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**University of Southampton**

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Modern Languages

# Teacher Learning in Communities of Practice:
# Multiple Case Studies of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan

by

**Hiroko Tsujino**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

[August 2021]

# University of Southampton

## Abstract

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Modern Languages

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**Teacher Learning in Communities of Practice:**

**Multiple Case Studies of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan**

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Hiroko Tsujino

This qualitative study uses narrative inquiry to investigate how non-Japanese Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) construct their professional identities as English teachers in the 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In the era of globalisation, the role of English language teachers has become more and more important in school education in countries like Japan, and the processes of teacher learning and their professional development need to be examined more closely. The present study focuses on teacher learning, addressing from both formal accounts of teacher education and non-formal teacher learning as social practice by looking at the realities of ALTs who teach English in public schools in Japan from preschool to senior high school level. The study investigates how ALTs learn to become effective teachers through their participation in the multiple communities of practice, such as the ones with the local teachers within the school, or the communities of ALTs themselves. Becoming effective in turn improves classroom learning and enhances English education, which can be understood as a fundamental teacher learning process. As teachers from outside the Japanese school contexts, the experience of ALTs has the potential to identify important implications for us to understand the multifaceted teacher learning in communities of practice. The research identifies key issues in the way ALTs learn from their experience of teaching in Japanese schools in partnership with the local Japanese teachers, an area which is still largely under-researched. Data from an online questionnaire survey, observations of 'landscapes of practice' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014) and their narratives of learning in interviews and reflective journals are analysed for 'narrative knowledging' (Barkhuizen, 2011). The analysis shows how ALTs participate in each CoP and learn through their relationships with other members of communities of practice. The study will contribute to our understanding of the realities of ALTs in Japan, and more generally, to give some insights into the process of language teachers' identity formation and language teacher education.

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# Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

| | |
|---|---|
| Print name: | Hiroko Tsujino |
| Title of thesis: | Teacher Learning in Communities of Practice: Multiple Case Studies of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan |

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature: Hiroko Tsujino Date: 28/08/2021

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Lastly, I wish to thank my dear family and friends who have patiently watched and waited for me to finish and provided me with practical and moral support to get me through. I should like to end by dedicating this thesis to my parents and grandparents who have supported me.

# Definitions and Abbreviations

AET: Assistant English Teacher (a synonym for ALT)

ALT: Assistant Language Teacher (a synonym for AET)

AoO: Apprenticeship of Observation

BoE: Board of Education

*Bonenkai*: Japanese word for year-end party

CELTA: Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults

CIR: Coordinators for International Relations (another position hired via the JET programme)

CoP: Community of Practice

CLAIR: The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, which organise the JET programme

CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EI: Emotional Intelligence

ELF: English as a Lingua Franca

ELT: English Language Teaching

*Enkai*: Japanese word for drinking party (a synonym for *nomikai*)

ERGO: Ethics and Research Governance Online

ES: Elementary School(s)

ESS: English Speaking Society (a type of extra-curricular club activity)

ESL: English as a Second Language

HRT: Homeroom Teacher at preschool and elementary school level

Definitions and Abbreviations

IT: Information Technology

JALT: The Japan Association for Language Teaching

JET: Japan Exchange and Teaching (programme)

JHS: Junior High School(s)

JTE: Japanese Teacher of English at secondary school level

*Kenkyu jyugyo*: Japanese word for open/demonstration lesson(s) for study where other teachers are invited to observe the lesson(s)

*Kyoshi*: Japanese word for teacher, indicating occupation

LTI: Language Teacher Identity

MEXT: The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan

NES: Native English Speaker(s)

NET: Native English Teacher (a full-time ALT, directly hired by BoE or local government)

NNES: Non-native English Speaker(s)

*Nijikai*: Japanese word for after-party

*Nomikai*: Japanese word for drinking party (a synonym for *enkai*)

NP: Narrative Portfolio

NPO: Non-Profit Organisation

NS: Nursery School(s), including kindergarten(s) (a synonym for preschool)

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PA: Prefectural Advisor (a supervisor for ALTs on the JET programme)

PGCE: The Postgraduate Certificate in Education

PTA: Parent-Teacher Association

SDC: Skills Development Conference

*Sensei*: Japanese word for teacher or Mr./Miss./Mrs./Ms./Dr./Prof.

SHS: Senior High School(s)

SI: Social Intelligence

TALIS: The Teaching and Learning International Survey

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

T-NET: Temporally Native English Teacher (a part-time ALT, dispatched from temporally staffing agencies)

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

'Teacher learning' has become one of the most important foci of the studies in the field of teacher education in general and also in language teacher education since the mid-1970s (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Freeman & Richards, 1996; K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2003). It is meaningful to look at the process of language teachers' professional identity formation, how they learn to become a teacher in relation to social, cultural and institutional context and how they act as a teacher through their teaching practices, as it has potential not only to enhance learning of both students and teachers (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006), but also to revisit language teacher education itself (Freeman, 1996). The main aim of this study is to explore language teachers' cognitive process to understand how they know to become teachers and how they construct their professional identity through actual teaching practices and their relationships with others in various communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) as life experience. "Ultimately, we need more studies that investigate how the generative mechanisms of teacher learning appear in different combinations and sequences, with different weights, in different but concrete situations" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011: 394). Teacher learning is an ongoing process, and their professional identity is changing overtime because 'identity' is dynamic and fluid (Edwards, 2009) and it is conceptualised as actively constructed sense of self (Kumaravadivelu, 2012a). Therefore, the present research is conducted as longitudinal qualitative case studies over a period of one year, based on the narratives provided by the language teachers in Japan in order to explore the process of teachers' identity formation. I draw attention to Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) who work at nursery, elementary and secondary schools in public education system in Japan to investigate how 'situated learning' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) affects their identity construction as language teachers and their actual teaching practices to contribute to enhance located language teacher education (K. E. Johnson, 2006).

As Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005) demonstrate, the complexity of language teacher identity needs to be investigated in more depth from various angles. In fact, there are many studies have been done to investigate language teachers' identity and their professional development in different contexts (Barkhuizen, 2017; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Kiely & Askham, 2012; Kiernan, 2010; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013; L. Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010; Tsui, 2007a). The number of studies which focus on in-service teachers is smaller compared with that of looking at pre-service teachers, although even experienced teachers are possible to go through their professional identity crisis when they get into a different institutional context (Verity, 2000).

Verity (2000: 183) describes that "although I "knew" I was an expert, I "felt" like a novice" when she came to Japan to teach English at a university. In the case of ALTs, they have different backgrounds in terms of their nationalities, ethnic origins, and the use of their first language(s). They also have different experiences as a language learner and a teacher. Although most of ALTs have not been qualified as language teachers yet, they have just a few opportunities to take teacher training courses which are given under guidance by their employers such as boards of education (BoEs) or outsourcing companies. In addition, the contents of those training sessions and support system for ALTs are diverse, even though they are in the same status as an ALT (Sekeres, 2010), and sometimes they do not meet the ALTs' needs and interests. Therefore, almost every ALT should learn how to teach in the particular school contexts from scratch through their actual teaching practices so that they can fit in different situations. Their learning is situated and every ALT belongs to multiple communities of practice (hereafter CoPs). From my previous study (Tsujino, 2014), I found some evidence that ALTs are participating in various CoPs such as the community of students and teachers, the local community, their own family, or a group of ALTs in social media, and they actually utilise them as their sources for learning. They engage in a variety of practices and they have different degrees of participation in activities offered in each CoP. However, the functions of those CoPs and the contents and qualities of participations have not yet been fully investigated. This study tries to fill the gap by exploring generative mechanisms of teacher learning in CoPs.

I employ narrative inquiry as my methodological and analytical orientation. In post-structuralism sociocultural theories, learning is conceptualised as a social practice and language teachers develop a sense of professionalism in negotiation with others through their practices (K. E. Johnson, 2009). To explore teachers' cognitive process of learning and professional identity formation, narratives can be recognised as a useful analytic lens (K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2002). It is important to focus on the stories of the teachers' lives because narrative itself is a sense making process and it reflects the process of their identity formation over time. Teachers learn through stories and those stories can reveal the actual learning of teachers and how they construct their professional identity (Barkhuizen, 2013; Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014; Hayes, 2017). That is why narrative approach is widely used to understand the complexity of learning, and I also utilise narratives as the main instrument of the present study. As shown in the title, the researcher employs multiple case study approach (Stake, 2006) to present the narratives of participant ALTs.

## 1.2 Conceptual foundations

This study explores teacher learning in CoPs to promote better understandings of the mechanisms and functions of multiple CoPs in which language teachers engage and the process of their professional identity formation. "To understand and explain why and how teachers learn, we must consider how a teacher's individual learning orientation system interacts with the school's learning orientation system and how both of these systems together affect the activities (and features of activities) in which teachers participate and then are reciprocally affected by the changes that occur from participation in these activities" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011: 393-394). Thus, I plan to take case study approach to collect not only spoken narratives through interviews but also written narratives in questionnaire survey and reflective journals and multimodal narratives through fieldwork, observing their teaching practices in classroom and the relationships with others outside the class to see how they interact with their students, teachers, and other members of CoPs in order to investigate both their 'identity-in-discourse' and 'identity-in-practice' (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Varghese et al., 2005).

There are several reasons why I decided to focus on ALTs in Japan. First, there is not many research has been done to listen to ALTs' voices and to examine how they feel, think, know and act as teachers in educational settings in Japan, even though the government has been promoting the active use of foreign 'native' English speakers in classroom to improve students' English language learning. Second, since ALTs are foreign nationals and they are literally 'newcomers' to the CoPs in Japanese society, the diverse social and cultural background of ALTs and the uniqueness of their working situations seem to have large potential to give us a lot of useful insights about the mechanisms and functions of not only the school-based CoPs but also other CoPs in wider social settings. Furthermore, teacher learning for ALTs could be largely situated learning, because many ALTs did not experience formal teacher education. Therefore, it is possible to observe how the in-service learning system for teachers functions to support their professional development, and conversely, we can also deepen our understandings about the influence and effectiveness of teacher education by examining their needs. I envisage the ALTs' narratives or 'stories to live by' could provide valuable knowledge about the language teachers' identity formation which is also applicable to promote better understanding of its process in wider contexts.

"Identity and how it shapes teacher-learning can be explored through case studies, through the review of lesson protocols, through narratives in which teachers describe the emergence of their professional identities and the struggles and issues that are involved" (J. C. Richards, 2008: 168). That is why I chose to conduct multiple case studies with ALTs across Japan and closely look at

how they construct and reconstruct their identity as an English teacher in Japanese schools through their in-service work from 'narrative portfolio' analyses which is discussed at length in Chapter 3. The main theoretical framework, CoP and the function and mechanisms of multiple CoPs that teachers might engage in will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

## 1.3 Personal interest

This study focuses on ALTs who work as language teachers at preschools, elementary and secondary schools in Japan. All the participant ALTs teach at state schools in the school year 2015, from April 2015 to March 2016. The main reason of this choice of the research site is because I am also a member of English language teaching community in Japan, and I can share a lot of contextual knowledge with them as a Japanese teacher of English (JTE). I have worked with several ALTs at different senior high schools (SHS), trying to build productive learning partnership in our English classes. Unlike JTEs, ALTs have little opportunity for their professional development and career progression. Furthermore, I have heard many stories of marginalisation that those ALTs experienced in the school contexts and wondered how we could tackle these issues to enhance mutual learning relationship and generative mechanisms of teacher learning for both JTEs and ALTs. Unfortunately, many ALTs seemed to find it very difficult to act as fully legitimate members of the ELT community in Japanese schools throughout my previous study (Tsujino, 2014), and most of them were struggling to construct their professional identity. In fact, ALTs' participation in teaching practices tends to stay peripheral like as 'a human tape recorder/player' (Allen, 2013; McConnell, 2000; Nambu, 2015; Rutson-Griffiths, 2012; Scully, 2001; Tajino, 2002; Tajino & Tajino, 2000; Tsujino, 2017) and their potential as a provider of rich linguistic and cultural resource of language learning is underestimated because of their given status as 'just assistants' (MEXT, 2011), not as professional language teachers on one hand. However, majority of the students and colleagues see ALTs as teachers and some ALTs get on inbound trajectories successfully to construct their professional identity through participating in various practices in school-based CoPs (see Chapter 2.5) on the other. As such, I would like to explore and identify the factors that facilitate/hinder the learning of ALTs to make some recommendations for creating more productive learning environment at school.

As an English teacher, I feel that my experience as a student in the classroom observing many teachers' practices or 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975) and my day-to-day in-service work are much more useful than formal teacher trainings. Therefore, I am interested in how ALTs utilise their experience of apprenticeship of observation (hereafter AoO) and to what extent they

transfer it into Japanese school contexts. Additionally, I found that studies of ALTs tend to focus just on specific employment type such as ALTs on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme in specific region and/or school level. Thus, I invited ALTs in all different employment types working in various school levels in different regions to provide a broader picture of their realities.

Through the collaborative narrative research with ALTs, I would like to explore the process of how ALTs negotiate with others and build their professional identity as language teachers through their relationships and interactions with other teachers, students, people in the local community and Japanese society in order to contribute to “strengthen and enrich ALT training programs” (MEXT, 2014a). Needless to say, I utilise my identity as a SHS JTE to retell the stories of ALTs. I shall discuss the contextual background of this study in more detail in the following section.

## 1.4 Contextual background

### 1.4.1 English education in Japan

Firstly, I examine the contextual background of this study by looking at the foreign language education system in elementary and secondary school level in which my research participants engage. The ministry of education, culture, sports, science and technology (MEXT) determines the national curriculum guideline, the Courses of Study, to ensure a fixed standard of education in Japan and it is generally revised once every 10 years. At the time of the data collection, the most recent revision of the Courses of Study took place in 2008 and the new national curriculum guideline was fully implemented in all elementary schools (ES) in April 2011, followed by junior high schools (JHS) in 2012 and senior high schools (SHS) in 2013 (MEXT, 2008b). English has been treated as the most important foreign language in Japanese educational context for decades, as Kubota (2002) illustrates. It became a compulsory subject in lower secondary schools from 2002, and ‘foreign language activities’ were put in execution in elementary school curriculum in 2011. Here, ‘foreign language’ means English in principle, but MEXT (2008a) explains that it is also desirable to introduce other languages along with English. Table 1.1 shows the general picture of hours of English lessons in each school levels. In most cases, one lesson is 45 minutes in ES and 50 minutes in secondary schools, so I also put the actual study hours of English at each school level in square brackets.

Table 1.1 The hours of English lessons in elementary and secondary schools (MEXT)

| Level of school | Grade | Number of hours of English lessons | Total study hours [actual length of time] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary schools | 5 and 6 | 35 hours/year (1 hour/week) | 70 hours [53] |
| Lower secondary schools [junior high schools] | 7, 8 and 9 | 140 hours/year (4 hours/week) | 420 hours [350] |
| Upper secondary schools [senior high schools] | 10, 11 and 12 | 140-280 hours/year (4-8 hours/week) [Depending on the type of school] | 560 hours on average* [467] |

*Adapted from Aspinall (2012: 6)

Among those hours of English lessons, ALTs were utilised in 9.7% of total hours of English lessons in public SHS, 22.1% in JHS, and 61.7% in ES in the school year 2015 (MEXT, 2015). In secondary schools, the majority of the English lessons are taught by JTEs and grammar translation is still the dominant method in the actual classrooms (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008) especially in SHS level from my own experience as a JTE. In the interviews, some ALTs pointed out the fact that it is not surprising that ALTs speak only a few words during the lesson even though they physically attend the class. Whereas other ALTs said that they usually plan the lessons by themselves and take the leading role in class. Thus, those percentages do not tell the reality of what happens in the English classroom and how ALTs involve in the actual lessons. One of the reasons of the ongoing trend of grammar translation method is because English has a function as a 'gate-keeping device' (Graddol, 2006) to go into the higher educational institutions and to get a better job. Although the national curriculum guideline encourages teachers to promote the communicative language teaching (CLT), most of the JTEs tend to rely on traditional *yakudoku* (grammar-translation) in an exam-oriented curriculum, and the school-based English language teaching community is slow to accept the policy change (Aspinall, 2012; Tahira, 2012). Therefore, ALTs are often regarded as just an occasional visitor or entertainer who introduces some fun games and cultural topics other than the mainstream of English study as a subject. In a worse scenario, they can be treated as a fancy furniture or a human tape recorder/player to just read out sentences in the textbook.

While it is true that many JTEs feel that ALTs have a superiority as 'native' speakers of English because 'native' English is highly valued in the Japanese society (S. Sutherland, 2012). Looking into the broader society in Japan, 'native-speakerism' (Holliday, 2005) or native-speaker *shinko*

(blind faith) can be observed frequently (Houghton & Rivers, 2013) especially for so-called 'native' English speakers. The policymakers, JTEs and other members of the ELT community are not fully aware of 'native speaker fallacy' (Phillipson, 1992). As a result, the foreign language education policy in Japan has been placing 'native' English speaking teachers as one of the most important keys to enhance English education under the notion of communicative approach. However, in reality, ALTs are just peripheral members of the ELT community in Japan and usually they are not given enough opportunities for proper training and support as language teachers (Hashimoto, 2013; Ohtani, 2010).

In 'the Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication' which was released in 2011, MEXT described their view on ALTs as "just 'assistants'" (MEXT, 2011: 8), not as teachers, even though their roles in CoPs are various. The statement never seems to reflect the reality of ALTs properly. In fact, some ALTs are responsible to make lesson plans, take a leading role in classroom and work collaboratively with JTEs and other teachers, whereas others are treated as just a 'human tape recorder' (Tsujino, 2014). I feel this ambiguous and conflicting status of ALTs requires negotiation, and I believe that such negotiation could count as a potentially rich experience for professional learning for ALTs. This study aims at understanding the narrative shape of such learning experiences among language teachers. In the next section, the actual status of ALTs in recent years is illustrated.

### 1.4.2 Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan

There are thousands of ALTs working in different school levels in Japan (see Table 1.2). Under the current ALT system, there are five different categories of employment: 1) JET ALTs who join the government-sponsored the JET programme, 2) so-called 'native English speaking teachers' (NETs) who are employed directly by the local governments or the prefectural/city/town BoE, 3) dispatched ALTs who have contract with private outsourcing companies under the Dispatch Law and the School Education Law, and the BoE control their actual work, 4) subcontract ALTs who are dispatched from private outsourcing company and the BoE have no duty or obligation to this type of ALTs and no control over their work (actually this employment type has no legal basis), 5) other ALTs who are 'native' English speakers or people who are highly proficient in English in the local communities and they teach English as volunteers (I excluded people who are Japanese nationals and put the numbers of foreign nationals in this category). In this study, I categorise both dispatched and subcontract ALTs as temporary NETs and refer to them as T-NETs to make the distinction simple and clear.

As presented in the statistics below (in Table 1.2), the largest group of ALTs at the time of the study conducted was other ALTs (5376 people, 31.6%), followed by T-NETs (4758 people, 28%) and JET ALTs (4177 people, 24.6%). Some BoEs have been attempting to replace JET ALTs for T-NETs because the cost to hire T-NETs is much cheaper than that of JET ALTs (Sekeres, 2010). Martin (2010) points out the problems of the bidding system of outsourced non-JET ALTs, who are treated as if they are 'furniture' (Flynn, 2009) without having career progression. One of the major problems of T-NETs is their limited work period. Basically, all types of ALTs have to renew their contract annually but most of T-NETs cannot work continuously during a whole school year, from April to March. In the case of the prefecture where I worked, usually T-NETs are allocated to each school after the middle of May and they leave the school in early February. Also, it is normal for us to have a different ALT every year.

Table 1.2 Numbers of ALTs working in state schools in 2015 (MEXT, 2015)

| School level [As of 1st December 2015] | JET | NET | Dispatched ALTs | Subcontract ALTs | Other ALTs | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary schools (concurrently work in JHS and/or SHS) | 2124 (1685) | 1772 (979) | 1230 (542) | 1576 (681) | 1658 (265) | 8360 (4152 [50%]) |
| Junior high schools (concurrently work in ES and/or SHS) | 2309 (1737) | 1447 (1001) | 1265 (541) | 1522 (686) | 613 (279) | 7156 (4244 [59%]) |
| Senior high schools (concurrently work in ES and/or JHS) | 1500 (66) | 487 (32) | 94 (7) | 313 (11) | 210 (14) | 2604 (130 [5%]) |
| Total | 4177 [24.6%] | 2696 [15.9%] | 2042 [12.0%] | 2716 [16.0%] | 5376 [31.6%] | 17007 [100%] |

Obviously, many ALTs work at more than one school concurrently and they even go to different levels of schools. For example, nearly 60% of the ALTs who work at JHS also teach at ES and/or SHS in the same school year (MEXT, 2015). Under the current teacher qualification system in Japan, it is very difficult for people to be certified as both ES and JHS teacher at the same time, because there is a large discrepancy in terms of their school cultures and curriculums. However, ALTs are often asked to go to different school levels without having proper trainings generally.

In the present study, I invited ALTs under all those different employment systems as the participants of the research to see how ALTs in each status conceive their work as an ALT and how they construct their identities as language teachers. The cover letters (Appendix A) to call for the respondents of the online questionnaire survey was circulated through my personal contacts and 'snowball sampling' (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010) technique was utilised to reach out as many ALTs as possible. For the in-depth part of the research including fieldwork and classroom observations, I intended to invite from five to ten ALTs who have various backgrounds and experiences, and seven ALTs all across Japan kindly agreed to take part in. All of the respondents/participants were

working as ALTs at the time of the data collection in the school year 2015, teaching English at different levels of state schools, one or more from each of nursery school (NS), ES, JHS and SHS. I will present further details about the participants in Chapters 3.3, 4, 5, and 6.

### 1.4.3 Issues of ALTs

As explained earlier, it is said that most of the ALTs have not qualified as teachers yet and majority of them have no previous experience as language teachers and they have not many opportunities to attend teacher training courses or seminars. In my former study, less than one third of the participants have teacher qualifications such as CELTA or PGCE, and only 22% of the thirty-two ALTs answered they took initial training more than five days before they started to teach at schools in Japan. More interestingly, the number of people who major in English, linguistics and/or education was only 34%, and some ALTs who speak English as a second language also worked as 'native' speakers of English (Tsujino, 2014). As such, most of the time, ALTs learn how to teach and how to become teachers from the relationship with students, colleagues such as JTEs and/or homeroom teachers (HRTs), other ALTs, and people in the local community through their actual work as an ALT (Galloway, 2009; McConnell, 2000; Miyazato, 2009). The learning of ALTs could be notably situated relying on the craft model and the reflective model through team-teaching with the local teachers, and it largely depends on the functions of communities they belong to. However, the problem is that the pre-service teacher training in Japan rarely cover the topic of team-teaching and how to work in collaboration with ALTs (Bolstad & Zenuk-Nishide, 2016). To be qualified as teachers in Japan, they must have Japanese nationality and go through pre-service teacher education in the concurrent model. Student teachers usually take a four-year teacher training program based on the guideline of teacher license policy released by the MEXT. Once they are qualified and employed as teachers at state schools, they must enrol in 'the first-year teacher training programme (including mentoring process)' and 'the tenth-year experienced teacher development programme' designated by law as induction and a part of in-service education. In addition, some local BoEs demand teachers to take part in the professional development programme in their second-year, fifth-year, and/or twentieth-year of their career at the time of this study. As a JTE, I took pre-service teacher education, inductions and many in-service trainings, but there were no lectures, teaching practices or seminars focusing on how to team-teach with ALTs. Even teacher training for JTEs do not offer enough opportunities and support to acquire competences for team-teaching, the situation for HRTs at ES seems worse. In fact, according to the survey about the implementation status of foreign language activities in ES (MEXT, 2014c), more than 83% HRTs who actually teach English to their

students answered that they have no English related qualifications or experience of taking English teaching courses. Although many ALTs are working at ES (see Table 1.2), it could be very difficult for them to get support from those Japanese teachers who still have anxiety about what they do to teach English in the classroom. Thus, mutual investment from both individual teachers and the school is required to fill the gap caused by the lack of teacher education and training courses. I feel that there is an urgent need to explore not only the various backgrounds of ALTs and the reality of their learning as teachers, but also their actual needs and understandings about what features are required for ALTs to enhance their learning as a language teacher in-practice, in order to create more effective teaching environment in Japanese schools. To do so, I utilise narrative inquiry to investigate the process of ALTs' learning as teachers through their stories of experiences.

Although 'native' English speakers cannot always be ideal models for language teaching mostly in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts as many studies suggest (Braine, 1999; Medgyes, 1992; Moussu & Llurda, 2008), I should say that the foreign language education policy in Japan is still depending heavily on 'native' norms. In fact, the MEXT announced 'the English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization' in January 2014 (MEXT, 2014a) and they proposed to double the number of 'native' English speaking ALTs in the next five years in this English education reform plan. According to the official statements, the government also tries to strengthen and enrich training programs for ALTs by proposing the basic guidelines, but the actual contents and the planning of trainings and seminars heavily depend on the local governments and BoEs. Furthermore, there are few studies conducted to investigate the professional identity of ALTs to understand the realities that they are facing and their actual needs in the Japanese school contexts. When I started to design this project, I could not find any longitudinal research focusing on the process of ALTs' identity formation through their narratives. Not only that, the majority of the JTEs including myself do not know much about the real situation of ALTs and how they learn to teach at schools in Japan. I believe that this study could provide some space for both ALTs and JTEs to understand how the CoPs in education settings from past to present in our life experience function to enhance our learning and professional development as teachers based on the social learning theory that sees learning as a social phenomenon (Wenger, 1998).

As briefly presented earlier, through my master's study I identified the issues among ALTs in Japan by investigating 1) their professional identity: their readiness for work as teachers and support for professional development, and 2) language identities: language learning experiences and their use of language(s) in and outside of the schools (Tsujino, 2014). Some of the ALTs who participated in my former research articulated that they work like apprentices and they have to be flexible and change their practices in relation with different JTEs. Others also mentioned that

'every situation is different' and they were told to 'adjust' to the JTEs' way of teaching and the school culture in the orientation or induction courses. They had to start their profession as an ALT almost from scratch. ALTs are not allowed to teach by themselves in class according to the School Education Law because they are not qualified as teachers in Japan, and if they are very 'lucky', they can be treated as teachers and take full responsibility to lead lessons and collaborate with JTEs well. Sadly, many ALTs who missed these opportunities would leave the job shortly after their first year of contract (see Table 3.4). I felt there is a need to investigate more about the issues which ALTs are facing when they become language teachers in Japan and how ALTs manage to get used to the different school contexts and develop their professional identity as teachers to benefit both current and future ALTs. In this study, I also take into account the personal backgrounds of ALTs and the influence of their language learning experiences which I could hardly explore in my former study to see what makes ALTs as professionals in more detail.

Still, not many studies have been done to investigate ALTs' professional identity formation (Kiernan, 2010), and there are a lot of issues to be examined to revise the ALT system in Japan. For instance, Aspinall (2012) suggests the possibility of ALTs as promoters of communicative language teaching (CLT) in classrooms because most of them, who are so-called Westerners, have been taught in CLT curriculum as a student. However, every situation is different, and there needs to be a close investigation on how and to what extent ALTs can bring their own creativity into the classroom and how their experience of apprenticeship affects their actual teaching practices. At the point of the study designed, little studies are conducted to put the focus on the aspect of AoO (M. Borg, 2004; Lortie, 1975) among ALTs in Japan exploring the influence of their experience as a language learner on teaching. Kiernan (2010) addresses the issues of language teachers' identity formation, including some ALTs as his research participants, but it is based on one-shot interview data and I could not find any empirical study to investigate ALTs learning as language teachers in relations to their participation in multiple CoPs over time.

In addition, I also feel it is important to explore the characteristics of expertise for ALTs and how they build those dispositions through their work. In order to closely examine the process of professional identity formation of ALTs as language teachers, I would like to investigate how they develop and use their 'furnished imagination' (Kiely & Askham, 2012) in their work as an ALT through participation in multiple CoPs from past to present. 'Furnished imagination' refers to "the combination of knowledge, procedural awareness and skills, dispositions, and identity which the teachers take from the course as the conceptual toolkit for work in TESOL" (Kiely & Askham, 2012: 496). It is especially important for language teachers in the process of acquiring expertise (Tsui, 2009a). The study of diverse background and uniqueness of each ALT and its influence on the actual teaching practice as language teachers would give meaningful insights to identify the

distinctive characteristics for the professional development of language teachers and it might help to provide implications for the language teacher education which is also applicable to other contexts. In fact, the similar native English-speaking teachers' employment system with ALT is implemented in other countries (Copland, Davis, Garton, & Mann, 2016; Wang & Lin, 2013). By investigating the issues of ALTs in Japan and explore the process of their learning in various CoPs, I hope that the present study could shed light on the 'native' English teachers who are in other countries as well and provide an opportunity to revisit the native-speaker-dependent English education reform plans more realistically. Moreover, in terms of constructing knowledge about how teacher learning happens for in-service language teachers in an EFL context, this study would be able to contribute to reveal some important aspects of the process of teachers' professional identity formation through their life experience together with the mechanisms and functions of CoPs which support their professional development, giving some implications for language teacher education in general.

The research questions which guide this research study are explained in the next section.

## 1.5 Research questions

This study focuses on teacher learning and the process of professional identity formation for language teachers. I examine how ALTs learn to teach in the Japanese school contexts through the CoPs framework, using narrative inquiry as methodology. I set four research questions to navigate my study as follows:

1. How do Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) construct their professional identities in Japanese school contexts?

