni ma~tsu tete [VERB] kudasai [politeness marker]!

With the album, “47 Ronin” movie, and everything else planned in the future, I have a lot to show you, so please look forward to it! (Nov. 10, 2011)

In addition to using a consistent politeness level in his language, Akanishi also occasionally uses advanced humble or extremely polite and humble words and forms in kenjougo language. These forms are called advanced because they designate the speaker as being on a lower social level while speaking to someone higher than them, in the hierarchy that is always ever-present in Japanese interactions (Banno, et al., 1999). Again, for more information about this, please refer back to table 1.2. These forms go beyond the polite or long forms of conjugation. An example sentence below shows both respectful and humble instances of Akanishi’s language use within the same sentence. In this example, the respectful language is bolded, and the humble language is underlined:

シングル『Seasons』はお聴き頂けましたでしょうか。


Have you all listened to my single, “Seasons”? (Dec. 28, 2011)

It is interesting to note that he combined both forms here, when making a point to humbly inquire if his fans had listened to his most recent Japanese single. Adding the o in
front of the verb used here – 聴く or kiku which means to listen or to hear – makes the entire verb more polite. The underlined part is the verb 頂く or itadaku, which means to receive and is used only in kenjougo language, as there is a different character and verb used when not using kenjougo. By using both forms, Akanishi is avoiding linguistically sounding pushy, as if he were goading fans into listening to his newest work. Using humble language here, he instead writes that he would be thankful that people would take the time to do so. By being overly polite, Akanishi is expressing that he does not expect anything and is humbled and honored by what he has received.

Another example is reproduced here:

皆さんご無沙汰しております。

Minasan gobusata [NOUN] shite orimasu [VERB + polite conjugation].

Sorry for not updating for a while, everyone. (Nov. 10, 2011)

Again, Akanishi combines a polite apology with humble language expressing remorse and humility. Akanishi’s J-webs cover topics in his work that he has been doing recently, including movies, music and concert tours, and rarely deviate to anything outside of his career, though occasionally straying to his thoughts on where he is and what he has been feeling while doing so. It is interesting to note that recently, in the past year, he has begun signing his J-web entries off with “Ciao!”, which has become a slightly ironic catchphrase of his used as a good-bye. This is, other than song and movie titles, the only English that appears in his J-webs – though the word is not English in origin and is instead taken from the Spanish language.

For an extended look at more of Akanishi’s J-webs, in both their original form and with translations, please refer to appendix A.
**Twitter.** Akanishi’s Twitter (http://www.twitter.com/Jin_Akanishi), as stated earlier, is entirely English and geared towards his American and international fanbase. As opposed to his J-webs, which are done in polite, respectful language and written out in complete sentences, his Twitter is largely done using American English netspeak with English slang and a great deal of misspellings. The way Akanishi speaks to his fans using his Twitter account is far different than that of his J-webs; he will interact with fans by asking them to answer questions and then report back with results, or he will ask them how they are doing or where they are from. All of this is done using what his fans have lovingly begun referring to as *Jinglish* – a mixture of English, Japanese, and errors between the two, in addition to words that Akanishi himself has seemingly made up.

While English does not have a linguistically built-in level of politeness, it is commonly seen as polite to use a level of respect and restraint during conversations. Notably, this means refraining from the use of profanity, slurs and slang, all of which Akanishi commonly publishes through his Twitter updates. Mercury (1995) talks of the sociolinguistic meaning behind the use of coarse and obscene language. That is, she says, that speakers who do choose to use language commonly considered to be *taboo* – or falling into one of the obscene language categories she identified, including profanity, vulgarisms, expletives, and blasphemy – often do so while evaluating their listener and thinking on the relationship they have with the listener. If it would reflect badly on them or be taken with offense, the speaker will not use it; conversely, amongst friends, speakers feel that their friends accept this and it strengthens their relationship with each other. Mercury also notes that previous research indicated that in terms of gender use of obscenities, that American males were less likely to use euphemisms for expletive or
coarse language, and used profanity to signal group membership and assert social dominance.

