Negotiating Boundaries in a Globalized World: Communication Privacy Management between Foreign English Teachers and Japanese Co-workers in Japan

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This dissertation titled
Negotiating Boundaries in a Globalized World: Communication Privacy Management
between Foreign English Teachers and Japanese Co-workers in Japan

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ABSTRACT

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Negotiating Boundaries in a Globalized World: Communication Privacy Management between Foreign English Teachers and Japanese Co-workers in Japan

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In order to better understand ways in which globalization influences intercultural communication, this study examines ways in which foreign English teachers in Japan and Japanese co-workers manage privacy. Using Petronio’s (2002) communication privacy management theory, as well as thematic (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) and cultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 2005, 2007), this study analyzed interview transcripts from 77 participants (39 English language teachers, and 38 Japanese co-workers) regarding ways in which (a) privacy is conceptualized and managed, (b) cultural premises guide such negotiations, and (c) larger structures enable and constrain privacy management between foreign English teachers and Japanese co-workers.

English language teachers (ELTs) defined “privacy” as a multi-dimensional construct encompassing personal information, space, and actions. ELTs perceived their privacy boundaries to be breeched when asked about one’s: (a) space and place, (b) bodies, (c) sexuality, and (d) dating/romantic relationships. ELTs employed the following management strategies: (a) withdrawal, (b) cognitive restructuring, (c) independent control, (d) lying, (e) omission, (f) avoidance, and (g) gaijin smashing. Japanese co-workers defined privacy as information that should be hidden and managed such information by: (a) drawing clear boundaries by not talking or changing contexts,
and (b) being pre-emptive by demarcating privacy boundaries early on within a relationship.

In terms of cultural premises, ELTs revealed: (a) they should not be constructed as a “free space” for privacy inquisition by Japanese co-workers, (b) they expected voluntary reciprocity in (egalitarian) workplace relationships, and (c) they expected co-workers to be co-owners who would not share private disclosures. Japanese co-workers revealed: (a) privacy inquisitions are acts of kindness/caring, (b) time matters for privacy disclosure in Japan, (c) age matters for privacy disclosure in Japan, and (d) that ELTs should “Do as Japanese do,” or, in other words, accommodate Japanese cultural norms and regulations for privacy management.

Rooted in English hegemonic and xenophobic practices, I identified the ideological construction of ELTs as “not real teachers,” which is heightened through the commodification of ELTs’ culture. This construction negated opportunities for successful privacy management through co-owner relationships. Similarly, Japanese co-workers viewed ELTs as guests or special visitors which positioned ELTs as inadequate teachers. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.
DEDICATION

For my participants.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

More people are crossing national borders and intercultural boundaries than ever before (e.g., Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Shome & Hedge, 2002; Sorrells, 2012). In 2009, 214 million people lived outside of their home country (International Organization for Migration, 2009). In 2008, 922 million people traveled internationally for business and leisure (World Tourism Organization, 2008). These numbers demonstrate that the need for intercultural understanding within this globalized age is critical.

Globalization has influenced scholars to be more reflexive about cultural assumptions that underlie theory, practice, and research (e.g., Cox, 2004; Ganesh, Zoller, & Cheney, 2005; Grossberg, 1993; Holmer Nadesan, 2001a; Nakayama & Martin, 1999; Schiller, 1991; Smith & Wilson, 2010). Within the context of globalization, “culture” is viewed as de-territorialized (Appadurai, 1996; Shome & Hedge, 2002; Sorrells, 2010). This involves uprooting people and their cultural objects from one geographic location and transplanting them into another (Appadurai, 1996). This frequent uprooting or “transplanting” means that “families, friends, migrants, tourists, business people, and strangers” from the corners of the earth are coming together more rapidly than ever before (Sorrells, 2010, p. 174). At the same time, individualized experiences with globalization differ due to differences in power and access to resources. For example, “some have the privilege of experiencing intercultural interactions through leisure, recreation, and tourism, while other people travel far from home out of economic necessity and basic survival” (Sorrells, 2010, p. 174). Therefore, globalization has magnified injustices and inequities (Sorrells, 2010). This influences intercultural interaction. In fact, an increase in disparities structures and binds “intercultural
relationships in terms of power, privilege, and positionality” (Collier, 2009; Sorrells, 2010, p. 177). Injustices brought about by colonialism and Western domination continue to define intercultural relations (e.g., Sorrell, 2010). However, a gap exists within communication literature in terms of how globalization influences intercultural dyads within the workplace. This study seeks to fill this gap.

Within this introductory chapter, first, I discuss the need for researching intercultural relationships within the context of globalization. Second, I discuss how examining western migrant workers and expatriates, whom I refer to as “foreign workers,” serves as a critical group for understanding and interrogating intercultural relations as well as expanding knowledge of intercultural communication. Third, I explain how negotiating privacy within intercultural relationships is a neglected, needed area of research amongst foreign workers. Finally, I discuss how examining foreign workers who have migrated to Japan, such as English language teachers (ELTs), provides a suitable context in which to explore the influence of globalization on intercultural privacy negotiation.

Intercultural Relationships in the Context of Globalization

Six interdependent and dynamic characteristics that maintain communication at its core are embedded in all globalization theorizing (Stohl, 2005). These are: (a) a dramatic increase in worldwide economic interdependence; (b) an intensification as well as deepening of political, material, and cultural exchanges; (c) rapid and global diffusion of ideas, information, and knowledge via new information technologies; (d) compression of time and space; (e) a shift of social interaction from local to various distributed
contexts across time and space; and (f) rising levels of global consciousness via
reflexivity (Stohl, 2005). Communication within the age of globalization requires
“flexibility, responsiveness, speed, and efficient knowledge production, generation, and
dissemination” (Stohl, 2005, p. 229) each of these dynamics not only influences social
interaction, but merits attention from researchers.

Globalization highlights unique characteristics of intercultural relationships.
Globalization brings cultural differences, privilege, power, and positionality to the table,
which provides an opportunity for negotiation, translation, and transformation to occur
(Sorrells, 2013). However, what is not focused upon are ways in which these “table
conversations” are negotiated. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define negotiation
as a transactional process that involves moments when participants attempt to arrive at a
“reasonable set of rules for protecting or accessing the private information that is
revealed” (Petronio, 2002, p. 77). This process can involve “individuals in an
intercultural situation attempt to assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their
own and others’ desired self-images” (Ting-Toomey, 2005b, p. 217). This process merits
attention since globalization places individuals in a space in which they cannot escape
being situated in various historical, social, economic, and political contexts (Collier et al.,
2001; Shome & Hegde, 2002). Collier (2002) discussed that, within intercultural
relationships, individuals must negotiate not only their own cultural identities, but also
their relational identities along with stereotypes, social power, and privilege, as well as
social perceptions.
Cultures have always been in contact (Martin & Nakayama, 2010), but globalization offers the potential to increase such interactions. Chen (2002) argued that intercultural relationship research remains in its infancy due to limited studies investigating intercultural communication as found within interpersonal relationships. Since intercultural communication occurs within the context of relationships, it is therefore vital to continue to advance scholastic understanding of such a context (Chen, 2002). By nature, intercultural relationships are both interpersonal and intercultural (Chen, 2002); these relationships are greatly influenced by globalization. As a basic, fundamental human experience, interpersonal communication research has proven insightful and applicable to various contexts (Smith & Wilson, 2010). Greater complexities for communicating within intercultural relationships exist when navigating the lines between the individual and the relationship, versus the relationship and the culture (Chen, 2002). This is especially prudent when considering the influence of globalization, which calls into question relational norms as a result of increased mobility amongst individuals, resources, and cultural products (Bell & Coleman, 1999; Sassen, 1999; Shohat, 1998).

Globalization calls for additional, expanded research. Scholars continue to rely upon intercultural foundations to explain globalized relationships (Ming-xiang, 2012). Intercultural relationship research has largely focused upon cross-cultural variability (Chen, 1995; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986; Ting-Toomey, 1991), relationship development (Chen & Celaga, 1994; Lee & Boster, 1991; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Sudweeks, Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Nishida, 1990), and communication processes
(Cabecinhas & Amancio, 1999; Collier & Bornman, 1999; Garcia & Rivera, 1999). A glance at popular intercultural textbooks reveals that friendships, romantic relationships, and alliance building are dominant, privileged features of study within the communication discipline (Jandt, 2013; Kurylo, 2013; Martin & Nakayama, 2013; Oetzel, 2009; Sorrells, 2013). Although useful, such foundations need to be built upon to help understand ways in which globalization now influences intercultural interactions. Since globalization brings diverse people and their cultural products together at a faster rate than ever, this provides opportunities for individuals to interact with those from a greater diversity of backgrounds than ever before (Sorrells, 2013). As people carry their cultural, (in)visible knapsacks (McIntosh, 1990) with them, they also carry passports which provide differing amounts of privilege and access which influence successful relationship navigation. However, we do not always share codebooks with others, nor does everyone have a similar text. In other words, we are more likely to have culturally different relationships due to globalization, and within those relationships, we each bring our own unique, cultural repertoire. Cultural scripts that individuals might use to carry out day-to-day interactions might not play out how they intend. With the influx of cultural encounters, exchanges, and sharing, chances of experiencing intercultural interactions can increase, since globalization has led to increased communication across nations (Ming-xiang, 2012). Thus, one aim of this dissertation is to reexamine and rethink how relationships are studied within the context of globalization.

I recognize that, although the opportunity for intercultural interactions has increased (for some more than others), individuals do not always take advantage of such
opportunities (Halualani, Chitgopekar, Morrison, & Dodge, 2004). Therefore, when individuals do interact between cultures, intercultural communication skills remain in infancy. Intercultural relationships require the ability to negotiate interpersonal norms, expectations, communication styles as well as meaning-making systems. Differences, more often than similarities, can increase misunderstanding, uncertainty, and conflict (Gudykunst, 2005; Sias et al., 2008). If unsuccessfully negotiated, communication barriers can form. Globalization has brought more people, like that of the migrant worker, together, which creates intercultural relational opportunities and challenges (Burawoy et al., 2000). Within the context of globalization, scholars have an increased opportunity to extend and enhance disciplinary knowledge of intercultural relationships and communication, especially amongst migrant workers, or to whom I will later refer to as foreign workers such as the English language teacher (ELT).

**Migrant Workers**

Relationships with migrant workers are an example of an intercultural relationship influenced by globalization. Labor migration is one of the most important sources of establishing regional connections and development (Taran, 2011). The United Nations defines a migrant worker as “a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national” (International Convention, 1990). This includes workers throughout the socio-economic spectrum. Migrant workers are often used as a tool through which to adjust economies since an increasing number of jobs within industrialized nations cannot be filled by native-born workers due to economic, demographic, and technological changes, such as
aging workforces and declining populations (Taran, 2011). At the same time, reverse flows of workers migrating from industrialized nations to new democracies or between industrialized nations also exist but have received far less attention.

In general, migrant workers face many inequalities. In fact, ways in which migrant workers are treated are commonly characterized by abuse (International Labour Organization, 2004). Migrant workers face higher levels of unemployment, and if employed, migrants tend to be placed into unskilled occupations within most countries (Ambrosini & Barone, 2007). When discussing migrant workers, the International Labour Organization (2004) stated:

Despite the positive experiences of migrant workers, a significant number face undue hardships and abuse in the form of low wages, poor working conditions, virtual absence of social protection, denial of freedom of association and workers' rights, discrimination and xenophobia, as well as social exclusion. Gaps in working conditions, wages and treatment exist among migrant workers and between migrant and national workers. In a significant number of cases unemployment rates, job security and wages differ between regular migrant workers and national workers. Disadvantages such as these, as well as unequal starting points, are the key reasons why migrant workers face more obstacles than the native-born population (Taran, 2011).

An additional struggle migrant workers face is that of being displaced individuals. For a migrant worker, “home” is a fluid concept (Nkosi, 1994; Tomlinson, 1999). After being uprooted from their cultural homeland, migrants must sustain a coherent identity
and community (e.g., Appadurai, 1996; Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1992; Guarnizo 1998; Levitt, 2001; Ong, 1999). We maintain, create, and recreate our identity via cultural expression (Collier, 2005; Whang, Cooper, & Wong, 2005). However, due to the transient nature of people’s lives in our globalized age, social interactions can prove challenging for identity maintenance. In order to create a coherent identity and community, migrants must be able to communicate effectively in order to create social ties. Yet, some migrants are restricted by international/national laws that regulate their ability to create social relations (Witteborn, 2011). Thus, migrant workers continue to face challenges as they not only navigate their own identities, but also social interactions and barriers such as discrimination, prejudice, stigma, and language barriers. To shed light on ways globalization influences intercultural relationships, this dissertation examines how communication is negotiated within host-migrant worker relationships. In particular, one area to consider the influence of culture and communication lies within the realm of privacy.

Culture, Communication, and Privacy

Privacy is a topic of interest that has grasped the attention of scholars interested in communication and culture (Ting-Toomey & Korzenny, 1991; Won-Doornink, 1985) as well as interpersonal communication (Kanter, Afifi, & Robbins, 2012; Petronio, 2002). Privacy, as an umbrella term, is an issue that is deemed important throughout the world that includes a related, plurality of items such as: the right to be let alone, limited access to the self, secrecy, control over personal information, protecting one’s personhood, and
intimacy (Solove, 2008). The desire to protect and manage what one considers “private” proves challenging (Petronio, 2002).

Privacy management is an important area of study for intercultural and interpersonal scholarship. Intercultural and interpersonal scholars should be interested in privacy management studies for at least two reasons. First, privacy regulation is universal across cultures, but the ways in which members of a culture manage/seek to control privacy varies (Altman, 1977; Moore, 1984; Roberts & Gregor, 1971). In other words, the ways in which one culture regulates private information (in)accessible to others varies. Since cultures and traditions have authority, this can act as a chain that renders individuals unable to be entirely free to pick and choose from cultural norms they wish to embody (Schoeman, 1992). Social control mechanisms are internalized with culture and influence one’s characterization of privacy (Schoeman, 1992). This can result with individuals feeling stuck in a place where they might be unable to reveal private information due to that information conflicting with the larger culture (Schoeman, 1992).

Second, intercultural and interpersonal encounters share the same dyadic basis. However, intercultural encounters involve the presumption that individuals are operating on differing cultural scripts, repertoires, and assumptions (Barnlund, 1989, 1998). Privacy regulation is said to be necessary for interpersonal and intercultural survival (Altman, 1977; Petronio, 2002). Interpersonal relationships, the basic building blocks of society, must successfully negotiate private information in order to thrive as a society. Social relations are transformed via globalization as opportunities for inter-regional
interaction are formed (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999). Since people experience globalization differently in uneven and varied ways (Giddens, 2000), this has relational consequences that are at the heart of interpersonal studies.

Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, and Chua (1988) explained that culture is a powerful, theoretical variable for interpersonal communication. Interpersonal processes vary across cultures, and when culture is included within a study, the scope of the study increases (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988). Ignoring the relationship of culture on communication would be like only painting a portrait halfway. Much is left to be discovered. Communication does not exist within a cultural vacuum (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988), and therefore should not be studied as such. Hall (1959) claimed that “culture is communication and communication is culture” (p. 169). When two people from differing cultures meet, they not only attach different meanings to the same event, but also express meanings distinctively from each other because they do not share the same cultural rules (Barnlund, 1989). Unfortunately, privacy management within intercultural relationships is a neglected area of study amongst scholars. Examining how migrant workers in Japan, such as ELTs, provide a suitable context in which to explore the influence of globalization on intercultural privacy negotiation.

Global English Education, Foreign Workers, and ELTs in Japan

Since the end of the 20th century, English has not only become a global language, but maintains a position of dominance as such (Ciprianova & Vanco, 2010). In fact, global English education has become essential in order to allow national economies to be able to compete, and even participate, within the global economy (Jeon, 2012). For those
on the periphery, English “symbolizes the divisive line between wealth and poverty” (Ciprianova & Vanco, 2010, p. 126). English’s prominent position created a “massive business” language teaching field, which employs many expatriates (Kaplan, 2001, p. 4).

English continues to be promoted as a critical resource and asset in order to compete and participate within the global economy (Jeon, 2012; Lan, 2011; Seargeant, 2011). This has led to the importation of native speakers of English to serve as temporary migrant workers within the worldwide English teaching market (Jeon, 2012; Lan, 2011). This commodification of English, and its native speakers, illustrates a setting where globalized relationships continue to increase which affects intercultural privacy negotiations. Foreign teachers of English have been defined and referred to as “migrant workers” (Jeon, 2012; Lan, 2011), and “expatriates” (Kim, 2005; Kim, 2008; Kim & Kim, 2004, 2005). However, guided by participants’ own voices, I use the term “foreign worker” in this dissertation. Regardless of the term used, it is the shared identity position as temporary or permanent workers and/or employees residing in a foreign country that matters.

Foreign worker research has received minimal attention from communication scholars. I refer to a “foreign worker” as someone living in, what is for them, a non-native country. To me, a foreign worker is an individual who is living in a country where they were not born and most likely are not citizens. Related research has primarily focused upon conflict negotiation (Sun & Starosta, 2001), adaptation to the host culture (Kim, 2005; Kim, 2008; Kim & Kim, 2004, 2005), expatriate voting laws (Johnson Davis, & Cronin, 2009), expatriate-local staff oral communication patterns (Du-Babcock
& Babcock, 1996), and conceptions of time (Masumoto, 2004). Only a handful of published studies within the communication discipline have sought to investigate communicative phenomenon amongst English language teachers (ELTs) (Komisarof, 2001, 2006; Root, 2009; Simmons, 2012).

English teachers in Japan serve as a prime case study in which to explore intercultural privacy negotiation due to their unique role which encourages and fosters globalization (Komisarof, 2001, 2006; McConnell, 2000; Simmons, 2012). Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) provides standardized curriculum for primary and secondary education which recognizes the role of English as a global language (Seargeant, 2011). This has led individuals and institutions alike to show interest in English (McVeigh, 2002) and to the continual recruitment of gaijin (外人), Japanese for foreigner or foreigners, by various private and government organizations. The existence of numerous global English teaching jobs for native-speakers, testifies to the fact that a global English ideology exists (Root, 2009). Despite the plethora of qualified non-native English teachers and English teaching materials readily available for study and purchase, native speakers are viewed as the “best resource” for learning (Root, 2009, p. 59). This is evidenced by the fact that native-English speaking teachers are becoming increasingly commodified by national governments (Jeon, 2012).

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme is one example of a Japanese government initiative to encourage and expand English education and internationalization throughout latter primary and secondary public education.
Celebrating its 26th year of operation, JET has over 54,000 alumni spread across the world, of which I am one. In 2012, JET brought 4,360 ELTs from 40 countries to Japan (JET Programme, 2012a). ELTs serve and assist Japanese teachers of English with material development, classroom instruction, and provide a native example for language usage and pronunciation (JET Programme, 2012b).

ELT recruitment, like that within the JET Programme, has revealed a Western bias, particularly in favor of individuals from the United Kingdom and the United States (Matsuda, 2006). Such a bias imports gaijin from nations that have fundamental cultural differences from Japan. ELTs are typically younger individuals who enter Japan’s English teaching workforce after completing an undergraduate degree in their home country. Within the context of globalization “our choices and actions are always enabled, shaped, and constrained by history, relations of power, and material conditions that are inextricably linked to intercultural dimensions of culture, race, class, religion, sexual orientation, language, and nationality” (Sorrells, 2010, p. 184). Taking an interpretive-critical perspective of privacy management allows for such forces to be better understood. This perspective will allow me to first understand a phenomenon and then to situate my understandings in larger social phenomenon (e.g., economics, power, histories, etc.). Research has shown that having knowledge of culture-specific values does not necessarily equate with effective interpersonal interactions (Earley & Peterson, 2004). Since ELTs are “imported” into Japan to foster cultural awareness, it is plausible to assume that an ELT might find that s/he must negotiate differing cultural assumptions and boundaries.
One role ELTs play within Japanese education is to increase international relations (McConnell, 2000). Native English speakers are seen as an important, tangible symbol in language education program seeking to promote internationalization (Breckenridge & Erling, 2011). Kubota (2002) argued that gaijin ELTs exist not for English educational purposes but, rather, to promote internationalization or international understanding. This is accomplished by “providing students with opportunities for intercultural communication and understanding” (Breckenridge & Erling, 2011, p. 81). ELTs are not required to have knowledge of Japan or teaching experience prior to moving to Japan. Importing iconic symbols (ELTs) that are not culturally literate could result in challenging intercultural interactions. ELTs are seemingly open and willing to acclimate sensitively to Japanese culture (Breckenridge & Erling, 2011), but given their seemingly public role and prominent position within Japanese education, it is important to learn how ELTs manage differing cultural ideologies of privacy. In order to understand how globalization affects privacy negotiation amongst intercultural partners, I pose the following.

Problem Statement

In order to provide deeper understandings and to create a more holistic picture as to the processes and consequences of privacy negotiation within intercultural relationships in a globalized society, it is vital to seek understanding as to the roles culture and communication play in how privacy negotiations are handled socially. Therefore, this dissertation fulfills this need by seeking to understand intercultural privacy negotiations within the context of globalization by using expatriate English
language teachers (ELTs) and their Japanese co-workers as a case study in which to understand and critique intercultural privacy negotiation. Thus, I seek to explore how perceived privacy is negotiated within dyads of ELTs and their Japanese co-workers. As foreign workers, ELTs offer a unique expression in which to expand intercultural scholarship.

For this project, I use Sorrells’ (2010) definition of globalization. Sorrells (2010) defined globalization as “the complex web of economic, political, and technological forces that have brought people, cultures, cultural products, and markets, as well as beliefs, practices and ideologies into increasingly greater proximity to and con disjunction with one another within inequitable relations of power” (p. 171). This notion reminds scholars that each participant within an intercultural interaction comes situated within various social, economic, historical, and political contexts that we cannot remove (Collier et al., 2001; Shome & Hegde, 2002). For the purposes of this dissertation, I define culture both as a resource and as a site of contestation where meanings must be constantly negotiated (Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992). This site is further complicated due to globalization, where culture is viewed as a resource (Yudice, 2003). Such a resource can be used in order to increase economic resources and political power (Sorrells, 2010). ELTs in Japan serves as a prime case study in which to critically examine intercultural communication interactions since both ELTs and their Japanese co-workers must daily manage such contested meanings both personally and intercultureally.

ELTs occupy multiple “spaces,” meaning that foreigners within Japan exist within a variety of cultural worlds (i.e., their host culture and their home culture). At times, this
could leave ELTs feeling they are in a world between worlds or caught in a moment of tension between privileging their home culture’s customs versus seeking to adopt or honor their host culture’s customs. Scott (1995) discussed the complexity of belonging to multiple communities:

… in a complex society where we belong to multiple communities with varying cultures and expectations of us, our privacy allows us to choose among the ways we might present ourselves to others. This way we can appear differently in different groups, while keeping our private self private (p. 18).

Although Scott (1995) did not discuss intercultural implications, this study seeks to uncover cultural premises and management strategies that may exist amongst ELTs and Japanese co-workers. Considering gaijin ELTs’ context within Japan, it is plausible to assume that differing cultural conceptions of privacy might not only influence one’s identity, but could cause intercultural tensions amongst interpersonal relationships. It is important for interpersonal and intercultural communication researchers to consider such instances in the context of globalization. Although ELTs probably experience many positive experiences when interacting with Japanese, ELTs also face intercultural challenges. In this dissertation, I seek to explore the experiences of foreign English language teachers (ELTs) living and working in Japan during privacy negotiations with Japanese.

Rationale

Intercultural communication scholars have revealed the utility of examining emotionally vulnerable populations within intercultural interactions (e.g., Oetzel, 2005;
Foreign workers, such as ELTs, can be considered vulnerable due to their institutional reliance on Japanese co-workers for access to local commodities, such as health care. ELTs are expected to rely upon and consult with their supervisors for both work and non-work related issues to help with the cultural transition. Such consultation has the potential to put ELTs in a double-bind where they desire not just assistance with Japanese life, but also privacy within the workplace.

Studying privacy management among foreign workers, such as ELTs, is important, because it can advance understandings of ways in which privacy is negotiated and managed during intercultural interactions. Doing so will expand intercultural communication scholarship within a globalized context. Simmons (2012) argued that researching *gaijin* ELT privacy management is important for three reasons. First, few studies from a communication perspective exist examine Westerners from a “subordinate” position in which westerners are overseen by a supervisor and not taking the “leading role” (Komisarof, 2001, 2006; Masumoto, 2004; Peterson, Milstein, Chen, & Nakazawa, 2012; Simmons, 2012). A communication perspective can enhance understanding as to how privacy might be negotiated within intercultural relationships. Breckenridge and Erling (2012) added that the perspectives as to how the global English teaching industry has affected *gaijin* in Japan are rarely heard. Thus, this dissertation will provide voice to a relatively muted group. Further inquiry provides potential to expand current communication theorizing and practice in intercultural privacy negotiation.

Second, understanding ways in which members of this particular community negotiate privacy can have heuristic value for better understanding how cultural
conceptions of privacy are negotiated. Further study offers potential to reveal how differing conceptions of privacy can influence intercultural relationships. Ting-Toomey and Chung (1996) called for more emphasis on “actual communication aspects of how people in different cultures negotiate and redefine their relationships via the use of actual verbal/nonverbal accounts and stories” (p. 255). Additionally, Ting-Toomey and Chung (1996) called for research between native and nonnative speakers in terms of how different cultures manage relational transgressions. Researching ways in which ELTs manage privacy with Japanese co-workers offers potential to fulfill this call.

Third, foreign workers in Japan are likely to continue to increase. Due to Japan’s projected population decline stemming from a low-birth rate and aging population, the Japanese government plans to partially address this current need via employing more foreign workers (Komisarof, 2006). Additionally, due to prolonged economic stagnation, Japanese officials expect “foreign talent to successfully rejuvenate Japan” (Kobayashi, 2013, p. 9). Currently, there are nearly 1,250,000 gaijin who live in Japan (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2009). Employing more foreign workers in Japan is likely to increase ELTs on all levels (national, prefectural, local) throughout Japan, thus promoting further intercultural interaction.

ELTs in particular will be increasingly recruited due to current proposals to reform the English education system in Japan by the year 2020. In mid-December 2013 the Japanese Ministry of Education presented a reform plan to “bolster English study from elementary to high school from the 2020 academic year to pursue globalization” (Kameda, 2013, December 31). At the same time Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party
issued a proposal calling to double the government-funded Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme in the next three years to “to boost Japan’s global competitiveness and nurture international talent” (Mie, 2013, April 24). This would increase the government’s program “to 10,000 from about 4,360 in 2012. The teachers also will be dispatched to all elementary, junior high and high schools within 10 years” (Mie, 2013, April 24). Clearly, this is not a niche population communication scholars should ignore. Young (1996) and Kim (2010) stated that nothing within the social sciences is more important than researching intercultural communication. Kim (2010) claimed intercultural communication is the most serious problem facing humankind. In order to expand the usefulness of examining communication within this context, I propose to take a discourse analytic approach within Petronio’s (2002) Communication Privacy Management and Goffman’s (1959) Impression Management theoretical framework due to its focus and proven track record of exploring privacy boundary management.

Preview of the Chapters

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. In Chapter Two, I discuss relevant literature related to globalization and the commodification of culture, English teaching in Japan, and privacy in an effort to establish the conceptual framework for the study. I also discuss how Petronio’s (2002) Communication Privacy Management theory offers the most appropriate theoretical frameworks to explore intercultural privacy management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers.
Chapter Three will discuss the methods I employed for this study. In particular, I describe how I collected and analyzed interview transcripts via thematic and cultural discourse analysis of 39 ELTs and 38 Japanese co-workers.

Chapter Four provides an overview of how ELTs and Japanese co-workers define privacy, what they perceive to be privacy violations, and how they manage/negotiate their privacy at work. Additionally, urban and rural differences are explored.

Chapter Five examines ELTs’ and Japanese co-workers’ cultural premises which guides social interaction and, thus influences their privacy management.

Chapter Six examines larger ideological and structural issues that enable and constrain ELT-Japanese co-worker privacy negotiations.

Chapter Seven summarizes this dissertation as well as providing theoretical and practical implications of this study, and posing future directions for research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Within Chapter Two, I synthesize relevant literature in an effort to establish the conceptual framework and contextual background for this dissertation. First, I provide a fuller picture of globalization and its influence on culture and relationships. In order to explicate this particular case study, I provide a fuller description of English education in Japan as well as English language teachers (ELT). Second, I synthesize and discuss ways in which examining Japan-U.S. communication provides insight into this context. This body of literature provides an example of a Japanese-Westerner relationship (the focus of this study). Third, after describing intercultural workplaces for expats, I review privacy literature and discuss gaps which merit scholastic attention. In particular, for this study, I focus upon privacy negotiations amongst foreign workers within the intercultural workplace. Finally, I argue why Petronio’s (2002) Communication Privacy Management and aspects of Goffman’s (1959) Impression Management theory contribute and are the most appropriate guiding theoretical frameworks for this study.

Globalization and Commodification of Culture

Globalization has been said to transform our social lives and work (Cheney, Lair, & Gill, 2001; Conrad & Poole, 1997; Holmer Nadesan, 2001b) from places to a space of flows (Castells, 1996). It is vital to consider ways in which communication can prove challenging within such a space. Inoue (2007) claimed that globalization calls for people to “rethink” intercultural communication in order to achieve intercultural communication competence. Within this section I further explicate globalization as I discuss challenges posed by globalization as well as how globalization has redefined the definition of
Second, I discuss how globalization has led to the commodification of culture.

In particular, I explore how the English language is now viewed as a cultural commodity.

Lastly, I discuss how this commodity has taken root within English language education and the importation of foreign English language teachers in Japan.

The concept of globalization implies, first and foremost, a stretching of social, political and economic activities across frontiers such that events, decisions and activities in one region of the world can come to have significance for individuals and communities in distant regions of the globe. (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999, p. 15)

Globalization is not just a “state of affairs” (Stohl, 2005). Globalization challenges cultural understandings (Chen, Fletcher, & Oetzel, 2010). This challenge has led to the need to reconceptualize the concept of culture as well as a reconsideration of modern-day influences on culture, such as globalization (Friedman, 2006; Shome & Hedge, 2002; Sorrells, 2013). However, first, it is important to understand globalization as it relates to culture, which is challenging.

Understanding globalization poses at least three challenges (Chen, Fletcher, & Oetzel, 2010). First, specifically naming, or developing an exhaustive list of, what globalization is and is not is problematic (Chen, Fletcher, & Oetzel, 2010). Second, globalization is not homogeneous nor is it one-dimensional (Chen, Fletcher, & Oetzel, 2010). Globalization embodies “dynamic communicative, economic, cultural, and political practices and produces new discourses of identity” (Stohl, 2005, p. 247). Third,
globalization’s complexity, connection, and contradictions that stretch across a wide array of spaces and places reveal contested discourses (Chen, Fletcher, & Oetzel, 2010).

Through these challenges, scholars have reconceptualized the concept of culture. Culture refers to situated, embodied differences that express and mobilize group identities (Appadurai, 1996). Within the era of globalization, culture is now viewed as a resource (Yudice, 2003), and is “conceptualized, experienced, exploited, and mobilized as a resource” (Sorrells, 2013, p. 9). For the purposes of this study, I define culture as both a resource and a site of contestation where meanings must be constantly negotiated (Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992; Yudice, 2003). In other words, culture can be viewed as a contested resource which can be exploited for economic gain. This can lead to the commodification of culture.

The commodification of culture refers to the process in which cultural practices, cultural spaces, and culture itself are turned into products for purchase (Sorrells, 2013). For example, cultural TV shows, movies, tourism, and even the English language are increasingly viewed as a resource for economic growth in the globalized economy (Lan, 2011; Sargeant, 2011; Sorrells, 2013). Yudice (2003) explained that as U.S. cultural products and corporations expand and, in some cases, saturate markets outside of the United States transmit American cultural values, norms, and assumptions. In other words, as Starbucks, Wal-Mart, Disney, and McDonald’s saturate the global market, these companies inject values and norms which influence, and in some cases dictate, the culture of the global economy.
The English language is another example of a cultural commodity. English has become an international lingua franca, which not only has allowed businesses and individuals to communicate in a common language during the era of globalization, but English has also served as a marker of cultural identity (Seargeant, 2011). Seargeant (2011) referred to English as the “symbolic face of globalization” due to its spread through globalizing technologies such as the Internet. Constructed as the “symbolic face of globalization” (Seargeant, 2011), English is viewed as both an opportunity and threat by some (Lan, 2011; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). In Japan, for example, English is associated with bringing “violent crime, reduced personal and national security, and a sense of loss and uncertainty about the future” (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011, p. 34). On the other hand, English is viewed as an opportunity for employment and economic growth (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011). English, as a cultural commodity, demonstrates the power of globalization to turn culture into an object or a thing, which can be consumed, produced, and exploited. Such usage will vary dependent upon the importing culture.

Since culture affects privacy negotiation processes (Altman, 1977; Petronio, 2002), the study of intercultural privacy negotiation is not only important, but is needed. Due to globalization, intercultural relationships merit not only scholastic attention, but a re-examination (Inoue, 2007). For this dissertation, I focus upon one specific workplace gaijin occupy: English education.
English Education and English Language Teachers in Japan

For Japan, English education is a critical piece of the larger globalization puzzle (Grant & Lee, 2009). In fact, in 2002, the Japanese Ministry of Education cultivated a strategic plan aimed at national prosperity and individual enhancement. The plan involved creating “Japanese with English abilities” (MEXT, 31 March, 2003). The Japanese government operates under the ideology that English will lead to globalized citizens and society (Baxter, 1980; Hino, 1988). This ideology is based on the belief that English has potential for expanding international understanding, uniting individuals between nations, and access to modernization, science, and technology (Phillipson, 1992). Additionally, this view sees English education as a means by which to communicate and, therefore, compete within the international economic and political arena (Butler & Iino, 2005). This explains why the Japanese government believes that obtaining English capital will lead to personally and nationally rewarding outcomes (Kobayashi, 2013).

English is not an easy language to learn for native Japanese speakers due to the linguistic differences between English and Japanese (Hino, 2009; Otani, 2007). Despite these differences, in 2008 the Ministry of Education mandated that English education should start in latter primary school (Hino, 2009). Such teaching follows the communicative language teaching model (CLT) which places emphasis on communicative competence versus accuracy and equips students with basic day-to-day conversation ability, such as ordering at a restaurant (Brown, 2000; Canale & Swain, 1980). CLT’s ideology, popular within foreign language learning since it was first
introduced in 1980 (Canale & Swain, 1980), has led to the existence of numerous
English-teaching organizations and recruiting companies in Japan. Such companies
include the JET Programme, Interac, Aeon, and Borderlink, to name a few. These
organizations, and others, seek to recruit and connect native speakers of English with
prefectural and local municipalities for employment. In order to be eligible to apply for
ELT positions, applicants must meet three general qualifications: (a) applicants must be
native-level speakers of English, (b) have at least a baccalaureate education, and (c) have
experienced at least 12 years of English education (Aeon, 2013, Borderlink, 2013,

ELTs in Japan have received very little attention from communication researchers
(Komisarof, 2001, 2006; Simmons, 2012). This is important to consider due to the
crucial importance the Japanese government places on foreign workers to rejuvenate
Japan’s economy (Kobayashi, 2013). Since ELTs are often young, untrained, educated
workers, they pose an interesting part of the globalization relationship puzzle to examine.
Past research amongst ELTs focuses upon membership norms (Komisarof, 2001),
acculturation (Komisarof, 2006), and privacy management (Simmons, 2012). These
studies highlight three items. First, this body of literature reveals ELTs stand out as an
“other” within their workplace which renders them (un)wanted attention. Second, this
research highlights the need for privacy research in order to offer understanding and
implications for intercultural workplace relationships. In particular, the ways in which
coworkers communicate influence relational perceptions for ELTs. Third, these studies
reveal the utility of exploring ELT workplace relationships. This particular context proves intriguing, which merits further exploration.

First, these studies highlight the fact that ELTs stand out within their workplace which often brings about (un)wanted attention. ELTs disclosed that the context in which they live influences their ability to obtain desired levels of privacy (Simmons, 2012). Rural ELTs, in particular, noted that the context in which they live influences their ability to stand out or blend in, which can bring unwanted attention (Simmons, 2012). Related, Komisarof (2001) uncovered moments that ELTs both wanted and did not want attention from Japanese co-workers. In fact, all of Komisarof’s (2001) and Simmons’ (2012) participants described receiving extra attention due to their foreign status. Such attention was perceived both positively and negatively. ELTs believed the extra attention occurred due to their nationality and foreign guest status (Komisarof, 2001; Simmons, 2012). Extra attention was appreciated when ELTs sought to accomplish tasks they felt they could not complete otherwise (Komisarof, 2001). In other words, if ELTs benefited from excess attention socially, it was appreciated and wanted. For example, having school rules translated into English helped ELTs feel included if they lacked the ability to obtain the information otherwise. However, “extra” attention related to health privacy was viewed as negative, unwanted behavior by ELTs in rural locations (Simmons, 2012). For example, ELTs reported that their location and gaijin status limited the amount of privacy they could obtain/maintain in the communities where they work (Simmons, 2012). Throughout these two studies, the subtext reads as experiences with inclusion/exclusion.
Being demarcated as different or “special” resulted in ELTs feeling excluded which influenced their interactions.

Second, this research highlights a need for privacy research in order to offer understanding and implications for intercultural workplace relationships. In particular, the ways in which co-workers communicate influence relational perceptions for ELTs. Disclosure and privacy was a theme present throughout these studies. Komisarof (2001) reported self-disclosure norms influenced ELTs’ perceived sense of belonging amongst co-workers. Within this study, all participants reported that self-disclosure was a means of being included within the group. Specifically, ELTs reported being included within the workplace when co-workers disclosed, but felt excluded and dissatisfied when co-workers did not disclose. Additionally, Komisarof (2001) found that much of the self-disclosure ELTs found satisfying occurred outside of the workplace (e.g., in restaurants, at teacher’s homes, etc.). However, those who did not engage within these activities felt distant from co-workers because they were missing the context in which disclosure occurred. Simmons (2012) discovered that perceived privacy violations often resulted in ELTs withdrawing socially from the workplace which influenced relationships.

Third, these studies reveal the utility of exploring ELT workplace relationships by highlighting intercultural tensions and ELT ideologies about group membership and ideal modes for communicative conduct. Komisarof (2001) revealed ways in which co-workers communicate ideals limit co-worker relationships. For example, a harmony-based communication style such as accommodating and avoiding conflict was reported by ELTs to limit co-worker relationships. ELTs were often unprepared for working in
intercultural environments (Komisarof, 2006; Simmons, 2012). Komisarof (2006) discovered that problematic acculturation and relational outcomes experienced by ELTs limits workplace contributions, which negatively affect ELTs and Japanese colleagues. This resulted in ELTs feeling alienated from their colleagues due to their inability to perform communitarian behavior and thus win acceptance into their workplace. Both Komisarof (2001) and Simmons (2012) draw attention to privacy as an important construct for ELTs and that an ELT’s workplace is a fruitful area of study.

Through semi-structured interviews, Simmons (2012) shared ways in which ten ELTs perceived health-related privacy violations due to differing cultural conceptions as to what is private. Simmons (2012) found that ELTs manage their health-related privacy concerns through various tactics such as omission, withdrawal from the supervisor-ELT relationship, as indicated by lack of trust that the supervisor will maintain confidentiality, lying, and seeking care through another: be it another ELT, non-work related Japanese friend, family member, or homeland medical professional. Simmons (2012) also discovered that ELTs privacy management is unfinished, intercultural business. In other words, for ELTs, privacy is an on-going intercultural challenging process. Further research needs to refine and expand how privacy is perceived and negotiated in order to understand how privacy boundaries are reinforced or made less permeable.

Overall, these studies highlight the importance and need of investigating privacy negotiation amongst ELTs and co-workers. Komisarof (2001) and Simmons (2012) reveal that ELTs often received extra attention due to being a foreigner. This extra attention may limit one’s ability to negotiate privacy within the public sphere (Beck,
Aubuchon, McKenna, Ruhl, & Simmons, in press; Simmons, 2012). Workplace relationships suffer when ELTs withdraw (Komisarof, 2006; Simmons, 2012). This research reveals ELT communication-based research is drastically lacking, but highlights privacy as an important construct for inquiry (Komisarof, 2001; Simmons, 2012). Further research is needed to include a greater diversity of both ELT and Japanese colleague perceptions. This study seeks to fulfill this gap by expanding research to incorporate Japanese and ELT perspectives regarding privacy negotiation.

*Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme*

In order to compete within the international economic arena, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme was created. The JET Programme “started in 1987 by local authorities in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC); the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA); and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)” (JET Programme, 2013b). JET began with the intent of increasing mutual understanding between Japanese and people from other nations. This notion encapsulates one of its major aims: to “promote internationalisation in Japan’s local communities by helping to improve foreign language education and developing international exchange at the community level” (JET Programme, 2013b). Thus, JETs (JET Participants) are encouraged to bring their own culture and diversity into the workplace and their communities. JET’s website states:

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme aims to promote grass roots internationalisation at the local level by inviting young overseas graduates to
assist in international exchange and foreign language education in local
governments, boards of education and elementary, junior and senior high schools
throughout Japan. It seeks to foster ties between Japanese citizens (mainly youth)
and JET participants at the person-to-person level. (JET Programme, 2013c)

McConnell (2000) claimed that the JET Programme was implemented just for
economic reasons. In fact, an official within Japan’s Ministry of Home Affairs said,
“Frankly speaking, the purpose of the JET Programme was never focused on the
revolution of English education. The main goal was to get local governments to open up
their gates to foreigners. It’s basically a grassroots regional development program”
(McConnell, 2000, p. 30). At the same time, the JET Programme’s goal is viewed to
“increase understanding of Japanese society and education among youth in the
participating countries” (McConnell, 2000, p. 30). In other words, English language
teaching in Japan is more about economics and globalization than English education and
competency (Kobayashi, 2013). To date, the JET Programme maintains a prominent
reputation as one of the world’s largest international exchange programs (JET
Programme, 2013b). The program expects to encourage long term global growth by
developing international connections between JET participants and Japanese (JET
Programme, 2013b). In 1987, JET had only 848 participants, which contrasts with 2013
which brought 4,372 participants from 40 countries (JET Programme, 2013b). The top
five countries that participate within the JET Programme include the USA (2,334
participants), Canada (477 participants), the United Kingdom (432 participants),
Upon recruitment, JET participants are placed to work within various organizations. Such organizations “consist of 47 prefectural and 20 designated city governments, individual city, town and village governments, and some private schools” (JET Programme, 2013c). These locations and climates vary throughout Japan. Some JETs are placed within vibrant metropolises, while others are placed in remote mountain villages. In terms of climate, JET participants can find themselves living and working anywhere from the “cool summers and pristine winters of the northern shores of Hokkaido or the tropical islands of Okinawa” (JET Programme, 2013e).

JET ELTs assist with classes taught by Japanese teachers of English (JTEs). Such participants are placed “mainly in public schools or local boards of education” (JET Programme, 2013d). Since JET’s ELTs serve in an assistant role, the job varies by site, but typically involves “Team teaching, or assisting with classes taught by JTEs, assisting in the preparation of teaching materials, and participating in extra-curricular activities with students” (JET Programme, 2013d). The JET Programme’s success has influenced numerous organizations. Similar gaijin recruiting organizations include, but are not limited to, Interac, Aeon, and Borderlink. Each of these organizations recruits native-speaking English teachers from across the globe. They assist with job assignment and visa support for prospective ELTs.

Due to the mandated importance of English education in Japan, ELTs will continue to live, teach, and move to Japan. This reality offers a unique context in which
to explore how globalization has influenced relationships, particularly within the realm of privacy. Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation, I chose to focus upon ELT and Japanese colleague relationships as a case study in order to understand ways in which privacy is negotiated interculturally. One particular relationship highlighted throughout communication literature which offers a basis for Japanese-Western communication is that of Japanese and Americans.

**Japan-U.S. Communication Patterns**

Cross-cultural, international, and intercultural communication scholars have demonstrated vested interest in exploring East-West communication (Huang, 2011; Inoue, 2007; Javidi & Javidi, 1991; Kim, Lim, Dindia, & Burrell, 2010; McDowell, 2002; Patterson, Iizuka, Tubbs, Ansel, Tasutsumi, & Anson, 2007; Servaes, 1988). These studies represent a significant body of literature within the communication discipline, comparing and contrasting East-West culture. One particular country that has caught the eyes of researchers is Japan. Many cross-cultural communication studies, in particular, have compared and contrasted communication patterns between Japan and the United States (Condon, 1984; Matsunaga, 2010; Shearman & Dumlao, 2008; Matsunaga & Imahori, 2009; Maynard & Taylor, 1999; Shearman, Dumlao, & Kagawa, 2011). Although my focus is not exclusively on Japan-U.S. communication, this body of literature merits attention as it provides a background and a type of case study of the phenomenon I will examine: intercultural privacy negotiation between Japanese-Westerners. Within this section I first discuss three reasons for such a strong focus on Japan-U.S. communication. Second, I discuss how Japan-U.S. communication has been
studied. Finally, I discuss how privacy negotiation is an overlooked and needed area of research between Japanese and Westerners from an interpretive-critical, intercultural perspective.

Over forty years ago, Silberman (1962) discussed three reasons for the enduring interest in studying Japanese culture. First, Silberman (1962) stated that Japan is intriguing to North Americans due to historic moments when North Americans were unable to predict or understand Japanese motivations (i.e., the bombing of Pearl Harbor in WWII). Second, Japan is readily accessible. Due to their international position and technologically-driven society, it is relatively easy to access Japanese culture. Third, Japan remains culturally different from the United States even though both countries have undergone similar processes of modernization and industrialization (Silberman, 1962). Although argument exists whether this is still true or relevant today (Kim, Lim, Dindia, & Burrell, 2010), the situated historical context of Japan-U.S.-based communication research continues to play out in the modern day (Kelly, 2008).

Within the communication discipline, Japanese-U.S. communication studies cover a variety of topics and arenas including: management (e.g., Nishida, 1992; Clarke & Lipp, 1998), politics (Ikeda & Huckfeldt, 2001), the family (Matsunaga & Imahori, 2009), group dynamics (Kitao, 1989), and U.S. interns working in Japan within subordinate positions (Gercik, 1992; Masumoto, 2000, 2004). The bulk of Japan-U.S. communication has largely been studied from a cultural variable, post-positivist perspective which began in the 1970s and continues today (Kelly, 2008). Predominately, coming from the functionalist paradigm, this research has successfully explained and
predicted cultural variability (e.g., collectivism and individualism) in both Japanese and American national cultures (Gudykunst, & Nishida, 1984; Yamaguchi, 1994). This body of literature is largely guided by Hofstede’s (1980, 1983, 1991, 2001) cultural variability dimensions, such as individualism/collectivism and power distance. Such scholarship aligns with Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey’s (1988) belief that one of the most important differences regarding ways cultures use language relies upon whether a culture is individualistic or collectivistic. Barnlund’s (1998) comments best summarize this approach:

What seems most critical is to find ways of gaining entrance into the assumptive worlds of another culture, to identify the norms that govern face-to-face relations, and to equip people to function within a social system that is foreign but no longer incomprehensible. (p. 37)

Throughout cross-cultural studies, Japan and the U.S. are compared as mirrored societies, casting each as opposite to the other (Condon, 1984; Gudykunst, Guzley, & Ota, 1993). In fact, “No nation is more different from America than Japan” (Condon, 1984, p. 2). Numerous studies exist which focus upon the study of cultural differences between Japan and the United States (e.g., Barnlund, 1975, 1989, 1998; Condon, 1984; Condon & Saito, 1974, 1976; Gudykunst, 1993; Hall & Hall, 1987; Ishii, 1985; Masumoto, 2004; Matsunaga & Imahori, 2009; Okabe, 1983). This construal paints the United States as an “individualistic culture and independent self construals predominate, while Japan is a collectivistic culture and interdependent self construals predominate” (Gudykunst, Guzley, & Ota, 1993, p. 291). From this perspective, the job of a communication
researcher is to paint a distinctive image of cultural differences. This perspective, although cross-cultural, frequents intercultural and interpersonal undergraduate textbooks (Floyd, 2009; Kurylo, 2013; Martin & Nakayama, 2011; Oetzel, 2009; Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2009). Similar to business research, these textbooks typically use Japan to illustrate a polar opposite viewpoint. For example, Japan is typically used to show a stark contrast and an opposite viewpoint for areas related to individualism-collectivism, communication style, intimacy, business practices, and facework (Condon, 1984; Goldman, 1994; Nishiyama, 2000, 2009; Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Chew-Sanchez, Harris, Wilcox, & Stumpf, 2003; Sodentani, & Gudykunst, 1987).

Of all the cross-cultural literature, Barnlund’s (1975) research regarding privacy merits attention. Barnlund’s (1975) seminal research regarding public and private conceptions of self provides only a cross-cultural comparison of related communication styles in Japan and the United States. Barnlund (1975) argued that Japanese and Americans maintain different degrees of interpersonal accessibility, which he referred to as the “public self” and the “private self.” Overall, Barnlund’s (1975) research revealed that Japanese and American public and private selves differ verbally. In particular, Japanese were found to communicate significantly less regarding feelings and thoughts, where as Americans expressed themselves on a more personal level in a variety of topics on deeper levels (Barnlund, 1975).

Japan and the United States cultural comparisons exist beyond the communication discipline. Disciplines such as, sociology (Yamagishi, Cook, & Watabe, 1998), business (Brett & Okumura, 1998; Goldman, 1994; Hodgson, Sano, & Graham, 2000; Kotha,
Dunbar, & Bird, 1995), management (Lu, 2002), marketing (Griffith, Myers, & Harvey, 2006), and politics (Ikeda & Huckfeldt, 2001) have followed the cross-cultural comparison approach. Such research has prominently been interested in easing intercultural business transactions by examining topics such as, forms of written arguments (Suzuki, 2010), meanings and conceptions of time (Masumoto, 2004), and negotiation (March, 1990). All of these have been researched with the purpose of facilitating smoother business partnerships, relationships, and transactions.

Interpretive and critical research, on the other hand, regarding Japan-U.S. relationship is lacking. This void demonstrates a need to provide understanding of intercultural communication from critical and interpretive paradigms (Kelly, 2008; Moriizumi, 2011). Critical intercultural communication approaches emphasize power relations and power differentials between differing cultural groups and reject the cross-cultural comparisons that essentialize cultural differences (Kelly, 2008). Although popular within the intercultural communication field (Gonzalez, Houston, & Chen, 2000; Gonzalez & Tanno, 2000; Martin & Nakayama, 2013; Martin, Nakayama, & Flores, 1998; Nakayama & Martin, 1999; Orbe, 1998), critical metatheoretical approaches regarding Japan-U.S. communication is currently lacking. This neglect caught the eye of neighboring disciplines. Dahlen (1997), a Swedish anthropologist, critiqued the ways in which intercultural scholars have studied communication as outdated due to the field’s overdependence on older anthropological models. The Japan-U.S context in particular, has witnessed few critical approaches come to fruition (Kelly, 2008; Moriizumi, 2011). Two studies exist which demonstrate the utility of interpretive and critical perspectives.
Taking a critical perspective allowed Kelly (2008) to uncover ways in which privilege rendered him communicatively incompetent as a foreign English teacher in Japan. He found that he accepted, reenacted, and perpetuated the U.S.-Japanese communication hierarchy (of dominance and superiority) that rendered him unique privileges due to his white skin color, nationality, and culture. This choice minimalized his intercultural competence when speaking with Japanese. Kelly (2008) stated “In my case, I had to recognize the humanity of Japanese people before I was able to progress toward accepting them as equals” (p. 275). Kelly (2008) claimed that the English education system in Japan teaches “the superiority of U.S. culture and its communication patterns” (p. 275). Taking a critical perspective allowed Kelly (2008) to be reflexive about the historical, political, and economic forces that influenced his communication.

Since Japan-U.S. researchers have paid very little attention to lived experiences, such as ongoing relational negotiation processes, Moriizumi (2011) analyzed identity negotiations within intercultural Japanese-U.S. American families in the United States. Using both interpretive and critical perspectives, Moriizumi (2011) uncovered how intercultural families negotiate relational identities from a historical context as well as gender and racial ideologies. Moriizumi’s (2011) study demonstrates the need to explore negotiation processes within intercultural relationships as well as the utility of combining both interpretive and critical perspectives.

This review of literature suggests two specific shortcomings. First, a large amount of the literature focuses upon cross-cultural or international relationships versus intercultural relationships. Although helpful, lack of attention to enhancing intercultural
relationships between Japan-U.S., or Japan-West, might have relational consequences, especially in the era of globalization. Second, privacy is one particular area of study that has received only minimal attention from communication scholars (Barnlund, 1975; Komisarof, 2006; Simmons, 2012).

Barnlund’s (1975) work provides a strong foundation for future privacy research. At the same time, Barnlund’s research demonstrates a limited understanding of ways in which Westerners, and particularly Americans, navigate and negotiate privacy within intercultural relationships. Interpretive and critical approaches to intercultural privacy negotiations do not exist within extant literature beyond my exploratory study (Simmons, 2012). This gap highlights two important features this dissertation seeks to fulfill. First, an intercultural perspective is needed to heighten understanding of cultural influences within globalized businesses (Griffith, Myers, & Harvey, 2006; Inoue, 2007). This study seeks to fill this gap by examining intercultural privacy negotiations within the global workplace, as present in Japan. Second, this study seeks to take an interpretive-critical perspective in order to understand the life worlds and meanings participants’ experience related to privacy negotiation. Once understanding is achieved, I will turn to the critical perspective for further insight. Before I elaborate on specifics, this goal warrants an understanding of privacy for foreign workers within the intercultural workplace.

Intercultural Workplace and Foreign Workers

It is important to consider communication within intercultural workplaces (Oetzel, 2005; Stohl, 2005), especially among expatriates (Kim, 2005; Kim & Kim, 2004; Kim & Kim, 2005; Kim, 2008). In fact, “Communication is the essence of culture and
organizational effectiveness is rooted in the ability of people from different cultures to work together” (Stohl, 2005, p. 228). Within this section I first discuss areas of focus within intercultural workplace literature. Second, I discuss the challenge of intercultural negotiation for foreign workers at work.