2. What are the features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs?

3. In what ways and to what extent do the CoPs support ALTs' professional development?

4. How does ALTs' participation in CoPs lead to teacher learning?

The first question explores the features of ALTs' professional identity and their expertise as English teachers in Japanese school contexts. I would like to examine their personal background, life history and experience of learning and teaching language(s) to see how these affect their

professional identity formation as ALTs. In so doing, both formal and informal aspects of teacher learning would be investigated. An online questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews were conducted to identify some functions and characteristics of CoPs which they engage in as the foundation of this study. The second question is to look closely at the complexity of the informal account of teacher learning and the features of apprenticeship of learning for ALTs, focusing on two different modes of apprenticeship of learning from past to present: how their experience of AoO (M. Borg, 2004; Lortie, 1975), both 'AoO in frontstage' which stands for their past experience of observing teachers as a student in classroom and 'AoO from backstage' having a teacher among family members and observing teacher's work at home (M. Borg, 2004), affect their teaching practices, and how they learn from JTEs and/or HRTs as apprentices in the school education system in Japan. To see how learning relationships are established and developed in CoPs and how ALTs utilise their experience as learners into their actual teaching practices, I focus on multiple CoPs in five different levels identified by reviewing literature and answering the first research question: 1) nano CoP within family and close friends, 2) micro CoP in classroom and/or subject department, 3) meso CoP inside school, 4) macro CoP outside/across school(s) in town/city/prefectural level, 5) mega CoP as organisations in national/world-wide level (see Figure 2.1). The details and the definitions of this classification are explained later in Chapter 2.5. Question 3 and 4 are addressing to the multiple CoPs which ALTs engage in, including both inside and outside of the school contexts to investigate how each CoP functions as a place for teacher learning through looking at ALTs' different modes of participation and various trajectories that they take. I utilise the narratives of ALTs to explore both their 'identity-in-discourse' and 'identity-in-practice' (Varghese et al., 2005: 39) through 'narrative portfolio' analyses, which can be understood as integrated multimodal thick description of retold narratives from the online questionnaire survey, interviews, observations, and reflective journals. This new approach of 'narrative portfolio' will be demonstrated in Chapter 3. To be precise, Question 3 addresses more to the cognitive aspects of teacher learning (identity-in-discourse) and the mechanisms of CoPs to look at how ALTs build learning relationships in different CoPs, whereas Question 4 is focusing more on the practical side of the CoPs and their functions (identity-in-practice) to examine the ongoing process of teacher learning and socially developed knowledge and skills of language teachers to investigate the generative mechanisms of teacher learning (Opfer & Pedder, 2011) in the Japanese school contexts. The details of the ways to tackle with each research question such as research instruments and analytical approach are shown in the summary of the research design (Appendix B).

## 1.6 Significance of the study

This study aims at identifying the significant features of ALTs as one of the professions in language education which is relevant in wider contexts, and revealing the complexities of teacher learning process, especially through examining the influence of informal learning in CoPs, to contribute to the further understandings of the functions of both positive and negative aspects of teacher learning. As a criticism of CoPs, Canagarajah (2013: 31) points out that

> CoP [community of practice] is not very sensitive to power differences between communities. … CoP is defined so much in terms of consensus that it is not always appreciated how the inner tensions and differences can be constructive. The model also doesn't give too much consideration to subjective factors such as members' attitudes, values, and ideologies in the conduct of their practices.

By looking closely at the process of teacher learning of ALTs in different contexts all across Japan, the current study will address these issues which are not fully focused in Wenger (1998). I hope this research project can contribute to not only expand our knowledge about teacher learning itself, but also shed a light on the realities of ALTs in Japan and show some implications for revisiting the ALT system in order to allow them full scope for their ability. Drawing on narratives of ALTs, I would like to demonstrate how language teachers from diverse backgrounds and in different stages of their professional development conceive their learning experiences and changes through their relationships with the members of various CoPs that they participate in. As mentioned earlier, in-service learning of teachers has huge potential for enhancing students' learning, and teacher communities can be seen as very efficient sites for sustained and continuous teacher learning (Lieberman & Mace, 2008; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). I envisage the findings from this study would contribute to create more productive learning environment for teachers in different educational settings as well.

Notably, the key findings of this study delineate some important features of teacher learning: 1) To compile productive learning to become a teacher, it is essential to develop one's emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and social intelligence (Goleman, 2006) as Gkonou and Mercer (2017) explain. Moreover, it is crucial that other members of CoPs in different levels (Figure 2.1) should have higher level of emotional and social intelligence to create mediational space for productive learning to benefit each other. In such cases, teachers can swap their roles as a mentor or a mentee flexibly and fluidly regardless of their years of experience or the level of professionalism and it enhances their learning relationships. 2) Teachers learn not only from more competent others but also from their students and other teachers through the process of knowledge construction both inside and outside the class. Teacher learning is serial and could

happen even when they are on the outbound trajectories to leave the current position in a particular CoP. In many cases of ALTs, a trajectory path that one ALT made tends to be inherited to next ALTs as newcomers/successors. 3) Not surprisingly, the level of responsibilities that ALTs take reflects their legitimacy in the CoPs and the degree of their participation and their inbound/insider trajectories to become a core member of CoPs. In some cases, ALTs experience 'glass walls' as cultural boundaries including the notion of native-speakerism, social boundaries represented in the concept of *uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside) and language barriers to communicate with Japanese locals in addition to 'glass ceilings' as legal boundaries that limit their position as language teachers in Japan. 4) AoO can influence teachers' practice not only in terms of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge but also their emotional and social intelligence. Learning from AoO in frontstage as a student can be a useful foundation for ALTs who have no background of teacher education. Furthermore, AoO from backstage, having a close member of the family who teaches at school, can also provide positive learning experience for some ALTs to build their identities as teachers. Examples of the stories are presented later in the analysis and discussion chapters.

## 1.7 Organisation of the thesis

Followed by this introduction (Chapter 1), literature review is presented to introduce conceptual frameworks and theoretical orientations of this study (Chapter 2). As for the conceptual frameworks, I set out the critique of assumptions of the formal account of teacher education in general. The theoretical orientations of this study is demonstrated through the concepts of situated learning and CoPs (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), and informal account of teacher learning through both ordinary craft model apprenticeship and AoO (Lortie, 1975) is explained as well, which can be observed in teachers' 'stories to live by' (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). I shall deal with all those different structures of teacher learning and how teachers' narratives as phenomena can be utilised as a useful lens to explore the actual teacher learning. Chapter 3 is about the methodology, and I illustrate case study approach and narrative inquiry as methodological orientation of the study, introducing the research settings and the procedure of data collection and methods in more detail. Then, three analyses chapters are presented. In Chapter 4, the findings from analysis of narratives about the first phase data are shown, including an online questionnaire survey (Appendix E, F and G) and the follow-up interviews (Appendix H). Chapter 5 and 6 delineate analyses of the longitudinal qualitative data in seven case studies (second phase) represented in the form of 'narrative portfolios' through narrative analysis, drawing on both within-case and cross-case analyses. The researcher retells

the stories of ALTs collected through observations (Appendix J), interviews (Appendix H & I), and reflective journals (Appendix C), investigating the features of apprenticeship of ALTs and the mechanisms and functions of CoPs that facilitate their learning as teachers. Narrative portfolios of four ALTs who have four years or more experience teaching English are reported in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 contains narrative portfolios of three ALTs in their third year of teaching in Japan and findings from cross-case analyses of seven ALTs. Key findings and the proposed answer to each research question are examined in Chapter 7 with discussions, followed by the conclusion chapter (Chapter 8) with a summary of the key findings and some implications for the further research.

# Chapter 2 Literature review

## 2.1 Introduction

As described in the previous chapter, the main aim of the current study is to construct knowledge about teacher learning, especially in-service language teachers learning at work focusing more on informal accounts of their learning to teach in multiple CoPs (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) conducted by OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) shows that teachers tend to engage more in informal activities for their professional development than formal qualification programmes (OECD, 2009: 57).

In the case of ALTs in Japan, each one of them has a unique experience and they also have different backgrounds as both a language teacher and a learner. For instance, some ALTs are qualified as language teachers having experience of formal teacher trainings, while others are just learning how to teach through their in-service work. Some are novices, but others are mid-career teachers who have prior language teaching experience in other countries. Some major in languages or education, while others major in natural sciences or technology. Some are bilingual or multilingual, although some are monolingual English speakers. Conversely, what they have in common are 'native(like)' English proficiency, a foreign nationality with a bachelor's degree, and the fact that they are newcomers to the school-based CoPs in Japan as most ALTs are new to the Japanese education system. To take these into consideration, both formal and informal accounts of teacher learning for ALTs should be reviewed to explain the foundation of this study. As those unique characteristics of ALTs have the potential to illuminate the essentials of teacher learning, I decided to invite them to participate in the narrative research.

In this chapter, I explain the conceptual framework and the theoretical orientation of the study through the review of literatures: 1) formal aspects of teacher learning related to language teacher education and professional development (J. C. Richards & Farrell, 2005), 2) informal structures of teacher learning including apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), 3) social learning theory of learning in CoPs (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), and 4) narrative inquiry (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). To explore the learning experiences of teachers both from the past (AoO and/or formal teacher training) and present (in-service learning in CoPs including craft model apprenticeship), I utilise their narratives or

lived stories as main source of data. At first, I will demonstrate the basic concepts related to the teacher learning and the linkage among them.

## 2.2 Teacher learning and professional development for language teachers

### 2.2.1 A global trend: teachers' professional development through lifelong learning

In recent decades, the main focus of the teacher education has been shifting from knowledge transmission based on certain methods to ongoing professional development for teachers and the transformation of their professional identity. There is a common understanding in a global trend that "[e]ffective professional development is on-going, includes training, practice and feedback, and provides adequate time and follow-up support" and "[s]uccessful [teacher education] programmes involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to ones they will use with their students, and encourage the development of teachers' learning communities" (OECD, 2005: 95). Needless to say, the quality teaching is vital for encouraging students' learning and teachers themselves should be a good model of lifelong learners who actively engage in learning activities autonomously.

According to Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009), for the successful professional development for teachers, teacher education or training courses need to be aimed at deepening the knowledge of both subject specific contents and about the contexts where their students are engaging in, and it should provide rather longitudinal sustainable support for their learning in collaborative and collegial environment. They point out the effectiveness of sustained, job-embedded, collaborative teacher learning strategies and the importance of constructing a situated professional learning community among teachers. While episodic and fragmented teacher training courses that mainly focus "only on training teachers in new techniques and behaviors" using "the one-shot workshop model" without enough support do not help teachers to achieve their professional development (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009: 51).

However, the term 'professional development' can occasionally be problematic because it has such a broad definition and it is conceptualised somewhat differently by different researchers (Friedman & Phillips, 2004; Middlewood, Parker, & Beere, 2005) and this conceptual vagueness may lead some confusions (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid, & Mckinney, 2007). Fraser et al. (2007) try to clarify the difference between teachers' professional development and professional learning by defining the latter as "the processes that, whether intuitive or deliberate, individual or social,

result in specific changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers," whereas teachers' professional development as "to refer to the broader changes that may take place over a longer period of time resulting in qualitative shifts in aspects of teachers' professionalism" (p.156-157). Following such definitions, in this yearlong narrative study, I primarily examine the language teachers' professional learning through the changes in their professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions to promote understanding of the processes of teacher learning that lead to more effective professional development, considering the influence of both formal and informal or positive and negative learning of teachers.

### 2.2.2 Teachers' identity formation as a lens of teacher learning

The researcher understands teacher learning "as normative and lifelong, built of and through experiences in social contexts: as learners in classrooms and schools, as participants in professional teacher education programs, and as members of communities of practice in the schools where they teach" (K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2002: 2) and also as individuals who have personal lives outside of school, seeking their professional development autonomously by joining seminars/conferences voluntarily, exchanging information with family members or friends to learn about teaching, and/or reflecting their experience in daily life into their teaching practice. Throughout the current study, I examine teacher learning through the teachers' identity transformation which is including different dimensions of their identities such as personal, professional, and situational or located identities (Day & Kington, 2008). By taking a broader standpoint and considering both modern and postmodern conceptions of identity, teacher identity is defined "as simultaneously unitary and multiple, continuous and discontinuous, and individual and social" (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011: 315). Moreover, to take a holistic approach to investigate the features and mechanisms of teacher learning, I conceptualise 'teacher learning' as "learning to teach as the development of a teacher identity" (M. Clarke, 2008: 8).

As Richards demonstrates, the concept of identity "reflects how individuals see themselves and how they enact their roles within different settings" (J. C. Richards, 2008: 167). Identity is multifarious and multifaceted, and 'professional identity' is considered as a part of that person's identity. B. Johnson et al. (2015: 103) explain that teachers have two dimensions in their identities: personal or 'core' identity and 'situational' or professional identity "behind which our 'personal' identity persists." Whilst Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) point out the importance of looking closely at both cognitive and emotional identities of teachers. Teachers' professional identity can be also conceptualised as the collaborative and interactional group

identity (K. Richards, 2006). In fact, there is no generally agreed definition of professional identity of language teachers. Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) put that “professional identity is not something teachers have, but something they use in order to make sense of themselves as teachers” (Beijaard et al., 2004: 123), and it seems that professional identity can also be seen as a self-reflection to understand ‘who am I at this moment?’.

As we can see, the notion of professional identity is inclusive and broad, and the characteristics or features of professional identity might be difficult to discuss in a systematic way, not just in the abstract level. However, when researchers shed light from specific angles to the teachers’ selves to examine what kind of identities they reflect on themselves, it should be possible to observe how they would shape their professional identities. For instance, teachers’ professional identity formation can be seen as “a process of practical knowledge-building characterized by an ongoing integration of what is individually and collectively seen as relevant to teaching” (Beijaard et al., 2004: 123). In other studies, different roles of the teachers are presented as features of their professional identity, such as five major roles of teachers demonstrated in Cohen (2008): teacher as gatekeeper, mentor/expert, collaborator, outsider, and learner. Also, Lauriala and Kukkonen (2003) show categories of teachers’ identities in three separate dimensions: ideal self, ought self, and actual or situational self (cited in Pinho & Andrade, 2015) originated from E. T. Higgins (1987). In addition, there are several other ways to conceptualise teachers’ professional identities such as ‘identity-in-discourse’ and ‘identity-in-practice’ (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Varghese et al., 2005), or identity in activity (Dang, 2013).

As mentioned earlier, the focus of this study is on the teacher learning and I would utilise the process of teachers’ identity formation as a lens to explore the features and the functions of teacher learning. Professional identity of teachers can be understood as one of the elements of their identities, and I will try to look closely at the teachers’ identities as a whole because “[t]he teachers’ identities influenced how they cognitively and affectively experienced their experiences. Likewise, their cognitive and affective response to experience could affect their identity formation, strengthening, weakening, or transforming certain identities. Their identities thus help to explain the ‘prism’ through which the context affected learning” (Dang, 2013: 50). Through the exploration of the ALTs’ identity formation process, I would like to delineate what they actually learn to teach in the context and how those learning happens in the relationships with the other members of the community.

Sometimes language teacher identity has been discussed with an issue of ‘native’ versus ‘non-native’ dichotomy, which might be one of the most widely recognised identity factors of language teachers (Holliday, 2005; Kiely, 2015). Most of the time, when researchers are talking about the

issues of native and/or non-native language teachers, the topic tends to be about the legitimacy and power relations between the two (Holliday, 2006; Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Phillipson, 1992). Indeed, it is true that we need to think about the different processes of teachers' identity construction in relation to those statuses as well because identity formation is a process of learning and your identity partly consists of language(s) you use and speak (Edwards, 2009). It is also important to bear in mind that 'learning as becoming' means that you would learn not only from the past, but also from the future, by using imagination and think about 'what kind of teacher I want to become?' (Kiely, 2015). The degree of proficiency in language or the knowledge of language is one of the elements of teachers' identity and it is also dynamic and fluid. Interestingly, in fact, some of the interviewees in this study tried to find a word in English even though English is their first language and sometimes Japanese words were used more effectively to convey meanings. Therefore, even the differentiation between the concept of native and non-native could be viewed as transitional and transferable, and it is vital to keep this in mind as well.

As an example of the shifting teachers' identities in different career stages, Day and Gu (2007) demonstrate that there are six professional life phases in their professional development: 0-3, 4-7, 8-15, 16-23, 24-30, 31+ years of teaching. Teacher learning can be observed through the process of professional identity formation and it is easy to assume that years of teaching experience have a huge impact on that process. Of course, it might not always be the case, because teacher learning can be seen as a context-dependent phenomenon. Also, the boundaries between each phase cannot be that clear-cut. However, those transitional stages are existing in any type of professions and this fact is a part of our common understandings among people as social animals. As you can see in the characteristics of the sub-groups of the teachers in each phase (see Table 2.1), teacher learning can result in both positive and negative outcomes, since "identity formation is conditioned not merely by inherited traditions such as culture, or by external factors such as history, or by ideological constructs such as power, but also by the individual's ability and willingness to exercise agency and to make independent decisions" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008: 144). I used the concept of these professional life phases as one of my references to organise the analysis chapters, presenting seven cases in the form of narrative portfolio (from Chapter 5.1 to Chapter 6.3).

Table 2.1 Professional life phase of teachers in the UK (Day & Gu, 2007)

| Phase | Feature | Sub-groups |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0-3 years | learning which builds identity and classroom competence | 1) 'easy beginnings' with a developing sense of efficacy<br>2) 'painful beginnings' with a reducing sense of efficacy |
| 4-7 years | developing professional identity | 1) teachers who sustaining a strong sense of identity, self-efficacy and effectiveness,<br>2) teachers who coping/managing identity, efficacy and effectiveness, and identity,<br>3) whose efficacy and effectiveness were at risk |
| 8-15 years | defining work-life balance | 1) teachers with sustained engagement,<br>2) teachers with a sense of detachment and loss of motivation |
| 16-23 years | managing work-life tensions | 1) teachers with growing motivation and commitment,<br>2) teachers who maintained their motivation, commitment and effectiveness,<br>3) teachers with decreased motivation, commitment and effectiveness because of the heavy workloads and poor management |
| 24-30 years | adjusting to change | 1) teachers with improved work-life balance and sustained motivation,<br>2) teachers who holding on but losing motivation and commitment |
| 30+ years | sustaining commitment | 1) teachers with high level of motivation and commitment and a strong sense of 'active' engagement in the profession,<br>2) teachers with increased feelings of fatigue and disillusionment |

Teachers usually stand alone in the classroom when they teach, but they never work in real isolation as they cannot escape from the influence of the communities surrounding them with their colleagues, students, parents and other stakeholders in which they are occasionally engaging. Especially, 'teacher learning community' constantly plays a very important role (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Talbert & McLaughlin, 2002). I will come back to this point in Chapter 2.5 to observe more closely how the learning of teachers could be encouraged and achieved in relation to the communities, how those learning outcomes from the past and future might influence on the teaching practices at present, and how teachers live on and perform their identity as a teacher.

## 2.3 Formal aspects of teacher learning and professional development

Although many of ALTs do not experience formal teacher education (Chapter 1.4.3), I will review the formal aspects of teacher learning through its common structure and the contents for language teacher education in general to take into account a critique made by Opfer and Pedder (2011) and to avoid "misunderstanding the nature of teacher learning by underplaying the complexity of the problem leads to focus on the micro context (individual teachers or individual activities or programs) to the exclusion of influences from meso (institutional) and macro (school system) contexts" (p.378-379). They claim that teacher leaning is not an event, but it is a complex system which contains various dynamics. Even a simple decision-making activity for teachers could stand on multiple mechanisms or systems which include their biological, normative, institutional, and historical reasons. Thus, it is important to review the roles of formal education/training for language teachers here to see its possible impacts on my participants as some ALTs have teacher training experience.

Traditionally, the major role of teacher education is to develop ones' knowledge, attitude, and skills about teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; J. C. Richards, 2008). In the past few decades, however, the focus of teacher education in general has been shifted from product-oriented knowledge transmission to more process-oriented knowledge transformation (Crandall, 2000). According to Coolahan (2002), the initial teacher education has two predominant models: the concurrent model and the consecutive model. In the concurrent model, academic subject knowledge is combined with educational and professional studies for 3-4 year's course. Whereas in the consecutive model, student teachers start to learn educational and professional studies for a year or two after finishing their undergraduate study. Yet, it seems impossible that such a short-term teacher education course can provide enough opportunities for student teachers to become fully prepared and work as professional teachers. Number of studies highlight the significance of the idea of professional development for teachers as a supporting system for the ongoing learning process for each teacher at various phases of their teaching career to provide appropriate guidance for their continuing development (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; K. E. Johnson, 2009; J. C. Richards & Farrell, 2005; Schön, 1983; Wallace, 1991).

In general, teacher education has three different stages: "the "3 Is" – initial, induction and inservice education" (Coolahan, 2002: 8). Obviously, no one can be perfectly ready as a teacher right after the completion of the teacher training programme without having much hands-on experience through the process of trial and error. That is why continuous in-service learning of teachers is so important for their professional development. However, as explained in Chapter 1.4.3, many ALTs do not have initial teacher training either in concurrent or consecutive model as

the eligibility criteria for the job just requires a bachelor's degree in any major. Some ALTs hold a certificate for language teaching such as TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), CELTA (Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults), PGCE (The Postgraduate Certificate in Education), or other teacher qualification in a state/country. ALTs in all employment types are required to attend training seminars for induction, but the time commitment ranges from a half-day for T-NETs to several days for JET ALTs. Their in-service trainings are also implemented differently according to the employment status (Reed, 2016). It is obligatory for JET ALTs to attend the Skill Development Conference (SDC) and other workshops/seminars annually, whereas some NETs and majority of T-NETs seem to have no such mandatory in-service trainings. There has to be more research done on this topic because I was unable to locate any studies that provided detailed information about teacher training opportunities for NETs and T-NETs.

Teacher development is often best promoted within the context of school development and through 'inter-school networks or clusters' by engaging in collaborative development planning (Coolahan, 2002: 26), but this "bottom-across" approach seems to have a lot of difficulties to put into practice. Also, in a sense, experience of AoO as the frame of reference for teachers (Kennedy, 1999) and day-to-day situated serial learning through everyday teaching activities are rather overlooked in recent trend which focus more on formal accounts of teacher education. In the case of Japanese teachers, all JTEs must complete the teacher qualification programme at university or college which consists of the combination of the knowledge-based studies for two to three years with teaching practice for two to four weeks. They have opportunities to gain subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and curricular knowledge through lectures and practice their skills through micro-teaching. Yet, the practicum is too short to deepen their understandings of the actual school context and culture and develop the proper skills to apply their knowledge into practice. Whereas HRTs, who should teach a lot of different subjects and contents at elementary school, also finished the teacher training curriculum as well as JTEs. However, except for the elementary school teachers who are recent graduates, experienced HRTs have limited opportunities for training to teach English to their pupils. Of course, they can apply their pedagogical skills and curricular knowledge in different subjects, but many HRTs feel strong anxiety when it comes to teaching English since they lack sufficient training and lack confidence in their own English language proficiencies (Butler, 2007; Machida, 2016). In this sense, HRTs tend to share the similar standing point as ALTs who have anxiety because of their lack of knowledge in Japanese language, school context, culture and pedagogy.

From the approaches above to the language teacher education in general, it is obvious that the focus of teacher education today either initial or in-service should be placed to support teachers'

continuing professional development to enhance and facilitate learning of both students and teachers themselves. Indeed, it is difficult to discuss the language teachers' expertise and professionalism because experience does not make perfect in teaching and there are some clear distinctions in the professional identities between expert teachers and experienced non-expert teachers (Tsui, 2009a). That is why we need to examine the generative mechanisms of teacher learning through investigating the process of professional identity formation and what could be counted as crucial factors to acquire expertise in language teaching.

### 2.3.1 Continuous professional development for teachers

Kumaravadivelu (2012b: 8) suggests that formal teacher education should move from the top-down information-oriented transmission models to "a judicious combination of cognitive and sociocultural orientations to teacher learning." To become a postmethod practitioner, it is necessary for teachers and student teachers to learn more from the contexts and the specific educational settings, making relation to the social values, needs, and political situations (ibid.). Kumaravadivelu (2006) repeatedly articulates the importance of focusing more on teachers' intuitive ability and experiential knowledge to facilitate and enhance students' learning, and he puts three parameters to construct postmethod pedagogy: particularity (situational understanding), practicality (teachers' personal theories or 'sense of plausibility' (Prabhu, 1990)), and possibility (empowerment of teachers' and students' individual identity). In other words, teachers' identity construction and how teachers keep learning to teach really matter to fulfil the needs from each classroom. As Akbari (2008) states, "the question is how teachers are going to develop the competence demanded of them in dealing with pedagogical and social responsibilities assigned to them" (Akbari, 2008: 642).

In relation to the postmethod perspective (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) and ALTs, it is possible to refer to the three parameters, particularity, practicality and possibility, in accordance with the expected roles of ALTs or their identity-in-practice. From the interviews and personal communication with ALTs, I found out that most of them came to Japan with common presumptions about the roles of ALTs that they are to be welcomed in the school to bring some changes into the English class and authenticity in communicative language teaching like other researchers demonstrate (Butler, 2005; Crooks, 2001; Galloway, 2009; Gorsuch, 2002; Hiratsuka, 2013; Mahoney, 2004; McConnell, 2000; Tajino & Tajino, 2000). It might be possible to break down these presumptions or prerequisites for ALTs into the three parameters. ALTs have to be flexible and sensitive all the time to meet the needs of local teachers, students and other

stakeholders within a particular institutional context represented in the school-based curriculum, syllabus and school rules in a particular sociocultural milieu (particularity). ALTs are expected to offer linguistically and culturally informative practices into the English classroom to improve the communicative competences of their students and teachers (practicality). Also, ALTs are employed to enhance internationalisation and support the government's educational policy of cultivating global competitiveness for pupils/students by exposing them to various perspectives and values held by people from other countries (possibility). These aspects could be understood as the basis of ALTs' professional identity and each ALT is trying to negotiate their identity through their in-service work. As such, ALTs are supposed to act as 'postmethod teachers' who are autonomous teachers constantly learning through engaging in self-explore activities to realise self-improve (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Unfortunately, however, not all the local teachers who work with ALTs are fully aware of these facts. Despite the fact that recognition of the postmethod condition has been growing, most of teacher training courses and language education curricula seem to still depend on methods and knowledge transmission and they do not show enough acknowledgement to the need of cultivating teachers as postmethod practitioners (Murray, 2009). Even if the formal teacher education lacks such perspectives, teachers could gradually become postmethod teachers through their in-service work. In fact, experienced teachers informed in Kiely and Davis (2010) show their practice-based teacher learning, and they demonstrate that "teachers' interest in new ideas and perspectives can be effectively harnessed for transformational professional learning" (Kiely & Davis, 2010: 292). Overall, not only formal teacher education or training courses which are temporal and occasional but also learning in day-to-day experience or informal accounts of teacher learning should be taken more seriously.

In recent years, researchers have started to focus more on language teachers professional well-being and continuous professional development in relation to their emotions (Anari, 2012; Day & Gu, 2009; Zembylas, 2003). It is likely that a clear distinction between expert teachers and experienced non-expert teachers could be drawn whether they have strong emotional intelligence and social intelligence competences (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017) or not. Gkonou and Mercer (2017) point out that it is important for teachers to become highly emotionally intelligent and socially intelligent to improve the quality of the classroom life by developing and maintaining the positive and secure interpersonal relationships among teachers and students. They summarise five key components of emotional intelligence (EI) from Goleman as follows:

> "a) self-awareness, which means that individuals constantly endeavour to know themselves better by engaging in self-appraisals and critical reflection on their strengths and weaknesses, verbalising their emotions, welcoming feedback from others and treating failure as an impetus to self-improvement; b) self-regulation, which refers to the ability of

> individuals to manage their own emotions and behave in ways that are conducive to their own goal attainment; c) motivation, which encompasses a range of positive aspects such as hope, optimism and strong incentive to perform a task or participate in an activity; d) empathy, which reflects one's ability to share someone else's feelings by 'being in their shoes'; and e) social skills, which are indicative of people's willingness to take part in social interactions and their ability to handle interpersonal relationships." (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017: 5)

Also, they argue that EI is not a fixed personality trait and it can be developed through life experience. EI is sometimes seen as incorporating SI, but EI is about the emotional trait within individuals, whereas SI is about the interpersonal relationships and social interactions, which is understood as one of the important aspects of teachers' professional identity: "[w]ith regard to teachers, high SI is conducive to positive social relationships with colleagues, trust and rapport, exchange of materials and ideas, and personal and professional well-being" (ibid.: 6). To become an expert teacher as well as a(n) intuitive/reflective/postmethod practitioner, it seems that developing ones EI and SI is crucial because "[f]ostering empathy, which is a key component of EI and SI, can mediate intercultural understanding, increase self-awareness and an awareness and appreciation of other cultures, and make learners open to others" (ibid.: 8).

As previously stated, most ALTs learn how to teach by doing or 'sink or swim' situation (Freeman, 2009), gradually adapting to the context in which they are allotted. They can take advantage to use their knowledge of language into their teaching practice, but many ALTs have no choice but starting their job without having enough curricular knowledge and pedagogical skills. It seems that some 'lucky' ALTs who are fortunate enough to have supportive colleagues with higher emotional and social intelligence could pursue their professional development through mutual investment and collaboration in team-teaching (see Chapter 7.3).

As Coolahan (2002) demonstrates, "because of the nature of their work, teachers, more than any other group, should be lifelong learners" (Coolahan, 2002: 32). Generally speaking, teachers are expected not only to be skilful in teaching but also to be autonomous learners. Their professional development and growth have been discussed in different ways such as reflective practice (Schön, 1983), exploratory practice (Allwright, 2003), or action research (Burns, 1999). D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) illustrate the interconnected model of professional growth for teachers which has multiple entry points and they argue that teachers' professional development has to be conceptualised as a cyclic model rather than linear knowledge transmission model. Also, Opfer and Pedder (2011) argue that ""effective" teacher learning requires multiple and cyclic movements between the systems of influence in teachers' worlds" (p. 386) because "[a]s

teachers learn, new knowledge emerges from the interaction of the teacher learning systems, and this new knowledge then recursively influences future learning and also what is to be known about teaching" (p. 388). Their claims guide this study, which aims to provide a "causal explanation so that we understand under what conditions, why, and how teachers learn" (ibid.: 378). Instead of referring to systems and subsystems they point out, this study employs the CoPs framework to identify some principles of complexity in the learning of ALTs in Japan through their different modes of participation in multiple CoPs from past to present.

I examine informal learning for teachers by looking closely at the notion of AoO and craft model apprenticeship (Chapter 2.4) followed by CoPs framework (Chapter 2.5) to investigate more context sensitive dynamic interplay between teachers, students and other members of the communities.