Akanishi’s public Twitter is a mixture of what he is doing, thoughts he writes down, questions and interactions with the fans following him, and conversations to his other Twitter-using friends. Akanishi’s language, it is worth noting, does not change between any of these functions; instead, he uses the same expressions, freedom and language for all of them. As noted earlier, his open use of obscene language may reflect his desire to be part of what he perceives, incorrectly or not, as the American cultural norm. It may also stem from the fact that on his Twitter, using English, he is not subjected to the same rules of etiquette and politeness as he is in his native Japanese. While Akanishi goes to great lengths to appear humble and respectful while corresponding to his Japanese fans on his J-webs, the same cannot be said about his correspondence in English with his fans on Twitter. An example of several Twitter updates is offered below:

[March 30, 2011]@U_and_YOU hi nice to meet u on Twitter lol Im doin good bro~

[March 30, 2011] danmmm i cant keep up with all massages form everyone but ill try to read as much as i can!! hella thanks for the shout outs~ ciao~

[March 30, 2011] wow i had no idea u guys r from all over the world. thank u for supporting me. its literally international party over here and its so dope~

The first Twitter update is an @ reply – or a Twitter update sent directly to another Twitter-user, in this case Akanishi’s celebrity friend Shirota Yuu – and is
conversational and casual. The second and third Twitter updates are at-large messages to anyone following Akanishi’s account. The language does not change at all between them; indeed, Akanishi uses both slang and profanity in both messages towards his fans. His very casual use of internet abbreviations and common language gives a sense of familiarity that is quite different from the detached, humble language used in his J-webs. Using English, Akanishi can not only converse with a larger cross-section of his fanbase, but has the opportunity to do so without putting on airs. Akanishi can speak to his fans via Twitter without assuming a humble role, as he does in Japanese, or censoring himself to appear to be something that he is not.

In over 530 Twitter updates, Akanishi used obscene language in English 32 times. Mercury (1995) notes that the environment in which the conversation is taking place or language is being used in is the largest factor in affecting the speaker’s decision to use obscene language. By using expletives in a public place followed by a large number of fans, Akanishi is showing a sense of comfort and familiarity with those who choose to follow him. He is also expressing himself in ways that, while still perhaps taboo in American culture, is not frowned upon as much as the Japanese equivalent would be. This relates back to the idea of group membership (Mercury, 1995), and the fact that Akanishi is using expletives to claim his place within the group. On the internet and in English, Akanishi can be someone that he has never been allowed to be before, even with fans following his Twitter updates and conversations.

A table with Akanishi’s obscene language usage is provided (see table 1.5).
Table 1.5 Akanishi’s Twitter obscene language usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obscene word*</th>
<th>Number of uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hell</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damn</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ass</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shit</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuck</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*- misspellings and inclusion in compound words were also counted

In addition to obscene language, Akanishi frequently speaks to the fans as if they were, in fact, friends that he knows personally. His language use towards them uses a wide variety of colloquialisms and slang, often after asking a question and sorting through the received replies. A few examples:

[Apr. 2, 2011] morning~hope all u guys have a great day~so please wish that im gonna have a great day too lol

[Apr. 3, 2011] ppl i dont think i can get along with u guys.cuz i LOVE hot tamales lol

[Apr. 4, 2011] ppl's assumptions amuse me.cuz somebody thought i called BoA "a ho" educate urself "aho" means idiot n japanese idiot lol #pureentertainment

His correspondence with fans can almost be considered rude at times. However, through his Twitter updates, Akanishi is refusing to treat the fans differently than he does his friends; he is refusing, perhaps, to censor or change his style of speech from that which he uses with those close to him. Coming from Japanese, which requires a speaker to do just this at all times, it can be suggested that Akanishi feels free from the constraints
of constantly having to double-think everything he says to make sure that it fits into societal etiquette norms and expectations. As an idol, Akanishi has been presented as obtainable to Japanese viewers by being ordinary and just the same as them, and as such, has fostered a false feeling of intimacy with his fans, as was noted in detail earlier. It is worth noting that this same sense of intimacy may be obtained with his English-speaking fans when Akanishi treats them with such frank, open familiarity in his correspondences with them. Further examples of Akanishi’s Twitter updates:

[Apr. 5, 2011] @ZenTN look at u zenny boy,u jackin my tweet swag now??

[Apr. 5, 2011] @ZenTN what the fuck is "diddums"??

[Apr. 9, 2011] @ZenTN i dont kno ur damn dogs name lol

The above examples, to music producer and composer Nishizawa Zen, are public to anyone following him. Akanishi knows that his fans follow many of his contacts, and are therefore privy to the conversations done on Twitter between them. Occasionally, he will comment on fans’ reactions to them. The other in question here, Nishizawa, has also addressed a few direct questions from fans regarding Akanishi and their interactions. Due to the highly public nature of the conversations, one would assume that Akanishi, knowing how closely his fans follow him, would censor himself, if he were adhering to Japanese cultural norms. Instead, Akanishi’s Twitter acts more as a highly personal, private insight to his life, friends, and thoughts. He does not seem bothered that his fans are a part of all conversations he has on the social networking site.