Intercultural workplace research predominately focuses upon diversity, which has been studied from three primary perspectives: adding value to an organization as well as a competitive advantage (Cox, 2001; McLeod, Label, & Cox, 1996), acting as a barrier to effective process and output (Oetzel, Burtis, Chew-Sanchez, & Perez, 2001), and finally, diversity can both inhibit and prohibit workplace effectiveness (Oetzel, Burtis, Chew-Sanchez, & Perez, 2001; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). Thinking about diversity as an addition and benefit to a workplace has shown to lead to a competitive advantage for organizations (Cox, 2001; McLeod, Label, & Cox, 1996). For example, diversity has shown to enrich problem-solving strategies, creativity, and marketing effectiveness (Cox, 2001). Nemeth (1992) found that, when group members encountered a diverse range of opinions and perspectives, they made better decisions and responded to problems better than those not exposed to minority opinions. Goleman, Kaufman, and Ray (1992) claim that we learn more from people who are different from ourselves during interaction and particularly during creative processes. Marketing effectiveness increases when companies are viewed as being inclusive and open to difference (Cox, 2001).

Intercultural workplaces also experience difference as a potential barrier to effectiveness. Workplace communication barriers include: cultural differences,
interpersonal skills, lack of social networks, and language barriers (Sorrells, 2013). Additional constraints can include time-deadlines, cultural identities, and the hierarchical status of interactants (i.e., superior or subordinate) (Brew & Cairns, 2004). Research shows that the more culturally diverse a workplace or organization is, the more likely it will experience less effective interaction processes as well as process difficulties (Oetzel, Burtis, Chew-Sanchez, & Perez, 2001; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). Such instances can result in a lack of cooperation, power struggles, conflict, unequal turn taking, and a lack of respect among group members (Oetzel, Burtis, Chew-Sanchez, & Perez, 2001). Decreased turnover and absenteeism and increased productivity are linked with employee satisfaction (Richmond, McCroskey, & Davis, 1986).

Through the added benefit or challenge of diversity, foreign workers are one group that must negotiate interactions within an intercultural workplace. Expatriate workplaces have proven an intriguing site of research (Du-Babcock & Babcock, 1996; Johnson, Davis, & Cronin, 2009; Kim, 2008; Sun & Starosta, 2001). Throughout the literature, expatriate acculturation and adaptation to their host country remains a dominate site of interest (Kim, 2005; Kim & Kim, 2004; Kim & Kim, 2005; Kim, 2007; Kim, 2008). Condon (1984) observed “Unexpected difficulties (and opportunities) are encountered when people who have grown up in different cultures live, work and socialize together” (p. vii). Expatriate workplace negotiation research primarily focuses upon acculturation due to cultural adjustments (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Tung, 1988). This dominate research lens is largely driven by practical concerns and highlights the importance of adjusting to one’s host culture. For example, consequences of failing to
adapt include financial and personal aspects (Kim, 2007). In fact, early termination of an expat’s contract costs an American company as much as $1 million (Shannonhouse, 1996). Various costs incur beyond the financial. For example, damaged reputations, lost business opportunities (Black & Gregersen, 1991; Copeland & Griggs, 1985; Shannonhouse, 1996) as well as diminished self-esteem, impaired relationships, and disjointed careers pose adverse effects on foreign workers (Stoh, 1995; Tung, 1988). Out of expatriates who complete their contact, nearly one-third do not perform up to their supervisor expectations (Black & Gregerson, 2007). Lack of cultural knowledge, language ability, and difficulty adjusting to the host culture are primary factors which often lead to expatriate failure (Briscoe & Schuler, 2004; Dowling & Welch, 2005). Jablin (1979) noted that supervisors and subordinates who communicate frequently often vary in their perception of the organization as well as their communication with each other. Prior experience with intercultural interactions and organizational policies, systems, and structures in place can also influence one’s ability to be effective within an intercultural workplace (Mamman, 1995). Therefore, training is vital to expat adjustment (Ko & Yang, 2011). In considering privacy negotiation within the intercultural workplace, how can such training occur if no research is conducted?

Compounding challenges of intercultural communication, foreign workers, working as ELTs, occupy an intriguing site of exploration. This is particularly relevant for communication inquiry since one’s culture is found to influence one’s communicative choices at work (Brew & Cairns, 2004). Appadurai (1996) argued, “The central problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural
heterogenization” (p. 230). This dissertation specifically focuses upon privacy negotiations within the intercultural workplace of ELTs and Japanese colleagues. Such a focus will enhance understanding of globalized relationships within intercultural workplaces. An employee’s intercultural effectiveness, or competency, has been found to be influenced by that employee’s ethnicity, age, country of origin, educational or professional level, and religion (Mamman, 1995). Research shows that group composition affects communication patterns employed by participants within the workplace (Aritz & Walker, 2010). This is particularly visible when participants move from being a majority to a minority (Aritz & Walker, 2010). Since many ELTs undergo this transition when moving to Japan, it is important to understand ELT workplace negotiations as related to privacy. However, first, it is important to understand what it is like to work in Japan from a Westerner’s perspective.

**Working in Japan from Westerners’ Perspective**

With the influx of foreign workers into countries like Japan, barriers arise which can result in expensive and frustrating delays (De Mente, 2005). Since employees bring expectations and understandings from the broader society into the workplace (Mason, Button, Lankshear, Coates, Sharrock, 2002), it should be no surprise that foreign workers operate similarly as they carry unique cultural repertoires with them to work. Condon and Masumoto (2011) state “even those who take Japanese language classes, study about many aspects of Japanese culture and society, and participate in workshops or training programs in intercultural communication are still likely to confront everyday challenges when they go to work in Japan” (p. xv). In fact, doing business in Japan is a challenge
for Japanese, “so it should come as no surprise that foreigners often find it even more
difficult” (De Mente, 2005, p. 44). De Mente (2005) identified the first of these barriers
or “cultural walls” as etiquette and morality of personal and business relationships. For
example, individualistic versus collectivistic mentality can strike Westerners as strange
since decisions are based on the consensus of the entire group. The scene in which
business decisions are made can also surprise foreigners. Additionally, “behind the
scenes” dealings usually occur outside of regular office hours over food or drinks (De
Mente, 2005). These dealings highlight the importance of relationships to Japanese
business culture and demonstrate that actual business dealings come second (De Mente,
2005).

revealed that, in terms of management styles, Americans prefer independent work while
Japanese prefer interdependent relations amongst co-workers. Condon (1984) also
uncovered preferred interpersonal communication channels. Americans prefer direct
contact with individuals of similar status or rank within an organization and indirect
contact with subordinates. This mirrors Americans’ desire for top-down decision making
strategies in business. Japanese, on the other hand, view intermediaries as essential prior
to direct contact. De Mente (2005) added that, although exceptions exist within recent
years, management proposals generally start out in various departments instead of
coming from the executive level. Such an approach can seem “upside down” to
Westerners (De Mente, 2005). Additionally, Japanese prefer frequent and direct contact
between superiors and subordinates which demonstrates Japanese preference for upward
decision-making which generally involves consensus through lengthy discussions (Condon, 1984). Japanese standards for professionals, especially skilled workers, are quite different from Western standards (De Mente, 2004). Much of these preferences mirror American (explicit/confrontational) and Japanese (implicit/avoidant) communication styles preferences (Condon, 1984). Managers, for example, are expected to be able to “read the atmosphere” by understanding human nature and employing various strategies to maintain harmony within the group. Japanese harmonious actions often appear as “naïve, indecisive, obstructive, insidious, and untrustworthy” to Westerners (De Mente, 2004, p. 177). Condon (1984) said that knowing about the other is not enough for successful interaction. To have such requires new insights and skills (Condon, 1984, p. ix). To further contextualize this study, I next review privacy literature.

Privacy

In this section, I provide an overview of how privacy has been conceptualized and studied. Specifically, I share ways in which privacy has been studied by communication scholars. Second, I discuss how privacy is achieved. Lastly, I discuss Japanese conceptions of privacy in order to offer better insight into my study’s context.

Merriam-Webster (2008) defined privacy as “the quality or state of being apart from company or observation; freedom from unauthorized intrusion; a place of seclusion; or secrecy.” Scholars have reinforced and expanded this definition. Throughout communication and related research, privacy has been defined as information regulation (Petronio, 2002; Scott, 1995), the right to be let alone (Solove, 2008), a way to obtain
individual freedom (Schoeman, 1992; Scott, 1995), a mechanism to obtain personal control over intimacy (Schoeman, 1992; Scott, 1995; Solove, 2008), limited access to the self, secrecy (Solove, 2008), and a protection strategy from oversocialization or protecting one’s personhood (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979; Solove, 2008).

Privacy research has received an abundance of attention from interpersonal scholars. Such scholarship has interpersonal relationships amongst the family (Afifi, 2011; Petronio & Gaff, 2010), romantic relationships (Petronio, 1991; Steuber & Solomon, 2011), friendships (McBride & Burgen, 2008; Rawlins, 1983; Rawlins, 1992), student-teacher relationships (DiVerniero & Hosek, 2011; Hosek, & Thompson, 2009), provider-patient interaction (Greene, 2000; Parrott, Duncan, & Duggan, 2000), and workplace relationships (Allen, Coopman, Hart, & Walker, 2011). Topics include infertility (Bute & Vik, 2010; Steuber & Solomon, 2011), genetics (Petronio & Gaff, 2010), sexual health disclosure (Derlega, Winstead, & Folk-Barron, 2000; Keller, Sadovsky, Pankratz, & Hermsen, 2000; Lucchetti, 1999; Ngula & Miller, 2010), psychological implications of revealing secrets (Afifi & Caughlin, 2006), and disability disclosures (Braithwaite, 1991). In sum, interpersonal scholars have vested interest in exploring privacy within dyadic relationships which results in a plethora of published research.

Although privacy within the workplace is an area of interest for scholars (Allen, Coopman, Hart, & Walker, 2007; Snyder & Cornetto, 2009), privacy negotiations within the workplace remains an understudied area of research (Allen et al., 2007). Petronio (2002) claims that, within the workplace an individual must manage personal, dyadic,
group, and organizational boundaries. Literature that does exist regarding privacy within the workplace primarily focuses upon electronic surveillance (Allen et al., 2007; Snyder, 2010; Snyder & Cornetto, 2009; Stanton & Stam, 2003). Within the workplace, employees must decide to reveal or conceal private information as the costs and benefits of such disclosure is examined as company relationships and anticipated uses of private information is calculated (Allen et al., 2007). Despite attention from interpersonal and organizational scholars, intercultural communication scholarship paints a different picture.

From an intercultural standpoint, privacy remains an area of minimal attention. In fact, searching popular communication online databases such as Communication & Mass Media Complete with the key terms “intercultural” and “privacy” renders no published work which uses these words as key terms. Broadening the search reveals relevant results, but from disciplines outside of communication which focus primarily on technology usage, such as data protection and security (Capurro, 2005; Ess, 2005; Le, 2007). Altman (1975) argued that, without obtaining one’s desired privacy levels, a healthy relationship is not possible. Since intercultural relationships brave the additional benefit/challenge of intercultural negotiations, intercultural scholars should direct attention to intercultural workplace privacy research.

Throughout literature, privacy is predominately conceptualized as a dialectical expression. In other words, researchers cast privacy as something that is either expressed/protected (Rawlins, 1983), or expressed/repressed (Duck, 1982). It is important to remember that negotiated privacy tensions are culturally informed (Hastings,
2000). Unfortunately, an intercultural understanding of how privacy is negotiated remains lacking throughout published works. This dissertation, therefore, seeks to fulfill this void by examining ways in which privacy is negotiated interculturally. Additionally, this review offers five dominant areas in which privacy has been conceptualized. First, information regulation refers to one’s ability to control another’s access to information about one’s self. Within this view, scholars conceptualize privacy as the information one seeks and is sometimes able, to control (Petronio, 2002). However, to leave privacy as merely “regulation” of one’s “private information” limits the scope and complexity of privacy. I believe this is a part and product of how one attempts to manage privacy, but it is important to broaden the scope of understanding regarding privacy.

Secondly, individual freedom refers to the rights individuals have over the control of their self. Conceptualizing privacy as a means to obtain freedom broadens our prospective to additional reasoning for wanting to regulate information. Schoeman (1992) argued that privacy protects our social freedom “by limiting scrutiny by others and the control some of them have over our lives” (p. 7). Schoeman (1992) claimed social freedom is only possible if two conditions are met. First, one’s culture must provide a space and place for privacy. In other words, if one’s culture does not sanction “private areas” or topics that are considered “off limits,” then social freedom will not be possible. Secondly, the end product of social control devices utilized must justify the means. Schoeman (1992) argued that privacy and “the right to be left alone” are synonymous (p. 8). At the same time, privacy is important due to the ways in which it facilitates socialization with others. This conception of privacy allows scholars to
understand how individuals manage interpersonal relationships. By regulating personal information, an individual is able to control the bonds of his or her social ties, which might or might not apply to intercultural interactions. I believe this will apply to my study since I will examine westerners and Japanese.

The final two conceptions of privacy I will discuss are interrelated. Personal control over intimacy refers to the degree to which one allows, expresses, or limits close relationships. This influences the ways in which we are able to be socialized by members of society and various social circles. Bensman and Lilienfeld (1979) observed that privacy protects from over-socialization. If one achieves any sense of privacy, that achievement refers to “a sense that one is a unique individual, that part of oneself is not surrenderable in social relationships, it is not a phenomenon that can be regarded as socially given” (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979, p. 29). In other words, privacy is a way to obtain and maintain individuality, which is important for individualists (Hofstede, 1991).

In my perspective, the scholarly conceptions of privacy build upon each other. For the purposes of my proposed study, I conceptualize privacy as a potential way in which individuals regulate information to control access to “private” information as a means to obtain social freedom and to limit potentially “suffocating” over-socialization. Such an act is likely to produce personal and social benefits for the individual seeking privacy. According to Scott (1995), privacy provides individuals with three psychological benefits. They include:

(1) It’s [privacy] a way to separate a part of one’s life form others. (2) It gives one control over a part of his or her life. (3) This separation or control gives one
power over certain “intimate” decisions, information, or access. Thus, through privacy, we can feel in charge of our ability to regulate the personal information we give out about ourselves and how accessible we are to others (p. 11).

Benefits are not obtained without risks. Privacy is said to be able to trigger emotional desires such as autonomy and intimacy (Scott, 1995). However, privacy can also trigger “isolation, deprivation, and separation from others” (Scott, 1995, p. 11). In other words, rather than being over-socialized, an individual runs the risk of being under-socialized. Scott (1995) cautioned that such a break could be dangerous in that it “can be harmful to the individual’s psyche or for society as a whole. Under-socialization might lead to harmful fantasies, to being out-of-touch with reality, or to negative emotional states” (p. 12). Such realities can be triggered when privacy disclosure decisions sever or distance interpersonal ties. Additionally, not disclosing information can involve the risk of missing out on enacted social support (Goldsmith, 2004).

Privacy is purchased by space (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979), but purchasing space is not always possible. Bensman and Lilienfeld (1979) argued that rural settings in particular are not conducive to achieving one’s desired level of privacy for two reasons. First, “patterns of rural settlement are such that overcrowding exists in village communes, even though vast acreages of adjoining lands are relatively empty” (p. 30). Secondly, “rural societies in general tend to construct intricate networks of ceremonial and ritual social relations that prevent the achievement of privacy in the psychological meaning of the term” (p. 30). When individuals pull away in rural communities, that distancing might ignite fear as individuals who attempt to achieve more privacy might be viewed as
“devaluing the ritual and ceremony, [thus] the public life that binds the community
together” (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979, p. 30). Similarly, those in the public eye, such as
a celebrity or a government official, might have fewer privacy protections (Schoeman,
1992). Obviously, ELTs are not government officials, but in one sense they are
“ambassadors” of their home countries as well as “local celebrity figures,” particularly in
rural settings.

Privacy is achieved via one’s decision to reveal and conceal that which is
defined self-disclosure as “what individuals verbally reveal about themselves to others
(including thoughts, feelings, and experiences)” (p. 1). The choice of self-disclosure
functions to allow individuals to achieve social validation, relationship development,
obtaining feedback, obtaining assistance, and/or managing impressions are functions of
self-disclosure (Derlega et al., 1993). Self-disclosure has been understood to be a turning
point within an intercultural relationship (Allen, 2000). However, not all private
information is revealed by one’s choice. Privacy norms “are a precondition of gossip”
(Schoeman, 1992, p. 150). Blithe and Tracy (2009) found that gossip within an
organization allowed co-workers to build relationships, gather “needed” work
information, and vent. Such information is obtained without the other’s consent. Next, I
discuss Japanese conceptions of privacy.

Japanese Privacy

The fundamental differences describing individualist versus collectivist cultures
inevitably influence how privacy is expressed, enacted, and interpreted (Mizutani,
Dorsey, & Moor, 2004). Conceptions of privacy differ cross-culturally (Altman, 1977; Petronio, 2000; Ngula & Miller, 2010), as do cultural expressions of privacy values (Westin, 1967). In Japan, the concept of privacy is predominately based on a collectivistic orientation (Hofstede, 1991) rooted in the importance of cohesive groups. For example, the majority of Japanese people value the group’s needs and interests over their own personal needs and interests (Benedict, 1946; Hendry, 2003; Mizutani, Dorsey, & Moor, 2004). For collectivists, the very notion of privacy could be considered and/or perceived as selfish due to a perceived disregard for the group. Capurro (2005) argued that, within Western cultures, the self is something which should be protected versus Japanese culture where the self should be denied because it goes against collectivist mentality.

Japanese people generally view the right to privacy as an imported idea (Orito & Murata, 2005). In fact, the Japanese word puraibashi (プライバシー) is directly imported from the English word for privacy. Puraibashi is written in katakana which is “the Japanese syllabary used primarily for words of foreign origin” (Mizutani, Dorsey, & Moor, 2004, p. 121). Since traditional Japanese language does not have a word for privacy, this results in a unique cultural meaning for the concept of privacy (Mizutani, Dorsey, & Moor, 2004). For many Japanese, “‘the right to be let alone,’ indicates a lack of cooperativeness as well as an inability to communicate with others” (Orito & Murata, 2005, p. 4). Indeed, the ability to control one’s private information can be considered a “shameful excess of mistrust” with regard to the larger, cooperative, harmonious society (Orito & Murata, 2005, p. 4). Such a concept does not equate to western understandings
of privacy (Takada & Lampkin, 2011). Westernized Americans might believe or find this “ideal level of group interdependence for Japanese … suffocating” (Mizutani, Dorsey, & Moor, 2004, p.124).

Foreign workers can be confused by Japanese language utilized to discuss privacy. Nakada and Takanori (2005) explained two distinct, interrelated meanings of privacy in Japanese: shakai (社会), or public, and seken (世間), or world/society. These terms make known Japan’s collectivist values which stress the importance of harmonious, interdependent relationships. For example, shakai contributes to the lack of details regarding negative aspects of crimes in the media in order to either protect victims or the victims’ families (Nakada & Takanori, 2005). Breaking or ignoring shakai would mean speaking openly or publically about private matters which could harm another’s public reputation; such an action would contradict Japan’s collectivist history of protecting individuals within the group (Mizutani, Dorsey, & Moor, 2004). Seken emphasizes “human relations as defining the world of meaning for individuals, families, and the larger society” (Nakada & Takanori, 2005, p. 30). Via seken’s stress on human relations, Japanese come to understand, explain, and theorize what went wrong in a given circumstance (Nakada & Takanori, 2005). For example, if an ELT obtains a sexually transmitted disease in Japan, a Japanese person might seek to explain, make sense of, and understand the meaning of the illness of the ELT by examining the ELT’s home life or culture. However, an ELT might perceive this examination as a privacy violation.

Nakada and Takanori (2005) advocated that “‘privacy’ or the concepts of individualism related to privacy function only as a needless veil for Japanese people” (p.
32). For example, in a 2006 interview of over 1,800 Japanese regarding their understanding of privacy, only 41% reported “medical record and physical disability” as personal information they did not wish to disclose (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2008). Therefore, the majority of Japanese view health information as potentially public information. Nakada and Takanori (2005) revealed privacy and individualism “remain outside the lists of the most important values for Japanese” (p. 31). This culturally-specific idea of privacy in Japan warrants our attention. In contrast to the Japanese, Althen (2003) said foreign workers from westernized nations, such as the United States or Canada, view privacy as inherent to their cultural individualist values. In order to ground my research, I next review guiding theoretical frameworks for this study.

Theoretical Framework

For the purposes of this study, I primarily employ Petronio’s (2002) communication privacy management (CPM) theory to guide my examination of intercultural privacy negotiation. As a secondary lens, I borrow some concepts from Goffman’s (1959) impression management theorizing such as “back stage” and “front stage” to complicate my analysis. First, I provide an overview of these theories. Lastly, I will offer an explanation of how I see aspects of Goffman’s (1959) theory informing CPM as well as explain my particular approach to combining these theories in my research.

Communication Privacy Management Theory (CPM)

As an applied, western, rule-based theory, Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory gives us a glimpse into the construct of privacy based on western
sensibilities which will help us to conceptualize how western ELTs negotiate privacy with Japanese co-workers. CPM describes private information management as an unfinished, ongoing process (Bute & Vik, 2010; Petronio, 2007; Petronio & Ostrom-Blonigen, 2008).

CPM contains five suppositions (Petronio, 1991, 2000, 2002). The first supposition states that people believe private information belongs to them. The second supposition claims a boundary metaphor to illustrate distinctions between private information and public relationships. People make these boundaries less permeable to protect private information. Since people believe they own their private information, they also believe they have the right to control and protect what they consider as private. The third supposition is that people believe private information is owned or co-owned with others, which leads to a desire for boundary control as individuals reveal and conceal information. The fourth supposition informs us that CPM understands the management of private information by utilizing a rule-based management system in boundary regulation. The fifth and final supposition refers to CPM treating privacy and disclosure as dialectic in nature. To make visible, and in order to understand, privacy’s dialectical nature, Petronio (1991, 2000, 2002) revealed three privacy management processes: rule formation, boundary coordination, and boundary turbulence.

Rule Formation

Petronio (1991, 2000, 2002) developed five criteria individuals utilize to create privacy rules. These rules manage, protect, and allow access to an individual’s private information. These rules include and are related to culture, gender, motivations, context,
and risk-benefit ratio. Each criteria influences privacy rule revisions and rule development.

**Culture.** Every culture has privacy values and regulation norms. In fact, “someone from a different culture may invade our privacy because he or she follows different rules” (Petronio, 2002, p. 41). The ELT and their co-workers could be operating on different rules due to cultural differences. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that at one point or another a Japanese coworker might invade, intentional or not, an ELT’s privacy boundaries due to differing cultural rules and norms of what is constituted as private (or vice-versa).

**Gender.** In addition, gender or sex differences exist since “men and women establish rules based on their own unique perspective of how to enact disclosure or maintain privacy” (Petronio, 2002, p. 39). On top of that, the way one’s culture socializes men and women impacts their conceptions of privacy. For example, if women are taught to seek medical attention and discuss health information freely, then they might view privacy in a different light as someone raised with a different value orientation. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that ELT and Japanese privacy boundaries could differ between men and women. This could lead to further complication throughout intercultural privacy negotiations as the gender of participants within a conversation might contribute to ways in which privacy is negotiated and understood.

**Motivations.** Motivation is another factor which influences privacy boundary rules. For example, an individual’s needs could influence his or her decision as to
whether or not to open privacy boundaries or keep them closed (Petronio, 2002). If an individual has “low tolerance for ambiguity, he or she may depend on rules that allow for gathering and disseminating private information to satisfy these needs” (Petronio, 2002, p. 39). It is possible an ELT will disclose for relational rewards. Since the very act of disclosure is sometimes rewarding (Petronio, 2002); an ELT might need to disclose for social support. However, if an ELT sees the potential for privacy violation as too great a threat, the individual might keep quiet, which has enormous implications for the ELT’s well-being as well as the relationship in which s/he is involved.

Context. Context is the fourth factor Petronio (2002) identified as impacting our privacy rule development. Depending upon the situation, privacy rules can alter and appear different. For example, it is likely privacy rules will look much different for a traumatic event versus a “normal” day to day event. If an ELT develops cancer versus a common cold or a sexually transmitted infection, s/he will likely develop different privacy rules to manage her/his boundaries. Greene, Derlega, Yep, and Petronio (2003) claimed even the “physical environment can make a difference in decisions to disclose” (p. 24). Therefore, it is plausible to assume if an ELT does not have a private location in which s/he can speak with their supervisor, disclosures on various levels might be limited.

Risk-benefit ratio. Risk-benefit ratio is the fifth factor Petronio (2002) argued individuals and collectives utilize in order to construct privacy rules. Petronio (2002) stated, “neither privacy nor disclosure is ever without some measure of risk and benefit” (p. 40). It is risky to disclose personal information with one’s employer. ELTs might
interpret the level of risk involved in disclosures differently. In order to better understand the risks of disclosure, Petronio (2002) informed us that there are various levels of risks: high-risk, moderate-risk, and low-risk. However, if an ELT has no other avenue for obtaining specific information or assistance that is required, the benefits of disclosure could outweigh the risks. This is a decision each ELT must manage. The complications of security, stigma, face, and role risks only adds to the ELTs already complicated boundary management.

Research in Communication Privacy Management

As an interpretive theory, Petronio’s (1991, 2000, 2002) contribution of Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory has heavily enhanced our understanding within health (Allman, 1998; Bute & Vik, 2010; Greene, Derlega, Yep, & Petronio, 2003; Petronio & Gaff, 2010; Petronio, Reeder, Hecht, & Ros-Mendoza, 1996), family (Afifi, 2011; Ngula & Miller, 2010; Petronio, 2006; Petronio, Sargent, Andea, Reganis, & Cichocki, 2004; Youngquist, 2010), workplace (Allen, Coopman, Hart, & Walker, 2007; Snyder, 2010; Snyder & Cistulli, 2011), and interpersonal communication (Braithwaite, 1991; Ledbetter, Heiss, Sibal, Lev, Battle-Fisher, & Shubert, 2010; McBride & Bergen, 2008; Petronio, 1991) research. This body of literature reinforces the utility of Petronio’s (2002) CPM theory. CPM has proven useful throughout these studies to demonstrate ways in which privacy boundaries become more and less permeable. Although beneficial, a cultural focus is lacking. In fact, the bulk of extant research utilizing CPM has an interpersonal health emphasis such as HIV/AIDS disclosure (Greene, Derlega, Yep, & Petronio, 2003), child sexual abuse (Petronio,
Reeder, Hecht, & Ros-Mendoza, 1996), and medical mistakes (Allman, 1998) which demonstrates CPM’s utility.

CPM proves insightful as to how some people might approach disclosure incrementally. In particular, CPM examined privacy rules for children’s use of boundary access and protection about abuse (Petronio, Reeder, Hecht, & Ros-Mendoza, 1996). Petronio (2002) claimed that, due to fear, “the application of the privacy rules they [abused children] use tends to be unconventional or different from the rules used by adults who have not been abused” (p. 211). Research reveals that sexually abused children often utilized incremental disclosure where they revealed a “series of statements about the abuse” (Petronio, Reeder, Hecht, & Ros-Mendoza, 1996, p.191). As the “waters were tested,” children either revealed additional information or halted the disclosure dependent upon the response from the individual to whom they disclosed.

CPM has proven useful when examining requests for information (Bute, 2009). Requests not only come in a variety of forms, but meanings are attached to information requests which influence response (Bute, 2009, 2013). Bute and Vik (2010) found that women’s privacy management regarding infertility will always be unfinished business. In other words, privacy management is not a one-time process, but privacy boundaries must always be negotiated.

Although CPM denotes culture as a factor which influences privacy rule formation, CPM has not been used within an intercultural setting. Therefore, this study seeks to expand and enhance the utility of CPM within an intercultural context. To date, only two published studies examine CPM in a different culture, but these studies do not
focus on intercultural interaction. For example, CPM has proven relevant in exploring HIV disclosures in Kenya (Ngula & Miller, 2010). This particular study found that CPM was useful for examining how Kamba men in Kenya disclosed their positive HIV-serostatus to family members as well as how family members disclosed this information. Similarly, Smith and Niedermyer (2009) found that efficacy and context influenced family member’s decisions to maintain positive HIV-serostatus private. Simmons’ (2012) is the only study which examines intercultural relationships. Simmons discovered that, for ELTs in Japan, privacy management is unfinished, intercultural business. However, this study only obtained Westerner perspectives, thus leaving the story half told. These studies, although insightful, continue CPM’s tradition of focusing upon a single culture. Extending CPM to intercultural settings will not only test the theory’s utility, but offer opportunities to expand its usefulness and gain communicative insight within privacy negotiations amongst intercultural relationships. Next, I discuss how concepts from Goffman’s (1959) impression management will benefit this study.

Goffman’s Impression Management

Goffman (1959) introduced self-presentation, or impression management, as a fundamental interpersonal process. Goffman (1969) saw every statement, or communicative act, as a performative utterance one way or another. Such utterances allow people the ability to craft desired presentations of one’s identity via communication (Goffman, 1959). Goffman compared private and public behaviors to a performance complete with actors and an audience (Thornborrow & Haarman, 2012). Further, impressions were demarcated between a “front” and a “back” stage, which can be relative
to a given performance (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) argued “it is natural to expect that the passage from the front region to the back region will be kept closed to members of the audience or that the entire back region will be kept hidden from them” (p. 113). This results in the back region, or back stage, as a place where performers “can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude” (Goffman, 1959, p. 113). In other words, the front stage of one’s self generally refers to the positive impression one attempts to present of themselves in any given situation, whereas the backstage is where one is allowed privacy to take off the front or “mask” one wears on stage.

Since Goffman’s time, impression management has been an area of focus by various scholars in the context of the workplace. As relevant to this proposed study, impression management research has included a diverse area of interest including, but not limited to: job interviews (Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011; Ralston & Kirkwood, 1999), résumé construction (Knouse, 1994; Metcalfe, 1992), promotion decisions (Giacalone & Rosenfield, 1991), and CEO impressions (Pollach & Kerbler, 2011). Additionally, impression management has been found to be influenced by relationships with other people (Leary, Nezlek, Downs, Radford-Davenport, Martin, & McMullen, 1994), perceptions of how an individual is perceived (Martin & Leary, 1999), prevalent norms (Pataki & Clark, 2004), and to whom one is interacting (Vorauer & Miller, 1997). Leary and Allen (2011) argued that, within any interaction people might agree with other’s perceptions regarding a variety of dimensions, such as friendliness, competence, dependability, approachability, dominance, cautiousness, and attractiveness. Thus, proving suitable for exploring intercultural interactions within the workplace, impression
management offers strong potential for understanding how ELTs attempt to manage public and private constructions of self during privacy negotiations within their workplace(s).

Using privacy as a tool, individuals are able to construct images, or presentations, of how they wish to present themselves in everyday life (Goffman, 1959; Scott, 1995). In other words, via privacy individuals are able to create impressions or various identities as they see fit. Scott (1995) claimed that, by using our private space or “backstage” as a retreat or sanctuary from day-to-day life, we can “craft an image of how we want to appear to others when we step out into the public arena” (p. 17). Scott (1995) argued that “privacy gives us the freedom to indulge ourselves to satisfy certain inner needs and cravings, as well as to hide secret fears and weaknesses” (p. 18). Privacy offers the opportunity to create one’s desired impression.

Scott (1995) argued that privacy is important for the various roles, or impressions we attempt to convey in society. Additionally, privacy provides “a place of refuge where we can put aside our public social roles to be ourselves” (Scott, 1995 p. 20). Goffman (1963) described the backstage as a space to regroup and to reach one’s desired sense of equilibrium. The backstage can be figurative or literal. Privacy is “that backstage part of ourselves where we can express what we feel and desire very strongly, yet which may be publicly taboo, or may detract from the external impression of ourselves we want to project” (Scott, 1995, p. 18).

Goffman (1972) argued that individuals claim “personal space” in public. Therefore invading one’s physical “personal space,” or “bubble,” can lead some to feel
violated and threatened. This is especially true when permission is not granted to the “intruder” or perceived violator. For example, individuals might be very protection of their personal space, such as an apartment, in order to construct a backstage in which they are able to recuperate. Scott (1995) argued that, within one’s private place, “one is free to take off any public role one is playing and the demands to perform a certain way to be more of oneself” (p. 20). If privacy is vital to maintaining one’s individuality (Scott, 1995), one might presume that more individualistically-inclined individuals would experience boundary turbulence or perceived privacy invasions within a collectivistic society. Goffman’s (1959) work will guide my dissertation as a theoretical lens. In particular, the concepts of the “front” and “back” stage will help interrogate and explicate privacy in ways unseen. Such concepts can offer a sense-making device of ELT-Japanese privacy negotiations as both sides of this intercultural dyad are likely to navigate multiple realms.

Via privacy individuals are able to manage our everyday life presentations (Scott, 1995). In other words, through privacy individuals are able to create impressions or various identities which regulate our desired front and back stage appearances. Scott (1995) claimed that by using our private space or “backstage” as a retreat, sanctuary, or place of refuge from day-to-day life, we can carefully craft images as to how we desire to appear before others as we enter into the public arena. Therefore, privacy is important for the various roles, or impressions we attempt to convey in society and at work. Goffman (1963) discussed the backstage as a space to regroup and to reach one’s desired sense of equilibrium. The backstage can be figurative or literal. Privacy is “that
backstage part of ourselves where we can express what we feel and desire very strongly, yet which may be publicly taboo, or may detract from the external impression of ourselves we want to project” (Scott, 1995, p. 18). Due to the potentially taboo nature of privacy topics, one must manage his or her impressions.

If privacy is vital to maintaining one’s individuality (Scott, 1995), one might presume that more individualistically-inclined individuals might experience boundary turbulence or perceived privacy violations within a collectivistic society. Goffman (1959) said that viewing the transition between the front and back stage of one’s impression management is one of the most interesting times of observation. Goffman (1959) argued this allows a researcher to “detect a wonderful putting on and taking off of character” (p. 121). In order to further conceptualize my study, I next discuss the theoretical framework of CPM in order to understand ways in which privacy is managed within intercultural interactions.

*Communication Privacy Management (CPM) & Impression Management (IM)*

Coupled with concepts from Goffman’s (1959) impression management (IM), CPM will primarily guide my study as the overarching theoretical lens. These theories complement each other well which creates a firm theoretical foundation for this study. This compilation will offer intriguing insight into ways in which privacy is negotiated interculturally. First, both theories reveal dialectical tensions exist while negotiating privacy. Petronio’s CPM work draws added attention and exposure to the dialectical nature of disclosure. Readers obtain this knowledge and infer this tension via Goffman’s (1959) work, but Petronio’s (2002) modern-day terminology offers a clearer language to
discuss such concepts when individuals struggle with revealing and concealing that is deemed private. Second, Petronio’s criteria for disclosure involving culture, gender, context, etc. add light to how one might manage one’s desired level of privacy when different contextual factors are present. This insight enhances Goffman’s (1959) work, which only discusses acting differently in different situations. Petronio (2002), on the other hand, provides us with definitive areas in which privacy boundary maintenance might appear and play out differently. Third, Goffman (1959) helped “disclosure” to be viewed as a performative event. This allows disclosure to be seen as not only as a risk-benefit concept, but more of a “dance” in which actors must manage and navigate present dialectical tensions in order to achieve desired outcomes.

No theory is without its limitations. Both theories emerge out of interpersonal contexts but maintain applicable assumptions about relationships and privacy that are applicable in an intercultural context. Petronio’s (2002) CPM theorizing was conceptualized with culture in mind. In fact, culture is one of Petronio’s (2002) criteria for how privacy rules are formed. Since Goffman’s (1959) impression management and Petronio’s (2002) CPM do not consider globalization within its current theorizing, I also seek to advance these theories by examining globalized intercultural relationships in the context of privacy negotiation. Both of these theories have proven extremely valuable in the past, but should be re-evaluated due to globalization. Miike (2003) argued that “the topics we pursue, the theories we build, the methods we employ, and the materials we read [must] adequately reflect and respond to the diversity of our communicative experiences in a globalized world” (p. 243). Starosta and Chen (2003) claimed the
intercultural field is in ferment. It is, therefore, important for intercultural communication research to “formulate critical reflections on established theories and proven methods, and to contemplate on past achievements and future directions” (Asante, Miike, & Yin, 2008, p. 1).

Summary & Research Questions

In order to understand how privacy is negotiated interculturally within a globalized context, I propose to explore privacy boundary negotiations between foreign English language teachers (ELTs) and their Japanese co-workers from an interpretive-critical perspective. This study offers potential to understand how front and back stage privacy negotiations manifest within globalized intercultural relationships. In order to understand this phenomenon, I seek to integrate Petronio’s (2002) communication privacy management (CPM) theory with concepts from Goffman’s (1959) impression management theorizing. Since the privacy world of the individual is bound to conflict with the public culture and society (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979), it is vital to explore instances in which individuals from differing cultures negotiate public and private intersections. With this study and conceptual framework in mind, I propose the following research questions:

RQ1: How do ELTs and Japanese co-workers experience and negotiate privacy boundaries?

RQ2: What cultural premises exist amongst ELTs’ and Japanese co-workers’ privacy boundary management?
RQ3: What larger structures enable and constrain privacy boundary management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers?
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

In this chapter, I will describe my methods of data collection and analysis. I employed qualitative methods (Creswell, 1998; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) to understand meanings pertaining to privacy boundary management, cultural premises which undergird privacy negotiation, and how larger structures enable and constrain privacy negotiation between ELTs and Japanese co-workers. Taking an interpretive-critical perspective allowed me to understand the descriptive meanings and actions of ELTs and Japanese co-workers as I focused on specific communication acts and related processes that aided in constructing meaning (Berger & Luckman, 1967; McCracken, 1998).

Participants

For this project, I interviewed 39 ELTs and 38 Japanese co-workers. Of the 39 ELTs, the majority self-identified as female (n=21), whereas the remaining identified as male (n=15), transgendered person (n=1), queer-female (n=1), and queer-man (n=1). Participants were from USA (n=27), the U.K. (n=3), Australia (n=3), Canada (n=2), New Zealand (n=2), New Zealand/Romania (n=1), and Portugal (n=1). In terms of race/ethnicity, the majority of participants identified as white/Caucasian (n=24) or claimed a white identity in intersectional terms such as white-Greek (n=1), white-Cuban (n=1), Mexican-Caucasian (n=1), or White-Okinawan (n=1). The rest of my participants self-identified as Philipino-American (n=2), Japanese-Romanian-American (n=1), Okinawan-American (n=1), Vietnamese-French-American (n=1), Indian-Americans (n=2), African-American (n=1), Asian-American (n=1), or Chinese (n=2). All ELTs had a Bachelor’s degree except for one. Additionally, four had Master’s degrees and one was
a Master’s candidate. ELT ages ranged from 23-45 years old with an average age of 29.5. The ELTs had lived/worked in Japan from 8 months to 25 years with an average of 4.3 years. In terms of sexual orientation, participants self-identified as heterosexual/straight (n=24), gay (n=6), straight-questioning (n=2), pansexual (n=2), lesbian (n=1), bisexual (n=1), queer (n=1), lesbian-queer (n=1), or transgendered-queer-straight person (n=1). The ELTs lived in rural (n=25), urban (n=13), and/or both urban and rural areas at different times in their ELT careers (n=1). The ELTs worked in public schools (n=31), private schools (n=6), and/or a combination of public and private schools (n=2). The ELTs worked in pre-school, kindergarten, elementary, junior high, special needs, and high schools as well as English conversation schools, education centers, and universities. In other words, the ELTs in this study represent almost every type of ELT employment available in Japan. In terms of socio-economic status, the ELTs reported being members of their home country’s middle-class (n=31), upper-middle-class (n=5), working-class (n=2), or lower-middle-class (n=1). Finally, in terms of Japanese language ability, participants self-reported fluent and/or second-language (n=9), advanced (n=6), intermediate (n=7), conversational (n=6), or beginning (n=11) levels.

Of the 38 Japanese co-workers, I interviewed the majority self-identified as female (n=27), with the rest self-identified as male (n=11). All Japanese co-workers identified as racially/ethnically Japanese. Japanese co-workers’ age ranged from 22 to 65 years old with an average age of 40.9. In terms of sexual orientation, Japanese co-workers reported being heterosexual/straight (n=36), gay (n=1), and queer-lesbian (n=1). All participants taught with ELTs at some point except three who worked primarily in
administrative roles. In terms of location, Japanese co-workers worked in urban settings (n=19), rural settings (n=16), suburban settings (n=1), or in both urban and rural locations (n=2). Participants worked in public education settings (n=32), private (n=5), or both private and public settings (n=1). Participants worked at a wide variety of educational institutions including: elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools, as well as English conversation schools and universities. Japanese co-workers’ experience in working with ELTs ranged from 1 ELT to around 200 ELTs. Japanese co-workers reported being middle-class (n=34), upper-middle class (n=2), and lower-middle-class (n=2). In terms of English-speaking ability, participants self-reported advanced levels (n=23), fluent (n=5), intermediate (n=5), beginner (n=4), and none (n=1).

Data Collection

I collected data in Japan from May 2013 until September 2013. Both ELT and Japanese participants were solicited utilizing a snowball technique. I used my previous and current connections as an ELT to recruit participants throughout Japan. I sent emails (see Appendix A) to current and former ELTs I met or had some type of connection to during my prior experience (2007-2009) living, traveling, and teaching in Japan. I asked ELTs to mention the study to their co-workers. Additionally, I spoke with friends (both Japanese and non-Japanese) who knew people who taught in Japan. I contacted my university’s Japanese program to see if they had any connections with ELTs or Japanese co-workers. I went to an English teaching conference in Japan that was primarily composed of Japanese teachers. My contact allowed me to introduce my study to all in attendance. I joined various Facebook groups for ELTs and English teaching in Japan to
solicit participants (See Appendix A). I went to a foreign dance night at an urban club to solicit ELTs. I interviewed for various English teaching positions in order to make contacts with Japanese co-workers. I also worked at a junior high school in an urban area and at an English conversation café that fueled my snowballing sample. I even stopped foreigners on the streets and in subways. Lastly, I made cold calls to various schools in Japan and at ELT-recruiting organizations where I introduced myself and my study, and solicited participants. I advertised the study as one that sought to learn more about intercultural communication within the Japanese workplace between ELTs and Japanese co-workers.

I stressed different parts of my identity dependent upon whom I was speaking to (see Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality for more details). In brief, when speaking with ELTs, I was up front about my current and past role in Japan as an ELT, but did not provide information regarding my own conceptions of privacy as well as how I manage(d) it until data was collected from the participants and, then, only if asked. When I spoke with Japanese participants, I stressed my researcher persona and only shared that I was an ELT if asked. For the purposes of this study, I focused upon the ELT-co-worker relationship. Due to my lack of Japanese language ability, I focused upon Japanese co-workers who felt comfortable conducting interviews in English. However, about one third of the interviews I conducted with Japanese co-workers had translation assistance through a volunteer. One interview was conducted almost entirely in Japanese. I shared a copy of the semi-structured interview guide in Japanese with Japanese co-workers to ease potential language challenges. I collected data primarily
through in-depth interviews, and used fieldnotes to complement views and perspectives gleaned from in-depth interviews.

**Interviews**

Upon IRB approval (see Appendix B) and informed consent (see Appendix C), I utilized in-depth interviews as my primary method for data collection. ELT interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 3 hours and were conducted via Skype (n=29), face-to-face (n=8), and email (n=2). Japanese co-worker interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours and were conducted via Skype (n=2), face-to-face (n=34), and email (n=2). Past ELT-focused research highlighted the utility of exploring ELT perspectives via retrospective interview techniques (Komisarof, 2001, 2006; Simmons, 2012). In-depth interviews allowed me to “have access to the participants’ interpretations and evaluations of the events and how their views were modified or reinforced in the course of the [perceived] problematic [and non-problematic] events” (Kotani, 2008, p. 355).

In-depth interviews are proven as both appropriate and useful for studying talk about private information (e.g., Afifi, 2011; Allen, Coopman, Hart, & Walker, 2007; Braithwaite, 1991; Bute, 2013; Bute & Vik, 2010; Durham, 2008; Thorson, 2009; Simmons, 2012). In-depth interviews proved especially useful as discussions of privacy as they often involved highly sensitive topics which bring about ethical considerations for researchers that impede direct observation or recording conversations (Bute, 2013; Keeley, 2004; Petronio, Reeder, Hecht, & Ros-Mendoza, 1996). Bute (2013) stated that observing conversations that involve privacy disclosures pose a number of practical and ethical concerns, such as adding undue pressure on participants. Additionally, an
observer might not realize when intentional disclosure avoidance occurs (Bute, 2013). Therefore, numerous communication scholars have found retrospective accounts of conversations as an appropriate and beneficial means to study privacy (e.g., Bute, 2013; Greene & Faulkner, 2002; Petronio, 2002). This method allowed me to ask questions about how participants interpreted and attached meanings to their conversations.

Within these interviews, I asked participants to describe interpersonal privacy negotiations using a semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide included a series of questions concerning participants’ past experiences of privacy negotiation in the workplace and was translated/back-translated by a volunteer with translation experience whose native languages are both Japanese and English (see Appendix D & E). Prior to translation, I had the Japanese co-worker interview guide checked for cultural sensitivity by two different cultural insiders who were Japanese (1 man and 1 woman). This process helped me to rephrase questions to be more culturally sensitivity and accurate. When participants described specific incidents, I asked them for details with open-ended in order to ensure their voice is being heard as well as to allow full description of each specific episode.

Upon completion of each interview, I transcribed all audio-recorded interviews utilizing Dragon Speak, a voice dictation program. I double checked Dragon Speak’s dictation to ensure accurate representation with the original recording. The interview guide was composed of a series of open-ended questions that were designed to investigate how participants negotiate privacy. Throughout the interview process, I compiled field notes to supplement transcripts in case of recording errors. Due to the
diverse locations of participants throughout Japan, I used Skype and, as a last resort, e-mail-based conversations to interview participants when all other options had been exhausted and a face-to-face interview was not possible. As mentioned, I collected a total of 77 interviews (39 ELTs; 38 Japanese co-workers). However, as a qualitative researcher, saturation was my ultimate goal (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Data Analysis

As a qualitative researcher, I realize that an indefinite number of interpretations can be constructed and articulated from this projected research (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Fitch (1994) noted that “data and analysis should include consideration of inferences and interpretations, as well as concrete phenomena” (p. 36). To make sense of my data, I implored thematic analysis (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002; Owen, 1984) and Carbaugh’s (2005, 2007) cultural discourse analysis (CuDA) in order to answer my research questions with breadth and depth. Doing so revealed prominent themes throughout my data as well as ways in which participants’ revealed distinct cultural premises regarding privacy boundary management. In order to protect and ensure participants’ privacy, I utilized pseudonyms for all participants in my analysis. In order to make clear the contributions of thematic analysis and CuDA, next I discuss how I used each method of analysis.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis has proven appropriate within past studies of CPM (e.g., Petronio, Flores, & Hecht, 1997; Petronio & Kovach, 1997; Petronio, Reeder, Hecht, & Ros-Mendoza, 1996; Petronio, Sargent, Andea, Reganis, & Cichocki, 2004; Simmons,
I used an iterative process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) for analysis as I followed Owen’s (1984) thematic criteria. Within this framework, a theme is considered a salient meaning that is discovered via repetition, recurrence, and forcefulness (Owen, 1984). Recurrence refers to moments when two or more reports indicate the same thread of meaning. Repetition results when key words or phrases are duplicated throughout data. Forcefulness refers to the ways in which participants use paralanguage such as vocal inflections and pause for (de)emphasis. I read each transcript and journal entry in order to gain a holistic sense of my data. Next, I recorded my preliminary impressions. Guided by my research questions, theoretical lens, and my preliminary impressions I then re-read transcripts and journal entries in order to achieve a more systematic reading of all data and themes based within the voices of my participants as I employed Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) constant comparative method. This resulted in the emergence of categories and subcategories and allowed me to re-examine my transcripts and field notes in order to solidify themes. This process also created an audit trail (Farley & McLafferty, 2003) of theoretical notes, thus enhancing the trustworthiness of my claims.

*Discourse Analysis*

Discourse analysis examines how reality is constructed in language (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). From a discourse analytic perspective, “there are a number of possible discursive frames for thinking, writing, and speaking about aspects of reality” (Cheek, 2004, p. 1143). Although defined and conceptualized differently by scholars in various fields, discourse analysis always involves the study of particular segments of talk or text scholars use to make arguments (Tracy, 2005). Following Gee’s (2011a; 2011b) work,
discourse in this study is conceptualized both as spoken/written language (little “d” discourse) and as a tool in which to combine and integrate “language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity,” which Gee refers to as big “D” discourse (p. 201). In other words, discourse, in this study, is conceptualized both as talk and “other stuff” we use to construct a favorable impression (Gee, 2011a, 2011b). In order to make sense of the discourses I gathered for this study via interviews, I used Carbaugh’s (2005, 2007) cultural discourse analysis (CuDA).

*Cultural discourse analysis (CuDA)*

Housed within the world of ethnography of communication and influenced by practical theory (Carbaugh, 1989; Craig 1989, 1999a, 1999b; Taylor, 1997), cultural discourse analysis (CuDA) was developed by Carbaugh (2005, 2007) as a way in which to analyze differing cultural premises (or cultural ideals) in action as they cause (mis)understanding within intercultural contexts. CuDA conceptualizes communication as a cultural practice embedded with speech codes and cultural discourses that guide premises for appropriate communicative conduct (Carbaugh, 2005). In other words, communication, and what is deemed (in)appropriate, is guided by a social actor’s culture.

With culture in the forefront of this methodology, CuDA offers much to intercultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 1990). Scollo (2011) argued “CuDA offers a rich, nuanced, and systematic way of describing and interpreting the cultural meaningfulness of communication” (p. 18). Generally, CuDA asks “how is communication shaped as a cultural practice” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 168). Answering this
question helps researchers to understand what cultural communicative ideals influence intercultural interaction. Based within the social construction of reality, via communication, CuDA allows researchers to analyze ways in which individuals state “meta-cultural commentary, that is, they (and we) say things explicitly and implicitly about who they are, how they are related to each other, how they feel, and what they are doing, and how they are situated in the nature of things” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 168).

CuDA focuses inquiries on the practice and culture of communication as emergent within practices (Carbaugh, 2007).

CuDA offers five cyclical, analytical modes for analysis including: theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, comparative, and critical (Carbaugh, 2007). The theoretical mode offers an etic perspective that allows analysts to guide subsequent modes (Carbaugh, 2007). In other words, with theory at its base, other modes, such as interpretive or critical, can lead researchers back to the theoretical mode. This move can result in theoretical insight(s). The descriptive mode tries to understand what actually happened within the interaction. The interpretive mode attempts to identify meanings within communication practice. The comparative mode allows for a cross-comparison between similar and dissimilar participants. This process helps to make visible what is culturally distinct. The critical mode evaluates the communication from an ethical standpoint. However, first CuDA attempts to understand the communicative phenomenon before criticizing (Carbaugh, 2007). In other words, “the analyst engages deeply in descriptive and interpretive analyses as a way of gaining perspective on the importance, salience, or relevance of critical cultural inquiry” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 173).
These modes of inquiry suggest six necessary items in cultural research: “(1) careful attention to research questions and problems of concern; (2) reflection upon how the analyst understands discourse and discursive phenomena theoretically; (3) focused descriptive explorations of phenomena of concern; (4) interpretations of the meaningfulness of those phenomena to participants; (5) comparative assessments of such phenomena across discourses of communities; and, if warranted, (6) a critical appraisal” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 173). Throughout my analytic processes, it was important that I remained reflexive. In order to highlight the importance of reflexivity, I next discuss my relationship and positionality as related to this project.

Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality

Throughout this entire process, I engaged in Lindlof and Taylor’s (2002) approach to reflexive analysis as I continually discussed my own role in the social situation. When speaking with ELTs, at the start of each interview, I informed participants that I am an ELT. In my past research (Simmons, 2012) I noticed this helped the participants to feel more at ease. The same was very much true in this study. ELTs saw me as “one of them” because I was. Since I taught at a public junior high school and a private English conversation café to support my stay in Japan, I was not just able to relate with ELTs because of my past experience on the JET Programme (2007-2009), but was able to relate with ELTs in a wider array of positions as a non-JET. My workplace disclosure allowed for freer and more open conversation with ELTs.

When speaking with Japanese co-workers, I stressed that I am a doctoral candidate/student for the purposes of this study. If asked, I disclosed that I was also
teaching English, but I tried my best to downplay this to Japanese co-workers in order to alleviate any concerns Japanese co-workers might have had with sharing information to a foreign English teacher. It is understood within Japan that the foreign community is small and close-knit. Therefore, I did not want to create any obstacles that may render Japanese co-workers’ feeling uncomfortable and unwilling to discuss their true perspectives/experiences with me. Additionally, by not disclosing I was an ELT to them (unless asked), participants were more likely to describe the “mundane,” which helped me in my role as researcher/participant to not overlook everyday taken-for-granted workplace assumptions. Although the Japanese public education system is standardized, I recognize that small differences exist between schools.

In order to obtain a clear research perspective apart from my own experiences as an ELT, I continually check backed with participants to ensure we were discussing their situations and experiences, not mine. I reflected upon how I was asking and wording questions to ensure I was not leading participants toward any particular responses that expressed similarities with my own experiences as an ELT. Additionally, I avoided leading questions and communicated continuously with participants to ensure I understood their stories and was not injecting my own. However, I realized I can not separate my story from their story. As I spoke with ELTs and Japanese co-workers alike, I genuinely understood and felt their workplace frustrations, joys, and challenges. I had been there; I was there. Reflecting upon these encounters I realized that this dissertation isn’t just their story; it is my story; it is our story. There’s no way to separate it.
Although I recognize individual experiences differ, I related to each and every single participant in this study. It was as if a part of me was somehow in them, our shared experiences bonding us even before we met. Many conversations ended with hugs, and some conversations included tears. I found myself angered and frustrated with participants when they expressed such emotion. I also found myself comforted and honored by the stories they shared. They made me a co-owner of their private information, which is a task I took seriously. I became very protective of my participants, paranoid that I might misrepresent them in some way because our experiences are so interconnected. I felt a weight on my shoulders and my heart to share each perspective truthfully and honestly. To be honest, I did not expect this pressure. Nor did I expect to suddenly become the ambassador of ELTs and Japanese co-workers.