## 2.4 Informal learning of teachers

As pointed out in Chapter 1.4.3, many ALTs lack formal teacher training experience. Therefore, they tend to rely on and reflect their own life experience in their teaching practices when they first start working in Japan. Presumably, as ALTs are foreign nationals with diverse educational backgrounds, their AoO in frontstage may differ from that of local Japanese teachers. Local teachers who received education in Japan had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge of the contexts by observing teachers' work through AoO, which they could share with their colleagues. However, it is unknown how and to what extent ALTs can utilise their experience of AoO in Japanese school contexts as newcomers. Personally, I have been through AoO from backstage because there are several teachers in my family. I gradually formed my professional identity as a teacher from being exposed to my parents' and relatives' off-stage teachers' work and conversations about school education. This aspect of AoO from backstage is still underexplored and I believe that some ALTs have such experience like myself. I hope that this study will be able to contribute to construct knowledge about this unique form of apprenticeship as well.

The sections below review such AoO, both in frontstage and from backstage (M. Borg, 2004), and situated learning in craft model apprenticeship (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

### 2.4.1 Apprenticeship of observation (AoO)

Before becoming schoolteachers, most teachers encountered various models of teaching during their years of study as students. This experience as a student and the power of observation is called AoO (Bailey et al., 1996; M. Borg, 2004; Kennedy, 1991; Lortie, 1975), and it appears to have a significant impact on teachers' actual teaching practice as well as their philosophies of teaching. As Hobbs (2007: 406) demonstrates, "the fact that teachers, having spent thousands of hours as students, already possess deeply-held beliefs about what constitutes good and bad teaching, beliefs that are often rigid in the face of teacher education" because the habitual practice that have been formed over a lengthy period of time are difficult to change. It is believed that not only beliefs about teaching, but inexplicit teaching philosophies are shaped through AoO (Bailey et al., 1996). Also, other researchers point out that teachers usually have indelible imprints about teaching or teachers' job from their own experiences as students and they cannot be free from the influence of AoO (Farrell, 2007; Grossman, 1991; Kennedy, 1990; Peacock, 2001; Slekar, 1998; Warford & Reeves, 2003).

In a study of autobiographies, Bailey et al. (1996) found that there are four important characteristics of 'good' teachers which teachers-in-training identified through their own AoO: positive expectations, reciprocal respect, sustaining motivation, and maintaining atmosphere. Through the opportunity they had to observe numbers of examples and models of how we should teach and how we should not teach, students, it turns out, seem to have more positive view of demanding and strict teachers. Along with the student teachers, the influence of AoO on novice teachers seems to be more powerful than the teacher education courses they took. Kennedy (1991: 16) describes it as follows:

> Often, despite their intentions to do otherwise, new teachers teach as they were taught. The power of their "apprenticeship of observation," and of the conventional images of teaching that derive from childhood experiences, makes it very difficult to alter teaching practices and explains in part why teaching has remained so constant over so many decades of reform efforts.

Lortie (1975) tries to explain this issue by introducing the term 'reflexive conservatism' which means "a *reflex action* to rely on more familiar approaches to teaching when confronted with new and unfamiliar teaching methods" and it "makes it difficult to envision a range of possible decisions and actions available in teaching" (Slekar, 1998: 488 emphasis in original). Indeed, it would be much easier for teachers to stay in their comfort zone and simply imitate what they have experienced and observed, especially in their early years of teaching. Furthermore, Lortie (1975: 62) shows that "[w]hat students learn about teaching, then, is intuitive and imitative rather

than explicit and analytical; it is based on individual personalities rather than pedagogical principles." He also demonstrates the limitations of AoO as follows:

> The student's learning about teaching, gained from a limited vantage point and relying on imagination, is not like that of an apprentice and does not represent acquisition of the occupation's technical knowledge. It is more a matter of imitation, which, being generalized across individuals, becomes tradition. (Lortie, 1975: 63)

In addition, those experiences of students are typically limited to observing only the teachers' 'frontstage' behaviours or teachers' practices in the classroom, such as monitoring and lecturing, and they would not have chances to become familiar with their 'backstage' behaviours, which are understood as teachers' work outside of the classroom, such as assessment and preparation of lesson plans and teaching materials (M. Borg, 2004). Therefore, teacher education and/or training courses must be designed to fill these gaps between the experience of the AoO and the realities of teachers.

Although there are several limitations of AoO, we cannot deny its impact on teachers' identity formation. As discussed before, teacher identity is multifaceted and multi-layered and those past experiences as students are also counted as a part of their identity. The average hours students spent in classroom based on what Lortie (1975) presents, 13,000 hours, can be of help to get a grasp about teachers' work and their 'expertise as a state.' However, people cannot acquire 'expertise as a process' by 'studenting' because the experience of AoO rarely includes deliberate practice. When we consider the individual differences, there is the possibility of having someone who can achieve exceptional performance. For instance, some teachers might have a natural talent or ability to teach, whereas others could be very keen observers with the ability and desire to turn AoO into a true apprenticeship. There is also the possibility that people with close relatives of teachers have access to the 'backstage' of teaching. M. Borg (2004) points out that students do not have opportunities to observe teachers' 'backstage' behaviours, even though they are familiar with their teachers' 'frontstage' performances. Still, some students may have opportunities to learn how teachers do their backstage work at home if their parents/relatives/siblings work as teachers in schools, such as Yucatec midwives' apprenticeship model presented in the study by Jordan (1989) introduced in Lave and Wenger (1991). Those people can learn how to teach more effectively through AoO than others who are just 'studenting.' Learning opportunities are everywhere, and AoO is not limited within the school community but could occasionally extend into family life.

Indeed, AoO is not the same as the craft model apprenticeship, wherein apprentices must focus their energies and make conscious efforts to learn specific skills and knowledge from more

experienced mentors or teachers in order to gain expertise in that particular domain. In contrast, AoO refers only to unconsciously gained experiences among students. The features of apprenticeship among ALTs thus include their experience of AoO from the past and the craft model apprenticeship in the present school contexts with the local teachers.

### 2.4.2 Craft model apprenticeship and expertise in teaching

It is true that whether or not people can achieve expert performance largely dependent on the context and personality because "there are many types of experience and that these different types have qualitatively and quantitatively different effects on the continued acquisition and maintenance of an individual's performance" (Ericsson, 2006: 685). According to Tsui (2009b), teaching expertise can be explained from two different angles: expertise as a state, and expertise as a process. From the former view, expert teachers are supposed to have following characteristics (Tsui, 2009b: 192-193 emphasis in original): Expert teachers 1) *exercise autonomy in decision making*, 2) respond *flexibly* to contextual variations, 3) are *efficient* in lesson planning, 4) establish *coherence* between lessons, 5) *recognize patterns in classroom events* very quickly, 6) have better *improvisational skills*, 7) provide a deeper analysis of problems, and justify their practices in a *principled manner*. Whereas from the latter angle, Tsui (2009b: 194) illustrates the characteristics of expert teachers as follows: 1) the continuous renewal of teacher knowledge through the interaction between theoretical knowledge and teachers' personal practical knowledge, 2) the capability to transcend contextual constraints, to perceive situated pedagogical possibilities and exploit them for student learning, 3) the capability and propensity to problematize what appears to be unproblematic and to tackle problems at a deeper level, 4) the ability of the expert teachers to reinvest their mental resources to tackle problems that require them to work at the edge of competence or to push their boundaries enable them to develop skills in new areas. These characteristics of expert teachers link to the emotional and social intelligence introduced in Chapter 2.3.1. Here, it is noteworthy that having worked as a teacher for a number of years does not always imply that one possesses all the qualities of an expert teacher. In fact, there are 'experienced nonexpert' teachers (Tsui, 2003) as well.

According to D. J. Clandinin (1985: 362), personal practical knowledge is defined as "knowledge which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person's being" and "[i]ts meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of, a person's experiential history, both professional and personal." In my view, personal practical knowledge for teachers is a set of cumulative wisdoms obtained from a teacher's experience of teacher learning. As such, informal in-service learning of

teachers including craft model apprenticeship plays an important role for them to acquire expertise in teaching. When discussing the social theory of learning, the concept of apprenticeship is crucial. Rogoff (2008) explains three different planes of sociocultural activity: 1) apprenticeship (active participation in a sociocultural activity with others to acquire mature participation in that particular activity), 2) guided participation (interpersonal process in which individual manages his/her own and others' roles and structure situations through observation and participation in activities), and 3) participatory appropriation (personal process of transforming their understanding of and responsibility for activities through the participation). In the social learning theory of CoPs framework, apprenticeship refers to both formal or ceremonious type of learning and informal learning as part of daily life and "strong similarities in the process of moving from peripheral to full participation in communities of practice through either formal or informal apprenticeship" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 71). Usually, craft model apprenticeship starts from 'legitimate peripheral participation': one of the modes of participation in CoPs that newcomers who do not have full membership often take at first in the forms of apprenticeship.

Lave and Wenger (1991: 67) demonstrate that "[t]here is variation in the forms of apprenticeship and the degree of integration of apprenticeship into daily life, as well as in the forms of production with which apprenticeship is associated". In the process of apprenticeship, there seem to be several phases. People normally start with a 'way-in,' which is a period of observation to construct an approximation about the work, and then progress to 'practice,' which is the reproduction of a segment from beginning to the end, using the skills and knowledge gained through observations. In this sense, "newcomers' legitimate peripherality provides them with more than an "observational" lookout post: It crucially involves participation as a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the "culture of practice"" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 95). Thus, legitimate peripheral participation in CoPs can be understood as combinations of these planes.

Adding to such definition of legitimate peripheral participation, Lave and Wenger (1991: 40) demonstrate that it can be "an analytical viewpoint on learning, a way of understanding learning." In their view, having 'legitimacy' is crucial for learning, and learning does not happen merely through peripheral participation in CoPs. One example of this is found in a popular Japanese proverb: 'A young monk outside the gate can read out sutras he has never studied' (*Monzen no kozo, narawanu kyo wo yomu*). The young monk here lacks 'legitimacy' because he is not yet permitted to study the sutras. Outside, he can only hear the voices of other senior monks reading sutras. Thus, although it appears at first glance that he knows the sutras, this does not imply that he truly 'learns' them and understands their meaning. It seems like a form of AoO, but the young

monk does not have opportunity to observe the activity, so it is more like 'apprenticeship of hearing.' Of course, some people may be able to learn something from such 'apprenticeship of hearing' because of their talent or personal predispositions, but in most cases, it seems impossible for people to learn without adequate access to learning resources. As Lave and Wenger (1991: 55) illustrate, "[l]egitimate peripheral participation refers both to the development of knowledgeably skilled identities in practice and to the reproduction and transformation of communities of practice. It concerns the latter insofar as communities of practice consist of and depend on a membership, including its characteristic biographies/trajectories, relationships, and practices."

In the case of ALTs, they have legitimacy to participate in educational context in Japan as 'assistants' from the start. However, their membership status is peripheral, and it does not necessarily guarantee their legitimate peripheral participation in school-based CoPs as shown in Chapter 1.4.3. Even if ALTs are welcomed to participate in CoPs, they must first acquire the locally defined competences through apprenticeship, guided participation and participatory appropriation in relationships with old-timers including colleagues and students to eventually gain full membership. In general, apprenticeship is important for acquiring expertise as a process because it is based on conscious and devoted participation in becoming a member of a certain community. The next section examines the learning of teachers from wider view through the participation in CoPs.

## 2.5 Communities of practice and teacher learning

### 2.5.1 Social theory of learning

As Lortie (1975: 79-80) points out, teachers are largely "self-made" on one hand, and "socialization into teaching is largely self-socialization; one's personal predispositions are not only relevant but, in fact, stand at the core of becoming a teacher." On the other, however, it is also important to take into consideration the fact that human beings are social animals and we can learn a lot from interactions and relationships with others. Our experiences from taking part in various sociocultural activities, as well as the knowledge and skills we developed from those experiences, have shaped who we are today. In this section, I would like to take a closer look at the social theory of learning and the CoPs framework, which serve as the study's theoretical basis for investigating into the mechanisms and functions of teacher learning.

First and foremost, the concept of learning in CoPs should be reviewed. Lave and Wenger (1991: 114) claim that "learning must be understood with respect to a practice as a whole, with its multiplicity of relations - both within the community and with the world at large." According to Wenger (1998: 8), "learning is an integral part of our everyday lives" and "[i]t is part of our participation in our communities and organizations." In addition, "learning is not merely situated in practice - as if it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located somewhere; learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 35). Wenger (1998) outlines four components of the social theory of learning: learning as doing (practice), learning as belonging (community), learning as experience (meaning), and learning as becoming (identity). As we can see, learning has different aspects and dimensions, and as demonstrated in Chapter 2.4.2, it occurs through the legitimate peripheral participation in CoPs.

I would like to examine the core concept: what are CoPs? Lave and Wenger (1991: 98) provide the following explanation in their seminal study about the situated learning in CoPs:

> A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice. A community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage. … It is possible to delineate the community that is the site of a learning process by analyzing the reproduction cycles of the communities that seem to be involved and their relations.

Also, Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002: 4) describe that "[c]ommunities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis." Based on the definitions given, the research conceptualises a CoP as a unit where people can get access to the wider networking system through their participation and interactions with other members. CoPs are everywhere, and learning can happen anytime either incidentally or intentionally, both from observing models and through interactions. Ultimately, Wenger takes learning for granted and said, "[i]f people learn together, the result is a community of practice" in Omidvar and Kislov (2014: 269).

In fact, schooling is not the only way to learn things and apprenticeship can be a site of learning as demonstrated in Chapter 2.4.2. "Apprenticeship happens as a way of, and in the course of, daily life. It may not be recognized as a teaching effort at all" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 68). Also, "[a]pprenticeship learning is not "work-driven" in the way stereotypes of informal learning have suggested; the ordering of learning and of everyday practice do not coincide" (Lave & Wenger,

1991: 96). Newcomers can learn not only from the old-timers or adepts through mentoring, but also from 'near-peers' by participating in the same activities, sometimes through improvised practice. According to Lave and Wenger (1991: 93), "[i]t seems typical of apprenticeship that apprentices learn mostly in relation with other apprentices. … where the circulation of knowledge among peers and near-peers is possible, it spreads exceedingly rapidly and effectively" and "engaging in practice, rather than being its object, may well be a *condition* for the effectiveness of learning" (emphasis in original). ALTs in Japan seem to establish such near-peer support system among themselves such as online CoPs utilising social networking platforms such as Facebook or Dropbox (see Chapter 4.3.2). Additionally, predecessor ALTs may pass down information about the school contexts and teaching materials to their successors by leaving some notes on the desk or sending emails. Although they do not work together concurrently, they do share the same working environments. It appears that predecessors as old-timers offer apprenticeship remotely, across place and time, to their successors who join the CoPs as newcomers, a phenomenon I termed 'remote apprenticeship' (see Chapter 4.3.3 & 6.4.1).

Then, what kind of activities do the CoPs embrace? There are a variety of activities taking place in CoPs, for instance, problem solving, requests for information, seeking experience, reusing assets, discussing developments, documentation projects, visits, mapping knowledge and identifying gaps, etc. (Wenger, 2011). Members of a CoP share a set of norms and engage in the same practice together, pursuing shared objectives and learning from those experiences because "there is no activity that is not situated" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 33). Situated learning is, therefore, one of the most important outcomes of the functions of CoPs. Of course, learning as an outcome would differ depending on the mode and levels/degrees of participation in the CoPs. Nonetheless, the mode of participation is inclusive; it is both cerebral and embodied, contemplation and involvement, or abstraction and experience. Learning is conceived as a trajectory such as from peripheral to the centre of CoPs, and it can happen at any levels (Wenger, 1998). As previously stated, ALTs are expected to participate in teaching activities in English classes by default. Though not always possible, many ALTs try to engage in activities outside of the classroom such as extra-curricular club activities or community events. Each ALT takes unique learning trajectory through participating in various practices in multiple CoPs such as small-scale CoPs with their family and friends and school-based CoPs with their students and teachers (see Chapter 4.3.2).

However, there are some criticisms about CoPs framework (Barton & Tusting, 2005; Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, & Unwin, 2005; Liu & Xu, 2013; Singh & Richards, 2006). Barton and Tusting (2005) claim that it overlooks the issues of power and conflict within communities and it needs to incorporate the broader social context (see also Singh & Richards, 2006). Yet, the CoPs

framework is widely applied to investigate the process of learning through participation in many different domains (Barton & Tusting, 2005). I take these criticisms into account and seek some space to discuss power relations and examine the process of identity formation in a more integrated and inclusive manner, illustrating live examples of the peripheral, inbound, insider, boundary, and outbound trajectories in Wenger (1998). According to Wenger (1998: 154-155), peripheral trajectories are the modes of participation in a CoP that remain on the periphery and never lead to full participation, either by choice or necessity of the participants. Inbound trajectories are observed when members of a CoP move from the periphery to the core with the prospect of becoming full participants in its practice. When participants with full membership in a CoP encounter new events/demands/inventions/generations and renegotiate their identities, they can take insider trajectories. Boundary trajectories can be thought of as the processes that link different CoPs across their boundaries. Outbound trajectories represent the movement of finding their way out of a CoP.

As we can see, the CoPs framework focuses "on people and on the social structures that enable them to learn with and from each other" (Wenger, 2011: 4). In this study, I investigate the CoPs in which ALTs engage, as well as how the members of CoPs interact and learn together (mutual engagement), how they develop a set of stories about shared practice (shared repertoire) and what kinds of interests and commitments they share (joint enterprise) in the domain of English education at state schools in Japan. Furthermore, I attempt to illuminate how ALTs construct and reconstruct their professional identity as language teachers based on their experiences by examining their various types of trajectories of traveling around multiple CoPs as a process of learning through the negotiation of meaning. In the next section, I outline potential CoPs for language teachers that could serve as the basis for teacher learning.

### 2.5.2 Communities of practice and language teachers

What kinds of CoPs do language teachers belong to, and how can we identify and distinguish one CoP from others? One of the fundamental concepts in social theory of learning is that CoPs are everywhere and that people can participate in multiple CoPs at the same time, such as those with family, friends, and/or colleagues. Two or more CoPs could overlap, and they may even have multiple cores or centres. Wenger et al. (2002) give us examples of characteristics and forms of CoPs, which can be big or small, long-lived or short-lived, collocated or distributed, homogeneous or heterogeneous, inside and across boundaries, spontaneous or intentional, and unrecognised to institutionalised. Furthermore, they illuminate the distinctions between CoPs and other

structures such as formal departments, operational teams, project teams, communities of interest, and informal networks (Wenger et al., 2002: 42). According to their definition of a CoP, it is formed "to create, expand, and exchange knowledge, and to develop individual capabilities" when people who have a passion or expertise for a topic get together because of their "passion, commitment, and identification with the group and its expertise" (ibid.). The boundaries of CoPs are hazy, and each CoP evolves and comes to an end organically. Fuller et al. (2005: 63) also explain that "organisational structures and the working of power relations within the organisations were of central significance in determining the existence of communities of practice." Therefore, we can assume that a CoP can be evolved both inductively and deductively when people participate in activities together and interact with each other to negotiate meanings. In educational settings, for instance, a school can be a CoP itself where teachers and students learn together through various practices. However, when we look at a particular classroom context, each class has a different ecology and each student tends to show varying degrees of participation in different events depending on their personality or the condition of the day. Such CoPs at the micro level can evolve and change more deductively than larger level CoPs initiated more inductively.

There are many studies investigating CoPs in education settings (H. Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Printy, 2008; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008), and more specifically, those for language teachers (Little, 2002; Liu & Xu, 2011, 2013; Singh & Richards, 2006; Tsui, 2007b). Singh and Richards (2006) demonstrate that a CoP of pre-service language teachers exists in a second language teacher education course room. While there appear to be four major categories in school-based CoPs among in-service teachers: 1) macro level (between-school CoPs), 2) meso level (within-school CoPs), 3) micro level (subject department and classroom-based CoPs), and 4) nano level (teachers' personal CoPs, including ones with family and/or friends) (see H. Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004). In my view, family members can also form a CoP as shown by the example of AoO from backstage introduced in Chapter 2.4.1. The most frequently referred to one would be the meso level within-school CoPs, which look at entire schools or institutions as a CoP (see Vescio et al., 2008). Whereas P. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003) point out that subject departments would be the key CoPs for teachers' professional development (see also H. Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004). This seems to be because "[s]chool-based teacher learning communities are positioned between "macro" or system-level directives and resources and the "micro" realities of teachers' classrooms. Thus, they are uniquely capable of interpreting, mediating, and conveying information from the larger system" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006: 4).

I would like to add another level, mega level to refer to organisations in the public education domains and present the five levels of CoPs in educational settings (see Figure 2.1). Connecting this model with Wenger (1998) view, learning is conceived as organisations at the mega and macro levels, communities at the meso and micro levels, and individual at the nano level. The label reflects the physical and psychological distance from individuals. However, in the era of information-communication technology innovation, examples of online CoPs can be observed across different boundaries, such as quick and hands-on access to the various social networking services via smartphones. These will be demonstrated in the analysis chapters, with this five-level model serving as a guide for the analysis process.

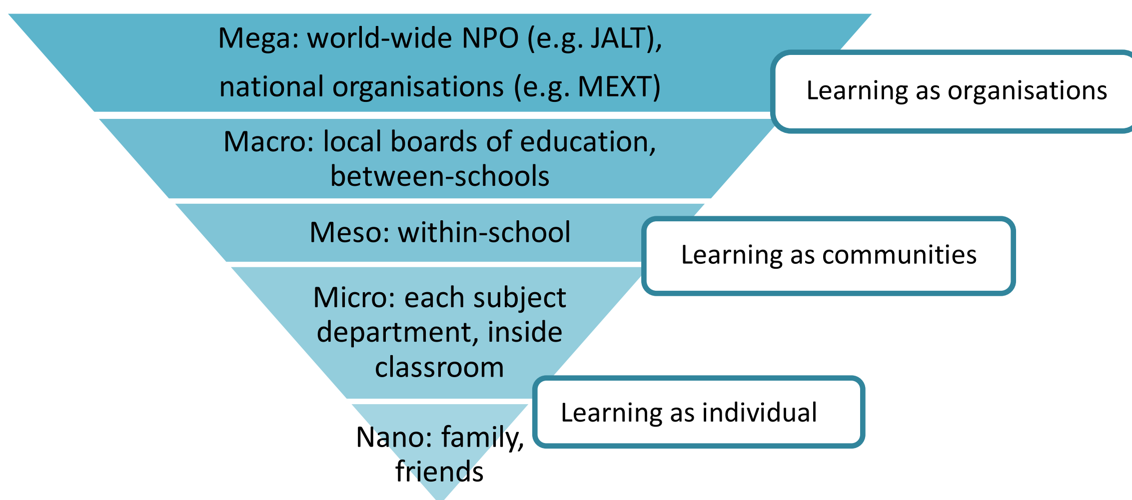


Figure 2.1 Five levels of communities of practice in educational settings

According to Talbert and McLaughlin (2002), it is essential to reform school-based communities from ‘solo artisan’ in weak and traditional school communities to ‘artisan communities’ or ‘teacher learning communities,’ where teachers work in collaboration both at school-wide CoPs and at subject department-based artisan communities because “‘teacher artisan communities’ create conditions for teachers to share courses and work together to invent ways of engaging all students in challenging content” (ibid: 328). They emphasise the importance of school-based teacher learning communities (CoPs) which enable “members to learn from one another’s strengths, thereby boosting individual and collective know-how” (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006: 6) and “help socialize new teachers and administrators by reinforcing norms of practice among faculty and affirming expectations for teachers’ ongoing learning and growth” (ibid: 8). While they argue that macro level off-site learning opportunities or “[e]xternal learning resources such as workshops associated with special projects or “in-service” sessions tied to new curricula

typically represent others' ideas about needed skills and knowledge but seldom reflect teachers' thoughts about what they need to learn or how to learn it" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006: 2). I will return to this point again later to see how CoPs at various levels (from nano to mega) affect teacher identity formation.

Based on my review of the literature, I presume that there are five levels of possible CoPs for language teachers including ALTs, ranging from broad social groups to small 'tight-knit' groups, as described above. I believe that it is possible to investigate CoPs in which ALTs participate both inside and outside of school by analysing their narratives as a window into their life experiences. Also, by examining the relationships between newcomers, old-timers and near-peers in CoPs, I hope to uncover the multiple membership in different CoPs. As in Fuller (2007), it is researchers who determine the boundaries of CoPs by examining the detailed functions of each CoP. Before delving into the functions of CoPs in school settings, I would like to highlight an important premise of being a teacher or one clear evidence of having the status of a teacher in Japan.

In Japanese, teachers are commonly referred to as '*sensei*' (先生), which literally means 'born before' or senior. Other address terms for teachers include *kyoshi* (教師) and *kyoin* (教員), which mean 'teaching master' or 'teaching staff,' respectively. We tend to use the latter titles *kyoshi*/*kyoin* for teachers as an occupation, but when they call each other in the staff room at school or elsewhere, they normally use the title '*sensei*' putting it after the surname, such as Smith *sensei*. This term '*sensei*' is widely used not only in the educational settings but also in a variety of other domains, including medical doctors, lawyers, politicians, architects, novelists, and so on. Even though, at the first meeting, people usually refer to those professionals as '*sensei*' to show respect. Interestingly, people distinguish professionals from non-teaching or non-qualified local staff members by using the general addressing term '*-san*' (English equivalent of Mr./Ms.) instead of *sensei*. This could be evidence of the boundary whether the ALT is perceived as a teacher or another staff member in the CoPs. Most of the time, the title '*sensei*' functions as a passport for legitimate peripheral participation in school-based CoPs.

As such, the term *sensei* has authoritative meaning as professionals on the one hand. On the other, however, it is also believed as a humble way to express their expertise by saying 'I am just a senior.' Whereas the title *kyoshi* implicates more authoritative status of the teacher suggesting more knowledge transmission type of teaching by 'masters.' One of the senior teachers once told me that the title *sensei* contains possibilities for changes and further development both as a professional and as a person to show the mutuality of learning with others by saying 'I was just born before you as a human being.' In this sense, *sensei*s have potential to learn in the relationships with newcomers (junior/novice teachers, students or parents), old-timers (senior

teachers, school principal, vice-principal, or supervisors in BoE), near-peers (similar-age teachers), and others (community members). In fact, even if teachers are unaware of the existence of CoPs, they genuinely act as members of CoPs and participate in them by addressing each other as *sensei*. However, it is also true that when a teacher is called by his/her nickname, it may indicate that the teacher has full membership in the CoPs. Thus, it is crucial to examine the broader school contexts in order to interpret the message behind the ways in which teachers refer to one another. That is why I planned observations and school visits to explore 'landscapes of practice' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014) where ALTs participate.

### 2.5.3 The functions of communities of practice among language teachers

This section reviews the possible functions of CoPs so as to have a clearer insight of the existence of CoPs in educational settings and their boundaries.

McLaughlin and Talbert (2006: 8) delineate that "[a] learning community provides the social interaction and informal learning opportunities necessary to incorporate new members and teach them about the standards, norms, and values that guide practice." They demonstrate that there are three types of professional communities among schoolteachers: typical weak community, strong traditional community, and learning community. They are different from one another in

- *Technical culture*: views of students, conceptions of subject content, beliefs about student learning, and understanding of effective pedagogy and assessment
- *Professional norms*: collegial relations, views of professional expertise, and conceptions of career
- *Organizational policies*: criteria for course or class assignments and resource allocation, for example (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006: 18 emphasis in original).

Looking closely at the teachers' learning communities, which can be regarded as a synonym for CoPs, they illustrate three points to keep in mind when making positive changes in the school culture to build more effective learning community for teachers (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006: 39 emphasis in original):

- A teacher community of practice develops through *joint work on instruction*, usually starting with a focus on one facet of instruction—subject content, students, or assessment of student learning

- Teacher learning in a community depends upon *how well the joint work is designed and guided*, or the extent to which an effective learning environment is created for the teachers
- Teacher learning community development, spread, and sustenance depends upon proactive administrator support and broad teacher leadership.

They argue that effective teacher CoPs should include aspects of students' learning and achievements, collaboration with other teachers, and systematic administrative support. McLaughlin and Talbert (2006: 9) make a compelling case for this by stating, "[r]esearchers agree that teachers learn best when they are involved in activities that: (a) focus on instruction and student learning specific to the settings in which they teach; (b) are sustained and continuous, rather than episodic; (c) provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues inside and outside the school; (d) reflect teachers' influence about what and how they learn; and (e) help teachers develop theoretical understanding of the skills and knowledge they need to learn."

This links to what Tajino, Stewart, and Dalsky (2016) claim about effective team-learning relationships among ALTs, the local teachers, and the students. As ALTs are expected to team-teach with the local teachers, their joint work in micro CoPs is taken for granted. However, there is a power imbalance between ALTs and the local teachers, and team-teaching can be conducted in different patterns, from a weak version with little to no collaboration to a strong version with mutual engagement from all the members in the classroom (Tajino & Tajino, 2000). The weak version of team-teaching in Tajino and Tajino (2000) does not fit the definition of CoPs because it is just a team. Thus, even though team-teaching situation is promised, not all ALTs are necessarily participating in CoPs. In fact, a frequently used metaphor of ALTs' role as 'a human tape recorder/player' (Allen, 2013; McConnell, 2000; Nambu, 2015; Rutson-Griffiths, 2012; Scully, 2001; Tajino, 2002; Tajino & Tajino, 2000; Tsujino, 2017) implies that they do not have legitimate membership in CoPs.

Printy (2008) found that in between-school models, school size and the school principal's personality and attitudes towards other teachers are counted as important factors influencing teachers' participation in CoPs. Looking at both institutional level CoPs and two subject departments, mathematics and science teachers at high schools, she demonstrates that smaller schools have more productive membership in CoPs. It indicates that the functions and mechanisms of school-based CoPs can be influenced on a school-wide scale. Schools in rural areas of Japan typically have smaller student populations than those in urban areas, so it is important to account for regional differences when conducting this study. Also, it is important to note that "[t]here is no place in a community of practice designated "the periphery," and, most

emphatically, it has no single core or center" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 36). Therefore, identifying the boundaries between CoPs and core(s) of each CoP is not the study's ultimate focus.

It is possible to infer from the studies reviewed above in this section that one of the most important functions of CoPs for teachers could be viewed as having a '*telos*' (Lave, 1996) or a 'joint enterprise' (Wenger, 1998), and it might get to the point of how to mediate and enhance students' learning by building team learning relationships (Tajino & Smith, 2016). As McLaughlin and Talbert (2006: 43) state, "[f]or teachers as learners, the focus and content for learning center on how to create effective learning environments for students—classroom instruction that is centered on discipline knowledge and skills, on individual learners, on assessment, and on peer learning community." Mutual engagement in activities and active participation in CoPs would be essential for effective teacher learning. Therefore, this study investigates the realities of team-teaching situations and examine how they facilitate or hinder teacher learning for ALTs.