Akanishi does, in fact, seem to relish how close and intimate his fans can be with him through Twitter. In the following set of tweets, Akanishi may be coming dangerously
close to violating the agency’s rules on proper behavior, though, since the rules themselves are not explicitly known, this is only speculation. However, he does in fact seem to be engaging in – and speaking openly about – things that the Japanese paparazzi have caught him doing, resulting in perhaps the tarnishing of his Japanese reputation.

[May 19, 2011] i went shopping btw. i got classy ass pants!!! ppl guess how much is it????

[May 19, 2011] 14 bucks!

[May 21, 2011] Alternate this: pop some cereal then drink some milk. rocking my ghettooooo breakfast. "ghetteal"

[May 30, 2011] im finna drink the shit out of vodka~

[May 30, 2011] couple of shots for pregame.started off with red bull and vodka.im already faded like cant even say my name.kind of lame.do u kno where i am?

Instead of hiding the behavior that the Japanese media has chastised him for, Akanishi seems here to revel in the fact that he no longer has to conceal it. His English identity does not have to conform to as strict of cultural norms. In his second identity, Akanishi can be what his first does not allow him to be. These behaviors strongly indicate a rebellious personality, and, through his linguistic use of English towards his fans here, Akanishi appears to be more open about them in his English identity than in his Japanese one.

As shown in detail throughout this section, Akanishi’s written correspondence with fans is very different between his Japanese identity and his English one. Below, a
table provides examples of the way he uses both Japanese and English in similar situations, so that the contrast between the two can be more easily identified. Most striking is his use of polite requests when asking something of his fans in Japanese, and his use of the imperative form when doing the same in English. Also of note is his usage of polite verb forms throughout his statements in Japanese, as opposed to the profanity, slang, and colloquialisms that he uses while speaking on the same topics in English. Because both his J-webs and his Twitter are his only public correspondence with his fans, so they are, in essence, his only direct means of interacting through written words with his fanbase. The differences shown in the detailed analysis in this section and the table presented below are striking (see table 1.5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not having written or responded in awhile</td>
<td>皆さんご無沙汰しております。Sorry for not updating for a while, everyone.</td>
<td>danmmm i cant keep up with all massages form everyone but ill try to read as much as i can!! hella thanks for the shout outs~ ciao~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filming for the movie 47 Ronin</td>
<td>自分の中で一つの撮影に対しての最長記録です。This has been the lengthiest filming I’ve ever been involved in.</td>
<td>shooting<del>it always takes so long</del> thats what she said~~~~~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His birthday on July 4</td>
<td>ちなみに27歳になりました。時間が流れが速い(笑)。Speaking of, I turned 27. My, how time flies (laugh).</td>
<td>ppl i just wanna say thank you so much!!! happy 27!! im having so much fun for my burthdayyyyyyyyy!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking fans to listen to or watch his productions</td>
<td>アルバム、映画47RONINとこれからも色々な物が発表できると思うので、楽しみに待っててください!! With the album, “47 Ronin” movie, and everything else planned in the future, I have a lot to show you, so please look forward to it!</td>
<td>Go check this out! The first official trailer of Yellow Gold Tour 3011 DVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing his friends and family</td>
<td>僕も自分の大切な人たちと会って一っす。。。もちろんみんなにも。I want to see my friends and family---! ...but I’m sure I’m not the only one.</td>
<td>@AubreeStorm @LizzyRichardson @_jfresh fuuuuuuuuck i miss you!!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Language use in spoken video messages**

Due to the differences between written and spoken language, Akanishi’s oral interviews and messages are looked at separate from his written correspondence and compared to each other between Japanese and English.
Groups in Johnny’s Jimusho periodically record video messages for the fans, called “Johnny’s Fan Club” messages, that are then released to the public via the official agency website (http://www.johnnys-net.jp). Most of the time, these messages correspond to a particular event or holiday – for instance, during New Year’s and Christmas, all of the groups prepare messages for the site. These messages are done entirely in Japanese, and very rarely, if ever, have subtitles in any other language.

Akanishi’s (JFC) messages are the same way, done entirely in Japanese for the Japanese audience and fans. Like his J-webs, his (JFC) messages are polite and detached, using formal conjugations. The dialogue below is taken from his (JFC) message from February 25, 2011. The underlined section indicates Akanishi’s use of very humble language, and the bold shows the polite verb conjugations:

近いうちにかならずコンサートを日本でもやりたいと思っているのでどんな形になるかも分からないですけどやるので、皆さん遊びに来てください。

Chikaiuchini kanarazu konsāto o Nihon demo yaritai to omotte irunode don'na katachi ni naru ka wakaranaidesukedo yaru node [transition], minasan asobi ni kite [VERB] kudasai [polite request].

I’d definitely like to hold a concert in Japan soon, and though I don’t know what form it will take as of yet, it will happen, so everyone, please come and see it.