Suddenly, I became the “expert” that would help this relationship become better, less frustrating, and more open. Japanese co-workers usually flipped the interview back onto me, which put me in a position to become the literal voice for all ELTs. Japanese co-workers frequently asked, “You know?” as if drawing attention to the fact that they knew who I really was: an ELT turned graduate student. Even though I did not always share I was an ELT, they assumed I held that status. It was as if they could smell it, or just see it. Even though a couple asked if I had Japanese blood, my white skin gave me away. I clearly was foreign. I tried my best to not be the token foreigner and to represent all, but also, this was the only opportunity Japanese co-workers had had at this point to ask an ELT’s perspective without social ramifications. Japanese co-workers became concerned about what were “good” and “bad” questions to ask ELTs the more I asked.
about privacy negotiations. I was seen as someone who could help train the Japanese teachers and help them to see the ELTs’ perspectives. ELTs asked me for communication strategies and ways in which to speak with Japanese co-workers. Suddenly, I was the insider informant for both groups. I was left with a dilemma: do I “bow out” and leave them be, pretending not to have an opinion, or do I act as a “bridge” in the small way that I can. This was not an easy task or decision.

Chatham-Carpenter (2009) discussed the ethical tensions of bringing one’s personal life into the professional. Coming from an autoethnographic standpoint, she wrote about her struggle with an eating disorder. She admitted she felt safe within a tenured role to “expose portions of [her] back region” (Chatham-Carpenter, 2009, p. 134). Although this is not an autoethnographic dissertation, I found that, throughout this process, I felt in some aspects this (is) an autoethnography as my stories are reflected throughout my participants’ speech. As I offered words of comfort, advice, or just a listening ear to my participants, I felt my own personal backstage exposed my private side into a public, professional front stage. I felt to not share or acknowledge my own personal tensions between public and private would limit the scholarly contributions of my research, and most importantly, the contributions of this work to the lives of my participants. I believed I should be willing to do what I asked of my participants, so I did share my perspective and experiences when solicited.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH QUESTION #1 FINDINGS

In this chapter, I share findings for the first research question: “How do ELTs and Japanese co-workers experience and negotiate privacy boundaries?” Specifically, I will discuss findings for this first research question. The findings and themes shared below are the results of a thematic analysis as detailed within chapter three. Within this chapter, first I will discuss the perspectives of the English language teachers (ELT), and second, I will discuss those of the Japanese co-workers regarding how privacy is experienced and privacy boundaries are negotiated.

English Language Teacher Perspectives

As I share findings from a thematic analysis of the 39 ELTs I interviewed, I will share four dominant themes. For reader ease, I organized themes in a logical fashion in which one theme builds upon the other. First, I will synthesize how ELTs defined privacy. Second, I share major themes regarding perceived privacy invasions. Third, I reveal ways in which this group of English teachers managed their privacy boundaries. Fourth, I discuss, and distinguish, ways in which rural and urban-based ELTs experienced privacy.

Privacy Defined

Within this section I will share findings from how ELTs defined and conceptualized privacy. Understanding how individuals “perceive, achieve, and restore privacy is necessary for a complete portrait of relational development and communication” (Burgoon, Parrott, Le Poire, Kelley, Walther, & Perry, 1989, p. 132). Throughout the interviews all ELTs defined privacy as personal information or a place
that one owns and should have the ability to control who has access to such information or place. Such a definition reveals “privacy” as a multi-dimensional construct for ELTs that encompasses personal information, space, and actions. This definition reinforces ways in which western conceptions of privacy have been portrayed throughout literature (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979; Burgoon, Parrott, Le Poire, Kelley, Walther, & Perry, 1989; Petronio, 2002; Schoeman, 1992; Solove, 2008). Ruby’s and Steve’s responses represent how ELTs in this study understood privacy in general: “privacy is being able to keep personal information and information that you may have received that is not personal, out of other people’s clutches.” Ruby laughed after defining privacy in this way due to the use of the word “clutches,” but she stuck with her answer. Steve said privacy is “Just, I guess, I would say for me being by myself and not having anyone intrude [on] my space.” ELTs in this study conceptualized privacy as being obligation-free, a physical or mental space, a choice, a judgment-free zone, information and activities performed outside of work, a personal right, and involving boundaries.

Twelve ELTs took this definition one step further and considered one’s actions to be personal. Kelly defined privacy as, “feeling like you can do something and not be judged for it I guess, and living your own life and yeah, not having anyone else look at that.” Sean echoed Kelly’s sentiments and said that to maintain privacy also means that “other people won’t go telling other people the things that you said or that they saw you doing.” For Blake, privacy is “being able to keep the information and activities that I would like to remain unknown to remain unknown.” Blake considered obtaining privacy as involving keeping information and activities he does unknown. Kelly, Sean, and
Blake reveal that, for some ELTs’, actions they perform are perceived as private and should not be reported on later amongst co-workers.

Eight ELTs within this study saw one’s “home” as a major component of privacy. Alicia explained that privacy is “the things that I wouldn’t want to leave my house.” In fact, Alicia said “my first thought is the home.” Alicia saw her home as a private location that is very personal. She said “If I invite someone back into my home, then that is extending a big invitation to them, you know, like an invitation into my own world.” Stephanie said “My home was supposed to be private to me, but it wasn’t.” Expected privacy violations will be explored later, but Stephanie’s quote revealed that, for some ELTs, home is expected to be a private space. Brent also explained that for him, “The confines of my apartment and where I lived was pretty much private.” Alicia, Stephanie, and Brent highlight the importance of one’s home, or personal space, for ELTs.

All ELTs believed that one’s work life and one’s private life were to be separate entities. Anna explained that, to her, privacy “is just knowing personal boundaries, and people not being overly inquisitive into my personal life. For me, work life and personal life is generally totally separate.” Anna demonstrates what many ELTs expressed throughout interviews, that work and personal life were viewed as two worlds that should be kept separate. When discussing advice for future ELTs within his workplace, Sean said, “your coworkers probably aren’t going to talk a lot about their personal lives so you shouldn’t talk about your personal life so much either.” Sean observed that one should not talk about his personal life because his co-workers did not. Cindy shared similar sentiments. She said, “When I went up for the weekend and came back late, I didn’t say
it was because I was sleeping over my boyfriend’s house. There is a perception [at work] that you want to appear professional and relationship stuff is unprofessional.” Cindy’s comment revealed that a distinction exists between private and professional life. Her story also revealed that mixing the two would be considered unprofessional, thus such should be kept separate. Anna, Sean, and Cindy revealed that, for some ELTs, personal and professional contexts should be kept separate. However, as I will share later this chapter, that is something that is extremely difficult for some ELTs. Throughout interviews, ELTs mentioned several topics that they reported being asked about by co-workers in ways that they perceived as invasive.

*Perceived Privacy Violations*

As ELTs defined privacy, they also demarcated boundaries around topics they deemed private. Such topics were brought to light when ELTs shared examples of perceived invasive questions they were asked by co-workers while at work. ELTs constantly mentioned being asked invasive questions by co-workers. ELTs perceived invasive questions as those that inquired into one’s health, weight, income, age, family, relationship status, sexuality, and time spent outside of work. Additionally, ELTs shared numerous instances in which they felt their privacy was invaded. Collectively, ELTs shared stories and experiences in which they believed their privacy to be infringed upon or invaded. In particular, ELTs felt that their expectations about their private (a) space and place, (b) bodies, (c) sexuality, and (d) romantic relationships were not upheld by their co-workers. Such themes were mentioned equally across interviews, except dating/romantic relationships. Out of these themes, romantic relationships were
mentioned the least, potentially due to the fact that not everyone within this study was actively looking to pursue or initiate a romantic relationship. Some ELTs reported a number of questions that they perceived to be inappropriate, but were frequently asked by co-workers.

Space and Place

ELTs mentioned that one’s space or place was a meaningful area in which privacy is to be expected, and is even an entitled right. In this study, space and place are used interchangeably to denote perceived ownership of ELT territory. Such talk of space and place resulted in ELTs discussing their “home” or living arrangement. For many westerners, privacy is purchased by space (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979), and the need to manage one’s territory in order to obtain desired levels of privacy exists (Petronio & Kovach, 1997). For instance, Ren said: “Sometimes I just really don’t want things to be revealed… I feel people are entitled to have their own space.” Similarly, Steve saw privacy as “not having anyone intrude [on] my space.” Ren and Steve’s sentiments were echoed by many ELTs’ throughout this study.

First, several ELTs reported their desk, which typically is next to a coworker in a shared staff room (see Appendix F for a sample staff room photographs), as their “private space.” Most ELTs, teachers, and staff members have their “own” desk within their workplace. Ren explained that, upon returning to work the next day, “my desk will be used for everything. There is a gauze pad and notebooks, cords, and then my team teacher will be like, ‘Oh, I’m sorry’ and she will clean it off for a minute, but it’s like my desk is not my desk, even though it is my desk.” When her space/place was perceived to
be invaded or occupied by another, Ren perceived her privacy to be violated. She said, “I feel like a lot of my sense of privacy is violated when I come in [to work] and stuff is on my desk.” Jennifer, an ELT who worked at several different schools, mentioned that having her desk away from the shared staff room resulted in no major privacy concerns at work. She said, “the thing is I don’t really [have privacy concerns]; my desk is away from my co-workers at the Board of Education, so it’s [just] me and the other ELT.” For Jennifer, having her desk at the Board of Education’s office, instead of the school, alleviated privacy concerns.

Second, ELTs’ living arrangements were constantly mentioned across interviews as a private, back stage space/place where ELTs could avoid the “watchful” eye of their co-workers. ELTs live in a variety of housing situations, such as an apartment or house. It is common for ELTs to occupy housing left by their predecessor. That housing was partially paid for by their Board of Education. According to ELTs, their living arrangement was also not treated the way in which the ELTs would prefer. For instance, Ren’s Board of Education would “just show up” at her door. She said, “…you didn’t say you were coming today and they would be like ‘Oh, we need your keys so we can access your room.’…it’s like oh, your dorm is my dorm.”

Stephanie explained “One of the more surprising things was when I would call in sick to work and somebody would stop by my apartment.” After calling in sick one day she said around “11am someone would knock on my door and would ask, ‘Are you feeling okay?’ And I would say, ‘I’m sick, I don’t want to talk to you.’” Stephanie explained that this type of behavior prevented her from taking future days off work. For
instance, “...if I wanted to just stay home one day we didn’t have class and say I was sick like one does from time to time, I could never do that because someone would show up at my house and ask if I wanted to go to the doctor or whatever.” Alicia said, “If I’m inviting someone back into my home, then that is extending a big invitation to them, you know? Like an invitation into my own world.” Alicia’s comment demonstrated that, for her, home is a private location into which one should be invited.

When ELTs live near their co-workers, it constructs a “work space” outside of work. This resulted in several ELTs feeling as if their privacy was invaded due to their privacy expectations being unmet. Sara and her fiancée Charlie lived together as they taught English in their small, rural town. Sara said, “We knew it would be awkward from day one because we had a supervisor live in our apartment building.” Sara further explained, “It was awkward as hell...the woman actually went through our rubbish at one point. It was weird. That’s how involved she was. [It] was awkward.” After someone within their apartment complex put out their trash a day late, it wasn’t collected. Their supervisor then collected the trash and went through it on her kitchen table in her apartment. She then called Charlie into her apartment. Charlie described the experience, “She took it inside her house, opened it all up, and went through everything finding a whole bunch of things written in English and then brought me over to her house and set me down and said ‘Can you verify whose this is?’” Sara and Charlie both deemed this situation as “inappropriate,” even though the garbage ended up not being theirs, but was that of another ELT who lived within the same complex. Sara and Charlie not only felt uncomfortable due to their close proximity with their supervisor living within the same
apartment building, but also deemed her actions inappropriate due to perceived privacy violations.

Steve also perceived his personal space to be violated after a coworker called him names and yelled at him from his vice-principal’s house, which was next door to his. This occurrence resulted in Steve feeling as if his privacy expectations for space were unmet. Steve explained that the incident occurred during a barbecue to which he was not invited and which took place at his vice principal’s house:

I guess one of the teachers got so drunk that he started yelling my name and started calling me stupid in Japanese… he started harassing me like outside of my house and I was so pissed off because I was just minding my own business and eating dinner and all of a sudden I hear someone calling me stupid and yelling at you outside of your house. I was like, ‘What the fuck?’ you know. I had just had enough. I was like, ‘Fuck, what the fuck?! What did I do to you?!’

As illustrated by this excerpt Steve perceived his privacy to be violated due to someone entering his space and place of residence outside of work while he was “minding his own business” and eating dinner. After the fact and still upset about this encounter, Steve reported the matter to his supervisor and vice-principal, which resulted in receiving a letter of apology from the offending teacher and an awkward relationship. Steve said:

It was just awkward… he just didn’t act the same way to me as before the incident you know. It sucks, because, at the beginning he was such a nice guy and I felt we could have come out and had a drink and stuff, but ever since that incident it was really just… on one hand, I didn’t want to know, I just wanted to forget about
it. I didn’t want to cause any trouble, but the other hand, I was like, ‘Fuck you,’ you know, like fuck!! I would never do that!! Who would do that?!

Steve’s encounter is both an exemplar of the importance of one’s “space” to ELTs, as well as an extreme atypical example. Steve’s account is a strong example due to showing how the presence of unwanted guests, particularly if they do not follow cultural expectations at to how to behave on one’s “turf” can influence privacy violation perceptions. At the same time, not everyone in this study had a drunken co-worker insult them, which makes this account a bit atypical. However, the invasion of one’s space is worth recognizing. Obviously upset by this perceived violation, Steve defined that moment as “my breaking place. I was like; I want to get the fuck out of here! I wanted to be in the city…. ” Steve’s comments convey the belief that such things would not happen in a more populated area like a city.

Finally, days off work were seen as private “time” by the ELTs within this study. Private time within this study refers to an ELT’s space outside of work. In fact, Brent said, “If I’m having a holiday, it’s my time and you [co-workers] don’t need to know what I’m doing every second of the day, thank you very much.” Brent’s statements reveal that, for him, his time off work should be a private space in which co-workers are not to know what he is doing. Similarly, Cindy described the importance of her time and space on days off work. She explained:

It will be Monday and I’ll get a message early in the day saying ‘Hey, are you doing anything today? Because my son is sick and I want you to cover my classes for me.’ And it’s like, while it’s my day off, no, I don’t have anything going on,
but I don’t want to go to work either, but I can’t say ‘No, I’m not going to come in to work for you.’ So, that’s a privacy of time I guess if such a thing exists. I want my time for my own self.

Brent and Cindy’s stories showcase and reinforce that, for ELTs’, expectations that time off work constructs a space/place that should be uninhibited and uninhabited by “extra work” or communication with co-workers. These stories exemplify the important of ELTs’ perceived sense of space and place. In addition to space and place, ELTs mentioned their physical bodies as an area that was seen to be violated due to unmet privacy expectations.

**Bodies**

Communication scholars have explored privacy regulations of one’s body (Bute, 2009; Bute & Vik, 2010; Rose, 2012; Shugart, 2010). Throughout the interviews, eleven ELTs expressed strong privacy concerns regarding their bodies as personal space at work. Such instances involve one’s body being questioned, talked about, or regulated in a way that rendered the ELTs feeling uncomfortable and invaded. Stephanie said “I think a lot of the privacy problems I had were about the body.” She was ill on a few occasions and had to miss work due to her illnesses. On one occasion, Stephanie was asked if she was pregnant by co-workers after returning to work from being sick. She said, “…things that are happening, things that are about my body, to me, are private. And shouldn’t…you know, shouldn’t be asked questions about.” Similarly, Casey said “a lot of body stuff for me, actually, really hits the privacy stuff, like bodily autonomy.” In particular, Casey had privacy concerns regarding questions from co-workers regarding what she ate for dinner.
Stephanie and Casey’s experiences illustrate that when asked about their bodies, some ELTs felt uncomfortable and perceived their privacy to be invaded due to unmet privacy expectations that such questions would not be asked.

Aarti perceived privacy expectation violations when co-workers discussed the health of her body at work. After Aarti went to the doctor her vice principal and team teacher talked about her health experience across the shared staff room with other teachers, when Aarti was present. Aarti said, “…so it was public knowledge to everyone about what I had gone in for and if I was sick, like if I was taking meds and that, and I was like, this is really weird. Why are they just casually talking about this?” Aarti’s comments illustrated that her co-workers’ discussion of her health was a personal matter deemed inappropriate for open workplace discussion where others could hear that she had not granted access to such information.

William worked for one of the many ELT-recruiting companies within Japan. Such organizations recruit and train the ELT before placing them at a school. In many ways, ELT-recruiting companies set the rules for ELTs, such as dress code, after consulting the Board of Education from which the company received the contract or bib. As we discussed his company’s dress code, William said that he understood his company’s professional standards in terms of having short hair, beard, and/or mustache, but he said, “I thought at times it was sort of infringing on my privacy or my free will.” William’s story showcases an instance in which an ELT’s body is regulated in order to conform to organizational policies and procedures. Although compliant in order to maintain his employment, William’s comments reveal that his co-workers did not meet
his body privacy expectations. William said that he wanted a beard, but was told “no or do something about that” which rendered him unable to grow a beard as he had hoped.

Similarly, Joshua felt his privacy expectations were unmet by co-workers when his school’s health check results were not regulated the way he had hoped. For instance, he said:

Medical exam results were kind of treated a little bit less private than I would’ve liked and I’m not particularly ashamed of mine or anything, but it is kind of like I feel like that should be considered private unless the patient himself releases that kind of information you know, but when somebody is like ‘Oh, here is your medical results.’ and it’s just on a printed out sheet of paper, it is just like, oh really? No envelope for it?

Joshua reported that, even though he wasn’t ashamed of his health results from his school’s required health examination, he considered such information private unless he chose to reveal the information. Joshua further expressed his expectation of how medical results ought to be delivered: “within an envelope where only the patient has access and permission to open the results.” Joshua’s story, as well as the other ELTs’ perceived privacy invasions, solidified the ELTs’ expectations about one’s body being a sacred, private location of being that when violated leaves many ELTs feeling as if their privacy is invaded.

**Sexuality**

Privacy related to sexuality has been a focus of much research related to one’s sexual history (Nichols, 2012) and same sex relationships (Lannutti, 2013). As
mentioned in the previous chapter, ELTs from various sexualities participated within this study. In fact, ELTs (n=11) throughout the sexual spectrum viewed their sexuality as private information that should not be disclosed amongst co-workers. The following excerpts reveal instances in which ELTs perceived their privacy expectations regarding sexuality to be violated.

Carlos, a gay man, was fired from his workplace due to the perception of being involved within a same sex relationship. Carlos told his story:

[I’m] Not out of work. It’s legal to fire you. You have nothing that you can do if you’re fired for being gay. And that is something that almost happened to me when that woman [his former employer] fired me without just cause, because she insinuated that I was boyfriends with my ex-boyfriend. But, I never spoke about that at work. I never spoke about that. I just spoke about our friendship and the fact that we shared a house, but she insinuated that and that is where I drew the line. And I said ‘You are going into my personal life and you have no right! You are invading my privacy!’

Carlos’ story did not end there. After threatening a lawsuit, Carlos found himself without a job and feeling that his expectations for privacy were invaded. Within Carlos’ story, we see an example of an ELT who seeks to maintain his relationship and sexuality private. However, when this privacy expectation was invaded by his former boss, he sought to reinforce his privacy boundaries by informing his boss that she did not belong within that boundary and that he would pursue legal action against her. Carlos credited
this situation with ruining his romantic relationship. He said, “It was really traumatic…It
destroyed my relationship too.”

Tim, a heterosexual man, felt his privacy expectations were invaded when a
coworker asked him about his sexual life. He said, “[my coworker] asked me one time
how many times I have sex with my wife or something like this. I just look at him and
go, ‘Oh boy! [That’s] Way off base!!’” Tim’s story showcases an example that for many
ELTs within this study inquiring about one’s sexual acts, or sexuality, is perceived to
violate ELT privacy sensibilities.

Juan, a self-identified genderqueer person, also experienced privacy expectation
violations when co-workers inquired into his sex life. Juan enjoyed visiting Korea. After
one visit, his principal asked about his sexual encounters in Korea. Juan said, “he asked
me if I go to Korea to get call girls and I’m like hmm. …” Juan said that none of his
other co-workers asked him about his sex life other than his principal. He said, he “…is
very nice, but he’s very direct. So, he felt a little too comfortable with me, and
sometimes I feel I get tokenized as a foreigner.” Juan explained his tokenized foreigner
feelings as “It’s a person they can say stuff to because they wouldn’t say that stuff to each
other so that was a little frustrating.” Within this story we see that Juan is not only
frustrated with the situation, but felt victimized when asked such questions. He felt this
way because, as he explained, his principal would not ask another Japanese coworker the
same types of questions, but took liberty to do so because he is foreign.
Dating/Romantic Relationships

Reflective of past research (Miller, 2009), personal relationships, such as one’s dating partner, were frequently referred to as private matters by ELTs. Questions regarding relationship status, as well as one’s partner were perceived to violate privacy boundaries by some ELTs due to expectations being unmet by co-workers. Five ELTs, including Geeta, Katie, and Carlos, commented that familial relationships and friendships were considered private to them as general topics, but such information was not elaborated upon.

In order to protect her relational privacy after being asked about her relational status, Ashley explained that not dating or dating someone long distance helped her to obtain her desired level of privacy. She said:

The other thing that helped me protect my privacy was that I didn’t really date anybody…or not anybody like in my area. I started dating one of my college friends, but he was in Tokyo and it was mostly me going out to Tokyo. The one time that he came to my area I was very, very paranoid about being spotted. So I made sure…[to] borrow a friend’s car and head out of the city.

Within this excerpt, Ashley explained that foregoing romantic relationships helped her to obtain her desired levels of privacy at work. In fact, she chose to date long-distance and even avoided the town in which she worked when her boyfriend visited her in order to protect her privacy.

Stephanie felt invaded by co-workers’ questions on multiple occasions regarding her romantic relationship. Her boyfriend, an avid cyclist, would often cycle to her house
to have dinner, and to spend the night before cycling home in the morning. However, this put her relationship in the public eye of her co-workers who were on their way to work as he cycled home.

…they asked me tons of questions about him. There was the ‘I saw your boyfriend cycling this morning,’ and I was like, ‘Oh cool, he does it every morning. I’m sure you’ll see him every morning.’ You don’t have to tell me. And [my co-workers] asked me questions about him. And one of my teachers asked me what kind of car he drives later on, and, you know, where he works, and what he does, and stuff. And I’m like, ‘I don’t know.’

Uncomfortable due to a perceived privacy violation, Stephanie did not appreciate her co-workers asking questions about her boyfriend. Such an action left Stephanie feeling as if her privacy expectations were unmet regarding her romantic relationships. Stephanie answered “I don’t know” so as to not answer relational questions and to obtain the level of privacy she desired.

Jack left his previous employer due to a bad relational breakup, which became well-known news amongst his former employer’s current workers throughout Japan. He explained why he left his former employer to his successor. His successor responded, “Oh, you are that guy!” Shocked by his successor knowing this information, Jack felt his privacy expectations were unmet and were, therefore, violated, by his former employer. He said, “So, clearly, all of [COMPANY NAME], all the way to [CITY NAME] have heard the story, and the rumor mill had turned, and she [his new girlfriend] was now my wife and I got this other girl [his ex-girlfriend] pregnant.” Jack said, “I couldn’t have
expected it to be private I guess, but I should’ve been allowed to expect too, you know.”
Jack’s comments revealed not only that his relational privacy was breeched by employees within his former company, but also that he expected privacy. In particular, Jack’s story revealed an understanding that privacy might be breeched, but an expectation that control over such information should exist. In addition to one’s relationship or relational status, many ELTs felt privacy related to their sexuality was invaded.

Strategies Managing Privacy Boundaries
The ELTs in this study revealed seven ways in which they manage their privacy boundaries. These strategies helped ELTs to obtain their desired, or expected, level of privacy by protecting and reinforcing privacy boundaries. The ELT privacy management strategies reported in this study were: (a) withdrawal (n=5), (b) cognitive restructuring (n=3), (c) independent control (n=4), (d) lying (n=4), (e) omission (n=8), (f) avoidance (n=7), and (g) gaijin smashing (n=6).
Withdrawal
Five individuals withdraw from anxiety producing situations in order to manage anxiety levels by reducing exposure to anxiety producing situations (Lazarus & Averill, 1972; Leary, 1983). Similar to findings reported in Simmons (2012), ELTs reported protecting their privacy boundaries by avoiding social interaction or withdrawing from workplace relationships in order to obtain their desired level of privacy. For instance, Carlos said, “I am basically a hermit, so I keep my privacy by being private.” For Carlos, withdrawing from relationships allowed him to obtain his desired levels of privacy. Such
instances reveal the “extremes” some ELTs go to in order to avoid the gaze of their co-workers.

When discussing her former workplace, Karen shared strong sentiments and reasons for her decision to withdraw from workplace relationships. Karen said:

Oh my god! The gossip factory. They were such expert gossipers. Oh, spread rumors like you would not believe! Oh yeah, yeah, so the last year and four months I was at that school, I dreaded going to work because I knew I would not be able to say a single word to anybody, and I would have to watch the way I sit and stand, and how I walk because I know everyone will be staring at me and then they’ll be talking about how…

Karen stopped there after repeating “Oh my God” several times. Visibly upset by the gossip and privacy intrusion she experienced at her former employer brought an emotion and physical reaction. As she remembered this moment, she sat upright in her seat, with her body flushed, hands shaking as we drank coffee together. Karen’s story revealed the influence privacy intrusions can have on some ELTs. Karen watched her physical body and tried to manage or discipline her body in order to protect her privacy. Overall, Karen avoided discussions with her co-workers in order to not “fuel the fire” or to provide information that may be used against her. Karen’s reflection did not end there. She said “Some people are that way.” Karen claimed “That’s not Japanese people. This is [just] people.” Karen carved out the cultural from the perceived human experience. She did not believe it was part of Japanese culture per say to gossip about colleagues when they were not present, but instead believed it to be a human quality.
Ashley also reported withdrawing from workplace relationships in order to maintain her privacy. Ashley chose this strategy in order to avoid her private information being shared. When discussing her workplace environment she said, “I’ve heard a lot of stories of love affairs and, like, certain female co-workers getting pregnant and having to decide whether they will get married, or not get married. And, so, it’s quite shocking.” Shocked by the private information she hears shared, Ashley explained further. She said, “It’s when they [co-workers start to] leave that the whispering starts, I wouldn’t be surprised if there is stuff said about me, but I limit the amount of stuff I say and leave right when work is over.” Conscious of her privacy, and the likelihood that she too could be discussed when she leaves work; Ashley withdrew from her co-worker relationships. She said, “I choose not to participate in their gossip.” By withdrawing from this social interaction Ashley was able to control information that was known about her at work. In addition to withdrawing from co-worker relationships, several ELTs employed cognitive restructuring in order to manage their privacy.

*Cognitive Restructuring*

Three ELTs employed and, even recommended, cognitive restructuring as a privacy management technique and strategy. Throughout cognitive psychology and communication literature, cognitive restructuring has proven to help individuals manage and change their reactions to negatively perceived situations (Beck, 1995; Krayer, O’Hair, O’Hair, & Furio, 1984). In this study, cognitive restructuring refers to instances in which ELTs retrained their thinking or limited thoughts that led them to feel as if their privacy was invaded or that their coworker was being intrusive.
Some ELTs used cognitive restructuring to create a “safe place” in which their privacy was impenetrable. Ren enjoyed running and used exercise to construct a “safe space” in which she could de-stress and think about her day. Ren described her running experiences in her town:

You’re only going to invaded because I feel that you are invading it. So I’m not gonna let you make me feel that way. So, you know my running, may be externally- I’m still feeling that people are staring me and I’m not comfortable, but internally, I’m comfortable because I’m doing this thing that I like. Yeah, it’s like my space in that way.

Ren’s reflections revealed the resistance experienced when retraining one’s mind to think differently about a situation. Within this excerpt, Ren’s statement indicated the belief that she has control over how she feels. She refused to feel invaded and therefore chose to feel comfortable performing an activity she enjoys. Ren even positively reported on the perceived benefits of what she defined as invasive questioning. Rather than be upset, Ren said, “I feel like people ask questions about your life because they are trying to get to know you and they care which is good.” Ren chose to alter restructure such moments from intrusion to caring.

Some ELTs revisited what they perceive as their social position or job in order to restructure their thinking about privacy. Cindy said:

It is important to keep on the cultural ambassador hat too when I deal with these kinds of things that seem invasive or privacy issues. Like, remember that they don’t mean to invade your privacy. There is a genuine cultural interest in the
differences between you guys and they don’t mean to be prying, but at the same
time, they can be. You just have to tell them that where I come from you
wouldn’t ask that. That works.

Cindy emphasized the importance of remembering one’s placement within the education
system in Japan. Like other ELTs, Cindy believed she is a cultural ambassador and,
therefore, should rethink perceived privacy invasions. Cindy does this by restructuring
perceived privacy invasions or “praying” to curiosity. Cindy then demonstrated that such
restructuring may lead to a “teachable moment” in which the ELT is able to communicate
that such questions are inappropriate from one’s cultural standpoint.

Other ELTs, like Jack, recommended cognitive restructuring. Within the
following excerpt, Jack discussed how he managed privacy, his approach to cognitive
restructuring, and recommendation to other ELTs. He said:

There’s nowhere in your contract that says you are required to give out
information that you don’t want to. That isn’t appropriate. So don’t, but at the
same time don’t take every question to be an infringement of your privacy. Don’t
think that there is some kind of war or infringement of your privacy. Don’t think
that curiosity is an infringement of your privacy. Just say, ‘I don’t want to say
that,’ and move the conversation somewhere else.

Within this excerpt, Jack offered advice to future ELTs as he discussed how he
negotiated privacy boundaries. Jack recommended and employed cognitive restructuring
by transforming the way in which he perceived “invasive” questioning. Jack perceived
such questioning as curiosity and urged other ELTs to not perceive every question as
privacy infringement. Jack also recommended that once ELTs transform their thinking about privacy that ELTs should direct the conversation elsewhere via deflection or avoidance.

Independent Control

Burgoon, Parrott, Le Poire, Kelley, Walther, and Perry (1989) identified interaction control strategies as “behaviors that abbreviate, terminate, or prevent conversation” (p. 144). In this study, I use the term “independent control” to highlight efforts many ELTs took in order to be fully in charge of one’s situation and thus more control over their privacy boundaries and related outcomes. In other words, ELTs “took the reins” of their own privacy in order to enact independent control over their privacy regulation. This predominately translated into ELTs reporting that they asserted their independence by performing some action by themselves without the assistance of their co-workers. Aarti said:

If I needed to go to the clinic, or something, if I knew what it was, then I would just try to go by myself rather than asking my team teacher to go with me to interpret. So, yeah if I could do something myself, sometimes I would do that.

Aarti sought control of her health related-privacy by going to clinics or medical professional offices by herself. This provided Aarti with greater control of her privacy boundaries.

In order to obtain her desired level of privacy, Cindy chose to keep her gynecological visits secret. She said, “I absolutely did not tell anyone any way related to my workplace [when I was going.]” Cindy purposely avoided her local gynecologist to
avoid being seen. She explained “because, if someone saw me, then I would get questions and I would hear about it.” This decision showcases a way in which Cindy attempted to manage per privacy due to a previous perceived privacy violation. Cindy said:

I made the mistake one time of telling my supervisor….I would like to go to the doctor because I have a hemorrhoid problem and the whole Board of Education knew about it. The next day they heard all that happened to me before and I was like, ‘Oh my God! I’m never telling them anything medical again!’

Cindy said, from then on, “I did take all of my own medical stuff. I would either take it to a personal friend and keep it very quiet, but do it myself because I didn’t want the whole town or even just the whole Board of Education to hear about the fact that ‘Oh Cindy had to go to the doctor because she has a funny butt.’” Cindy road a train 45 minutes one way to a larger city in order to obtain anonymity and the privacy level she desired. Although Cindy mentioned asking others for help, her story reveals she sought independent control by doing so. Traveling 45 minutes to a larger city as well as seeking outside support demonstrates Cindy’s drive to take control of her privacy by staying away from helpful co-workers. Cindy is not alone in this strategy several other ELTs like Aarti and Stephanie, for instance, welcomed coworker assistance for medical visits at first, but then chose to go to medical visits by themselves after improving language levels and learning one’s environment.

Stephanie explained that, when she first arrived in Japan she relied on co-workers to assist with her medical translations. She said:
I just went by myself because the doctor spoke a little bit of English and I could speak enough, you know. I read a chapter about going to the doctor and I always use that [doing something in Japanese] as an opportunity to learn the Japanese words for everything. So, I knew how to say I had a fever, I have a cough, you know, my stomach hurt, and I could say dates because they always ask when it started or for how long. And, so, I could do that by myself, and I just did that because it was awkward to go to the doctor with a coworker.

Stephanie saw going to the doctor’s as an opportunity to learn and practice Japanese. She chose independent control of her situation as demonstrated by her choice to go by herself to medical visits in order to avoid “awkward” interactions with co-workers.

*Omission*

DeScioli, Christner, and Kurzban (2011) found that the frequency in which omission is used as a strategy increased when punishment is possible. In other words, people can avoid condemnation by employing omission as a management strategy. Reinforcing prior ELT privacy management research (Simmons, 2012), eight ELTs mentioned that, in order to obtain their desired level of privacy, they omit, failed to comment upon, or keep secret, parts of their lives. Omitted topics included a wide array of items related to health, relationships, and anything ELTs deemed private. For instance, Kelly said that, in order to protect her privacy at work “I’ve never really shared anything that is really private.” Kelly’s statement revealed that although she had shared some privacy information with co-workers, she would omit disclosures she deemed “really private” from conversations with co-workers.
In order to protect privacy boundaries, some ELTs omitted their significant other due to new relationships beginning, a same-sex relationship, or being involved romantically with a co-worker. For instance, in order to keep his relationship secret, Jack and his girlfriend decided to socially engineer a vacation together. Jack said:

We went to Tokyo last week on holiday and we decided that I had not posted pictures in a very long time and that they were going to be my pictures and so we engineered it to look like it was just me who had gone to Tokyo so that I could post these pictures on Facebook.

Jack’s story reveals the extent to which some ELTs would go in order to maintain their privacy. Since Jack was Facebook friends with all of his co-workers, even online, he felt he ought to manage his privacy. Jack managed his privacy by omitting his reality: the fact that he went to Tokyo with someone else. This excerpt also reveals that many ELTs present only part of themselves to their Japanese co-workers. Jack’s privacy management choices influence not only his relationships with his co-workers, but also his other online friends who are “drug” into his privacy management.

Similarly, Cindy, like Jack, expressed privacy concerns regarding her romantic relationship. She too employed omission tactics in order to obtain her desired levels of privacy. She said: “We [Cindy and her boyfriend] don’t post any pictures of the two of us on Facebook, because we feel like that is kind of a privacy issue at the moment.”

Cindy worked at a private English school and did not want her co-workers to know about her relationship yet. She said that, currently, this is a privacy concern, but at the same time, her usage of “at the moment” identifies this privacy boundary as open to change.
Out of all the ELTs with whom I spoke for this project, William had the most unique story as to why he came to Japan. Rather than to learn Japanese, to live abroad, or to gain teaching experience, William came to Japan for religious reasons. William joined what he referred to as a cult in his home country. Since the cult originated and had stronger roots in Japan, he initially moved to Japan to learn more about his faith. However, this was not something William shared with just anybody. In fact, during the interview, he told me I was the only other foreigner to whom he had disclosed this information. He said:

“I’m pretty secretive. I keep things to myself and I’m careful not to divulge secrets that might get me in trouble. Yeah, because I don’t really know how they [Japanese] would handle some things in Japan so like, [for] example, I told you at the beginning about the religious cult. I never really mentioned it to people if they ask, because I just don’t know how they would perceive it, ‘Oh yeah you were part of a religious cult.’

Although no longer a member of this religious sect, William feared how he might be perceived by his co-workers and, therefore, omits the true reason for what brought him to Japan. Although this decision allowed William to manage his privacy, it limited his co-worker relationships.

Lying

Simmons (2012) discovered ELTs used lying to manage health-related privacy boundaries. Lying, within this study, involves altering truths or sharing only partial truths as a rhetorical strategy to obtain and maintain desired levels of privacy. Like many
ELTs within this study, Geeta valued the importance of relational privacy. In order to maintain her desired levels of privacy, she employed omission and lying. For instance:

They [co-workers] don’t know [about] my relationships. If I have friends, they would know. They would ask ‘Who are you talking to all this time?’ I would go outside and talk on my phone during lunch break and they would ask ‘who are you talking to?’ And I would say, ‘Oh, that’s my friend in Tokyo.’ And they would ask, ‘Your boyfriend?’ and I would laugh and say, ‘Of course not.’

Geeta’s comment revealed a demarcation of privacy boundaries between co-workers and friends. Geeta did not consider her co-workers to be friends. If she did, she would have told them that, in fact she was talking to her boyfriend, who didn’t live in Tokyo, but not too far from where she worked. Geeta also revealed that her friends are allowed to know about romantic relationships, but co-workers are not. In order to manage her privacy, she chose to omit information about herself and, in this instance, to lie.

Blake, a gay man, also lied about his relationship status in order to preserve his privacy boundaries. In fact, Blake claimed to have a girlfriend, instead of a boyfriend. Blake said that the same co-workers constantly asked him over and over about his relationship. When discussing his boundary management, he said:

I gave my stock ‘yes. I have a girlfriend; her name is _____’ you know. Here’s her picture and, like, I have three or four different friends that were my “girlfriend” and all have the same name, because they [my Japanese colleagues] can’t tell the difference. You know, white people with brown hair they look all the same.
Blake revealed to me that he changes pronouns and shows pictures of his “girlfriend” in order to provide a space in which he could create some space to talk about his boyfriend as well as maintain privacy about his sexuality. Blake said “[I] would never beat them to the punch with this fake answer, but if they ever asked me information, I would answer the information truthfully, just changing pronouns.” Blake saw his privacy management lying technique as being truthful minus the small of showing photographs of his female friends. Similarly, Gideon, a gay man, said, “I didn’t really want to come out at work, so I told them [co-workers] the type of guy I liked but in female version. I change pronouns.” Changing pronouns, showing fake photographs, and lying about having a girlfriend constructed a space for Blake and Gideon to be private, but at the same time to negotiate his very own private space in which their sexuality and partners, just in female form.

After noticing this theme throughout interviews, I asked Chloe if lying was something she did to maintain privacy. Her response was simple. She said “Yes.” After a long pause, she explained:

and it’s something I don’t do much because it makes my morals, or morality, my moral principles, and I find it really hard to do that. So, I try not to [lie] as much as possible, and actually there are times where I kind of did it, but felt really bad and so I changed my answer and they [my co-workers] got confused.

Chloe lied in order to manage her privacy at work; however, her conscience gets the best of her. Chloe said that she sometimes changes her answer once she feels guilty for lying. She described her answer change “[Co-workers will ask] ‘You doing something this
weekend?’ ‘No, not really.’ But then I say, or they will ask something else, then, I’ll be like ‘Oh, wait. Well, actually I’m going to do this.’” Within this excerpt, Chloe revealed how she changes her lie into a truth. Her transition from lie to truth shows the moral tax that employing lying as a rhetorical strategy to manage privacy takes on some ELTs.

Avoidance

Avoidance behaviors refer to instances in which individuals used verbal or nonverbal behaviors to deflect a perceived violation (Burgoon, Parrott, Le Poire, Kelley, Walther, & Perry, 1989). ELTs reported avoidant management strategies as a way in which to protect their private information and to reinforce boundaries. The following excerpts reveal ways in which ELTs avoided perceived invasive questioning or conversations, as well as the social implications of such decisions.

ELTs avoided in a variety of ways; one way; was to “laugh off” or to “act dumb” as a way in which to avoid questioning. For instance, Sara said that, whenever her team teacher asked her questions that she felt were crossing boundaries, she “would just giggle it off or say, ‘Well, I don’t know… You know act dumb.’” “Acting dumb” or providing a vague response reveal ways in which Sara avoided answering her co-workers perceived invasive questioning.

Three ELTs reported using online outlets such as message boards or social media sites as a way in which to later vent about an experience they avoided at work. For example, Charlie mentioned used message boards as a place to vent and, therefore, to avoid confrontation. He said, “I would just bitch about it [his perceived privacy violation] there to be honest; it just, it didn’t seem worth the hassle to bring it up.”
Rather than communicate with his co-workers about what he perceived to be inappropriate, Charlie chose to avoid the situation entirely and then to share his experience online in an environment in which he felt safe and heard. Although online message boards proved a useful management strategy for Charlie, his tactics did nothing to repair harmed coworker relationships or to improve future social interactions with co-workers.

Sometimes ELTs avoided co-workers or certain topics once learning they were “unsafe.” Patricia explained “I learned one of my co-workers has a really big mouth. So, anything that I want to keep personal, I just don’t tell her, and so things that I figure are a little private, I just don’t say.” After learning she was unable to trust her coworker with information, Patricia decided it was best to avoid discussing private information with her. Avoidance although useful as demonstrated by these ELTs stories, limited their social interaction with co-workers and never fully addressed the root issue for their management decisions.

Gaijin Smashing

Gaijin Smashing is defined by the urban dictionary’s website as “A technique used by foreigners, or gaijin, in Japan in order to impose their will on the Japanese.” Intercultural communication scholars have yet to explore gaijin smashing. To date only, Asian language and literature scholars, for example, Kumagai and Sato (2009) have discussed this phenomenon. Kumagai and Sato (2009) found that gaijin smashing is a way of using “ignorance” as a rhetorical strategy to gain a powerful social position for one’s own gains. In other words, gaijin smashing referred to “cases when they [gaijin]
used their ascribed positioning in defiance to the societal rules in order to get what they wanted” (p. 318). In this study, gaijin smashing refers to instances in which ELTs used their own “foreignness” to smash through cultural barriers or boundaries in order to obtain valued goal(s), such as an increased sense of privacy. Richard, a white, gay man, defined gaijin smashing as, “it’s where you use the fact that you are not Japanese to get out of social interactions of people that are Japanese, are usually beholding to.” Casey, an Okinawan-American who self-identified as queer, offered a similar definition. She said, “gaijin smashing is basically doing something that is not Japanese to get something that is beneficial to you.” Within this study, gaijin smashing refers to intentional, intrusive, actions that violate Japanese cultural norms in order to obtain personal perceived benefit(s). In other words, gaijin smashing is when a foreigner uses their cultural outsider positionality to “smash” through cultural boundaries that “restrict” or “dictate” Japanese social interaction norms.

I asked Richard to tell me about a moment in which he disclosed personal information to a coworker. He said that he not only expects reciprocity, but that Japanese co-workers respect his answers. He also said that sometimes his truthful answers to questions, that he perceived to be invasive, did not always set well with his co-workers. He said:

I hate to stereotype, but I am an American, so I am more extroverted. I have a larger presence a lot of the time, and can kind of throw it around. I really hate to say that. (Laughter.), but effectively I can gaijin smash my way out of parts of it. It is really the best way to say it.
Richard’s comment revealed that, when he employs gaijin smashing, he uses his “dominant” personality in order to get his way. Speaking hypothetically, Richard described how he responded to privacy expectation violations.

But if someone asks me a question, the answer is on them, you know, like you asked for it and deal with it, is a lot of my mentality. I don’t mean it quite so aggressively, but that’s how I think about it. I don’t want to volunteer information that I can say is private, but if they asked me, I will answer it and they will answer in turn. And it’s a little, I don’t want to say manipulative, but it creates a situation where I have the upper hand.

Richard revealed that he does not want to volunteer private information, but if asked, he will answer most questions. However, Richard adopted gaijin smashing as a way in which to view his co-workers’ responses. Richard smashed through Japanese cultural boundaries by valuing the individual (himself) over the group (his co-workers). He also restructured the perceived violation in a way in which he comes out on top. Thus, gaijin smashing is a way in which ELTs might feel powerless within a situation could grasp, or actually attain a more powerful position within the conversation. Similarly, Juan explained that he uses the “subtleness” of Japanese culture to his own advantage as he negotiates privacy boundaries within his intercultural workplace. Juan said, “I’ve had to find ways of, like, navigating the culture and seeing things, you know, like using this subtlety to my own advantage, and it has helped.” Juan not only admits to gaijin smashing situations at work, but also revealed that he uses gaijin smashing to target perceived subtly within Japanese culture. He also claimed it helped him.
Andrea reported using gaijin smashing to inform her co-workers about how her chronic depression and low blood pressure symptoms influence her work. Andrea was reprimanded by a supervisor for grading too slowly, which resulted in a meeting with her supervisor, team-teachers, and a guest educator, hired by her Board of Education. She said the meeting “turned into things we hate about Andrea.” Andrea explained her meeting frustration:

The meeting was there so I could explain what my symptoms were and how it affected me. And, so, I told my teachers and I managed to kind of gaijin smash my way there, and I don’t do that lightly. But, when you [Japanese co-workers] sat there talking about me, I’m like ‘Okay, I thought the meeting was about this—what depression does to me.’ And they’re gonna have to listen because, even if you don’t like it, I know it’s not what you want to talk about, but this is what I’m here to talk about. And, so, I told them; I explained to them. And I’m like, it’s not that I’m being lazy, but it is that my body physically will not work. ‘Well you have to push through that.’ And I’m like, ‘You can’t push through it, [when] the body does not work!’

Andrea employed gaijin smashing when the meeting was not discussing what she wanted to address: her symptoms related to her private health experiences. Andrea mentioned that she does not gaijin smash lightly, which indicates that gaijin smashing is a tool to be used cautiously and, perhaps, in “risky” situations as a “last resort,” at least for Andrea. Her story revealed that gaijin smashing helps some ELTs to reach their agenda when it is otherwise being “ignored.” Although, this conversation did not necessarily pan out the
way Andrea intended, she did reach her personal goal within this conversation by explaining her health symptoms to her co-workers.

Gaijin smashing does not have positive connotations, even within the ELT community. Richard said gaijin smashing “implies being a belligerent foreigner.” As a foreigner, Richard said, “I’m not expected to know all of those rules, nor is it reasonable to expect me to know all of them, but I can kind of use that to my advantage.” Even though gaijin smashing is not necessarily perceived as a positive management strategy, Richard acknowledged the utility of such a strategy. Richard claimed his ability to gaijin smash was “possible because of my Caucasian features and American nationality.” Throughout these excerpts gaijin smashing is a rhetorical strategy some ELTs used in order to alter power dynamics and, therefore, obtain a position of dominance over Japanese. It is plausible to assume that the privacy content might have bearings on management strategies, particularly those in which ELTs perceive less power to alter their situation as they intend or wish. However, it is unclear within this study which “risk-orders” might be most salient for ELTs and, therefore, lead one to gaijin smash.

Even though not every ELT within this study employed gaijin smashing, they were aware of it. When discussing cultural differences, Brent said, “Some ELTs take advantage of that.” Although not everyone agreed with gaijin smashing and, several, like Brent and Casey discouraged its use, ELTs still believed in its utility. Casey said, “I feel like gaijin smashing is one of those techniques that you should have in your repertoire, but not something you should be constantly breaking out.” Casey’s comments speak to the utility of gaijin smashing, but, at the same time, speak to it being a management
strategy that should not be used consistently. These are the dominant management strategies ELTs revealed throughout interviews. Additionally, ELTs commented upon to whom they made co-owners of their private information.

*Co-ownership*

For ELTs, co-owners of their private information refers to individuals they can trust to uphold their privacy boundaries. Petronio (2002) said the co-owner relationship is dependent upon how the recipient of the private information treats the experience. ELTs shared that, in their experiences, the Japanese co-workers to whom they disclosed private information were like “friends.” Such disclosure led ELTs to create co-owners of co-workers ELTs perceived to meet their friendship criteria.

I asked Brent how comfortable he was sharing something that was private within his workplace. He said “Not really.” He explained that:

I never really felt that there is someone who I would consider at the level of friend to the extent that I can actually trust this person not to reveal my secrets….I was always very aware that the people I’m working with were not my friends.

Brent did not make any of his Japanese co-workers co-owners of his private information because he did not consider any to be friends. Brent demarcated his co-workers as people that were not his friends, thus he did not make any of them co-owners of his private information.

Similarly, Jennifer, a self-identified genderqueer person, said that for her, only friends would know about certain topics such as her sex life. Jennifer explained that:
If someone said, ‘What do you enjoy?’ and unless they are a really good friend, you know, or if they are a fellow LGBT person, I would be like, ‘Well, she’s totally into bondage.’ But, whatever, it’s fine. If it was just a straight person, maybe if they were a good friend, I would be like whatever [and share]. But, if they are a coworker, and were like, ‘What do you do in bed?’ I would be like, ‘That’s a violation of my privacy.’

Within this excerpt, Jennifer demarcated who is an appropriate co-owner of her sexual relationship with her co-worker. Jennifer stated that friends or fellow LGBT community members would be an appropriate outlet for co-ownership, but co-workers were not. In fact, Jennifer stated that, if a co-worker were to inquire about her sexual life, she would not share and would perceive such an act to be a privacy violation.

Samantha reported soliciting a co-worker’s advice on a personal situation due to feeling as if the individual were a friend. Samantha did not want to tell me about the situation due to it being private, but she explained, “I asked her [co-worker] to talk to me as a friend, so we went into the women’s changing storage area [at school] and we had a private conversation.” This conversation took place after the two shared thoughts and opinions on a variety of topics.

We talked about all kinds of things— anywhere from sex-ed in Japanese schools to World War II and the atomic bombs. And, so, we had had that from the beginning and maintained that the last few years, and it was something where I was like, ‘You know, this really bothers me.’ I went to the locker room, and just
kind of talked about it, and I asked her [for], her opinion. But, it’s not something I felt uncomfortable with because we had talked [about] serious topics. And she shared something with me about her family.

For Samantha, prior discussions on a variety of topics and issues helped her to feel comfortable making her co-worker a co-owner and consultant of her private information. Being able to speak with someone as a friend was a criteria Samantha used in order to determine if she could make this particular co-worker a co-owner. In addition to sharing friendship criteria for co-ownership, ELTs shared perspectives on their workplace supervisors as co-owners.

_Supervisors as Co-owners_

All ELTs within this study had a supervisor. All ELTs had a supervisor within their school(s) and at their Board of Education or ELT-employing company. Petronio (2002) warned that a conflict of interest might exist between employee-employer privacy rights. ELTs reported that the Japanese co-workers they trusted became co-owners whom they trusted and expected to manage their privacy boundaries correctly. For instance, Ruby described her relationship with her supervisor:

It’s an interesting one [relationship] because she’s my boss and, you know, I guess really should be a little bit careful about things that I tell her but, we are such good friends. And, she is just so, I don’t know, just so easy to talk to. And, I suppose I’m not looking for any advance in my career here, so I don’t feel like I need to protect my image necessarily. And, I trust her wholeheartedly. Absolutely, trust her with any information that I give her.
Ruby described her supervisor not only as a co-owner of her private information, but also as a friend. Ruby’s relationship demonstrated what some ELTs reported as necessary criteria for co-owner relationships. Additionally, for Ruby, she believed making her supervisor a co-owner of her private information to be ok since she was not looking to advance her career within her workplace. Ruby indicated a great degree of trust in her supervisor/co-owner. I asked Ruby how she expected her privacy to be treated at work, she said:

If I had to tell my supervisor something, and she’s probably the person I told the most things too, then, I would expect her to use the information to get the result that we needed. And, if she had to tell some people, then she has to tell some people, and I will leave that up to her judgment.

Ruby’s reflection on her supervisor/co-owner relationship revealed that she trusted her supervisor to manage her private information. For Ruby, she trusted that her supervisor would only share information if the end result was beneficial to both parties. Ruby’s excerpt revealed a team attitude within her co-owner relationship. Not everyone experienced the type of co-ownership Ruby experienced.

ELTs, like Sara, indicated skepticism regarding the “forced” co-owner relationship she found herself in within her school and with her supervisor. She said:

You know, the funny thing is, the more I think about it, the ELT-supervisor relationship is, it’s kind of like you’re forced into this trusting relationship
without knowing somebody. Whereas, normally, in the other scenario, like, the trust is built through months or years of earning it, by revealing details about yourself, and having them protected the way you know they should be. But with the supervisor, it is more like they kind of have your livelihood in the palm of their hands from the outset. And, there’s no building of trust, it’s just automatically there, and they didn’t have to do anything to earn it.

ELTs are assigned a supervisor once they are hired or enter the workplace. Sara described that, for her, she felt like she was forced into a relationship that was built more on policy than on trust. Sara’s “normal” co-owner relationships evolve over time and require trust that is built via disclosure. Sara said:

It’s almost like immediately they have access to all of your personal details and, then, it is up to what kind of person they are at the end of the day whether your privacy is upheld. It’s a little bit of a lack of control, which is why it’s hard to know what to do about it.

Sara perceived her supervisor relationship to be one that rendered her powerless and without control. This left her in a state of not knowing how to respond or what to do. Sara claimed that since the supervisor is made a co-owner, without her consent, she felt a lack of control as the supervisor/co-owner will employ their own disclosure rules that have not been built on trust.

Other ELTs, like Stephanie, felt similarly to Ruby and Sara. Stephanie also felt trust was a required component for supervisor/co-owner relationships. When discussing how she responded to situations where supervisors assisted her with private matters, such
as transferring money from her Japanese bank account to her account in her home-country, Stephanie said:

Yeah, that’s really hard to trust them [supervisors and co-workers], because they know so much more about us [ELTs] than we know about them. They know where we live, like, all of my entire staff came to my house the day that I moved in, and was just hanging out. And, they could show up when I was sick, you know. I couldn’t do that to them. I didn’t know where they lived. I don’t know if the other Japanese teachers did that to Japanese teachers. I think they only did that to me.

Stephanie said that, in her experience, she felt her supervisor and co-workers knew more about her than she knew about them. This led Stephanie to feel as if she could not trust them as co-owners of her private information. Her supervisor and co-workers knew where she lived and would come to her house when she was sick. However, she was unable to do this for her co-workers because she did not have the same information. Additionally, ELTs commented upon their location as influencing their privacy negotiations.

_Urban vs. Rural Contexts_

ELTs mentioned that their geographical context (a.k.a., their urban or rural location) influenced their experience with privacy in Japan. For example, those within rural settings constantly mentioned that their rural location limited their amount of desired privacy attainability. ELTs within urban locations, on the other hand, reported
less privacy invasions than those within rural settings. First, I will share what ELTs in rural locations mentioned about how their setting influenced their privacy.

