



## **SPRING 2008 NEWSLETTER**

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### **Table of Contents**

1. [Editor's remarks \(page 2\)](#)
2. [A message from the Program Chair, Folake Abass \(page 4\)](#)
3. [Language and Sexuality Interview by Folake Abass \(page 6\)](#)
4. [Interview with Jackie Beebe by Joanna Hosoya \(page 13\)](#)
5. [Agentless Passives Lesson Plan By Tamarah Cohen \(page 18\)](#)
6. [A Report of the IGALA Conference by Andrea Simon-Maeda \(page 24\)](#)
7. [Summaries of GALE Presentations from the Pan SIG Conference in Kyoto by Kathy Riley \(page 28\)](#)
8. [A JALT Breakfast Report \(page 32\)](#)



Dear GALE members,

This late- summer newsletter starts with a packed report from our busy programme chair Folake Abass, who explains the stimulating GALE presentations lined up for the JALT 2008 conference. We have also: an interview with our departing member, Jackie Beebe (by me); an interview with a new member, Marlen Harrison, by Folake Abass; a passives lesson plan, which helps students to identify the un-stated agents of power in passive sentences, from Tamarah Cohen; a report of the 2008 IGALA conference from Andrea Simon-Maeda; and summaries of the GALE presentations at the Kyoto Pan SIG Conference and also a GALE breakfast from Kathy Riley.

I hoped to get a newsletter out earlier, but we are a very small staff. Our editorial committee presently, includes the indispensable roving executive member Kathy Riley, the editor and our online editor Paul Arenson. One solution Kathy proposed to get newsletters out with regularity is for specific members to take on columns or to write regular articles. There has also been some discussion about what kind of newsletter or journal we want. You can Moodle (see website: <http://gale-sig.org>) to participate in these discussions or you can email me at [:joannaATrb4.so-net.ne.jp](mailto:joannaATrb4.so-net.ne.jp) . If you wish to volunteer for GALE publications, at our AGM we will select a new editor, and an editorial team for 2009.

The two interviews in this edition loosely explore the connection between sexual identity and gender identity issues. A lot of our more interesting contributions have related to sexual identity. It seems to be a topic that generates much interest in relation to English learning and teaching.

In the interview with original member Jackie Beebe, I ask how she sees lesbian/queer interests and feminist interests (e.g. gender issues) intersect. I also try to sense whether she feels pulled in different directions by Japanese and American cultures especially with regards to gender roles. And as this is a final chance-I find out more about her before she heads off to India. We will miss Jackie's radiant presence, humour and intelligence.

GALE has always been a very inclusive group. It has been a group about supporting its' members. So I bear that in mind when I edit. I hope we can grow to understand how our myriads of perspectives on gender, language and education can mesh.

—Joanna Hosoya, Newsletter editor

[top page menu](#)



## **A message from Folake Abass, Gale Program Chair**

Greetings All,

It has been an incredibly busy past few months on the GALE front but I am pleased to say that our labours have borne fruit. We have organised a great panel discussion during the JALT conference in November, which will feature an amazing line up of women. See the website for the latest. The theme for the panel discussion is "Negotiation/reinvention of gender globally" and should be an exciting and informative event. A short summary of the theme for the discussion appears below:

Four international researchers enlighten us with reports on their research: in East Timor, expatriate gender and racial relations expose the persistence of colonial relations and power; in Cambodia, an English language retraining program for 'entertainment' women prepares them for reintegration into society; in Australia, a sociolinguistic analysis of Japanese women's pilgrimage for language learning, travelling and careers in tourism; and from Japan, an examination of the limits of thought towards gender and sexuality in language education.

In addition to the above, I also had the opportunity to interview one of our featured speakers for the panel, Roslyn Appleby. Her research explores the links between gender, professional practice and education in institutional contexts and doing the interview was very enlightening. The interview will be published in the September issue of *The Language Learner* and you can learn more about Roslyn and her research then.

Lastly, and moving away from gender slightly but not completely, I interviewed Marlen Harrison about the research he is doing for his PhD dissertation on Language and Sexuality in Japan. Our paths crossed whilst we were both at the JACET/JALT Conference in Nagoya in June and after talking to him, I felt his research was worth sharing. You can read about his fascinating research in this and future issues of the GALE newsletter.

As I mentioned, it has been a busy time for GALE but the best is yet to be. We look forward to seeing you at the JALT Conference in Tokyo in November and in the meantime, please check the website for updates about presentations and events during the conference.

Have a great, great summer and see you all in Tokyo!

Folake

[top page menu](#)



## **Discovering Voices, Discovering Selves – A Dissertation about Language and Sexuality in Japan.**

Marlen Elliot Harrison, a PhD candidate in Composition and TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, has been travelling throughout Japan this summer in order to present recent research, reunite with old friends, and lay the groundwork for his dissertation on language and sexuality in Japan. Harrison, who lived and taught in Kansai from 2002-2006, was the co-coordinator of the JALT Learner Development SIG from 2004-2006 and an active member in the Osaka JALT chapter. He has recently become a member of GALE.

**FA:** Thank you for agreeing to do this interview with us. To begin with, can you tell us about the research you are doing for your dissertation and where the idea came from?

**MH:** It all stems from a comment a Japanese friend once made to me. He said, "I'm gay in English, but I'm not gay in Japanese." This was fascinating to me and then I heard something similar from another friend a few weeks later who said, "Only my American friends know I'm a dyke." As a result of this, I would now like to understand what the significance of "English" (and here I mean English as a linguistic culture, as a linguistic system, etc) is in the lives of Japanese queer individuals.