あとですね、5月4日に「YELLOW GOLDTOUR」のDVDが出ることが決定いたしました。

Ato desu [VERB] ne, 5 tsuki 4-nichi ni ‘YELLOW GOLDTOUR’ no DVD ga deru koto ga kettei itashimashita [VERB + polite conjugation].

Next up, it’s been finalized that my “Yellow Gold Tour” DVD will be released on the 4th of May.
In the first example, the bold shows the use of polite verb conjugations. For more information on this, please refer back to table 1.2. In the second example, Akanishi uses another instance of *kenjougo*. The use of *kenjougo* here, when talking about the DVD release of his concert tour, is most likely to appear humble so he does not come across as demanding that fans buy the video upon its distribution. Instead, Akanishi is merely relaying facts so that those watching know what is happening and coming up in terms of his releases and career. Akanishi’s repeated use of the ending *kudasai* (ください) is done so that he is not ordering those fans watching to do anything; by attaching this to the end of verbs, he has linguistically adhered to the Japanese rules of etiquette by politely imploring his fans to attend the hypothetical concert rather than directly tell them to do so. To order someone to do something, a different verb conjugation is used, but it is seen as very rude and abrupt to use, and has only limited contexts in which it would be considered appropriate. Again, further information on this is found on page 19.

あの、ちょくちょくこういった形で情報提供していきますのでインターネットの方もチェックまねにしてください。

*Um, I’ll often be giving out news over the web like this, so please remember to check diligently.*

Throughout the recording, Akanishi asks things of his fans, such as their continued support and interest, through the linguistically polite manner of asking for something. The starting of the above sentence with *ano* (あの) has a specific meaning.

The *Genki Japanese Integrated Coursebook* (1999) described the use of *ano* as a way to
express having reservations about what you are going to say after it. The book gives examples of being concerned with interrupting someone in a conversation, or being worried about sounding rude or impolite (p. 18). While the direct translation of *ano* is the English *um*, used often when a speaker is thinking or formulating ideas and is in the middle of a statement, *ano* can often carry more connotations than the English equivalent (Banno, et al., 1999). In this sentence, Akanishi uses it before asking his fans to check back for further updates, so he is perhaps expressing reservations about his request, as he could be risking being impolite.

Not all of Akanishi’s (JFC) messages are alone. Recently, his messages have come with fellow agency member Takizawa Hideaki. While perhaps not important personally, the linguistic results of Akanishi filming messages with Takizawa are quite interesting. Akanishi’s usual polite formality quickly switches over to a casual form of speaking when he addresses Takizawa instead of the camera, and by extension, the fans. This switch happens both rapidly and often; it is a marked change and a switch done for specific reasons. Linguistically, Akanishi is addressing Takizawa as a close friend while speaking to the fans as if they are socially higher or equal to him. An example, from January 1, 2012:

JOHNNY’S NET をご覧の皆さま、赤西仁です。

Johnny’s net o goran no minasama, Akanishi Jin desu.

*Everyone watching Johnny’s net, this is Akanishi Jin.*

もう緊張した。

Mō kinchō shita.

*I was so nervous!*
The first line is to the camera and the fans – the bold indicates respectful language. The verb is “ご覧”, which is the honorific way to say the noun to watch. In contrast, the second line is an interjection to Takizawa in the middle of a conversation, and it is done casually, without the polite ending to the verb, which has been underlined. The contrast of the two lines, linguistically, puts the fans watching and Takizawa himself on different social spheres. There is a definite division there that is expressed simply by the language Akanishi uses and the way he uses it. Another example, from the same video, happens immediately after the last line above when Akanishi goes back to discussing his music and career as opposed to having a conversation with Takizawa within the video: “そうなんですよ [sou nan desu yo]”. The polite ending desu (です) is back on his verb, as he has gone back to addressing the camera and the fans.

This switching back and forth takes place throughout the entire (JFC) message:

Akanishi Jin deshita.

This has been Akanishi Jin.

言っちゃいけないことが、言うたら終わるじゃないですか?

Iccha ikenai koto ga, yuutara owaru janaissu ka?

So if I say something I shouldn’t have, it’ll end, right?

In the first line, Akanishi is addressing the camera. The bold indicates the polite verb conjugation. In the second line, which happens immediately after the first, Akanishi has begun addressing Takizawa and the staff members present. The underlined section at the beginning is a very casual colloquialism meaning to say, and the second underlined part is the casual negative verb conjugation: ja nai as opposed to the polite, more formal
ja arimasen. The rapid switching between the levels of linguistic politeness in Japanese is an obvious one, and by employing it here, Akanishi has continued to speak to the fans watching humbly and speaks only to Takizawa, his coworker, as if they are close friends.