*Rural ELT Experiences*

Throughout the interviews, ELTs living and working in rural locations claimed that their rural location influenced their experience with privacy, or lack thereof. ELTs reported being seen by co-workers outside of work as well as by individuals within their co-workers’ social network that would inform ELT co-workers of their observations regarding ELTs behavior and actions outside of work. This led ELTs to feel as if their rural experience limited their privacy due to standing out, smaller perceived social distance, and tight-knit communities. Throughout interviews, ELTs living and working in rural locations commented upon how they were watched or that their privacy was limited due to their location. When I asked Carlos about his experience working in a small town, he referred to his experience as “Big brother in Japan,” meaning that everyone saw and/or knew about what he did or was doing on any given moment. For example, he said, “Yes, it’s a small town and everyone knows everything. You’re farting in the corner in the street, everyone knows later.” Lilienfeld (1979) argued rural settings in particular are not conducive to achieving one’s desired level of privacy due to: (a) “overcrowding” by rural communities living close together despite relatively empty lands nearby, (b) rural societies tend to construct densely connected social relation networks which prevent the achievement of privacy. When individuals pull away from social networks within rural communities it may send the message they devalue such networks (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979).
According to the ELTs I interviewed, degrees of separation in small towns are much smaller than six. Samantha explained that within small towns, “even connections you don’t think [about] are there.” Samantha got a rash on her foot and went to her local doctor for treatment, which resulted in her needing a prescription from her local pharmacy. Through her experience, Samantha ran into three people associated with her workplace. She said, “…by the time I got my prescription I had run into three adults I knew in town and the pharmacist told this other ELT what I had been in for and other ELTs asked, ‘Oh, what’s wrong with your foot?’” Samantha perceived this to be a privacy violation since she had not yet revealed her rash to anyone within her workplace. Samantha’s story did not end here. The next day at work the librarian said “Oh, I heard you were at the pharmacy yesterday. Were you okay?” One of the people Samantha met at the pharmacy was the librarian’s husband. Living in a small town put Samantha’s personal health experience in the public eye. Samantha said, “I’m from a suburban area, so I’m not used to people knowing when I’m going to the doctor and all of a sudden I felt like everyone was checking up on me.” Samantha did not want people to know about the rash on her foot. In fact, she said, “It’s gross.” Samantha perceived her privacy to be violated due to her rural location. Living in a small town did not allow her the opportunity to obtain the desired level of privacy she experienced within her suburban home country.

Aarti knew that living in a rural location would limit her privacy. She said, “I knew coming to a small town that I wasn’t going to have as much privacy, but…it is weird that all of you guys [co-workers] know all this stuff about me.” Even though Aarti
expected to have limited privacy within her rural town, she still felt weird that her co-
workers knew so much about her life. Aarti’s comments revealed that for some ELTs
visualizing, and then actually experiencing, life in a small town is very different for
ELTs.

Chloe’s formal employer was her local Board of Education. Chloe believed that,
by living in a small town, and being the only ELT employed within her town, left her
employer feeling the need to observe closely. Chloe said:

I am the only ELT in my town and so I feel like that has kind of like changed my
situation a bit because I’m the only ELT in a small town I have seen that my BOE
has been a little bit overprotective, at least in my opinion. Where I feel like it is a
little too much and kind of, like what is the word, breaching my privacy laughter.
Although potentially well-intentioned, Chloe perceived her Board of Education’s
watchful eye as breaching her privacy. Chloe’s thoughts on this were reinforced when
comparing her situation with other ELTs in larger cities.

Whereas the other ELTs [in my prefecture] that I’ve spoken with, I don’t feel like
they have the situation where they have to share as many things about their life,
which is private, you know, things about yourself - that is somewhat exclusive. So
other ELT’s that live in the city, in the city they have the most ELTs and I don’t
think that the BOE [Board of Education] can give as much attention and time to
them. So they just have more freedom.
Within this excerpt, Chloe revealed her belief that BOE’s with multiple ELTs might not have the time to inquire into one’s private life, thus affording one the ability to have more privacy than her current state, if desired. Chloe continued:

And that they don’t have to tell their BOE where they are going on the weekends…and they don’t have to submit an itinerary showing what train they take when they leave and when they come back and where they are going and where they are staying, where I have….That I think is a little too much…it is privacy because I also don’t just feel comfortable sharing where I go, do you know what I mean?

Chloe’s story revealed that asking an ELT how they are spending their time outside of work is perceived to violate one’s privacy sensibilities. Additionally, Chloe’s story showcased ELTs’ perspectives on living and working within a rural setting. In other words, ELTs like Chloe perceived rural areas as places where employers are “too” hands on and, in this instance, invasive, whereas, urban areas are perceived to offer a greater sense of privacy, and, therefore, freedom. Experiences such as these led rural ELTs to feel as if they were constantly at work.

*Always at Work.* ELTs within rural locations commented that living in their small town, where people report back to co-workers as to where they were seen and what they were doing, led them to feel as if they were always at work. For instance, Ren said, “because I see my students everywhere I kind of feel like I’m at work.” Ren’s feelings were echoed throughout interviews with rural ELTs. Cindy explained her feelings of always being at work:
I would never ask my gynecologist on his day off to talk about my vagina. I don’t do that. I would never ask him a medical question if we were just hanging out, but my Japanese friends ask me all these questions all the time. And sometimes it’s my day off and I don’t want to teach English, but you’re never off. You are always a foreigner. You are always going to be on somebody’s clock.

Cindy’s statements revealed that being a foreigner adds to the feelings produced within rural environments for ELTs. She mentioned that she will always be seen as a foreigner in Japan and therefore always on someone’s clock. In other words, Cindy deemed it inappropriate to ask ELTs language questions when they are not working. However, at the same time, Cindy demarcates when it is ok for such intrusions to occur. She said “It’s fine when it’s little kids that are like, ‘Hello! Hello!’” Age plays a role for Cindy as to when it is appropriate for her to assume her work persona outside of work. She explained, “When it is the 40-year-old drunk businessman that is imitating you on the train saying ‘This is a pen.’ That is not fun.”

Brent echoed many of the sentiments previously mentioned, but also reveals that the sense of duty being “on call” some ELTs experience. He said, “A lot of times I felt everything that I was doing in Japan was intertwined with my work, even when it wasn’t really connected.” Brent said that when he was in his town, “I felt like I was permanently on duty in one sense. So anything that I did you would see it reflected on my workplace.” Brent said this was especially true when “I was teaching in a small town and everyone knew who I was.” Brent’s story showcases both the sincerity many ELTs I interviewed have for their position. Many ELTs like Brent love their workplaces and
took their jobs very seriously. Throughout interviews, rural ELTs like those mentioned above stated that they were unable to obtain their desired levels of privacy due to their rural location and small towns. Additionally, ELTs felt as if they never left work and were always “on call” within such settings. Next, I will share experiences of ELTs living within urban settings.

*Urban ELT Experiences*

Throughout interviews with ELTs who lived and worked in urban areas, their story was slightly different. Urban ELTs, although sympathetic to rural ELT experiences, reported feeling that work ended and more space in order to live out their lives as they desired, thus enhanced privacy due to the increased population.

Richard lived in one of the largest metropolitan areas in Japan. Even though he lived next door to a junior high school, he did not work there. Instead, he commuted at least 30 minutes by train to work. When discussing his living situation he said:

I live next door to a middle school. I’m very happy I don’t work at that middle school. [Because] if I were to drunkenly stumble home and see my students then that would be difficult, you know. So, I’m glad there is that element of division.

Richard’s perspective speaks to an understanding of what rural ELTs experience. Richard is glad he must commute to work in order to steer clear of the feeling of being “on call” or “always at work” that rural ELTs described. Living away from his workplace within an urban area allots Richard the private space and place he desires away from work.
Patricia is one of the urban ELTs I interviewed. She lived in one of the largest cities in Japan. When asked about life outside of work, Patricia said “I feel like it [work] ends.” Although Patricia feels her work ends, she still sometimes sees co-workers and students during her private time. She said, “I run into them [co-workers and students] sometimes, but I don’t feel like my work continues. I feel like they just see a different part of me.” What is interesting about Patricia’s story is that she feels her work ends even when she “runs into” co-workers and students off the clock. This differs from many rural ELTs I interviewed.

Brent, an ELT who lived/worked in both urban and rural settings offered insight as to why some urban ELTs might or might not feel the ability to disconnect from work afterhours. He said:

It was easier once I was in the bigger city because there were just more people and a lot more foreigners around. It was like no one knew I was even there when I went out in the town and did things. I felt my privacy was more assured because there were more people.

Since Brent experienced urban and rural life he compared the two perspectives. Brent revealed that it was easier to obtain his desired level of privacy within an urban area due to the increased population and social distance and larger foreign population. These stories visually showcased a difference in perspective and work experience for ELTs in rural versus urban settings. Since space and place are rendered meaningful as locations in which ELTs perceived privacy violations, it is important to highlight this difference in
order to better understand differing experience ELTs may have in differing regions of Japan.

ELT Summary

Throughout interviews ELTs defined “privacy” as a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses personal information, space (or place), and actions. In particular, ELTs viewed privacy as personal information or a place that one owns and should have the ability to control who has access to such information or place. ELTs perceived privacy expectations to be invaded or violated during instances in which such boundaries were questioned, approached, or breeched by Japanese co-workers particularly regarding topics related to space and place, bodies, sexuality, and romantic relationships. ELTs employed privacy management strategies to obtain their desired, or expected, level of privacy by protecting and reinforcing privacy boundaries. ELTs reported managing privacy expectations via (a) withdrawal, (b) cognitive restructuring, (c) independent control, (d) lying, (e) omission, (f) avoidance, and (g) gaijin smashing. All experiences with privacy were viewed as a product of one’s location. For instance, urban ELTs reported feeling that work ended and more space in order to live out their lives as they desired, thus enhanced privacy due to the increased population. Rural ELTs, on the other hand, reported that their rural location influenced their experience with privacy and led them to feel as if they were always at work.

Japanese Co-worker Perspectives

This section features results a thematic analysis of 38 Japanese co-worker interview transcripts. I interpret four dominant themes. First, I will discuss how
Japanese co-workers defined privacy. Second, I will discuss instances in which Japanese co-workers discussed perceived privacy violations. Third, I will discuss ways in which Japanese co-workers managed their privacy at work. Finally, I will discuss Japanese co-worker perceptions of managing privacy within urban and rural areas.

Privacy Defined

Throughout interviews most Japanese co-workers defined privacy as deeply personal information that they own and, if shared, is only revealed to close relationship partners with whom they have shared a significant amount of time, such as a friend or family member. The following responses represent how Japanese co-workers in this study understood privacy in general: Kondo explained, “Privacy is something that people don’t want to disclose.” Kondo’s definition reveals private information is both controlled and owned. In other terms, Nakamura defined privacy as “something I want to hide from strangers.” Nakamura’s comment revealed that such private information could be accessible to others, but not to “strangers.” In other words, Nakamura believed privacy to be more about non-disclosure and hiding certain information from certain types of people. Kobayashi said that she can share private information with, “very close friends or co-workers, or someone who really understands me.” Kobayashi’s statement reiterated Nakamura’s sentiments that private information is hidden from non-close relational members. Saito clarified that, “…privacy [private information] is something that you share only with really close friends or people who are close to you.” Saito’s comment revealed that private information is bound by rules that demarcate some as possible co-owners of one’s private information. When discussing with whom he
disclosed, Tanaka said: “I personally need time to develop the relationship with somebody.” Similarly, Yamada said, “If it is my friend, I will tell him many things about myself.” Tanaka’s and Yamada’s comments represent the majority of Japanese co-workers I interviewed for this study which will be further explored later within this chapter. Throughout interviews most Japanese co-workers mentioned the following topics were considered private information: romantic, platonic, and family relationships; health (including age and weight); hobbies; and personal data such as finances/income, phone numbers, email addresses, as well as where one lives. Additionally, Japanese co-workers commented upon perceived cultural differences that exist between Japanese and “others.”

*Privacy is Different for Foreigners*

Throughout the interviews Japanese co-workers believed the definition of privacy to be different for foreigners than Japanese. When discussing to whom Sasaki disclosed at work, she said: “I just think the concept of privacy is kind of different for Japanese people and English people. Not English people, foreign people.” Sasaki defined such difference via the topics she considered as private which are reflected within the previous paragraph. Watanabe echoed Sasaki’s sentiments. She said, “the definition of the privacy for the foreigner is bigger than for Japanese.” Sasaki came to this conclusion via observation within her workplace. Sasaki worked for an English teaching company that hired and placed ELTs with local Board of Education throughout her prefecture. She explained:
So if I got information from the ELT, I told everything to the boss, but if the area [ELT] coordinator received information from the ELT, some information is closed or hidden because that information is private, for example, if they are injured or something like that.

Sasaki noticed that the ELT coordinator, who was himself an ELT, would choose to keep some information private between him and the ELT. Sasaki believed it was important to share such information with her boss. This episode led Sasaki to believe privacy is defined differently between foreigners and Japanese.

Similar to Sasaki, Ono said that foreigners and Japanese perceive health-related privacy differently. She said, “In Japan it’s normal I guess, maybe if someone gets sick, you know, we [co-workers] talk about that right? But for foreigners, maybe it’s strange, I guess.” Within this excerpt, Ono demarcated Japanese co-worker and foreigner (ELT) health privacy perspectives. Ono says that it is “normal” in Japan to discuss if someone gets sick, but, at the same time, mentioned that such discussion maybe strange for cultural outsiders such as ELTs.

Interestingly enough, half of the Japanese co-workers in this study mentioned that they did not often think about privacy and, thus, had no privacy concerns. When I asked Inoue to define privacy, he said, “Privacy? (Laughter.) Privacy? I never thought [about that]…Privacy I never think about this kind of difficult stuff. (Laughter.)” Inoue defined privacy as difficult and stuff that he, personally, never thought about. Other Japanese co-workers shared Inoue’s sentiments regardless of role or positionality within the school system or ELT employment agency. Morishita claimed “I don’t really care about
privacy.” Kuroki, like most Japanese co-workers in this study, wished to see the semi-structured interview guide prior to the interview. During the opening of the actual interview, he said, “I did not understand very much why you are asking about privacy so much. I have never thought of privacy so seriously so far.” Kuroki, like many in this study, said he did not personally think seriously about privacy. Next, I discuss ways in which Japanese co-workers discussed items related to perceived privacy violations.

**Perceived Privacy Violations**

Although the majority of Japanese co-workers within this study did not report any privacy violations at work with ELTs, they reported that personal information (i.e., such as one’s phone number, email address, or bank account), religion, family, politics, romantic relationships/marital status, age, and income as private information. Japanese co-workers revealed insight into workplace dynamics and several topic areas some ELTs find invasive such as why co-workers discussed ELTs’ actions and views on sharing personal information.

**On Discussing ELTs with Japanese Co-workers**

Three Japanese co-workers reported that their colleagues asked them questions about the ELTs within their workplace. These co-workers shared with me why some colleagues discussed ELTs’ life, actions, and culture. Overall, Japanese co-workers reported discussing ELTs with Japanese co-workers that did not speak English, especially when their ELT did not speak Japanese (See Chapter 3 for participant demographics). Sasaki, who had fluent English language skills, said:
You know, Japanese teachers cannot ask some questions to ELTs directly because they do not speak English, right? So if they want to ask some questions, or if they want to know something about the ELT, they just asked me. (Laughter.) You know, yeah, something like that or ‘Oh he looked a little bit tired,’ or ‘Do you know what he did in the weekend?’ or something like that.

Within this excerpt Sasaki explained that her Japanese co-workers asked her questions about the ELTs employed at her school because they themselves could not ask the ELTs due to the language barrier. Since Sasaki speaks English, she is seen as someone who can share information about the ELTs that work at her school with her Japanese colleagues.

Onishi, a teacher with advanced English skills, acknowledged the language barrier between Japanese co-workers and ELTs. She said her co-workers asked her about the ELTs’ private lives within her school. She explained, “Japanese teachers, especially not English teachers, think they shouldn’t ask about the privacy of ELTs, but they are really interested in ELTs’ life.” Onishi said that Japanese teachers of subjects beyond English are interested in ELTs lives, but think they shouldn’t ask ELTs about their privacy. She said, “They want to know [about ELTs due to curiosity], but think they should not ask [the ELTs].” However, they do ask Onishi. She said her colleagues believed they shouldn’t ask ELTs such questions, especially since a language barrier exists between them.

When speaking with Nakamura, I asked her to tell me about an experience where she, or the ELT, disclosed something private and/or personal. She said “I have nothing
special with it, the ELT. But some other English teacher tells me about him.” Even with advanced English level abilities, Nakamura revealed that even though she did not have any special moments in which she and the ELT at her school disclosed personal information, she did hear about the ELT’s private life from her co-workers. Overall, these comments reveal that, at times, Japanese co-workers disclosed personal information, such as hobbies, workload, or personal characteristics about an ELT with one another, whether a language barrier exists or not.

*Personal Information about ELT*

Japanese co-workers discussed instances in which an ELT spoke with them about a perceived violation in which the ELT’s information was either shared without their consent or solicited by another. Each discussion resulted in a “teachable moment” in which the Japanese co-worker shared their cultural perspective on the perceived violation.

Tanaka supervised ELTs who work for his recruiting company. Although he did not see ELTs daily, he had frequent contact with them via email and phone as he assisted ELTs with daily life items such as banking, post office, or even shopping questions. Tanaka’s company appointed one senior-level ELT as an “area manager” to check up on ELTs. The area manager’s job was to call and email ELTs to ensure their emotional, physical, and workplace well-being. Tanaka explained:

We [his company] are supposed to tell all the ELTs that we share their information; your personal information including mobile phone or email address with the area manager, which is one of the ELTs at the school, so their standpoint
is the same, as you as an ELT. It’s not our company staff; it is just one of the ELTs. So, we should explain, carefully explain that and get an understanding from everybody. But kind of, the HR division is managing the area manager and they just forgot the process. They skipped the process and just spread out information to the area manager. So, the manager contacted one of the ELTs and they asked, ‘How did you get my email address? I didn’t agree to give my address to anybody but COMPANY NAME.’

Tanaka revealed an instance in which he had to negotiate a perceived privacy violation involving his company’s procedures and an ELT. I asked Tanaka how he managed the situation. He said “Oh, we just apologized to him and then just asked the area manager to delete their number and email address and then confirm that you never contact him anymore.” Tanaka’s company decided it was best to apologize to the ELT, who felt intruded, and, then, to ask the area manager to leave the offended party alone in the future. Thus, the ELT who perceived the violation would no longer be checked upon by the area manager.

Hidaka, who worked at an ELT-recruiting agency, also reported a perceived privacy violation between ELTs. Within this excerpt, Hidaka explained how Japanese co-workers at an ELT’s school shared a former ELT’s contact information in order to help train their new ELT.

We had one ELT [that] called me, he got a phone call from another ELT he doesn’t know, but he was working at that school before. And that ELT presently working at that school, he has some kind of trouble and wanted to ask some
questions to this former ELT. And he suddenly contacted to this foreigner and he didn’t tell him his mail address and stuff like that. And the school teachers told him, the current ELT, the address of the former ELT and to contact him.

Hidaka explained that, in this instance, the school provided contact information to the new ELT in order to speak with the former ELT regarding some kind of trouble the new ELT faced within his workplace. Hidaka viewed this instance as a privacy invasion since the school shared the former ELT’s contact information without his consent. However, the former ELT felt differently. She explained, “He said, ‘It’s okay,’ so there was no conflict, but I thought it was really a big problem with [sharing] personal information.” Even though the ELT did not perceive a violation, Hidaka did. She felt sharing personal information without the other’s consent was a big problem.

Watanabe, a supervisor who worked for an ELT-recruiting organization, shared an instance in which her co-worker, an ELT, felt violated. She said:

A personal letter to Chad (an ELT at her office) was opened by [office personnel]. The letter was sent to the office, so Chad was very surprised who opened it. Because he thinks that this is a letter to him, but someone open. But in Japanese culture, the letter to the office is a public letter. The letter, this is personal information personal letter to Chad, but this is also a letter to the office. This is just addressed attention, just attention, but sent to the office.

Watanabe, Chad’s supervisor and a co-worker, told me about how Chad became upset when his “personal” letter was opened. She said, “I explained to Chad that this is a good example of cultural difference.” Watanabe used this opportunity to tell Chad about the
cultural difference. Even though the letter was addressed to the attention of Chad, the “personal” letter was still sent to the office, which meant it was public property.

These three stories show that, for Japanese co-workers, personal information received or distributed with the intent to be used outside of the workplace context, such as a phone number, is perceived as a privacy violation if no consent is provided. At the same time, these stories reveal that, when private information is sent to the workplace, such as a letter, it is considered public domain and, therefore, should not be considered private. These excerpts also reveal instances in which Japanese co-workers taught ELTs about Japanese culture, when such concerns arose. Next, I will discuss ways in which Japanese co-workers employ various strategies in order to manage their privacy boundaries at work.

Strategies Managing Privacy Boundaries

Although almost all Japanese co-workers, in this study, did not perceive any privacy violations at work, they did report ways in which they managed their privacy. Such measures enabled Japanese co-workers to obtain and maintain their desired levels of privacy. Japanese co-workers reported using the following two strategies to manage their privacy boundaries: (a) drawing clear boundaries by not talking or changing contexts (n=11), and (b) being pre-emptive by demarcating privacy boundaries early on within a relationship (n=9).

Drawing Clear Boundaries

Throughout this study, many Japanese co-workers discussed that they kept their work life and private life separate. Japanese co-workers said that they keep these areas
distinct by drawing clear lines or boundaries between their work and private worlds. The following Japanese co-workers’ remarks make such sentiments clear: Tosu said, “At work is work; private is private. I draw a line. It’s a different situation.” Tosu’s comments revealed that, to her, work is different from her private life. Tosu keeps such parts of her life separate. Matsuo echoed Tosu’s feelings. She said “I’m very secretive. So, I wouldn’t talk, especially with my co-workers. Like, my private and my work life is a totally different things. I try to draw line between these two.” Such sentiments were expressed throughout interviews.

Matsuo claimed to not only be secretive at work, but also to draw a line between her public and private worlds. She said she did so by watching what she said at work. Matsuo said, “I talk about students with other co-workers, but I don’t talk about myself, like, who I live with, how old I am, like what I did this weekend. I wouldn’t. I don’t go to drinking party so often too.” Matsuo kept her privacy boundaries clear by not only avoiding certain topics at work, but chose to only discuss students with her colleagues. She also avoided drinking parties, which are prevalent throughout Japanese work culture.

Fujii recommended her own management strategies to ELTs. She said that private things such as her family, should be discussed with friends, not co-workers. She recommended:

Please keep quiet, and the ELT should find a nice friend, or Japanese teacher [as in a personal tutor, unrelated to work]. Or then become a friend, so he or she can talk to the private things to Japanese friend. But it’s a friend, not a coworker. They don’t say private things to co-workers.
Fujii argued that one way to keep public and private lives separate is to have a close relational friend to whom one can disclose. When I asked Fujii why she should keep so private, she replied, “That’s business. (Laughter.) Only business and private, private things they need friends, Japanese friends, or foreign countries friends. They need friends. But coworker is only business thing. Business life is separate, they have to separate.” Fujii explained that business and private life should be separate. She stated that ELTs should have friends, non-work related Japanese friends or other international friends to whom they could disclose their privacy. On top of stressing the importance of demarcating, or drawing, privacy boundaries, Japanese co-workers discussed they did so by not sharing private information within their workplace.

Drawing Boundaries by not Sharing. Throughout interviews, many Japanese co-workers believed that one way to draw clear boundaries was not to share personal information. Matsuo demonstrated this within her previously stated excerpt in which she revealed she only talked about students with co-workers. Kai and Nakajimi also choose not talking or telling as privacy boundary management strategies. When I asked Kai how she keeps her privacy at work, she said: “I try to not talk too much. Silent is good.” Kai chose to draw her boundaries by not talking “too much” at work.

Nakajima said “I don’t tell, don’t tell. [Do] You know how many times I told the words ‘don’t tell’ and sometimes the person talks to another person? It happens because we are human beings.” Nakajima revealed that she does not reveal anything private at work due to a prior violation. At the same time, Nakajima claimed such things happen due to human nature.
Koga also nominated not talked as the best management strategy. Koga said “Basically, if I want to keep something secret, I just talk nothing about it…. I don’t want to tell a lie, so I don’t make up stories. But, I just try to be honest or talk nothing about this, you know.” Koga chose to not reveal any information in order to maintain privacy, as well as to not lie or create alternative versions of the truth. Koga strived to be honest in her co-worker relationships. Therefore, she decided to not share her personal life at work, thus she maintained separation and her desired levels of privacy.

Japanese co-workers recommended ELTs not share too, if they want their privacy. Abstaining from communication is viewed as the safest strategy by some Japanese co-workers, such as Watanabe. She said, “If the foreigner doesn’t say anything, it is the best way to keep everything secret.” Similarly, Sasaki said, “If they don’t want the people to know, they shouldn’t say; they shouldn’t.” Sasaki clearly stated that in order to keep private information, private, that it should not be stated within the workplace.

Japanese co-workers commented that the best way to maintain privacy is to draw clear, distinct boundaries between one’s public and private selves. In other words, keep work at work, and home at home. Further, Japanese co-workers revealed that they keep their worlds separate by consciously choosing to not discuss private matters. In addition to not sharing or talking within one’s workplace, Japanese co-workers reported changing contexts as a way in which to manage privacy boundaries.

*Changing Contexts.* Three Japanese co-workers drew privacy boundaries by focusing upon the context in which their communication occurs. For example, some Japanese co-workers encouraged conversations to happen later, outside of work. Koga
said that, when co-workers start to share something private with her, she tells them
“Okay, I want to listen to you. I want to hear you out, but we can’t do that at work. So
let’s change place; I don’t want to discuss my private life at work.” She clarified that, “A
little bit may be okay, a starter, so like, for example, I want to talk about my boyfriend;
I’m struggling with them. Oh, okay. I have time tomorrow. Let’s go grab something
and hear you out.”

Kai said that she too saved private conversations for when she is not at work. She
said, “I talk with other Japanese people about this topic when we go drinking, or go
eating dinner. Private, so I don’t talk about this topic in the workplace, because I don’t
want other teachers to listen. (Laughter.)” Kai keeps her workplace separate by ensuring
she discussed private matters outside of work. Even though Kai did share some personal
matters with her co-workers, she does so in context away from their workplace. This
allowed Kai to draw privacy boundaries between the two places, as well as maintain who
had access to her private information.

Changing contexts is not always easy though. Sometimes people carry an artifact
that brings their private life into the public light. Watanabe explained, “Sometimes it’s
difficult. For example, this is a very easy example, [but] my computer has my
screensaver as a sideshow of pictures from foreign countries, so that mean I like foreign
countries or foreign cultures.” Watanabe revealed that, even though Japanese co-workers
might make attempts to draw boundaries by changing contexts, sometimes they bring
artifacts into the workplace that disclose their private matters.
Pre-emptive

Being “pre-emptive” in this study refers to taking initiative early within the ELT-Japanese co-worker relationship to discuss what is considered private in order to avoid potential privacy violations. Some Japanese co-workers mentioned the importance of being pre-emptive throughout our discussions. In particular, Japanese co-workers recommended ELTs to be pro-active. For instance, Maeda said:

Private is different. I feel ELT and Japanese teachers thinking about the private. So, if you know he says, ‘I have two children,’ or something like that, you think ‘Oh, you have two children.’ And, I don’t think this is very secret. So, if he or she doesn’t want anyone to know they have children, I want them to tell me, ‘Please, don’t tell anybody,’ or ‘This is secret.’ That kind of thing. I want them to mention about that. If he doesn’t say that, I don’t know that I have to keep that private. (Laughter.)

Maeda reinforced Japanese co-workers’ belief that ELT and Japanese co-worker’s conceptions of privacy differ. Maeda distinguished that speaking about her children, for her, was not private information. At the same time, Maeda realized this might be considered private information by some ELTs. Maeda, therefore, wanted ELTs to tell her such information is private so she would not share this information with other co-workers.

Hidaka, who worked for an ELT-recruiting and training organization, said, “I usually tell the principal and vice principals that sometimes Americans don’t want the teachers to ask private things. They feel sometimes bad. So, I won’t say ‘Please, do not
ask,’ but I just tell them ‘Be careful about it.’” Hidaka, as part of her job facilitating ELT-Japanese co-worker relationships, took pre-emptive action to inform the principal or vice-principal at the ELTs school to be careful with ELTs’ privacy.

Some Japanese co-workers took being pre-emptive one step further and asked ELTs to inform them what information they consider as private. Kudo said:

So I don’t feel that for myself about my condition: I have a cold or stomachache. I don’t feel that is my privacy. So the idea of privacy is, maybe, different [for ELTs]. So, if they [ELTs] teach us this is the privacy for them, we will not ask them. So the cultural background is the difference.

Kudo not only believed that cultural privacy conceptions exist, but she explained that, for her, she preferred ELTs take pre-cautionary methods and teach Japanese co-workers what they consider to be private in order to avoid a perceived privacy violation. Kudo said that if she knew what was considered private, she would not ask that. Now that I have discussed ways in which Japanese co-workers navigate privacy boundaries, I next discuss ways in which they discussed their co-ownership of ELT privacy boundaries.

Co-ownership

Japanese team-teachers reported behaviors that indicated a co-ownership of an ELT’s privacy boundaries. Instances of co-ownership were evident in the ways in which they treated ELTs’ private matters, such as maintaining ELT privacy boundaries by concealing ELT disclosures. Five Japanese co-workers mentioned that they concealed private information ELTs disclosed to them. In other words, some Japanese co-workers
reported being co-owners of ELTs’ private information. Such actions demonstrated that some Japanese co-workers become co-owners of ELTs’ private information.

Yoshida said, “I didn’t tell about her secret to anyone else; because I wanted her to trust me, and I wanted to trust her.” Yoshida’s comment represented reciprocity demonstrated throughout those co-workers that were co-owners of ELTs’ private information. Yoshida expected that she and the ELT would maintain each other’s privacy.

Abe and Fukazawa confirmed that, from his perspective, privacy need not be shared. Abe said, “I don’t think it needs to be shared. If it’s something about that person’s privacy, I wouldn’t share obviously, you know. I’ll keep it to myself.” Fukazawa echoed Abe’s comment. She said, “Sometimes ELT tell me his or her private things, but, of course, I never say to anyone.” Both Abe and Fukazawa said that they do not share private information ELTs share with them. Maeda also said that, “When we (she and the ELT) share information, I don’t tell it to anybody.” These Japanese co-workers revealed that, for them, shared information is to be kept private between them and the ELT. Such co-workers also did not share information with others. Now that I have shared ways in which Japanese co-workers managed ELT privacy boundaries via a co-owner relationship, I next discuss ways Japanese co-workers revealed contextual differences between urban and rural settings regarding privacy, and the extent to which privacy may be obtained and/or managed within such settings.
Urban vs. Rural Contexts

Throughout interviews with Japanese co-workers, some demarcated a difference between ways privacy is treated between urban and rural locations. Japanese co-workers depicted rural areas as places in which privacy is not protected due to closer relationships and ties. Urban areas, on the other hand, were depicted as more autonomous zones. First, I will share how Japanese co-workers characterized rural locations. Second, I will share ways Japanese co-workers characterized urban locations.

Rural Japanese Life

Eleven Japanese co-workers indicated that rural Japanese life is filled with kind people, but little to no privacy. Tanaka, a man who grew up in a rural area, but worked within an urban area at the time of the interview, said

I think there is [a difference]. Country people really know each other well, like small populations, and everyone knows everyone and their family histories. So, if I tell somebody information, (laughter) I might risk that everybody knows that information the next day. (Laughter.) It really happens sometimes.

Tanaka explained that, since country, or rural, areas within Japan are less dense in population, everyone knows everyone. This results in many people within small, rural communities in Japan knowing the other’s family history. Tanaka explained that, if he shared something in these areas, as a Japanese man, he runs the risk of everyone knowing this information. Tanaka said that this happens only sometimes, which reveals this is not always the case.
Narita lived in a rural town, but taught in an urban city. When discussing an ELT he knew who worked in a rural area, he said:

He [an ELT] is a foreigner, so in our mind every culture is different. So, [if we, Japanese, notice a difference] maybe it’s their culture. So, ELT’s behaving differently from Japanese, are generally accepted as they are: unless they go to some rural areas that have never been exposed to foreign culture. Then, they make no difference between Japanese and foreigners. They just keep asking and behaving in the Japanese way.

Within this excerpt, Narita denotes that ELTs are free to be who they are since cultures differ, except in rural areas. In rural areas, Narita noted that ELTs are not necessarily free to be themselves and to enact their own culture since many Japanese people have not been exposed to foreign culture. Narita explained that people in rural areas continue to ask and to “behave in the Japanese way.” Narita’s comments revealed a difference, not only between urban and rural life in Japan, but also between foreigner and Japanese life.

I asked Narita to tell me more about life in countryside Japanese to ensure I understood what he was saying about rural life in Japan for foreigners. He explained:

It’s rural. They [rural town people] don’t know. They have no idea that every country, every culture, is different. They only know that we are Japanese. And, they behave in that way. And sometimes, some Japanese, they want you to behave in Japanese way, because this is Japan. So, you are here, so just as the proverb says ‘do as Romans do.’ But, not so many Japanese insist on that. I think the idea with privacy differs from city areas and rural areas. …If you live in the
rural areas, traditionally, there is almost no privacy. (Laughter.) People live in the house with their doors open so anyone can come in, from both sides. So, in that case, in the privacy almost doesn’t, doesn’t exist, you know?

Narita explained that people in rural areas were unaware, or didn’t know, that every culture would be different. Instead, Narita explained that people in rural areas in Japan, only understood their own culture. Narita explained that within rural areas, acculturation was expected. Narita also revealed that space, or one’s home, would be treated as public territory within rural areas. Narita demarcated a difference between rural and urban life. Since houses are public spaces, in a sense, Narita shared that privacy does not exist within that sense. Intrigued by this difference, I asked Narita how he thought living in a rural environment might influence the Japanese co-worker-ELT relationship. He laughed and said:

I’m not sure, but (laughter) as it often happens, actually there are many ELTs working in the rural areas. They like that lifestyle, because people are more close. Of course, their privacy is not perfectly protected, but (laughter) and, beside because of the mass communication and the TV’s influence, even if they have been exposed to foreign cultures, they had some idea. So, we have to keep some distance from others’ life except some old, old people. They have some fixed ideas they cannot change their mind. But, for other people yes. So, many ELTs, I think they enjoy their country life. (Laughter.) Better than the city area.

Narita believed ELTs enjoyed rural life more than urban life despite potential perceived privacy violations due to closer social ties. He also explained that, even within rural
locations there should be some sense of privacy due to media’s influence. At the same time, however, older generations are excluded from such influence due to being perceived to be “stuck” in one’s ways. Despite these potential differences, Narita claimed that ELTs enjoy rural life, better than city life.

Ono, who lived and taught in a rural area, also said that a difference existed between rural and city areas. For her, Japanese people in rural areas are very kind:

Privacy, I think maybe it’s different between the rural areas and maybe city areas. Right? Especially, maybe rural areas, the people are kind of, how can I say?

(Laughter.) It’s very hard to say you know, なれなれしい [narenareshii ] it’s Japanese. なれなれしい it’s very friendly but, but something.

Ono stated that people in rural locations were very kind people, but at the same time there would be more than kindness demonstrated. After contacting my cultural consultant, I learned that narenareshii (なれなれしい) means that “someone is kind in a rude way.” In other words, they are too friendly. Narenareshii usually indicates “disapproval.”

Watanabe, who lived in a semi-rural/urban environment, described rural areas as places where people are watched. She said, “in the rural countryside, there is some tendency to, where his or her life is watched by everyone.” This phrase summarizes what some Japanese co-workers had to say about life in rural Japan: a place of surveillance and no privacy.

I asked Takahashi, a man who lived and worked in a rural environment, if he thought privacy was different in urban and rural areas. He said:
I think so. It’s the countryside, so it’s rural. But, the rural area in Japan, the people, want another people’s privacy. When I go to the supermarket, another people say, ‘Oh, you went to the supermarket,’ and I say ‘Oh, yes.’ (Laughter.) But, urban area, no.

Takahashi not only distinguished between urban and rural areas, but commented that people in rural areas want to know other people’s privacy. He said that when he goes to the supermarket, people know that he went. He also said that in urban areas, people do not know such things.

Fukazawa, a woman living in an urban city, shared her feelings on small town privacy conceptions. She said, “In my feeling, the small town is, the person who is from a small town, is a little bit kind, and do not so concentrate to the privacy.” Fukazawa believed that, in small Japanese towns, the people who live and work there do not concentrate on privacy much. In other words, privacy is not something thought about as much as in larger cities.

When I asked Hidaka, a woman living in an urban suburb, if privacy was different in urban or rural contexts, she said “Yeah I think so definitely!” She explained that in:

A small town it’s like they really care about that community, because they have to survive in that really small communities. So, they have to know everything. They have to know everything about other people. If you go to the small island in Japan you have absolutely no privacy.

Hidaka described small towns as small, caring communities. She commented that it is important for them to know everything about other people because they are surviving in
small areas. Hidaka also said that, within smaller spaces, such as small islands in Japan, privacy is non-existent. Since Hidaka works for an ELT-recruiting company, she views part of her position as a cultural educator for ELTs. She said, in the past, she described this difference to ELTs.

I tell them, it’s really important for all the co-workers to know their situation, but in a rural area it’s true that the whole town will know about this. But it’s like that for Japanese people too. It’s like a greeting. It’s like they are just asking, ‘Hi, how are you?’ They [ELTs] think Japanese people are a little kind and try to show their feeling of care to the person so it doesn’t mean that we [Japanese] want to invade your private things. So I will tell them just don’t care and to say, ‘I’m good. I’m fine.’

Within this excerpt, Hidaka revealed how she explained rural Japanese life to ELTs. She says in rural locations, it is important, not only for co-workers to know ELTs’ situations, but also that the townspeople will know it. Hidaka taught ELTs how to manage potential perceived privacy violations. She told ELTs to respond both briefly and vaguely. Next, I share how Japanese co-workers discussed privacy in urban life.

*Urban Japanese Life*

Overall, Japanese co-workers, in this study, conceptualized urban Japanese life as offering more privacy and autonomy. Urban and rural life was often discussed in comparisons. For instance, Ono defined urban life as not being as caring as rural life.
She said “Maybe in cities, they don’t care, right? But, the rural areas, the people really want to care for somebody, especially foreigners.”

Maeda, a woman who lived in a rural area, but worked in an urban area, described her town’s only ELT. Maeda’s children went to school where she lived. She contrasted her children’s ELT it with her own experience in working with ELTs in a city:

She [an ELT] is only one ELT in my town, so everybody knows about her. And she is writing some column in the public newspaper, so everybody in my town knows about her. But in Osaka, it’s not like that. So it’s different where you [ELTs] go to teach. So in URBAN CITY NAME, in RURAL TOWN NAME, is very different. So I think in URBAN CITY NAME, the ELT feels more you know try, not communicate well. I think. (Laughter.) Feel alone.

Maeda shared that location, or the context in which an ELTs teaches, offers different experiences with privacy. Maeda described that everyone in her town knew the ELT because she wrote for the local newspaper. However, she also revealed that, in urban cities, she believed that ELTs do not try as hard to communicate with others and, as a result, feel alone.

Nakajima, a woman from a rural area, but who taught in an urban city, offered insight as to why some ELTs might be perceived to be lonely. She said:

I’m sure it’s so hard to keep privacy in URBAN CITY NAME. Maybe. Because they love the new person. And URBAN CITY NAME’s people think that alone is bad thing. Everyone has a friend and needs a friend and we need the communication, so they ask many things. (Laughter.) They make many
Nakajima claimed that, although she lived in an urban area, this particular city’s culture views being alone as a “bad thing.” Therefore, Nakajima said that Japanese people in this city like to ask many things. This is the only instance in which such a case was mentioned. She said that, in larger cities, privacy is possible since the friendly culture of her current location is not present.

Narita characterized Japanese urban life as being westernized. He explained:

If you live in a big city, I think the mentality is in a way westernized. If you live in a big city people don’t care, you know who you are and what you are doing. So they don’t stick to asking, they don’t want to know about your private things. There’s some limit, you know.

Narita said people in big cities do not care to know who you are or what you are doing, just like in the west. He characterized urban Japanese people as being less persistent than rural Japanese people. He said that there is a limit in urban settings as to how much people will ask.

**Japanese Co-worker Summary**

Throughout the interviews most Japanese co-workers defined privacy in terms of deeply personal information that they own and, if shared, was only revealed to close relationship partners with whom they have shared a significant amount of time, such as a friend or family member. Japanese co-workers understood privacy to be something different, or “bigger,” for foreigners. Although almost all Japanese co-workers in this
study did not perceive privacy violations, they did report ways in which they managed their privacy. Such measures enabled Japanese co-workers to obtain and maintain their desired levels of privacy. Japanese co-workers reported using the following strategies to manage their privacy boundaries: drawing clear boundaries by not talking or changing contexts, and being pre-emptive by demarcating privacy boundaries early on within a relationship. Throughout interviews with Japanese co-workers, some demarcated a difference between ways private is treated between urban and rural locations. Japanese co-workers depicted rural areas as places in which privacy is not protected due to closer relationships and ties. Urban areas, on the other hand, are depicted as more autonomous zones.

Chapter Summary

This chapter featured conceptions, perceptions, and experiences of how ELTs and Japanese co-workers negotiated and managed privacy boundaries in this study. Examining this particular intercultural relationship between ELTs and their Japanese co-workers (e.g., team-teachers and/or supervisors) reveals several similarities and differences exist within this type of workplace relationship. Next, I summarize findings from this chapter and highlight similarities and differences between ELTs and Japanese co-workers regarding how privacy is defined, managed, co-owned, and how urban vs. rural life experiences influence privacy expectations.

On Defining Privacy

ELTs defined privacy as personal information or a place that one owns and should have the ability to control who has access to such information or place. Throughout the
Interviews most Japanese co-workers defined privacy as deeply personal information that they own and hide, if shared, they only reveal personal information to close relationship partners with whom they have shared a significant amount of time, such as a friend or family member. Japanese co-workers understood privacy to be something different, or “bigger,” for foreigners. Although, it was not necessarily clear from these interviews as to what exactly this was, Japanese co-workers said that privacy was different for foreigners. Perhaps this in part due to the fact that about half of the Japanese co-workers in this study mentioned that they did not often think about privacy and, thus, had no privacy concerns at work.

First, space and place are meaningful areas in which privacy is to be expected, and even an entitled right for some ELTs. ELTs highlighted their “home” or living arrangement as an area of particular salience in which they anticipate their privacy expectations to be met. Second, ELTs’ bodies were reported as personal space that was often invaded at work. For instance, ELTs reported that their bodies were questioned, talked about, or regulated in some way that rendered discomfort and feeling as if one’s privacy expectations were invaded. Third, ELTs across the sexual spectrum viewed sexuality as private information. For instance, disclosing one’s same sex or opposite-sex partners, as well as sexual frequency were reported as involving instances of privacy expectation violation. Fourth, romantic relationships such as one’s dating partner also referred to as private matters by ELTs. In particular, some ELTs reported that questions regarding relationship status, as well as one’s partner were perceived to violate privacy
boundaries. Throughout conversations with ELTs, some reported criteria they use in order to select, and also trust, co-owners of their private information.

Overall, this study revealed that similarities exist between ways ELTs and Japanese co-workers conceptualize privacy. First, ELTs and Japanese co-workers defined privacy as personal information that one has a “right” to own. Second, both groups reveal that only they have a right to disclose such information. Such beliefs denote the presence of privacy boundaries, rules, as well as expectations for privacy.

Although similarities exist regarding how ELTs and Japanese co-workers defined privacy, differences also exist. First, ELTs denoted privacy as involving space in addition to personal information. Japanese co-workers did not mention this being a component of privacy. Second, Japanese co-workers revealed that privacy is shared primarily with close relationship friends or family members with whom they have invested a significant amount of time. The length of the relationship was not something that ELTs mentioned regarding a criteria for disclosure. Third, Japanese co-workers claimed that privacy is different for foreigners. For instance, Japanese co-workers shared instances where ELTs in a position of authority failed to disclose information gathered by ELTs. Japanese co-workers also noted that open discussion of one’s health at work might seem “strange” for foreigners, but is normal for Japanese. In fact, about half of the Japanese co-workers interviewed for this study mentioned that they did not think about privacy often and, thus, had no privacy concerns at work. Although how exactly Japanese co-workers conceptualize the differences between Japanese and foreigner privacy is unclear from the data gleaned for this study, the idea that privacy is “bigger” or
more expansive is evident. In other words, Japanese co-workers see privacy as encompassing more topics for ELTs. Such differences highlight that what one group considers private, the other might not. At the same time, it is important to consider who “owns the turf.” Japanese co-workers might be more in control of the physical and cultural environment than ELTs. This could influence one’s ability to manage privacy.

Since criteria differs as to what is private and when such information should be shared, it is clear that privacy expectations may be violated for one, or both groups as they work side-by-side.

Perceived Privacy Violations

Japanese co-workers and ELTs have no similarities regarding perceived privacy expectation violations within this study. Instead, Japanese co-workers and ELTs revealed strong differences as to what is perceived to violate privacy. This is likely due to the fact that the majority of Japanese co-workers within this study did not report any privacy violations. Japanese co-workers might not have reported privacy violations due to “owning the turf” or better understanding how to navigate workplace boundaries. Additionally, the idea of a “privacy violation” might seem irrelevant because one is expected to “hide” such information in the first place.

Even though Japanese co-workers did not report any perceived privacy violations, they revealed insight that helps explain why some ELTs reported privacy expectation violations. For instance, Japanese co-workers shared instances in which they felt it necessary to share and/or discuss an ELT’s “private” information with another co-worker, particularly a supervisor/superior. Information was disclosed and discussed between
Japanese co-workers because many co-workers are unable to ask the ELTs directly due to language barriers. However, even in cases where Japanese co-workers speak English, sometimes information is discussed between individuals who have minimal contact with the ELT. Additionally, Japanese co-workers shared moments when ELTs reported a privacy violation to them regarding personal information. These discussions led to “teachable moments” in which the Japanese co-worker was able to educate the ELT about the Japanese cultural perspective concerning the event. Some Japanese co-workers reported that their colleagues asked them questions about the ELTs within their workplace. Overall, Japanese co-workers reported discussing ELTs with Japanese co-workers who did not speak English, especially when their ELT did not speak Japanese. Japanese co-workers disclose information about the ELT with each other whether a language barrier exists or not.

ELTs, on the other hand, reported that their privacy expectations were violated regarding their space and place, their bodies, sexuality, and romantic relationships. An interesting thing about these items is that all reported perceived privacy violations involved the sharing of information about one of the previously stated categories. Japanese co-workers revealed that sometimes information is shared between co-workers when a language barrier exists, rendering the ELT and Japanese co-worker unable to communicate effectively.

Managing Privacy

Japanese co-worker and ELT privacy management strategies differed. In fact, no similarities were reported regarding how both groups manage privacy at work except that
both were aware of their privacy at work as evidenced by both enacting management strategies to ensure they maintained their desired privacy expectations.

Although almost all Japanese co-workers, in this study, did not perceive privacy violations, they did report ways in which they managed their privacy. Such measures enabled Japanese co-workers to obtain and maintain their desired levels of privacy. Japanese co-workers reported using the following strategies to manage their privacy boundaries: (a) drawing clear boundaries by not talking or changing contexts, and (b) being pre-emptive by demarcating privacy boundaries early on within a relationship. Drawing clear boundaries refers to Japanese co-workers keeping their public and private lives separate by not sharing or talking about personal information within their workplace, or to direct a co-worker relationship to a different context, such as a restaurant or bar, in which personal conversations could occur. Japanese co-workers recommended that ELTs also not share private information at work if they hope to maintain their desired levels of privacy. Some Japanese co-workers claimed to be pre-emptive by noting early on in a relationship what is considered private as a way to avoid perceived privacy violations.

In addition, ELTs revealed seven ways in which they manage their privacy boundaries. First, some ELTs avoided social interaction or withdrawing from workplace relationships in order to obtain their desired level of privacy in order to protect their privacy boundaries. Second, some ELTs employed cognitive restructuring. Cognitive restructuring refers to moments where ELTs retrained their thinking or limited thoughts that led them to feel as if their privacy was invaded or that their coworker was being
intrusive. Third, ELTs within this study sought independent control of their personal situations in order to have direct privacy outcomes. In particular, some ELTs reported that they asserted their independent control by performing some action by themselves without the assistance of their co-workers, such as going to the doctor’s office to keep such information private. Fourth, some ELTs employed omission via not sharing information, failing to comment upon topics when asked, or kept secret parts of their lives. ELTs reported that such omitted topics included items related to health, relationships. Fifth, some ELTs lied in order to manage their privacy expectations. Within this study, lying involved altering truths or sharing only partial truths. Sixth, some ELTs used avoidance as a privacy management strategy. By avoiding topics of conversation, some ELTs were able to protect their private information and to reinforce boundaries. Finally, ELTs reported gaijin smashing their way through instances in which they felt their privacy expectations to be violated or compromised. Gaijin smashing refers moments where some ELTs used their foreign status to smash through cultural barriers or boundaries in order to obtain personal valued goal(s), such as an increased sense of privacy.

Two main differences exist between how these two groups managed privacy. First, Japanese co-workers reported only two privacy management strategies, whereas ELTs reported seven. Japanese co-workers reported using the following strategies to manage their privacy boundaries: (a) drawing clear boundaries by not talking or changing contexts, and (b) being pre-emptive by demarcating privacy boundaries early on within a relationship. ELTs, on the other hand, employed management strategies such as (a)
withdrawal, (b) cognitive restructuring, (c) independent control, (d) lying, (e) omission, (f) avoidance, and (g) gaijin smashing. Both groups employed these privacy management strategies as detailed above.

Second, the largest difference between these two groups is that Japanese co-workers reported being pre-emptive in their management strategies. By indicating early on in a relationship, or when a perceived privacy invasion was on the brink of existence, denoting one’s privacy expectations allowed Japanese co-workers to be able to not experience a privacy violation. Overall, ELTs did not report partaking of pre-emptive management strategies.

Co-ownership

Japanese co-workers and ELTs both shared insight into their co-owner relationships. For ELTs, co-owners of their private information were individuals they perceived as friends and that they could trust to conceal their information, or to use it in a way beneficial to them. However, not all ELTs were able to choose their co-owners. Some ELTs reported that their assigned supervisor at work became a co-owner by default. This left some ELTs to feel like they were “thrown into” a trusting relationship without the time or reciprocal disclosure required for such a relationship to be built according to their liking. Overall, some ELTs require trust as criteria for a successful co-ownership relationship, especially with their supervisors. Japanese co-workers, on the other hand, shared instances in which they were made co-owners of their ELTs’ private information. Japanese co-workers reported maintaining ELTs’ privacy boundaries by concealing and, therefore, not breeching an ELT’s privacy boundaries.
Urban vs. Rural Life Perceptions

Throughout the interviews with Japanese co-workers, some demarcated a difference between ways private is treated between urban and rural locations. Japanese co-workers depicted rural areas as places in which privacy is not protected due to closer relationships and ties. Urban areas, on the other hand, are depicted as more autonomous zones. Rural locations are seen as places in which individuals are watched and have little to no privacy. Despite mass media reaching rural parts of Japan via television, rural Japan is viewed as a place that differs from urban conceptions of privacy. Urban Japanese life, on the other hand, was viewed as offering more individual privacy and autonomy. Urban life was characterized as being lonely for ELTs due to close social ties not existing the way they do within rural settings. Since ELTs are perceived to be lonely, Japanese co-workers ask many questions in order to help the ELT feel better. Although this was described within this setting, participants also noted that other larger urban areas offer more privacy than their city. Although Japanese co-workers might ask questions within urban settings, rural life is painted differently. Urban Japanese people were described as being less persistent than rural Japanese people. In other words, there is a limit within urban settings as to how much someone will ask, but that limitation is different, or non-existent, within rural areas.

ELTS and Japanese co-workers conceptualize urban and rural locations similarly in many ways. Both groups saw urban areas as spaces in which one is able to achieve a greater sense of privacy due to the increased number of people. At the same time, both
groups saw rural locations as areas in which achieving one’s desired privacy levels is difficult, or next to impossible.

Although ELTs and Japanese co-workers conceptualized privacy and urban/rural location similarly, differences exist. First, ELTs mentioned that within rural areas, they feel as if they are always at work. Japanese co-workers did not mention this. Second, ELTs reported being “watched” by “big brother” in Japan, but Japanese co-workers did not share these sentiments. This does not mean that Japanese co-workers did not experience what ELTs did in rural locations, but since ELTs did report this, it is plausible to assume this is more salient for ELTs. Third, Japanese co-workers mentioned that rural Japan is filled with many kind people. Kindness was perceived to be a caring behavior by some. In other words, some rural Japanese co-workers might ask about one’s private matters in order to demonstrate concerns. However, at the same time, that kindness is perceived to be “too much” and actually rude by some Japanese co-workers.

Overall, this chapter reveals that ELTs and Japanese co-workers are both similar and different in how they manage and negotiate privacy at work. Revealing such similarities and differences could explain why some groups perceive privacy expectation violations whereas the other may not.
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH QUESTION #2 FINDINGS

In this chapter, I share findings for the second research question; “What cultural premises exist amongst ELTs’ and Japanese co-workers’ privacy boundary management?” In this study, I define cultural premises as my “formulations about participants’ beliefs about the significance and importance of what is going on, both as a condition for that practice of communication, and as expressed in that very practice” (Carbaugh, 2007, p. 177). Such beliefs might include what is deemed proper or valued in interaction. In fact, Carbaugh (2007) said, “cultural premises capture and explicate taken-for-granted knowledge which usually does not need to be stated by participants since it is believe to be part of common sense” (p. 178). The findings and analysis shared below are results of cultural discourse analysis as detailed within Chapter Three. Within this chapter, first, I will discuss the cultural premises of the English language teachers (ELT) as revealed throughout a cultural discourse analysis of 39 interview transcripts. Second, I will discuss Japanese co-workers’ cultural premises about privacy uncovered from a cultural discourse analysis of 38 interview transcripts.

English Language Teacher Perspectives

A cultural discourse analysis of 39 ELT transcripts revealed cultural premises that governed their intercultural privacy management. As I share these premises, first, I discuss how ELTs believed Japanese co-workers perceived them to be a “free space” for privacy inquisition. Second, I will discuss how voluntary reciprocity is expected in (egalitarian) workplace relationships. Third, I discuss ELTs’ belief that as co-owners, co-workers should not share private disclosures. The following cultural premises became
evident as a result of CuDA (Carbaugh, 2005, 2007) analytical techniques from ELT retroactive accounts of intercultural interaction with Japanese co-workers.