### 2.5.4 Issues of participation

As previously noted, CoPs play a fundamental role in the social learning theory and this concept might be over-romanticised. However, scholars are aware of the downside of CoPs (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger et al., 2002). One of the major disorders of CoPs is the issue of participation, such as marginalisation caused by an inability to obtain legitimacy or proper access to learning resources, which is mainly rooted in contradictions in relationships between newcomers and old-timers. As Lave and Wenger (1991) demonstrate, they may have competitive relations, and tensions between the two could entail the lack of participation and hinder learning "when masters prevent learning by acting in effect as pedagogical authoritarians, viewing apprentices as novices who "should be instructed" rather than as peripheral participants in a community engaged in its own reproduction" (ibid: 76). Thus, "[n]ot all concrete realizations of apprenticeship learning are equally effective" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 76). Wenger et al. (2002) explain the downside of CoPs in more detail. According to them, disorders of CoPs emerge when they fail to achieve the balance and lose flexibility, when members of the community fail to connect sufficiently to develop trust. Also, the human frailties of its members or a strong sense of ownership may create a barrier to newcomers and this sort of attitude can be a blinder to new ideas or critiques.

However, marginality and peripherality both have the potential to be sources of learning. Learning happens not only when people take inbound trajectories from legitimate peripheral participation to the full membership in the process of reaching to the centre of a CoP, but also

when they take the outbound trajectories to get out of the community and become an outsider. As outlined by Wenger (1998), there are four main modes of participation: full participation (insider), full non-participation (outsider), peripherality, and marginality. Non-participation can be interpreted as a positively or consciously chosen identity act. It is possible to distinguish peripherality from marginality based on whether the learning trajectories are inward to reach the centre(s) or outward to leave the CoPs.

Wenger (1998) introduces different types of trajectories of learning: peripheral trajectories, inbound trajectories, insider trajectories, boundary trajectories, and outbound trajectories (Wenger, 1998: 154-155) as introduced in Chapter 2.5.1. The most well-known are the inbound trajectories, which are taken by novices who begin with peripheral participation and gradually gain expertise by moving to the centre of the community. However, "by choice or by necessity, some trajectories never lead to full participation" (ibid: 154), and these are known as peripheral trajectories. Of course, experts and adepts also learn from others and take insider trajectories by renegotiating their identities even after gaining full membership. Boundary trajectories connect CoPs and can be observed when they overlap with each other; outbound trajectories refer to inbound trajectories in the opposite direction. Wenger (1998) explains outbound trajectories in a positive way "as when children grow up" (ibid: 155), but it is not always the case. In many cases, ALTs seem to take peripheral trajectories for a year or two before undertaking on outbound trajectories to leave the job because of social/cultural boundaries such as language barriers and the local teachers' lack of readiness, which I refer to as 'glass walls' in this study, and the legal boundaries that make ALT non-tenured position up to five years, which I refer to as 'glass ceilings' (Chapter 1.4.3). Some ALTs mentioned that they may be able to get on inbound trajectories if they are fortunate enough to get legitimate membership in school-based CoPs (Tsujino, 2014). In the analysis chapters, I will examine the factors contribute to such 'luck.'

Liu and Xu (2013) demonstrate how a language teacher experienced struggles such as identity crisis to transform her identity not only as a teacher but also as a parent through narrative inquiry, arguing that studies using CoPs framework typically do not focus enough on the power relations and the other types of trajectories besides inbound trajectories. Actually, not many empirically based studies have been conducted yet to investigate the various trajectories of teacher learning. By examining the realities of ALTs in seven different cases, I hope to fill these gaps in the literature with this study. Since "[i]nclusion may not necessarily lead to better professional development, … while exclusion might open up opportunities for new understanding of self and the community" (Liu & Xu, 2013: 191), it is important to investigate not only inbound but also outbound and other trajectories.

Issues of participation in the teacher learning communities can range from the personal to the organisational levels. Normally, teachers play different roles and they have varying degrees of responsibility in activities "to reflect on their practice, examine evidence about the relationship between practice and student outcomes, and make changes that improve teaching and learning for the particular students in their classes" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006: 4). Off-site learning communities for teachers should also be considered, in addition to school-based learning communities. "A sustainable community of practice should provide teachers with opportunities of participation, but more importantly, there should be a transparent and fair system to recognise individuals' participation and contribution" (Liu & Xu, 2013: 191). Accordingly, I should take all of those factors into account when I investigate ALTs' learning in CoPs.

As we can see, "[p]articipation is always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 51). In fact, "participation at multiple levels is entailed in membership in a *community of practice*. … It does imply participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 98 emphasis in original). It is natural for conflicts to arise when people with different identities participate in CoPs. Additionally, sometimes "[l]earners can be overwhelmed, overawed, and overworked" (ibid: 116). Yet, participation in a social practice enables us to gain new insights about the world and ourselves by developing and reconstructing our identity through negotiation of meanings. Although issues of participation are complicated in and of themselves, problematic situations emerge of the fact that those issues reflect the nature of complexities of identity construction and reconstruction as a result of participating in various sociocultural activities. As Lave and Wenger (1991: 85) noted, "the important point concerning learning is one of access to practice as resource for learning, rather than to instruction." Therefore, this study explores not just the episodic narratives of ALTs but their learning trajectories which can be observed in the multifaceted and multidimensional identities formed/transformed through participation in multiple CoPs. The researcher investigates the identification processes of ALTs in three modes proposed in Wenger (1998): imagination, alignment, and engagement. In fact, many ALTs utilise their experience of AoO as imagination, apprenticeship and mentorship as alignment, and team-teaching or team-learning as engagement. These will be covered in Chapter 7.

### 2.5.5 Language teachers' identity formation in communities of practice

Learning is situated in social and cultural practices, and people construct and reconstruct their identities through experiences. Thus, the process of identity formation is viewed as a learning trajectory. Wenger (1998) explains that identity is lived and temporal, shaped by both individual and collective efforts, and it is also known as negotiated experience, social or community membership, a learning process, and a nexus of multimembership through a local-global interplay. In fact, "learning is not merely a condition for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership. We conceive of identities as long-term-living relations between persons and their place and participation in CoPs. Thus, identity, knowing, and social membership entail one another" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 53).

As demonstrated earlier, this study focuses on teacher learning in CoPs, aiming to investigate the functions of CoPs and the process of teachers' professional identity formation because "learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: They are aspects of the same phenomenon" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 115). Therefore, I would rather follow the position of Lave (1996) by utilising the Wenger's (1998) theoretical view on identity formation. The purpose of this study is to construct knowledge about teacher learning and the mechanisms of CoPs among teachers, with the hope of providing some implications for more effective professional development for language teachers. As Lave (1996: 161) demonstrates, "[t]here are enormous differences in what and how leaners come to shape (and be shaped into) their identities with respect to different practices" and "[r]esearchers would have to explore each practice to understand what is being learned, and how" (ibid: 162). To do so, as presented in Chapter 2.3.1, it is important to be aware of the nature of identity based on the poststructural view, which is dynamic, fluid, contextual, relational, emotional and multifaceted. As such, identity has multiple dimensions and teachers' identities are also considered to have various dimensions.

Day and Kington (2008: 11) note three dimensions of teacher identity in their study: 1) professional identity which "reflects social and policy expectations of what a good teacher is and the educational ideals of the teacher"; 2) situated or socially located identity which "is located in a specific school and context and is affected by local conditions (e.g. pupils' behaviour, level of disadvantage), leadership, support and feedback"; and 3) personal identity which "is located in life outside school and is linked to family and social roles." They propose four different scenarios and examine teachers' positive and negative experiences in each dimension: 1) dimensions in relative balance; 2) one dominant dimension; 3) two dominant dimensions; and 4) three conflicting dimensions. Based on the same longitudinal research project, Day et al. (2006) point out that teachers could possess both subtle and unsubtle identities with positive and negative

aspects, and they are affected by four different structures: macro structures (government policy, and broader education system); meso structures (social/cultural/organisational structures of schools, and teacher education); micro structures (contextual factors such as relationships with colleagues, students, and parents); and personal biographies (values, beliefs, and ideologies). Not surprisingly, this categorisation echoes to the one I presented earlier in this section in Figure 2.1. They conclude that:

> Teachers in all countries need support for their commitment, energy and skill over their careers if they are to grapple with the immense emotional, intellectual and social demands and as they work towards building the internal and external relationships demanded by ongoing government reforms and social movements" (Day et al., 2006: 614).

As many researchers argue, emotions play an important role in identity formation (Day et al., 2006; Hargreaves, 2001; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003) and "[t]he search for understanding teacher identity requires the connection of emotion with self-knowledge" (Zembylas, 2003: 213). Zembylas (2003: 215) claims that "educational researchers can study teacher identity in classroom and school settings where teachers are emotionally engaged in forming their identities; explore the personal, social, and cultural/historical aspects for teacher identity formation; and examine the role of power relations and teachers' agency for teacher identity formation." He conceptualises emotions as "not only as matters of personal (private) dispositions or psychological qualities, but also as social and political experiences that are constructed by how one's work (in this case, the teaching) is organized and led" (ibid: 216). From those standpoints, I focused on the roles of emotions in ALTs' professional identity formation in CoPs, looking into the personal, social, cultural, and historical aspects such as their biographical information, educational background, knowledge of the current working contexts, perceptions about English education in Japan and the ALT job, their motivations to become ALTs and memorable experiences. To collect such data, an online questionnaire survey was created (see Appendix E).

In regard to language teachers' identity, Kiely (2015) presents three dimensions: 1) 'language' which includes subject matter knowledge and language awareness; 2) 'professional status' which refers to the aspects of the teachers' linguistic background whether they are native or non-native speaker; and 3) 'learning' which means teachers' pedagogic expertise and being autonomous professionals. As we can see, not only the contextual and institutional dimensions but also the personal attributes or traits and aspects of the profession need to be considered as important factors in the process of language teachers' identity formation. Pedagogical knowledge, language knowledge, and personal practical knowledge are counted as a part of professional identity for language teachers.

> Great teaching in schools is a process of facilitating the circulation of school knowledgeable skill into the changing identities of students. Teachers are probably recognized as "great" when they are intensely involved in communities of practice in which their identities are changing with respect to (other) learners through their interdependent activities. (Lave, 1996: 158)

Then, how would language teachers construct their professional identity at work? For instance, Kanno and Stuart (2011) demonstrate how student teachers learn to teach through classroom practice and how novice teachers' emerging identities manifest themselves in and shape their teaching practice through interviews, classroom observations, stimulated recalls, and their journals. They followed two novice language teachers and found that there are both match and mismatch between the narrated identities (identity-in-discourse) and the enacted identities (identity-in-practice) as emerged from different sources of data. The findings show that teacher identity and practice are mutually constitutive, thus "[p]ractice shapes identity, whereas identity, in turn, affects practice" (Kanno & Stuart, 2011: 245). While Liu and Xu (2013) illuminate the conflicting relationships between an experienced language teacher's 'designated identity' and 'actual identity' (see Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Designated identity can be understood as equivalent of 'ought self', and actual identity as 'actual self' or 'situational self' in (E. T. Higgins, 1987). As explained earlier, there are so many factors behind the process of teachers' identity formation and it is important to be aware of "the theoretical importance of recognising the social-ness, bi-directionality and power-enactment of teacher learning in communities of practice" (Liu & Xu, 2013: 191).

There is no absolute way to see the process of teacher identity formation because "*[c]hanging* locations and perspectives are part of actors' learning trajectories, developing identities, and forms of membership" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 36 emphasis in original). "Becoming a "member such as those" is an embodied telos too complex to be discussed in the narrower and simpler language of goals, tasks, and knowledge acquisition … but identities of mastery, in all their complications, are there to be assumed" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 85). Thus, following the poststructual understanding of identity as multidimensional phenomena, I would like to use narratives of ALTs as windows to examine the process of their professional identity construction. As researchers demonstrate, evolving CoPs and shifting mode of participations can be observed well by utilising narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen, 2007; Liu & Xu, 2011, 2013; Tsui, 2007a). Learning how to talk with the other members of CoPs and how to talk in CoPs are crucial for situated learning, thus narrative approach is quite useful to investigate how people learn by storying their experience to construct their personal philosophies with contextual, social and emotional

changes. To confirm how we can utilise narrative inquiry as a lens to examine identity formation will be the task of the next section.

## 2.6 Narrative inquiry

### 2.6.1 'Stories to live by'

This study focuses on teacher learning, specifically how language teachers construct and reconstruct their professional identities through participation in multiple CoPs. In the social theory of learning, how to tell stories is one of the important elements of learning because the ways people 'talking about' and 'talking within' a practice are considered as a key to get legitimate peripheral participation in CoPs (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Also, "learning is supported by conversations and stories about problematic and especially difficult cases" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 108). Thus, it is possible to say that the evidence of learning can be embedded in individuals' stories of experience.

To better understand the concept of 'experience', I would like to refer to John Dewey's theory of experience (Dewey, 1938), which holds two important criterions: 'interaction' and 'continuity.' Since people are unique individuals who are unable to stop having social interactions with others, experience can be seen as both personal and social in nature. J. D. Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 2) point out as follows:

> Dewey held that one criterion of experience is *continuity*, namely, the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences. Wherever one positions oneself in that continuum – the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future – each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future (emphasis in original).

In sum, it would possible to say that people learn from experience by moving "back and forth between the personal and the social, simultaneously thinking about the past, present, and future, and to do so in ever-expanding social milieus" (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 2-3). According to Deweyan view, life is education and education is life. Wenger also supports this view by saying that "[i]t is life itself that is the main learning event" (Wenger, 2011: 5), especially in the educational institution. "Experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively" (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 19). We can observe how individuals construct and reconstruct their identities by

examining the narratives they tell since “the main strength of narrative inquiry lies in its focus on how people use stories to make sense of their experiences in areas of inquiry where it is important to understand phenomena from the perspectives of those who experience them” (Barkhuizen et al., 2014: 2). This feature of narrative inquiry will be used as methodology, and I will return to it in Chapter 3.

Through the stories of experience or ‘stories to live by’, we can understand how people learn to become who they are. The term ‘stories to live by’ refers to “the intellectual thread” that “helps us to understand how knowledge, context, and identity are linked and can be understood narratively” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999: 4). Stories to live by, another term for identity act, “is given meaning by the narrative understandings of knowledge and context” and those stories “are shaped by such matters as secret teacher stories, sacred stories of schooling, and teachers’ cover stories” (ibid.). Thus, narrative inquiry as a phenomenon can be a useful tool to explore the process of teachers’ identity formation. “Narrative is the phenomenon of inquiry because everything, including teacher development, is a phenomenon narrated through stories. The phenomena of narrative inquiry are, themselves, narrative in nature” (Xu & Connelly, 2009: 221).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) demonstrate that narrative is important not only as a product but also as a process, and it can be seen as both a phenomenon and a method. “Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the pattern of inquiry for its study” (ibid.: 2). Narrative inquiry as a phenomenon and a method seems to go along well with the CoPs framework. Since “narrative that all of us to learn” (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 8) represents a holistic vision, it is possible to observe and comprehend how people learn to become who they are through the stories to live by which reflect their experience in various social settings and connect one’s past, present and future. Evidently, “the self can be seen as the meaning maker, or the teller of stories. If our identities are stories, then our selves might be the storytellers” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008: 738). In the next section, I will outline the functions of narrative inquiry as a lens to explore the process of professional identity formation among ALTs.

### 2.6.2 Narrative as a lens to explore teacher identity formation

As previously explained, the notion of identity is inclusive, multifaceted, and ever-changing. Narratives are defined as the stories people tell about their experiences in order to reflect their thoughts, emotions, and knowledge through interaction with others. These stories are composed, recomposed, and evolve over time. Xu and Connelly point out that “everything needs to be seen in temporal flow. Narrative phenomena are <u>not</u> seen as existing in the here and now

but, rather, are seen as flowing out of the past and into the future, as *we observe*" (Xu & Connelly, 2009: 223-224 emphasis in original). In my view, individuals or tangible 'selves' can be recognised as storytellers, and their identities can be told in the form of 'stories to live by.' Furthermore, it is crucial to be aware of the multiple 'I's in narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). People typically carry more than two 'selves' at once, such as the core self (naked self) and the social and/or cultural identity (clothed self). We cannot ignore these multiple 'selves,' as well as the identities that teachers enact outside of school and their professional identities within school contexts. Therefore, an inclusive approach is required to explore teacher learning and how they shape and reshape their identities as teachers. In this regard, narrative inquiry appears to be an appropriate methodology to guide my research project which aims to investigate the process of language teachers' professional identity formation and their learning as teachers. As K. E. Johnson and Golombek (2002: 7) demonstrate, "narrative inquiry enables teachers to organize, articulate, and communicate what they know and believe about teaching and who they have become as teachers. … ultimately, narrative inquiry enables teachers not only to make sense of their professional worlds but also to make significant and worthwhile change within themselves and in their teaching practices."

According to J. C. Richards (2008: 168), "[i]dentity and how it shapes teacher-learning can be explored through cases studies, through the review of lesson protocols, through narratives in which teachers describe the emergence of their professional identities and the struggles and issues that are involved." A teacher's identity can be told in his/her 'stories to live by' or "stories shaped by the landscapes past and present in which s/he lives and works" (J. D. Clandinin et al., 2006: 112) as a unique embodiment. "In order to recognize and document the activity of teacher learning and language teaching through the perspective of teachers, it is necessary to gather descriptive accounts of how teachers come to know their knowledge, how they use that knowledge within the contexts where they teach, and how they make sense of and reconfigure their classroom practices in and over time" (K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2002: 2). These are the rationales of the current study designed as multiple case studies with narrative approach.

Researchers illustrate three important aspects of teacher professional identity through narrative inquiry: personal practical knowledge (see Chapter 2.4.2) or teacher knowledge, teachers' knowledge landscape, and narrative intersections of ways of knowing and being (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; J. D. Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Olson & Craig, 2005; Xu & Connelly, 2009). The relationship between teacher knowledge and knowledge-for-teachers should be noted first. "Teacher knowledge is a narrative construct which references the totality of a person's personal practical knowledge gained from formal and informal educational experience" with cultural and social qualities and it is "what teachers know

through life experience, including what is taught to them" (Xu & Connelly, 2009: 221). Whereas knowledge-for-teachers are the resources for teachers such as language knowledge and subject matter knowledge. They explain that "anything taught to teachers as knowledge-for-teachers becomes teacher knowledge and touches the very heart of who teachers are by touching their identity as teachers and as persons" (Xu & Connelly, 2009: 223) Teacher knowledge, thus, can be understood as both personal and social. We need to be aware of this because "[p]rofessional development emerges from a process of reshaping teachers' existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, methods, or materials on teachers" (K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2002: 2). The items in the questionnaire survey Section 2 and 3 (Appendix E) were set up to get a glimpse of teacher knowledge that ALTs have and their knowledge landscape.

As for the teachers' knowledge landscape, Connelly and Clandinin use the metaphor of landscape as a way of conceptualising contexts in which teacher knowledge is constructed, and it refers to "a way of thinking narratively about the contexts in which teachers, and others, live and work" (J. D. Clandinin et al., 2009: 141). Connelly and Clandinin (1999: 94) demonstrate that "teachers' working lives are shaped by stories and that these stories to live by compose teacher identity" and teachers' professional identity can be observed in the professional knowledge landscape. One of the reasons they use the landscape metaphor is that they conceptualise teachers' professional identities as being shaped not only by their personal dispositions but also by broader social and cultural contexts. Besides, they argue that "identities, the stories we live by are, it would seem, not easily changed, so difficult, at times, it may appear that they are, indeed, fixed unchanging entities. But … identities both have origins and change. … identities are composed, sustained and changed" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999: 95). Another reason for the use of landscape metaphor is that the image we have from the word 'landscape' is usually symbolised by a natural scenery such as a forest or mountains. Although it is constantly changing, it can be difficult to discern those changes in a shorter time span. Explaining this by using the landscape as a forest metaphor, especially when it is already cultivated and the ecology is well established, it may be difficult to see the differences after only observing it for a month or two, compared with the trees which have just sprouted and started to grow. Changes do occur in the landscape, but they can be difficult to detect in matured personalities. Additionally, there are some things that teachers cannot easily change such as school rules or curriculum. For instance, teachers may find it difficult to introduce more communication based cultural lessons on a regular basis under the exam-oriented curriculum. They should find a way to exercise their creativity within the framework of the curriculum. Therefore, we must consider the professional landscape of teachers in order to explore their professional development from a wider perspective. In this

study, I treat this teachers' knowledge landscape as the notion that coincides with CoPs in which people learn. That is also a rational behind the choice of methods, conducting a series of fieldwork with ethnographic approach to actually get into the same landscapes with my participants.

Among the researchers who study the process of teachers' professional identity formation, narrative is conceptualised as "a mediational tool—narrative as externalization, verbalization, and systematic examination—in fostering teacher professional development" (K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2011: 486). As K. E. Johnson and Golombek (2011: 490) illuminate, "[w]hen narrative is conceptualized as a mediational tool, the act of narrating, as a cultural activity, influences how one comes to understand what one is narrating about. The telling or retelling (either oral or written) of an experience entails a complex combination of description, explanation, analysis, interpretation, and construal of one's private reality as it is brought into the public sphere." In the next chapter, I will explain the research methodology including the role of the researcher as a narrator in the process of narrative research (Chapter 3.5.1).

# Chapter 3 Research Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, this is a qualitative, narrative study to explore teacher learning, focusing on the professional identity formation process of ALTs in Japan via multiple case studies. This chapter explains the context of this study and how to approach it in order to construct knowledge about the actual process of teachers' identity formation, as well as the mechanisms of CoPs and both formal and informal aspects of teacher learning through narratives as demonstrated earlier. I set four research questions to investigate the features of situated learning of ALTs and how CoPs could be used to support their learning (Chapter 1.5). Narrative inquiry is utilised as the main method to investigate the complex nature of identity formation process together with ethnographic approach. According to Lave (1996: 162), "[e]thnographic research is a good way to come to understand learning as part of practice" and "useful for trying to focus on the specifics of changing participation in changing practices, most especially on learners' changing conditions and ways of participating." Following this standpoint, I take into account the four qualitative research characterisations: locally situated, participant-oriented, holistic, and inductive (K. Richards, 2009), to carry out the whole study, as with the prior studies on investigating identities. Although there are researchers focusing on teachers' professional identity formation who use conversation analysis (K. Richards, 2006), discourse analysis (Cohen, 2008; Little, 2002), or grounded theory (T. Borg, 2012), I personally trust that narrative inquiry fits in well with my research purpose and introducing the integrated use of 'analysis of narratives' by categorising and 'narrative analysis' by storying (Barkhuizen, 2013) in 'narrative portfolios' would be the best way to represent my data. The studies of identity research tend to focus more on life histories or "big stories, asking questions of who, what and why" and narrative analysis (most of the researchers use discourse analysis) is to examine "how tellers construct their stories within the context" (C. Higgins & Sandhu, 2014: 56). However, the functions of CoPs and situated teacher learning are so complex that I also should keep sufficient space for 'small stories' to be explored as well as 'big stories' (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). As a foundation, I would like to place my study based on the concept of 'narrative knowledging' (Barkhuizen, 2011). "*Narrative knowledging* … is the meaning making, learning, or knowledge construction that takes place during the narrative research activities of (co)constructing narratives, analyzing narratives, reporting the findings, and reading/watching/listening to research reports" (Barkhuizen, 2011: 395). I also take into consideration the researcher identity as Norton and Early

(2011) demonstrate. In this chapter, I will explain the methodological orientation, research settings, procedure of data collection and data analysis.

## 3.2 Methodological orientation

### 3.2.1 Case study approach

As shown in the title, this study is categorised as multiple case studies. Yazan (2015) summarises that there are different approaches to the qualitative case study standing on different epistemological foundations such as positivism (Yin, 2003), constructivism and existentialism/non-determinism (Stake, 1995), and constructivism (Merriam, 1998). The current study is largely informed by Stake's view on qualitative case study approach and multiple case study analysis (Stake, 2006). I position myself in a constructivist paradigm, conceptualising case as "a specific, a complex, functioning thing" or "an integrated system" with a boundary and working parts (Stake, 1995: 2). Qualitative case study is a "study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (ibid: xi). Stake (1995) points out that case study research is not sampling research since our first obligation is to understand this one case and we do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. This study contains seven cases presented in the form of 'narrative portfolio' as a means to report the qualitative narrative research of ALTs in Japan with the four defining characteristics demonstrated in Stake (1995): holistic (considering the interrelationship between the phenomenon and its contexts), empirical (basing the study on their observations in the field), interpretive (resting upon their intuition and see research basically as a researcher-subject interaction), and emphatic (reflecting the vicarious experiences of the subjects in an emic perspective).

Yin (2003) states that 'collective case studies' and 'multiple case studies' are similar in nature and they are used as synonyms. Yet I personally believe that 'multiple case study' fits best for the title of this study. The research investigates the ALTs in different contexts. Despite they are under the same occupational category called 'ALT', their position, the level of the school(s) where they teach, and working conditions vary (Chapter 1.4). I use plural form 'multiple case studies' because this study aspires to deepen our understanding of the teacher learning for ALTs in diverse contexts with different personal backgrounds. The researcher tries to delineate the landscapes of practice where the ALTs live through their trajectories in multiple CoPs told in their narratives. To explore the

multifaceted identity formation process of each ALT, narrative inquiry is used as the main method. Then, each case is presented as a 'narrative portfolio' (Chapter 5 & 6).

In case studies, triangulation to assure the validity can be done by using multiple sources of data and multiple perceptions that serve to clarify meaning (Stake, 2006). As data gathering tools, researchers recommend the use of observation, interview, document review, archival records, and physical artifacts (Yazan, 2015). Baxter and Jack (2008: 554) explain that "[a] hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources" such as "documentation, archival records, interviews, physical artifacts, direct observations, and participant-observation" to enhance data credibility. Moreover, "within case study research, investigators can collect and integrate quantitative survey data, which facilitates reaching a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied" (ibid). Therefore, the researcher collected data through multiple means: a questionnaire survey, interviews, observations, and reflective journals. As Stake mentions, "selection by sampling of attributes should not be the highest priority. Balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance" (Stake, 1995: 6). Also, vigorous interpretation could be maintained through the process of data collection. In this study, the data from multiple sources are converged in the analysis process and put into the form of 'narrative portfolio'. Baxter and Jack (2008: 554) state that:

> In case study, data from these multiple sources are then converged in the analysis process rather than handled individually. Each data source is one piece of the "puzzle," with each piece contributing to the researcher's understanding of the whole phenomenon. This convergence adds strength to the findings as the various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case.

This research project named as multiple case studies has functions like a tapestry telling several stories in one creation. Stories of the seven ALTs are weaved in the surface as the weft, supported by the narratives from others under it as the warp. Tellis (1997) indicates that case studies are multi-perspective analyses to give a voice to the powerless and voiceless by considering not just the voice and perspectives of the research subjects but also the relevant group of people and the interactions between them. Throughout the analyses process, I tried to present various perspectives, weaving the stories told by the participants and others who live in the same CoPs in different levels presented in Figure2.2. Baxter and Jack (2008: 555) claim that "[t]here is no one correct way to report a case study" and "it is the researcher's responsibility to convert a complex phenomenon into a format that is readily understood by the reader." I will demonstrate the process of data collection and analyses later in this chapter (Chapter 3.4 & 3.5).

### 3.2.2 Narrative knowledging

As demonstrated in Chapter 2.6, the current study employs narrative inquiry as its methodology. To begin, I would like to introduce the notion of 'narrative knowledging' (Barkhuizen, 2011) to explain how narrative inquiry functions as methodology in this study. According to Barkhuizen (2011: 395), narrative knowledging is "an umbrella term to refer to the meaning making, learning, and knowledge construction that takes place at all stages of a narrative research project. *Narrative knowledging*, then, is the meaning making, learning, or knowledge construction that takes place during the narrative research activities of (co)constructing narratives, analyzing narratives, reporting the findings, and reading/watching/listening to research reports" (emphasis in original). He claims that "[t]he concept of narrative knowledging, therefore, recognizes the active, fluid nature of meaning making, and aims to avoid conceptions of narrative knowledge as stable, permanent, and unchallengeable" (Barkhuizen, 2011: 396).

In narrative knowledging, the researcher and participants co-construct meanings of the stories not only during the data collection but also during analysis, interpretation and representation of narratives. It means that researchers are actively involved in the sense-making process of 'stories to live by' or narrative knowledging. Once the lived experiences of participants are retold by the researcher, those narratives are to face the readers or audiences in the form of research articles or papers. Then, the readers/audiences start to communicate, negotiate and accommodate with the reported narratives to create new space for the knowledge in their own sense. This series of knowledge construction process through narratives is conceptualised as narrative knowledging and "[t]hese practices come with complex ethical, ideological, and emotional responsibilities" (Barkhuizen, 2011: 393). Thus, narrative researchers need to be aware of this fact to do justice to the stories told by the participants throughout the whole process of research. As "it is clear that narrative research means different things to different researchers" (Barkhuizen, 2011: 409), each narrative inquirer is more responsible for how to conduct the study, how to prepare the narrative research texts and what to include and exclude from them. Below, I will go over the procedure of this research project, as well as the relationships between my participants and 'I' as the researcher.

### 3.2.3 Narrative inquiry as the main method

In this study, narrative is placed not only as one of the theoretical orientations for the research design, but also as the main method because one of the commonly used approaches to investigate teachers' professional development and the transformation of teachers' identity is through their narratives (Kiernan, 2010). K. E. Johnson and Golombek (2011: 487) describe that "teacher narratives are by their very nature not meant to represent phenomena objectively but rather to expose how teachers' understandings of phenomena are infused with interpretation from within their individual and social worlds." Of course, "thinking, knowing, believing and doing are enacted in classroom context in a way that can not be separated from identity formation" (Miller, 2009: 175), and how teachers learn to think, know, feel, and act like a teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2008) can be understood through their narratives. Teachers' narratives express various aspects of their professional lives such as their personal philosophies, knowledge about language and context, emotions, pedagogical skills, and so forth.