**American video messages.** While Akanishi has no direct equivalent in English to (JFC) messages, he does have his official Youtube station, through his American music label, Warner Music Group. He has also released messages as precursors to his American concert tours on both his Youtube channel (http://www.youtube.com/user/JinAkanishiUSA) and his official American website, [http://jinakanishiusa.com](http://jinakanishiusa.com). These messages are released only in English and only on the American websites. Akanishi’s American video messages are done straight to the camera, the same as his Japanese (JFC) videos; however, when speaking in English, Akanishi expresses himself in a different manner than he does in Japanese. Again, while English does not possess the same grammatically-ingrained etiquette levels, it is generally thought of as polite to avoid slang and profanity when having more formal conversations.

From Akanishi’s video message released before his 2010 concerts, which took place in cities in the United States in November of that year:

Of course I… of course I love Japan. But I wanna do- I wanna share my music with… bigger audience.

Right after the concert I had in L.A., … I got an offer to do a tour in the states. Uh… around the states, and uh… yeah. Of course, I wanna do it.

[…] I have couple, like, ballads. They’re really slow, chill…yeah, would be good for… good for you to listen to right before you go to bed… with your boyfriend… or your girlfriend… whatever.
Understanding that because English is his second language, he frequently has grammatical mistakes in his spoken language, Akanishi still uses several interesting linguistic speech acts here. He never uses *want to* in its full form; every usage of it is shortened to the slang *wanna*, which is not uncommon in conversational English when compared to written English. It is, however, worth noting that it is consistent throughout the video. He also uses several colloquialisms – *the states*, which is not an expression commonly used by Americans living here, and the word *chill*, which is English slang (dictionary.com). His use of *whatever* following the last line quoted above also falls into this category. While these words are not offensive or derogatory, they are words that an English speaker would use in causal conversations rather than formal, polite ones. The contrast between Akanishi’s fan correspondence in Japanese, in which every line is uttered with care and words are chosen based on formality level, and his English messages to the fans, is very high.

In January of 2012, Akanishi announced his second American single and his second American tour with a video message on his Youtube channel:

Hey, wassup, this is Jin. Uh, let me just start by thanking all my long-time fans for the love and support you've shown me throughout the years. I also want to thank all my new fans for the love you've been giving my first U.S. single “TEST DRIVE”.

And my next single, “Sun Burns Down”, is coming out soon, so look out for that. And I'm really excited about my first U.S. album that's coming out. So, check it out, too.
I'm gonna have special treat for you guys. I'm gonna tour. The tour starts in March. I'm going to New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Honolulu. Just stay focused on my Facebook page and my official website, Jinakanishiusa.com for more info to come.

Hope to see you all there. (youtube.com/JinakanishiUSA, Jan. 12, 2012)

The bold sections here indicate Akanishi’s use of the English imperative. There is no please attached to this to make it more polite. While Akanishi begins by thanking his fans for their support, the language is casual and informal, particularly his greeting, wassup, which is very casual American slang. Even when indicating what fans can expect to see from him in the future through his American activities, he does not include please before the imperative forms, which is a striking difference from his polite requests in Japanese. Throughout the video, going to is shortened to the casual, conversational gonna. Akanishi even shortens information to the less formal info when requesting that fans continue to watch his official sites for details. At the end of the video, Akanishi truncates the subject from his sentence to make it less formal. For the full transcripts of Akanishi’s messages quoted here, please see Appendix B.

In an interview with UTB, done entirely in English, Akanishi explains some of his song lyrics and how he wrote his songs in English. The series of interviews are done without showing the interviewer at all, and each segment’s subject is one of Akanishi’s English songs written for his Yellow Gold Tour in 2010. As noted earlier, one of the songs explained is “Paparats”, and in the interview, Akanishi discusses his relationship with the Japanese paparazzi and how he feels about the false identity they have created for him.
[Jin]: I have a lot of experience about it… like, people took a picture of me… when I’m partying.

[MC]: You like to party?

[Jin]: I like to party… and I like to work. It means, like, not… like I’m partying every day. I’m working hard. And if… if I’m having, like, a party every day, I wouldn’t be here. I- I wouldn’t be doing this. Like I… I produce, produce my show. Like… writing… writing music (‘Akanishi Jin Music Talk: Paparats’, Sept. 2010).

Akanishi’s argument here seems to be that the paparazzi merely take an image of one moment of his life and turn it into his entire identity. He goes on to explain that the identity they have created for him is not, in fact, his real one:

Jin: I’m not saying I… I don’t party. I, uh… I love to party. They’re just taking the pictures, a moment of my life…

MC: They’re just building an image of you?