**FA:** Can you tell me what you mean by the significance of "English"

as a linguistic system and how does this tie into Japanese queer individuals?

**MH:** First of all, in this dissertation, the descriptive term “queer” is used to describe non-heteronormative sexual expressions or identities and honours both the recent reclamation of the term and development of queer studies as an academic discipline. In terms of English as a linguistic system and a linguistic culture, I'm referring to Gee's comment that language teachers teach more than just language (the linguistic system), they teach culture as well (linguistic culture). What then is the significance of the English language itself and the significance of English-speaking cultures in the lives of Japanese who identify themselves as queer, or rather, whose desires are queerly performed?



**FA:** Can you explain what you mean by “queerly performed”?

**MH:** When I say desires are “queerly performed”, it’s really quite a loaded statement. Perhaps a better way of putting it would be to say “perform queer desires”. It is suggested that one’s sexuality is partially a performance of one’s desires (sexual desire, desire for power, etc.). For example, if one is a woman who sexually desires other women, then one may perform behaviour that is ascribed to “lesbianism” (Cameron & Kulick explore this in their book, *Language and Sexuality*). However, to perform lesbianism and to identify oneself as a lesbian are two different things. Whether such desire and performance is strictly socially constructed, I haven’t decided, but what interests me is the role that English plays in such queer performances. English is a symbol system and has unique, multiple and varying significances to each individual that can change over time. For example, “Japanese” means many things to me (people, culture, language, food, etc.) and my idea of “Japanese” has greatly changed since my first encounters with the cultural and linguistic systems and continues to change with the acquisition of new

information and each new interaction. Therefore the question remains, for specific individuals, what is the significance of English learning and performance with regards to sexuality?

**FA:** This all sounds quite fascinating. How would you describe the relationship between Japanese people's learning experiences especially from an EFL/ESL perspective and their ideas about their sexuality?

**MH:** Great question! Recently, I interviewed a participant who reported that his motivation to learn English was so that he could meet foreign men. In his mind, he knew he had a desire to be with "white men", and saw English as his pathway to enabling such a desire.

**FA:** It is quite intriguing that some Japanese people feel comfortable talking about their sexuality in English but not in Japanese. Has your research revealed any insights into why this is the case?

**MH:** The assumption is that English ability allows for intercultural communication; I'm going to call this kind of communication the ability to enter into a specific community (whether it is a speech community, community of practice, or discourse community). So, the fact that an individual's linguistic ability allows participation in a specific community is significant. My participants report that the distance from their Japanese (L1) communities makes it easier for them to discuss and perform their sexual desires due to the ostensible anonymity this type of participation provides them.

**FA:** What are you hoping to discover through your research?

**MH:** I am asking my participants to tell their stories. Inspired by Summerhawk et al's 1998 collection of narratives in "Queer Japan", I want to examine the stories about the significance of English (again whether it be language or culture) learning and usage experiences in the lives of queer Japanese. I am hoping that through their stories, and reflections on both the stories and the process of telling them, the participants and myself (as researcher) will have a fuller understanding of the symbolism of "English" with regard to sexual selves.

**FA:** The symbolism of "English" with regard to sexual selves sounds like a very interesting concept. Can you tell us what you mean by

that?

**MH:** My understanding is that for some people, the actual language itself when compared with Japanese language offers a sense of freedom of expression not available in the Japanese L1. Whether that is actual or perceived is not as significant as the fact that English symbolically functions as a "free space". Kostogriz calls it, "third space", or from Anzaldua, "borderlands", where desires or identities can be revealed, constructed, or performed. The term "borderlands" comes from Anzaldua's research with American bi-lingual Latinas and signifies the bi-lingual spaces in which such individuals operate and/or perform in. This research will examine just who is using the English that is being taught in Japan and in what ways, hopefully giving credence to the idea that English language education needs to be inclusive of all of those who use it. The post-method, critical pedagogy paradigm currently popular in language education encourages the consideration of queer identity through its accent on inclusion, reflection on practice, student-centred learning vs. method, and awareness of student needs and local cultures. Kostogriz, drawing on Gee, envisions the creation of a semiotic, ESL "third space" as a way of "reconceptualising literacy pedagogy in/for conditions of multicultural life". Kostogriz recognizes the politics of the language learning environment as a multi-cultural arena and re-imagines the classroom as a collective of diverse identities "whose learning is related to the practices, discourses, and funds of knowledge of other communities". This concept of "third space" is significant as when transferred to any EFL/ESL space where English learning and communication exists, it allows for a theoretical framework (semiotics) and recognition of the importance of setting in which to examine firsthand the uses of English by queer individuals throughout Japan.

To give you an example, many of my participants report not discussing their sexualities with members of their Japanese communities, such as co-workers or family members. However, they do discuss their sexualities with members from a different cultural-linguistic community. I might call this a linguistic "borderland" or "third space". One of the participants talked about wanting to fully exist in that English space. In fact, he reports that although he is Japanese, and not a native English speaker, he now considers English to be his first language, his L1. This is fascinating to me when considering that he also reports that he has no interest in dating non-English speakers or participating in Japanese-only communities. I

want to talk further with him to gain an understanding of the symbolism of English culture and language in regard to performances of sexual desire and constructions of sexual self.