> Their [teachers'] stories reveal the knowledge, ideas, perspectives, understandings, and experiences that guide their work. Their stories describe the complexities of their practice, trace professional development over time, and reveal the ways in which they make sense of and reconfigure their work. Their stories reflect the struggles, tensions, triumphs, and rewards of their lives as teachers. (K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2002: 7)

Looking closely at narrative inquiry as a phenomenon, it functions as "to capture and describe experiences as they occur "in the midst" (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of other lived experiences, to look inward, outward, backward, and forward at teachers' experiences in order to capture their temporal nature and their personal and social dimensions, and to see them as situated within the places or sequences of places in which they occur and from which they emerge" (K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2002: 3). J. D. Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 50) explain as follows:

> By inward, we mean toward the internal conditions, such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions. By outward, we mean toward the existential conditions, that is, the environment. By backward and forward, we refer to temporality – past, present, and future.

There are research studies have been done to investigate teachers' professional identity formation through narratives. For example, Golombek and Johnson (2004) highlight the influence of emotional, ethical and relational components on teacher identity formation within school contexts, and Watson (2006) demonstrates how we can utilise biography and knowledge about theory and

contexts to examine teacher identity formation in regard to behaviour management in classroom. Olson and Craig (2005) explain why cover stories were told by teachers, and they argue that it is because of the conflicting views of change, institutional prescription, or gap between school stories and teachers' stories. In their study, the notion of cover story is introduced "as one way to explain how individuals come to terms with contradictions between the stories they desire to author and the stories expected of them by others" (ibid: 164), referring to Crites (1979). Through life history narratives of female teachers, Simon-Maeda (2004) illuminate the issues of gender and social and cultural influences on female teachers' identity formation such as marginalisation and discrimination. Also, socio-political issues and power relationships are raised as influential factors in getting legitimate participation in order to construct teachers' professional identity (Liu & Xu, 2013; Tsui, 2007a). Those studies investigate several aspects of the process of teacher identity formation, not just inward or outward, but also backward or forward.

As we can see, narrative inquiry has "open-ended, experiential and quest-like qualities" (Conle, 2000: 50) and "it was important to attempt to inquire into and safeguard the personal, the particular, the temporal, the experiential, and the moral quality of the phenomena under study. Mind should not neglect body, emotion and imagination" (ibid: 52). By combining these features of narratives with the five trajectories of identity formation patterns in CoPs proposed in Wenger (1998), it seems possible to examine the complexities of the process of teacher identity formation. In this study, I explore how ALTs find their space in the school landscape in Japanese education contexts and enact their identity as teachers through their narratives. However, as K. E. Johnson and Golombek (2002: 9) claim, "narrative inquiry is not the panacea that will miraculously sort out the complexities of preparing language teachers for the work of this profession." The key elements of narrative inquiry research will be discussed in the next section.

### 3.2.4 Key conceptions of narrative research

Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) show that narrative inquiry can be understood as one of the grounded and defensive research methods. They demonstrate how narrative inquiry as methodology functions in social science studies by explaining four narrative turns: relationship of researcher and researched, from numbers to words as data, from the general to the particular, blurring knowing (validity). As illustrated above, narrative inquiry stands on postmodern epistemology and the narrative researcher's position differs from that of the positivist view because "narrative inquiries recognize that the researcher and the researched in a particular study are in

relationship with each other and that both parties will learn and change in the encounter" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006: 9). That is why narrative researchers usually call people who take part in their research 'participants', not 'the subjects of research.' "What fundamentally distinguishes the narrative turn from "scientific" objectivity is understanding that knowing other people and their interactions is always a relational process that ultimately involves caring for, curiosity, interest, passion, and change" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006: 29).

Showing how to design a narrative study, J. D. Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr (2007) demonstrate eight design elements and three commonplaces. The eight design elements presented in J. D. Clandinin et al. (2007) are as follows: 1) Justify the personal, the practical, and the social reasons; 2) Name the phenomenon from tell and retell, positioning on landscapes through participation in the context(s); 3) Describe how to unfold multidimensioned ever changing life space; 4) Define and balance the three commonplaces (temporality, sociality, place) and make it contextual and relational in analysis and interpretation; 5) Position yourself philosophically, scholarly, and locally (topically); 6) Find out a gap or niche; 7) Consider ethically in the development of relationships with participants and choose which story to tell or not to tell in participants' imagined presence; and 8) Think narratively, consider possibilities of textual forms, multiple audiences, and judgement criteria (authenticity, adequacy, plausibility, resonance) in the process of representation. They emphasise the importance of three commonplaces in narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; J. D. Clandinin et al., 2007). Each commonplace is defined as follows:

> Temporality: transition of people, places and events (past, present, future)
>
> Sociality: social conditions (existential; environment, surrounding factors & forces, people), personal conditions (feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions), and the relationship between participants and narrative inquirer (researcher)
>
> Place: the specificity of location (the specific concrete, physical, topological boundaries), sequence of places.

All the narrative researchers should be aware of three commonplaces because "[a]s we worked within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, we learned to see ourselves as always *in the midst* – located somewhere along the dimensions of time, place, the personal, and the social. But we see ourselves in the midst in another sense as well; that is, we see ourselves as in the middle of a nested set of stories – ours and theirs" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000: 63 emphasis in original).

Based on these notions, I designed my research project and collected narratives in different forms as 'field texts' (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). In narrative inquiry, researchers start to collect 'field

texts' or participants' stories to live by as raw data, and then compose 'research texts' to represent them in journal articles, books or theses. The research texts in this study are called 'narrative portfolios' as they are the stories retold by the researcher for the purpose of the research, recomposed to integrate varieties of stories in different formats such as spoken, written, and multimodal narratives like photos, presentation slides and handouts. There are a range of kinds of field texts, for instance, interview transcripts, photographs, field notes, conversation transcripts, teaching materials and so on. Most of the researchers use interview data as main field texts, and written narratives are also commonly used, which include teacher-authored written journals (Golombek & Johnson, 2004) and 'narrative frames' (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). However, not only written and oral narratives but also multimodal narratives such as pictures or artefacts can be considered as kinds of field texts (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). As I explore the professional identity construction of ALTs in the current study, I utilise both interviews (spoken narratives), questionnaire results and reflective journals (written narratives) as my main research instruments, supported by field notes, photos and artefacts from observations (multimodal narratives) and other documents provided by my participants. I explain the methods of this study in more detail in the next section.

As explained in Chapter 2.6.1, 'stories to live by' are "not immutable, universal, and timeless but always tentative, continually revised by new discoveries that function like story endings that change our understanding of past knowledge and present new problems for study that had not been foreseen" (Mishler, 2006: 47). Therefore, narrative inquiry needs to be a context-sensitive longitudinal ethnographic research project especially for researchers trying to explore the ecology of CoPs or 'landscapes of practice' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014) by experiencing the life spaces of participants. Bell (2011: 579) demonstrates that "[m]ost of us researchers find that 6 months is the minimum period for negotiating entry and collecting data" for narrative research. Furthermore, narrative inquirers need to be fully aware of research ethics and "we need to imagine ethics as being about negotiation, respect, mutuality and openness to multiple voices" (J. D. Clandinin, 2006a: 52), since it is crucial to assure the validity of the research. Polkinghorne (2007: 480) argues as follows:

> The validity threats arise in narrative research because the language descriptions given by participants of their experienced meaning is not a mirrored reflection of this meaning.… The disjunction between a person's actual experienced meaning and his or her storied description has four sources: (a) the limits of language to capture the complexity and depth of experienced meaning, (b) the limits of reflection to bring notice to the layers of meaning that are present outside of awareness, (c) the resistance of people because of social desirability to

reveal fully the entire complexities of the felt meanings of which they are aware, and (d) the complexity caused by the fact that texts are often a co-creation of the interviewer and participant.

Similarly, other researchers point out that "[i]n studying human thinking, researchers had to rely on language as a vehicle for expressing cognition" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006: 12), and "understanding what participants do with narratives in the storytelling world and how they position themselves vis-à-vis each other in the process is a premise for capturing the why and how of story-world contents as well" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015: 3). Thus, narrative researchers need to be able to claim that they consider all those limits of language, the limits of reflection, the resistance caused by social influences and stances, and the complexities of interaction to answer the questions of validity in narrative inquiry.

It is important for narrative researchers to provide 'thick description' (Holliday, 2007). "The description must be convincing, and it must demonstrate how the connections were made and where they came from" (Holliday, 2004: 732) by presenting multiple perspectives and sources of information. In this study, 'research text' or 'thick description' is to be shown in the format of integrated multimodal thick description or 'narrative portfolio' as stated above.

Bearing in mind those key conceptions of narrative research, I designed the current study. I will demonstrate how I collect 'field texts' and compose my field texts into 'narrative portfolio' through the 'interim research texts' in the following sections.

## 3.3 Research settings and research design

In this section, the further details of research settings and the research design are demonstrated. The status of ALTs in Japan and the typical issues among them are already addressed with my research questions in Chapter 1.5 to set the ground of this project.

### 3.3.1 ALTs in Japan

Through my previous study (Tsujino, 2014), I found that the multifaceted issues of the professional identities among ALTs especially caused by their ambiguous status. ALTs have various backgrounds in terms of their nationality, use of their languages, education, teaching experience,

culture, ethnicities and so on. However, the ambiguity of their status is not only coming from their biographical aspects or circumstances, but largely from the working environment and the scheme of their contract. As presented in Chapter 1.4.2, there are five different employment schemes of ALTs at public/state schools in Japan: JET ALT, NET, subcontracted ALTs, dispatched ALTs, and other ALTs as volunteers. In fact, most of the ALTs have different level of legitimacy because of their job status. Thus, on the one hand, they could fall into an unstable situation where they have no choice but accept involuntary identities such as ‘a human tape recorder’ or ‘a bird in a cage’ (Tsujino, 2017). Whereas some ALTs have a chance to embrace the role as ‘an incredibly useful and necessary tool’ or ‘a door to the world’ with a high level of job satisfaction, on the other (ibid.). In addition, even the Japanese teachers who work with ALTs are not sure about whether they should be positioned as an assistant, a professional teacher, a co-worker, a guest, or a helper. One of the major reasons behind this is the current ALT system which lacks continuity and stability. Most of the time ALTs teach at the same school(s) only for one year or two, and they must renew their contract annually except for some NETs. There are legal constraints and all the ALT position must not exceed 5 years. As such, majority of ALTs do not have a career ladder to become a core member of school-based CoPs.

Furthermore, there seems to be not enough platform for both ALTs and JTEs to exchange their opinions and ideas for their professional development. ALTs in all different employment system must have some training opportunities regularly, but it is not always the case. JET ALTs have a compulsory annual conference for the development of their skills as teachers organised by the local BoE such as the SDCs for minimum of five days each year and some JTEs are also invited to join the trainings. Yet, HRTs’ and/or JTEs’ attendance is not mandatory and not all Japanese teachers have the experience of joining the training seminars with ALTs. Sometimes JTEs decide who would go to the conference with the ALT by *janken* (the rock-paper-scissors), or the same teacher attends every year as a volunteer. While other ALTs, some NETs and T-NETs, rarely have such opportunities to attend the joint seminars with Japanese teachers and most of them just have an induction at the beginning. According to my experience, ALTs are considered as newcomers in Japanese educational contexts, but they tend to have little information about the school before they start working. Therefore, novice ALTs have to learn how to teach from scratch through their in-service work in most cases. More importantly, they are sometimes forced to act as an odd jobber and have no choice but travelling around several different schools in different levels. Some ALTs have lessons together with dozens of teachers in one school year and they are torn apart by conflicting views which each JTE or HRT has about lesson preparation or classroom management and sometimes in danger of their ‘identity crisis’ (Braine, 1999). One of the major aims of this study is to reveal the

realities of ALTs and how they negotiate with other teachers to get the legitimate participation in the CoPs at school for their professional development to contribute the establishment of a healthy learning relationship between ALTs and the local teachers.

Most of the ALTs just have limited opportunities and support for their professional development. Even though they work at schools to teach English, ALTs' status is ambiguous, and they cannot be simply defined either teachers or just assistants. According to OECD (2018), a teacher is defined as "a person whose professional activity involves the planning, organising and conducting of group activities to develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes as stipulated by educational programmes." This definition does not depend on the qualification held by the teacher nor on the delivery mechanism. However, they exclude both teachers without active teaching duties and people who work occasionally or in a voluntary capacity in educational institutions. Reflecting this definition of teacher, it is still difficult to say whether all ALTs could be regarded as teachers or not. In fact, some ALTs work as a full-time teaching staff located in one school, but others are in dispatched part-time contract and/or they are traveling around several different schools and having less duties in teaching. Thus, according to the OECD report, the situation among ALTs can apply in both teacher and non-teacher definitions. Although there is uncertainty in the status of ALTs in general, the seven participants of this longitudinal narrative research are ALTs who met the definition of teacher. Therefore, the main aim of this research investigating the mechanisms and functions of teacher learning would be possible through the work of ALTs.

Because of the ambiguities in the status of ALTs, sometimes they encounter criticism such that many of them have not been qualified as teachers or they are not major in education or language at a university (Aspinall, 2012). Yet, I know many talented ALTs who do not have any teacher qualifications and respectable JTEs who are not major in English or education. As Kennedy (1991: 14) points out, majoring in the subject to teach "does not guarantee that teachers will have the kind of subject matter knowledge they need for teaching." As such, experience of formal teacher education or being a native speaker of the language cannot guarantee the readiness and quality of teachers. For one thing, it is true that "change in teachers' learning orientations appears easier to accomplish in in-service rather than preservice teacher learning" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011: 390). For another, "untrained native-speakers teaching EFL overseas are sometimes credited with an identity they are not really entailed to (the 'native-speaker as expert' syndrome)" (J. C. Richards, 2008: 168). Although this 'native-speaker as expert' syndrome is often used as a justification for not providing any teacher training for ALTs, as far as I know, there is no concrete evidence provided. Apprenticeship model of learning is the main approach for the professional development for ALTs.

Most of the time ALTs are new to educational context in Japan and they should learn through their in-service work at school to become a teacher.

As widely acknowledged, the learning at work has a great potential for the professional development for teachers and the actual process of their learning needs to be investigated closely to build an effective CoPs for more productive learning. "Teacher-learning is not viewed as translating knowledge and theories into practice but as constructing new knowledge and theory through participating in specific social contexts and engaging in particular types of activities and processes" (J. C. Richards, 2008: 164). I believe that the narratives of ALTs tell us a lot of valuable stories to promote better understanding of important aspects of teachers' professional development because each one of them has a very unique experience and different background as both a language teacher and a learner. For instance, some ALTs are qualified as language teachers having experience of formal teacher trainings, but others are just learning how to teach through their in-service work and/or AoO. Some are novices, but some are mid-career teachers who have previous language teaching experience in other countries. Some are major in language or education, but others are major in science or other disciplinary areas, some are bilingual or multilingual, but others are monolingual English speakers. To take these into consideration, both formal and informal accounts of teacher learning should be examined.

### 3.3.2 Research design

As introduced in Chapter 1.5, I have four research questions to answer:

1) How do ALTs construct their professional identities in Japanese school contexts?

2) What are the features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs?

3) In what ways and to what extent do the CoPs support ALTs' professional development?

4) How does ALTs' participation in CoPs lead to teacher learning?

Firstly, I investigate how ALTs feel about and evaluate their readiness for work as a teacher and to identify the CoPs which they are actually engaging in and the broad characteristics of existing CoPs which support their learning as a teacher. To do so, I designed an online questionnaire survey using iSurvey (see Appendix E) and interviewed with twenty respondents out of forty-six who completed

the survey via Skype or LINE (online communication applications). The online questionnaire was conducted to collect the current ALTs' biographical information, language learning and teaching experiences, and their perceptions about English language teaching and English education in Japan. Follow-up interviews were set to complement the information about their actual teaching practices and the relationship with students and other teachers, both other ALTs and local teachers, in the particular school context(s) and sociocultural milieu, and the reflections on their identity through their experience as an ALT. The result and the analysis of the questionnaire survey and the follow-up interviews are shown in Chapter 4.

Drawing information from the same data set, I also tackled with the second research question to delineate the features of both formal and informal in-service learning of ALTs. The main aim is to explore not only the mutuality in learning relationship of ALTs with others in the school context in Japan, but also how ALTs utilise their experience as a student in classroom in their teaching practice as a teacher through AoO (Lortie, 1975). This question also addresses the point of whether ALTs are recognised as a novice newcomer or a language expert, in comparison with the local teachers such as HRTs and JTEs who are possibly viewed as a qualified educational expert in the context and/or a less-experienced English language user. These multifaceted identities of teachers, how learning relationships are established and developed, and how they negotiate with each other to gain legitimate peripheral participation in the CoPs are also investigated.

The third and fourth questions are examined through the in-depth longitudinal narrative research from observations, reflective journals and narrative interviews with seven ALTs. To answer the third question, I explore the mechanisms of CoPs among ALTs and see how they participate in each CoP. Here, not only the school-based CoPs but other CoPs which support ALTs' professional development are taken into consideration to illuminate how they build learning partnership in multiple CoPs. Focusing on their 'identity-in-discourse' (Varghese et al., 2005), I try to reveal what makes ALTs feel that they have changed or gained in their dispositions or skills as a teacher through the participation in CoPs, including their conceptual development in the process of their self-reflections on their skills and practices. Indeed, different types of trajectories such as inbound or outbound need to be considered because learning happens not only from the positive experiences but even when you have negative outcomes through the participation in CoPs. Regarding the fourth question, I try to delineate the functions of CoPs among ALTs and what kind of outcomes ALTs gain from participation in CoPs and how those influence on their actual teaching practices to foster better understanding of the ongoing process of teacher learning and socially developed knowledge of language teachers. I believe that the features of 'identity-in-practice' (Varghese et al., 2005) which ALTs demonstrate tell

us important and valuable stories about the duality of the functions of CoPs, participation and reification process, to enhance the quality of teacher learning in CoPs which support the continuous development of language teachers in wider contexts. This study tries to address what Hiver and Dörnyei (2017: 406) point out: "What has not yet been fully addressed in studies of language teacher identity are the ways in which intrapersonal factors of teacher identity intersect with contextual and organizational factors in building that identity." Table 3.1. shows the summary of research design.

Table 3.1 Summary of Research Design

| Research Questions | Instruments | Data analysis |
|---|---|---|
| 1. How do Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) construct their professional identities in Japanese school contexts? | *Questionnaire*<br>(Online: iSurvey)<br>*Conceptual & Narrative Interviews*<br>(Online: Skype/LINE) | Analysis of narratives<br>+ Narrative analysis<br>Narrative portfolios |
| 2. What are the features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs? | *Questionnaire* (Online: iSurvey)<br>*Semi-structured & Narrative Interviews*<br>(Online: Skype/LINE, Face to Face)<br>*Reflective journals* (Written) | Analysis of narratives<br>+Narrative analysis<br>Narrative portfolios |
| 3. In what ways and to what extent do the Communities of Practice support ALTs' professional development? | *Reflective journals* (Written)<br>*Semi-structured & Narrative Interviews*<br>(Online: Skype, Face to Face)<br>*Observations*<br>(Field notes, photos, audio recordings, etc.) | Narrative portfolios |
| 4. How does ALTs' participation in Communities of Practice lead to teacher learning? | *Observations*<br>(Field notes, photos, audio recordings, etc.)<br>*Semi-structured & Narrative Interviews*<br>(Online: Skype, Face to Face)<br>*Reflective journals* (Written) | Narrative portfolios |

### 3.3.3 Participants of the study

The participants of this study are the ALTs who worked at state schools in school year 2015, from April 2015 to March 2016. All of them were in the active registrations as ALTs at the point of the data collection. I tried to invite ALTs in all different employment types throughout my research and it was partially successful. In the first phase, forty-six ALTs in total (including 35 JET ALTs, 7 NETs, 3 T-NETs and 1 Other ALT) completed the online questionnaire survey (see Table 4.1) and twenty of them agreed to be interviewed. I interviewed with seventeen JET ALTs, two NETs and one T-NET through the Internet for follow-up (see Table 4.5). Among those twenty ALTs, seven people kindly agreed to take part in the second phase. They are two NETs and five JET ALTs (2 female and 5 male)

and their working experience as an ALT varies from three to eight years. They sent me reflective journals and I arranged my visits to observe them at schools at least twice in the period of data collection (see the calls for participation and cover letters in Appendix A and the participants information sheet in Appendix C for further details). When possible, I also attended the training seminars, conferences and other events with them so that I could have clearer pictures about their work and experience as an ALT and actually engage in the landscapes of their narratives (see Appendix J). I travelled all across Japan to go to six different prefectures, as one ALT was in the region over 700km away from the researcher's resident area, two ALTs were about 500km away, three ALTs were in the neighbour prefectures (40km, 90km, 130km away) and one in the same prefecture within 20km.

As demonstrated earlier, this study was originally designed as multiple case studies expected to have about five (up to 10) participants to construct knowledge about the learning of ALTs from a vast range of experience in different contexts to explore the mechanisms and functions of CoPs which support teachers' professional development. Thanks to the contributions from a lot of ALTs all across Japan, snowball sampling worked well for the online questionnaire and interviews in the first phase of the research. Furthermore, seven ALTs participated in the second phase, allowing me to visit their schools and attend seminars and conferences with them. As a result of their great cooperation and dedication, I was able to get so many valuable insights about how the personal and social factors could affect the participation and reification process in various CoPs. For instance, the participant ALTs differ in their length of experience as an ALT, age group, gender, country of origin, working area (urban/rural), school level (preschool/ES/JHS/SHS), employment status (JET/NET), and having teacher training/certified (CELTA/TEFL) or not. One fact to note is that all the seven ALTs are White Westerners and I have no ALT from other ethnic groups participate in the second phase.

Table 3.2 shows the profiles of the seven ALTs in the second phase. The information includes the pseudonyms with their country of origin, employment types (teacher qualifications) and years of experience as an ALT in Japan (previous teaching experience), educational backgrounds, languages they use, schools they work in the academic year 2015, the number of lessons per week, the numbers of students per class, lesson styles, extra-curricular activities or other related practices they engage in, and the area they live and work.

Table 3.2 Profiles of the seven ALTs

| Participant | Employment type | Education | Languages | Schools | Lessons / week | Students / class | Lesson styles | Extra-curricular activities | Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gary<br>US | NET (CELTA)<br>8 years<br>(T-NET 4 years + NET 4 years) | BA International Studies | English<br>Spanish<br>Japanese | 2 NS,<br>2 ES,<br>2 JHS | 15 | from 8 to 15 | ALT leads | (JALT member) | rural |
| Amy<br>US | NET<br>6 years<br>(JET 4 years + NET 2 years) | BA English<br>MA Library Science | English<br>Spanish<br>Japanese | 5 ES,<br>2 JHS | 20 | from 9 to 70 (usually 20 or 40) | Mixed Team-teaching or ALT leads | (NET Union member) | urban |
| Glen<br>US | JET<br>4 years | BA Japanese Language and Civilisation | English<br>Spanish<br>Japanese | (1 NS),<br>7 ES,<br>2 JHS | 18 | from 6 to 38 | Mixed Team-teaching or ALT/JTE leads | Volunteering at NS | rural |
| John<br>UK | JET (TEFL)<br>4 years | MA Landscape Architecture | English<br>German<br>Japanese<br>(Spanish & French) | 4 ES,<br>1 JHS,<br>(1 SHS) | 30 | from 5 to 19 at ES<br>about 25 at JHS | Mixed Team-teaching or ALT/JTE leads | Football club,<br>Speech contest,<br>Gardening,<br>Volunteering at SHS & community English club | rural |
| Nash<br>NZ | JET<br>3 years | BA Industrial Design | English<br>German<br>Japanese | 1 ES,<br>2 JHS | 20 | from 17 to 34 | Mixed Team-teaching or ALT/JTE leads | Smart club (PC club),<br>Speech contest,<br>Student exchange | rural |
| Tina<br>NZ | JET<br>3 years | BA History | English<br>Japanese | 2 SHS | 15 | 28 or about 40 | Team-teaching or ALT leads | ESS (English Speaking Society),<br>Speech contest | urban |
| Dane<br>US | JET<br>3 years<br>(+ 2 years at JHS in South Korea) | BA English | English<br>Spanish<br>Japanese | 1 SHS | 15 | 20 or about 40 | Team-teaching ALT & JTE lead | ESS, Tea ceremony club,<br>Performing art club | urban |

Table 3.3 shows the summary of differences in three employment types of ALTs. As illustrated in narrative portfolios (Chapter 5 & 6), both NETs and JET ALTs express their concerns about the status of ALTs and legal boundaries. As for T-NETs, the information is based on Flynn (2009) that shows examples of T-NET status, my own experience as a JTE working with T-NETs for more than a decade and the follow-up interview data with a T-NET, Donna. On a side note, the JET programme was launched in 1987, then T-NET and NET system was implemented in 2002.

Table 3.3 Differences in three employment types of ALTs

| Employment Type | Contract period | Contract renewal | Trainings |
|---|---|---|---|
| JET ALTs (under the government sponsored the JET programme) | August - July | Annually (up to 5 years, including accommodation and insurance) | Induction, SDCs, and workshops are mandatory |
| NETs (directly hired by the BoE) | April – March | Annually (usually up to 5 years including insurance, depending on BoE) | Seminars / regular meetings / joint events (depending on BoE) |
| T-NETs (dispatched from temporally staffing agencies by bidding) | April – March (monthly paid) or May – February (School holidays are excluded from payroll) | Annually (no limit, but no health, pension, employment insurance) | Several days initial training, half-day induction (depending on BoE) |

The participants of this study articulated the issues regarding the status of ALTs such as having not enough training opportunities and no career progression. In general, ALT allocations are non-negotiable, and when someone begins working as an ALT, no one knows which school(s) they will be teaching at. Thus, John's case would be considered as an exception because he negotiates about the schools to visit with the local BoE (see Chapter 5.4.2).

The JET programme is a national government supported programme, but the actual implementation and the management are left to the local governments and BoE. It is a good thing because they can modify how to operate the programme and adapt it to the needs of the region. The central government only set the regulations about the employment contract and the length of seminars and conferences. The contents of the SDCs and whether the local Japanese teachers would be included or not are decided by the local BoE. Some ALTs said that the formal trainings are not useful and there are not much to learn. For instance, John suggested that the trainings should include more basic skills for ALTs to become professional English teachers in Japanese school contexts such as how to read the textbooks for students and Japanese language skills. Glen and Tina mentioned that the SDCs tend to lack the perspectives from the local teachers and practical applications of the suggested ideas into actual classroom settings with a sense of continuity. One supervisor from the BoE told me at the SDC that they stopped inviting Japanese teachers because they do not have enough budget to cover their transportation fees. It seems that there are a lot of space to reconsider what kind of opportunities are more helpful for both ALTs and local Japanese teachers for their continuous professional development and what kind of events are manageable for the BoE.

The cases of NETs are different from JET ALTs. The status of NETs is totally different in each context depending on the local BoE as employer. Their training opportunities vary ranging from zero to weekly meetings. In Amy's case, she has regular meetings, training workshops, and joint events called 'English Day' organised by the NETs in the city. At the workshop, she learned how to introduce phonics in ES lessons. Then, she shared the idea with other teachers both at ES and JHS. Gary does not have any training sessions, but he leads *kenkyu-jyugyo* as a mentor. For his own learning, he attends the JALT and organises young learners SIG in the area. The NET programme in Gary's case does not offer any support for his professional development, so he tries to find opportunities on his own accord.

Along with the limited opportunities for teacher trainings, the contract period for both JET ALTs and NETs is limited up to five years by Labor Standards Act. They used to be eligible to work for a maximum of three years, but it is extended to five years in 2007 as Dane pointed out. However, most of the JET ALTs leave after one or two years and not many stay until their fifth year (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Numbers of JET ALTs by years of experience (2015-2016)

| Years of experience | 1st year | 2nd year | 3rd year | 4th year | 5th year | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of JET ALTs | 1806 | 1235 | 732 | 358 | 273 | 4404 |
| % | 41% | 28% | 17% | 8% | 6% | |

As such, Japanese teachers tend to hesitate to build close relationships with ALTs because even though they invest time and effort to foster their working relationship, that collaboration does not last long. Because of the 'glass ceiling', ALTs and JTEs/HRTs should work together with an air of resignation in a sense. The only solution seems to be the overhaul of the whole ALT system in higher level.

Again, the aim of this qualitative narrative study is not to conclude with any kind of generalisations since every situation is different. However, I could observe some tendencies and typicality during the fieldwork and analysis process by dealing with seven different cases. Indeed, it is impossible to report all the findings in detail due to the limited space. Yet, I hope this research can contribute to grasp the wider pictures of the work and learning of ALTs.

Throughout the data collection, I was very lucky to have a lot of opportunities to get to know so many teachers and staffs in different school contexts. Some ALTs were based on the urban schools, while others were in a rural area. Teachers in a rural area commute by car, and those who are in the urban area use public transportation because they are not allowed to come to school by car without having any special considerations. The school size varies and the school type or the level of the school was also different. I visited NS with pupils aged normally from two/three to six, ES (pupils aged 6-12), JHS (students aged 12-15) and SHS (students aged 15-18). During my school visits and through the attendance of the seminars and conferences, I met many ALTs, Japanese teachers (both HRTs and JTEs), and some supervisors working at the BoE. Especially in the second phase, I was able to have chances to get many small stories or 'conversational narratives' (Georgakopoulou, 2006) from my participants and others. The actual procedure of the data collection and analysis is explained in the next section.

## 3.4 Data collection procedures and methods

As briefly described in the previous section, I conducted a longitudinal narrative research through the two consecutive phases. Ethnographic approach is taken because this study aims at exploring the teacher learning and the process of language teachers' professional identity formation in CoPs.

> "Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical – they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social, material and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. They are core and peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple and hybrid, and they are foregroundned and backgrounded. And LTIs change, short-term and over time – discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in classrooms, institutions, and online." (Barkhuizen, 2017: 4)

Along with the multiple case study approach introduced in Chapter 3.2.1, the selection of the data collection methods was also informed by the ethnographic approach explained in Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 3): "ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry". Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) advocate the importance of the reflexive character of the social research by claiming that social researchers are part of the social world they study. They state that "[t]he concept of reflexivity acknowledges that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them" (ibid.: 15). By taking in such standpoint, the research has a flexible and negotiable design which had been developed through communication with each participant and others who involve in the CoPs.