**ELTs Should Not Be a “Free Space” for Privacy Inquisition**

Some ELTs commented that they felt like a “free space” for privacy inquisition by co-workers, which violated their sense of entitlement to control and own their private information. This construction revealed ELTs’ perceptions regarding their social identities within their workplace(s), as well as expected meanings for such relationships. However, this “free space” is not completely boundary-less, but is guided by cultural premises that are perceived to be common sense. As mentioned in Chapter Four, ELTs perceived privacy violations when asked about one’s: (a) space and place, (b) bodies, (c) sexuality, and (d) dating/romantic relationships. This chapter provides a deeper layer of understanding by explicitly naming cultural premises that influenced perceived privacy violations in this study. For instance, after Ren defined privacy as boundaries, she said, “Even if you delineate these [privacy] boundaries, they are not going to be taken seriously.” Ren’s comment revealed that she believed the privacy boundaries she drew were not only clear to her co-workers, but would not be taken seriously, and therefore, her boundaries would be fully understood, but not shared by her co-workers. In other words, Ren perceived her privacy boundaries as disregarded by her colleagues. “To be taken seriously” is another way of stating that one’s privacy expectations, which are deemed common sense by their beholder, were violated, or at the very least, held potential to be violated.

Similarly, when discussing his view on privacy in Japan, Juan said:
Coming to Japan, where there is no privacy, at least not the way as it is defined by American standards, you know, I think that can be frustrating. It is not so much, it’s, a big issue is just getting used to a different way of thinking about it.

Juan constructed Japan to be a place where his privacy norms are not recognized according to his American sensibilities. “Coming to Japan” could also be replaced with “Being here,” which demarcates a place in which Juan’s privacy sensibilities differ from his host country, and, therefore, his co-workers’ privacy sensibilities. Juan expressed his frustration but, at the same time, commented upon the time it takes to acculturate to differing cultural privacy expectations.

Richard also commented upon the cultural divide between ELT and Japanese co-workers. The presence of this divide brings questions for foreigners regarding their social identities as ELTs. He explained:

I think because of the cultural divide, a lot of the times when the ELT comes, they are exotic, just by virtue of being foreign, and usually not Japanese by race, you know. They tend to get bombarded with a lot of questions up front whereas other teachers have the opportunity to do this over months, if not years, but the ELT must do it all in a week. And they have to do it in a week in which they are not established yet.

Richard claimed that being both foreign and non-Japanese were key attributes of some ELTs that encouraged being asked multiple, if not excessive, private questions. Treating ELTs differently due to their “foreignness” and race is reminiscent of Bakhtin’s (1929, 1941) carnivalesque ideology. Within carnivalesque theorizing, the sacred is combined
with the profane. A “spectacle of fools” is brought for the amusement of others. In this study, the sacred refers to an ELT’s private information, whereas the profane refers to private matters that are not shared at work according to Japanese co-worker cultural ideologies. However, since ELTs are perceived to ideally be the “spectacle of fools” asking about one’s sacred privacy opens up the parade of one’s profane foreignness for the gaze of the other. Such perceptions position ELTs as a spectacle to be observed and consumed for amusement while Japanese co-workers position themselves as the observers. Bakhtin (1929, 1941) described carnivalistic misalliances as uniting items that are typically separate. Within this context, high-context collectivists met low-context individualists. For instance, Richard demarcated the role of ELT as a position in which Japanese co-workers are able to ask multiple, “intrusive” questions due to their social positioning as foreigners and probable racial difference.

And there’s a difference of building a tower by yourself and fending off, but doing it ground-level is difficult and I would not be comfortable even if the teacher asked me point blank, ‘Are you seeing someone?’ and I had a boyfriend and there was no way for me to get out of it, without lying.

Richard indicated that such social positioning of ELTs, as free agents for questioning, has the position to place ELTs in instances in which they must perform potential unethical management privacy strategies such as lying in order to protect themselves. As a gay man, Richard was uncomfortable discussing his sexuality at work and was unable to negotiate his privacy boundaries due to his social position as a foreign ELT. His colleagues constructed a space in which they could ask him multiple questions within a
short period of time, rendering Richard unable to establish clear privacy boundaries interpersonally, and, therefore, leading him to a position in which he felt he must perform an unethical behavior, such as lying, in order to protect his privacy. Richard’s comments revealed that, for him, lying was unethical behavior, but was a last resort, thus, violating his own personal meanings on how co-worker relationships should co-exist.

Bakhtin (1929, 1941) described the carnivalesque world as including: familiar and free interaction between people. For ELTs like Richard, this carnival is not one in which ELTs perceived themselves to have purchased their “ticket.” In fact, ELTs’ foreignness and race centered them as major attractions within the carnival. ELTs did not anticipate this position. Since ELTs are positioned within this role, Japanese co-workers respond as if everyone knew the social rules: that social interaction should be free and familiar. In other words, interaction should be personal and privacy, or the ability to possess privacy, violates such carnival rules and expectations. Ultimately this perception contradicted ELTs’ premise that they should not be a free space for privacy inquisition.

Edward also commented upon the spectacle of an ELT’s social identity within a Japanese workplace. When explaining his perception of Japanese co-worker–ELT relationships, he said:

I think Japanese people feel a little bit more like they [ELTs] aren’t their usual card. They have to keep up all the time when they’re talking to other Japanese people, for better or worse. It doesn’t exist to foreigners, whether that is positive or negative. I think it is true that they [Japanese co-workers] see a foreigner, and I (speaking as a Japanese co-worker) like, basically, I can do what I like, because
they aren’t Japanese and they don’t play by the same rule, so let’s ask them anything.

Edward explained that Japanese people are free from conversational, cultural norms when speaking with ELTs due to their cultural difference. In other words, some ELTs, like Edward, believe that Japanese co-workers’ view ELTs as a cultural other who can be asked any question due to perceived freedom from cultural boundaries. This conflicts with some ELTs’ cultural premises regarding privacy boundaries, like Edward, on how to relate to co-workers. When Japanese co-workers asked ELTs multiple questions it positioned ELTs into a carnivalized role. Edward denoted that such a behavior could be positive and/or negative. Although Edward did not denote whether this was an acceptable practice or not, Edward’s actions of “asking anything” denoted a privacy expectation difference that violated Edward’s cultural expectations for privacy, thus revealing a cultural premise that as an ELT he should not be a “free space” for privacy inquisition. In other words, constructing someone as a seemingly “rule-less” arena does in fact violate expectations for relating within organizations for some ELTs. Although such an area was perceived as “rule-less,” it was still governed by certain cultural premises regarding interaction practices with cultural others and/or outsiders, such as the belief that cultural others are a “free space” for privacy inquisition. In other words, cultural others, like ELTs, can be asked anything in order to appease the spectator’s curiosity. Bakhtin (1929, 1941) helps make sense of this situation.

Bakhtin (1929, 1941) described eccentric, or unacceptable, behavior as not only welcomed, but appreciated within the carnival. Therefore, no social consequences exist.
ELTs commented that Japanese co-workers maintained cultural codes within their Japanese interactions, but acted differently towards them as foreigners. The space in which Japanese co-workers interacted with ELTs welcomed behaviors ELTs perceived to be unacceptable and intrusive. Related, Tim also commented upon the social identity he felt constructed for him by Japanese co-workers. Like Edward, Tim revealed the perception that ELTs are viewed as “free space” by Japanese co-workers. He said:

Japanese are pretty reluctant to share stuff that is too private. They usually know where the boundaries are. They concern themselves to know where the boundaries are for themselves, they will tell you. They [Japanese people] will tell you what you need to watch and not watch…

Tim commented that Japanese co-workers understand where fellow Japanese privacy boundaries exist. However, Tim described this is not the case for foreigners.

…but sometimes, when it goes the other way, and they are asking questions, they would just ask you, because they think you are a foreigner or something and that you will blindly answer that. Were you to provide that information, you’ve got to keep in mind that sometimes you have to be defensive about your own privacy. You can’t automatically expect them to want to protect your privacy, or watch out for your privacy, and you have to say something to them.

Tim explained that Japanese usually know where privacy boundaries are for themselves, but seem culturally unaware, or uncaring, about a cultural other’s sense of privacy. Tim pointed out the social positioning of being a “foreigner” may also be viewed as being “non-Japanese.” This perception of Japanese cultural premises for foreigners, is
perceived by Tim, and other ELTs, to construct an “anything goes space,” which violated ELTs approved privacy practices. Feeling threatened by the perceived social identity construction, Tim warned that ELTs must “watch” their privacy and defend it when necessary. Tim’s usage of “you’ve got to keep in mind” reminds ELTs that they must be conscious of their privacy management, which suggested action steps and revealed that some ELTs value active privacy negotiation practices. Tim indicated that foreigners, such as ELTs, are in a different cultural mode than Japanese due to ways in which privacy is treated between the two, thus revealing differing cultural premises for workplace action between the two groups.

Cindy, too, perceived Japanese co-worker cultural premises for privacy action differed from her perspective. She also discussed her perceived social positioning as influencing ways in which Japanese co-workers treat their relationships with her. She said:

Don’t expect Japanese standards of privacy to hold for you. That would be, you know, no one ever talks about what happens in the drinking party, stays in the drinking party, unless you are an ELT. And then, there is this assumption that ‘Oh well, you are the foreigner, so it’s okay to talk about that.’ That is true.

Cindy perceived that privacy rules differ between ELTs and Japanese co-workers within work functions such as drinking parties, which denote a perceived difference in cultural premises regarding appropriate action within relationships. Multiple times within a school year an ELT might be invited to join colleagues in a drinking party and lavish feast in order to celebrate seasons, school event success, and Japanese holidays. The
phrase “unless you are an ELT” can be replaced with “if you are a foreigner,” which
denotes ELTs as embodying a cultural other social positionality that includes differing
privacy rules and expectations. Such a phrase also denotes “foreign” as being a space in
which Japanese co-workers perceive a freedom from potentially rigid norms, according to
ELTs. Since ELTs occupy a cultural norm “free space” for Japanese co-workers, some
ELTs believed this leads to excessive, intrusive questioning that exhibits differing
privacy rules, or, rather, a lack of regard for ELT privacy cultural rules and premises.

At the carnival, Japanese co-workers might perceive themselves to be free of
privacy boundary maintenance. In other words, Japanese co-workers, as spectators,
expressed themselves differently than they would with other Japanese. As they interacted
with ELT performers, Japanese co-workers interacted free of their own cultural privacy
assumptions. However, since ELTs did not ask for, nor receive, a ticket to this show,
they are caught in a mesh-up they do not yet understand. Daniel commented upon the
“cultural free space” Japanese co-workers exhibited during her intercultural interactions.
Such a “free space” comes at a cost. ELTs reported negatively. Being extorted for one’s
cultural insight left some ELTs feeling as if they were unable to control their privacy
boundaries. Daniel shared his perspective on this perceived social positioning, as he
discussed what surprised him about Japanese co-worker actions.

I guess, it was just, the general ‘anything is okay to ask’ attitude that was
surprising. And there’s nothing that was to the degree of shocking [for them].
Or, just the general attitude that I don’t know this person, but I can ask them
anything, pretty much.
Daniel described his Japanese co-workers’ “anything is okay to ask” attitude as surprising, which demarcated a difference in cultural premise between the two groups. Daniel explained that, for his Japanese co-workers, no question or topic shocked them or prevented them from asking. In other words, Daniel’s Japanese co-workers treatment of Daniel’s privacy boundaries shocked and surprised him due to their improper treatment, thus violating his expectations on how co-worker relationships should act. By pointing out a disapproved practice, Daniel revealed an approved cultural premise: do not ask. He explained further, “They [Japanese co-workers] would just speak to you as if they knew you very well. Even without that trust relationship established, they would just ask things.” Within this excerpt, “They would just ask things” could be replaced with “they violated my privacy.” Daniel revealed that the ability to ask private questions takes place over time, once a trusting relationship was established. Daniel said such reactions to ELTs happened often. He said, “They [Japanese co-workers] don’t focus on you [ELTs] as a person, but more as a foreigner, that happens all the time.” Daniel’s commentary on ELT-Japanese co-worker privacy disclosures revealed that some ELTs feel treated more as a cultural other than as an individual or part of Japanese society, which revealed their perception of how Japanese co-workers perceived ELT social positioning. This led to the impression that Japanese co-workers disregard ELT privacy expectations and adopt an “anything is ok with ELTs” type of attitude, which created moments in which ELTs were confronted with multiple, personal questions and the perception that their cultural premise on how to act within a work environment has been violated.
Bakhtin (1929, 1941) offered further insight into this perspective. He believed that which is sacrilegious is permitted within the carnival without consequence. In this study, the sacrilegious referred to perceived privacy violations. As mentioned in Chapter Four, ELTs reported feeling as if their privacy boundaries were violated in relation to their: (a) space and place, (b) bodies, (c) sexuality, and (d) dating/romantic relationships. Because Japanese co-workers operated as “ring masters” and spectators within the parameters of the carnival, this type of behavior passed without punishment or judgment from their Japanese colleagues. When this cultural premise went unmet, ELTs’ premise for voluntary reciprocity was also violated.

**ELTs Expect Voluntary Reciprocity in (Egalitarian) Workplace Relationships**

Within this study, some ELTs expected reciprocity, which denoted ELTs’ beliefs and values and cultural practice expectations within what they perceived to be egalitarian workplace relationships. Reciprocity has long been of interest to disclosure researchers (Altman, 1975; Bradac, Hosman, & Tardy, 1978; Hendrick, 1987; Jourard, 1971; Petronio, 2002). Gouldner (1960) defined reciprocity as a universal code that guides social interaction. Further, he explained reciprocity as a: (a) moral norm, which referred to instances in which what one does to the other requires some type of return and (b) pattern of exchange, which referred to the idea that exchanges are owed to another once received. Jourard (1971) referred to reciprocity as the “dyadic effect” through which people build close relationships. However, when such is not returned, the ability to build close relationships is weakened and/or strained. Research revealed individuals who do not reciprocate may be perceived as cold, incompetent, unfriendly, and untrustworthy.
Petronio (2002) claimed reciprocity can “function as a motivating factor in regulating boundaries and establishing rules” (p. 50). In other words, reciprocity is vital for privacy management as it helps regulate and establish privacy boundaries and rules. In the following quotes, ELTs revealed reciprocity as a key cultural element and expectation for Japanese co-worker relationships. In other words, ELTs constructed the privacy rule of “reciprocity,” which revealed an expectation of action: voluntary reciprocal disclosures from Japanese co-workers when solicited.

Throughout interviews, ELTs expected reciprocity to be volunteered. Stephanie said, “They know more about us than we know about them,” which indicated a lack of expected reciprocity; some ELTs expected reciprocity when solicited by co-workers or when they shared private information. Similarly, Casey described that for her, she not only disclosed incrementally, but expected such to be matched via reciprocity in order to establish privacy boundaries. She said:

I tend to be more reserved until I get a feel for them [co-workers] and let them put statements about themselves out. I invest more to match it [the disclosure] and push a little bit more and see if they [co-workers] match it and establish boundaries that way.

Following her cultural premise for action, Casey explained that she created privacy boundaries via reciprocity. When a disclosure is matched with shared information Casey, prods deeper in order to uncover an acceptable boundary within a co-worker relationship.
After co-workers tried to set Ren up on multiple dates at a staff drinking party, she described that she now does the same. This action of “paying it back” revealed the importance she placed on reciprocity. She explained:

I try to hook my teachers up on relationships. And I don’t know if that makes them feel uncomfortable. I don’t know if the teachers ask me because I’m foreign and I’m not supposed to ask that, but it’s like a reciprocal thing right? I feel like privacy is a very much a bridge, and if you ask someone for this information, you should be comfortable enough to get it back, right? So if he [a co-worker] asked me, ‘Do you have a boyfriend?’ You better tell me if you have a boyfriend.

Ren said that she tries to hook up her co-workers romantically. Although she does not know if that is crossing a line, or potentially violating Japanese co-worker action premises, she continued to do so, since it was first done to her. This “pay it back” attitude demonstrated within Ren’s excerpt, revealed her perception on how co-worker relationships should act. In other words, Ren could have said, “Don’t dish, if you can’t take.” Ren’s statement of “because I’m foreign” indicated that Ren believed the treatment she received may be due, in part, because of her social position as a non-Japanese woman and “free space” for privacy inquisition. However, at the same time, Ren stated that if someone asks, they should be comfortable to share back, or reciprocate. Ren’s statement of “you better tell me if” indicated a belief clause in which, for Ren, reciprocity is a precursor and expectation of any private information she disclosed.
Similarly, Richard said that he is “conditionally open,” meaning that, for him, he must experience his cultural premise of reciprocity in order to feel comfortable sharing private information. He said:

Something that is private is something, I’m generally, I’m very open, but I’m very conditionally open. Like, I would say if somebody asked me something and I answer it, then, they owe me their answer for that same question. It is more about reciprocity than anything else, or anything which is none of their business.

Richard demarcated that, for him, reciprocity is an essential, expected practice when discussing private information with relational partners. Richard explicitly stated his expectation that private information should be “matched” by his conversational partner(s). This information is perceived to be “owed” to Richard, which denoted the salience of meanings of reciprocity as practice and action for him. He further described his view and cultural expectations for relational reciprocity:

I think just the idea of reciprocity; I think that if you ask a question, you need to be fully prepared to be asked that question immediately in return. I don’t think that’s anything particular to Japanese people either. I think this is a general rule.

Richard described that the solicitor must also be willing to be solicited. Within this excerpt, Richard revealed a lack of intercultural understanding. He argued that reciprocity is a “general” rule. In other words, Richard believed that reciprocity is a universal, shared concept that is “common sense” across/between cultures. However, this might not necessarily be shared by Japanese co-workers. Further, Richard revealed that
reciprocity should occur immediately, thus denoting further rules for how his practice should be reciprocated within co-worker relationships.

The cultural premise that reciprocity is not only expected, but should be mutual speaks to ways in which ELTs perceived power relations between their co-workers. Across disciplines, power is largely defined as the ability to influence another’s behavior as well as the ability to produce intended effects (Bachrach & Lawler, 1981; Berger, 1994; Burgoon, Johnson, & Koch, 1998; Dunbar, 2004; French & Raven, 1959; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983). Hofstede’s (1980, 1983, 1991, 2001) cultural variability power distance dimension referred to the degree to which less powerful members accept unequal power distributions between members of different status.

Similar to this study’s context, Kowner and Wiseman’s (2003) study between Japanese and North Americans revealed that Japanese expected higher distances between high and low power status individuals than North Americans. In other words, North Americans expected low power differences between co-workers, especially in terms of demonstrated behaviors. Japanese, on the other hand, expected larger behavioral differences in terms of how individuals are treated based on power. In this study, not participating in reciprocity can be one way in which to maintain relational power. Intentional or not, by not participating in ELT cultural expectations for reciprocity affords Japanese co-workers greater relational power and distance. Since most ELTs within this study worked as “Assistant Language Teachers,” their role within the organization might have naturally created a power discrepancy that was later reinforced by Japanese denial of ELT reciprocity expectations. Intentional or not, ELTs within this
study valued egalitarian workplace relationships, particularly related to conversations/disclosures that involved perceived private information. Additionally, ELTs valued co-owners not sharing private disclosures.

As Co-owners, Co-workers Should Not Share Private Disclosures

In order to better understand ELT cultural premises, I asked ELTs to tell me how they thought privacy should be treated at work, which revealed an additional expectation—as co-owners, Japanese co-workers should not share private disclosures. Perceptions related to what is appropriate workplace conduct influence employee behavior (Peterson, 2002). Unmet cultural premises might also influence employee behaviors. Trevino (1990) defined perceived organizational ethical values as beliefs that described acceptable and/or appropriate organizational practices. The following quotes reveal that, for some ELTs, Japanese co-workers as privacy co-owners are expected to not share entrusted private information unless informed to do so. For instance, Rose said, “I would expect them [Japanese co-workers] to not spread it [her private information] to other people.” This quote explicitly revealed some ELTs, like Rose, expected that disclosed information to be kept confidential amongst co-owners. Similarly, Cindy said, “I expect anything that I say to be held in the same confidence that I have with a friend.” Cindy not only explicitly stated her expectation that her private information would not be shared, but designated co-owner relationships are having the “same confidence” as a friendship, which speaks to the value that some ELTs put on co-owner relationships.
Some ELTs, like David, revealed that they had explicit cultural premises regarding how privacy practices should be enacted within the workplace by Japanese co-owners of their private information. He said:

I want that person [his co-owner] not to tell anybody, or to only tell the people that I want. If I wanted to quit and I told my boss I might say, ‘Well, don’t tell anybody yet. I want to tell them, or don’t tell the [students’] parents yet, I want to tell them.’ I guess I would want them to not [tell], I want them to respect the area that I want that information to go.

Within this excerpt, David stated that he didn’t want his co-owner to reveal his private information. Instead, David informed his co-owner that he wanted to disclose the private information. David believed co-owners should not disclose private information. For ELTs like David, co-owners violated ELTs’ cultural meanings for relating and acting if they disclosed information an ELT entrusted to them. In order to uphold cultural meaning expectations for relating and acting, co-owners should not share ELTs’ private information.

Similar to David, Jack believed co-workers as privacy co-owners, should not share private information at work. In the following excerpt, Jack revealed his perspective regarding the cultural premise practice expectation that private information should not be shared. He said:

I expect people to be curious, and that is fine. I don’t expect people to not ask questions…I expect that, within reason, people don’t try and find out stuff that isn’t relevant, you know?
Jack mentioned that being curious is ok, but acting on such curiosity is not acceptable. Jack believed private information should not be shared or disclosed amongst co-workers, thus, reinstating the belief on how co-workers should relate. Jack believed co-owners should not share private disclosures when asked by another co-worker who might be digging for personal information about him. To some ELTs like Jack, by asking questions one assumes the role of a privacy co-owner. Thus, if one is NOT ready to be a co-owner of private information s/he should not ask questions that would automatically place them into a co-ownership role, which demonstrates a one-sided perceived relationship.

Throughout interviews, some ELTs revealed that their privacy expectations were not met due to private information being shared as detailed within Chapter Four. Such experiences are a result of discordant cultural premises. ELTs believed Japanese co-workers did not share their cultural premise that private information should not be shared at work. When such practices were unmet, some ELTs perceived mistreatment, broken trust, and boundary turbulence, which are important for workplace relationships. For example, mistreatment at work can result in workers negating workplace perceived ethical values and norms (Biron, 2010). Employee trust is not only associated with employee satisfaction, but also with perceptions of organizational effectiveness (Ellis & Shockley-Zalabak, 2001), and trust levels influence interaction with one’s superiors (Wells & Kipnis, 2001).
**ELT Summary**

Overall, ELTs meanings of identity, relationships, and action or practice are intertwined within these findings and suggest a complex cultural premise that suggests one’s identity is tied deeply with their meanings of relating and acting at work. In other words, some ELTs believed that when their cultural expected practices such as reciprocity or non-disclosure were unmet, they questioned their relational meaning(s) within the workplace and also their perceived social identity/ies. As I will discuss in Chapter Six, this “violated” premise potentially explains feels of worthlessness as demonstrated by not feeling like a “real teacher” reported by ELTs. It is important to understand Japanese co-worker cultural premises for a larger picture of this scenario. In order to gain deeper understanding to ELT-Japanese co-worker privacy negotiations, next, I will discuss Japanese co-worker privacy cultural premises that emerged throughout this study.

**Japanese Co-worker Perspectives**

Within this section, first, I will discuss how Japanese co-workers revealed that privacy inquisitions are acts of kindness/caring. Second, Japanese co-workers revealed that time for trust is not only valued, but a required cultural premise for co-owner relationships. Third, Japanese co-workers further explicated meanings about relating and relationships through evident beliefs such as that one should disclose to someone who is of similar age. Doing so was deemed a proper rule for disclosure. Fourth, Japanese co-workers revealed that assimilation to Japanese culture, or “Doing as Japanese do,” is an
expected practice for privacy management, which demonstrated meanings for certain acting, action, and practice.

Privacy Inquisitions Are Acts of Kindness/Caring

All Japanese co-workers within this study demonstrated a clear concern for ELT well-being, which speaks to the importance of kindness/caring within Japanese culture. It is important to note that such caring behaviors can be representative of their role as team-teacher and supervisor for ELTs. Often within Japanese workplaces, supervisors and team-teachers are placed in a caretaking position to oversee ELT well-being. Throughout interviews, helping behaviors were both indicative of an anticipated cultural practice and visible throughout stories Japanese co-workers shared regarding their interactions with ELTs. Oshiro’s comment explicitly summarized Japanese co-worker sentiments in responding to moments in which ELTs disclosed something private. He said, “If I can help something about it, I will try to do that.” Oshiro’s comment demonstrated an eager willingness to assist ELTs if possible.

When sharing a moment in which ELTs discussed something private with Japanese co-workers, Kimura, a team-teacher, said it is better if co-workers know your health status. She said:

In the Japanese workplace it’s better, you had better know, other co-workers know your health situation I think. If you are late for school, the ELT yesterday [at her workplace] he had a, a cough, and he was coughing often, so maybe he had a sore throat or has a cold. So, he was late. Is he okay? But, it’s like my current ELT, he don’t say anything, so I cannot imagine his bad situation.
Kimura mentioned that it is better for Japanese co-workers to know ELT health situations in order to help them if possible. She said that if Japanese co-workers know their health situation they (the Japanese co-workers) might be able to understand behaviors such as tardiness. However, at the same time, Kimura said that by not disclosing their health status, ELTs rendered Japanese co-workers, like her, unable to imagine their potentially bad situations and, thus, unable to sympathize or help. At the same time, by not sharing one’s health concerns strips Japanese co-workers of the opportunity to fulfill their cultural premise/expectations on how they should treat their foreign co-workers.

Sato, a team-teacher and supervisor, said, “I think some ELTs should be helped sometimes. But [if] they don’t need the help, they should say so.” Sato believed that ELTs need help from time-to-time within their private lives, but should also tell their co-workers when they do not need help. He explained, “For Japanese people, kindness is very important [in order to] live together. So, please understand [that about] Japanese culture.” Sato revealed that such kindness or helping behavior is a part of Japanese culture. This is something he wished ELTs understood.

Taniguchi, a supervisor, said that upon hearing about a conflict between ELTs, “I was very happy to hear because if they hide everything, I cannot help their problem.” Knowing this information allowed Taniguchi to ensure ELTs that did not mesh well ended up apart in group projects. She described the situation:

So, for example, four ELTs, they are not getting along with, one female [Japanese] teacher and with each other at totally different times. So, I have heard
from this person and another person, and so, okay, when I make a team [for an
activity] I have to think about it…I can do something about it.

Taniguchi mentioned that, by knowing about something private, such as personality
conflicts can help her better plan teaching activities. In other words, she can do
something about it.

Saito, a team-teacher, said that, before she involved others, she would ask the
ELT if doing so was permissible. She explained:

I think if the problem can be solved by involving more people who are, for
example, in the higher rank at work, I would ask my [ELT] colleague first. ‘Is it
okay to share this information with other people? Because, by doing that, I think
I could help you.’ I would ask first, right. And I expect they would do that for me
too.

Saito believed that some problems that existed within something a foreigner disclosed
were fixable by individuals with higher authority at work. However, Saito stated she
would ask an ELT first if she could solicit other people to help, if needed. Within this
excerpt, she also went one step further and stated that she expected this behavior to be
reciprocated by the ELT. For Saito, such reciprocation would demonstrate that privacy is
a “two-way street.” In other words, kindness/caring should be reciprocated and, therefore
privacy inquisitions are perceived to be acts of kindness that serve as a means to obtain
information to demonstrate care and concern. Additionally, Japanese co-workers
illustrated that involving others was a way in which to better provide kindness/caring to
another.
Soliciting Help from a Supervisor Provides Opportunities for Better Care

One way Japanese co-workers enacted caring behaviors for ELTs was by soliciting help from another. This approach had logistical benefits. This process required Japanese co-workers to share private information ELTs disclosed to them. Japanese co-workers reported disclosing ELT private information to “supervisors,” such as another school the ELT works with, an ELT coordinator, and someone in a position of power to help the ELT. Such disclosures minimized logistical issues that could arise due to a potentially absent ELT.

Taniguchi worked with an ELT who visited multiple schools. This ELT’s daily schedule was different, meaning that s/he visited a different school every day. Therefore, whenever the ELT was ill, she felt it was her responsibility to contact other schools the ELT worked at, so that they might be prepared for a potential absence. She described the situation:

One ELT has to be absent because, maybe he was sick in the morning, but Japanese, we have to call to the principal [and tell him] that the ELT will be absent because of so and so. And, also, he will visit another school the next day, so maybe we should share that information with [them] because one of the ELTs [is sick]. But, also, because the, maybe the cause is, if an ELT can speak Japanese and contact them directly, but maybe we don’t do. We don’t need to do that, but maybe there’s a miscommunication and the next day the school will wait for him, but [he] does not come. Before one [day], day-by-day they should know,
so as my job I had to inform them, but maybe this is too much for ELTs.

(Laughter).

Taniguchi laughed after she stated that this procedure might be “too much” for ELTs, which illustrates an understanding of differing cultural premises between the two groups. In other words, this action could be perceived as a privacy violation by ELTs. She was aware of this, but at the same time, thought that she must keep other schools informed of the ELT’s health situation in case s/he must miss work in order to fulfill her cultural premise for showing kindness/caring. Additionally, this action allowed other schools to prepare for a potential absence that might alter their daily schedule.

Hidaka, who worked for an ELT-recruiting organization, said that she shared private information ELTs disclosed to her if it was helpful when making hiring decisions.

Of course, we have to keep information secure, but if I have heard some kind of secret from ELTs, if it’s necessary, I will share with the other coordinator. But, sometimes that information is necessary to hire the ELT. Mainly people should keep it secret.

Hidaka said ELTs’ private information should be kept secret, but at the same time, noted that, at times, it was important to share such information with another program coordinator, especially if it provides opportunity to demonstrate kindness/caring. For example, such information helps her company make hiring decisions which may benefit the ELT and/or the organization. However, Hidaka believed information should
“mainly” be kept secret. In other words, if the information does not serve a purpose (such as an opportunity to show kindness/caring), it should not be shared.

Oshiro said that she shared information in order to help the ELT. She explained, “If I tell the information, another person will help him. I will do that. After I tell it to him, I will ask ‘Is it okay, is it okay?’ I will try to do that, but if it won’t help him I shouldn’t say it.” Oshiro said that she should not reveal an ELT’s private information if it won’t help him/her. She also stated that after she shared the information she would ask the ELT if it is ok she did so. Oshiro stated that she would not share information unless doing so helps the ELT, which demonstrates that private information is asked and shared in order to demonstrate kindness/caring.

Takahashi explained that supervisors, such as principals, needed to know ELTs’ private information in case an emergency should occur. He said, “The principal needs the ELT’s private information, but other teachers don’t need the ELT’s private information.” I asked Takahashi why the principal needed this. He responded, “If you have an accident, the principal needs the ELT’s information. [Such as] blood type, married or not married, where come from.” Takahashi also said that, when ELTs go on a trip, it’s important to know “the hotel’s name. If you have an accident, we have to tell the Board of Education.” Takahashi revealed that, to him, it is important to know the ELT’s private information, including trip plans, in order to take action and inform the Board of Education, who hosts the ELT’s visa, if/when an accident occurred. Such information helped Takahashi to show kindness/care to the ELT. In addition to revealing
how privacy inquisitions/disclosures are acts of kindness/caring, Japanese co-workers revealed the importance of time to them.

*Time Matters for Privacy Disclosure in Japan*

Many Japanese co-workers commented upon the influence of time on their workplace relationships with ELTs. Time was mentioned as an important criterion through which to build relationships for Japanese team-teachers and co-workers alike. In fact, no thematic difference exists between these two types of Japanese co-workers, although potential implications for disclosure decisions may differ for relationship. It is possible no differences were noted because team-teachers within this study acted as official and unofficial supervisors for ELTs due to language barriers and frequency of contact. Japanese co-workers’ implicit and explicit revelations of time revealed that “time” is not only valued within Japanese co-worker relationships, but is deemed a necessity for relationships in which one may feel comfortable discussing private information, thus highlighting a cultural premise for relational meanings: time matters for privacy disclosure in Japan due to the necessity to develop relationships.

Hall (1983) was convinced that time influenced every facet of human behavior. To understand how time influenced this intercultural relationship, Hofstede’s (1980, 1983, 1991, 2001) cultural dimensions of collectivism and individualism offer contextualization for this relationship. In particular, this cultural premise speaks to the high-context, collectivistic culture of Japan. Individuals with collectivist orientations value interdependence as they tend to emphasize the creation and maintenance of strong social ties, working harmoniously with others, ideas of community, a sense of duty to
groups/institutions, and refrain from personal needs that might conflict with group goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). As a nation, Japan demonstrates conflicting notions of where it might fall within Hofstede’s categories. For instance, in Japan older populations largely align with strong collectivist orientations, whereas younger people tend to have unclear, conflicting orientations due to Western influence (Oyama, 1990). Although as a whole, this cultural premise is understood and appreciated within Japanese culture, it is important to remember that individual’s perceptions can vary.

In addition to being largely perceived as a collectivist culture, Japan is also a high-context culture that involves the notion that the message is embedded within the context versus directly stated. Within such a context, relational expectations of workplace relationships, and related expectations, are implicitly embedded, and, therefore, might not be visible to the foreign eyes of ELTs. Within high-context cultures, like Japan, cultural premises are not thought about but, rather are put into action. In other words, the premise of time needed for relational development is as natural as breathing air to Japanese co-workers.

I asked Tanaka, a supervisor within an ELT-recruiting organization, to whom he disclosed private information at work. He said, “I just feel that the person is a little nice and good to speak with about my privacy. I, personally, need time to develop the relationship with somebody.” Within this excerpt, Tanaka explicitly stated that time is needed in order to develop a workplace relationship with someone, which demarcated “time” as a criterion in which some Japanese co-workers need in order to feel
comfortable speaking about private matters. In other words, time has significant meaning for some Japanese co-workers in terms of how one should relate to one another. Curious, I asked Tanaka how much time he needed. He responded, “I can’t say the time, but I always observe the person myself, whether he or she is reliable or not. I just need more time maybe than other people. I carefully watch the person.” Tanaka could not state a specific amount of time needed in order to have private conversations with co-workers. However, he did reveal that he watched a person, over time, in order to determine if s/he was trustworthy. Thus, noting that time provides clues in to which a Japanese co-worker might observe as s/he evaluates and decides if a targeted recipient is worthy of private talks, which demonstrates the importance of this relational meaning and cultural premise.

Onishi, a supervisor and team-teacher, provided an example of time’s influence on meanings pertaining to relating and acting. She explained that she feels comfortable sharing private information with her ELT co-worker because they’ve worked together a long time. She said, “Now, we’ve been working for one year, more than one year, so I can ask anything.” Onishi explicitly noted that because she had worked with her ELT co-worker for more than a year, which meant they could discuss anything she asked. For Onishi, time is needed in order to openly communicate about private topics. I asked her when she could talk about private things with her ELT co-worker. She said, “Probably working after three months.” Onishi’s use of time to demarcate culturally approved practices of acting within relationships revealed the cultural importance of time to her.

I asked Fukazawa, a supervisor within an ELT-recruiting organization and team-teacher, the same question. She said,
If the ELT and me don’t have a good relationship, I just feel a little bit strange. But, for example, if we have been working for more than one year or two years, sometimes I casual talking, it’s up to the period I and ELTs working time.

Fukazawa referred to relationships that are not good as giving her a “strange” feeling. She stated that working together for 1-2 years might be enough time to build a relationship, which included casual talking. Regardless of the duration of time needed, it is clear a period of time is needed in order to acclimate to each other prior to discussing one’s privacy, which speaks to the significance of time needed for relating with co-workers. Fukazawa, later, provided advice for ELTs: “Actually, at the beginning time, please don’t ask the private thing.” Fukazawa explicitly revealed that relationships need time for private matters to be discussed. In other words, ELTs should not ask Japanese co-workers about their private life during initial relationship formation. The “beginning stages” were demarcated as being inappropriate for privacy inquisition by Fukazawa.

The “beginning stages” represent a time in which relationships have not yet formed to the point of disclosure. In other words, co-owner relationships are deemed inappropriate during initial conversations. Throughout interviews with Japanese co-workers all indicated with time, came trust.

*Time Builds Trust for Private Disclosures*

Japanese co-workers demarcated “time” as a significant criterion for workplace disclosures due to the need for trust-building. Many Japanese co-workers, in this study, discussed the fact that time allowed them to build trust with their co-workers. Masumoto
(2004) explained that among business and political worlds, the running joke is that a short-term plan in Japan is a long-term plan in the United States. She explained that in Japan, a “long-term” plan may be at least 30 years, which is the same period of time and expectation for an employee to work for a company. This norm and conception of time highlights differences ELTs and Japanese co-workers likely view their “time” together. Within this study most ELTs were offered one-year contracts with the possibility of renewal. However, some ELTs were offered contracts as short as 3-6 months throughout their ELT teaching experience. In the excerpts below “time” and “trust” are treated synonymously, as one is bound by the other in a type of relational precursor for private conversations. Such a marriage between “time” and “trust” deepens understanding of Japanese co-worker meanings about relationships.

Yamashita, a new team-teacher in her school, said, “Everyone thinks that I talk a lot, but nobody knows about myself. So, I am kind of the mysterious person, because I am not likely to show my inside.” Yamashita revealed that although she talks a lot, nobody at work knows much about her. Unlikely to show her “inside,” Yamashita’s words could also read, “I don’t often disclose at work.” This quote also speaks to differences pertaining to inside layers of self between Japanese co-workers and ELTs. Barnlund (1975) explained that Japanese communicate less about their inner feelings and thoughts, even with acquaintances, than Americans. Intrigued, I asked Yamashita to describe the type of person she felt comfortable showing her “inside.” She said, “To the person I trust.” Since Yamashita was a new teacher at her school, she had not yet had the “time” needed in order to build trust that is needed for private conversations. Yamashita
continued by saying “It takes a lot of time to talk about your own privacy. It takes a lot of time.” This excerpt from my conversation with Yamashita revealed, quite explicitly, that time is needed to build trust, a precursor to disclosure and close relationships.

Similarly, Fukazawa said before situations emerged in which she discussed private information with an ELT, a base of trust must be built. Once that had been established, discussions of private information may occur. She explained, “Before the situation [or disclosure] is made we have a, like a base, base of trust. And I think [once] we have a base of trust, after that, we start talking about the private thing.” Fukazawa stated that once a “base of trust” is built private conversations may occur, which demonstrated a proper mode for relating. Fukazawa’s concept of a “base of trust” implicitly implied time is needed to construct such a base. Overtime, Fukazawa established her trust base with co-workers, which then enabled her comfortable to share private information.

Like Yamashita, and Fukazawa, Matsuo, a team-teacher, valued trust in her co-worker relationships. Without such, she did not share private information. She said, “I think you need readiness, it’s like, you know, until you feel comfortable with this person, I wouldn’t ask those questions. Yeah the people do, some people do.” Within this excerpt, “readiness” could be replaced with “time,” “comfortable” could also be replaced with “trust.” In other words, time builds comfort, or trust, within relationships. Those qualities are required for private conversations. Matsuo revealed that in order to have a relationship in which one feels comfortable discussing private information, trust must be built over time. Such a statement revealed meanings that Matsuo, and other Japanese
colleagues, shared in how relationships should be negotiated. Time, to grow and nurture a trusting relationship was not only valued and deemed proper by many Japanese participants, but foreseen as a way in which to form friendships with colleagues.

Trust Builds Friendships That Permit Private Disclosures

Once Japanese co-workers have obtained their ideal amount of time to form a relationship with ELTs, friendships are formed. Such friendships created a space for private disclosures. In fact, communication is a key feature for friendship formation (Matsushima & Shiomi, 2002). In particular, intercultural scholars found that self-disclosure is a major factor that contributes to intercultural relational identity and friendship development (Chen & Nakazawa 2009, 2012; Gudykunst, 1985; Lee, 2006; Kudo & Simkin, 2003). Japanese co-workers, in this study, used the term “friends” or “friendships” to demarcate relationships with ELTs in which enough time and trust have been established. Such friendships left Japanese co-workers to feel comfortable disclosing and discussing personal information, which showcased their cultural premise of relating and acting being met across time.

Tanaka explained appropriate ways to negotiate co-worker relationships. In other words, Tanaka described meanings about how to relate in the Japanese workplace.

Japanese tend to keep the privacy, much. (Laughter.) So, first, you [ELTs] shouldn’t ask a lot of questions to Japanese. Maybe, they don’t like to be asked a lot of questions from the person who they don’t know well. Build the relationship first. Yeah, then you can ask some question to the person.
Tanaka stated that Japanese co-workers do not like to be asked a lot of questions from strangers. Tanaka recommended that ELTs build their co-worker relationship first, before asking questions. What Tanaka did not explicitly state is that trust is required in order to build the relationship over time. This is not mentioned due to the implicit understanding and taken-for-granted assumption on how to enact co-worker relationships that permeates this high-context culture. In other words, Tanaka’s cultural premise for relating guides his advice to ELTs. Many Japanese co-workers, in this study, claimed time necessitates opportunities for trust-building, which is required for friendship development. Once such relational identities are formed, co-worker relationships have opportunity to develop into co-owner relationships.

When discussing an experience where she shared private information with an ELT, Saito, a team-teacher, said, “If they become good friends I do talk about my, yeah, private stuff, yeah. My family and… yeah. Whether they are colleagues or not, I think once I trust them, and they become good friends, I do, I have.” Saito’s use of “good friends” indicated someone to whom she learned to trust over time, and, therefore, felt safe discussing private information. Additionally, her use of “good friends” indicated satisfaction that her cultural premise was met.

Fujii, a team-teacher, described a relationship with an ELT to whom she disclosed private information. This particular relationship with an ELT developed over the course of four years.

We have a lot of time we spend together with the lesson, or something. So, we are very close friend. We become a close friend. And he, we talked private
things, private many things he, he had a family, he had a wife, but they argue
many times. (Laughter.) And he complained [about] his wife to me. (Laughter.)
And, we talk to each other very private things, but because we are very close
friend.
Fujii’s excerpt revealed that they discussed private information because they were close
friends, and also continual disclosure increased intimacy. Because Fujii and her ELT co-
worker worked together for four years and spent a lot of time together at work preparing
lessons, they had opportunity to, and eventually did, become close friends. Fujii noted
that the four years of working together allotted them a lot of time to spend together,
which met her cultural premise expectations regarding relating and acting. Fujii’s
statement of “because we are very close friends” speaks to the importance of relational
meaning to her. At the same time, this statement indicated that it would be an
inappropriate way of acting to have such conversations if the two were not close
relationally. Additionally, some Japanese co-workers revealed that age had particular
meaning to them as it influenced their disclosure practices.

*Age Matters for Privacy Disclosure in Japan*

As a graying nation (Komisarof, 2006), Japan continues to be influenced by age.
Two relational types within Japanese culture speak to the importance of age: seniority,
and superiority. First, the *senpai* (先輩)-*kohai* (後輩), or senior-junior, relationship is a
relational system that permeates Japanese culture. *Senpai* refers to a senior individual
who guides a *kohai*, or junior, in appropriate customs, behaviors, and required
competencies (Whitehill, 1991; Yoshimura & Anderson, 1997). It is common for *senpai*
to offer advice to kohai. In other words, the senpai-kohai relationship is a mentor based relationship bound by age. Secondly, the oyabun (親分)-kobun (子分), or leader-subordinate relationship is a type of apprentice relationship (Bennett & Ishino, 1963; Dore, 1973; Madono, 1998; Nakane, 1972). Oyabun generally provide guidance and protection to kobun as they develop professionally and seek employment opportunities. Both relationship types encourage emotional bonds between both parties (Bright, 2004). These culturally established relationships provide understanding as to why age matters for privacy disclosure in Japan. In this study, most Japanese co-workers reported working with younger ELTs fresh out of undergraduate institutions. This systematic setup naturally melds with these particular Japanese relational systems. Such relationships were found to influence disclosures.

Some Japanese co-workers revealed that disclosing to co-workers similar in age is not only appropriate and valued, but a proper outlet for disclosure. This demarcated culturally-approved practices for acting within co-worker relationships such as senpai-kohai and oyabun-kobun relationships. In other words, “age,” in addition to the duration of a relationship, acted as a cultural premise that guided Japanese co-worker disclosure decisions.

Goto, Matsumoto, and Nakamura indicated “age” as their primary rule governing private disclosures at work. When discussing to whom she reveals private information with at work, she said, “the same age.” Matsumoto and Nakamura shared similar statements. For instance, Matsumoto shared that she told her private information to, “The same age, or similar age teacher.” Nakamura said she shared with, “Some Japanese
teachers around my age, about the same situation, tells me about their private, because we want to share about the difficulties or some joy, especially childcare.” Nakamura explained why age was important for her. By sharing with similar aged co-workers, Japanese co-workers are able to relate in life events such as child-rearing. Additionally, similar, shared situations can be shared as same-aged Japanese co-workers for commensuration. Nakamura’s excerpt revealed that “age” and “similar situation” or “generation” might be interchanged throughout previous discourses. When Japanese co-workers like Goto, Matsumoto, and Nakamura discussed age, they stated that people of the same age or generation, are in similar situations, thus rendering them more likely to be able to relate with each other. This not only demonstrated culturally acceptable behavior for them, but highlighted relationships in which power differentials were minimal unlike senpai-kohai and oyabun-kobun.

Hidaka commented upon generational differences by comparing and contrasting “old” and “young” Japanese when discussing her experience with ELTs and privacy at work:

Especially old Japanese people don’t care about private personal information. (Laughter.) Not young Japanese people, but old Japanese people try to build the relationship by asking private things. I think that is a really big cultural difference. It’s like they have the notion that to know the private things of other people makes them really close in relationship. So, they think it’s good to ask the private things to other people. So, if the older people ask them [ELTs] about
By comparing Japanese and United States culture, Hidaka clarified that age differences exist amongst Japanese people. For older, Japanese people, Hidaka explained that by obtaining private information through questioning, some older Japanese co-workers are able to build a closer relationship. In other words, Hidaka demarcated ways in which generational differences relate and act within Japanese culture when she explained the meanings behind older Japanese co-workers asking ELTs potentially perceived private questions. According to Hidaka, it is not that the older Japanese co-worker is trying to make an ELT uncomfortable, but that they are trying to build a closer, working relationship, which is important to them. Hidaka demarcated this difference between “old” and “young.” She explained that young people don’t necessarily care about knowing ELTs’ privacy, thus, she noted a difference in meaning and social interaction between older and younger Japanese generations. Hidaka’s demarcation between “young” and “old” Japanese, not only revealed generational relational differences, but revealed modern-day thinking: privacy is best discussed with similar aged co-workers. In addition to meanings about relating for workplace relationships, Japanese co-workers revealed appropriate modes of action and practice within the Japanese workplace: Do as Japanese do.

*Do as Japanese Do*

Throughout interviews, some Japanese co-workers revealed meanings about appropriate modes for action and practice related to privacy negotiation at work. When
soliciting workplace advice for ELTs, Japanese co-workers used the phrase “do as Romans do” to denote a culturally approved workplace practice ELTs should adopt. Throughout the following excerpts the phrase “Do as Romans do” could be replaced with “Do as Japanese do.” In other words, ELTs are expected to assimilate and to “act Japanese.” ELTs should “Teach English, but behave Japanese.” This cultural premise preserves Japanese cultural norms and functions to keep the workplace as “Japanese” as possible.

A strong history of acculturation research, or the process of adopting cultural values and practices, exists within the communication discipline (Kim, 2005; Kim, 2008; Kim & Kim, 2004, 2005). However, this premise is not acculturation; it is assimilation. Assimilation benefits those in power more than those who are not. Oetzel (2009) explained that those in power benefit from cultural others that assimilate because they do not have to do any work, but at the same time gain access and exploit cultural outsider workforces’ benefits. In this instance, asking ELTs to assimilate to Japanese culture offers Japanese co-workers benefits such as the perceived benefit of a native English-speaker by not having to do any cultural negotiations. ELTs offer not only their mother tongue, but their cultural background, perspective, and heritage, which all benefit Japanese ministerial educational goals to increase internationalization throughout the country. Problematic acculturation amongst ELTs has shown to negatively influence workplace performance (Komisarof, 2006). Therefore, it is important to understand Japanese co-workers’ cultural premise regarding expected assimilation practices.
Narita said, “Sometimes, some Japanese, they want you to behave in Japanese way, because this is Japan. So, you are here, so just as the proverb says, ‘Do as Romans do.’” In this excerpt, “Do as Romans do” may be replaced with “Do as Japanese do” or “Act as Japanese act.” In other words, assimilate. Narita revealed that some Japanese people expect ELTs’ actions and practices to match Japanese cultural ways. Therefore, Narita recommended that ELTs act as Japanese act at work to facilitate intercultural relationship development.

Similarly, when asked what advice Kuroki might have to offer ELTs, she said, “Do as Romans do in Rome is a good basic sentence [for privacy management].” In other words, Kuroki believed ELTs should manage their privacy, as Japanese people do. At the same time, Kuroki referred to this advice as a “good basic sentence,” indicating that privacy management is more complex. Since more complex advice is likely to exist, Kuroki indicated this “good basic sentence” is a good “starting point” or foundation on which to construct how one should respond to privacy negotiations. In other words, assimilating into Japanese cultural expectations is the baseline for privacy negotiation strategies. However, all ELTs, in this study, came from low-context, individualistic cultures, which heavily contrast Japanese high-context, collectivism. Such ELTs may be unskilled in interpreting high-context communication, which might render them unable to not only assimilate, but to learn how best to navigate privacy boundaries like Japanese.

Takahashi offered the same advice to both urban and rural ELTs. When discussing advice for ELTs living in a rural environment like his, he said, “When alone in Rome, when in Rome, do as Romans do. So [if], the area is urban, the rule is the same.”
Takahashi denoted a difference in location, but recommended the same advice and cultural assimilation expectation regardless of placement of ELTs in Japan. Such advice denoted the homogenization, or shared sense of cultural premises, Takahashi perceived to be prevalent throughout Japanese culture. Additionally, such advice indicated a culturally approved way of action, or acting within the Japanese workplace. This advice offered ELTs a management strategy that asks them to model Japanese privacy treatment.

Although Kondo offered similar assimilation advice, she provided a somewhat deeper understanding as to how following this preferred meaning of action and practice may influence some Japanese relationships. Kondo said:

Some foreigners think that Japanese are too polite, so they also have to be polite to me or CO-WORKER NAME, but it’s not true. I want them to be like all them, to be themselves, but they change their attitude in front of us and too many bow, bowing, and suddenly start using *keigo* (敬語) (formal or honorific speech in Japanese) or some, not all of them. That makes the relationship worse, harder.

Within this excerpt, Kondo revealed that being too polite can cause a distance between ELTs and their co-workers. Kondo stated that she wants ELTs to “be themselves.” In other words, Kondo hoped ELTs will act as they should act according to their culture premises and not assimilate to Japanese culture. Therefore, the “Do as Japanese do” advice is not what Kondo offered at first. At the same time Kondo’s expectations speak to a threshold, or level, to which ELTs should not pass throughout their assimilation process. Being too polite or “too Japanese” violated Kondo’s cultural premise, thus
leading her to feel relational distance. Surprised by her contrasting-statement, I asked her “Why? Because it is distance or…” She interrupted and said:

Those people are usually picky and care about small stuff, sensitive, too sensitive. I think there is something related to their personalities, so they have to follow this rule. If you are in Rome do as the Romans do that kind of people.

Kondo pointed out the legalistic qualities that can befall some ELTs who follow other Japanese co-worker advice to “Do as Japanese do.” Kondo attributed a strict, rule-bound personality type to people who try to mimic formal Japanese culture. Kondo’s excerpt, although unique within this study, revealed that not all Japanese co-workers believe such advice should be followed. It also speaks to the belief that one may over-assimilate.

_Japanese Co-worker Summary_

A cultural discourse analysis of 38 Japanese co-worker transcripts revealed cultural premises related to meanings regarding relating and relationships, as well as about action, and practice pertaining to private information and privacy management. First, Japanese co-workers revealed time is a crucial cultural premise that influenced their intercultural relationships with ELTs. In particular, Japanese co-workers reported that privacy inquisitions, as well as disclosures, are acts of kindness/caring. Second, Japanese co-workers reported needing time to cultivate intercultural friendships that would then construct a space in which co-owner relationships pertaining to privacy are appropriate. Third, age was revealed as an important cultural premise that dictated disclosure decisions. In particular, Japanese co-workers believed same age co-workers were the best individuals in whom to make co-owners of their private information. This practice
highlighted their cultural conceptions of age appropriate behaviors and minimized power differentials present throughout Japanese culture as expressed within senpai-kohai and oyabun-kobun relationships. Finally, Japanese co-workers revealed the cultural premise of “Do as Japanese do.” In other words, Japanese co-workers expected ELTs to assimilate to Japanese norms for relating. In particular, they expected ELTs to enact Japanese privacy management strategies. This type of cultural expectation not only minimizes cultural work for Japanese co-workers but speaks to an idealized construction of ELTs that will benefit the Japanese educational system. Through appropriate levels of assimilation Japanese co-workers may benefit from ELT’s cultural imports such as their mother tongue and cultural heritage.

Chapter Summary

A cultural discourse analysis of 39 ELT and 38 Japanese co-worker interview transcripts revealed clear, distinct cultural premises for each group. For instance, ELTs indicated strong meanings related to one’s social positioning as foreign and cultural others, as well as how one should relate and act within co-worker relationships. In particular, ELTs revealed that: (a) they expected to not be a “free space” for privacy inquisition by Japanese co-workers, (b) they expected voluntary reciprocity in (egalitarian) workplace relationships, and (c) they expected co-workers to be co-owners who would not share private disclosures. Japanese co-workers revealed cultural premises related to meanings regarding relating and relationships, as well as about action and practice regarding privacy management. In particular, Japanese co-workers revealed: (a) privacy inquisitions are acts of kindness/caring, (b) time matters for privacy disclosure in
Japan, (c) age matters for privacy disclosure in Japan, and (d) that ELTs should “Do as Japanese do,” or, in other words, assimilate into Japanese cultural norms and regulations for privacy management. In this summary, I will revisit findings from ELTs and Japanese co-workers as I discuss similarities and differences between these two groups.