**FA:** Wow! Really interesting stuff! So how far along in your research are you?

**MH:** I'm just getting started. I've spent the past year examining my own understandings of language and sexuality. It began with a paper I wrote examining the positioning of queer sexualities within the field of TESOL. I argued that a re-positioning is possible so that queer identities are not relegated to the fringes of academia, such as books entitled Taboo Topics, or Hot Topics, where homosexuality is only addressed as an issue of conflict alongside topics such as gun control, euthanasia or abortion. I wonder what kind of message that sends to queer students who only see themselves represented in this manner.

I wrote a personal narrative about my struggles to construct a sexual self in my 2nd language, Japanese, and compared my difficulties with self-revelation to a friend of mine who did reveal her sexual self to others. I envied that bravery and wondered why I performed my sexuality in the way that I did. This paper was then followed by manuscripts investigating such topics as queer linguistic research, the social significance of English in the lives of Japanese, and other similarly themed topics. It seemed as if I was asking the same questions over and over again, but from different angles. All of this writing has informed my current research and so I am now at the point of putting it all together and writing my first three chapters. I hope to have identified a wide diversity of individuals who can speak to the topic of English and queer sexualities in Japan so that I may begin to examine firsthand experiences and narratives. I have created a website that tracks the progress of my research and allows for commentary and story sharing as a way of collecting additional data and sharing my own journey with my various communities.

**FA:** What sort of information would you be looking for from those willing to share their stories?

**MH:** Information may be shared by both Japanese and non-Japanese alike - anyone is welcome to share their stories about how English (language or culture) is significant to the construction of queer sexualities. For examples, English teachers who have had students "come out" to them; individuals who have had Japanese

friends discuss sexuality with them; people who have opinions or stories that disagree with my hypotheses, or Japanese individuals who can speak to any of the issues raised in our interview so far. I would like to include all forms of sexuality, not just queer, but the scope of this project is very specific and so at this time I am most interested in stories about queer sexualities.

**FA:** How would you define "queer identity" in your terms? Some people might have a problem with the terminology here.

**MH:** Approaching sexuality in Japan as an identity construction is a tricky undertaking. McLelland, in his manuscript "Is there a Japanese 'gay identity'?" (2000) discusses the difficulty of transferring a Western concept such as a "sexual identity" to a traditional, Asian, group-focused culture (where one avoids setting him- or herself apart) such as is often the case in Japan. Jñanavira writes "...the notion of 'sex' in general, and more specifically, how the idea that individuals inhabit or express themselves through distinct 'sexualities' is a modern innovation confined largely to those cultures with their roots in northern Europe". In his interviews with self-identified gay Japanese men, McLelland discovered that there is an association between the concepts male homosexuality and femininity as popularized in the media (Japanese) such that for a male to identify himself to other Japanese as gay is to assert a desire to be like a woman, an assertion that some may find unfavourable and hence results in avoidance of self-revelation. Moreover, there exists a debate among queer Japanese as to whether one is a gay (reflective of a queer identity) or a person with specific sexual desires (reflective of Japan's long history of accepted male homosexuality as behaviour rather than a lifestyle choice that shuns contemporary familial roles). While this uncertainty may exist for particular queer individuals, there are in fact gay-rights groups "that promote Western concepts such as gay identity and gay rights" (McLelland). One example is OCCUR, a group that "provides a clear example of gay Japanese following American gay and lesbian discourses" (Lunsing in McLelland, 2000). It is such "discourses" representative of ideological approaches to sexuality that may be influencing how, where, and why Japanese are expressing or not expressing their sexualities, and to whom and in what language.

In a recent discussion with Barbara Summerhawk, co-editor of "Queer Japan", we discussed McLelland's concern about using "identity" as a construction. Our conclusion was similar, the participants who shared

their narratives in "Queer Japan" were in fact discussing identity as a significant construct and so though we understand McLelland's point, people are indeed crafting "queer identities" and are even using the word "identity". Now perhaps this is a reaction to the travelling discourses (see DeVicenti et al for an interesting discussion of "How Queer Travels in the Language Classroom") of queer sexuality that is coming from "western" or "English-speaking" cultures, or perhaps Japanese themselves are recognizing a need to identify their desires as a way of legitimizing them. Hopefully the research I'm doing will shed some light on this.

**FA:** Well, good luck in your research and thank you so much for taking the time to do this interview with us.

**MH:** My thanks to the GALE SIG for being open to the discussion of not just gender, but sexuality as well. Over the past year I have received much support from the GALE publications, such as Robert O'Mochain's 2004 essay "Sexual identity politics in the classroom: The case against monosexual pedagogy" that appeared in a GALE newsletter, and the many links to significant sites on the web. And thank you, Folake, for taking an interest in helping me share my research with others.

For those interested in sharing their stories or learning more about Marlen's research, you can visit his website at <http://DiscoveringVoices.wordpress.com> or email him at [m.e.harrison@iup.edu](mailto:m.e.harrison@iup.edu) . You can also refer to his website for a list of references quoted in this interview.