The process to get the ethical approval, data collection methods, and the detailed procedure of the two phases are shown in the following sections.

### 3.4.1 Research ethics (ERGO process)

This project was first launched in October 2014. Since then, the researcher started working on the process to get ethical approval from the University of Southampton research committee by completing the risk assessment form, submitting the research protocol, and designing an online questionnaire survey. They were successfully approved in February 2015 (ERGO reference number: 13902). The duration of the data collection was from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. As Hammersley and Traianou (2012) illustrate, it is important to be fully aware of the possible ethical issues to conduct qualitative research and to protect participants' privacy by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity because the researchers need to work closely in collaboration with participants. The participant information sheet (Appendix C) and the consent form (Appendix D) were also prepared to give sufficient information to the participants. All the names of the participants are replaced with pseudonyms and all the data are stored in a password-protected laptop.

### 3.4.2 Data collection methods and instruments

As instruments of narrative research, many different tools have been used such as field notes of shared experience, journal records, interviews, storytelling, letter writing, documents, metaphors, picturing (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) or reflective diaries, e-journal, weekly blog, digital audio recorded self-reflective narrative (Martel & Wang, 2014). I planned to collect data using four instruments: 1) an online questionnaire survey in pre-stage of the research to gain general information about current ALTs such as their educational background and teaching experiences and find out potential participants for further investigation, 2) classroom and school-based observations to share the same school landscapes with my participants and attend the training seminars and/or conferences together when possible, 3) reflective journals as a series of stories that the ALTs want to share with me, mainly about their work experiences, 4) semi-structured interviews to listen to their voices and thoughts about their learning as teachers.

All the teachers shape their professional identity through practice reflecting their 'identity in practice' (Kanno & Stuart, 2011) and various angles are necessary to investigate the complex learning experiences of teachers. The reason to do the series of observations is because the ALTs who I interviewed in my former study emphasised that "every situation is different" (Tsujino, 2014). I felt the necessity to actually observe the ALTs' day-to-day practice at schools and experience the training opportunities with them, diving into the multiple CoPs where they participate. The experience of fieldwork made it possible to understand the contexts well and

identify unique small stories of ALTs. However, the opportunity of observations was limited because of the accessibility. Also, post-observation interviews/conversations did not always provide enough information to collect the participants' own reflections on their teaching practice. To obtain the supporting stories in-between big and small, I assumed that an instrument like digital reflective journals (Martel, 2013) would be a sound instrument for my research. Depending on the participants' preference, reflective journals can be collected in either audio or written form. In this respect of the research design, I negotiated with my participants. In fact, all the seven participants chose to send me their reflections in a written form (Word documents or blog posts). I will show the excerpts later in the analysis chapters (Chapter 5 & 6).

### 3.4.3 Overview of the data collection procedure

The school year in Japan starts from April, and normally all the ALTs are allocated to the school by the middle of May, except for new ALTs on the JET programme who usually arrive in August and start working from September (see Table 3.3). Therefore, it is reasonable to start the questionnaire survey to collect the data about current ALTs who work in the school year 2015 from April. To do so, I got ethical approval through Ethics and Research Governance Online (ERGO) by the university ethics committee on 24$^{th}$ February 2015 [ID: 13902] and conducted a pilot study for the questionnaire in early April to make sure the online survey (iSurvey) worked well. As explained in the previous section, the online questionnaire also has a function to find out potential participants for the second phase of this study, and a follow-up interview was also conducted online in the first phase, in June 2015. The second phase is multiple case studies which started from July 2015 until the end of March 2016. The overview of the data collection procedure is presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Overview of the data collection procedure

| Instruments | Time Frame | Contents |
|---|---|---|
| Questionnaire (preliminary online survey) | April - July 2015 | Using iSurvey to gather general information about current ALTs and to look for potential participants |
| Observations: field-notes (including informal conversations), audio recordings of lessons, curriculum and other artefacts such as handouts, course materials etc. | July 2015 – January 2016 | Observations are arranged to visit each participant at least twice during the fieldwork, trying to visit as many schools as possible to observe the realities of ALTs including both activities and practices inside and outside of classroom. When possible, I attended the training seminars, conferences, and other events for ALTs to have the same experience as my participants. |
| Reflective journals (oral or written) | June 2015 – March 2016 | I asked participants to audio record or write their own reflection of learning or new findings and leave comments on their work as ALTs and send it to me when they have something to tell me. Sometimes I had personal communication via emails. |
| Narrative interviews (semi-structured, for approximately 60 min.) | 1st: June 2015 2nd: March 2016 | 1st interview is a follow-up of the questionnaire answers and mainly ask questions about the participants' life history and their experience as both students and teachers. 2nd interview is a wrap-up to see their changes and development as teaching professionals and how they feel about the relationship with local teachers, students and other people in the local community. It includes the questions about how they feel after take part in this project and how they have been learning through working as ALTs. |

Figure 3.1 shows the procedure of the whole data collection from April 2015 to March 2016 with the number of participants in each step in the form of a flow chart.

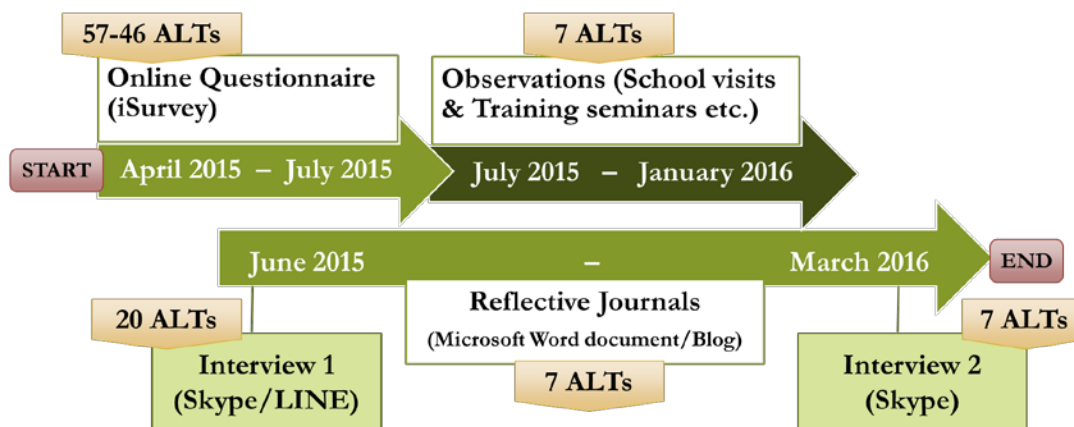


Figure 3.1 Data collection procedure

### 3.4.4 Phase 1 [April 2015 – July 2015]

The online questionnaire was designed with eighty-eight questions in four sections (see Appendix E). It was piloted with several colleagues in the same department and published online via iSurvey in April 2015. The survey was available online from April to July 2015. As demonstrated in Chapter 2.5.5, the survey items were set up to capture a glimpse of the ALTs' diverse backgrounds, perceptions about teacher knowledge and knowledge landscapes. Section 1 seeks biographical information, educational backgrounds, their experience as ALTs/teachers and working conditions. Section 2 and Section 3 ask their perceptions about teacher knowledge and knowledge landscapes as explained in Chapter 2.6.2. Section 4 gives respondents a space to leave a comment and their contact information if they feel okay to be interviewed later.

Items in Section 2 and Section 3 were based on what Shulman (1986: 9) illustrates in three categories of teachers' content knowledge: subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge. Subject matter knowledge for language teachers includes personal language skills and knowledge about language and culture. Pedagogic content knowledge consists of various language teaching methods and techniques and procedural knowledge in teaching such as lesson planning and delivery skills, classroom management skills and assessment techniques. Curricular knowledge is related to contextual knowledge such as knowledge about curriculum, students' needs and the school context. Every three types of knowledge can be learned as both received knowledge and experiential knowledge (Wallace, 1991). I utilised those conceptualisations together with my contextual knowledge to set the survey items. The wording of the open-ended question in Section 3 "What is your most memorable experience as an ALT in Japan?" was based on the claim by Atkinson and Coffey (2003: 118): "Memory is a cultural phenomenon, and is therefore a collective one. What is "memorable" is a function of the cultural categories that shape what is thinkable and what is not, what is counted as appropriate, what is valued, what is noteworthy and so on." As we know, memorable and emotional experiences can bring a huge impact on our personal and professional lives, whether it is positive or negative. Sometimes life lessons are learnt after several months or years past when we have opportunities to look back some specific moments and link them back into our complex cognitive sense-making process. Hence, the stories of lived experience could give us valuable insights about the process of learning for growth and/or changes in our attitudes and perceptions towards the world around us, including various CoPs that we engage in.

I prepared a covering letter (Appendix A) for the potential respondents and it was advertised through former co-workers, family and friends in Japan. The consent was given by each respondent by clicking the start button to answer the questionnaire. As a result of snowball sampling (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981) making use of personal contacts, I got fifty-seven respondents in Section 1, forty-nine in Section 2, and forty-six in Section 3 and 4. I emailed the respondents who left their contact information in Section4 and arranged a follow-up interview in June 2015 with twenty ALTs. I chose to conduct all the interviews online via Skype or LINE for convenience. The use of online platform can give participants control (Hanna, 2012) and this is part of my research agenda to leave the choice for each participant about the research medium for participation. The physical distance and time zone differences between the researcher and the participants are one of the reasons for the use of online interviews. All the interviews were audio-recorded with a digital audio recorder. Majority of the interviews were online face-to-face interviews utilising the camera function. For the technical reasons, mainly because of the weak Internet connection, we were not able to turn the camera on during two interviews, so they were voice-only. I had nineteen interviews via Skype (one joint interview with two ALTs), and one via LINE.

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews in the first phase is to follow up the questionnaire survey and clarify the reasons behind their answers to understand the circumstances where the respondent ALTs are and issues they are facing (see the interview prompts for 1st phase in Appendix H). Interview questions were modified to adapt each ALT's situation, according to their questionnaire answers. At the end of the interview, interviewees were asked if it is possible for them to take part in the research project further by sending the researcher reflective journals and allowing me to observe their lessons at schools. To make things clear, I sent participant information sheet for the second phase (Appendix C) to twelve ALTs who gave me a positive response. Consequently, I was fortunate to have seven ALTs who would participate in the second phase.

### 3.4.5 Phase 2 [July 2015 – March 2016]

After exchanging several emails with the seven ALTs who kindly agreed to take part in the second phase of this research project, the researcher started to contact with schools and supervisors at the BoE to get permissions for my school visits and observations. I wrote another covering letter for each school and the BoE (Appendix A) and sent it with the participant information sheet to explain about my research project and to get their consent. I managed to

get access to the schools, and I was allowed to attend the lessons, training seminars, conferences and other events organised by the BoEs. During the observations scheduled from July 2015 to January 2016, I took fieldnotes using a traditional notebook with pencil to keep the record of the ALTs' teaching practices in class and some informal everyday conversations with them and with other ALTs, HRTs at NS and ES, JTEs at JHS and SHS, school principals, vice-principals, other subject teachers, a school librarian, a school clerk, supervisors in BoE, coordinators in the town/city hall, family members, and friends as local residents. In this way, I gathered small stories when I had opportunities to talk to the members of various CoPs in different levels (see Figure 2.1) to understand more about the landscapes of practice that each participant is engaging in. I also sketched the layout of the teachers' room and the classroom because "[t]he physical layout of a work setting is an important dimension of learning, since apprentices get a great deal from observing others and being observed" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 78). When it was allowed, I turned on the digital audio-recorder during the lessons to keep the record. As for Supporting documents, school timetable, curriculum, syllabus, coursebooks, documents such as handbooks or presentation slides, photos, and other teaching materials are collected during fieldwork for reference, because "[t]he social science reformists, including narrative researchers, held that social science needed to explore and develop knowledge about areas of the human realm that fell outside the limits of what had conventionally been thought to be accessible to validation. These areas included people's experienced meanings of their life events and activities" (Polkinghorne, 2007: 484).

Following the instruction on the participant information sheet including examples of the topic of reflective journals adapted from J. C. Richards and Farrell (2005: 76-77) (Appendix C), participants sent me reflective journals in occasions from June 2015 to March 2016. One ALT used online blog and sent the link of the website to me, and others sent their reflections in Word documents. To wrap-up the longitudinal narrative research, I interviewed with each participant via Skype again in March 2016 and these online face-to-face interviews were also recorded with a digital audio recorder (see the interview prompts for 2$^{nd}$ phase in Appendix I).

### 3.4.6 List of data set: 'field texts'

Thanks to the kind help and support from the participants and other teachers, I was able to get the huge data set through a-year-long data collection. The list of data set shown in Table 3.6 covers almost all kinds of data listed in Connelly and Clandinin (1990: 5):

> Data can be in the form of field notes of the shared experience, journal records, interview transcripts, others' observations, story telling, letter writing, autobiographical writing, documents such as class plans and newsletters, and writing such as rules, principles, pictures, metaphors, and personal philosophies. … The sense of the whole is built from a rich data source with a focus on the concrete particularities of life that create powerful narrative tellings.

My field texts also include narratives in the form of conversational narratives (Norrick, 2000) and narratives-in-interaction (Georgakopoulou, 2006). During the data collection period, I had been keeping these as memos in my fieldnotes chronologically. In addition, I stored emails with my participants and others such as supervisors at BoEs, school principals, and vice-principals. The record of observations and school visits is presented in Appendix J. The audio-recorded interview data were transcribed manually by the researcher, stored in Microsoft Word documents, and coded to find themes using the highlighting function. Then, all the data were put into the form of 'narrative portfolio', which is regarded as the synonym for 'research texts' (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), 'thick description' (Holliday, 2007), or 'narrative form' (Benson, 2013), having the similar function with vignettes in Wenger (1998) or dramatized narratives in Nelson (2013). However, 'narrative portfolio' could be positioned as a modified version which contains more information including not only written and oral narratives but also multimodal narratives (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) to deal with the complex nature of narrative research. After several common themes were identified among seven narrative portfolios (see Chapter 3.5.4), cross-case analyses were carried out for further discussion (see Chapter 6.4). This newly introduced analysis approach is discussed in detail in the following section.

Table 3.6 List of data set

| Participant ID | Employment type | Interview 1 | Interview 2 | School type | School visits | No. of lessons | Data sources | Training/seminars | Data sources | Other data sources | No. of RJ | Words in RJ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gary<br>GM8M, US | NET (CELTA) | #8 9/6/2015<br>65min | #7 29/3/2016<br>90min | NS, ES, JHS | 2015/10/13,14,16<br>2016/1/21,22 | 14 | 12 audio recordings, 40 photos, notes, 1 handout | none | none | school timetable, ES English curriculum | 15 | 12805 words |
| Amy<br>AO6F, US | NET | #9 10/6/2015<br>41min | #4 24/3/2016<br>55min | ES, JHS | 2015/7/15, 9/4, 9/11, 11/19, 12/9 | 19 | 11 audio recordings, 8 photos, notes, 5 handouts | 2-day seminar 2015/8/3-4, 1-day event 2015/11/14 (+preparation 2015/8/24) | handouts, notes, 18 photos | 4 lesson plans | 3 doc. (diary) | 21444 words |
| John<br>JK4M, UK | JET (TEFL) | #12<br>13/6/2015<br>71min | #3 17/3/2016<br>50min | ES, JHS, (SHS) | 2015/11/4,6,30, 12/1,2 | 23 | 23 audio recordings, 14 photos, notes, 4 handouts | 3-day orientation 2015/8/17-19, 2-day SDC 2015/12/3-4 | 6 audio recordings, 2 handbooks, notes, presentation slides | BOE English program, ES curriculum, halloween materials | 10 | 20156 words |
| Glen<br>GY4M, US | JET | #14<br>15/6/2015<br>57min | #5 25/3/2016<br>60min | (NS), ES, JHS | 2015/9/15,16, 11/10,11 | 11 | 10 audio recordings, 1 photo, notes, 3 handouts | 2-day SDC 2015/11/12-13 | 2 audio recordings, presentation slides, notes, 12 photos | workshop handout, phonics presentation slides | 8 | 5707words |
| Dane<br>DH3M, US | JET<br>(2 years teaching in South Korea) | #19<br>24/6/2015<br>62min | #2 16/3/2016<br>30min | SHS | 2015/10/8, 2016/1/15 | 3 | 2 audio recordings, notes, 1 handout, 1 copy of textbook | (2-day SDC but could not attend) | none | 3 listning test scripts, 6 handouts, emails | 4 | 2671 words |
| Nash<br>NK3M, NZ | JET | #11<br>11/6/2015<br>46min | #1 16/3/2016<br>30min | ES, JHS | 2015/10/30, 2016/1/19 | 7 (+1) | 8 audio recordings, notes, 1 handout | 2-day SDC 2015/11/17-18 | 1 audio recording, notes, presentation slides, handbook | copy of STEP test's interview questions | 2 | 2334 words |
| Tina<br>TK3F, NZ | JET | #20<br>25/6/2015<br>37min | #6 28/3/2016<br>55min | SHS | 2015/12/11, 2016/1/27 | 5 | 5 audio recordings, 2 photos, notes, 4 handouts | 2-day SDC 2015/11/17-18 | handbook, notes | 9 handouts, 7 lesson plans | 2 | 920 words |
| | | Ave. 54min | Ave. 53min | | Total 82 lessons | | | *SDC: Skills Development Conference (mandatory annual conference for JET ALTs) | | | | |
| | (Interview1 Ave. 50min with 20 ALTs) | | | *NS: Nursery School, ES: Elementary School, JHS: Junior High School, SHS: Senior High School | | | | | | | *RJ: Reflective Journals | |
| *Participant ID: Pseudonym, Initial + Location + Years of experience + Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## 3.5 Data analysis and interpretation

"Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (Stake, 1995: 71). This study employs the combination of 'categorical aggregation' and 'direct interpretation' to search for correspondence and patterns in the data. Aggregating impressions and identifying consistency within certain conditions by constant winnowing to discover the essences from the huge data set, the researcher tries to provide 'naturalistic generalisation' (Stake, 1995). According to Stake, "[n]aturalistic generalisations are conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves" (ibid.:85). He claims that case researchers need to consider not only how to provide the researcher's propositional generalisations or assertions but how to provide input into the reader's naturalistic generalisations when they analyse and interpret the data. The idea corresponds to 'narrative knowledgeing' introduced in Chapter 3.2.2.

As demonstrated earlier, this is a qualitative narrative research, analysing narratives provided by the participants in different forms such as spoken, written, and multimodal narratives including photos, handouts and other materials. I would follow the two different approaches proposed by Polkinghorne (1995) for my analyses: 'analysis of narratives' and 'narrative analysis.' For the first phase data analysis, I mainly used 'analysis of narratives' to identify general themes or concept presented in narratives, and the set of data in second phase was analysed in 'narrative analysis' to unify the stories told by the participants and reconfigure their narratives as a coherent whole. To do so, I would like to introduce a new approach to present my analyses in 'narrative portfolios' composed as integrated multimodal thick descriptions. From the ethnographic point of view, I examined something typical in the first phase data, whereas I tried to look for significant and telling stories in the second phase data. The data were gathered collaboratively with the participants and analysed in not linear way but iterative way. I analysed my data through 'negotiated analysis' and create "categories and analysis developed by researcher with input of participants" (Freeman, 1996: 372) in the belief that "[a] narrative account, a story, a chronological presentation, personalistic description, emphasis on time and place provide rich ingredients for vicarious experience" (Stake, 1995: 87-88). The process of making field text into research text (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) is very important for narrative inquirers, and I intend to provide 'thick description' (Holliday, 2007), which could add validity to the qualitative research studies, by taking the carefully organised processes.

### 3.5.1 Researcher identity in narrative inquiry

There is a need to mention the role of researcher in narrative inquiry. As Canagarajah (1996) argues, researchers' voices are usually disregarded from research report. However, especially in narrative inquiry, researcher identity usually plays a very important role because identities of the researcher and the participants influence each other through collaborative work by sharing ideas and engaging in the particular social settings together (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006; Polkinghorne, 1995). J. D. Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 20) express it as follows:

> narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social.

As such, we need to address the matter of researcher identity to answer the fact that "there has been little focus on the identity of the researcher, an important stakeholder with considerable power, influence, and investment in the field" (Norton & Early, 2011: 416).

They utilise small stories (Bamberg, 2007) and illuminate four identity positions of themselves as researchers in narrative inquiry in Uganda: researcher as international guest, researcher as collaborative team member, researcher as teacher, researcher as teacher educator. As Norton and Early (2011: 417) claim, "there is a great need to better understand how the relationship between researchers and teachers is co-constructed" in order to explore the complexities in the process of teacher identity formation.

As described in Chapter 1, the researcher has an identity as a SHS JTE, teaching English in the Japanese school contexts and it makes possible to share the contextual knowledge with participant ALTs. Moreover, I visited the schools where the seven ALTs worked to observe their lessons and attended the meetings, seminars/conferences and other activities outside the school with them to experience the same landscapes in multiple CoPs. The fieldwork gave me the opportunities to live in the same milieus with my participants for a while, and it enabled me as the researcher to retell their narratives in the form of narrative portfolios presented in Chapter 5 and 6. It was such an eye-opening experience because I only knew the SHS contexts in an urban area without having experience of teaching in ES and JHS settings. Also, my own experience of AoO both in frontstage as a student and from backstage provided by my mother as an ES teacher helped me to digest the information about the different school contexts and to understand the

narratives of ALTs. As a researcher, I strongly believe that no one can understand the 'stories to live by' without having experience of actually 'live' in the landscapes of narratives.

Additionally, it is crucial to note that "[m]ost important is the attitude of the inquirer toward participants, an attitude that will foster learning" (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 9). I actually experienced this during my fieldwork. One of my participants clearly articulated that he felt changes in his identity as a teacher through participating in my research project. I also felt that the research impacts my own identity not only as a junior researcher but also as an English teacher. Situated learning happens in the relationships with the researcher and participants as well as with the other members of the CoPs. It might be possible to say that the research itself could create small CoPs where the researcher and participants mutually engage in. Therefore, I will draw my researcher identity in the analyses and followed discussion.

> Narrative inquirers cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into participants' experiences, their own experiences as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process. … As narrative inquirers engage in inquiry, they realize that they, too, are positioned on this landscape and both shape and are shaped by the landscape. (J. D. Clandinin, 2006a: 47)

The next section demonstrates how I address the analyses and interpretation to report the narratives of ALTs.

### 3.5.2 Analysis of narratives, narrative analysis and 'narrative portfolio'

To answer four research questions stated in Chapter 1.5, the researcher utilised two approaches to analyse narratives as field texts, 'analysis of narratives' and 'narrative analysis' to composed 'narrative portfolios' as research texts for further discussion and exploration. The main aims of the analysis process are to identify multiple CoPs where each ALT involves and to find out what kind of learning happened through the participation in the CoPs in different levels presented in Figure 2.1, trying to examine the mechanisms and functions of multiple CoPs by following the trajectories of ALTs. Narrative analysis is mainly employed for interviews and reflective journals with triangulation from the data in fieldnotes and other sources, and analysis of narratives is used as a complement for the questionnaire survey to set the ground of the research. Initially, the researcher planned to use the software called NVivo to support the analysis procedure, but it was seldom useful to process the huge data set composed of complex intertwined multimodal narratives as listed in Table 3.6. The researcher stored most of the narrative data in either

Microsoft Word/Excel files or MP3 audio files along with the handwritten memos in three fieldnotes, photos as digital images, PowerPoint slides, handbooks, handouts, a DVD, etc. I found it reasonable to analyse the data by processing my own experience in the narrative landscapes because "[r]esearchers studying human learning and interaction began to look beyond "behavior" alone to account for what they observed" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006: 12).

Analysis of narrative is "the procedures of coding for themes, categorizing these, and looking for patterns of association among them" (Barkhuizen, 2011: 401). For analysis of narrative, "data (stories) are collected from research participants or subjects and the narrative data is analysed for common themes, metaphors, plotlines, and so on to identify general themes or concept" (J. D. Clandinin, 2006b: xv). In turn, "[w]hat Polkinghorne's (1995) narrative analysis does is configure the various bits of data content into a coherent whole – in other words, the outcome of researcher narrative knowledging is a story" (Barkhuizen, 2015: 100). In narrative analysis, "experiential data are collected and the research aim is to organize the data to create a narrative with a plot that unifies the data" (J. D. Clandinin, 2006b: xv). Indeed, the distinction between analysis of narrative and narrative analysis is not always clear and it seems difficult to employ a fixed systematic analysis approach in the narrative research. As Benson (2013: 255) argues, "we would have to categorize many studies as 'hybrid', involving both 'narrative analysis and 'analysis of narratives'." As such, the analysis process of this narrative research is also positioned as hybrid.

The online questionnaire survey data in Excel were analysed to explore the diverse background of the ALTs and the tendencies in their perceptions about teacher knowledge and English education in Japan. I calculated the mean of each item with Likert-scale in Section 2 and 3 (see Table 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4). Due to the limited space, the summary of the findings is reported in Chapter 4.2 and the full results are put in Appendix F. The answers to the open-ended question were copied to a Word document and coded with highlighting functions under the five major categories (Appendix G): 1) Where (home/private space as nano CoPs, class/lessons as micro CoPs, schools as meso CoPs, BoE/other schools as macro CoPs, society/organisations as mega CoP), 2) When (past, present, future), 3) Who (students, Japanese teachers, ALTs, etc.), 4) What (types of events/activities), 5) How (positive/negative emotions/evaluations). I analysed them to look into the three commonplaces introduced in Chapter 3.2.4 through analysis of narratives, and the results are shown in Chapter 4.2.3. The follow-up interviews with twenty ALTs were transcribed by the researcher in Word and analysed through narrative analysis to explore the issues that help to answer the research questions such as the influence of formal teacher trainings on the ALTs' teaching practices, the aspects of their professional identities, the features of apprenticeship including both AoO and craft model apprenticeship, the mechanisms and

functions of CoPs and their relationships with the other members. The findings from the interviews are demonstrated in Chapter 4.3. The data from first phase is utilised as the basis of further investigation in second phase of the study to construct narrative portfolios.

Jaatinen (2013) uses the term 'narrative portfolio' as an approach and a tool for reflection in language teacher education. "Student teachers collect and produce narrative material that is reflected upon, analysed, evaluated, selected, presented and "published" by giving well-grounded reasons and motives for their choices and action" (ibid.: 107). According to Jaatinen (2013), "the portfolio is a personal remembrance, personal memories of one's pedagogical studies, a certain special period in one's life with its people, happenings, etc." (ibid.: 108) and "the portfolio consisting of various types of narratives is a collaborative document, a mutually constructed story of the lives of a student teacher, her or his peers, supervising teachers and significant others" (ibid.: 111). There is another example of the use of portfolios in Jones and Shelton (2011: 21-22):

> Portfolios are rich, contextual, highly personalized documentaries of one's learning journey. They contain purposefully organised documentation that clearly demonstrates specific knowledge, skills, dispositions and accomplishments achieved over time. Portfolios represent connections made between actions and beliefs, thinking and doing, and evidence and criteria. They are a medium for reflection through which the builder constructs meaning, makes the learning process transparent and learning visible, crystallises insights, and anticipates future direction. (…) Portfolios are the embodiment of holistic learning. (…) In all cases, (…), they facilitate learners' exploring of questions and addressing of problems that are complex, multifaceted, reflective of builders' value systems, and embedded in the sociocultural environment.

Although there is a difference in the ways the narrative portfolios are created whether it is composed by the narrator self or by the researcher as a third person, I would like to utilise the idea of portfolio in this narrative research. Indeed, the researcher identity (Chapter 3.5.1) is reflected in the interpretations and the retold stories in narrative portfolios. As Polkinghorne (2007: 483) points out, "[a]n interpretation is not simply a summary or précis of a storied text. It is a commentary that uncovers and clarifies the meaning of the text" in narrative research.

As explained in Chapter 3.2.4, the narrative researchers must be sensible about the claim of validation. Unfortunately, however, the researcher did not have chance to get back to participants for the check whether my interpretations truly reflected their original intentions due to the limited timeframe for the data collection. Still, I believe that the awareness of this limitation could help to minimise the negative effects in composing narrative portfolios.

### 3.5.3 How to compose 'narrative portfolio'

As an analytic tool, 'narrative portfolio' is introduced in this research because there is a necessity of a way to integrate all the different forms and modes of narratives provided by my participants into one coherent narrative. "What distinguishes narrative inquirers is their understanding that understanding the complexity of the individual, local, and particular provides a surer basis for our relationships and interaction with other humans" and "their desire to understand rather than control and predict the human world" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006: 30). In addition, "[a]ny given attempt to analyse a form of learning through legitimate peripheral participation must involve analysis of the political and social organization of that form, its historical development, and the effects of both of these on sustained possibilities for learning" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 64). That is why I came to reconstruct the research texts into a form of 'narrative portfolio.' In the present study, narrative portfolio is defined as a unified coherent text composed from the range of documents, a varied set of photographs and pieces of creative work intended to demonstrate a person's ability or experience for narrative knowledging (Barkhuizen, 2011).

Based on the findings from first phase, I conducted narrative analysis to identify telling episodes from the scope of apprenticeship, AoO, and mechanisms and functions of different CoPs, examining the data obtained from fieldwork, reflective journals and interviews. The following list of indicators that a CoP has formed in Wenger (1998: 125-126) is considered as a guide for narrative portfolio analysis because it is to investigate the functions and mechanisms of CoPs that support teacher learning for ALTs.

> 1) sustained mutual relationships — harmonious or conflictual, 2) shared ways of engaging in doing things together, 3) the rapid flow of information and propagation of innovation, 4) absence of introductory preambles, as if conversations and interactions were merely the continuation of an ongoing process, 5) very quick setup of a problem to be discussed, 6) substantial overlap in participants' descriptions of who belongs, 7) knowing what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise, 8) mutually defining identities, 9) the ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products, 10) specific tools, representations, and other artifacts, 11) local lore, shared stories, inside jokes, knowing laughter, 12) jargon and shortcuts to communication as well as the ease of producing new ones, 13) certain styles recognized as displaying membership, 14) a shared discourse reflecting a certain perspective on the world.

I did not employ any fixed frames to compose narrative portfolios, but I put telling episodes of each participant in the chronological order, and at the same time, from nano to mega level of CoPs to the utmost by tracing their learning trajectories through participation in multiple CoPs to ensure the coherency. Then, I conducted cross-case analyses like in Kanno and Stuart (2011) after composed a narrative portfolio for each participant. The narrative portfolios and the findings from cross-case analyses are presented in Chapter 5 and 6.