**ELT Cultural Premises**

Some ELTs perceived Japanese co-workers to treat them as cultural “free spaces” in which they need not adhere to Japanese privacy norms. This perceived action violated ELTs’ cultural premise that they should not be free spaces for privacy inquisition. Additionally, this perceived social positioning, influenced ELTs’ interpretations of co-worker relationships. For instance, ELTs held to this cultural premise in order to explain Japanese co-workers’ behaviors when they reflected upon instances in which they felt “bombarded” with questions. In other words, ELTs felt that by being a cultural other/outsider due to their foreign national status Japanese co-workers could ask them anything without filters. This constructed a carnivalesque-type relationship.

Bakhtin (1929, 1941) described the carnivalesque world as a place that included familiar and free interactions between people. As mentioned earlier, positioning ELTs as free agents for questioning places ELTs into positions in which they must perform potential unethical management privacy strategies such as lying (see Chapter Three) in order to protect themselves. This not only strips ELTs of agency, but this action places ELTs in a spectacle light in which they must endure the gaze of their Japanese co-works. No social consequences exist for those operating under the carnivalesque mentality. Therefore, asking ELTs questions about their lives that they might view as a privacy
violation (see Chapter Three) incurs no costs according to Japanese co-workers. However, this is not the case. ELTs perceive their “spectacle of the fools” positionality to be contradictory to their cultural premise for workplace disclosure, privacy, and relationships. In other words, ELTs felt that they should not be a free space for privacy inquisition. Such an action violated cultural expectations of how privacy should be treated at work in two ways: (a) ELTs expect reciprocity in relationships and (b) ELTs expect that co-owners not share private information.

Additionally, ELTs perceived their cultural premises of relating and acting to be violated when Japanese co-workers did not reciprocate disclosing personal information after soliciting ELTs for such information. Such reciprocity beliefs related to private disclosures held significant meanings about relating with co-workers and acting at work. For ELTs in this study, reciprocity was anticipated prior to, or shortly after, moments of disclosure. In other words, ELTs expected their Japanese co-workers to reveal private information equally, or at the same rate and time, as them. If this expectation was not met, some ELTs felt as if their cultural premise expectations regarding reciprocity were violated. Furthermore, some ELTs believed this violated cultural expectations and how to relate with co-workers and how to act within the workplace. This perceived lack of reciprocity extended and reinforced the, intentional or unintentional, motive of constructing ELTs as an ideal cultural-other for display. When Japanese co-workers did not meet ELTs’ cultural expectation of reciprocation, this reinforced ELT perception of their social identities as viewed by Japanese co-workers (i.e., foreigners and cultural others). Coupled with instances in which ELTs believed their meanings for action were
not met when co-owners shared an ELT’s private information, ELTs expected cultural premises for meaning about acting and relating were evident and left unmet. The lack of reciprocity also speaks to one way in which Japanese co-workers as members of the host society might have enacted relational power differentials. By not reciprocating private information leads one to a greater position of power due to a potential arsenal of information that may be disclosed.

Perceived Japanese co-worker cultural premises violated ELT premises regarding the treatment of private information at work. Since some ELTs believed private information should not be disclosed by co-owners to other co-workers, doing so was perceived to violate ELTs’ cultural premises regarding privacy co-ownership and the treatment of private information at work. In other words, this perceived practice left some ELTs to feel as if their cultural premise and work ethics were violated. Potentially unaware of this perceived violation, Japanese co-worker relationships are influenced by this action. Some ELTs reported the expectation that asking about and sharing private information constitute co-ownership and private information, once shared with a co-owner, should be kept private and confidential. In other words, ELTs perceived co-owners sharing private information in which they have been entrusted as an expectation violation, and, therefore, a cultural premise violation. ELTs meanings of identity, relationships, and action or practice are intertwined within these findings and suggest a complex cultural premise that suggests one’s identity is tied deeply with their meanings of relating and acting at work. In other words, some ELTs admitted that when their cultural expected practices, such as reciprocity or non-disclosure were unmet, they
questioned their relational meaning within the workplace and also their perceived social identity.

*Japanese Co-worker Cultural Premises*

Japanese co-workers shared that privacy inquisitions are acts of kindness/caring for ELTs. In other words, asking ELTs questions about their private information and/or disclosing such information to others is an act of kindness/caring. ELTs did not share this cultural premise and perceived such inquisitions to be intrusive privacy breeches. If this premise remains unshared or unknown by ELTs, this might lead to continual perceived privacy violations.

Time, or the length of one’s relationship with co-workers, is a significant element in which one builds relational meanings for Japanese co-workers in this study. In particular, Japanese co-workers discussed the importance of building trust and friendships over time prior to privacy disclosures. However, ELT contracts vary and are often “too short” to fit Japanese co-worker cultural criteria for such relationships. This will be further explored in the next chapter.

Japanese co-workers noted that one’s “age” held significant relational meaning. In other words, co-workers who are of the “same age” or “generation” may relate deeper and more personally than inter-generational co-workers. Japanese co-workers mentioned disclosing personal information only to co-workers within the same age co-hort. Such disclosure decisions also evade power relationships embedded within traditional *senpai-kohai* (senior-junior) and *oyabun-kobun* (leader-subordinate) relationships. The majority of ELTs within this study, and those that worked with Japanese co-workers within this
study were newly graduated students. This systematic approach to recruit recent native
English speakers complicates Japanese co-workers’ age premise. For instance, as
younger teachers, ELTs can be the youngest within their workplace. If Japanese co-
workers continue to hold to their premise that disclosures and close relationships are best
with those of similar age, the ELT might be left without the opportunity to construct
tight-knit co-worker relationships.

Japanese co-workers suggested culturally appropriate meanings for practice for
ELTs to enact: “Do as Japanese do.” Following suit or performing “Japanese-ness” was
praised as an appropriate way of acting that should help ELT-co-worker relationships. In
other words, Japanese co-workers expected ELTs to assimilate to Japanese culture.
Doing so enabled Japanese co-workers smoother relational practices and maintained
power levels which left Japanese co-workers in a position of authority and privilege.
This advice not only was offered to “help” ELTs manage privacy boundaries, but speaks
to anticipated relational co-worker benefits. For instance, within their position of
dominance, Japanese co-workers may solicit cultural goods from ELTs such as their
mother-tongue and cultural heritage. This commodification of culture constructing an
idealized ELT co-worker will be further explored within Chapter 6.

While the Japanese co-workers expected ELTs to be, act, and behave Japanese, at
the same time, the ELTs felt like cultural outsiders where normal rules did not apply to
them. This contradiction indicates a double standard. On one hand, ELTs are expected
to act as Japanese, but on the other hand, Japanese co-workers do not act Japanese as they
solicit ELTs for private information. ELTs spoke about their perceived social identities
within their Japanese workplace. Perceived as a cultural other, or “free parking” zone, Japanese cultural privacy relational norms left some ELTs feeling violated due to unmet privacy expectations. Japanese co-workers did not comment upon ELTs’ social identities at work. Both groups, however, discussed cultural premises regarding relating and acting, which highlighted specific meanings to each group. For Japanese co-workers, kindness/caring guides their social interactions with ELTs. Such kindness/caring might be perceived as invasive by ELTs. Additionally, time is of the essence. Without sufficient time to build a relationship Japanese co-workers were unable to build trust and, consequentially, the friendships needed in order to provide a culturally-approved place for privacy-related conversations. ELTs, on the other hand, often began this process feeling as if their privacy was violated due to their perception of their role within the workplace as individuals who “can be asked anything.” When ELTs did not experience their reciprocity and co-ownership expectations fulfilled, this added to their social identity perceptions, as well as violated their meanings for relating and acting.

Despite differences, similarities exist. ELTs and Japanese co-workers both expected the other to assimilate to and/or accommodate their cultural practices. Just as Japanese co-workers expected ELTs to “Do as Japanese do,” ELTs expected Japanese co-workers to accommodate their privacy expectations and “Do as ELTs do.” As ELTs expected voluntary reciprocity in disclosures, they highlighted their belief that Japanese co-workers should work to match their cultural expectations. ELTs were dissatisfied when their cultural premise was not met, which speaks both to its importance and the expectation that Japanese co-workers would reciprocate not only disclosure statements,
but their cultural expectations and ways of interacting. Japanese co-workers expressed a very similar sentiment as they recommended ELTs “Do as Japanese do” in terms of managing privacy. With both groups expecting assimilation and/or accommodation as preferred outcomes for their intercultural relationships, difficulties in managing privacy becomes more apparent between these two groups. With all “pull” and no “give” in this relationship, the two groups are left unsatisfied due to the unmet cultural expectations.

Overall, this chapter highlights the complexities cultural premises may bring into an intercultural encounter such as the ELT-Japanese co-worker relationship. Similarities and differences in cultural premises between these two groups bring several potential implications to light. First, as carnival performers an ELT’s agency can be jeopardized. Hall (2013) defined agency as “the ability to act in ways that require reasoned explanation and have real consequences for relationships” (p. 105). Bandura (2003) equated agency with being human. In other words, agency is an innately human quality that influences relationships. In fact, as part of the “spectacle of fools,” ELTs lose agency that is required to not only be human, but to establish satisfactory privacy boundaries. When one loses the ability to make decisions for herself or himself, s/he loses the ability to be human. Thus, as performers, ELTs are left agentically disabled to coordinate privacy boundaries with their Japanese co-workers.

Second, boundary coordination is rendered difficult due to cultural differences. Petronio (2002) explained that boundaries include both personal and collective borders. In other words, we not only must manage personal privacy boundaries, but also boundaries of another’s information when we become co-owners. Petronio (2002)
explained that “in order for coordination to take place; the rules need to be agreed upon so that there is synchronicity between and among the co-owners” (p. 29). Mutual agreement helps establish privacy rules. However, mutual agreement is complicated by cultural differences as demonstrated in this study. In this study, ELTs expected Japanese co-workers to be privacy co-owners who do not share their privacy disclosures. Boundary coordination difficulties can lead some individuals to employ potentially unethical management privacy strategies to obtain her or his desired levels of privacy. As mentioned within the ELT Perspectives section, this places ELTs, like James, in a difficult position where they can see lying as their only management alternative. Bennett (1993) said that “ethical choices can and must be made for intercultural sensitivity to develop” (p. 66). Therefore, if an ELT is unable to make an ethical privacy management choice, she or he is, therefore, unable to progress towards intercultural sensitivity, which complicates future privacy negotiations and encounters with her or his Japanese co-worker.

Third, due to both groups expecting the other to assimilate to and/or accommodate their cultural values, norms, and expectations for privacy, neither is fully satisfied with their relationship. This notion demonstrates cultural insensitivity and ethnocentrism. Bennett (1993) claimed that “intercultural sensitivity is not natural” (p. 21). Due to culturally different premises that, at the same time, call for the other to adapt to their way of managing privacy poses challenges. In particular, ethnocentrism is evident as both ELTs and Japanese co-workers expect the other to adapt to their cultural premises. Ethnocentrism is defined as “assuming that the worldview of one’s own
culture is central to all reality” (Bennett, 1993, p. 30). Both groups enact privacy management in the denial stage of Bennett’s (1993) model of intercultural sensitivity. The denial phase indicates a lack of consideration of cultural differences. In the ELT-Japanese co-worker relationship, neither considers the fact that privacy expectations might differ between groups. Such denial provides the potential to escalate conflict due to unmet cultural expectations and associated frustrations by the cultural other, whomever that might be, not assimilating to one’s cultural ways of privacy management. Such a practice can result in what Petronio (2002) defined as “boundary turbulence.”

Boundary turbulence refers to moments of disconnect or clashes in privacy boundary management (Petronio, 2002). Turbulence disrupts the rule management system (Afifi, 2003; Pertronio, 2002). Specifically, boundary turbulence occurs when “the coordinating efforts of privacy management are confounded” (p. 177). Petronio (2002) explained, “For boundary maintenance to work, everyone must agree on the rules. When one person has a different idea about the way rules are formed and used, the management system may be disrupted and lead to turbulence” (p. 49). Of particular interest to this study is that Petronio (2002) identified dissimilar boundary orientations stemming from one’s cultural background as a factor that could lead to boundary turbulence. In fact, “it may be problematic to comprehend the rule choices each is making to reveal private information” (Petronio, 2002, p. 195). Due to cultural differences, one might perceive intentional rule violations. Petronio (2002, 2004) described clashes occur when boundaries are intentionally violated, misunderstood or mistaken, fuzzy or ambiguous, boundary definition predicaments, and privacy dilemmas.
Boundary turbulence can lead to conflict, which can be positive since conflict can force issues to the “table” to be dealt with accordingly (Hawk, Keijsers, Hale, & Meeus, 2009). When cultural premises are not met, or shared, it might jeopardize the co-owner relationship. In particular, these intercultural relationships can be strained at work. The following chapter will explicate and interrogate these premises by offering greater contextual depth as to what larger structures and ideologies enable and constrain privacy management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers.
CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH QUESTION #3 FINDINGS

In this chapter, I share findings for the third research question; “What larger structures enable and constrain privacy boundary management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers?” The below findings are results of a cultural discourse analysis as detailed within Chapter Three. Within this chapter, first, I will discuss the perspectives of the English language teachers (ELT) and, second, I will discuss Japanese co-worker perspectives regarding what enables and constrains ELT and Japanese co-worker privacy management.

English Language Teacher Perspectives

As I share findings from a cultural discourse analysis of the 39 ELTs I interviewed, I share two dominant findings. First, I will synthesize how the ways in which ELTs spoke about their role at work are enabled and constrained by larger structures such as English hegemony and xenophobia, which function to construct ELTs as not real teachers. Second, I will discuss how ELTs felt culturally commodified by co-workers, as evidenced throughout discourses in which ELTs reported feeling like local “celebrities.”

_Ideological Construction of “Not a Real Teacher”_

In this section, I will discuss the ideological construction of ELTs as “not real teachers.” This ideology functions to exclude ELTs from co-worker relationships. This exclusion negates opportunities for successful privacy management. Additionally, this ideology positions ELTs as ideal “tape-recorders.” This ideology is entrenched in English hegemonic and xenophobic practices. First, I will explain the ideological
construction of “not a real teacher.” Second, I will discuss institutional practices that construct ELTs as “inadequate” teachers. Third, I will discuss how this ideology positions ELTs as tape-recorders.

Nearly two-thirds of the ELTs who participated in this study reported feeling as if they were not a “real teacher.” All ELTs, within this study, were familiar with this colloquialism, thus, speaking to its dominance within ELT participants’ experiences and culture. For instance, Joshua said, “I didn’t feel like a real teacher, but I felt like kind of almost a pinch hitter a lot of times for the teachers themselves.” Joshua used this baseball analogy to indicate his feelings regarding his role within his workplace. He described a pinch hitter as, “one person from the rosters to be at bat every time the pitcher would be up because the pitcher is not a very good hitter...he [the pinch hitter] just comes into substitute for a person.” In other words, Joshua claimed to be an English “pinch hitter” to substitute for perceived poor English levels of his Japanese team-teachers. Joshua’s comment also reflected a preference for native-English speakers and its superiority in the context of English education in Japan. Since native European-looking teachers are preferred by Japanese ELT employers (Kobayashi, 2011), Joshua, as a white man, was an imported pinch hitter to fill in for perceived Japanese inferiority in speaking English. Joshua’s comment reflected many ELTs’ discourses throughout this study. As mentioned, the majority of ELTs within this study reported feeling as if they were not real teachers, but it didn’t stop there. ELTs shared insight as to why they didn’t feel like a real teacher in juxtaposition with what real teachers do.
Communication and identity negotiation research has examined the concept of a “real job” (Buzzanell, 1995, 2001; Clair, 1996; Lingard, Reznick, DeVito, & Espin, 2002; Marks, Scholarios, & Lockyer, 2002; Tsetsura, 2011). Clair’s (1996) research defined a real job as “communicatively constructed and may reflect, create, support, or challenge the dominant work ideology” (p. 253). In other words, what constitutes a “real job” might be telling as to what dominant work ideologies are at play within an organization. Clair (1996) shared eight characteristics that influence one’s perception of one’s job:

1) enjoyable, 2) easy or nonskilled, 3) temporary or unstable, 4) have low probability of success, 5) require little trust, 6) are not conducted in their natural time (e.g., a soldier in war time versus a soldier in peace time), 7) underutilize the worker in terms of duration and intensity, and 8) are not primary means of support. (p. 253)

The more factors present, the less “real” the job becomes (Clair, 1996). Additionally, Clair (1996) stated that this expression “defines the workplace and its problems as ‘unreal’ and, therefore, as unchangeable” since such a labeling allows workers to dismiss what they feel cannot be changed (p. 253). In other words, adopting the “real teacher” ideology is a management strategy for ELTs to cope with dissatisfaction from seemingly meaningless work.

Meaningful work refers to any work that has a significant purpose (Broadfoot, Carlone, Medved, Aakhus, Gabor, & Taylor, 2008; Buzzanell, & D'Enbeau, 2013; Cheney, Zorn, Planalp, & Lair, 2008; Kuhn, Golden, Jorgenson, Buzzanell, Berkelaar &
Kisselburgh, et al., 2008). Dempsey and Sanders (2010) said, “meaningful work varies across time and reflects broader cultural assumptions about the nature of work and happiness” (p. 439). Therefore, understanding ways in which ELTs view and discuss their role as teachers offers insight into not only privacy management, but also ELT performance and ideologies such as English hegemony and xenophobia which can govern the job, task, and role of ELTs in Japan. Cindy said, “The schools we [ELTs] feel like a real teacher are also the ones we’re going to put in your best effort, so it is in their [Japanese co-workers] interest, I think, to include you in things.” Cindy’s comments revealed that not only did she perceive one’s work ethic to be influenced by one’s perception as to if they are a “real teacher,” but being excluded influenced her perception as to whether or not she was a real teacher.

When ELTs questioned if they were a real teacher or not, they were actually questioning their social identity and position within their place, which consequentially influenced one’s ability to successfully navigate intercultural privacy boundaries. One ELT commented that her identity as a teacher is related to her privacy management. Ren said, “A teacher to me is someone you respect and you know, the students have to listen to you, and when asking certain questions, privacy is infringed upon and that brings down your identity as a teacher.” Ren’s comment highlighted the importance of understanding ELT reflections upon their job as well as the consequences that one’s workplace identity may have upon privacy management. Therefore, this chapter will highlight larger structures, such as English hegemony and xenophobia, which influence ELTs’ perceived social identity as well as their capacity to manage privacy satisfactorily.
In contrast, ELTs defined a “real teacher” as someone who did “actual” work that could be measured in some way such as creating lesson plans. For instance, David said, “A real teacher is someone who uses their skills and knowledge to help, but I guess I’ve never done that.” In fact, Daniel said he didn’t feel like a real teacher except when he was out of the workplace. Daniel prepared the majority of his lessons at home. It was during class preparation processes that Daniel reported feeling like a real teacher. He explained,

I definitely didn’t feel like a real teacher; after all, I felt more like I was in Disneyland or something. Everything was just crazy and over-the-top and I discovered new things every day. And at the time, I felt sometimes like a real teacher, closest to the real teacher when I was out of the school when I prepared.

To keep the attention of the little kids, it requires quite a lot of prep. Daniel said that it took a lot of preparation to keep his elementary school students’ attention. This process of preparation enabled Daniel to feel more like a real teacher because he was utilizing his talents. Additionally, Daniel’s perception of being in “Disneyland” insinuated being located within a magical, fake world constructed to be something it is not. Such a comment speaks deeply to Daniel’s perception about his positionality within his workplace. For Daniel, the actions experienced in his “Disneyland” workplace were perceived to be exaggerated and over-the-top, which led him to believe his reality was fake. Since his workplace perception was only met while prepping for courses, it was only then that Daniel felt like a real teacher. In juxtaposition
to the belief that real teachers do stuff, ELTs’ discourses reflect experiencing themselves as not real teachers.

ELTs experience of feeling not like a “real teacher” stem from a system of cultural exclusion prevalent throughout the English education system in Japan. In his book, *The Idea of English in Japan*, Seargeant (2009) offered a critical reading of English language teaching in Japan. Seargeant (2009) claimed that English has not been passively imposed on Japanese citizens but, rather, has been appropriated, resisted, and even ignored by Japanese. Being excluded or ostracized by groups threatens an individual’s need for self-esteem, belongingness, control, and meaningful existence (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Williams, 1997, 2001). Additionally, negative interpersonal consequences are likely such as aggressive behaviors (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001) and decreased levels of prosocial behavior (Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007), which are valued by collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 1980, 1983, 1991, 2001). In this context, excluding ELTs from fuller instructional involvement—consciously or subconsciously— is reminiscent of xenophobic practices and speaks to a “subtle” resistance to English-only ideological practices.

Japan, as a nation, has a history of resisting outside influences (Becker, 1936), which led to a period of isolation from foreign influence. However, in the summer of 1853, American ships sailed into Edo Bay and forcefully “invaded” Japan for economic trade (Beasley, 1995; Jansen, 2000). These events led to a political and economic restructuring of Japan referred to as the Meiji Restoration which is credited with “modernizing” Japan and, thus, its birth as a major, global economic player (Beasley,
Since Japan has not always opened its doors to foreigners, and is “suspicious” of ethnic Japanese (Brody, 2002), it has long been referred to as a xenophobic nation (Jung, 2004). Japan’s xenophobia is not a thing of the past. In fact, xenophobic discourses in Japan have increased online since the early 2000s (Yamaguchi, 2013). In today’s age of globalization and English hegemony, nations are forced to comply with the superiority of English in order to survive and compete internationally (Pac, 2012). Consciously or subconsciously, ELTs are active participants and carriers of English-only ideology/superiority. As the literal “face” of “true” (sic) English education in Japan, their very presence and daily actions at work continue to reinforce English hegemony and superiority. Understanding how English hegemony and xenophobia are at play provide insight as to why English language teachers might receive the brunt of this exclusion due to them being the literal “face” of English education. Next, I discuss institutional practices that construct ELTs as “inadequate” teachers, thus reinforcing the ideology that ELTs are not real teachers.

Institutional Practices Constructing ELT as “Inadequate” Teachers

As mentioned in Chapter Two, modern-day institutional practices require ELTs to: (a) be native-level speakers of English, (b) have at least a baccalaureate education, and (c) have experienced at least 12 years of education in which English is the medium of instruction (Aeon, 2013, Borderlink, 2013, Interac, 2013, JET Programme, 2013a). Such requirements imply that English instruction is not the primary goal for ELTs. In fact, Butler (2007) explained that English reforms instituted by the Japanese Ministry of Education were in place to prepare students for a global economy rather than to increase
English language proficiencies. Actually, inadequate teacher pre- and post-employment training are a documented source of daily frustration for Japanese teachers (Fennelly & Luxton 2011; Matsumata, Nakano, Nagoh, Hashiuchi, Kakehi, Saiki, et al. 2006; Yagi & Igawa, 2011). Since Japanese teachers experienced frustrations with their own teacher-training, this frustration might be compounded with the additional task to supervise, and perhaps even team-teach with, an “untrained” ELT.

Participants within this study reinforced that hiring skilled workers is not the goal of ELT-recruiting organizations and schools. All ELTs within this study, except one, held baccalaureate degrees. ELT recruiting requirements and practices resulted in inadequate preparation for ELT duties at work, which led to exclusionary practices from co-workers. As un-skilled, or less-skilled, workers, several ELTs mentioned not feeling like a real teacher due to not being “properly” trained. Such training referred to instances in which they did not have educational background, “official” training, or the know-how for their job. For instance, Edward said he was “Absolutely not” a real teacher. He explained, “Because I wasn’t trained as a teacher.” Similarly, Andrea explained that she was not a real teacher because, “Well, I don’t have a diploma [in English education]. I’ve never been officially trained.” Related, not having training led Carlos to feel as a “fantasy teacher.” He said, “I’m a fantasy teacher. Every day I’m pretending to know how to teach.” These three direct instances revealed that several ELTs did not feel like real teachers due to their lack of “proper” training. This led some, like Carlos, to feel as if he must pretend to be a teacher. Additionally, the institutional practice of labeling ELTs as “Assistants” is representative of the ideology that ELTs are not real teachers.
Labeling ELTs as “Assistant Language Teachers.” The majority of ELTs in this study had the official work title as “Assistant Language Teacher.” The practice of labeling ELTs as “Assistants” is the result of how the “not a real teacher” ideology functions to position ELTs. Institutions like the JET Programme, which spear-head ELT English education efforts throughout Japan, summarized ELT duties as assisting: (a) classes taught by Japanese Teachers of English; (b) conversation training; (c) preparation of supplementary materials English-teaching; (d) language training of Japanese English teachers; (e) English language club instruction; (f) by providing information on language and related subjects for people such as Japanese English teachers (e.g., word usage, pronunciation, etc.); (g) English language speech contests; (h) via participation in local international exchange activities (JET Programme, 2013a). Most ELTs, in this study, were expected to instruct and conduct the previously listed duties by themselves without assistance. The only exception existed within course teaching. Most ELTs prepared and taught class lessons without the immediate help from a Japanese English teacher. Even so, some ELTs reported feeling not like a real teacher due to their role at work. In fact, Japanese English teachers almost always accompanied ELTs to their classes and sat and/or stood in the back of the classroom while the ELT taught.

The institutional practice of positioning ELTs as assistants led some ELTs to feel that they are not real teachers due to their assistant role and lack of training. This practice also encouraged others to question their workplace role. In fact, one ELT, Brent said his students asked what his job was. Brent said his students asked him, “What job do you have?” He explained,
I had that a reasonable number of times and I think that goes back to the thing that people are not seeing you as a real teacher. Just like this person who comes in to entertain them. Once a week, or even less than that. They would say, ‘What is your real job?’ and I would say, ‘This is it. I’m trying to do it.’

Although Brent’s story is not related to his co-worker relationships explicitly, it does speak to his overall perceived role as an Assistant Language Teacher within his workplace. After being questioned about his job, Brent perceived that he was not a real teacher at his school. His usage of “I’m trying to do it” could be replaced with “I’m trying to be a real teacher.” Such questioning of one’s role as ELT was not always explicitly stated or questioned by people within their school. Additionally, Brent said that he was not a real teacher because he did not have a set role. He said, “You are a teacher if you have a set role teaching a subject for a class and I never did.” Brent contrasted his experience of never having a formal set role as de-qualifying him for the identity and label of “real teacher,” as well as excluding him from “real teacher” obligations.

Karen, an ELT with an education background, reported that she did feel like a real teacher due to her undergraduate training in English education and teaching English as foreign language (EFL) certifications. She said,

I studied education at college and I know how to teach. There’s nothing assistant about me, but anyway, they [co-workers] say I am an assistant language teacher….They think, oh, she speaks English, but she doesn’t know anything.
When the reality is *sorry*, I’m one of the few! I’ve been trained!! I know what I’m doing! That has been a bit frustrating.

Karen revealed her frustrations with her co-workers. Although, Karen’s official title at work is “Assistant Language Teacher,” she denies this title as an identity due to her educational background in education. Karen is a minority amongst ELTs; she is trained. The majority of ELTs in this study did not have an education background, which is true of the larger ELT-teaching population. However, this decision to hire non-education trained ELTs caused frustrations for those that are “properly” trained. For those that are not trained, it creates a space in which they felt as if they are not a true teacher in their school(s). As discussed later within this section, a lack of credentials influenced their teaching authority. In addition to training, most ELTs reported their role as salient to their feelings of being not a real teacher.

Like Brent, Juan also did not feel like a real teacher due to his role within the workplace. When discussing his role at school he said,

> You’re not a real teacher, you know. They [co-workers] never said that to me, but, you know, like, I can feel it. I’m not really there, you know, I’m not really part of the team or whatever. I’m not part of the school. I just come every so often.

Juan is an example of an ELT who works not just at one, but multiple schools, thus adding to the complexity of their position within the workplace. For Juan, being a real teacher meant that he was a part of the team, thus calling attention to his membership status and feeling excluded from his co-workers within his workplace. For Juan, he
believed that he wasn’t a part of the school because he only came “every so often” to that particular workplace.

For some ELTs, like Edward, it was not the feeling per se that led him to feel like a fake teacher, but his role responsibilities. He said, “I wasn’t responsible for grading or for planning, all the competencies of a teacher were not my competencies and that is why I would not say that I was a real teacher.” Edward did not feel like a real teacher due to his lack of job responsibilities that he perceived a teacher should do. In other words, to be a teacher involved grading and planning. Since Edward did not perform these tasks, he felt as if he was not a real teacher within his workplace.

Similar to Edward, Aarti said that she was not necessarily a real teacher due to her lack of grading. She explained that her role was,

Somewhere in between a teacher and a tutor. Or I’m just there to help the students practice, but I’m not really teaching the new concepts or really involved in grading or any of that other stuff that teachers have to do.

Aarti demarcated her lack of role responsibility at work as contributing to her not being a real teacher. Aarti’s quote revealed that for some ELTs there can be teaching aspects that lead one to feel somewhere “caught in the middle” between varying teaching models. Since no clear distinction was revealed to Aarti, she felt as if she was not a real teacher. In addition to one’s assistant role, ELTs perceived a lack of authority. This led them to feel they were not real teachers.

Lack of Authority. Some ELTs claimed they lacked authority within their workplace role, which speaks to the salience of the ideology of ELTs as not real teachers.
Sophie explained, “They [co-workers] don’t see me as a real authority figure.” ELTs like Sophie reported that they were excluded due to a perceived lack of authority, which may stem from a lack of credentials/training, their title, or role at work. ELTs’ experiences with team-teachers led them to feel as if they had no authority within their classrooms. Amelia said, “It depends on how the team-teacher sees me if I have authority in the classroom or not.” Consequently, this led some ELTs to feel as if they were not a real teacher due to perceived low authority thresholds. Additionally, being perceived to have a low level of authority influenced perceptions of one’s level of success.

Some ELTs perceived a lack of authority within their positions due to the team-teaching relationship. All ELTs within this study experienced being a team-teacher with a certified Japanese teacher at some point in their career. This institutionalized relationship speaks to the English institutional embedded practices that exist, which accept ELTs without English education degrees, thus rendering ELTs unable to establish classroom authority without the presence of a team-teacher. For example, Brent described that he was not able to experience the role of being a full, real teacher because he wasn’t the sole authority within the classroom, thus rendering him unable to control the situation. He said, “When working with junior high, I didn’t really feel like I hit the role of a full teacher, because I wasn’t the one in charge of the situation. I wasn’t responsible for what I was doing.” He compared this with his elementary teaching experiences. He said, “Usually, when I went to an elementary school, I would end up taking charge of the class for that period. So, to me, that felt more like I was a real teacher.” Brent described that being able to take full charge of a classroom setting
enabled him to feel as if he was a real teacher. In other words, not being the sole authority or having sole power within the classroom setting led him to feel as if he was not a real teacher.

In addition to being labeled as assistants, Japanese co-worker relationships influenced perceptions of an ELT’s authority. When asked if he felt like a real teacher at his school, Juan explained, “It just totally depends on my [team] teacher in my school in my class.” For many ELTs, like Juan, the team-teaching relationship can “make or break” their feelings of not being a real teacher. Similarly, Ren explained that the presence of a team-teacher in her classrooms and her English-language speaking negated her classroom authority, thus rendering her not a real teacher. Ren explained, “When you’re team-teaching. It is kind of like you are not the authority. You’re not the only authority in the classroom, and, in fact, you are not really even an authority, because you’re just a babbling English person.” Ren reported that, in her view, ELTs are not authorities when Japanese team-teachers are present. In fact, Ren claimed that the role of being a “babbling English person” negated any authority she might have within the classroom. Additionally, a “babbling English person” speaks to the ways in which Ren perceived herself to be excluded by her co-workers. A “babbling English person” can be replaced with “a babbling idiot” which denotes being ignored, and/or overlooked by co-workers as being a serious investor in the organization. In other words, being an English speaker was constructed as a position in which one does not have authority within the classroom due to one’s native-English speaking skills and lack of authority in the classroom setting.
Within team-teacher relationships, some ELTs, within this study, had to submit lesson plans for approval regardless of who “led” the classroom. Charlie explained that the lesson plans he submitted to his team-teacher for approval were overlooked. He said:

I realize that the lessons I was putting forward either the teacher wouldn’t even look at them. They would just go, ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure.’ And we’d go to class and I realized that they hadn’t read the lesson plan at all. So, I was going to teach through with them [the lesson plans], but they look up and say, ‘No, just stick with, you know, How are you? I’m fine, thank you. And you?’ That stuff.

And that kind of got me down.

Charlie discussed his team-teacher relationship as one in which his work was overlooked. His planning efforts for class were often dismissed, thus leading him to feel “down” and not like a real teacher. Charlie’s excerpt revealed that not feeling like a real teacher also gets some ELTs down. In this case, this lack of authority in lesson planning influenced Charlie’s perceived level of success. In other words, since Charlie did not have authority and had to have lessons approved, his team-teacher’s response influenced his probability for success. In addition to a lack of authority, ELTs reported having “nothing to do” which also evidences the ideology of ELTs as not real teachers due to being excluded from performing real teacher duties and obligations.

Nothing to Do. As mentioned, most ELTs within this study held the title “Assistant Language Teacher,” which positioned ELTs into a secondary and often excluded position. At work, most ELTs reported having “nothing to do” at work at some point in their job. Most ELTs where not informed about or involved in making important
curriculum decisions. This led some to feel as if they were not a real teacher due to being underutilized. For instance, David said, “At my first place [school] I felt like a decoration. I didn’t have to do much of anything.” He explained, “It didn’t matter if I taught my students anything or not. And I felt bad about it. And I said, ‘What should I do?’ and they didn’t say anything.” David did not receive the feedback he hoped for to help him feel as if he was a productive member of his workplace. Instead, David was excluded from participating within his workplace due to not understanding what it is he should have done.

Information exclusion is one way in which to exclude or ostracize group members (Jones, Carter-Sowell, Kelly, & Williams, 2009; Jones, & Kelly, 2010). In fact, Sunwolf and Leets (2004) revealed that two ways peer-groups communicated rejection is through ignoring and disqualifying contributions. However, such a practice might not necessarily be information exclusion. Research shows that Japanese supervisors often delay giving feedback until an appropriate time is available such as the ability to locate an informal setting to provide feedback (Clarke & Lipp, 1998; Masumoto, 2004). Related, Masumoto (2004) revealed that Japanese supervisors did not provide feedback to U.S. interns due to the expectation that they would learn themselves and that they would not contribute much to the organization due to short contracts, which reinforces findings from Chapter Five that time does not allow for meaningful relationships to be established due to short contracts, which Japanese co-workers’ perspectives further explicate later in this chapter.
Cindy said that she, like David, had nothing to do at her prior employment. This led her to not only feel like a fake teacher, but led her to feel as a burden to her colleagues. She said,

I would be like sitting at the desk, sitting at the desk, and having a cup of coffee and some small talk with the secretary. And the English teachers would have their meeting without me, and it’s like, ‘Come on. I’m right here. Can we not at least pretend to include me?’ I want to help you. I’m not here as a burden to you, but I would feel like a burden at some schools. I would feel like this is something that we have to do. And partly we [Japanese co-workers] don’t want you and probably we don’t need you, and that would be really frustrating.

Cindy reported that by not having anything to do, and then being left out, or excluded, from meetings not only frustrated her, but led her to feel as if she was not a real teacher. Additionally, this exclusion caused relational strain as demonstrated through her frustration.

Steve echoed David and Cindy’s sentiments. He said, “I didn’t really do difficult things so didn’t feel like I was, you know, a real teacher. I don’t know I didn’t feel like I was a real teacher. I was just there to take up the time, you know.” Steve didn’t feel like a real teacher due to not doing difficult things and feeling as if he was there to just “take up the time.” I asked him what, in particular, made him feel that way. He said,

I guess because like I was all over the place and I didn’t have a base school. I mean that I wasn’t there all the time, and sometimes I wouldn’t even teach and sometimes they’re days where we’re [Steve and his team-teachers] like we don’t
Steve worked at multiple schools within his rural community. This resulted in him not always being in the same school for long periods of time. This not only led him to feeling as if he was not part of the school, but that he was not a real teacher. In other words, by not feeling as part of the school, on top of the fact that he didn’t have lessons at times, led Steve to feel as if he was not a real teacher. Since ELTs were excluded from participating in “real teacher” duties, several ELTs took on a non-teaching role with hopes of being included and fulfilled at work.

*Taking on a Non-Teaching Role.* Several ELTs, labelled as assistants, took on non-teaching roles, which demonstrated practices that emerge as a result of institutional constructions of ELTs as not real teachers. This practice acknowledged that their role was not necessarily to teach, as representative of the ideology of not being a real teacher. At the same time, ELTs were able to add meaning to their assistant labels by occupying a non-teaching role within their school(s). For instance, Alicia said, “I didn’t feel like a teacher so much as just kind of like a visitor to the school…like a guest visitor or something like that…I didn’t feel like I was fake or something like that. It was just a different role.” Alicia felt more like a guest than a teacher. Alicia did not feel “fake” because she obtained meaning at work by occupying a different type of role other than her institutionally constructed role as assistant. In other words, occupying a non-teaching role allowed Alicia to obtain meaning where her “teaching role” lacked.
Andrea, too, viewed her role at work as being non-teacher based. She said, “I don’t present myself as a teacher, because I don’t feel like I am a teacher. I feel like I am most useful and needed as an older sister character.” Andrea not only saw herself as an “older sister” character, but attempted not to present herself as a teacher due to feeling as if she is not a teacher. Andrea said she felt useful and needed as a sister, thus explaining why she welcomed this role. Andrea’s experience highlighted that her perceptions of her role at work influenced her workplace persona.

Not being a real teacher was not necessarily upsetting to all ELTs. Amanda, for instance, said, “I came hoping that would be the case, because I actually did not care too much about teaching, as much as I did building relationships.” Amanda’s story revealed that not all ELTs come to Japan with hopes of teaching. People, like Amanda, have different goals. For Amanda, she made it her ambition to build relationships with her co-workers, thus, putting her job of teaching second. Amanda hoped to not be a real teacher due to her disinterest in teaching. These institutional practices and experiences constructed ELTs as being a “tape-recorder.”

*On Being a “Tape-Recorder”*

Being a “tape-recorder” is an example of an institutional practice that emerged as a result of the ideology that ELTs are not real teachers in this study. This practice surprised ELTs and did not meet their expectations for their workplace role. Almost every ELT within this study reported that they assumed the role of a tape-recorder at one point in their English teaching career in Japan, which speaks to the dominance of this institutional practice. For instance, Sean said that the moments in which he did not feel
like a real teacher were those that involved “the stereotypical human tape recorder type of experience.” Being a tape-recorder referred to instances in which ELTs assumed the role of a literal tape-recorder in which they read, repeated, and increased their rate or pitch in order to assist a team-teacher with pronunciation or “native” sounding English demonstrations. Such experiences highlight English hegemony.

As a socially and politically-motivated construct, English hegemony refers to instances in which the English language dominates other languages in communication (Cooper 1989; Phillipson, 2010; Tsuda, 2008). As a hegemonic force, the English language places an expectation to sound like “standard” native English speakers onto Japanese. This is related to the cultural and social capitals associated with English hegemony in the increasingly globalized world. English hegemony paints the ELT as supreme due to their native accent(s). Therefore, the tape-recorder model for ELTs is valued because it is perceived to help Japanese students obtain a “better” accent, and thus, higher social-standing position and economic advantage within the globalized world market.

Performing the role of a tape-recorder led some ELTs to feel that their job was easy or under-skilled and that their skills were underutilized. Geeta said, “First of all they [team-teachers] end up telling you [ELTs] ‘Please sing faster and faster and faster.’ And I’m only human. I’m not a tape recorder. Finally, I started carrying my own CDs after that.” In order to combat feeling like a tape recorder, Geeta brought her own CDs so she would not have to perform what she deemed as tape recorder functions. This
action shows that Geeta resisted her role and identity as a tape recorder in order to feel more like a real teacher.

Related, Cindy explained that, at times, her job within the classroom was to “run” the tape-recorder. She explained,

The Japanese teacher planned the lesson, what they want to do, and what they were going to do and they would ask me to either have sometimes very minimal input like, ‘Here, read this.’ One time I had a team-teacher who brought this CD to class and had me stand there and play the CD. Really?! Really?! You’re going to do this?! And, yes, they did.

Rather than using Cindy as a tape-recorder, her team-teacher had her operate the tape recorder. Cindy did not do anything else, but operate the tape recorder. This example showcases the preference for standardized (American) English pronunciations to the point that machines are valued over some humans. In this instance, it wasn’t enough that Cindy’s mother tongue was English, but a standardized way of speaking is revealed as the “appropriate” English. Cindy further explained that sometimes her “job” within the classroom is very minimal, such as assigned reading. Cindy expressed shock and disbelief that her team-teacher would have her merely operate the tape recorder, when she could have read the materials to students. This action put Cindy in a position in which she perceived her skills to be underutilized. Additionally, this account highlights this role as surprising. Cindy did not anticipate being a tape-recorder, but the tape-recorder role has emerged as a practice that is common for ELTs to occupy due to the ideology that ELTs are inadequate teachers.
Carlos explained that he thinks the Japanese team-teacher role should be more than that of “press play” on the CD. He said, “I think the Japanese teacher should be a facilitator between the students and being native teacher. Not just press play. Come on, word box. Speak.” Carlos described his preferred role for his team-teacher within this excerpt. At the same time, Carlos revealed his disdain for the tape-recorder model he experienced in previous lessons.

For Sally, being a “tape recorder” involved reading the text-book to the class. Sally said, “There have been plenty of days where I’ve just been reading through the book.” This action of being a tape-recorder by reading the text-book to the class led her to not only feel like a tape-recorder, but to question her role within the classroom. She continued, “And so it’s like, ‘Exactly, why am I here? Why am I getting paid to just reiterate what’s in the book that the teacher could do?’” Sally questioned her job when she acted as a tape-recorder. Feeling as if her Japanese team-teacher could do her job, she questioned her role at work. Such questioning also highlighted Sally’s ignorance of English hegemony at work within her workplace. By thinking that her team-teacher could do what she did, insinuated a lack of larger social, political, and economic factors in motion that position her as the “standard” way of speaking English.

In fact, the “standard” way of speaking mandated an American accent due to the national and geopolitical power of the United States. Two non-American ELTs commented upon accent preference at work. Brent, an ELT from Australia, said, “Sometimes people find me hard to understand, because they were used to hearing an American accent.” He explained that:
The [Japanese] education system wants students to learn English, but they want to learn a very set, standard English. They don’t want to know about different kinds and varieties in different parts of the world. They want to learn English in terms of the best English if you like, and they see that as being a white, upper-middle-class American English.

Brent explained that his Australia accent was not valued in Japan due to the American accent preference. Additionally, Brent commented that co-workers sometimes had difficulty understanding him due to his Australian accent. Brent’s story highlights the dominance of American English preference in Japan as demonstrated by a lack of exposure to non-American accents.

Similarly, Jack, an ELT from the UK, said, “Occasionally, I would be writing something on the board and they [his team-teacher and students] would say, ‘Jack teacher, Jack teacher, you spelt favourite wrong.’” Jack’s comments further revealed that particular ways of speaking and writing are preferred in Japan. Omori (2007) found that exposure to varieties of English actually help expand Japanese foreign language learners’ speech perception flexibility. In other words, by being exposed to a variety of English accents, Japanese English learners understand and are more conversationally flexible when speaking with diverse groups. Therefore, by upholding American English as the “ideal” accent, not only are ELTs put in positions in which they must perform “(North) Americanness,” but also language learners suffer due to a lack of diversity. Such practices raise the question as to what exactly is the purpose of teaching the American accent.
Curious about ways in which accented Japanese influence perceptions of one’s likability, Tsurutani (2012) conducted a study. She had one Japanese and one foreigner, whose native language was English, read a passage in Japanese. She found that her metropolitan and rural Japanese participants favored native Japanese speakers. In fact, participants rated Japanese speakers higher in competence and integrity than the non-native Japanese speaker. This study highlights the value some Japanese people place on accents. Since accent Japanese is perceived to be less desirable, we may speculate accented English may be treated similarly. In fact, Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) found that Japanese disapproved of their accented English and indicated a preference for native English pronunciations. McKenzie (2008) found Japanese speakers of English look to native English speakers to provide “notions of correctness” (p. 151). As Japanese look to native English speakers for “correct” ways of speaking, this notion not only reinforces a “native speaker ideology” (McKenzie, 2008, p. 151), but demonstrates American English hegemony being accepted, upheld, and reinforced in Japanese English education as ELTs are constructed as inadequate teachers in order to perform as tape-recorders. Tsuda (1997) argued that the perception of English as an international, global language in Japan has led to the glorification of native English speakers. This study found that in addition to feeling excluded and not feeling like real teachers, ELTs reported feeling as if they were celebrities.

**Commodification of Culture/ELTs as Celebrities**

As influenced by globalization, culture has become one of the many highly commodified products that are packaged for consumption (Sorrells, 2003, 2013). When
something is commodified, it becomes objectified and can be sold, bought, exchanged, and/or consumed. However, not everything sells easily in today’s globalized world. Sorrells (2003) explained that the marketability of culture “depends upon the ways in which the cultural forms of representation embody difference –difference from the dominant culture” (p. 17). However, what is prized and valued as “difference” is influenced by western domination/imperialism. Continually characterized as a homogenous nation, Japan seeks to import western diversity through the employment of ELTs (McConnell, 2000). Such commodification and importation of “diversity” has the potential to perpetuate stereotypes through identity-freezing (Imahori & Cupach, 2005). Sorrells (2003) explained that fixed or frozen cultural representations limit and reinforce the dominant culture’s belief about the “other.” Since identities are played out in social interaction, limiting one’s expression of her or his avowed identities limits self-presentation choices and capabilities (Goffman, 1959), and can influence one’s abilities to negotiate privacy.

Wilson (1997) noted that preserved fixed or frozen representations of cultural others are vital for the tourism industry that thrives off commodification. McCannell (1976) expressed that commodification “represents an end to the dialogue, a final freezing of ethnic imagery which is both artificial and deterministic” (p. 375). As frozen identities and representations of the exotic emerge, as do categorical differences which otherize individuals and groups alike. Scholars argued that difference constructs “us/them” or “other” categories (Douglas, 1966; Kristeva, 1982). When such categories exist, exclusion emerges, to demarcate the exotic from the norm (Sorrells, 2003). hooks
(1992) said that “difference” is not only marketed as exotic, but is perceived as delicious for consumption by the dominant culture. Exaggerated representations of the exotic not only influence commodification, but demarcate a “standardized difference” only certain types of “others” are able to fit. In this study, ELTs who did not fit stereotypical western, white, heterosexual ELT categories clashed with Japanese co-worker expectations of how ELTs should act: as an international, English-speaking doll.

Over half of the ELTs, within this study, experienced privacy negotiation from a commodified, “celebritized” position. Out of those who mentioned such feelings, most worked in rural settings. One ELT worked solely in an urban area, and five worked in various places within urban and rural settings. A celebritized position, in this study, indicates feelings of being unable to limit their ability to “blend in” and/or control their own private disclosures. For instance, when discussing her rural workplace, Alicia, a Mexican/Caucasian woman, said, “I definitely was an anomaly.” She explained that, “people there, you know students, didn’t see a lot of foreigners and didn’t interact with a lot of foreigners and the teachers there weren’t used to having a regular foreign English teacher in the school.” Alicia explained that she felt like an “anomaly” at work since her students and co-workers had not had much exposure to foreigners. Similarly, Cindy said, “I’m kind of the cultural oddity.” These demarcations of difference, as well as terms ELTs used such as, “celebrity, rock star, entertainer, clown, or Disney character” describe their perceived celebritized positionality. Such feelings of “otherness” led many ELTs to conceptualize themselves as “famous” or as “celebrities” within their communities, and, therefore, workplaces. “Celebrity,” within this study, refers to an individual who stands
out within their workplace or receives extra, wanted or unwanted, attention in comparison to one’s co-workers.

“Celebrity,” in this study, also denotes a privilege “token” status. Cloud (1996) described tokens as a “medium of exchange, through which group identity, politics, and resistance are traded for economic and cultural capital within popular cultural spaces. Tokenism glorifies the exception in order to obscure the rules of the game of success in capitalistic society” (p. 123). Kanter (1977a, 1977b) described three general tokenism processes: (a) performance pressures, (b) boundary heightening, and (c) role entrapment. Performance pressures result from high exposure or visibility. Boundary heightening occurs when exaggerated and sometimes polarized differences are highlighted between and dominant group members and the tokenized individual/group. Similar to Imahori and Cupach’s (2005) identity freezing, role entrapment emerges through stereotypes of the token as portrayed to the dominant group. In other words, “Tokenism is likely to be found wherever a dominant group is under pressure to share privilege, power, or other desirable commodities with a group which is excluded” (Cloud, 1996, p. 123). Extending existing literature on tokenism (Cloud, 1996; Flores, 2011; Kanter, 1977a, 1997b; Kelly, 2007; Skerski, 2007), the “celebrity token,” in this study, highlights ways in which dominant group members, such as ELTs, experience tokenization as minorities. Due to the influence of globalization and English hegemony, ELTs might be viewed as a source of envy and/or admiration, with their Japanese counter-parts seeking to capitalize off their (the ELTs’) commodified difference such as accent, culture, heritage, ethnicity, or race.
Celebrity status led some ELTs to feel “under the spotlight” and, thus, predominately occupy the frontstage. Celebrities, or individuals in the public eye, may have fewer privacy protections (Schoeman, 1992). For some ELTs, like Steve, a Pilipino-American man, this came as an unwelcome social position. Steve and I discussed the fact that in both of our rural work settings we would hear people say our name, but then were never included in the conversation, which was, most often, in Japanese. I asked Steve why he did not like this. He said, “It’s the spotlight. I don’t like being in the spotlight, Nate. I hate it!! I don’t know. I hate being in the spotlight! I don’t want to bring attention to myself.” Steve’s feelings of being a celebrity “in the spotlight” were heightened when co-workers discussed him in front of him without informing him of the conversation. Having experienced a similar situation, Aarti, an Indian-American woman, tried to make sense of this action. She said, “I don’t know if it’s our lives are more interesting or something, if that’s why they want to talk about us, because like they imagined our lives are really glamorous or something.” Aarti’s use of the word “glamorous” revealed that she not only felt like a celebrity, but perceived her co-workers as to being interested in her life due to her perceived celebritized position.

Being a celebrity was not all glitz and glam for my participants. One ELT mentioned feeling more like a “D-list celebrity” than anything else. When discussing his job as an ELT, Joshua, a white/Brazilian man, said, “It’s kind of like being a minor celebrity, or like a D-list celebrity.” He explained, “In that some people would be like, ‘Oh yeah, you’re cool. I know you. You are that foreigner.’ But then other people be like, ‘I’ve never heard of you. I don’t give a damn.’” Joshua’s analogy of being a “D-list
celebrity” highlights differences in perception from conversational partners. Not everyone thinks of ELTs like Joshua as a celebrity, but some do due to his foreign status.

This celebritized positionality reflects one way in which ELTs are culturally commodified in accordance with their race, ethnicity, native-English speaker, and/or nationality. This commodification of culture in aspects outside of the Japanese co-worker-ELT relationship influenced their privacy management with Japanese co-workers. When discussing our shared experiences with living in a small Japanese town, I asked Stephanie, a white/Cuban woman, why she thought her co-workers would ask her personal questions, such as the story shared in Chapter Five about her boyfriend. She said,

My hypothesis on that, is that we [ELTs] are foreign and they [Japanese co-workers] don’t treat us how they would treat other [Japanese] people. Kind of a commodity that they have questions about. And there are two types of people: one is it they are too scared to ever ask anything, and the other is because you are foreign and they can literally ask you anything or speak to you about anything.

Stephanie believed that she was treated differently because of her foreign status. In other words, Stephanie experienced commodification due to her nationality. This feeling rendered her unable to acquire desired privacy levels. In fact, she believed that her commodification put her in a position where she could be asked intrusive questions by co-workers as mentioned in Chapter 5.

Being a foreigner led one ELT to speak of his celebrity status as a “tokenized” individual. After a trip to a neighboring country, Juan, a self-identified genderqueer,
Mexican person, was asked by his principal if he went for the “call girls.” Juan said, “he felt a little too comfortable with me and sometimes I feel I get tokenized as a foreigner; it’s a person they can say stuff to because they wouldn’t say that stuff to each other, so that was a little frustrating.” Juan’s experience with feeling like a “token” foreigner, led him to feel as if he could be asked anything, especially private details about his sex life. This frustrated Juan due to the unequal treatment he perceived at work. In other words, since his colleagues are not asked the same questions by his principal, he further felt like a tokenized individual with minimal privacy rights. Such perceived invasion and questioning brought Juan’s backstage to the front spotlight.

Navigating the Front/Back Stage

Individuals within a “celebritized position” must learn to cope with the scrutiny of the public gaze. Similar to Murphy’s (2003) ethnographic observations of female performers, ELTs experience a dialectic of agency and constraint in which ELTs are simultaneously subjects and objects of attention and inquiry in their celebritized position. I argue that English hegemony infuses an ELT’s positionality with agency that is constrained through private inquiries. After all, individuals in the public eye, such as celebrities, can have fewer privacy protections (Schoeman, 1992), a situation influences personal narratives and related disclosure decisions (Beck, Aubuchon, McKenna, Ruhl, & Simmons, 2013). The double-edged role of being free agents, and, at the same time, constrained individuals, puts ELTs in a position that renders navigating one’s front and back stage difficult. Goffman (1959) explained that it is natural to keep back regions closed and/or hidden to members of the audience. Keeping back regions as “safe terrain”
constructs a space in which one can retreat to be his/her true self (Goffman, 1959, 1963). In fact, some ELTs’ “celebrity feeling” was due to the perception of a minimized backstage. Since much of their public life is private, this led some ELTs to be in a position in which they must continually occupy the frontstage of their life, with little “time off.”