[top page menu](#)



## **An Interview With Jackie Beebe By Joanna Hosoya**

**When I heard Jackie was going, I thought I had better find out more about someone who has been so influential within WELL and GALE...who has often been the life of GALE parties and events. So I had to ask her some questions before she left.**

**You could say I am a Jackie fan. I first encountered Jackie's jokes at a WELL retreat I attended... jokes that pulled the plug on a poker faced performance of gendered self. I felt energised by her feminist queer perspective, (especially as I often feel I am succumbing to gender pressure as a mother raising Japanese -Australian children in mainstream Japanese society).**

**At that particular WELL retreat Jackie facilitated an enjoyable improvisation workshop for teachers. She even introduced me to the work of feminist SLA researcher, Anita Pavlenko, which helped me doing my own research...Certainly meeting Jackie made a difference to me.**

### **Jackie, why did you come to Japan?**

I'd always assumed, who wouldn't want to live in foreign countries? I had a particular interest in Asia, but not in Japan more than anywhere else. I lived in a dorm (at university) and I had some Japanese as pretty good friends. Some of them said, "Oh, you should go to Japan. Americans are popular. You can make a lot of money teaching English", and I thought that's it!

I took one semester in teaching second languages, a linguistics type thing and Japanese...I sent a letter to this small chain with just 3 branches and literally on the day of my graduation I got a job. They gave me a contract and paid my way over.

I had no idea of what kind of job I wanted and for me, teaching was just a way of getting to Japan and then I discovered that teaching was perfect.

### **What kind of place are you from? Did your experiences growing-up encourage activism?**

I grew up the North-West side of Detroit, a white area- with a kind of a suburban feeling. But it changed...the white flight syndrome. Mum was out and about most of the time doing stuff for the church and working part-time when I was in high school. I went an hour by bus to a magnet high-school which drew people from all over the city....You had to have a high grade point average to get in... Most of the students were black. I remember Martin Luther King's birthday was still not a National Holiday and everybody walked out of the school on that day... So there were people doing things.

It was a fantastic school where you could major in chemistry, biology, vocational music or automechanics. Dianna Ross majored in Home Ec. there. If you had a particular interest you wanted to pursue, it was good. When I was a kid, I liked books about liberators... I was already interested in gender issues. I did a research paper in junior high on first wave and second wave feminism.

**Did you feel angry and want to change the world?**

Not particularly. At school the girls had to take home ed. And the boys had to take shop. I told the teachers I wanted to take woodshop. They said I couldn't because I had long hair. I suggested I could wear a hairnet like we did for cooking but they said "No, no, no, you just can't do it". It wasn't like I had a particular interest. It was just like "This isn't fair. Let's see what I can do about this."

**What was the driving force behind establishing GALE and WELL?**

WELL was started by Cheiron McMahill. I remember saying, "Let's call it WELL" (Women Educators and Language Learners). We were sitting around trying to work out a name for the group. There were women I knew from the lesbian community and women from International Feminists of Japan. A lot of presenting and publishing came out of WELL.

GALE was started by Cheiron at Jalt. She put out word of mouth and we discussed it over dinner...research and teaching issues. These two groups serve a very important function. It means having a way to connect.

**As editor for GALE I was initially overwhelmed by contributions about gay identity issues which I felt did not have any direct relation to language education.**

About that. Some people feel that teaching is about introducing concepts to the classroom. Also, I think the desire not to compartmentalize your life is a big reason that this group exists. So, maybe, there is no-one at your workplace with whom you can talk about being queer. It is just a great gift to find people you can share both of those sides with- the English teaching side and what you feel. Like what you felt like when your husband said this or your male boss said that. GALE is just a place where you can put all that together. I think that is why the groups continue, even when they go through the crisis of who is going to leave and who is going to put the energy into it.

**I did not think sexuality and gender were necessarily strongly or directly linked. Gender roles vary depending upon culture. Does having a non-mainstream sexual identity make you want to perform your gender differently ?**

I think sexuality and gender are inseparable. Definitely you enact your gender differently (if you are not heterosexual) or at least you are aware that you have that choice. Even if in my head I have a fantasy about a woman, I am not performing my gender as I am supposed to.

**But when I am being "feminine" I am often performing my gender, or presenting myself in a recognizable way...it is not necessarily revealing the real "me". I may be consciously role- playing.**

I think as soon as you are aware that you are lesbian you are very aware of those thoughts in your head and when you are performing (not just being yourself). It is true there are lesbians totally into traditional gender roles but I think being lesbian

makes you more aware that there are options. You will be aware somewhere, that your way isn't the only way.

**Do you find when you are in conversation with a heterosexual person unaware of your sexual identity that you do not have the language resources to express yourself?**

The language is there. It is just a matter of whether I am going to use it.

**To what degree does a feminist group like GALE or WELL enable people to transcend limiting gender assumptions?**

With GALE, I'd say it is a lesbian friendly group. As soon as people come up to the JALT desk to check it out it is very clear that the word "gender" is acting as a kind of code word for tonnes of people. Whether they are "out" at work, teaching in gender issues, doing research, or not, they are thinking I am going to go over to that table and meet people. And probably it works that way for the straight feminists too. They may not necessarily teach about gender but they are happy to be in touch and to network.

**Do you teach gender issues?**

They come up all the time but typically they are not the exclusive focus of the lesson.

**What classes did you enjoy teaching most?**

I used to teach one called, English for music lovers. Music is my passion. And sometimes I've used improvisation a bit.

**What is the inspiration behind your stand-up comedy?**

That came out of improvisation workshops. Somebody suggested I try stand up... and I said "NO, I never want to" and that's how I got started. I like it a lot. In my stand-up I always wanted to have some lesbian content. That was my way of being an activist.