Jin: Yeah, there’s a Jin Akanishi they created. I don’t, I don’t like him. [laughs] (‘Akanishi Jin Music Talk: Paparats’, Sept. 2010)

This interview builds on the linguistic biography foundation that was established earlier, and because Akanishi speaks directly about his identity, this allows us to expand on the idea that there are things that Akanishi is discouraged from doing or saying with his Japanese identity. For an analysis of the lyrics of “Paparats” as part of the linguistic biography, please refer back to the linguistic biography.

Akanishi’s spoken linguistic norms between Japanese and English mirror the differences in his written linguistic norms. A table is provided below with several direct
comparisons across similar situations, analyzing Akanishi’s spoken correspondence (see table 1.7).

Table 1.7 Akanishi’s spoken correspondence in both Japanese and English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greeting fans watching the video message</td>
<td>JOHNNY’S NETをご覧の皆さん、赤西仁です。Everyone watching Johnny’s net, this is Akanishi Jin.</td>
<td>Hey, wassup, this is Jin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requesting fans to check back for updates</td>
<td>あの、ちょくちょくこういった形で情報提供していきますのでインターネットの方もチェックまねにしてください。Um, I’ll often be giving out news over the web like this, so please remember to check diligently.</td>
<td>Just stay focused on my Facebook page and my official website, Jinakanishiusa.com for more info to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regarding his concerts and tour</td>
<td>近いうちにかならずコンサートを日本でもやりたいと思っているのでどんな形になるか分からないですけどやるので、皆さん遊びに来てください。I’d definitely like to hold a concert in Japan soon, and though I don’t know what form it will take as of yet, it will happen, so everyone, please come and see it.</td>
<td>(1) But I wanna do- I wanna share my music with… bigger audience. (2) I’m gonna have special treat for you guys. I’m gonna tour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

As shown through the literature review and research within the field of linguistics, individuals’ identities are constantly negotiated and influenced by the culture around them (Ros i Solé, 2007; Mantero, 2007; Byrd Clark, 2007), and it is possible to have two or more different versions of themselves: identities which are presented and used
differently based on social expectations. These identities exist simultaneously and
independent of one another (Ros i Solé, 2007). Akanishi Jin, who has two languages he
can claim a degree of fluency in, has developed two versions of himself – a Japanese
identity, in which he responds and portrays himself in the manner expected according to
society’s etiquette, and an English identity, where he experiences a large degree of
freedom in what he can present, share and the way he can linguistically present himself.
These identities are inherently constructed, performative ones due to his nature as a
celebrity, in which specific linguistic choices have been made in order to build an image
(Austin, 1970; Butler, 2000; Stan, 2011), either by Akanishi himself or a team of
management staff members. These identities are public personas that are constructed
through linguistics and language use, and as constructed identities, they produce
linguistic items (Pennycook, 2007). These items, when studied, indicate that while both
identities stem from the same place and the same basic characteristics, the culture
surrounding the languages has shaped these identities and dictated in what ways they
should and should not evolve. In Japanese, Akanishi adheres to the rules of etiquette and
social hierarchy, but in English, he is free to show sides of himself that his Japanese
identity has been influenced to hide. These identities are given legitimacy by the fans
who consume, redistribute, and believe them, making them valid performative personas
that Akanishi uses to indicate desired group membership and to appeal to music markets
(Ben Huat, 2006).

Linguistically, Akanishi’s English is riddled with slang, colloquialisms and, at
times, a large degree of profanity, because he and/or his agency feels he does not have to
repress those things he wishes to say or do in order to conform to societal expectations.
Instead, he can speak to fans and viewers the way he does to his close friends, without fearing, perhaps, his career suffering for it. His English identity indicates a desire for group membership in what is perceived as the American English culture, and the subculture of the hip hop music genre, and by producing linguistic items through his constructed identities, he is attempting to appeal to different markets with each identity in different ways (Pennycook, 2007; Trudgill 1983), He has been given the chance to reinvent himself in a second language in a new way that the culture accepts and allows in order to appeal to the market and promote his music and performances. Akanishi’s English identity, while a performative and constructed persona, can still be studied under the theories that govern individual identity creation, in which the second identity not merely a facet of his original identity that he uses in English language situations; instead, it is a separate identity entirely, influenced and negotiated through a second culture and set of values and adjusted accordingly to them (Ros i Solè, 2007). Just as Lee (2007) and Moody (2006) noted when studying English use within K-pop and J-pop entertainers and music, Akanishi’s English identity has experienced the opportunity to use English to create a version of his performative persona that more open, vocal, and uninhibited than his Japanese identity. The decision to use English indicates that he and/or his agency have the desire to cross international boundaries and reach new markets, and as such, Akanishi’s second performative identity was constructed to appeal to these markets (Moody, 2006).