### 3.5.4 Themes identified in the data

The themes identified from narrative analysis are listed in this section briefly. The details and further discussions are presented in the following chapters.

From the first phase interview data (Appendix H & K), the themes related to 1) ALTs' professional identity; 2) their legitimate participation in CoPs from nano to mega level; 3) features of apprenticeship; and 4) challenges for ALTs to get on inbound trajectories and obtain membership in CoPs were found out. Chapter 4.3.1 illuminates the ALTs' professional identity in relation to their actual-selves, ideal-selves, ought-selves and 'furnished imagination' (Kiely & Askham, 2012). The narratives of ALTs revealed the two most important characteristics for their brittle profession, being patient and flexible, and named contextual knowledge and Japanese language skills as expertise for their job, expressing both negative and positive opinions about teacher training for ALTs. Some mentioned their iridescent identity as ALTs, assigned different role identities in different levels of schools where each teacher, either HRT or JTE, has different expectations on what ALTs bring/provide in class. These aspects link to the narrative landscapes of ALTs such as the challenges that itinerant ALTs are facing including 'glass walls' as sociocultural gaps presented in Chapter 4.3.4. As for the ALTs' legitimate participation in CoPs, their narratives imply their participation in all the five levels of CoPs from nano to mega level in Figure 2.1 (Chapter 4.3.2). Indeed, there is no clear boundary between CoPs and they are overlapping with each other in most cases, sometimes sharing the same definitions of competence. Nano CoPs as sites of individual/private learning for ALTs away from workplace in their private time/space can be observed with their friends, both local people and other ALTs, and family members whether they are in Japan or in their home country. In some cases, online CoPs utilising SNS can be in the category of nano CoPs. Also, AoO from backstage with family members could be understood as an example of nano CoPs. Micro CoPs are often formed making one class as a unit, where ALTs can be a member of a learning community with their co-teachers (HRTs/JTEs) and students. I examine the patterns of team-teaching in the ALTs' narratives referring to Tajino and Tajino

(2000), investigating the differences in degree of their participation in micro CoPs. The members of a subject department of the school can also create micro CoPs for their learning. In the five-level model of CoPs, meso CoPs consist of all the regular members within school, including students, teachers, and other staff members at the particular school context. The learning of meso CoPs happens within the community as in micro CoPs. Whereas in macro and mega CoPs, the learning can be shared in organisational level. Macro CoPs can include ALTs, students, teachers across schools and/or supervisors at the BoE in the city/town or prefectural level. The participants of *kenkyu-jyugyo* (open-lessons for observations), the SDCs, and seminars or conferences in the town/city/prefectural level who get together from different school contexts can form macro CoPs. Of course, the concept of mega CoPs stands for national or worldwide level organisations such as MEXT as a part of national government organisations or NPOs like JALT which call for members worldwide. Chapter 4.3.3 reports the features of apprenticeship in ALTs' learning: 1) AoO in front stage and from backstage, 2) craft model apprenticeship in different patterns that ALTs act as mentors or mentees, 3) 'remote apprenticeship' among ALTs that predecessors provide learning opportunities for their successors.

Similarly, the data from the second phase were analysed to delineate the patterns and themes to answer my research questions (Chapter 1.5). Seven narrative portfolios presented from Chapter 5.1 to 6.3 were composed along with the themes identified in the first phase data in the belief that "[m]ultiple cases strengthen the results by replicating the pattern-matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory" (Tellis, 1997: 4). The researcher tries to delineate the identity in learning, the functions and features of apprenticeship for ALTs who are in different professional phases, different employment types (JET/NET), different regions (rural/urban), and different school levels (ES, JHS, and SHS). In summary, CoPs in nano and micro level seem to work quite well for the learning of ALTs in seven cases (learning as individual). While in meso and macro level, learning as a community seems to be a bit difficult to achieve for some ALTs who are in the early stages of their career as an ALT. In mega level, I would say learning as organisation is rarely functioning because even ALTs who are self-motivated and devoting themselves to bring something into their schools or classrooms have no choice but to leave the position after a few years in the current system. Most of them take outward trajectory from the CoPs even if they have certain membership in the school-based CoPs. It seems nearly impossible for ALTs to become a core member of the CoPs in longer-term and build their career because they are 'foreigners'. The marginalisation in macro/mega CoPs is there and ALTs are destined to take outbound trajectories from the very beginning.

Looking at their in-service work, the ALTs who work in ES or SHS tend to have more opportunities for their professional development as a language teacher without having specific

curriculum or textbooks to follow, being able to take leading role in the ES/SHS classes. In terms of the localised competences, both English and Japanese are playing important roles in their communication and successful learning. On one hand, ALTs sometimes have to deal with the classroom management, and they need Japanese language skills to maintain healthy learning environment. To make teaching plans or materials together with Japanese teachers, they should have a sufficient level of both languages on the other. However, sometimes issues come up even after the local teachers and ALTs overcome the language barrier. These issues were mostly caused by the unique social/cultural norms in Japan and lower emotional and social intelligence of the teachers or teaching staffs in question. Having greater cultural awareness and higher emotional and social intelligence, showing respect with each other (e.g. calling each other 'sensei') are very important to maintain productive learning environment and relationships in the CoPs.

# Chapter 4 Narrative inquiry: Online questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews in 1st phase

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data from an online questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews to capture the ALTs' personal backgrounds and their perceptions about teacher knowledge, learning as ALTs, and English language education in Japan. The data from first phase contribute to compose 'narrative portfolios' from the second phase data. The main aims here are to gain insights about the broader picture of ALTs' professional identity and to reveal the features of apprenticeship and the functions of CoPs in their learning. The findings from first phase are positioned as threads of the warp of a tapestry, which cannot be seen from the surface but play an important role to set the grounds for this study, used in combination with narrative portfolios which are considered as the weft to weave the whole narrative research as one tapestry of collective history of ALTs' learning.

Firstly, the overview of the questionnaire results is displayed, including ALTs' biographical information, language and educational backgrounds, working experiences (Chapter 4.2.1), and their opinions about current situation at different levels of schools in Japan through closed-response items; some of them are with 7-point or 5-point Likert scales (Chapter 4.2.2). The set of questions and the whole results are shown in Appendix E and F. The written narratives in the open-ended answers identify the most memorable experiences of ALTs and they illuminate the possibilities of the situated learning that happened when, where and with whom (Chapter 4.2.3). Also, the spoken narratives from semi-structured interviews complement the answers in the questionnaire, giving more details about the real-world experience of ALTs (Chapter 4.3).

## 4.2 Summary of the questionnaire answers

### 4.2.1 Overview of the questionnaire result

The respondents of the questionnaire survey were ALTs working in the school year of 2015. Forty-six ALTs (26 female and 20 male) completed four sections with eighty-eight questions among fifty-seven people (36 female and 21 male) attempted to but did not finish. The survey website was accessed by one hundred sixty-nine people in total during it was available online

from April 30th to July 1st, 2015. The average time taken to complete the survey was twenty-seven minutes, in the range of the minimum eight minutes to the maximum four hours thirteen minutes. As demonstrated in Chapter 3.2.4, this is one of the advantages of an online survey that respondents can take as much time as they need. Also, it is possible to encourage them to participate in the survey even when they just have inconsecutive free time or limited access to the Internet. In my view, this highly convenient accessibility and the secured anonymity of the online questionnaire helped me enormously to reach out to the potential respondents, especially in the situation where having no choice but taking the snow-ball sampling strategy. In the total of seventeen thousand seven ALTs working in Japan as of 2015, the number of respondents is rather small, but at least I got answers from ALTs in all four different employment types. As stated in Chapter 1.4.3, this study is trying to fill the research gap by inviting ALTs in all different employment types to participate in to listen to their voices. Table 4.1 shows the overview of the fifty-six questionnaire respondents (46 ALTs who completed and 10 ALTs who answered halfway). On a side note, the ALTs who are on the JET programme and have been teaching in Japan more than five years join the programme for the second time because the renewal of the contract is limited up to five years. As such, many of NETs are former JET ALTs who change their employment status to stay and teach in Japan. However, NETs' position is also non-tenured. Normally, their contract is limited up to five years and it requires to be renewed annually. The questionnaire respondents consist of forty-four JET ALTs (15 of them have a teacher qualification), seven NETs (include 4 qualified NETs), four T-NETs (1 with qualification), and one in the category of 'other ALT' coming to Japan under teach abroad scheme.

Table 4.1 Overview of the questionnaire respondents (56 ALTs)

| | Gender | Age group | Nationality | Mother tongue | Ethnic origins | Educational background | Major of study | Teacher certificate | Previous English teaching experience | Period of teaching English in Japan | Employment type | School level(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | M | 35-39 | Canada | French | White | Bachelor | Social sciences | | | 4 years 8 months | JET | ES, JHS |
| 2 | F | 20-24 | US | English | Other Mixed | Bachelor | Chemistry/Japanese | | | 1 year 8 months | JET | SHS |
| 3 | F | 25-29 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Japanese Studies | | | 3 years 9 months | JET | NS, ES, JHS |
| 4 | F | 50- | Australia | English | White | Post Grad Diploma | Education | Other (Bachelor of Education) | 16 years in Australia and South Korea, ES and adult education | 12 years | NET | SHS, Adult education and community classes |
| 5 | F | 25-29 | Canada | English | White | Bachelor | Global studies/English | | | 5 years 10 months | JET | SHS, Special Needs |
| 6 | M | 35-39 | UK | English | White | Master | Landscape Architecture | TEFL | | 2 years 9 months | JET | ES, JHS |
| 7 | F | 25-29 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Music | | | 9 months | JET | JHS |
| 8 | F | 20-24 | UK | English | White | Bachelor | Social Anthropology | CELTA | 2 months in the UK, Private language company | 1 year | T-NET | ES, JHS |
| 9 | F | 35-39 | US | English | White | Master | English | | 2 years in Spain, Private language company | 10 months | JET | JHS |
| 10 | M | 20-24 | Australia | English | White | Master | TESOL | TESOL | 1 year, part time in Japan, College/University | 2 years 9 months | JET | NS, ES, JHS, Community Eikaiwa |
| 11 | F | 25-29 | Ireland | English | Any Other ethnic group | Bachelor | Anthropology | | | 1 year 9 months | JET | SHS |
| 12 | M | 30-34 | Canada | English | White | Bachelor | Linguistics and applied language studies | TESOL | 6 months in Canada, Publicly funded ELL education for immigrants | 4 years | JET | SHS, Special Needs |
| 13 | M | 20-24 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Media | | | 1 year 9 months | JET | ES, JHS |
| 14 | M | 25-29 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Japanese Language and Civilization | | | 2 years 9 months | JET | NS, ES, JHS |
| 15 | F | 20-24 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Biotechnology | | | 1 year 9 months | JET | NS, ES, JHS |
| 16 | F | 20-24 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Linguistics | TESOL | | 8 months | JET | ES, JHS |
| 17 | M | 35-39 | US | English | White | Bachelor | International Studies | CELTA | | 7 years 9 months | NET | NS, ES, JHS |
| 18 | F | 30-34 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Biochemistry; Japanese | | | 3 years 9 months | JET | SHS |
| 19 | M | 30-34 | US | English | White | PhD | Educational Policy and Evaluation | Other (Texas and Arizona Teaching Certification) | | 2 years 8 months | JET (Sister Cities Program) | ES, JHS |
| 20 | F | 25-29 | NZ | French | Mixed White | Master | Plant Biotechnology | | | 1 year 9 months | JET | SHS |
| 21 | M | 20-24 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Psychology | | | 8 months | JET | SHS |
| 22 | F | 30-34 | South Africa | Afrikaans | White | Master | Language and literature | PGCE (English) | 3 years in South Africa, SHS | 2 years | JET | SHS |
| 23 | F | 25-29 | NZ | English | White | Bachelor | Psychology and Japanese | | | 9 months | JET | ES, JHS |
| 24 | M | 20-24 | US | English | Mixed White and Asian | Bachelor | TESOL | TESOL | 1 year in USA, Student teaching for my BA | 8 months | JET | ES, JHS, Adult conversation class |
| 25 | M | 30-34 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Education | | | 2 years | JET | SHS |
| 26 | F | 25-29 | US | English | White | Master | English (undergrad), Library science (grad) | | | 5 years 9 months | NET | ES, JHS |
| 27 | F | 25-29 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Asian Studies | TEFL | 2 months in USA, SHS | 5 years 10 months | JET | SHS, Special Needs School, BoE |

| | Gender | Age group | Nationality | Mother tongue | Ethnic origins | Educational background | Major of study | Teacher certificate | Previous English teaching experience | Period of teaching English in Japan | Employment type | School level(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | F | 25-29 | UK | English | White | Master | Archaeology and Ancient History | | | 1 month | T-NET | ES, JHS |
| 29 | F | 40-44 | Canada | English | White | Bachelor | English / Drama | | | 8 years | JET | SHS |
| 30 | F | 30-34 | Canada | English | White | Bachelor | Linguistics | Other (Certificate of Teaching English as a | | 4 years 9 months | JET | JHS |
| 31 | F | 20-24 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Education | Other (Arizona state teaching certification ) | | 1 year 9 months | Other (Teach abroad) | ES, JHS |
| 32 | M | 25-29 | NZ | English | White | Bachelor | Industrial Design | | | 1 year 9 months | JET | ES, JHS |
| 33 | F | 25-29 | Australia | English | White | Bachelor | Speech Therapy | TEFL | | 1 year 9 months | JET | SHS |
| 34 | F | 25-29 | NZ | English | White | Bachelor | History | | | 1 year 9 months | JET | SHS |
| 35 | F | 25-29 | NZ | English | White | Bachelor | Anthropology and Religious Studies | | | 9 months | JET | SHS |
| 36 | M | 35-39 | Australia | English | White | Bachelor | Humanities | CELTA | | 7 years | NET | SHS |
| 37 | F | 25-29 | UK | English | White | Bachelor | Biology | TEFL | | 1 year 10 months | JET | SHS |
| 38 | M | 25-29 | US | English | White | Bachelor | English | | 2 years in South Korea, JHS | 1 year 10 months | JET | SHS |
| 39 | M | 25-29 | US | English | White | Bachelor | East asian studies | | | 1 year 2 months | T-NET | ES, JHS |
| 40 | F | 20-24 | UK | English | White | Bachelor | Music | | | 1 year 10 months | JET | SHS |
| 41 | F | 25-29 | South Africa | English | Black African | Bachelor | Architecture | TEFL | | 4 years | NET | SHS |
| 42 | M | 30-34 | US | English | White | Bachelor | Advertising | | | 1 year 10 months | JET | SHS |
| 43 | M | 20-24 | UK | English | White | Bachelor | English Literature and History | | | 9 months | JET | ES |
| 44 | M | 30-34 | US | English | White | Bachelor | English | | 3 years in USA, Tutor for ESL university students | 8 years | NET | SHS |
| 45 | M | 30-34 | US | Spanish | Any Other ethnic group | Bachelor | English Literature, Japanese | | | 4 years | JET | ES, JHS |
| 46 | M | 35-39 | Canada | Chinese | Chinese | Bachelor | Finance | | | 11 years | NET | JHS |
| 47 | F | 20-24 | US | English | Other Mixed | Bachelor | Political Science | TEFL | 6 months in Spain and USA, ES | 8 months | JET | ES, JHS |
| 48 | F | 30-34 | Australia | English | Mixed White and Asian | Bachelor | Marketing/International Studies | TEFL | | 2 years 10 months | JET | ES, JHS |
| 49 | F | 25-29 | Australia | English | White | Bachelor | Law | | 7 years in Australia, Private language company | 2 months | T-NET | ES |
| 50 | F | 25-29 | Ireland | English | Mixed White and Asian | Master | Engineering | TEFL | | 1 month | JET | SHS |
| 51 | F | 20-24 | UK | English | White | Bachelor | English Literature and Italian | | 9 months in Italy, SHS | 1 year 9 months | JET | SHS |
| 52 | F | 20-24 | Canada | English | Mixed White and Black | Master | Politics | | | 8 months | JET | SHS |
| 53 | F | 20-24 | Philippines | Bisaya | Filipino | Bachelor | English Literature | | 2 years in the Phillipines, SHS | 1 year 2 months | JET | JHS |
| 54 | F | 25-29 | NZ | English | White | Bachelor | History | | | 1 year 9 months | JET | SHS |
| 55 | F | 20-24 | US | English | Other Mixed | Bachelor | Chemistry/Japanese | | | 1 year 8 months | JET | SHS |
| 56 | F | 25-29 | US | English | Any Other ethnic group | Bachelor | Finance | | | 2 years | JET | ES, JHS |

On average, the respondents teach 15.2 lessons per week (see Figure 4.1). In general, most of the local teachers have about 16 to 18 lessons per week. Therefore, this result indicates that there seem to be no significant differences in the teaching hours between local teachers and ALTs. However, some ALTs articulated that because of their given status as just assistants, they tend to have quite a different workload between regular schooldays and the examination periods. From my own experience as a SHS JTE, I can easily imagine the situation because I was told not to ask ALTs (in my case, T-NETs) for support regarding marking exam papers as it would violate the contract and the law. JTEs are busy grading and having special seminars or meetings during exam periods, so usually there is no time to discuss and make lesson plans with the ALT then. Thus, it was common to exclude the exam week from the T-NET's working hours. Interestingly, the average number of lessons for fifty-two full-time ALTs (both JET ALTs and NETs) was 14.8, whereas the average number of lessons for four T-NETs who were in part-time contract was 20.8. Due to the inequality in the number of respondents and the difference between the school levels where the ALTs work, it is not adequate to discuss the difference here, but this gap seems to be significant because normally part-time ALTs have fewer working hours than full-time ALTs. Flynn (2009: 39) reports that "the average ALT employed by a dispatch company works 29.5 hours per week" in his research, while full-time ALTs usually work in the range from 35 to 40 hours per week like local teachers.

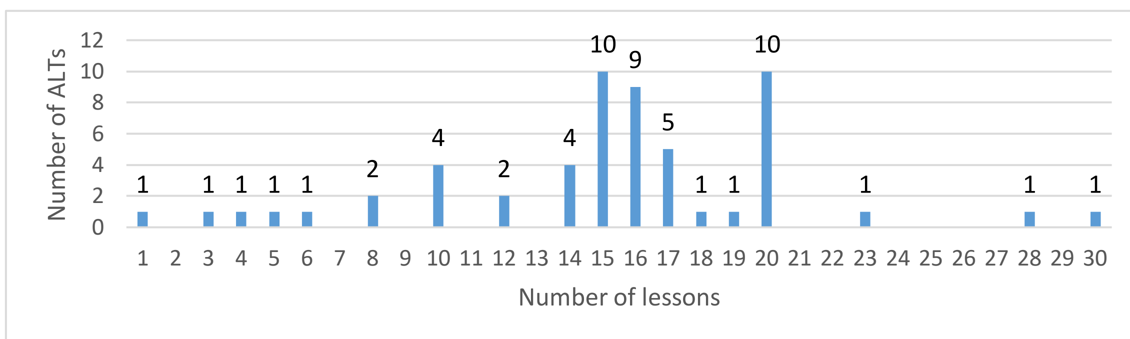


Figure 4.1. Number of lessons that ALTs teach per week

Furthermore, one ALT commented that: "My school lies to the BoE in terms of how many classes I have each week. The BoE thinks I have 16 classes a week. In reality, I have 4 classes a week." Sadly, a worse-case scenario found in the follow-up interviews. Some ALTs said that they are given the schedule with full of lessons, but the JTEs reject to have them in class saying that the schedule is just a token acknowledgment to submit to the BoE and there is no time for them to do the team-teaching lessons because they have to cover the whole contents in the textbooks to prepare students for the entrance examinations. It seems that those JTEs are trying to circumvent

ALTs because they cannot afford to have time to discuss the lesson plans to team-teach in their overloaded work schedule. That is one of the reasons behind why some ALTs answered they only have a few lessons a week.

Among fifty-six ALTs, twenty-eight respondents answered that they engage in extra-curricular club activities or events like speech contest, field trip, and student exchange programme, etc. The most common club activity is ESS (English Speaking Society), and the second most popular event which ALTs are involved is speech contest, followed by student exchange programme, English camp/festival, presentation, *Eiken* interview test preparation, debate contest, volunteering, and so on. As Lave and Wenger (1991: 111) state, "[m]oving toward full participation in practice involves not just a greater commitment of time, intensified effort, more and broader responsibilities within the community, and more difficult and risky tasks, but, more significantly, an increasing sense of identity as a master practitioner." These activities could be the site of learning for ALTs, and the features of apprenticeship might be observed through the relationships with the members of such CoPs, where ALTs engage in the activities with students and others, sharing certain repertoires. This aspect will be discussed later in more detail. Meanwhile, it is important to note that T-NETs "provided by outsourcing companies are usually not available to get involved in the school life outside the classroom, in club activities or social events, and so on" (Aspinall, 2008: 40). Indeed, there is a clear identity gap among ALTs in different employment types (see Table 3.3).

The following sections examine the ALTs' perceptions towards English education in Japan and their opinions about the ALT job based on their experience through the closed-response items utilising 7-point or 5-point Likert scale and an open-ended question asking their most memorable experience as an ALT. As for the limitation of the questionnaire design, these answers do not perfectly reflect the complex realities of the respondents since twenty-six ALTs working at more than two different school levels. One of the respondents left a comment as follows:

> **I work at 9 different schools: 2 JHS and 7 ES. In total, that makes for 3 JHS JTEs, and 66 ES HRTs that I work with. So many of the questions asked (such as meeting to discuss plans) are both "agree" and "disagree." [Extract 1]**

Despite the limitation, the results still help to build up the ground for the narrative research to investigate the identity construction process of ALTs and their learning as English teachers.

### 4.2.2 ALTs' perceptions towards English education in Japan and their job

As shown in Appendix E, the online questionnaire survey contains sixteen question items each in Section2: ALTs' perceptions about language education in Japan, and in Section3.1: ALTs' opinions and experience of the job as an ALT, with 7-point Likert scale from 1 'strongly disagree' to 6 'strongly agree' with 0 'I don't know.' Also, eighteen aspects of characteristics for English teachers were asked to be evaluated in 5-point Likert scale from 1 (less important) to 5 (very important) in the perceptions of ALTs in Section3.2. Section2 was completed by forty-nine ALTs and Section3 had forty-six respondents in total. The following tables show the overview of the results with the mean score of each question item in 3 sections: 1) ALTs' perceptions about language education in Japan (Table 4.2), 2) ALTs' opinions and experience about the job (Table 4.3), and 3) ALTs' views on important characteristics of English teachers (Table 4.4).

Table 4.2 Overview 1: ALTs' perceptions about language education in Japan (49 respondents)

| Question items | Mean |
|---|---|
| 1. I have enough knowledge about the education system in Japan. | 4.24 |
| 2. I know about the new national curriculum, the Courses of Study (2008 revision), fully implemented in 2013. | 3.49 |
| 3. I understand the mission/motto of the school where I work now. | 3.86 |
| 4. I have enough knowledge about the school curriculum. | 3.65 |
| 5. I understand the existing school syllabus. | 3.49 |
| 6. I follow the syllabus when I teach the subjects. | 3.37 |
| 7. I think the government approved textbooks are useful. | 3.22 |
| 8. I follow the principle of "teaching English only in English" when I teach English in class. | 4.10 |
| 9. I think the class size (generally 30-40 students in one class) is appropriate. | 2.53 |
| 10. I think the hours of English lessons in school education are enough. | 3.16 |
| 11. I always work collaboratively with Japanese teachers. | 3.80 |
| 12. I can use technology (interactive whiteboard, web-based materials, mobile electronic devices etc.) in classrooms. | 3.51 |
| 13. I think my students have access to enough resources to study English. | 2.88 |
| 14. I think Japanese people should start learning English from their earlier years. | 4.76 |
| 15. I think ALTs are necessary for the English language education in Japan. | 4.24 |
| 16. I think the ALT system needs to be revised. | 5.29 |

The highest rated statement agreed by most of the respondents was Item16. Some researchers demonstrate the problems of non-JET ALTs (Aspinall, 2008; Flynn, 2009; Martin, 2010), but it is very interesting to see even JET ALTs feel the ALT system needs overhaul. Even though many ALTs recognise the malfunction of the system itself, they put higher rate on Item15.

It means that many of them reckon that the current ALT system has a lot of potential for improvement. This links to the less agreed statement in Item13, as some ALTs articulate that students have not enough time to actually use English for communication in class and the local teachers heavily rely on the textbooks even if they contain 'unnatural' sentences or expressions. Also, they think that the class size and the start of English education at school should be changed. Especially in the urban cities, usually each class has maximum thirty-five students at ES and forty students at JHS and SHS in Japan. According to the follow-up interviews, it seems that ALTs reflect their own experience in their school days and express their concern about the dense classroom environment at Japanese schools. Some ALTs who have longer experience in Japan articulated that they recognise the differences in the JHS students' behaviours in English class after the English Activity had been implemented in the ES level. They mentioned that many students who have experienced some activities with English at their ES tend to be more positive and well-motivated to speak up in English when they come to JHS.

In terms of the level of understanding of the national curriculum, the mission/motto and the curriculum of the school, they show little more understandings in the local school level than in the national level. Especially JET ALTs who have mandatory training sessions at the SDCs said that the supervisors from BoE repeatedly talk about the national curriculum guidelines there, so all the JET ALTs should have enough input about the Courses of Study at the SDCs. One JET ALT commented that "I can't recall a single of my five-conference participation where the course of study was NOT mentioned and explained to some degree." Although non-JET ALTs tend to have less frequent training opportunities, they still show higher understandings in both. One possible reason for this is because non-JET ALTs in this study have longer years of experience than JET ALTs and some of them are former JET ALTs. On average, non-JET ALTs (11 ALTs) have been working in Japan for more than five years, ranging from minimum one month to maximum twelve years.

One of the interesting findings here is the mixture of responses about Item8. Among forty-nine respondents, fifteen ALTs answered 'disagree' with this statement. Looking at the level of schools they are in, five ALTs work at NS, either *Yochien* (kindergarten) or *Hoikusho* (nursery school), ES and JHS level, six ALTs at ES and JHS, one ALT only at JHS, and three ALTs at SHS. It seems that ALTs who teach younger children tend to have more needs to use not only English but Japanese in the classroom. This will be discussed again in the following chapters through the longitudinal narrative research, investigating why and how ALTs use Japanese in class.

Table 4.3 Overview 2: ALTs' opinions and experience about the job (46 respondents)

| Question items | Mean |
|---|---|
| 17. My work as an ALT gives me job satisfaction. | 4.07 |
| 18. I think my own foreign language learning experiences affect my teaching practices as an ALT. | 5.02 |
| 19. Japanese teacher of English (JTE) is an ideal model for my teaching. | 2.64 |
| 20. I always teach lessons with a JTE. | 4.13 |
| 21. I can take a leading role when I teach lessons. | 4.80 |
| 22. I discuss lessons with JTEs at least once a week. | 4.28 |
| 23. I have enough knowledge and skills to be a language teacher. | 4.13 |
| 24. I do not teach English in the same way as the JTE. | 5.17 |
| 25. I teach English as I was trained in my teacher training courses. | 2.52 |
| 26. I cooperate with JTEs only when they invite me to work with them. | 2.93 |
| 27. I have right to choose materials (textbooks, workbooks etc.) without much consultation with other teachers. | 2.30 |
| 28. I have right to create new materials (handouts, homework etc.) for students by myself. | 4.85 |
| 29. I feel I have a reliable source to ask for advice when I need some help as an ALT. | 3.89 |
| 30. I am learning how to teach through in-service work at school. | 3.59 |
| 31. I am learning how to teach through activities outside school (i.e. training sessions, seminars or personal communication with other ALTs). | 3.07 |
| 32. I am improving my teaching skills as I work. | 5.00 |

Based on the given status of ALTs as 'assistants', it is assumable that most of the respondents demonstrated that they do not have right to choose materials by themselves (Item27), corresponding with their answers to Item20. Interestingly, however, they do not teach in the same way as the JTE (Item24) and JTEs are not their ideal model (Item19). These results suggest the identity gaps between ALTs and JTEs such as 'native' vs. non-native, assistants vs. qualified teachers, newcomers vs. old-timers, foreign vs. local, etc. Indeed, there should be various situations behind their opinions. Some ALTs feel that JTEs and ALTs complement each other, and others regard JTEs as a counter example of good communicative language teacher sometimes with frustration. In fact, one ALT commented that:

> **Team-teaching in Japan in its current form is a mess, and it's designed to cover any weaknesses between the two. But students are quick to pick up the insincerity that JTEs have with not actively engaging with the language. [Extract 2]**

Another ALT noted that "I feel ALTs are generally viewed as poorly equipped to help their JTEs, by JTEs, and therefore maybe undervalued, this is a major struggle in the workplace." Those will be discussed later in more detail.

In terms of the professional development of ALTs, most of them think they are improving their teaching skills as they work (Item32) and going through apprenticeship (Item30). The possible explanation for the gap between the two similar statements I found from their narratives is that some ALTs feel severe marginalisation at school, especially in the staff room, and it seems impossible to build collaborative working relationship with the local teachers. In such cases, ALTs might be able to evaluate their own professional development as an English teacher positively through the entire job experience, but not so much from their in-service work relationships. In fact, most respondents showed high level of job satisfaction (Item17) and this positive evaluation would probably come from their relationships with students. The background of these aspects will be revealed from the open-ended responses in the next section. The stories of marginalisation caused by the local teachers and difficulties of getting legitimate peripheral participation in the school-based CoPs are presented in Chapter 4.3.

Many ALTs expressed the influence of AoO through their own foreign language learning experience (Item18). While, the responses for Item25 suggest that there are ALTs who did not have chances of any teacher training since eleven people answered, 'I do not know.' Although many ALTs have not experienced teacher training courses, they are confident of having enough knowledge and skills to be a language teacher (Item23). It implies that the ALTs' initial identity as a teacher is shaped mainly through their experience of AoO and probably by being a native speaker of the language and it is gradually formed through their in-service work by adapting the specific social/cultural and educational contexts.