**Did you find Japan allowed you freedom to be yourself, outside gender expectations, in a way you would not have experienced back home? (In Japan, can you say, do and be a Jackie that is an expansion of your previous self?)**

I felt freer just being away from my family. Being in another country is just another level of that same... being away.

**Do you feel any part of you has adapted to fit Japanese communities?**

I grew up here really. I came here when I was 21. I certainly don't walk or talk, laugh or gesture in what a Japanese would call a feminine way but I think the stereotypical Japanese way; you don't confront, you talk about things in a round-about way; that either suited me already or being here just brought out that side of me. I feel comfortable and Japanese people feel comfortable around me. Obviously I have changed.

**So you blossomed here.**

Yes. That's the perfect word.

## **How did you keep yourself engaged in current academic discussions about gender whilst living in Japan?**

I was going to Temple University of Japan for 2 years of masters and 8 years of doctorate studies. Part of what I was looking at in my research on good speakers of English turned out to be gender. It was hard to find really good speakers who weren't girls.

I sometimes went to TESOL or AAAL conferences or whatever, in Canada or America or other places. I went to a Language and Gender Conference in England. Most of the time when I went to all these conferences I was not doing any research especially in that area, but it was interesting to me.

## **What is drawing you away?**

Love. Freedom. The place where I'm happier than anywhere else in the world. From July, for about a year, I will be at an ashram about a kilometer outside of a village that's about 2 or 3 hours outside of Mumbai. It's back to the theme of freedom. Freedom from worries and my own ego.

**Thanks for the perspective Jackie!**

**I didn't ask if Jackie would be back. She has no intention to return for good. But I am sure that many people will find it strange to imagine WELL or GALE without her! For the time being at least, we'll just have to get used to it.**

[top page menu](#)



## AGENTLESS PASSIVES A LESSON PLAN BY TAMARAH COHEN

### [DICTATION]

- (1) Girls and boys *are often expected* to behave according to different sets of rules.
- (2) These rules *are based* on gender.
- (3) Girls, for example, *are often rewarded* for being modest, deferential and dependent, whereas boys *are encouraged* to be confident, competitive and independent.
- (4) As a child, *were you required* to behave according to certain gender rules?

- ▷ WHAT IS THE VERB PHASE IN SENTENCE-ONE? [*are expected to behave*]
- ▷ WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF THE PASSIVE VERB PHRASE? [*are expected*]
- ▷ WITH PASSIVES, HOW IS TENSE SHOWN? IS IT SHOWN BY THE FORM OF THE VERB 'BE' OR BY THE FORM OF THE MAIN VERB?
- ▷ [*on the chalkboard*] WHAT'S WRONG WITH THESE SENTENCES?
- a. \*The woman was died.
  - b. \*The accident was happened.
  - c. \*It was occurred to me.
  - d. \*It was seemed to be correct.
  - e. \*They were agreed to go.

Passives are used only with transitive verbs, i.e., verbs that can be followed by an object, for example:

The woman fixed **the car/the car was fixed...**  
The man washed **the dishes/the dishes were washed...**

INTRANSITIVE VERBS ARE NEVER PASSIVE.

▷ WHO IS THE AGENT (*the person responsible for the action of the verb*) IN SENTENCE-ONE? [*Parents, priests/ministers/imans/rabbis, teachers, babysitters, other children, etc.*]

Most sentences with a passive verb (about 85 percent) do not mention the agent.

▷ HOW WOULD YOU SAY SENTENCE-ONE IN THE PASSIVE VOICE WITHOUT OMITTING THE AGENT? [*Girls and boys are expected by X to behave...*]

▷ HOW WOULD YOU SAY SENTENCE-ONE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE? [*Parents often expect girls and boys to behave...*]

[*on the chalkboard*] ACTIVE = AGENT -- VERB -- OBJECT  
PASSIVE = OBJECT -- VERB -- ((BY) AGENT)

The active voice puts focus on the agent.  
The passive voice puts focus on the result.

### **A WARNING ABOUT AGENTLESS PASSIVES**

Passives often suppress important information. They omit reference to those responsible for carrying out actions. In other words, passives remove the agent and shift the hearer/reader's focus to the receiver (of the action). When passives do this, they often force the hearer/reader to guess at who the agent might be.

Passives can be used for many deceptive purposes. They can be used to encourage the hearer/reader to forget that some human being is responsible for performing an action, for example:

- a. The Gaza Strip **was invaded**. *Who invaded the Gaza Strip?*
- b. Iraq **was bombed**. *Who bombed Iraq?*
- c. The price of tuition has **been raised**. *Who raised the price of tuition?*

Learning to identify and question the agents of passives can be very interesting and illuminating. All you must do is learn to ask, "by whom?" But it takes a little practice. Let's try a few (from newspapers):

- d. The stalker **was arrested**. *Arrested by whom?*
- e. The vehicle has **been impounded**. *Impounded by whom?*
- f. Naughty children should **be spanked**. *Spanked by whom?*
- g. The torture **was authorized**. *Authorized by whom?*
- h. About 95 percent of the women at Genesis House, an organization that helps Chicago sex workers, **were abused**. *Abused by whom?*
- i. According to UN figures, at least one in every three women worldwide is likely to **be beaten, coerced into sex** or otherwise **abused** in her lifetime, and one in five women will become a victim of rape or attempted rape. *Beaten by whom? Coerced into sex by whom? Who is abusing women worldwide?*