For most of the ELTs with whom I spoke, work is not confined to their school system. In fact, ELTs work place often involves their community persona, which means that ELTs are both at work at school and in their neighborhood market. For instance, Joshua said, “I felt like my work persona was something I had to put on outside of work and just to be kind of nice and professional with people.” Joshua explained that his agency was constrained due to feeling the need to put on his work persona outside of his work was “kind of the Japanese idea of honne (本音) and tatemae (建前).” He explained, “honne is like your true self and tatemae is like the face you put on for other people when it becomes a social situation, like you might meet somebody and know them for a long time, but never actually know their honne kind of true self underneath. So, I felt like I had to put on airs a lot.” Joshua felt that he had to occupy the frontstage outside of work by “putting on airs” outside of his workplace, thus speaking to feeling watched or constrained. Such a move put Joshua into a position in which his true self was not likely known by his conversational participants. In other words, Joshua felt as if he must continually be occupying his frontstage with little time in his backstage. This occurred due to his celebritized position within his community and work as a foreigner.
For some ELTs, like Sara, seeing individuals related to her workplace reminded her of her workplace persona. In other words, like Joshua, she too would occupy the *tatemae*, or frontstage when she met people from her work outside of work. Sara said, “I certainly felt when I checked out of work that I checked out.” Sara felt as if she could leave her front stage performance when she left work. However, she was not always able to do so. She explained, “Every now and then you would go home and get ready to go out, and as you’re all dressed up to go somewhere, you run into a student. So, it brings it back home in a weird way.” Within this excerpt Sara revealed navigating the front and backstage due to constrained agency. Sara noted that being dressed up to go somewhere, but then running into the watchful eye of someone like a student, brought back her frontstage persona due to the constraining gaze of her local public. Although she was able to retreat to her backstage when she left work, if she met someone from her workplace, it did lead her to abandon her backstage momentarily to occupy the front stage once more. Her usage of “in a weird way” indicated that this action was surreal and unexpected from her cultural expectations for life beyond the workplace. In other words, Sara’s cultural expectations were different than what occurred in her daily life as an ELT in a rural location occupying a celebritized position. Sara did not anticipate her celebritized position and need to continually manage her public life.

Some ELTs were only able to leave their front stage within the comfort of their home. Samantha said that, “The only place that I can truly be myself is in my apartment. Once I walk out of my apartment. I am wearing this smiley foreigner face.” Like Joshua and Sara, Samantha denoted her apartment as her backstage; a place in which she could
be her true self and to escape the constraining Japanese gaze. However, once she left her
apartment, she assumed the frontstage. Samantha referred to her frontstage as her
“smiley foreigner face.” This face was only able to be taken off when she was within her
apartment, highlighting the importance of Samantha’s space to her. Samantha’s
discussion of her “smiley foreigner face” hinted at actions ELTs do to manage their
celebrity persona. Other ELTs discussed performing certain actions or (White) roles that
led them to feel like a celebrity, thus diminishing their ability to successfully navigate
privacy boundaries.

Performing the (White) Celebrity Role

Even though English is conceived as a global language, meaning it is not owned,
per say, by European-looking speakers, Japanese students maintain the belief that
“standard English” should be taught by European-looking native speakers of English
(Bailey, 2007; Fujita, 2009; Kobayashi, 2010, 2011). In fact, Japanese students perceive
intercultural communication as contact with white, native (American) English speakers
(Kobayashi, 2011). This ideology continues to be reinforced throughout Japan when
English education entities seek to attract students and clients by hiring white teachers
(Bailey, 2007). These findings highlight the dominance of whiteness, and associated
white privileges, throughout the English education system in Japan.

Whiteness can be understood as: (a) socially constructed location of structural and
racial privilege, (b) a standpoint from which whites experience, not only themselves, but
their social world and others, and (c) “a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked
and unnamed” (Frankenburg, 1993, p. 1). Whiteness studies offer novel ways of talking
about and conceptualizing inequity and privilege (Wray, 2006). However, such studies offer unique challenges. Focusing upon whiteness presents the danger of (re)centering whiteness as the normalized position from which to view all intercultural communication interactions (Nakayama & Martin, 2007). Additionally, ignoring the race/ethnicity of whites leaves a story half-told and “a picture unfinished” (Martin & Davis, 2001, p. 299).

As discussed in Chapter Three, 25 of the 38 ELTs within this study self-identified as being white or Caucasian; four ELTs identified as being half-white. Some white ELTs reported feeling like a celebrity when performing certain action such as signing autographs, being on television programs, or meeting “fans.” White ELTs reported feeling like celebrities more than their non-White counterparts. For example, Daniel, a white man, said that he felt like a celebrity because he gave students autographs. He said, “There was definitely that celebrity persona…I signed at least three or 400 kids books every day.” He explained that “Every time I went to the school, they would ask me for signatures and it would be the whole class would line up and I’d sign their notebooks.” This became a ritual he would perform in each of his classrooms that served as participation encouragement and acted as a reward for speaking English.

Daniel spoke about his performance at school as a way in which he performed his celebrity role. Daniel described himself as a “Disneyland character.” He said that by performing his Disney character role, it helped him meet classroom expectations. He explained,

If you went to Disneyland and Mickey Mouse is just sitting on a sofa and eating a sandwich and didn’t want to talk to anyone, you would be somewhat
disappointed. But if I am going to the school I have to be larger-than-life, that is one of the reasons I’m there. Not quite clown, I hope, but a character if you like. Daniel explained that he views his job and reason for him being in Japan is to occupy a Disney character role within the classroom. Additionally, within this excerpt, Daniel compares himself with Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse is an imaginative character that captivates the fantasy life of both children and adults. By comparing himself to Mickey, Daniel commented upon his perceived role in Japan and at work. The idea of Mickey Mouse sitting at a couch stands out, and it also seems odd. Daniel knows that, as a foreigner, he stands out within his workplace as an exotic other. He believed that he was brought to Japan to perform this larger-than-life character role, even though it is not necessarily him. He said, “So, I had that persona which I don’t think was 100% me outside of the job, and I guess it was very similar to being a celebrity, but I like to think there was no ego attached to it.” Daniel noted that his celebrity role wasn’t really “him.” He compares his role at work to being a celebrity, but without the perceived ego that accompanies being a celebrity. He was also careful to contrast his character role with the “clown” analogy other ELTs used. For Daniel, being a clown held a negative connotation. When discussing what his job is like, he said, “Actually, it’s a negative analogy, but often a word that was used is that you go in and you are a children’s entertainer here, you are a clown.” Daniel resists this perceived negative analogy by viewing his work as a character.

Not all ELTs agreed with Daniel’s term usage. Brent, a white ELT, referred to his role as being an “ELT clown” whose job was to entertain students. Brent said, as part of
that role, his students were encouraged by his Japanese co-workers to ask him questions. He said, “They [students] were encouraged in [asking questions] that by [Japanese] teachers. That, this is the ELT clown whose been brought in to perform for them [students]. Not human. They aren’t a real person. They are just here to entertain us.” Brent demarcates his role as one in which he is an entertainer for students. His use of being “brought in to perform” for students hints at a perception that he is an imported entertainer for students. In other words, he views his role as a cultural commodity that has been imported in order to satisfy and entertain Japanese children. This role, however, wasn’t necessarily upsetting for him. Laughing, he explained that, “To a certain extent, I was willing to sacrifice some of my privacy for their education.” For Brent, his saw his role, as a cultural entertainment product, as potentially beneficial to Japanese education. By being willing to “sacrifice” his privacy for Japanese child entertainment, he viewed it as a way in which to educate them. In other words, by occupying a celebritized position, Brent was able to educate Japanese children about different cultures from a culturally commodified and celebritized role.

However, not all ELTs were okay with sacrificing their privacy at work, especially amongst co-workers. One ELT offered the provocative idea that ELT privacy is a source of entertainment for Japanese co-workers. In other words, being a celebrity for Carlos, a white man, involved being an entertainer. However, his privacy became the brunt of the “joke.” He explained,

I’m very private myself, but people [co-workers] know something private about me. They will mention it. If anything, Japan taught me to be very careful about
that [disclosing information at work]. [Being private] Became like a second skin, because people will play with whatever information they get from you. It’s like a source of entertainment for them.

For Carlos, his very being became the celebrity performance. In Carlos’ eyes, to speak about his private information was “entertainment” for his co-workers. Therefore, performing his daily functions became his “performance” which co-workers watched in order to find later entertainment value. This not only led Carlos to actively monitor his privacy, but to develop a “second skin” in which he managed his privacy. Carlos’ example highlights that for some ELTs, occupying a celebrity role encourages some to try manage their privacy in order to not be the center of entertainment value at work.

In addition to providing autographs and performing entertaining roles for students or co-workers, some ELTs reported being a part of local television stations. Kelly, a half Japanese ELT, explained, “They [the local TV station] found out that I could speak [Japanese] and they got really excited. And were like, ‘We can do a series where we follow you around.’” Within this series, they recorded a personal interview she had with the mayor and her classroom teaching. She said, “They broadcasted that at least five times.” I asked Kelly how it felt being on TV. She said, “I would rather not think about it. I never wanted to watch it.” She said, “That kind of is why I feel like everyone in the town knows who I am, whereas I don’t know who they are. And they know a lot about me, because it’s like personal.” She said that the television interviews asked her questions such as, “Where you’re from? What’s your race? How old are you? What do your parents do? What do you think about teaching?” This exposure leads Kelly to be
easily recognized by people within her community. As indicated, it also puts Kelly in a position where her community knows more about her, than she knows about them. Kelly is in the spotlight. This spotlight brings about a lot of attention. She explained, “I meet people even if I’m walking on the streets, and sometimes they talk to me. It’s like, ‘Oh, I know you. You are Kelly.’” This outside attention influenced Kelly’s co-worker relationships. She said, “They’re [co-workers] always saying how I’m a celebrity.” In fact, they jokingly tease her. She said, “They call me a famous person and stuff like that…it’s hard, I don’t want to toot my own horn.” Kelly does not want to “toot her own horn.” In other words, Kelly doesn’t want all of the attention. She perceives the local TV coverage, “fans” meeting her on the street, and co-worker teasing as attention that puts her in a spotlight and position in which she is paraded as ideal. In other words, the celebrity role puts Kelly in a glamourized spotlight in which she doesn’t necessarily want, thus highlighting the position being a celebrity creates for ELTs.

Like Kelly, meeting “fans” led Edward to feel like a celebrity. In other words, the very action of meeting individuals who were excited to see and/or meet them left some ELTs to feel celebrity-like. Edward, a white man, said he “Absolutely” felt like a celebrity, an analogy actually used throughout his programs training to describe his role at work. He explained,

It was crazy, like, day one I was walking up the hill to school and there were gangs of teenage girls hanging out of the windows screaming, and I will never forget. It was just absolute carnage. Literally, be like fucking Justin Bieber or
something. And I walked up the hill [to school] and remember thinking, ‘This will make a great diary entry.’

Edward experienced feeling like a celebrity at work due to his treatment by students. Such attention and greeting screams he received on the first day of work at his school placed him into a position in which he felt like other celebrities like Justin Bieber. In other words, the screams of his teenage girl students, echoed, in his mind, that of what celebrities like Bieber experience in concert halls and public appearances. Being greeted by screaming “fans” led Edward to his spotlight performance in his workplace. ELT celebritized positionality was not only influenced by performing certain actions, several ELTs commented upon a racialized component that influenced their workplace role and, therefore, experience with privacy.

*Whiteness*

As previously mentioned, whiteness is a socially constructed standpoint and set of cultural practices from which whites experience their structural and racial privileges which often go unmarked (Frankenburg, 1993). In brief, whiteness scholarship emerged from white trash and critical race studies (Kennedy, Middleton, & Ratcliffe, 2005). Offering a lens to critique (mis)representations of impoverished white culture and bodies, white trash studies gained popularity throughout the 1980s and 1990s, whereas critical race studies emerged in the 1970s to transform race, racism, and power relationships, as well as critique/expose racial hierarchy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In this study, several ELTs connected their celebrity experience, with their race. In other words, for some ELTs their spotlight, or lack thereof, was brought about by their racial/ethnic
identities. Such discussions revealed one’s privileged white identity position, or lack thereof, influenced their experiences as celebrities, and, ultimately, foreigners in Japan. Allen (2011) claimed communication plays “both oppressive and liberatory roles in the quest for racial equality and harmony” (p. 90). Therefore, understanding ways in which ELTs discussed their whiteness offers greater insight into ways their race influenced their privacy management.

Like Kelly, Samantha, a Caucasian female, was also on television as a co-host for an English news segment for her local community. However, unlike Kelly, Samantha’s discussion of her role revealed her white privilege. When discussing her celebritized position, she said, “I never wanted to be famous.” She explained that after her third year of living in Japan,

I am much better at handling all the attention now than I was when I first arrived, and it was something I went home after my first year and I was like, ‘Why isn’t anyone staring at me?’ Because I fit back in America, and I enjoyed fitting back in.

Samantha was shocked not to receive the same attention that she did in Japan in her home country. Samantha, at the same time, revealed her white privilege in U.S. society. She commented that she enjoyed fitting back in, without the extra attention. In other words, Samantha enjoyed being a part of the majority group in her hometown. Being a racial minority was a new experience for Samantha that led her to stand out and to receive attention for her racial difference.
Katie discussed her role as a celebrity entertainer at work in relation to her
Caucasian skin. She said that her role in her English conversation school with adults was
“kind of like being an entertainer.” She explained,

With adults, you’re [ELTs] kinda like an entertainer. I’m a boring white girl, look
at me. I have blue eyes and pretty skin, like, you know, (Laughter.). It’s a little
unhealthy, I guess. Yeah, [I] actually had old people that would be like, ‘Your
skin is so white,’ and I would say, ‘Just so you know that’s kind of an insult to us
[white people] we like to have tan skin, we think it looks healthy when you are
tan.

As Katie told this story she rubbed her arm back and forth. I asked if her co-workers and
students touched her. She said, “Yes, they would like caress my pale, soft, white, skin.”
She explained that it made her feel, “Uncomfortable, just that they were so amazed by it.”
Katie’s discussion of her role as an entertainer revealed that part of the entertainment
process for Katie involved using her white skin as a focal point. This may not necessarily
have been an intentional focal point from Katie’s perspective, but her use of “boring
white girl” indicates her whiteness This comment further speaks to a perceived lack of
perception of racial identity, which speaks to her experience with being a member of a
dominant racial group in her home country, and, therefore, her expectation of being the
norm. She denoted her students’ fascination with her pale, white skin as “unhealthy,”
which speaks to slight recognition, or discomfort, with her racial identity taking center
stage at work.
Sara also commented upon her white identity within Japan. She explained that for non-Japanese in Japan, they are racialized and assumed to speak English. She said,

I think the thing is there probably isn’t a white person in Japan or non-Japanese person in Japan who hasn’t been used at some point by some random stranger for an English lesson, like, ‘Hi, you are on the train beside me. Can I practice my English?’ And so in that way it [being a celebrity] follows you around.

In this excerpt, Sara described that her white identity led Japanese to perceive her as an English speaker. She explicitly demarcated the racial line between Japanese and non-Japanese people. She explained that one’s race often leads to the perceptions that foreigners teach, or are able to teach English, even when in unassuming positions such as trains. Being “on the job” or perceived to be “always at work” is influenced by such moments as mentioned in Chapter Three. For Sara, being a Caucasian foreigner is a large part of her identity due to being non-Japanese. Her white identity leads Japanese to believe she is an English-speaker.

A part of the PROGRAM NAME is not just teaching English; it’s about cultural immersion, or whatever they call it. And it’s like the Britney Spears effect; you might not be on tour on stage, but you’re kind of an ambassador. So, you are always aware of how you’re being perceived. So, in that way I don’t think you can really switch off the alien feeling. It kind of follows you around.

She referred to her white celebrity position as the “Britney Spears effect.” This referred to the idea that even though she might not be performing (a.k.a. teaching English), her celebrity status followed her around in her day-to-day life because of her social
positioning and racial identity that enables her unable to “blend in.” The use of “Britney Spears,” in this excerpt, who is a blonde-haired, white female, also represents the ideal image of a celebrity everyone knows.

Some ELTs commented that they were able to “blend in” due to their Asian background. Dongjing, a Chinese-Canadian, said that she did not feel like a celebrity due to her ability to “blend in.” She said, “I was really able to blend in a lot of the times. I mean, even on the train, or if I was going anywhere everyone would approach my [white] friends, but not me.” Dongjing did not experience celebrity life like her white colleagues. She not only was able to “blend in” in public spaces such as trains, but she was not approached by strangers like her “white friends.” Since Dongjing did not experience her position like non-Asian descent ELTs, she did not perceive herself to be a celebrity.

Not all Asian-descent ELTs felt as Dongjing did. Speaking in the third person, Aarti, an Indian-American, said “you stand out because there are no brown people.” Additionally, Jennifer, an Okinawan-American, explained that if she goes to the grocery store, students recognize her, thus highlighting her celebritized position within her community. She said, “They recognize me, and I’ll be like, ‘Oh, I forgot your name,’ which might be like being a celebrity, but not necessarily. I don’t get on the white pedestal of whiteness that a lot of people do.” Although Jennifer noticed celebrity-type feelings and experiences other ELTs commented upon, such as being noticed in a grocery store, she did not necessarily view her entire role as celebrity because of the missing “white pedestal of whiteness” other ELTs occupy. The “white pedestal” or glorified elevated positionality was something other ELTs noticed.
Ren, a Chinese-American, said that she wasn’t put on the white pedestal as much because she wasn’t white. She explained,

Personally, maybe because I’m not white, I don’t feel as much that I’m put on a pedestal or like you know…I don’t get people taking pictures of me. I’m not a rock star in that respect. And honestly, to me personally, I don’t know if I would do the PROGRAM NAME if I was white. Because I don’t want people to like me, or like treat me a certain way just because of my face. My outside.

Ren’s comments denote a clear demarcation between how white and ELTs of color are treated. Being put on the white pedestal, from Ren’s perspective, definitely brings about the “rock star life.” Ren noted that sometimes her white ELT colleagues would have photos taken of them in public spaces, such as baseball games. Although Ren may be a “rock star” in other ways, she did not receive the “fandom” her white peers did. Ren also noted that she would possibly not do her current teaching program if she was white. Ren perceived that white ELTs were liked by many merely because of their skin color.

**ELT Summary**

ELT privacy management is enabled and constrained by the construction of not being a real teacher, as well as being a commodified racial celebrity. The ideological construction of not being a real teacher led ELTs to doubt the meaningfulness of their work, which disqualified workplace relationships as importance. As demonstrated throughout excerpts from ELTs, “the commodification of cultures creates barriers to intercultural relations and alliances” (Sorrells, 2003, p. 43). Unequal power relations and frozen identities as a cultural “other” negated the space for intercultural dialogue
regarding privacy management. What could be a space for understanding and intercultural exchange dissolved into an appropriation of western culture reminiscent of colonization of a new kind. For example, western cultural values, norms, and assumptions are expanded as countries such as the U.S. expand cultural products and corporations (Yudice, 2003). In the modern-day global market, as culture is commodified, “other” identities may become static as the ideal caricature of a culture is sought after and consumed. Japanese co-workers, in this instance, appear to be victims of a “colonized native” ministry of education that seeks to import western thinking and ways of speaking for the “proper” English. Cloud (1996) described that a connection exists, “between tokenism and hegemony: Tokenism is the calculated, negotiated response of a ‘dominant group under pressure to share privilege,’ just as hegemony refers to the attempts of the dominant culture to incorporate challenges without having to change substantially itself” (p. 123). Such positionality puts ELTs in a dialectic of agency and constraint which complicates privacy negotiations. As controlled and controlling agents, this dialectic complicates ELTs’ abilities to navigate their intercultural workplaces while managing privacy boundaries. As ELTs encounter inquiries from Japanese co-workers they are rendered controlled beings that are unable to successfully management privacy boundaries on their own; they need assistance from Japanese co-workers. Next, I will discuss findings from Japanese co-workers’ interview discourses regarding what enables and constrains ELT and Japanese co-worker privacy management.
Japanese Co-worker Perspectives

A cultural discourse analysis of 38 Japanese interview transcripts revealed an ideological construction that enables and constrains ELT-Japanese co-worker privacy management. First, I will explain the ideological construction of “ELTs as guest teachers.” Second, I will discuss institutional practices such as hiring non-Japanese speaking ELTs aids in legitimizing language barriers that exclude ELTs. Third, I will discuss institutional contractual practices that minimize ELTs and Japanese co-workers time for relationship construction, and, therefore, space in which to create a successful co-owner relationship.

Construction of ELTs as Guest Teachers

In this section, I will discuss the ideological construction of ELTs as “guest teachers.” This ideology functions to validate ELT exclusion from co-worker relationships that, ultimately, negate successful privacy management opportunities. This ideology is supported and strengthened through language barriers and time constraints, which legitimize ELT exclusion by highlighting the temporality of ELT positions.

Similar to some ELTs’ perceptions, some Japanese co-workers commented that ELTs were not “real teachers.” Co-workers used terms such as “volunteer or guest” to define an ELT’s role, which speak to the temporary nature of ELTs’ positions and constructs ELTs as under-skilled, or unskilled, guests whom should be tolerated for a relatively short period of time. Co-workers’ talk of ELTs is reminiscent of Simmel’s (1950) concept of the stranger. Simmel (1950) defined the stranger as not “the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather is the person who comes today and stays
tomorrow” (Simmel, 1950, p. 402). In other words, seeing the ELT as guest indicates that s/he is not completely part of the organization, but will spend some time in Japan. Strangers, like ELTs, do not completely conform to the norms of their new environment and a stranger’s interpersonal relationships are characterized by social distance (Rogers, 1999; Simmel, 1950). Understanding ways in which ELTs are constructed as “strangers” or, in the words of Japanese co-workers “guests,” offers insight into exclusionary practices that constrain ELT privacy management with Japanese co-workers. Tafarodi, Shaughnessy, Lee, Leung, Ozaki, Morio, and Yamaguchi (2009) explained that interaction with cultural outsiders “may well be avoided because of ignorance of their background and social position, and the resulting lack of a relational frame for appropriate conduct” (p. 570). At the same time, xenophobia diminishes with education, time, and personal contact with foreigners (Nukaga, 2006). In Japan, cultural outsiders, such as ELTs, remain an object of interest. Doi (1981) explained cultural outsiders can attract curiosity, excitement, suspicion, and/or fear in Japan. In other words, as guests, ELTs experience exclusion due to xenophobia, but, at the same time remain an object of interest from a socially distant position.

In this study, when Japanese co-workers positioned ELTs as guests, they excluded them from privacy management opportunities. The hesitation to let ELTs take charge of English education within the Japanese classrooms, let alone English education curriculum, denotes hesitation that speaks to a fear of Western imperialism and xenophobia. Hu and McKay (2012) explained that English in Japan is recognized as important for trade, globalization, and Westernization but, at the same time, is perceived
to threaten Japanese identity, culture, and traditions. Such thinking puts ELTs in a position in which their presence is both a blessing and curse. In other words, ELTs may be welcomed and/or unwelcomed guests within their workplaces due to differing perceptions of their role in Japanese society. This contradictory construction speaks to ambivalence towards ELTs and English education in Japan.

Ambivalence towards ELTs and English education in Japan may reinforce Japanese identity. Hashimoto (2007) argued that “English is adopted only as a tool so that the values and traditions embedded in the Japanese culture will be retained, and cultural independence will be ensured” (p. 27). Constructing ELTs as guests enables Japanese co-workers, and particularly team-teachers, to instill a sense of “Japaneseness” into their students by contrasting Japan from the “other,” or in this case, “the west” (Yoshino, 2002; Kobayashi, 2013). Reinforcing this perspective, Kobayashi (2013) argued that Japan’s English education system has great success in the (re)production of monolingual Japanese “who willingly ascribe their poor English skills to their pure, genetic, innate Japaneseness” (p. 6). Maintaining ELTs as guests excludes them from occupying a true teaching role.

Narita, a team-teacher, explained that his ELT “is assistant language teacher which means he or she cannot work alone.” He described what he said to new ELT colleagues,

You [ELTs] have to always work with other qualified Japanese teachers so it’s team teaching, but every time I work with ELTs, at the very beginning ask them,
‘Okay, as a rule, I am your boss, and you are assistant, but in fact, in class, please take a lead. You know, I will be the assistant.’

Such an action places ELTs in a mixed, odd, and downright contradictory position. On the one hand, some ELTs are told that they are not a real teacher and require supervision by a Japanese team-teacher, but on the other hand, they are put in charge of not only the entire class, but now coordinating an assistant. This type of structure sends mixed messages that exclude ELTs.

Additionally, lack of training led some co-workers to perceive ELTs as not real teachers. Sasaki said, “They [Japanese co-workers] do not think they [ELTs] are real teachers.” I asked her why and she said that the difference is “having a license or not, and based on the curriculum the government decided or not.” Sasaki stated that licenses are what defined a real teacher for her colleagues. In addition to a license, Sasaki commented upon curriculum used by governments. Sasaki further described,

ELTs are kind of a guest, so they teachers want to be nice in front of them. They are also very curious how they want to do something. So like you know, they still want to know something about ELTs, but they do not want to ask that to ELTs directly, maybe even if they speak English they won’t do that…foreign people are still kind of special people…like they treat them as a guest and like if it’s a Japanese guest we do not ask some private questions.

Sasaki revealed that even though ELTs are perceived as guests by her co-workers, her co-workers still want to know ELTs. However, they do not ask them questions, even if they speak English. Sasaki also revealed a difference between how foreign guests and
Japanese guests are treated. For Sasaki, she revealed that her co-workers would ask ELTs anything, but commented that they would not act similarly to Japanese guests, thus revealing a special position ELTs occupy, which makes it culturally appropriate to ask ELTs questions that may not be asked to Japanese.

Tanaka said, “ELT is a kind of guest for schools.” He explained that they have two primary roles within the school system. He explained, “One is to just teach English, or in elementary school not to teach, but just get used to the English atmosphere is one role. And second role is to introduce their cultural background. I call them like a cultural ambassador.” Tanaka believed that ELTs’ jobs were to expose students to English and Western culture(s). Such belief is reminiscent of the JET Programme’s aim to promote international understanding via cultural exchange. Taking the form of an “ambassador” or a representative puts ELTs in an honorary position that differs from the position of co-workers. Shipton (2010) said, “Native speakers do possess something that is more powerful than syntactic mastery over the language—they possess cultural schema of understanding that goes beyond language” (p. 510). This positionality further demarcates ELTs from Japanese co-workers by marking them as “special guests” and, therefore, on unequal terrain.

One teacher believed the ways in which ELTs were perceived was unhealthy. Onishi, a team-teacher, believed that perceiving ELTs and Japanese co-workers differently was not good. She said, “Some teachers still think that ELTs, ELT is not the same as Japanese worker, to me it’s not too good because ELT also is our co-worker.” Onishi did not state whether she did or did not believe such a thing, but she spoke of
other co-workers. However, she did view this perception as bad due to ELTs being co-workers. In other words, the perception that ELTs were not on a level playing field with Japanese co-workers created an imbalanced work relationship. Such demarcation and “guest” label legitimized exclusion and reinforces the belief that relationships need not be built. Further, constructing ELTs as guests renders them unavailable to negotiate privacy. The dominance of the guest teacher ideology makes it hard to consider alternatives (e.g., ELTs as integral and equal players in the Japanese English education system) and, therefore, removes the ability to re-imagine a new normal. Next, I will discuss how the ideology of ELTs as guest teachers is supported through language barriers that legitimize ELT exclusionary practices.

Language Barriers Legitimizing Excluding ELTs

Language barriers constrain ELT and Japanese co-worker relationships as they reinforce the ideology that ELTs are guest teachers, which legitimize excluding ELTs. Yamamoto said, “Because communication is difficult we just don’t talk.” If Japanese co-workers and ELTs are unable to communicate effectively in order to share meaning and understanding, their relationships suffer. In fact, Fennelly and Luxton (2011) found in a survey that more than 30% of Japanese team-teachers claimed their team-teaching classes with ELTs were not going well due to their inability to communicate with ELTs. As mentioned within Chapter Three, only eight ELTs participating in this study spoke Japanese fluently, meaning that the majority of ELTs I interviewed did not speak Japanese on a fluent level. In fact, ELTs are not expected to speak Japanese fluently while working in Japan due to English hegemony. Butler and Iino (2005) explain:
In the past decade, Japan has experienced economic stagnation and struggled to find solutions to overcome the causes of its economic malaise. A common political discourse which purports to address this economic downturn has been that Japan has no choice but to accept globalization, and hence is forced to modify its economic and social structure to compete with other economic powers in the world. It is widely believed that Japanese people must be equipped with better communicative skills in English and that raising the ability to communicate with foreigners is a key remedial measure to boost Japan’s position in the international economic and political arena (p. 256).

Despite English being the de facto global language, among participants in this study only five Japanese co-workers spoke English, thus highlighting the potential difficulties and frustrations these two parties have experienced within their relationship. That is, the contradictory expectations regarding Japanese and English language abilities contributed and sustained the pervasive language barriers. Also, it is under the circumstances of great language barriers that the Japanese co-workers and ELTs were supposed to work together and “team teach.” In reality, discourses of frustrations from many Japanese co-workers suggest that they did not and could not “team teach” with the ELTs with whom they could not properly communicate.

Language barriers can also be an excuse to avoid intercultural negotiations, as well as an excuse for excluding ELTs. Such frustrations created more work and stress for Japanese team-teachers, which was difficult for them due to their other-oriented,
collectivist cultural upbringing. For instance, Fujii said that the relationship between ELTs and Japanese co-workers was “difficult.” He explained,

It’s difficult. Many Japanese teachers can speak English. (Laughter.) They can’t communicate with ELT teacher. ELT, so they say only, ‘Hi. Hello. Good Morning.’ Only that. (Laughter.) We can’t talk many private things or work things, or they can’t talk about it with ELT.

Fujii, an English team-teacher who taught with multiple ELTs in an urban setting, said that not knowing English created difficulties for the Japanese co-worker-ELT relationship. Not being able to speak the same language disabled Japanese co-workers, and vice-versa, from speaking with ELTs about their private lives and work. Fujii also noted that this language barrier prohibited the two from speaking. Fujii said, “they can’t talk about it [private things] with ELT.” This statement noted that even though they can’t speak about it with each other, doesn’t mean that the Japanese co-worker couldn’t communicate with someone else about the lesson or ELT. At the same time, Fujii’s laughter spoke volumes to the “subtly” of English hegemony. His laughter revealed frustration since he could not demand ELTs speak Japanese since English is the reigning international language.

Similarly, Hidaka, a supervisor for an ELT-recruitment and placement company, explained that the language barrier between ELTs and Japanese co-workers influenced their relationship. She said,

It’s really hard for them [Japanese co-workers] to try to communicate with them [ELTs]. If they cannot speak Japanese or if they cannot speak English it doesn’t
matter. If it is difficult to communicate with people then it’s hard to have a good relationship.

Hidaka explained that not being able to communicate causes relational difficulty by not being able to construct or nurture a healthy relationship. Higa, a team-teacher, said, “Some teachers hate English and don’t want to talk to ELTs because they hate English.” Higa’s comments highlight the influence language barriers have on communication. In Higa’s case, since his ELT did not speak Japanese, very few co-workers wanted to speak with his school’s ELT because some teachers in his workplace despised English. These Japanese co-workers all hinted upon the importance of one individual within this intercultural relationship to know the other’s language well. Without one person knowing the other’s language well, good relationships and privacy management are difficult.

As Japanese co-workers discussed language barriers, they mentioned it in the form of advice. In other words, learning Japanese was viewed as the key to privacy management by Japanese co-workers. For instance, when discussing how ELTs should manage privacy at work, Yoshida, an English teacher with advanced English skills and working in an urban area, said, “If she [her ELT] had spoke, spoken Japanese well, she would have never worry about those [privacy] problems. If she spoke Japanese well, she could use humor or make a joke when she doesn’t want to answer a question.” Yoshida not only recognized the language barrier within this excerpt, but, at the same time, noted that knowing Japanese language is essential to ELT privacy management. Yoshida recommended that ELTs use humor or make jokes to navigate privacy boundaries at
work. Besides language proficiency, this comment assumed speaking Japanese would mean knowing how to handle privacy management the Japanese way: via humor. In addition to language barriers that legitimized ELT exclusion and thus enabling the construction of ELTs as guest teachers, time constraints functioned to support ELTs as guests.

*Time Constraints*

Time constraints further construct the ideology that ELTs are guests and, therefore, should only receive minimal relational attention. In other words, on top of language barriers, many Japanese co-workers and ELTs in this study were expected to work together and “team teach” under great time constraints. In fact, several Japanese co-workers within this study indicated time constraints negatively influenced their relationships with ELTs. Such constraints were the result of inconsistent institutional practices related to (a) Japanese teacher workload and (b) ELT contracts. These co-workers mentioned that they did not have the time needed for relationships to be built in which private information could be shared. Masumoto (2004) uncovered different meanings conceptions of time when examining U.S. interns within Japanese organizations. Similar to Masumoto (2004), this study highlights that Japanese co-workers perceived time is needed in order to construct a beneficial relationship.

*Japanese Teacher Workload.* One barrier to constructing a beneficial relationship from the perspectives of Japanese co-workers is their workload. The Japanese school year begins early April and ends mid to late March. Japanese students must go to school 240 days out of the year, whereas American students go 180 days (Martin, 2004).
Japanese middle school teachers work an average of 55 hours per week (Yang, 1994). Sato and McLaughlin (1992) claimed Japanese teachers spend at least 20 more hours at work than American teachers. In a comparison study of Japanese and American teacher roles, Yang (1994) found that Japanese middle school teachers play a broader role in their students’ (non-)academic development. In fact, Yang (1994) reported:

(1) American teachers allocated a greater proportion of their time to academic work than did Japanese teachers (84.4 percent versus 58.6 percent); (2) Japanese teachers used a larger proportion of their time for nonacademic student-related tasks, such as student guidance and student activities, than did American teachers (28.8 percent versus 10.6 percent); and (3) Japanese teachers spent more time on school management, meetings, and other school-related work than did American teachers. (12.6 percent versus 5 percent)

Additionally, Japanese teachers are considered responsible for “students’ use of vacation time, students’ personal habits and hygiene, and students’ appearance and behavior on and off campus” (Sato & McLaughlin, 1992, p. 360). Although this is not a workload comparison study, these findings highlight the value, importance, and busyness of Japanese teachers’ workloads, which constrain communication with ELTs. Characterized by emotional exhaustion, Japanese nursery teacher burnout is more prevalent than Japanese clerical workers (Hisashige, 1993), which speaks to the strain of being a Japanese teacher. Some Japanese co-workers commented upon Japanese teacher workloads as barriers to communicating and building relationships with ELTs. Onishi, a team-teacher with ELTs, described this institutional practice.
Teacher[s] have many, much work every day. They have to call to the student parents, sometimes they have to take the students to the hospital, and they have to probably find the students if they escaped. (Laughter.) Or they have to listen to the students if they fight with each other. So they have much work a day, but if, if they have free time they, most of them really want to discuss with the ELTs.

Onishi detailed many of the duties teachers must complete throughout a typical workday. With so many additional social responsibilities, it is understandable that Japanese co-workers might be extremely busy throughout the day. Despite busyness, Onishi commented that Japanese co-workers do want to speak with ELTs; the problem is that time is just not available. Onishi was not the only co-worker who perceived time to be a barrier to communicating with ELTs.

Likewise, Kawaii, a teacher of multiple subjects with minimal English skills, said, “There’s no time to speak with the ELT. We (teachers) don’t have time, the time to talk with the ELT. So it’s difficult to get along with and to make a relationship with [ELTs].” Kawaii noted that since time does not exist to speak with the ELT at her school, this caused relational difficulties. It is important to note that Kawaii is one of the many Japanese co-workers of ELTs who has minimal English skills, but Kawaii, herself, mentioned time as the more influential factor on her workplace relationship with ELTs.

Kimura echoed discourses from many of the Japanese co-workers throughout this study. As a team-teacher, she said, “Japanese teachers are so busy and so this is the time schedule so no, during the day we have no time. No time to discuss about the next lesson.” Kimura explained that, because she and other teachers, were so busy, they did
not have the time within their schedules to even prepare lessons with ELTs for future classes. This is, in part, due to ELT contractual constraints.

**ELT Contracts.** Whereas the Japanese co-workers’ workload did not permit much time for communicating with the ELTs, the ELT contracts similarly featured limited working and contact hours with their Japanese co-workers. In addition to language barriers, team-teachers reported that their classes were not doing well due to lack of time to prepare for the team-taught classes with ELTs (Fennelly & Luxton, 2011). This study extends this finding to focus upon communication. Japanese co-workers identified ELT contracts as barriers to communicating with ELTs due to ELT contract restraints such as the work hours of ELTs. Contractual constraints, as an institutional practice, functioned to keep ELTs positioned as guests, which influenced co-worker relationships and, therefore, opportunities for successful privacy management. Japanese co-workers commented that contractual constraints were placed on relationships due to ELT contacts. These constraints limited the time in which the ELT was available to speak with and meet with Japanese co-workers, which not only made team teaching challenging, if not impossible, but also rendered privacy negotiations irrelevant. Minimal time to communicate with ELTs limits co-worker relationships; this includes limiting interpersonal privacy negotiations. This practice does not benefit ELT-Japanese co-worker relationships, but instead is the result of ELT-recruiting organizations maximizing profitability.

Perceptions of differential pay seem to exacerbate frustrations in the ELT-Japanese co-worker relationships. In a tell-all piece in *The Japan Times*, Currie-Robson
(2014, January 22) explained that, in recent years, English conversation schools “across the country have slashed benefits and reduced wages, forcing teachers to work longer hours, split-shifts and multiple jobs just to make ends meet.” He explained:

Big schools [such as Gaba and Berlitz] know they have an advantage because there has always been a steady stream of foreigners looking to fund their Japanese adventure. They know the teachers lack the resources to challenge them — the language skills, the legal and local knowledge, the contacts, and even the time on their visa, which is often tied to their employment at the school.

Between English conversation school works and government–funded JET Programme participants, their pay discrepancies vary greatly. First year JET participants earn ¥3,360,000 (roughly $32,528 USD) a year, which increases each year for a maximum of ¥3,960,000 (roughly $38,336 USD) a year for fourth and fifth year JET participants (JET Programme, 2014). Tax treaties between an ELT’s home country and Japan can result in tax free income, and thus a potentially larger take-home income than similar positions in one’s home country (JET Programme, 2014), which can render ELTs able to make more money than a similar position in their home country. English conversation schools, on the other hand, pay ELTs “considerably less than the average Japanese salary” which results in “just enough to get by in Japan and not much more” (Currie-Robson, 2014, January 22). However, this is not locally known knowledge. Many are unaware of ELT payment discrepancies. Currie-Robson (2014, January 22) said, “the fees students often pay, along with memories of the bubble years, lead them to the erroneous conclusion that English teachers make good enough money as it is.” Although payment discrepancies are
not the focus of this study, a couple of teachers commented upon the ELTs salary that offers insight into relational dynamics that influence privacy negotiations.

This payment discrepancy, or at least the perception of such, can add to an ELT’s awkward position as the “assistant language teachers,” which complicate privacy management. One Japanese team-teacher, Onishi, explained how payment discrepancies influence relationships in her school. She said, “Many Japanese teachers think ELT’s status is more than Japanese [because of payment discrepancies]. So, some of them complain about that. (Laughter.) That makes a bad, worse relationship between [them].”

Onishi explained that, in her school, payment discrepancies lead Japanese co-workers to think ELTs maintain a higher status than them. Such status involves higher pay and less work. In other words, these guest teachers held a place of resentment for some co-workers. She explained:

I know other teachers that doesn’t think very well of ELT status. Some of them feel jealous, because of that payment issue. So I am concerned about other teachers’ think of me because if I have good relationship between ELT, other teachers probably feel jealous or, don’t think a good thing [about me].

(Laughter.) It’s difficult to understand because it’s Japanese culture, and being as a member of the staff we have to, sometimes we have to deal and have the same feelings you know it’s kind of part of Japanese culture.

Onishi explained that some Japanese co-workers might be jealous of ELTs’ perceived higher salary. Such jealousy puts Onishi in a position where she must be aware of how close she is with ELTs. Onishi explained that as part of Japanese culture she must share
co-worker sentiments. In other words, even if Onishi wants to have a good relationship with her ELT she is constrained in that relationship due to her collectivist culture. Onishi is limited in how close she may get to ELTs which limits opportunities for successful privacy management for all involved.

Kimura, a team-teacher who worked with ELTs from a variety of companies, acknowledged the changing ELT market in Japan. She exclaimed, “These days… the quality of the ELT is lower and the salary is lower…the salary is very low, the salary of ELT became low and he or she worked afterschool. They have another job!” Kimura enjoyed taking ELTs sight-seeing, said, “Recently they have another job in the morning and Saturday they have, they go to another companies, so we cannot establish a good relationship.” Kimura understood that some ELTs must have multiple positions in order to pay their bills. She explained that knowing an ELT’s salary would help her to understand why the relationship is the way it is. She said:

If I knew the salary of the company ELTs, so I can understand after, after school they have another job, they should have another job so on Saturday and Sunday it’s not free so I don’t, invite but oh you are very busy. But if you want to, if you have free time let’s do drinking party, let’s have a drink.

Kimura noted that because of ELTs needing to have multiple contracts it limits her social interactions with them. Now, for concern of the ELT, she no longer reaches out to form a relationship due to their lack of availability stemming from multiple jobs.
Limited salary and relational contact greatly constrain this particular workplace relationship. Onishi explained that her ELTs’ contracts limited their workplace relationship due to minimal contact.

ELTs never have been with me all the time just visited twice a week, always twice a week. In those [two] days, they have a lot of lessons. [But] if they are with me, in my school all day long. Teachers can ask or discuss during the teacher’s free time and, usually classroom, especially questions…But in my case now I’m free, so I want to discuss with ELTs, but the ELT is already gone. (Laughter.)

Within this excerpt, Onishi discussed how different amounts of time with an ELT influenced her workplace relationships. Since she only sees her ELT twice a week, she is unable to plan lessons and to talk with them during free time. Such contractual constraints limit both workplace performance and relationship maintenance. Onishi’s use of laughter is worth noting. Japanese might use laughter in conversation as a defense mechanism to alleviate tension and to make a good impression (Fuki, 2002). In particular, laughter could be used to “express the speaker’s fear of feeling awkward or nervous while expressing himself or herself” (Fuki, 2002, p. 110). It is possible that Onishi used laughter to communicate frustration, but also to make a good impression with me, as interviewer, after being so direct about her workplace frustrations with the ELT’s contract at her workplace. Similar to Onishi, Fukazawa explained, “I always think ELT job is really, really difficult, because it’s like a special position about the teachers, other teachers has already had a relationship for a few years, but the ELT suddenly comes in and suddenly leaves.” Fukazawa commented upon short contracts for ELTs. Due to
the brevity of contracts for ELTs, some as little as 3-months or two weeks in this study, they do not provide enough time to establish relationships with co-workers.

ELT contract time limited relationships. Hamada, a team-teacher, said, “The ELT comes one time, every two months. Seven times a year. It’s very few.” Similarly, Higa, a team-teacher, said, “There is no time for a relationship because the ELT is not often here.” Throughout interviews, Japanese co-workers like Hamada and Higa viewed time as essential for their relationship. Kudo, a team-teacher explained,

To build a good relationship I think we need time. And like in this town we used to have an ELT the whole year, but not now maybe three months, less than three months. So, the whole year you can establish a relationship, so I often invited the ELT to my house and we had dinner together and we went to travel together, but now I don’t.

Kudo explained that for her as a team-teacher, she preferred having an ELT for at least a year in which she could establish a relationship. For Kudo, once a relationship was established, she would invite the ELT to her house, would eat with the ELT, and they would travel together. However, Kudo did not invest within ELT relationships that were less than three months due to the minimal time and exposure. In other words, the ELT contract itself limits ELT-Japanese co-worker relationships. Since ELTs did not occupy the workspace long enough to build meaningful relationships from Japanese co-worker perspectives, this led ELTs to be perceived as not a “real teacher.”
Japanese Co-worker Summary

Japanese co-workers confirmed that ELTs are not “real teachers.” Similarly, ELTs are perceived as guests or visitors whose presence is compounded by institutional structural constraints, such as Japanese co-worker workloads and ELT contract time constraints. As the literal face of English hegemony, ELTs are both accepted and rejected by Japanese co-workers. Constructing ELTs as guests or visitors enables Japanese co-workers to demarcate between what is Japanese and what is not. This “othering” of ELTs and the English language reinforces Japaneseness (Kobayashi, 2013).

These factors, first and foremost, minimize communication between this intercultural dyad, and, as a result, negate opportunity for successful privacy management. Further, the linguistic, communicative, and relational challenges suggest a logistic impossibility for the Japanese co-workers and the ELTs to “team teach” as they were supposedly set up to do.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I shared findings from a cultural discourse analysis of 39 ELT and 38 Japanese co-worker interview transcripts in order to answer my third research question; “What larger structures enable and constrain privacy boundary management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers?” First, I discussed ELT perspectives and secondly, I discussed Japanese co-worker perspectives. Such an analysis revealed larger structures that constrained privacy boundary management. Examining that which constrained privacy management provides insight as to what might enable successful privacy management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers.
Through ELTs’ discussions their positionality at work to not be “real teachers,” I identified and discussed the ideological construction of ELTs as “not real teachers.” This ideological construction is rooted in English hegemonic and xenophobic practices which excluded ELTs from co-worker relationships that, ultimately, negated opportunities for successful privacy management through co-owner relationships. At the same time, this ideology positioned ELTs as ideal “tape-recorders.” In particular, I identified labeling ELTs as “Assistant Language Teachers” to be one institutional practice that constructed ELTs as “inadequate” teachers. This label led ELTs to feel as if they lacked authority, had nothing to do at work, and led some to take on a non-teaching role at work in order to achieve some type of meaningful work. Such practices led ELTs to feel as if they did not have a “real job” and, therefore, were not “real teachers. As ideal tape-recorders, ELTs were positioned as an ideal in which to attain. Positioning ELTs as ideal tape-recorders contributes to western and native-English speaking supremacy, which renders anything but, inadequate.

Similar to ELTs, Japanese co-workers revealed that they perceived ELTs to not be real teachers within their workplace. In particular, Japanese co-workers viewed ELTs as guests or special visitors that served as cultural ambassadors or insiders into foreign culture. This placed ELTs into a position in which they embodied “foreignness.” Such a placement not only commodified ELTs, but placed them into a “special” social position of exclusion. This could be why some ELTs perceived themselves to be celebrities. Both ELTs and Japanese co-workers perceived ELTs to not be real teachers and in a different social position within the workplace. This compacted with the time constraints
and perceptions towards not having a “real job” or being a “real teacher” illustrated challenges and ideological structures that influence ELT-Japanese co-worker relationships, and, thus, one’s ability to navigate relational boundaries such as privacy.

As an obvious influential factor, language barriers between these two groups made it difficult, if not impossible, to communicate and let alone forming a satisfying relationship. At the same time, language barriers legitimized ELT workplace exclusion due to the perceived inability to communicate with co-workers. ELTs were not expected to speak Japanese fluently, or at all, prior to employment, thus, highlighting the presence and influential force of English hegemony. Japanese team-teachers, on the other hand, were expected to know English for classroom use and instruction. However, language barriers were not the only factor that limited this workplace relationship.

Japanese co-workers commented upon institutional time constraints as influencing their relationships with ELTs. In particular, Japanese co-worker workloads and ELT contracts limited social interaction. Since many ELTs have multiple positions due to declining salaries, they are not as available to meet with Japanese co-workers once their schedules open up at the end of the day. At the same time, not all Japanese co-workers are aware of ELT salary declines. This led to the impression that they were of a “guest” or “special” status, which further differentiated ELTs as others who should be excluded. Further, Japanese co-workers have numerous responsibilities throughout their day beyond the academic, which prevent them from communicating with ELTs. Time constraints minimized communication between ELTs and Japanese co-workers in this study and, therefore, opportunities for privacy management.
Overall, ELT privacy management was experienced from a celebritized positionality that led ELTs to experience the dialectic of agency and restraint. In other words, ELTs maintained a dominant position due to western imperialism and English hegemony that provided a great deal of agency to control their situations. At the same time, ELTs experienced restraint as Japanese co-workers used inquiries to control and resist ELT hegemonic influence. This interaction led ELTs to question and to become frustrated with their privacy management negotiations due to a perception of a lack of control. Becoming a celebrity in Japan included ELTs being culturally commodified due to western imperialism and English hegemony. As the “rightful and legitimate” English speakers, ELTs were valued within their workplaces. Viewing ELTs as a cultural product put ELTs within a spotlight in which they had to navigate their front and back stage personas. However, due to their celebritized position, which was exacerbated by whiteness, they were unable to successfully manage their privacy due to occupying the front stage and being in the spotlight for the majority of their time. In fact, some ELTs reported that their apartment was their only safe back stage area.

Being a celebrity in Japan for ELTs was influenced by performing (white) celebrity roles such as signing autographs and being on television in addition to one’s race. Non-white ELTs reported the ability to “blend in” to Japan, especially if they were of Asian descent/background. ELTs of color commented that their white colleagues were put upon pedestals and often received extra attention that they did not. Being white and speaking English were conflated throughout discussions of being a celebrity. Such equation speaks to the cultural commodification of what it means to be an ELT in Japan,
as well as related expectations. In other words, being an ELT in Japan includes performing white, western cultural identity. This performance constructed ELTs as mere performers and, therefore, “inadequate teachers.” Additionally, the “white pedestal” distanced ELTs from opportunities to construct close relationships with Japanese co-workers. Due to this social distance, opportunities to successfully construct meaningful relationships that can lead to successful co-ownership relations were discarded.
CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH QUESTION #3 FINDINGS

For this dissertation, I interviewed 39 ELTs and 38 Japanese co-workers to answer three research questions. In this concluding chapter, first, I summarize and discuss key findings for each of the three research questions; second, I offer theoretical and practical implications; and finally, I look towards the future on where this research will take me, and hopefully others as I pose future areas of needed research.

Key Findings

Findings of Privacy Negotiation and Boundaries

In Chapter Four, I shared findings for the first research question: “How do ELTs and Japanese co-workers experience and negotiate privacy boundaries?” To best understand this research question, I conducted a thematic analysis (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Owen, 1984) of all interview transcripts. This process allowed me to understand holistically how ELTs and Japanese co-workers experienced privacy boundary negotiations.

I, first, shared ELTs’ and Japanese co-workers’ definitions of privacy. For ELTs, “privacy” was defined as a multi-dimensional construct that encompassed personal information, space, and actions. In particular, ELTs defined privacy as one’s owned personal information or place. ELTs believed that such ownership should have afforded them the ability to control over who has access to their personal information and place. In contrast, Japanese co-workers defined privacy as deeply personal information that is both owned and hidden from others. If such is shared, close relational partners with
whom they have shared a significant amount of time, such as a family member or friend, are deemed appropriate outlets, and, therefore, co-owners of their private information.

ELTs perceived that their privacy boundaries were breeched when asked about one’s: (a) space and place, (b) bodies, (c) sexuality, and (d) dating/romantic relationships. ELTs reported the following privacy management strategies: (a) withdrawal, (b) cognitive restructuring, (c) independent control, (d) lying, (e) omission, (f) avoidance, and (g) gaijin smashing. About half of Japanese co-workers, on the other hand, said that they did not have any privacy concerns at work and did not think about privacy often. At the same time, Japanese co-workers said the following management strategies helped them to regulate their privacy boundaries: (a) drawing clear boundaries by not talking or changing contexts, and (b) being pre-emptive by demarcating privacy boundaries early on within a relationship.

In addition to management strategies, ELTs and Japanese co-workers discussed co-ownership relationships and related expectations. ELTs believed co-owners to be like friends whom they could trust maintain their private information. If co-owners were to disclose private information, ELTs believed Japanese co-owners ought to use an ELT’s private information in only beneficial ways for the ELT. However, in this study, not all ELTs were able to choose their co-owners. Some ELTs shared that they were assigned a work supervisor who became their co-owner by systematic default. This reality violated the expectations of some ELTs for the development of a trusting relationship to develop over time. Japanese co-workers, on the other hand, viewed ELT co-ownership relationships as an opportunity to demonstrate caring behaviors. Japanese co-workers
reported maintaining ELTs’ privacy boundaries. At the same time, Japanese co-workers reported they would breech privacy boundaries if the means justified the end: helping the ELT.

Finally, ELTs and Japanese co-workers shared insight into ways in which living/working in an urban or rural environment can influence privacy boundaries. Both ELTs and Japanese co-workers perceived urban areas as spaces that afford one the ability to obtain a greater sense of privacy due to increased population sizes and enlarged social distances. Additionally, rural areas were said to be areas in which obtaining one’s desired sense of privacy is difficult and, or almost impossible. Living in rural areas led some ELTs to feel as if they were always at work due to close social ties where they were unable to inhabit locations outside of work that did not have some connection to their co-worker relationships.

Even in the age of globalization cultural concepts of privacy differ. Scholars have argued that privacy regulation is universal across cultures, but varies in how it is managed (Altman, 1977; Moore, 1984; Roberts & Gregor, 1971). This study found that, even in the age of globalization where “culture” is viewed as de-territorialized (Appadurai, 1996; Shome & Hedge, 2002; Sorrells, 2010); distinct differences between host country participants and foreign workers exist. ELT group culture, although diverse, shares strong similarities and sentiments throughout, which suggests a western homogenization that is perpetuated by western domination. In other words, even in the realm of privacy management, globalization creates an “us” versus “them” mentality as ELTs and Japanese co-workers perceive and conceptualize the other as “other.” Such a
lens is complicated by similar sentiments that privacy is personal, owned information, and also confused by differing regulation strategies. Be it globalization or western colonialism, ELTs anticipate “others” to negotiate privacy boundaries like they do, and Japanese co-workers expect the same. However, management strategies, although familiar to the other, are not universally shared or no agreed-upon “first choice” strategies one will employ. Differing privacy boundaries and negotiation strategies highlight the continual ebb and flow, or regulation of boundaries to become both more and less permeable as contexts change. As Bute and Vik (2009) claimed, privacy management is “unfinished business,” which is particularly important to consider within the intercultural context (Simmons, 2012). Such claims reinforce the nature of privacy boundaries needing continual maintenance.

Additionally, this study broadens the scope of privacy conceptualization. As mentioned in Chapter Two, privacy is largely defined as “personal information” (Petronio, 2002), information regulation (Petronio, 2002; Scott, 1995), a way to obtain individual freedom (Schoeman, 1992; Scott, 1995), the right to be let alone (Solove, 2008), secrecy (Solove, 2008), a means to control intimacy (Schoeman, 1992; Scott, 1995; Solove, 2008), and a protection strategy from oversocialization or protecting one’s personhood (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979; Solove, 2008). Although privacy is purchased by space (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1979), scholars have yet to conceptualize privacy as a multi-dimensional concept. As mentioned, ELTs reported privacy as multi-faceted including personal information, space, and action. Thus, this study offers a more
nuanced and complex way to conceptualize privacy for research: as a multi-dimensional construct.