Due to the cultural restrictions on appropriate behavior in Japanese, particularly in those individuals who are a part of Japanese popular culture (Aoyagi, 2000; Stevens,
2008), Akanishi has constructed a linguistically freer and more open English identity in which he can say and do things that he is not able to do in and with his Japanese identity.

As shown through the case study presented here, Akanishi’s constructed Japanese identity adheres to the expected sociocultural norms of both Japanese as a language, Japanese as a culture, and the expected behaviors woven into Japanese popular culture. It is through his constructed English identity that Akanishi can be blunt, impolite and casual, using colloquialisms, slang, and profanity, in order to assert a degree of group membership and to appeal to a larger audience base rooted in a separate culture. The comparison of his correspondences with fans across both languages show the differences in his expressions and linguistic behavior, and combined with the linguistic biography that looked at his English lyrics and interview responses, indicates that Akanishi and/or his agency have constructed two very separate performative identities that operate and adhere to two different sets of expectations and rules. How these constructions will continue to develop and disassociate from each other will be influenced by the audience he intends to appeal to, through linguistic productions that are constructed by the culture and society of the performative identity’s language.
Glossary of Japanese Terms

Jimusho – agency or office

Keigo – the most polite level of Japanese linguistic grammatical construction

Kenjougo – part of keigo, the humble method of grammatical construction used to refer to oneself or someone of lower status

Sonkeigo – part of keigo, the polite method of grammatical construction used to refer to someone of higher status

Tohoshindai – life-sized
皆さんお久しぶりです。お元気でしょうか？
It’s been a while everyone. How are you all doing?

唐突ですが、日本が心配です。東日本大震災から立ち直れてない方もたくさんいらっしゃると思います。祈る事しか出来ませんが、共に頑張りましょう。
This is a bit sudden, but I’m rather worried about Japan. There are still many of those who haven’t gotten back on their feet after the events of the Eastern Japan quake. I know there’s nothing I can do besides pray, but let’s use that and continue to do our best.

ファンの方々にとっては少し嬉しいニュースです。アメリカの映画『47RONIN』に出演する事が決定致しました。
In a bit of good news for fan, it’s been officially decided that I’m to act in the American movie, “47 Ronin”.

実は撮影は二月後半、ツアーのすぐ後から入ってまして。今真っ最中です。
I actually started filming on it directly following my tour in the second half of February. I’m in the middle of it now.

まあ詳しい話は雑誌かなんかでするかと思いますが、なんかどうせ落ちるだろうと思って、とぼとぼオーディション受けに行ったら受かった(笑)。頑張ってますので楽しみに待ってて下さい。
More details are likely to be in magazines and the like, but in the beginning, I’d thought I didn’t have much of a chance, so I went to the audition a bit trudgingly. In the end, I managed to pull it off though, huh (laugh). I’m really doing my best, so everyone please look forward to it.

それもう一つ!
皆様のおかげで『Eternal』一位獲得しました。ありがとうございます。
曲の方も同時進行で出上げていっているので、そちらもヨロシクお願いします。
それではまた近いうちに。
And one more thing!
Thanks to everyone’s support, “Eternal” was able to rank #1 on the charts.
Thank you so much. And a big thank you to everyone who helped get the song to where it is today.
Until next time.
皆様お久しぶりです。赤西です。
Everyone, it’s been a while. This is Akanishi.

日本の夏はいかがでしょうか?
How is Japan’s summer treating you all?

僕は相変わらずロンドンの方で映画『47RONIN』の撮影をしています。
I’m still in the middle of “47 Ronin” filming with my people from London.

もう5ヶ月目突入しました（笑）。
We’ve already reached our fifth month [of filming] (laugh) This has been the lengthiest filming I’ve ever been involved in.

こっちの方は夏だというのに、日本の梅雨のような天気です。
It might be summer over here, but it reminds me more and more of Japan’s rainy season.

なので、たまに撮影ができたりできなかったりとバタバタ、バタバタしています。
Thusly, we keep going back and forth with being able to film and not being able to film.

あっ、ちなみにこの写真は僕のトレーラーの中です。ここで待機しております。
Ah, by the way, this picture here is a picture from inside my trailer. It’s where I tend to wait on stand-by and such.

もう既にpreviewやらで、撮影したものは見せてもらってるんですが、かなり綺麗な絵になってるので、できあがりが楽しみです。
We’ve already reached the preview stage [for a number of scenes], so they’ve let me watch a few of them, and I must say it’s coming along quite beautifully, so it’s making me even more excited to see the final production.