Did you experience an increasing difficulty (or lack of certainty) in identifying the agents in these examples? Were **d**, **e** and **f** obvious? Were the agents in **g**, **h** and **i** as easy to identify? How about these, below? Let's find the invisible agents in these sentences -- history books:

- j. The Ainu homeland, *Ainu-Moshiri*, **was renamed Hokkaido** and **subjected** to intense programs of colonialism and assimilation.
- k. It **is believed** that between 1937 and 1938, an estimated 80,000 Chinese women and girls **were raped**; many of them **were** then **mutilated** or **murdered**.
- l. The unfeminine behavior found in many women as a result of social trends in modern society must **be dealt with**.
- m. Among the most pitiful victims of agrarian as well as urban poverty in prewar Japan were the young farm girls who **were sold** to brothels. Their number increased markedly in years of crop

failure and ensuing famine; but even in normal years a steady flow of young girls **was being channeled** into brothels at home and abroad.

n. The most atrocious aspect of the brothel experience was the fact that girls barely into puberty -- some at ages twelve and thirteen -- **were compelled** to take customers and **have their bodies and spirits brutalized**.

o. It **is recorded** that numerous unknown people contributed to letting the world know Japanese compassion and humanitarianism by treating prisoners of war in the Japan-Russia War humanely.

p. Burakumin soldiers **were discriminated against** even when they **were killed** in action in the service of their country.

q. Those who hadn't died **were forced** to either relocate or assimilate into modern society.

r. In the rural areas, and well into the early Showa period, prostitutes **were considered** less than human.

Identifying agents isn't always easy or automatic. Too often, agentless passives slip right past our awareness. We often don't stop to wonder exactly who is responsible for this or that action. In an article entitled "Telling the Truth" (Trivia, Fall 1986), Sonia Johnson described her own realization of how agentless passives "often absolve men from responsibility for their violent behavior toward women."

Suddenly I realized that in my campaign [for U.S. president] speech I had been saying, 'Today over 2000 women in this country will be raped.' By using the passive voice, I made rape sound as innocuous [harmless] as 'today it will rain,' as if rape just falls out

of the sky on women, just 'happens' to us. As though there were no rapists.

Of course, there are reasonable uses of agentless passives: when we don't know who is responsible for a given action, namely in news stories or police reports when a criminal's identity is unknown (*the train was vandalized, their bikes were stolen*). We also use them when we are speaking hypothetically and have no specific individual or group in mind (*if given a billion yen, most people would quit their jobs*) or when the agent is understood (*rice is grown in paddies*). The emphasis is on the action itself or on the receiver of the action.

### **CONCLUSION**

Agentless passives can be used to deceive when the speakers/writers who use them purposely want to avoid mentioning the agent. This simple English structure makes it easy to hide responsibility; it forces hearers/readers to supply the missing agents from a range of possibilities that is often too broad. Reasons for using the passive voice in this way include protection of the guilty, denial of responsibility, and the pretense of objectivity (when the writer wants to sound objective without revealing the source of the information).

**REMEMBER:** When you encounter an agentless passive, just ask yourself "by whom?"

### **EXERCISE** [GROUP WORK]

*Identify the passive verb phrases in the following sentences. Then try to identify the agents. Once you've done this, think: why might the speaker/writer of each assertion be using the passive voice?*

1. During the so-called Renaissance, millions of women were burned as witches.
2. Women in music videos are most often used as props.
3. Some love is meant to be.
4. Woman is intended for reproduction; she has been appointed to take an active part in the reproduction of the race by pregnancy and childbirth.
5. "I was infected with the virus at the age of 16," Rebecca Armstrong says.
6. Whole forests are destroyed each year.

7. The west was won.
8. Except for certain offices in the church that are set aside for men, women should be given equal opportunity to obtain and hold the same positions as men.
9. Books like that shouldn't be permitted.
10. A lot of women are killed in their homes.

*Tamarah Cohen, Kansai Gaidai University, 2008 [tamarahc@hotmail.com](mailto:tamarahc@hotmail.com)*

[top page menu](#)



## IGALA REPORT

by Andrea Simon-Maeda

The IGALA conference held from July 3 to July 5 in Wellington, New Zealand, drew gender and language scholars from around the globe. Amongst those representing Japan were GALE members Andrea Simon-Maeda and Gerry Yokota. I was also able to attend presentations by Justin Charlebois and Laurel Kamada, from Japan, who, under the doctoral guidance of Jane Sunderland at Lancaster University, offered attendees thought-provoking interpretations of the situation of women and hybrid (Japanese/Caucasian) adolescents in Japan. Follow this link to see the conference program <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/igala5/programme.aspx> and also to get information on the IGALA organization and the next conference.



international gender and language association

The area of gender and language studies has certainly travelled a long distance from a structuralist focus on the linguistic differences between male and female speech in the 1970s to more recent analyses of the complex intersections of feminine, masculine, LGBT identities and their myriad manifestations in micro and macro level discursive practices. The plenaries given by Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard and Don Kulick (co-author with D. Cameron of the book "Language and Sexuality" reviewed by A. Simon-Maeda in the Spring, 2004 GALE newsletter) are good examples of the theoretical diversity of the field.

Caldas-Coulthard used "body care" advertisements to highlight the commoditization of women's bodies in a consumerist society.

Specifically, in a beauty-oriented culture “women of a certain age” are coerced into maintaining a youthful appearance, thus falling prey to normative discourses that hinder a more equitable status in society.