Beyond conceptualizing privacy as multi-dimensional construct, ELTs revealed that private information is more than what is shared or concealed, but it is also what is asked or not asked. As reported, ELTs perceived privacy violations even when asked about their privacy, be it their personal information (i.e., Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?), their space (i.e., Where do you live?), or actions (i.e., What did you do last night?). To date, CPM literature focuses primarily on one’s decision to conceal or reveal private information in order to achieve privacy. However, this thinking has largely neglected privacy inquisitions, or asking questions, as intrusive. In fact, minimal research has examined information requests (Bute, 2009). Information requests come in a variety of forms. Those forms evoke meanings which ultimately influence one’s response (Bute, 2009, 2013). Bute (2009) found that information requests enable and constrain social interaction. Bute (2013) called for scholars to focus on conversational dynamics to better understand how privacy management unfolds in daily conversations. This study extends Bute’s (2009, 2013) findings to an intercultural context. ELTs’ perceived privacy violations in this study emerged as a result of questions. At the same time, potential disclosers are most constrained during information solicitation due to feeling compelled to make a disclosure decision (Bute, 2009, 2013). Failing to attend to privacy inquisitions limits the scope of scholastic insight by focusing upon only one side of dyadic relationships. The additional layer of culture complicates such requests.
Japanese co-workers constant decision to “hide” personal information is not how ELTs understand privacy. ELTs, in this study, did not believe it was their responsibility to consciously hide private information. Japanese co-workers, on the other hand, believed they should be pre-emptive and consciously/deliberately hide information. Japanese co-workers expected that both they and others, such as ELTs, would do that. Therefore, through questioning, Japanese co-workers expected ELTs to hide personal information they were not comfortable sharing, thus protecting their own privacy through hiding information.

Finally, this study reveals “gaijin smashing” as a context specific privacy management strategy employed by ELTs. As ELTs pled ignorance or disregarded perceived Japanese cultural, norms, and values, they were able to obtain desired levels of privacy by forsaking their dyadic counterpart. This management strategy provides an example of extremes some might go to in intercultural contexts to protect privacy, but also highlights an additional area to explore in intercultural research. In particular, gaijin smashing revealed an intercultural “tool-kit” ELTs had in their knapsack they employed when necessary. As mentioned in Chapter Four, this was not always an ideal or first choice strategy, but it was a management strategy nonetheless. This shows that a “firing order” of ideal ways of managing privacy exists which indicates a variety of management strategies that may have yet to be uncovered by intercultural scholars. The presence of a “firing order” also suggests ethical implications on more “appropriate” strategies that have yet to be uncovered and determined.
Findings of Cultural Premises

In Chapter Five, I shared findings for the second research question: “What cultural premises exist amongst ELTs’ and Japanese co-workers’ privacy boundary management?” To answer this research question I conducted a cultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 2005, 2007) of all interview transcripts to make sense of my data. Cultural premises emerged in this process for each group, which not only allowed me to answer this research question, but provided insight as to how participants’ cultural membership influenced their privacy boundary management.

ELTs shared strong meanings related to their social positioning as foreign and cultural others, as well as co-worker relational expectations. Specifically, ELTs revealed that: (a) they expected to not be a “free space” for privacy inquisition by Japanese co-workers, (b) they expected voluntary reciprocity in (egalitarian) workplace relationships, and (c) they expected co-workers to be co-owners who would not share private disclosures. Japanese co-workers, on the other hand, revealed cultural premises related to meanings for relating and relationships, and, also, for action and practice regarding privacy management. Specifically, Japanese co-workers revealed: (a) privacy inquisitions are acts of kindness/caring, (b) time matters for privacy disclosure in Japan, (c) age matters for privacy disclosure in Japan, and (d) that ELTs should “Do as Japanese do,” or, in other words, accommodate Japanese cultural norms and regulations for privacy management.

These findings illustrate that the intercultural workplace inherently implicates and complicates privacy negotiations. In other words, the intercultural workplace is a
dynamic environment that includes a plethora of cultural premises that garner co-worker communication strategies. Cultures play a vital role in (mis)understandings of privacy negotiation. For instance, one’s embedded cultural premises, which can appear as taken-for-granted assumptions, can be invisible. Due to the potential invisibility of one’s cultural premises, “common sensicial” understandings of what is private and how such information through be treated, managed, and maintained might not only differ, but render it challenging to conceptualize why another does not share such sentiments. One’s cultures can mask critical thinking or empathic communication skills that are needed in the age of globalization. Without the ability to envision one’s self in the other’s shoes, or even the ability to imagine differences exist regarding privacy and how it should be negotiated, individuals position themselves in a play for misunderstandings and miscommunications to occur.

These cultural premises highlight the significant role taken-for-granted assumptions play within privacy management in intercultural settings. Such premises, driven by different cultural assumptions, orientations, and concerns, do not often surface, yet undergird all social interactions. In this study, cultures, or more specially one’s cultural membership in the case of ELTs, garner how privacy is managed at work. Even though ELTs, in this study, included individuals from various cultural contexts, ELTs emerged as a salient culture in Japan, with Japanese culture understandably influencing their workplace interactions. In other words, in this study, culture revealed itself as a group in which one belonged that influenced cultural notions of how things “should be.” Such premises influenced participants’ communication strategies regarding privacy.
This study highlights the difficulty of privacy co-ownership when different cultural premises exist and are salient. Since different cultural premises drive social interaction, communication is naturally influenced. Therefore, how to ask or enquire about one’s personal life, as well as how not to ask is all influenced by one’s culture. ELTs were surprised Japanese co-workers even asked about “private information.” At the same time, this study shows it is not just what is shared, but also what others ask of you that put you in a position to have to share, thus speaking to the dyadic nature of privacy management.

Privacy negotiation is not just what one decides to share or not share. In this context it is “all over the place” with lots of perceived violations which is compounded with the perceived notions of what is the underlying rule for how privacy management should take place. By highlighting cultural premises, intercultural privacy management is proven to be very interactive. This study shows that within privacy management, there’s a premise or underlying rule that influences communication that needs to be understood and made visible. Through social interaction, ELTs lose control because they get asked and attempt to manage such inquisitions.

Further, this study underscores that privacy boundary management in intercultural workplaces needs to be taken more seriously. Due to globalization, we cannot assume shared understanding since globalization highlights cultural differences, privilege, power, and positionality (Sorrells, 2013). Collier (2002) explained individuals within intercultural relationships must negotiate their own cultural identities, and their relational identity in addition to stereotypes, social power, privilege, and social perceptions. In
other words, intercultural communication involving privacy negotiation is very messy. Privacy management is never just about what the ELT or Japanese co-worker think from own cultural lens, but also what they the other to think/do and vice-versa. In other words, intercultural communication participants never know what is guiding the other person’s decision-making thoughts and actions. There are multiple rules at play that conflict. Intra-cultural privacy literature assumes people are coming from the same or similar standpoint. However, globalization has complicated and in many ways negated the existence of “true” intra-cultural encounters. Envisioning someone else to share our most salient cultural premises is a dangerous way of thinking that can result in relational costs, particularly within privacy management. Operating off assumed shared assumptions invites misunderstandings.

Findings of Ideologies and Structural Practices

In Chapter Six, I shared findings for the third research question: “What larger structures enable and constrain privacy boundary management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers?” To answer this question conducted a cultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 2005, 2007) of 39 ELT and 38 Japanese co-worker interview transcripts. This analysis revealed larger structures that constrained privacy boundary management, as well as provided insight as to what might enable successful privacy management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers.

Rooted in English hegemonic and xenophobic practices, I identified and discussed the ideological construction of ELTs as “not real teachers.” Ultimately, this construction negated opportunities for successful privacy management through co-owner
relationships. This ideology is self-sustaining as it positioned ELTs as ideal “tape-recorders,” which ultimately creates a feedback loop that reinforces the larger ideology.

Several institutional practices that construct ELTs as “inadequate” teachers were revealed, such as labeling ELTs as “Assistant Language Teachers,” which led ELTs to experience a lack of authority, perceived that they had “nothing to do,” and to take on a non-teaching role in order to attempt to construct meaningful work. As mentioned, this ideology functioned to put ELTs as ideal “tape-recorders,” which reinforces English hegemony and western supremacy by advocating for a “true” or “proper” English by placing ELTs as cultural others and native speakers as an ideal to attain in terms of accent, pronunciation, and mannerisms. In other words, anything that does not replicate the tape-recorder is lacking, and, therefore, inadequate.

This entire process is heightened through the commodification of the ELTs’ culture. ELTs experienced their workplace role as a “celebrity,” which created barriers to achieve one’s desired levels of privacy boundaries. Further, this construction places English education, and ELTs themselves, as entertainment that conflated “being white” and “speaking English.” ELTs performed the “white” celebrity role through television interviews, signing autographs, and being a local “other” figure in whom all were up-to-date on their happenings, particular in rural locations.

Similarly, Japanese co-workers viewed ELTs as guests or special visitors. This position led ELTs to be perceived as sample foreigners offering insider perspectives into foreign culture. As guests, ELTs experienced both a privileged and excluded positionality within their workplace. Japanese co-workers revealed that language barriers
and time constraints legitimized excluding ELTs from workplace relationships. Such exclusion complicated privacy management possibilities. Japanese co-workers reported time constraints related to Japanese teacher workload and ELT contracts as barriers to communication.

Overall, this study found ELTs experienced privacy management from a celebritized position due to being culturally commodified due to western imperialism and English hegemony. This positionality led ELTs to experience the dialectic of agency and constraint, meaning that ELTs were both in positions of power and disempowerment. Culturally commodified as “guest teachers,” ELTs experienced restraint and disempowerment when Japanese co-workers asked questions ELTs perceived to be invasive. Such moments led ELTs to feel a loss of control and power over boundary regulations. As cultural products, ELTs were put under the spotlight of the gaze of Japanese co-workers. This celebritized position rendered private front and back stage negotiations difficult and was exacerbated by whiteness. ELTs in Japan performed (white) celebrity roles by being a cultural other used in class demonstrations, by signing autographs for students, and being in local media spotlights. ELTs of color, particularly those of Asian descent/background, reported the ability to “blend in” to Japan. White identity and speaking English were equated throughout discussions of being a celebrity. This speaks to the extent of cultural commodification and what it means to be an ELT in Japan. Positioning ELTs as cultural products renders them and their cultural heritage available for consumption. Additionally, this positionality places ELTs as “inadequate teachers.” Complicated by perceived salary differences, ELTs and Japanese co-workers
do not enter their relationship on a level playing field. Due to Japanese co-worker workload, opportunities to conduct a mutually satisfying co-owner relationship are minimized, if not, nearly impossible in some cases.

It is useful and important to understand privacy negotiations are ideologically and structurally enabled and constrained to gain a “fuller picture” of what factors influence dyadic communication. For instance, understanding the ways in which ELTs serve as a cultural commodity to be explored and on display as an “ideal tape-recorder” or “(white) celebrity” provides understanding into their public persona, but also into their social positionality within the Japanese education system which might lead them to be both a goal to attain and a point of contempt. Embodying these roles position ELTs in a somewhat inhumane role in which they are to entertain, not educate, Japanese about their culture(s). Such “entertainment” results in a loss of privacy as ELTs are not able to obtained their desired privacy levels or amount of space needed to feel comfortable – all because of how the structures position ELTs within the Japanese education system. Due to potentially differing salaries and workloads, ELTs are viewed as guest teachers by Japanese co-workers that illustrate their perceived temporal status. Understanding the structures and powers that position ELTs into such roles offers understandings as to why relationships on the dyadic level might not be formed, initiated, or well maintained by co-workers, thus negating the opportunity for privacy management and successful co-owner relationships. Without considering structures that enable and constrain privacy management between ELTs and Japanese co-workers, the story would be only half-told.
Privacy management is never acontextual; privacy management is economic, political, cultural, and ideological. This analysis showcases the ideology that is driving relationship formation, which is an important part to engage in privacy negotiation or not. ELTs and Japanese co-workers are not negotiating their relationships. In fact, there’s almost no relationship due to institutional practices that limit social interaction. Understanding the ideological construction of ELTs as guest teachers helps to explain why Japanese co-workers and ELTs are not engaging in privacy management on the dyadic level, which indicates a larger context for understanding privacy negotiations. It also raises the question is there is little interest in relationship building between ELTs and Japanese co-workers. The ideological level helps explain why ELTs and Japanese co-workers are not negotiating privacy concerns, as well as demonstrates a lack of relationship-building as ELTs are excluded from co-worker relationships which ultimately negate opportunities for all involved.

Overall, this study found that the ideology of ELTs as “not real teachers” discourage privacy negotiations rather than encouraging it. In other words, there are more contextual reasons that prevent ELTs and Japanese co-workers from constructing and/or even wanting relationships. Looking ahead, this raises the question of what can be done to change it. Collier (2003) explained that “there are more ideological forces, institutional policies and practices, and social norms that reinforce hierarchy and elites keeping their privileges in place than there are ideologies, policies, practices and norms encouraging and rewarding intercultural alliances” (p. 14). In other words, there are more forces preventing us from wanting to form alliances then there are
ideological/contextual differences that encourage us to do so. Collier (2003) explained that the first step towards transforming relationships is a “critical analysis of how dominance is being enacted and reinforced, and how those processes preclude intercultural alliance connections” (p. 14).

**Theoretical Implications**

Communication Privacy Management (CPM), as an applied, western, rule-based theory, proved useful as a theoretical lens when examining privacy management as an intercultural phenomenon between ELTs and Japanese co-workers. Thus, this study confirms and extends Simmons’ (2012) claim that CPM is useful as a theoretical lens when examining ELT privacy management. Unlike Simmons (2012), this study examined both ELT and Japanese co-worker discourses. To date no known research is published that uses CPM to examine intercultural relationships. In particular, this study contributes to the cultural criteria within privacy management by highlighting the importance of examining cultural premises. Petronio (2002) said, “Cultural expectations inform individuals about the appropriate social behavior that ultimately controls boundary accessibility” (p. 40). However, Petronio (2002) does not provide a way in which to uncover, examine, and understand cultural expectations.

This study shows that using CuDA in combination with CPM enlarges the landscape. Rather than looking at symptoms of cultural expectations of privacy, identifying cultural premises gets closer to the root of privacy boundary formation. In other words, by uncovering cultural premises researchers gain a better understanding as to why privacy rules exist. At the same time, researchers should beware of identity
freezing (Cupach & Imahori, 2005). Uncovering cultural premises, although extremely helpful at gaining the “big picture” of privacy boundary formation and regulation, should be taken with a grain of salt as cultural differences exist. For instance, in this study it is important to remember that variance exists between ELTs and Japanese co-workers despite the evident cultural premises uncovered in Chapter Five.

Secondly, this study contributes to CPM’s contextual criteria by highlighting the influence of one’s urban or rural location. To date, no published studies using CPM as a theoretical lens have focused upon ways in which urban and rural areas influence privacy boundary management. The only exception being the pilot study for this dissertation in which ELTs noted their rural context influenced their privacy management (Simmons, 2012). However, this study exceeds original findings by offering a deeper analysis of how one’s urban or rural context influenced their privacy management. For instance, this study revealed urban spaces provided a greater sense of autonomy, which led both ELTs and Japanese co-workers with the ability to better obtain their desired privacy sensibilities. Rural locations, on the other hand, limited privacy negotiations due to close ties that rendered one, especially ELTs, visible.

Third, this study contributes to scant literature on “celebrities” using CPM as well as highlights the dialectic of agency-constraint. Schoeman (1992) claimed those in the public eye, such as celebrities, may have fewer privacy protections. To date, only one study exists using CPM as a theoretical lens to investigate celebrity privacy management (Beck, Aubuchon, McKenna, Ruhl, & Simmons, 2013). Celebrities, such as ELTs as foreign, exotic, and othered local celebrities, pose an interesting area of inquiry due to
their limited ability to exercise agency. ELTs experienced privacy under the spotlight through the dialectic of agency and constraint. As stated in Chapter Three, CPM’s fifth supposition is that privacy management involves dialectics which is grounded in Baxter and Montgomery’s (1996) dialectics of: public-private, disclosure-privacy, concealing-revealing, openness-closedness, and autonomy connectedness. Other scholars have uncovered the dialectics of expressed-protected (Rawlins, 1983) and expressed-repressed (Duck, 1982). Guided by Murphy’s (2003) ethnographic observations of female performers, this study highlights and showcases the importance of attending to the dialectic of agency-constraint as a critical lens to examine privacy management via CPM. This dialectic highlights the unequal social status and power relations that enable and constrain privacy boundary management. Being both free agents, and at the same time constrained by watchful eyes and privacy inquisitions, ELTs had difficulty managing and even obtaining their desired privacy boundary permeability. ELTs expressed a lack of agency when they viewed themselves as a “free space” for privacy inquisition. Such inquisitions constrained the privacy negotiation abilities for ELTs. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study using CPM as a theoretical lens that has uncovered this dialectical tension at play, thus contributing to CPM’s fifth supposition by highlighting the dialectic of agency-constraint that merits further attention.

As natives to Japan, Japanese co-workers maintained the “home field advantage,” which provided them additional agency to control their own privacy boundaries in satisfactory ways and also to constrain ELT boundary negotiations as they sought to regulate or train ELTs to be “ideal tape-recorders.” Foucault (1975) revealed that “docile
bodies” can be constructed through continual observation and surveillance. Therefore, the dialectic of agency and constraint is both visual as Murphy (2003) found and also expressed through privacy inquisitions as this study reveals. Asking ELTs questions revealed the notion of what Japanese co-workers perceived to be the “ideal ELT.” Regulating ELTs through questions, this ideal ELT is painted as a body to be controlled and open for inquisition. Such questioning painted ELTs as cultural informants who are to give knowledge of their cultural bodies and person over to Japanese co-workers for cultural exchange. In other words, privacy inquisitions served as a rhetorical tool in which to construct ELTs into a new body: the ideal ELT who are forever the “guest teacher” and/or “cultural other.” Throughout such discipline, ELTs became what Foucault (1975) referred to as “docile bodies.” In addition to observation, Foucault (1975) believed that docile bodies were created through ensuring the target for discipline internalized the received discipline. In this study, ELTs reported always feeling at work (see Chapter Four) and under the spotlight as commodified “celebrities” (See Chapter Six). It is through observation of this potentially unequal-gaze and continual molding that ELTs were pressured to conform to the ideal ELT tape-recorder persona. Since ELTs did not arrive in the “ideal-state,” Japanese co-workers worked to discipline their bodies to ensure what they perceived to be ideal.

As docile bodies, ELTs were ushered into a space where managing their front and back stage persona was difficult, which, ultimately influenced their ability to manage privacy boundaries in anticipated ways. A minimized backstage limits safe places for individuals to retreat to be their true selves (Goffman, 1959, 1963). Feeling like a
“celebrity” led ELTs to believe they had the agency to control their privacy boundaries, but ELTs’ celebrity status wasn’t as free as western, English hegemony would lead them to experience. Japanese co-workers and contractual endeavors not only limited communication between the two groups, but allowed isolated moments of constraint that contradicted their perceived experience. Such moments highlight this particular dialectic.

It is my suspicion that ELTs’ employed gaijin smashing when they experienced this particular dialectic due to experiencing a minimized or threatened backstage. The back region, or back stage, is a place where performers “can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude” (Goffman, 1959, p. 113). However, through constraint, the back stage is intruded upon or minimized. Passage and constraint on one’s backstage violates natural assumptions (Goffman, 1959), which are exacerbated by being the cultural other. Therefore, by attempting to manage one’s privacy boundaries ELTs sought to resist constraint and at the same time express their agency. In other words, gaijin smashing involves power struggles and as an act demonstrates attempts to regain power perceived as lost as ELTs experienced constraint. Viewed as a “last resort” by some, gaijin smashing proved effective to obtain their desired privacy levels. Gaijin smashing by pleading ignorance of cultural norms and expectations allowed ELTs to believe they maintained their ideal front stage performance with co-worker relationships. Since privacy management is a tool by which individuals attempt to construct their everyday presentations (Goffman, 1959; Scott, 1995), I suggest that, when ELTs gaijin smash, they attempt to preserve and/or (re)create their ideal workplace identity. At the same time, I must ask, at what costs? Smashing through politeness and cultural
sensitivity by pleading ignorance, disdain, or downright a lack of concern for the other not only highlighted extremes some ELTs will go to manage their privacy, but speaks of desperation to maintain control. It is as if ELTs experienced a panic or “crisis moment” which, not only merits further attention, but questions’ CPM in “crisis situations.”

Finally, this study extends research regarding ways in which forces and processes of globalization influence intercultural relationships. In particular, this study, builds upon scant literature (Masumoto, 2004) regarding the experience of westerners in subordinate positions. ELTs, as foreigners, proved a useful case study to explore and understand how globalization influenced this particular intercultural relationship. Even though, within the context of globalization “culture” is viewed as de-territorialized (Appadurai, 1996; Shome & Hedge, 2002; Sorrells, 2010), this study found distinct cultural premises that influence privacy negotiations for both ELTs and Japanese co-workers. These findings demonstrate that, although culture is not nation specific, stark differences emerged when analyzing privacy negotiations between ELTs and Japanese co-workers. At the same time, this relationship, like other intercultural relationships, experience injustices that Sorrell (2010) noted are brought about by Western domination and colonialism. Stohl (2005) claimed globalization requires, “flexibility, responsiveness, speed, and efficient knowledge production, generation, and dissemination” (p. 229). Yet, intercultural privacy management, as a dyadic, dynamic process, is not known, understood, or necessarily considered by participants in this study, which highlights the need for globalization training as well as other practical implications.
Practical Implications

This study offers several practical implications for privacy management between ELTs-Japanese co-workers. First, intercultural training for both ELTs and Japanese co-workers is needed. In addition to communication skills, intercultural training helps individuals: (a) enhance cultural sensitivity, (b) gain host country knowledge, (c) improve work performance/productivity, (d) improve interpersonal relations, (e) reduce emotional challenges, and (f) help expatriates acculturate (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Cushner, Robertson, Kirca, & Cakmak, 2003; Fowler, 2005; Graf, 2004; Harvey, Fisher, McPhail, & Moeller, 2009; Landis, Bennet, & Bennet, 2003; Lowe, Milliman, & Dowling, 2002; Selmer, 2005). In particular, I recommend a “reach out first approach” (Qayyum, 2012).

The current system in place makes ELTs’ and Japanese co-workers’ jobs extremely difficult, if not impossible, when it comes to conversations to discuss teaching, let alone privacy management. Since ELTs and Japanese co-workers are not even able to fulfill their first priority (i.e., team-teaching English), privacy negotiations might be rendered less relevant. Therefore, it is important for ELTs and Japanese co-workers to employ the “reach out first approach” (Qayyum, 2012) by taking the pre-emptive initiate to establish dialogue with their relational partner(s) regarding privacy management. For example, discussing what is considered private information, as well as expectations on how private information should be treated will help relational partners better understand co-ownership expectations. This pre-emptive strategy not only fits well with how Japanese co-workers in this study reported to manage their privacy boundaries, but will likely lessen boundary turbulence and perceived privacy violations. Such pre-emptive conversations, as well as
findings from this study regarding ELTs’ and Japanese co-workers’ cultural premises, will also help intercultural trainers. For instance, since intercultural trainers may need to overcome perceived cultural differences between them and their trainees (Pederson, 1983), these findings will assist trainers to lessen cultural divides by making visible their cultural knowledge of cultural premises for ELTs and Japanese co-workers. In addition to intercultural training, intercultural relationship partners are needed.

The primary goal of the ELT-Japanese co-worker relationship is to provide better education experiences to students. However, they are not really team-teaching or collaborating on lesson plans as they are supposed to do. ELTs and Japanese co-workers do not necessarily need to be allies, but they do need relational partners in whom they can work together. To be true partners they need to work through issues. For instance, ELTs and Japanese co-workers must negotiate who owns the “turf,” who does what, as well as histories that might influence one person’s willingness to engage in relationship building. Drawing from Collier’s (1998) conception of intercultural alliances, three key issues must be addressed to form partnerships in this context: (a) unearned privilege and power, (b) historical influences, and (c) maintaining an orientation of affirmation where partners affirm the others’ cultural identity. In terms of ELTs and Japanese co-workers, honest conversations regarding the influence of English western hegemony on their relationship both currently and throughout history will assist in the development of maintaining an intercultural partnership due to all relational partners better understanding potential relational constraints and diverse/contested identifications.
Scholarship shows a vested interest in intercultural alliances (Collier, 1998, 2003; DeTurk, 2001, 2006; Zhu, 2011), but neglect steps that lead to such “ideal” relationships. Collier (2003) defined an intercultural alliance as “a relationship in which parties are interdependent and responsible for and to each other” (p. 2). Collier (2003) explained that “intercultural allies recognize their cultural differences as well as their interdependence, and often seek similar goals, but they are not necessarily friends” (p. 2). I define an intercultural relational partnership as “a working relationship in which one attends to cultural histories and ideological factors that influence their modern-day institutional practices in order to achieve a more productive workplace relationship.” Intercultural partners are not necessarily friends or allies, but they are colleagues with whom one can get a long and achieve organizational goals.

It is difficult to see partnership possibilities when access to resources is differential and the differences unrecognized. Within this relationship, some of the resentment towards ELTs is misguided; it is not the ELTs’ fault that this is the system setup. Ideological assumptions influence institutional practices that position ELTs as inadequate teachers, and celebrity tape-recorders that can be paid more than Japanese co-workers whom have higher workloads. An intercultural partnership encourages more productive interpersonal-level relationships. In order to work together and be partners, ELTs and Japanese co-workers must learn how to better navigate privacy concerns. ELTs and Japanese co-workers should use empathy, mindfulness, and dialogue to better navigate their workplace relationships and, ultimately, privacy issues, concerns, and boundaries.
First, intercultural partnerships hold possibilities for the development of intercultural empathy, which may benefit intercultural communication. DeTurk (2001) defined intercultural empathy as “a foundation on which intergroup relationships and alliances may be built” (p. 383). Due to globalization, Calloway-Thomas (2011) claimed there is an urgent need to understand global empathy which she defined as “the ability ‘imaginatively’ to enter into and participate in the world of the cultural Other cognitively, affectively, and behavior” (p. 8).

Second, this intercultural partnership should employ mindfulness as one possible way to achieve global empathy. When discussing the utility of mindfulness for intercultural adjustment, Gudykunst (2005b) explained:

If we interpret host nationals’ messages from our own perspectives, as we do when we communicate mindlessly, we tend to interact ineffectively. The more we are able to learn how to describe host nationals’ behavior and the less evaluative we are, the more positive host nationals will perceive our intentions to be. (p. 441)

Gudykunst’s (2005b) advice to describe, interpret, and evaluate less is important for both ELTs and Japanese co-workers. Understanding that interpretations are culturally informed and, therefore, can be inaccurate of another’s behaviors is important to remember for privacy negotiations. In other words, ELTs and Japanese co-workers should keep in mind that perceived privacy violations may be a matter of perspective. Being mindful of their own behaviors will assist ELTs
and Japanese co-workers to better understand the other’s perspective as they
describe versus evaluate their interaction.

Finally, through empathy, intercultural partnerships present the possibility for
dialogue. Dialogue, as action itself (DeTurk, 2006), offers opportunity for change.
Dialogue is “a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and
remake it” (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 98). Goldberg (1993) explained, “It is not just that
the limits of our language limit our thoughts; the world we find ourselves in is one we
have helped to create, and this places constraints upon how we think the world anew” (p.
204). Therefore, through intercultural alliances, ELTs and Japanese co-workers will have
the ability to remake their relationship and imagine new possibilities. Intergroup
dialogues have been found to promote thinking about diversity, self-efficacy, and
communication changes which benefit intercultural understanding (DeTurk, 2006).
Within this relationship, both ELTs and Japanese co-workers are restricted due to
minimized cultural capital and a lack of incentives for change, which DeTurk (2006)
claimed are needed in order to create such change. Ruesch and Bateson (1987) claimed
communication has the most emancipatory potential at the interpersonal and small-group
levels. They argued interpersonal-level changes are the basis for all communication that,
if altered, can provoke systematic change. In other words, intercultural alliances hold one
possible key to restructure, rethink, and remake this intercultural relationship, therefore,
providing a positive environment to form co-owner relationships that may benefit privacy
negotiations. However, in order for alliances to take place, the ELT employment system
needs to be restructured.
As mentioned in Chapter Six, this study found that ELTs’ contracts and Japanese teacher workloads minimize opportunity for ELTs and Japanese co-workers to communicate, which not only influence their job, but their privacy management. Therefore, the ways in which the Japanese education system functions should be reconsidered. In particular, I recommend the Japanese Ministry of Education to decide what the end goal of ELT employment is: ideal tape-recorders or English education? Privacy negotiation needs to be understood as a global phenomenon due to the ever increasing force of globalization that highlights a need for future areas of research.

Future Studies

Although this study answers Simmons’ (2012) call for privacy management research to include Japanese co-workers’ perspectives, further research is warranted. This culmination of research is only the beginning of research regarding ELT and Japanese co-worker privacy management that should be extended. Expansion provides opportunities to enhance understanding and to alleviate intercultural tensions as well as assist in the development of intercultural training and alliances.

This research should be extended in the following ways. First, a deeper understanding of co-ownership relationships regarding ways in which co-owners maintain privacy boundaries is needed. In particular, researching culturally appropriate boundary repair strategies may provide deeper understanding in Japanese and ELT cultural premises. For instance, it would be interesting to examine how Japanese people conceptualize and experience privacy violations in future research. Second, in addition to examining ELT-Japanese co-worker relationships, this research should be extended to
include ELTs’ relationships with students, non-work related Japanese friends, and other ELTs. Similarly, research should examine Japanese co-workers’ privacy negotiations with students, non-work related Japanese and foreign friends, and other Japanese co-workers. Such research will provide further insight into the experiences of ELTs in the Japanese workplace. Third, future studies should employ a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods such as surveys, focus groups, ethnographies, and autoethnographies. In particular, it would be intriguing to explore gender differences and the role of race in privacy negotiations between ELTs and Japanese co-workers. Fourth, longitudinal studies should exam co-owner relationships overtime, as well as how ELTs’ privacy boundaries may change as they acculturate to Japanese culture. Further critical examinations of privacy negotiations will enhance understanding, provide strategies for change, and will enhance CPM. Griffin (2011) defined CPM as an interpretive theory that does not call for a radical reform of society, thus disqualifying CPM as a critical theory. However, this study shows that in combination with cultural discourse analysis, ideological and structural barriers that influence privacy boundaries become visible. In addition to Petronio’s (2002) rule-based criteria, such as culture, gender, motivations, risk-benefit ratio, and context, I call for critical scholars to usher CPM into critical studies. For instance, understanding participants’ positionality, power, and/or agency might prove fruitful in future areas of privacy management research.

Finally, this study demonstrates a need for research and theorizing regarding intercultural privacy management ethics. Some ELTs, in this study, found themselves in positions where they felt they had no other choice but to employ a privacy management
strategy they did not necessarily approve of such as lying or gaijin smashing. Although such instances aided ELTs with their privacy management, the costs of employing “unethical” privacy management strategies should be researched, particularly within intercultural relationships.

Final Thoughts

It was a hot August, Saturday afternoon, but I needed food, so I threw on a tank top, shorts, and sunglasses to somehow avoid the high temperatures, humidity, and impeding sweat that would surely greet me with my first step out of my apartment. As I stood waiting for the crosswalk signal to chirp, giving me the “ok” to cross, I became quickly alerted to a group of my students on the opposite side of the street – giggling, waving, and calling out my name. “Shimonzu!” I waved and said hello, only to be further greeted with the flash of my students’ jewel-infused hot pink and purple cell phone cameras. After a few quick snapshots the signal changed, allowing me to proceed. With each step I took, the flashing lights became brighter, penetrating my sunglasses. My students weren’t moving. Instead, they were waiting for me to cross the road, documenting each step I took. We exchanged greetings in English and they asked to take my photo. I agreed because I assumed we’d take it together, but instead, it was just me in my tank top and shorts feeling as if my pasty white skin was exposed to the gaze of my students and the hot August sun. I flashed an awkward peace sign and conjured up a smile, with cameras still flashing - Awkward doesn’t begin to describe my feeling, hesitation, and scrutiny. Thankfully, the crosswalk soon chirped once more, signaling it was time for me and my paparazzi to go…
This experience not only led me to think about ways in which ELTs occupied celebritized positions, but reminded me of what a “day in the life” of a white ELT is like. By the end of my data collection, I heard numerous instances from my participants regarding their experiences with being “local celebrities.” This encounter solidified mine. Due to interviews with ELTs, I became more aware of the “mundane” that contributed and reinforced my celebrity role at work. My students and/or co-workers would see me around my urban city, they knew I lived behind the eyeglass shop down the road from Starbucks, and I too found it odd that the “prize” for doing well in English was to have my signature on students’ papers. Within this section I reflect further upon my own experience throughout this entire process. In particular, I reflect upon my own experience as a white, celebritized, ideal tape-recorder.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I once again engaged in what Lan (2011) referred to as “flexible cultural capital conversion” (p. 1669). In other words, I exported myself (as a white, American English-speaking, white-collar working, male) to Japan for my data collection. My privileged position as an English-speaking Westerner is mediated and constrained by my class, nationality, race/ethnicity, and gender (Lan, 2011). This choice positioned me as a cultural object in exchange for capital; capital that allowed me to conduct my dream dissertation. However, my dissertation goals came at a cost; I commodified myself as I performed the role of a white, English teacher in order to gain access for data collection, which inevitably benefitted me socially, educationally, and financially. At the same time, by performing this role, I reinforced the hegemonic linguistic ideal that English should be the lingua franca (Seargeant, 2011). Lan (2011)
said that English-language capital in the global South is highly racialized in that it privileges white skin and “proper” accents. This study found ideological structures place ELTs as “ideal tape-recorders,” which from my experience, I can also testify.

In my prior experience as a JET Programme ELT (2007-2009), as well as this past summer (2013), I was constantly positioned as the ideal tape-recorder. For instance, I was complimented for the way I speak. My colleagues commented that they liked my accent and that I was from the U.S. I was constantly put in a position to “native check” my team-teacher’s work, including exams of which I did not know and/or understand the objectives. One day, one of my team-teachers asked me to distinguish between “from” and “of.” I had no idea, and honestly still do not, even though I scoured the internet for a clear response. I am not a trained English teacher, nor is my English the “right English.” I struggled to combat this ideology by explaining my lack of English education and asked them what they thought. However, as a “native speaker,” my English was positioned as superior or the “right way.” This disturbed me on multiple levels. By going to Japan as an English teacher, I gained access for my dissertation, but at the same time, I recognized I was perpetuating English hegemony and colonialism as I profited off a system that constructs dangerous ideologies for intercultural workplace relationships and young Japanese students. Positioned as a celebrity-tape recorder, one of my team-teachers told me my job was “more of an entertainer than teacher.” My accent was upheld as the “right way” to speak English by colleagues within Japanese classrooms. I believe research should benefit society, but I could not help but ask myself if I was causing more harm than good? Ultimately, I assure myself that my dissertation would not have been
possible without once again being an ELT. It reminded me of the “cultural glass ceiling”

ELTs face, as well as rigid constructs of who I should be at work as a celebrity tape-

recorder.

My role as an Assistant Language Teacher placed me into an odd position in

which I experienced agency and constraint. I was the native check or standard to

achieve, celebrity, tape-recorder, entertainer, but at the same time the assistant who was

not a “real teacher.” One day after playing a game with students that they enjoyed and

begged to play again, my team-teacher said, “I think your job is more like an entertainer,”

as he congratulated me on the lesson I created. Being a “guest teacher” positioned in me

a location that allowed for privacy inquisitions to occur, much like my participants. I

could not help but wonder if I somehow signed my “informed consent” form the moment

I accepted my ELT position. I found myself asking “Do ELTs waive their right to

privacy when they accept the position and sign their contracts?”

Finally, as a researcher, this role limited my access to the “‘true’ Japanese”

perspective—if authenticity is achievable. I had several participants (Japanese and ELTs)

inform me that, due to my low Japanese-level and white skin I was not getting the “true”

or “real” perspective from Japanese co-workers. The more I thought about this, the more

I agreed. At the same time, it was impossible for me to achieve a true insider’s

perspective, because I am not an insider in Japan. I am a cultural other and because of

that, it influences my social interactions. At the same time one Japanese participant

commented that even she might not get the “real” perspective because she speaks

English. In other words, influenced by English hegemony and globalization, she no
longer represented her “true” Japanese culture. Although somewhat discouraging, I chose to see the silver lining, that this dissertation is the start of a body of intercultural privacy management literature which will strive towards the “truer perspectives” to promote better and more equitable (intercultural) communication interactions.
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doi: 10.1515/text.2011.005
APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT MESSAGES

Sample Participant Recruitment E-mail

Hello ______!

My name is Nathaniel Simmons. I am an English teacher at ___________ in Osaka. I need your help for a research project. I am currently in a doctoral program studying communication at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, USA. After my own experiences with teaching English in Japan as an Assistant Language Teacher in Nara, Japan from August 2007-2009, I became interested in what others experience. Therefore, I am seeking participants for a research study I am conducting regarding English teachers’ experiences in Japan at work. I’d love to interview you!

Since I live in Kansai, I would love to schedule a time to meet up. If you are interested in participating, but unable to meet face-to-face, we can schedule a Skype interview or correspond via email. Also, if you know of anyone else who might be interested, please feel free to forward this email. I need all the help I can get!

Thanks for your help! I hope your classes are going well. I look forward to speaking with you.

Best,
Nathaniel Simmons
Doctoral Candidate
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio, USA
ns171110@ohio.edu

Dear ________:

Hello, my name is Nathaniel Simmons. I am a doctoral candidate studying communication at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, USA. However, I am currently living in Osaka, conducting research for my dissertation. I am seeking participants for a research study regarding Japanese co-workers experiences of working with foreign English teachers. I’d love to interview you!

If you are interested in participating, but unable to meet face-to-face, we can schedule a Skype interview or correspond via email. Also, if you know of anyone else who might be interested, please feel free to forward this email.

Thank you for your help! I hope your classes are going well. I look forward to meeting you!
Sample Participant Facebook Group Post

Hi everyone! My name is Nate. I was a JET in 2007-2009. I'm now back in Japan and working/living in Osaka. I'm currently conducting dissertation research regarding workplace communication between foreign English teachers and their Japanese co-workers. I need your help!

I need to interview both foreigners and Japanese. Therefore, if you are interested in participating in this study, please message me here, on FB or email me at ns171110@ohio.edu. I would GREATLY appreciate any help in this project! If you know of anyone else who may be willing/interested, please pass along my information to them. Please also ask your Japanese colleagues (if you feel comfortable doing so).

Thank you very much!!
Nate Simmons
ns171110@ohio.edu
080-9607-1983
shimonzu@softbank.ne.jp
Skype: n_simmons_
APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL

The following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University for the period listed below. This review was conducted through an expedited review procedure as defined in the federal regulations as Category(ies):

Project Title: Intercultural Workplace Relationships in Japan

Primary Investigator: Nathaniel Paul Phillip Simmons
Co-Investigator(s):

Faculty Advisor: Yea-Wen Chen (if applicable)
Department: Communication

Rebecca Cale, AAB, CIP
Office of Research Compliance

Approval Date 5/4/14
Expiration Date 5/7/13

This approval is valid until expiration date listed above. If you wish to continue beyond expiration date, you must submit a periodic review application and obtain approval prior to continuation.

Adverse events must be reported to the IRB promptly, within 5 working days of the occurrence.

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.

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APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Ohio University Consent Form (Face-to-Face Version)

Title of Research: *Intercultural workplace relationships in Japan*

Researcher: Nathaniel Simmons

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will decide if you want to participate. By going through with the interview process you acknowledge and consent to participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

**Explanation of Study**
This study is being done because working in an intercultural workplace offers its own unique challenges. In particular, this study seeks to understand how privacy is managed between intercultural co-workers. This study seeks to understand phenomenon that occur within this context in order to bring understanding and examine ways to enhance optimal communication for all involved parties. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to share your experience(s) regarding working in an intercultural workplace. You should not participate in this study if you do not have any related experiences and/or you are not comfortable discussing your workplace-related experiences. Your participation in the study will last for the duration of the interview. It should not take more than one-two hours.

**Risks and Discomforts**
Although no risks or discomforts are anticipated, some people may find it challenging to discuss difficulties they face within the workplace.

**Benefits**
This study is important to science/society because it provides insight into how intercultural workplace privacy is managed. You may not benefit, personally by participating in this study, but some may find it comforting to discuss their experiences.

**Confidentiality and Records**
Your study information will be kept confidential by Nathaniel Simmons, the primary investigator, of this study. Audio recordings will be stored on a password protected
computer of the primary investigator until the study is complete (5/2014). At that
time, all audio recordings will be destroyed.
Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information
confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose
  responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review
  Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:

Nathaniel Simmons  
Doctoral Candidate  
Scripps College of Communication  
School of Communication Studies  
Athens, Ohio 45701 USA  
Ns171110@ohio.edu  
080-9607-1983  
shimonzu@softbank.ne.jp

Yea-Wen Chen  
Assistant Professor  
Scripps College of Communication  
School of Communication Studies  
LSHR 007 Athens, Ohio 45701 USA  
cheny3@ohio.edu  
1-740-593-4837

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact
Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
  * you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been
given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
  * you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to
your satisfaction.
  * you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you
might receive as a result of participating in this study
  * you are 18 years of age or older
  * your participation in this research is completely voluntary
  * you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the
study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to
which you are otherwise entitled.
Ohio University Consent Form (Online Version)

Title of Research: Intercultural workplace relationships in Japan

Researcher: Nathaniel Simmons

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will decide if you want to participate. By going through with the interview process you acknowledge and consent to participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

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Confidentiality and Records
Your study information will be kept confidential by Nathaniel Simmons, the primary investigator, of this study. Audio recordings and email-based conversations will be stored on a password protected computer of the primary investigator until the study is complete (5/2014). At that time, all data will be destroyed. Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
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By participating in this interview, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you
might receive as a result of participating in this study

- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Version Date: [04/27/2013]
APPENDIX D: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER (ELT) INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Demographics
   a. What is your age? Sex/gender? Social-class/socio-economic status?
      Nationality? Race/ethnicity? Sexual orientation?
   b. How long have you lived in Japan?
   c. What languages do you speak? To what extent (i.e., beginner,
      intermediate, advanced, fluently).

2. Why did you decide to apply to teach English in Japan?
   a. What drew you to Japan?
   b. What drew you to English teaching?
   c. How long have you been in this position?

3. Tell me about your experience as an ELT in Japan.
   a. How would you describe where you live? (i.e., urban/rural)
   b. What is it like to teach English in Japan?
   c. What types of training did you receive (education or program training?)
      i. How helpful was this training?
      ii. What type of training is needed, but not present?
   d. What challenges have you faced?
   e. What metaphors/analogies do you or others use to talk about English
      education in Japan? Analogies others use to talk about you?
   f. What terms do you use to describe your status in Japan? Expat? Migrant
      worker?
4. Describe your work environment.
   a. What are your job responsibilities?
   b. How do you see your role at work? How do you think others (co-workers and ELTs) see it?
   c. What is a “real teacher?”
      i. Do you see yourself as a “real teacher?” Why/why not?
   d. What other work experiences have you had prior to this position? Any intercultural workplace experience? If so, please describe.
   e. How is this similar/different to prior places of employment in your home country? In Japan?
   f. What challenges have you faced within the workplace?

5. Tell me about a memorable moment at work.
   a. What happened?
   b. What makes this moment memorable?

6. How would you describe your interaction with Japanese-co-workers?
   a. What is your relationship like with your co-workers?
   b. Who do you talk to/not talk to? Why/why not?
   c. If you had a problem at work, who would you talk to? Why?

7. How do you define privacy? What types of information do you consider private?

8. Does your work have a “privacy” policy? If so, explain.

9. Who at work do you reveal “private or personal information” to? Why/why not?
   a. What types of situations (i.e, healthcare?) required disclosure?
10. How does privacy (negotiation) play out at work?

11. How do/did you experience privacy negotiation while working/living in Japan?

12. To what extent do/did you have conversations w/ your Japanese co-workers about privacy? Describe them.

13. Tell me about an experience where you shared “private information” or something personal with a Japanese co-worker (vice versa).
   a. What problems arose, if any?
      i. What was easy/challenging about this?
      ii. Tell me why you see this as a problem.
      iii. How did you respond to problems that arose (if applicable)?
   b. How did you decide who you could tell/not tell?

14. What should happen if you were to disclose private/personal information at work?
   a. If a Japanese co-worker disclosed private/personal information to you?

15. What types of questions do students ask you?
   a. In your opinion, is it ok for students to ask ELTs private/personal questions? Why/why not?
   b. What do you do if they feel uncomfortable answering a students’ question?
   c. What should happen to the student?
   d. How should teachers respond?

16. What is something that has surprised you about working in Japan? Living in Japan?
17. What health experiences did you have in Japan?
   a. What happened?
   b. How was related-privacy treated?

18. If you were to offer advice to another ELT about working at this school, what would it be?

19. What advice would you offer an ELT for living in Japan?

20. What cultural advice would you offer to prospective/another ELT?

21. What cultural advice would you offer a Japanese co-worker? Community member?

22. Is there anything else you would like to share, or that you think I should know?

23. In order to gain additional perspectives, who do you recommend I speak with (ELT or Japanese)?
APPENDIX E: JAPANESE CO-WORKER INTERVIEW GUIDES

Japanese Co-worker Interview Guide (English Version)

1. Demographics
   a. What is your age? Sex/gender? Social-class/socio-economic status (high, medium, low)? Nationality? Race/ethnicity?
   b. Have you always lived in Japan? What other countries have you visited/lived in? How long?
   c. What languages do you speak? To what extent (i.e., beginner, intermediate, advanced, fluently).

2. Describe your work environment (urban/rural/size of school).
   a. What are/were your job responsibilities?
   b. What do you currently teach?
      i. Why did you choose this profession?
      ii. How long have you been (or were you) in this position?
   c. What other subjects have you taught?
   d. How do/did you see your role at work? How do/did you think others (co-workers and ELTs) see it?
   e. What other work experiences have you had prior to this position? Any intercultural workplace experience? If so, please describe.
   f. What challenges have you faced within the workplace?
   g. How many ELTs/foreigners have you worked with in the past? In what capacity?
h. To you, what is a teacher? In what ways does an ELT fill that role? Not fill that role?

3. How would you describe your interaction with co-workers?
   a. What is/was your relationship like with your co-workers?
   b. Who do/did you talk to/not talk to? Why/why not?
   c. If you had a problem at work, who would you talk to about it? Why?
      How would the problem be managed/resolved?
   d. How would you describe your relationship with the ELT?

4. Tell me about your school’s ELT.
   a. What do you know about your school’s ELT?
      i. Nationality? Hobbies? Age?
   b. What types of conversations have you had with the ELT?
   c. What types of information do you discuss with your school’s ELT?
   d. What difficulties/challenges do you think the ELT faces at work?
   e. If you were to offer advice to the ELT about working at this school, what would it be?
   f. In what contexts do you interact with the ELT?
      i. At school only? Outside of work?

5. What health experiences have your ELTs had?
   a. What happened?
   b. What was your role in this situation?

6. Tell me about a memorable moment with an ELT at work.
a. What happened?

b. What makes this moment memorable?

7. What is it like to work with an ELT?
   a. What is easy/difficult? Challenging?
   b. What do you like/don’t like?
   c. What is something that has surprised you about working with an ELT?
   d. What unexpected results have you encountered from working with ELTs?

8. What do you think makes a good relationship with co-workers? What might ELTs do to help ensure a good relationship with co-workers?

9. What do you think makes a good relationship with students?
   a. What might ELTs do to ensure a good relationship with students?
   b. What are your expectations for ELTs?

10. What types of questions do students ask ELTs?
    a. In your opinion, is it ok for students to ask ELTs private/personal questions? Why/why not?
    b. What should an ELT do if they feel uncomfortable answering a student's question?

11. To you, what does “privacy” mean?
    a. How important is privacy to you?
    b. What do you consider as “private or personal information?”
    c. Who at work do you reveal “private or personal information” to?

    Why/why not?
12. Does your work have a “privacy” policy? If so, explain.

13. Tell me about an experience where you shared “private information” or something personal with an ELT.
   
   d. What problems arose, if any?
      
      i. What was easy/challenging about this?
      
      ii. Tell me why you see this as a problem.
      
      iii. How did you respond to problems that arose (if applicable)?
      
      iv. How did you decide who you could tell/not tell?

14. To what extent do/did you have conversations w/ ELTs about their experiences with privacy? Describe them.

15. Tell me about a situation where an ELT told you something “private.”
   
   e. How did you respond to this conversation?
   
   f. Who did you share this information with, if anyone?

16. If any ELT told you something “personal/private” tomorrow, what would you do?
   
   g. What if they told you the information at work? Outside of work?

17. What should happen if you were to disclose private/personal information at work to an ELT (vice versa)?
   
   h. If an ELT disclosed private/personal information to you what should happen?
   
   i. If a Japanese co-worker disclosed private/personal information to you what should happen?

18. How do you think information about ELTs should be treated?
19. What advice would you offer someone interested in teaching English in Japan?

20. What advice would you offer someone interested in working with an ELT?
   a. Any cultural advice?

21. What advice would you offer an ELT for living in Japan?
   a. Any cultural advice?

22. Is there anything else you would like to share, or that you think I should know?

23. In order to gain additional perspectives, who do you recommend I speak with
   (ELT or Japanese)?
英語教育者インタビュー

1)人口統計
何歳ですか？
性別は何ですか？
社会的・経済的な地位はなんですか？
国籍・人種は何ですか？
ずっと日本に住んでいますか？
他の国に行ったことがありますか？他の国に住んだことがありますか？どのぐらいの期間でしたか？
何語を話せますか？レベルは何ですか？（初級、中級、上級）

2)職場の環境を述べて下さい。（田舎・都会・学校の大きさ・ect.）
仕事での義務はなんですか？なんでしたか？
今は何を教えていますか？
i なぜこの職業へ就こうと思いましたか？
ii どのぐらいこの職業をしていますか？していましたか？
他の教科を教えていたことがありますか？何ですか？
職場での自分の立場をどう思いますか？他の人（同僚・ALT・ELT）にはどう見えると思いますか？
この職業に就く前にはどのような仕事をしていましたか？国際的な職場の経験はありますか？それについて述べて下さい。
この職場ではどんなチャレンジをしてきましたか？

395
過去に何人の外国人と働いたことがありますか？どんな風に？

あなたにとって先生とは何ですか？ELT・ALTはどのような役目を果たしますか？

3)同僚との関係を述べて下さい。

同僚との関係はどのようですか？どのようでしたか？

同僚の中で誰と会話をしますか？誰と会話をしないですか？それはなぜですか？

職場で問題が発生した時誰に相談しますか？なぜですか？どうやって問題を解決しますか？

ALT・ELTとの関係はどのような関係ですか？

4)あなたの学校のALT・ELTについて教えてください。

あなたの学校のALT・ELTについてどのような事を知っていますか？国籍、趣味、年齢、etc...

ALT・ELTとはどのような会話をしますか？

ALT・ELTとはどのような情報をやり取りしますか？

ALT・ELTにとって職場でのチャレンジや困難な事はなんだと思いますか？

あなたの学校のALT・ELTにアドバイスをするならどんなアドバイスをしますか？
ALT・ELTとはどのように接しますか？
i 学校だけ？学校以外でも？

5) あなたの学校のALT・ELTは健康についての問題をかかえていますか？かかえていましたか？
どのような問題ですか？でしたか？
この状況でのあなたの役目は何でしたか？

6) あなたの学校のALT・ELTとの印象的な出来事を教えてください。
何がありましたか？
なぜ印象的だったのですか？

7) ALT・ELTと働いた感想を述べてください。
一緒に働くことは簡単ですか？難しいですか？
ALT・ELTと働いて好きなところはなんですか？嫌いなところはなんですか？
ALT・ELTと働いてびっくりしたことはなんですか？
ALT・ELTと働いて予想していなかったことはが起こりましたか？それはどういう結果になりましたか？

8) 同僚と良い関係を持つためには何か必要・大事だと思いますか？同僚と良い関係を持つためにALT・ELTはどうしたらいいですか？

9) 生徒との良い関係を持つには何が大事ですか？
生徒と良い関係を持つにはALT・ELTは何をしたらいいですか？

ALT・ELTに対しての期待はなんですか？

10) 生徒はALT・ELTにどのような質問をしますか？

あなたは生徒がALT・ELTにプライベートな質問をして良いと思いますか？なぜですか？

ALT・ELTが生徒の質問に対しての答えを出したくなかったらALT・ELTはどうしたらいいですか？

11) あなたにとってプライバシーとはなんですか？

プライバシーはあなたにとってどのくらい大切ですか？

あなたにとって「プライベートな事」又は「個人情報」とはなんですか？

プライバシーはあなたにとってどのくらい大切ですか？

あなたの職場はプライバシーについての規約はありますか？それについて教えてください。

12) あなたの職場はプライバシーについての規約はありますか？それについて教えてください。

13) ALT・ELTにプライベートな情報を教えて経験はありますか？それについて教えてください。

それについて問題は起こりましたか？
iこれは単純・難しい問題でしたか？
ii なぜ問題になりましたか？
iii 問題に対してどう反応しましたか？
iv 誰に相談するか否か相談しなかったかを決めましたか？
14) ALT・ELTとプライバシーについてどのような会話をしますか？

15) ALT・ELTにプライベートな事を話をされた経験はありますか？それについて教えてください。

あなたはどう反応しましたか？

この情報を他の人に話しましたか？誰に話しましたか？

16)明日ALT・ELTにプライベートな話をされたらどうしますか？

職場でその話をされたらどうしますか？外で話されたらどうしますか？

17) ALT・ELTにプライベートな情報を話した場合、理想的にはどのようになると一番良いですか？

逆にALT・ELTから話されたら理想的にはどのようになると一番良いですか？

18) ALT・ELTに関する情報はどのように扱われると良いですか？

19)日本で英語を教えることに興味を持っている人にはどんなアドバイスをしますか？

20)ALT・ELTと働く事に興味を持っている人にはどんなアドバイスをしますか？

文化的なアドバイスはありますか？

21)日本に住んでいるALT・ELTにアドバイスはありますか？

文化的なアドバイスはありますか？
22) 他に伝えたいことはありますか？

23) 他の人の見解を得るために他の誰にインタビューした方が良いと思いますか？（ALT・ELT・日本人etc…）
APPENDIX F: SAMPLE STAFF ROOM PHOTOGRAPHS

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Retrieved from: http://www.accessj.com/2011/02/being-alt-6-4-japanese-teachers-you-may.html