ちなみに27歳になりました。時間の流れが速い（笑）。最近ものすごくそう感じます。Speaking of, I turned 27. My, how time flies (laugh). It seems recently, especially, it’s becoming more and more so.

それとこっちでは知ってる人が少ないので、少し寂しいですが、どうにかまぎらわしています～
There’s not many people over here that know who I am, so it’s been a bit lonely, but somehow or another I’ve been able to stave it off～
家族、恋人、友達がすぐ近くにいる人が羨ましいっす。。。
I’m a bit jealous of all those whom have family members, close ones, and friends nearby…

僕も自分の大切な人たちと会って一っす。。。もちろんみんなにも。
I want to see my friends and family---! …but I’m sure I’m not the only one.

何歳になってもやっぱり自分の大事にしてる人と健康が一番ですね。
No matter how old one gets, the health of those closest to you will always be the most important.

掛けがえのないものですね。
They’re irreplaceable in our lives.

なぜなら私、赤西仁は大事してる人と健康がないとガス切れになってしまうので、皆さんに良いものが見せられなくなってしまう。。。
This is why, if ever those close to me, Akanishi Jin, fall under ill health, I’m liable to lose steam myself and won’t be able to perform as well for all of you out there…

それは困ってしまう。。。。
Which bothers me…

と改めて思った赤西仁の WEB でした。
Which brings us to the end of another web-entry where my thoughts have turned on these matters.

皆さんも元気で! また近いうちに!
Everyone, stay well! Until next time!

CIAO!

皆さんご無沙汰しております。
Sorry for not updating for a while, everyone.

昨日アメリカのシングル Test drive を発売し、おかげさまで iTunes のダ
ンスチャートで一位という素晴らしいスタートをきることが出来ました。
My American single “Test drive” went on sale yesterday, and thanks to everyone’s help was able to hit #1 on the iTunes Dance Charts, making it a wonderful start for its release.

日本ではまだ買うことができないので日本のファンの皆さんには申し訳
ないんですが、12月7日に特別に3曲 yellow gold tour からピックした
曲と pv とメイキングをつけてミニアルバムとして発売しますので、是非チェックしてください。

I apologize for all you here in Japan being unable to buy it yet, but on December 7th it will get released as a special mini-album along with three songs selected from the yellow gold tour as well as a PV and making of documentary, so please check it out.

アルバム、映画 47RONIN とこれからも色々な物が発表できると思うので、楽しみに待ってください!

With the album, “47 Ronin” movie, and everything else planned in the future, I have a lot to show you, so please look forward to it!

Ciao!

皆様こんにちは。赤西仁です。
Hello everyone, this is Akanishi.

まもなく新しい年になりますね。
It’ll soon be a new year here, huh.
シングル『Seasons』はお聴き頂けましたでしょうか。
Have you all listened to my single, “Seasons”?

忙しくて1月7日のイベントに来られない方。そして計画中の方。イベントのダイジェストを PC でも公開するのでお楽しみに。
For everyone planning on coming to my event on the 7th of January, and also for those who might be too busy to attend, you can access the event digest online, so please look forward to it.

それではよいお年を～。
And with that, I hope everyone has a wonderful new year～
Appendix B: English video transcription
From Akanishi’s concert message, 2010

[claps]

[laughs]

I’m really excited about it… because… the last show was in L.A. It was amazing. The people, the crowd, the energy… ev-everybody was amazing.

I’ve been influenced by Western music… a lot. Doing concerts overseas has always been my dream.

Of course I… of course I love Japan. But I wanna do- I wanna share my music with… bigger audience.

Right after the concert I had in L.A., … I got an offer to do a tour in the states. Uh… around the states, and uh… yeah. Of course, I wanna do it.

My music is like… hip-hop… pop… maybe pop. Rock and roll, roll and rock. I- I do rap, but it’s not rap, it has a melody. It’s… it’s hard, but, I just, I just writing, just keep writing whatever I feel like.

I have couple, like, ballads. They’re really slow, chill…yeah, would be good for… good for you to listen to right before you go to bed… with your boyfriend… or your girlfriend… whatever.

I had an audition, I got the, the dancers. S’like, I really have confidence about it.

[laughter towards someone off-screen]

What’s unique about my shows? The composition of my concert is like really, like, futuristic. Like, that’s why I … that’s the reason why I named Yellow Gold Tour 3010. Yeah, that’s… that’s what’s unique about my show.

I’ve only been to L.A. and New York. I’m really, I’m really excited about it, to see, um, to see people I’ve never met. To see cities I’ve never been to. And, um, yeah, I hope all the crowds gonna be crazy like the people in L.A. Just looking forward to… different city.

I hope this is a chance for me to take my music worldwide.
References