The title of Don Kulick’s plenary was “Humourless Lesbians,” and the audience was provided with an intriguing question to ponder -- “Why are gay men typified as being funny while lesbians are not?” Kulick then outlined the theoretical background for his position concerning the ways in which certain ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual groups have traditionally been depicted as being humourless (e.g., Germans), and hence this is equivalent to a dehumanizing practice that denies these groups a fundamental human quality – humour. While groups such as African Americans, Jews (Woody Allen is a prime example), and gay men have developed “funniness” to deal with oppression, lesbians continue to face a unique set of obstacles. That is, in a heteronormative society, women (and all of their human traits including humour) are defined in relation to heterosexual men who are the unmarked (read:privileged) social category. Although Kulick provided a few examples of lesbian and bi-sexual comedians, these groups are still being denied their fair share of laughs. GALE’s own standup comedian, Jackie Beebe, would have had a lot to say at this presentation!

My own presentation overlapped with the panel, “Japanese, gender, sexuality: Questioning the binaries/resisting the norms,” and I’m sure I missed out on a very stimulating discussion of topics such as: metalinguistic comments as subversive practices that undermine heteronormativity, Momoko Nakamura; gendered interactional forms between parents and their children, Kyoko Satoh; stigmatization of Tohoku dialect as vulgar and unfeminine, Shigeko Kumagai; and linguistic and visual representations of female sexualities, Claire Maree. These Japan-based researchers continue to provide the field with new and exciting insights on gender and language issues, and the next IGALA conference scheduled for 2010 in Japan will be a wonderful opportunity for GALE members.



**Get a way with words**

A presentation I had very much looked forward to was concerned with discourse analysis methodologies. Well-known scholars such as Jane Sunderland, Mary Bucholtz and Judith Baxter presented their approaches to analysing data based on their own theoretical standpoints. For example, Baxter, as a feminist poststructuralist, emphasized the ways that power and identity issues highly influence discursive interactions and how the analyst needs to take into consideration the wider sociocultural frame that surrounds a stretch of discourse. Bucholtz combines traditional conversational analysis with long-term ethnographic data to get a more complete picture of what's going on in speaker/listener interactions. Sunderland emphasised that we need to consider what discursive genre (e.g., radio talk back call, interview, doctor/patient talk) the data belongs to and how larger discourses (e.g., parenting, sexuality, medicine) are manifested in local talk.

Another presentation, I didn't want to miss, was by Laurel Kamada who gave a fascinating talk based on her dissertation work about the discursive ways that Japanese-Caucasian adolescents negotiate issues of gender, ethnicity, and body image. Using a feminist poststructuralist discourse analytic methodology, Kamada provided us with media images and verbatim data from her participants who are positioned as both powerful and powerless within discourses of "haafu" (mixed-ethnicity) and "gaijin" (foreigner).

Justin Charlebois also drew on data from his doctoral work to discuss how Japanese women construct different identities vis-à-vis traditional gendered Japanese ideologies that obstruct women's attempts to move beyond a subordinate position in society.

As for my own presentation, I analysed a video clip of the Monica Lewinsky/Barbara Walters interview showing how Monica used particular rhetorical devices (generic forms, active voicing) to present herself as a reliable and coherent teller of past events, i.e., the Clinton scandal. One attendee pointed out that in addition to societal norms of moral/immoral heterosexual behavior that surrounded the interaction I should also consider how power issues (older, powerful male politician/ young, subordinate woman) contributed to the development of the interview.

There were several other presentations I attended but, as always when I travel a long distance for international conferences, I

oftentimes fall into a semi-unconscious state due to travel wear and tear, thus only being able to absorb a limited amount of information. However, whereas mega-conferences such as TESOL or AAAL are overwhelming and the attendee becomes exhausted trying to see as many presentations as possible, the IGALA conference is more focused, relaxed, and always worth the expense. Hoping to see many GALE presenters at the next IGALA conference!

[top page menu](#)



## **Presentations from the 2008 Pan SIG Conference**



### **Diversity & Convergence**

The 2008 Pan SIG conference in Kyoto, May10-11, 2008, offered a feast of gender-related presentations. Following is a summary of some of them. For more information, please contact the presenters.

#### **Women and Leadership: Teacher Education in Electronic Communities of Practice**

Blake E. Hayes, University of Leicester

As Japan has few women in leadership roles in higher education in Japan, teacher education is one area where educators and teacher trainers can encourage women's leadership potential. Hayes described two case studies of teacher education in Japanese universities. Using Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning two electronic communities of practice (CoP) were examined, focusing on gender dynamics in relation to competence and confidence. Cooperation, confidence and competence, which are relevant to effectiveness of leadership in higher education in technology fields, were analyzed in virtual communities of practice (vCoP). Both case

studies had mixed-gender groups, either with equal numbers of females and males (MixEQ) or with more males than females (MixMD). For the case study of pre-service Japanese teachers undertaking teacher education in vCoP, multi-method analysis showed overall consistency in perceptions of the platform being beneficial to teacher education regardless of the participant's gender. However, in the case of the non-Japanese in-service professional vCoP, the MixMD group, which was male-dominated, gender was an enabling structure for men and a constraining structure for women. In-depth interviews brought to light the underlying gender structures, and negative interactions such as exclusion, hostility and a competitive environment negatively impacted communication for women. Efficiency in work environments and education has been shown to benefit from balanced gender representation at all levels of institutional hierarchies and this paper argues that gender needs to be a conscious consideration given the gender-segregation found in education and employment related to technology.

### **English for Self-Fashioning: Case Studies of Three Japanese Women**

Yoko Sabatini, Temple University, <[yksaba@ce.mbn.or.jp](mailto:yksaba@ce.mbn.or.jp)>

The presenter discussed her qualitative study of three Japanese women whose study or use of English helped them "fashion and refashion" their lives in the fields of English education, fitness education and modern dance. According to the presenter, "the modes of living they struggled with and re-created are examples that show changes from traditional beliefs of 'how Japanese women should live' to multiple new possible ways to 'live creatively' in a globalized world. A longer version of her research was published in a recent edition of The Journal of Engaged Pedagogy.

### **Constructing gender in junior high school textbooks: observing process and product**

Thomas Hardy, Keio University [thomas\\_merlot@yahoo.com](mailto:thomas_merlot@yahoo.com)

Drawing on his experience as participant in a junior high school textbook writing project, the presenter discussed the ways that social, cultural, economic and political factors shape a writing team's perceptions of gender. He concluded with a critical look at the text writing process in Japan and the implications of his findings for writers and teachers.

### **Enhancing the non-traditional academic career path in Japan**

Kim Bradford-Watts, Kyoto Women's University

<[wundakim@yahoo.com](mailto:wundakim@yahoo.com)>

Women and members of other non-dominant groups often follow non-traditional career paths. This presentation reported on the requirements specified in Japanese online job listings, identified areas in which non-traditional applicants may be disadvantaged, and suggested forms of action.

### **So where are the working women? A discussion of gender roles in high school textbooks**

Fumie Togano, Hosei Daini High School <[toganofumie@hotmail.com](mailto:toganofumie@hotmail.com)>

Judging by lessons dealing with gender quality or gender-neutral expressions, high school textbook writers seem more aware of gender issues than before. Nevertheless, the presenter argued that traditional gender roles still predominate. She reported her analysis of the sentences used as examples or in exercises in five English writing texts used in Japan. She suggested that more attention should be paid to examples in order to really promote gender equality.

### **Lessons from bilingual speech for the language classroom: The gender factor**

Oana Maria Cusen, Ritsumeikan University

<[oana\\_maria\\_c@yahoo.com](mailto:oana_maria_c@yahoo.com)>

The presenter reported her study of gender differences in code-switching in an international couple living in Japan. She then connected those differences to implications for language teachers, arguing that investigating the use of code-switching can lead to a new view of L1 use by students and teachers.

### **En(d)gendering "communicative competence"**

Tamarah Cohen, Kansai Gaidai University <[tamarahc@hotmail.com](mailto:tamarahc@hotmail.com)>

This video-based presentation reported the results of a graduate student's study of gendered patterns in classroom interaction. Findings supported research showing that in mixed-sex settings, females routinely serve as a negative reference group against which males' performance is enhanced. Contact the presenter to inquire about the availability of the video discussion of the study, conducted by Matsuo Yuki, also of Ritsumeikan.

### **Sexual harassment in Japanese higher education**

Steve Silver, Kwansei Gakuin University <[sgsilver@gmail.com](mailto:sgsilver@gmail.com)>

and Salem K. Hicks, Kyoto Women's University  
<[salemhicks2@yahoo.com](mailto:salemhicks2@yahoo.com)>

This presentation examined the definitions of sexual harassment within the context of higher education in Japan. The presenters discussed relevant law and policy as well as intervention and prevention strategies.

Included was an examination of sexual relationships between faculty/staff and students, their ethical implications, and how they may or may not qualify as sexual harassment.

### **Diversity in the classroom**

Salem K. Hicks

This presentation explored how gender roles, performance and expectations all affect teaching practices, the content we teach, and day-to-day working relationships with colleagues. Also discussed was how limited gender roles and expectations and the lack of gender diversity effect the experience of educators.

### **Utilizing popular TV dramas as materials for raising gender awareness**

Tatsuhiko Paul Nagasaka, Tsuda College <[qwq00526@nifty.com](mailto:qwq00526@nifty.com)>

This presentation focused on a small-scale study based on the use of episodes of the American popular sit-com, Ally McBeal. In the study, questionnaires were given to participants, first-year university students, before and after viewing sessions. Answers showed that students understood the humor in the program and recognized the gender issues.

[top page menu](#)



## **JALT 2007 BREAKFAST -Getting to meet GALE-**

Don't forget to meet up with other GALE members when there is a chance! Every JALT conference we try to get GALE members together at least once for a meal. We look forward to seeing familiar faces and meeting new members too.

Last year we even had a special guest. Early risers for breakfast at JALT on Nov. 24 were treated to an informal conversation with Arifa Rahman, who was the Asian scholar at JALT2007. Dr. Rahman is Professor of English Language and Teacher Education at Dhaka University in Bangladesh and president of the main teachers' association there. She shared her experience with gender awareness and EFL materials design in her home country, and many other topics that morning. Kathy Riley who has coordinated many GALE events, over the years, organized this event.

Kathy first met Dr. Rahman two years earlier when she joined a team from Teachers Helping Teachers--

<http://www.geocities.com/yamataro670/tht> --a program for teachers who want to support English education in developing countries. By organizing this event, Kathy gave us all an opportunity to learn about gender issues in Bangladesh.

See some of you at JALT 2008. Wander up to the GALE table for a chat, attend the GALE presentations and try to attend the GALE get-together! Check the Moodle for details before the conference.

[top page menu](#)