Table 4.4 demonstrates the overview of ALTs' views on important characteristics for English teachers in eighteen aspects that consist of both personal/professional skills and pedagogic/content knowledge and skills. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of each characteristic from 1 (less important) to 5 (very important). The results display a good level of agreement in all the responses (see Appendix F for detail).

Table 4.4 Overview 3: ALTs' views on important characteristics for English teachers (46 respondents)

| Question items | Mean |
| --- | --- |
| 33. Skilled in English in terms of native(like) proficiency | 4.30 |
| 34. Knowledgeable in English grammar | 4.22 |
| 35. Good at classroom management | 4.41 |
| 36. Kind and caring person | 4.28 |
| 37. Having long experience as a teacher | 2.46 |
| 38. Skilled in intercultural communication | 4.02 |
| 39. Academically highly achieving | 2.52 |
| 40. Qualified as a teacher | 3.37 |
| 41. Having a loud voice | 3.15 |
| 42. Good handwriting | 3.04 |
| 43. Good at working collaboratively with other teachers | 4.27 |
| 44. Skilled in information technology | 3.22 |
| 45. Knowledgeable in various teaching methods and learning theories | 4.35 |
| 46. Spends long hours making lesson plans | 2.50 |
| 47. Skilled in assessment/evaluation | 3.67 |
| 48. Constantly examines and responds to students' needs | 4.54 |
| 49. Follows the textbooks carefully | 1.80 |
| 50. Open to new ideas and ways of teaching | 4.72 |

One of the common perceptions that ALTs expressed here is that most of them regarded Item37 and Item49 as less important. Along with the personal skills and traits (Item36 and Item50), pedagogical knowledge and personal practical knowledge and skills (Item45 and Item35), and interpersonal skills (Item43 and Item48) are highly ranked. It is interesting to see the results about the items based on the characteristics that typical 'model' teachers appearing on the TV shows or stories of manga have (Item41, Item42, and Item46). It seems that ALTs do not echo the cultural myths for these points. While, they gave higher rates to Item33 and Item34 and these seem to reflect their professional identity. Some ALTs told me in the interview that they are not specialists of English grammar although they are so-called 'native' speakers of English. Thus, it can be understood as a result of their awareness of how difficult it is to teach English grammar to the students in EFL context where their JTEs mainly use grammar-translation method. One ALT put a comment as follows:

> **Research shows that while teachers very much divide the classroom roles into JTE and ALT roles, students do not. Therefore, it is imperative that ALTs are competent in grammar teaching, and JTEs need to be able to take a communicative role in front of the teachers. [Extract 3]**

They also think it is important for English teachers to be proficient in English, but they are not trying to claim the native-speaker authority by putting higher rate for the statement. Rather, it seems to reflect their professional identity as English teachers/educators for their students and it

would link to the issues that ALTs have in the workplace such as miscommunication or lack of communication with some local teachers who are not proficient in English or lack of confidence to talk to them. Such stories are reported in the interview data in Chapter 4.3. Of course, it is not just a matter of proficiency and there seem to be issues of local teachers' heavy workload, burnout, low motivations, or personal traits in terms of their emotional and social intelligence. Like one ALT demonstrated in the comment:

> **A lot of the teachers at my schools are very busy, and I worry sometimes that the actual lessons will get pushed to the backburner in favor of club activities and other responsibilities. [Extract 4]**

The stories provided in the open-ended question presented in the next section help us to explore the lives of ALTs further.

### 4.2.3 Analysis of narratives in questionnaire data: Three commonplaces

In the online questionnaire, one open-ended question was asked: 'What is your most memorable experience as an ALT in Japan?' The main aim is to identify the links between ALTs' learning opportunities and their participation in multiple CoPs, exploring where the CoPs could be located in the 5-level model from nano to mega CoPs presented in Figure 2.1. Their written narratives were coded under the five major categories: 1) Where (home as nano CoPs, class/lessons as micro CoPs, school as meso CoPs, BoE/other schools as macro CoPs, society/government as mega CoP); 2) When (past, present, future); 3) Who (students, Japanese teachers, ALTs); 4) What (types of events/activities); and 5) How (positive/negative emotions/evaluations). The actual data with coding is presented in Appendix G. Through the 'analysis of narratives', the features of teacher learning for ALTs are illuminated in their identity-in-discourse. For instance, negative emotions caused by contradictions in their work as ALTs or emotional dissonance mainly with colleagues, in some cases with students, seem to succour identifying the gap between their actual identity and their possible-selves and give them the experience of 'learning wisdom from follies of others.' Whereas positive emotions brought from job satisfaction or sense of achievement enhance their professional identity formation process.

Some examples of three commonplaces, temporality, sociality, and place (Chapter 3.2.4), in the narratives of ALTs are demonstrated below. Not to mention, three commonplaces are not easily distinguishable from one another because they are intertwined in the narratives and "[w]hat makes a narrative inquiry is the simultaneous exploration of all three" (Connelly & Clandinin,

2006: 479). The following short excerpts display the typicality of three commonplaces. I position this as a basis of this narrative research because "the inquirer needs to examine, describe, and specify commonplace features to be built into the study" (ibid.: 482). Due to the limited space, only selected stories are presented here.

**Temporality**

Temporality observed in the narratives varies from the beginning to the end in the ALT's journey. Some refer to the specific moments or events, while others summarise the whole experience as an ALT. Indeed, ALTs with longer experience can narrate their experiences in a story with flow by looking back the achievements of their students or relationships with their colleagues. Typically, narrowed down episodes link to the experiences with positive emotions with their students most of the time, and sometimes with negative emotions towards the local teachers or the ALT system. The following is a story of 'learning from a mistake' event that happened at the beginning of an ALT's career.

> **Throughout life you learn as you go. In many cases you learn from what others tell you or what you read but in some circumstances the best way to learn is to make a mistake. I experienced one of these learning lessons at my ES. It was around 3:00pm and I had just finished a lesson. As the JTE and I were cleaning up the room we could not locate the light switch to turn the lights off in the room. My colleague was on the other side of the room when I thought that I had located the light switch. Now this did not look like a light switch to me but I thought to myself "Hey everything is different in Japan I will be the hero and turn the light switch off first so my JTE will be proud of how fast I found it." It was an orange button about the size of a light switch with several Kanji written on it. I pushed it. And it was then that I had realized my mistake. Every speaker in the whole school blasted a heart stopping alarm proceeded by a message in Japanese that I could only think meant "Fire everyone leave the building!!" This was obviously not the case due to the fact that were no little children exiting of the classrooms. There were only three adult male Japanese teachers running full blast towards my location followed by the principal in hot pursuit. When they arrived they realized my mistake and laughed it off. I have never been so embarrassed in my life and I will never randomly push a button in Japan again. To make it worse this was not a fire alarm. I was later informed by my JTE that this was an alarm for intruders!**
> **[Extract 5]**

This story is very interesting not only by the fact that the ALT still remembered clearly about the happening after three years but also in terms of how he got to know about the part of the school culture and how the other teachers reacted to his mistake. Although the one-shot survey cannot explore the detail and how this incident has affected later in his professional identity construction, it implies that even negative experiences can enhance the membership in the school-based meso CoP by the fact that he has been staying in the same CoP for another couple of years. Furthermore, he shared this story with his family by email. It seems that the learning of ALTs could be facilitated through the communication and networking in or between various CoPs across time and space since Wenger-Trayner explains that "[i]f people learn together, the result is a community of practice" (Omidvar & Kislov, 2014: 269). Here, it might be possible to interpret that the ALT's learning experience which happened in the school-based meso CoP would affect the learning of his family members as nano CoP if any of them felt they learned something from his email and referred to it on other occasion. This leads to the next point, sociality.

## Sociality

As repeatedly told by many ALTs, 'every situation is different.' Each one of them lives in the different and multiple sociality at times with their family, friends, students, colleagues, and other people. When I examined their stories of memorable experiences as ALTs, however, students are the main characters for the most part. Many ALTs shared their positive experiences with students including one-on-one or in a small group of students outside the class. This seems to be one of the background stories why they think ALTs are necessary for English language education in Japan. It can be understood as a part of ALTs' professional identities: ALTs are supposed to bring more opportunities for students and local teachers to actually use English to communicate with, and their presence at school and the local community benefits to enhance grass-root internationalisation. There are successful cases that ALTs take a leading role in the class, tailoring the lessons and practicing 'strong' version of team-teaching (Tajino & Tajino, 2000) with their colleagues where mutual learning can happen among all the participants in the lesson. One ALT noted that:

> **In-class my most memorable experience was running a series of conversation lessons at a low-level school. The JTEs were sceptical and to be honest I was uncertain as to how it would work but the lessons went brilliantly. The teachers were very pleased and feedback from the students was almost universally positive. [Extract 6]**

This episode suggests that this ALT seemed to act as a pioneer/ground-breaker who came into the school CoP as an outsider and bring some changes in the community where the old-timers are in a deadlocked situation like in Western films. ALTs are believed to be able to help open up new horizons for their students and local teachers utilising their unique backgrounds. This might be regarded as one of the elements of the ALTs' role identity.

However, some ALTs showed their frustrations of blur roles of ALTs as well. As Voci-Reed (1994: 63) demonstrates, "[t]here are three major stressors which characterise the team-teaching experience for the non-Japanese AET [that is, ALT]: 1) uncertain, or different role expectations between school staff members and the AET; 2) poor communication; and 3) the AET's limited sphere of influence, often including limited interpersonal relations." It seems that ALTs are still facing those challenges. One ALT explained that because of the scheduling and rotating system, it is difficult to build a collaborative partnership with the local teachers and she ended up performing a subordinate role in the English education. In other case, the school curriculum and the entrance examination system seem to create a barrier for ALTs and deprive them of legitimate participation in the English lessons.

> **Because I am not used to my full potential in school as an ALT (I teach very few classes because it is an academic school and they focus mainly on grammar classes for entrance exams) I take part in music club. It is always after my contracted hours, but I enjoy going because it gives me contact with students. [Extract 7]**

Not only this ALT, but many others devote their time and effort to build positive learning relationships with their students by participating in varieties of events outside class such as extra-curricular club activities or other community events. When ALTs cannot get over the barrier to actively join the classroom practices, this is what they can do to get membership in the school-based CoP.

In another case, an ALT expressed frustrations about having less autonomous teachers around and his position as an ALT to 'assist' those teachers.

> **My most memorable experience is the feeling I felt when I realized that my JTEs have absolutely NO idea what they are doing and the sickening feeling I got when I realized I have to take backseat to these "teachers." [Extract 8]**

It could be very hard for ALTs to actualise their full potential depending on the sociocultural milieu and different sociality of CoPs, which have different degree of openness to the newcomers and the types of engagement and alignment allowed to perform. Echoing the findings in the

closed-response items, some ALTs articulated the obstacles in the ALT system that they had experienced through their work.

In contrast, there are some ALTs who recognise their local teachers as mentors. One ALT who has 8 years of experience wrote as follows:

> **I've had two teachers (JTEs) I regard as mentors. They both retired this year. One has a very open-minded vision about teaching English and believes students should be given opportunities to use the English they know. The other is kind-hearted and taught me a lot about relating with students and helping weaker students. I would not be the same as a teacher without them. [Extract 9]**

Not only the co-working teachers in the stories above, but there seems to be a case that the school principal offered an ALT to do the mentor job for the HRTs and act her membership in the wider CoP. An ALT with nearly 6 years of experience noted that:

> **Having an elementary principal ask me about my opinion on the school's English teaching methods and about English in Japan in general. The school closed and combined with two other elementaries into an English focus school - he and the other principals were planning the English curriculum of the new school and he wanted my opinion. It was the first time someone who had actual administrative power had asked my opinion on English education here. My students see me as a real teacher as do my colleagues but the system really does not. It meant a lot to be asked for my opinion by an administrator. [Extract 10]**

This is a successful example of the ALT who seems to gain a full membership in a macro CoP. However, she still expressed her concern that the current ALT system causes the brittle status of ALTs and marginalisation. This aspect of ALTs' mode of participation in different CoPs and their trajectories will be discussed later in Chapter 6.4 and 7.

**<u>Place</u>**

As shown in the examples above, there are cases that ALTs involve in meso and macro CoP to participate in the core process of English education such as designing the curriculum, but those seem to be rare. Many stories are related to the school-based micro and meso CoP in the model presented in Figure 2.1. Interestingly, along with the several in-class activities, lots of outside-of-class episodes such as club activities, speech contest, English camps, and day-to-day interactions with students were listed. As one of the important factors whether ALTs could have opportunities

to nurture positive learning relationships with their students, we need to contemplate the differences of the school contexts. This also relates to the matter of sociality since people exercise different cultures in different places.

> **Working in ES. When I explain something in English although I use easy to understand English it is still at a level above what the students have learned but they still make an effort to understand and CAN understand and make an effort to respond using the English they know. This contrasts with my experiences in JHS where students often immediately respond that they didn't understand me and don't respond at all even though I have used English they have just learned. I believe this is because of a strong emphasis on accuracy rather than fluency and communication. [Extract 11]**

Such difference in the reactions of students in ES and JHS might arise from the different position of 'English' in the curriculum. In fact, it is placed as one of the core academic subjects with assessment at JHS, while just regarded as fun activities without formal evaluation at ES.

As we can see, three commonplaces of narrative inquiry are intertwined and complement each other to illuminate the complexities of identity formation process, and narratives of ALTs have huge potential to explore the process of language teachers' learning through their in-service work. I will examine the stories from follow-up interviews through narrative analysis in the next section.

## 4.3 Narrative Analysis of the follow-up interviews

Followed by the online survey, semi-structured interviews were scheduled with the respondents who left their contact information. The researcher prepared the interview prompts (Appendix H) based on the analysis of questionnaire answers. There are three main aims of this interview: 1) to understand the ALTs' conceptions about 'professionalism' or ALT as a profession, 2) to identify the existing and potential sites of learning for ALTs, 3) to identify the features of apprenticeship. Twenty ALTs working in various school contexts were interviewed via online platform either Skype or LINE. They gave their consent via email and I asked for their permission to audio-record the interview at the beginning of our conversation. Table 4.5 shows the list of twenty interviewees with their background information such as age group, country, length of experience as an ALT, school level(s), employment type and the qualification related to English teaching. The average duration of the interview was about fifty minutes, ranging from the

shortest twenty-two minutes to the longest seventy-seven minutes. Throughout the process of narrative analysis, the researcher kept in mind a description in Pinnegar and Daynes (2006: 29): "narrative inquirers embrace the metaphoric quality of language and the connectedness and coherence of the extended discourse of the story entwined with exposition, argumentation, and description."

Table 4.5 List of participants in the follow-up interview

| Pseudonym | Age Group | Country | Length of experience | School Level(s) | Employment Type | Qualification |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emma | 25-29 | Australia | 1 year 9 months | SHS | JET | TEFL |
| Sam | 35-39 | Canada | 4 years 8 months | ES, JHS | JET | |
| Jed | 30-34 | US | 2 years 8 months | ES, JHS | JET | |
| Peter | 30-34 | US | 2 years | SHS | JET | |
| Don | 30-34 | US | 1 year 10 months | SHS | JET | |
| Lina | 25-29 | US | 3 years 9 months | NS, ES, JHS | JET | |
| Pam | 30-34 | South Africa | 2 years | SHS | JET | PGCE |
| Gary | 35-39 | US | 7 years 9 months | NS, ES, JHS | NET | CELTA |
| Amy | 25-29 | US | 5 years 9 months | ES, JHS | NET | |
| Kate | 20-24 | US | 1 year 8 months | SHS | JET | |
| Nash | 25-29 | NZ | 1 year 9 months | ES, JHS | JET | |
| John | 35-39 | UK | 2 years 9 months | ES, JHS | JET | TEFL |
| Donna | 25-29 | UK | 1 month | ES, JHS | T-NET | |
| Glen | 25-29 | US | 2 years 9 months | NS, ES, JHS | JET | |
| Susy | 40-44 | Canada | 8 years | SHS | JET | |
| Joan | 25-29 | UK | 1 year 10 months | SHS | JET | TEFL |
| Silvia | 25-29 | US | 5 years 10 months | SHS, Special Needs | JET | TEFL |
| Hanna | 20-24 | US | 1 year 6 months | NS, ES, JHS | JET | |
| Dane | 25-29 | US | 1 year 10 months | SHS | JET | |
| Tina | 25-29 | NZ | 1 year 9 months | SHS | JET | |

To explore the first and second research questions, the sections below investigate four themes: 1) ALTs' professional identity: actual-self, ideal-self, ought-self and 'furnished imagination'; 2) Legitimate participation in CoP: relationship with local teachers, students and others; 3) Apprenticeship: AoO and craft model of apprenticeship in teacher learning; and 4) Narrative landscapes: challenges for ALTs. Some excerpts are put in Appendix K due to the limited space.

### 4.3.1 ALTs' professional identity: actual-self, ideal-self, ought-self and 'furnished imagination'

Narratives of ALTs give us opportunities to explore the professional identity of ALTs in different modes: actual-self, ideal-self, and ought-self (E. T. Higgins, 1987) constructed in the school contexts in Japan. Not only the ALTs' current self-conceptions as 'actual selves', but their 'ideal selves' or 'who do they want to be?' and 'ought selves' emerged from their duty/responsibility to attain are delineated. Also, their 'furnished imagination' as the conceptual toolkit of "the combination of knowledge, procedural awareness and skills, dispositions, and identity" (Kiely & Askham, 2012: 496) and 'possible selves' (Kubanyiova, 2012) based on their understandings of the realities in the social and cultural contexts are revealed.

**<u>ALT as a brittle profession</u>**

The interviewees articulated that ALTs could be a profession and it is important for English education in Japan, but it is not a long-term real profession because the position has no consistency, mobility and responsibilities. As a transition or short-term profession, it could be used effectively to contribute to give students opportunities to communicate in English and get to know various perspectives of the people from different backgrounds. Some ALTs, who are in the rural area, pointed out the importance of having an ALT there as a foreigner so that the students, teachers and the local residents could get used to people from different countries. While every situation is different and even the same ALT should act very differently according to the specific contexts at different school levels.

> **I feel like I'm a professional at ES, but not in JHS. One teacher at ES makes me feel like professional and part of the group. She asks me feedback/opinions after each class, having morning meeting every day before the classes. But in JHS, I don't feel like I'm a professional, having no responsibility, no job to do, just sitting down. It's like from zero to ton, because occasionally I have 400 papers to grade. I was treated differently. Even the 'human tape recorder' part, JTEs do. But it depends on the teachers. My best friend JTE just trusts me and gives me a chance/challenge to bring something in the class. [Extract 12: Jed (Q1.1)]**

Also, ALTs' conflicting status of 'native' as an expert of English but novice as a teacher tends to create obstacles to negotiate their identities and roles in the school contexts.

> **When you first come in, the problem was no work, did nothing. Then, when the teachers get used to you, suddenly you become the English expert for everything. The *Eiken* test, checking test papers, and you become very much relied on. But it's still inconsistent. I'm busy during term time, but during test time, there's nothing really. [Extract 13: Tina (Q2.1)]**

As we can see, the position of ALTs varies even in the certain school context and there seems to be no consistency in their professional identity. Other stories are presented in Appendix K [A-1].

**Important characteristics for ALTs**

The most frequently mentioned characteristic required for ALTs was being patient. Yet, it seems that ALTs refer to patience in many ways such as for continuously repeating the same things/sentences, acting to cheer up students, or tolerating marginalisation caused by JTEs, etc. (see Appendix K [A-2]). Hanna explained the reason to be patient in relation to her identity as a novice but expert 'native' English teacher as follows:

> **I got to learn a lot about English, which is weird because I'm a native English speaker. But the way you teach English is different from how I learned it. I had to relearn the English and try to break it down for kids, especially pronunciation because it was very difficult for kids to pronounce something they'd never done before. That's why patience is really important. [Extract 14: Hanna (Q2.3)]**

Dewaele, Gkonou, and Mercer (2018) demonstrate that teachers who are flexible, willing to accommodate the different situ, empathising others can provide more positive classroom atmosphere, lowering the anxiety of the learners. As such, the following attitude is also considered as part of their reasons to be patient:

> **They call it 'the sage on the stage' versus 'the guide by the side.' I'm trying to be off the front of the classroom as much as possible. When I have my visit school, I spend 2 minutes with each student in every lesson, looking over their shoulder, putting big smiley faces on their work, patting them on the shoulder waking them up if they fall asleep because they all have part-time jobs, so they're tired. I understand. I gently wake them up. [Extract 15: Pam (Q2.1)]**

The second most frequently expressed disposition was flexibility. It echoes what S. Borg (2006: 23) demonstrates as the essential traits for language teachers drawn from the Hungarian data: "creative, sense of humour, flexible, 'actor' type, motivating, enthusiastic, communicate freely

and radiate positive feeling." There are many ALTs work itinerantly, visiting several different schools in different levels and working with many teachers. This is also the reason why they think being flexible is crucial. Whereas Pam articulated the problems to become too flexible.

> **You need to be flexible, but also not completely flexible. I've also seen ALTs who adapt completely Japanese manners, culture, and language. But the Japanese government is paying us to be *gaijin* (foreigners), not to be Japanese. So, if we fit in too much, then we're not doing our jobs. [Extract 16: Pam (Q1.2)]**

Her opinion implies that ALTs' ought-selves as foreigners/assistants could conflict with their other ought-selves as flexible itinerant teachers and actual/ideal-selves as flexible educators.

These key traits for ALTs to be patient and flexible relate to their expertise as well.

**Expertise for ALT job**

Then, what kind of expertise do ALTs think is required in their self-conceptions? As well as the narratives presented earlier, subject matter knowledge, especially knowledge about English grammar and pedagogical content knowledge would be very important for ALTs on one hand. On the other, contradictory views are observed and some expressed that working out the characteristics of expert teachers could be problematic for ALTs, such as exercising more autonomy and much more efficient in lesson planning, being more flexible, and reflecting much more integrated knowledge base (Tsui, 2005).

> **I don't feel a teaching background is necessary for the role. If I've been trained as a teacher before, I would be very frustrated within the education system because there is no autonomy or opportunity for ALTs to teach English as a main person. [Extract 17: John (Q1.2)]**

Also, many ALTs mentioned about the importance of having a command of Japanese for communication purpose with colleagues and students, which is conflicting the education purpose of 'teach English only in English in principle' in the national curriculum guideline.

> **The ideal is to have the students speak in English only in the classroom, but in reality, we don't do it. For ES, English only class is too difficult for them to understand, the students need support. In JHS, they are too busy to prepare for the entrance exams to have English speaking lessons, especially 3rd graders, because they have to finish the textbook early. [Extract 18: Lina (Q1.3)]**

> **I use Japanese depend on the situation, especially in the advanced class, we use Japanese to understand the concepts such as TPP (Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership), same-sex marriage for essay writing class. The students even read some research papers in Japanese or they talk about the topic in Japanese, it doesn't matter. Whereas in the basic class, I don't use Japanese that often. I sometimes translate a word or use grammar terms like *kakokei* (past tense), *kansi* (article). [Extract 19: Kate (Q4.2)]**

It seems that there are various factors that create the gap among their actual, ideal and ought selves. Indeed, not only the social and cultural factors such as different school contexts, the levels of students and attitudes of their teachers, but also the personal factors such as their levels of understanding of the context and their proficiency in Japanese language cause the discrepancy between their identities. Kate's case suggests that she does not feel any significant gaps in her identity. This might be because she works with four other ALTs at a higher level SHS where the communication with students and teachers goes smoothly even in English and she is also proficient in Japanese.

In addition to the difficulty of communicating in Japanese or lack of communication and time, the unique cultures and social norms in Japanese school contexts and some stereotypical views that local teachers have on ALTs tend to cause trouble and marginalisation.

> **Often the teachers will suddenly ask me to teach without any preparation and that was challenging. Because they think "Oh, you're an ALT. You must know many games. You can do it." Actually, that happened to me today at ES. [Extract 20: Lina (Q2.1)]**

For one thing, teacher education or training opportunities and support for Japanese learning might help ALTs to ease these identity gaps. Many ALTs expressed that they need more training opportunities to become teachers. However, there are mixture of opinions about the TEFL course as John suggests (see Appendix K [A-3]). Some ALTs feel it useful to get knowledge of English grammar and methods to scaffold students' learning, whereas others say that grammar-translation is not helpful or applicable to their role identity as ALTs. It seems that more experienced ALTs tend to suffer from identity gaps between ideal-self and ought-self. The next section is investigating more on the ALTs' participations in CoPs, looking closely at how they enact the joint enterprise, shared repertoire and mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998).

### 4.3.2 Legitimate participation in CoPs: ALTs' relationships with local teachers, students and others

According to the five levels of CoPs presented earlier (see Figure 2.1), I investigate the ALTs' modes of participation in each CoP in order to examine their trajectories. As for the nature of semi-structured one-shot interview, the findings are limited to reach more in-depth process of their identity formation. However, the stories of twenty ALTs imply the complexities of participation and reification process in different CoPs.

<u>**In Nano CoPs**</u>

Most of the interviewees told me that they build connections with their friends ALTs and keep contact and physically meet up with them mainly for socialising. Most ALTs are in a group of ALTs in the area. Many also referred to their experience of participation in online CoPs through the social networking platforms such as LINE, Facebook, or Dropbox (see Appendix K [B-1]).

> **Most ALTs use the Internet to communicate with each other to talk about lesson plans, what works and what doesn't with students. Having access to it is a big help both in terms of human contact and for job performance-wise. Sometimes I ask other ALTs what they're doing in their classes and I'll use some of their ideas. [Extract 21: Don (Q2.5)]**

Unsurprisingly, these online CoPs such as Facebook group of ALTs are overlapping with micro, meso, and/or macro CoPs, depending on the scale/range of the participants.

> **There's a Facebook group now called 'Japan teaching resources' and it's gotten very big. I think it's the mix of the other foreign educators and ALTs. If my JTE says, "Could we have this activity?" Then I can go on to one of the social media groups saying, "My JTE wants to try this activity. I don't know what they're talking about." [Extract 22: Silvia (Q2.5)]**

There are other examples of the nano CoPs that involves the family members. As it is also closely related to AoO, these stories will be demonstrated in the next section when we look at the features of apprenticeship.

**In Micro CoPs**

Majorities of the stories in the interviews are about the ALTs in micro CoPs which is understood as one of the school-based CoP mainly inside the classroom where the students and HRTs and/or JTEs are involved. Various team-teaching relationships and stories of marginalisation and participation through negotiations of meaning were observed.

*Inbound trajectories of ALTs from peripheral to the centre of the CoPs*

> **I just found that being a lot busier and gaining more experience really helped. Because the busier I was, the more I could get done. It's always the way. The less you do, the less you can do. Getting involved in the clubs (extra-curricular activities), started to go to the staff meetings, I just felt like I was more part of the school and I was valued more and I could contribute more, that was maybe 6 months ago. [Extract 23: Emma (Q1.6)]**

Like in Emma's story, ALTs feel themselves becoming a legitimate member of the CoPs by getting more lessons and other responsibilities. Then, what kind of relationships do ALTs have with the local teachers in team-teaching situation? The stories of twenty ALTs were analysed in accordance with the five team patterns presented in Tajino and Tajino (2000). Pattern A: the teachers as a team (two teachers work together on-stage), Pattern B and C: one teacher and the students as a team, Pattern D: two teams (one teacher and some students form one group and the other teacher and the rest of the students form another group), Pattern E: the whole class as a team. In addition to these five patterns in 'real' or 'strong' version of team-teaching, 'weak' version of team-teaching is found in the narratives of ALTs. I label this as Pattern F: plausible/mock team-teaching where the ALT is treated as an outsider or a wallflower.

*Team teaching in five patterns*

In the following narratives, there are cases that one story contains some overlaps of different team patterns because the ALTs work with several teachers and the decision about which team-teaching pattern they would enact is usually left to the local teachers.

> **Some co-workers want you to be more serious, others want you to be like a clown, so you change depending on who you're working with. ALTs don't have much of the choice. [Extract 24: Tina (Q1.3)]**

There was no episode considered to be categorised in Pattern D where they have two teams in class. However, this is a limitation of interviews since they cannot fully express the dynamic and fluid team-teaching relationships that the members of micro CoPs actually perform inside the classroom. That is why ethnographic approach through fieldwork is necessary to understand the complexity of narrative landscapes. Only selected excerpts are presented below to demonstrate each pattern of team-teaching. See Appendix K [B-2] for other stories.

[Pattern A: The teachers as a team]

> **The teachers will come to me, and we'll discuss what they have been doing in the class, what they want of accomplish and I ask what they want me to do. I come up with the plan sometimes on my own, sometimes in the middle of discussion. We discuss that and see if/how it needs to be tweaked, and then it becomes finalised. There's a lot of back and forth. They do give me actual responsibility. I've not been treated as just a program/robot. I'm alive and utilised. I don't know why they trust me like that, but I appreciate it a lot. [Extract 25: Dane (Q2.4)]**

> **I think sometimes in my JHS classes, I would describe it as my teacher is the father, and I'm sometimes the mother. When students don't want to go to their 'father' to ask them something because they might get a negative reaction, they will often come to 'mother.' Certainly, in my own childhood, I would always ask my mother before asking my father. So, I think that's very important for the students as well. [Extract 26: John (Q3.2)]**

In Pattern A, both ALTs and the local teachers seem to invest themselves to provide effective lessons for the students and a lot of positive negotiations of meaning and mutual engagement happen. Interestingly, John expressed the position of each teacher using the metaphor of 'parents' for the students.

[Pattern B & C: One teacher and the students as a team]

> **It's difficult to achieve the ideal team-teaching in the classroom. It tends to be not as balanced a lot of times. At some school, ALTs are not utilised enough. Whereas at my school, ALTs mostly plan the lessons. JTEs have more minor role in the class for the most part. [Extract 27: Kate (Q1.3)]**

This pattern would be the most common one. As Kate suggests, it is difficult to build mutual and equal team-teaching relationship. Indeed, the contextual factors and the competence of their team-teaching partners affect a lot.

[Pattern E: The whole class as a team]

> **My lesson is to focus on students' speaking for the whole lesson. Generally, we would just do the demonstration, show the kids and then, if the teacher's helping me, we will do monitor the class. We'll just move around the classroom monitoring separately, especially in the larger classes, to support students. [Extract 28: Tina (Q2.4)]**

Most of the ALTs said that there are different degrees of engagement from ALTs and JTEs/HRTs. When they have positive team-teaching relationship, the whole class can be one team sharing the same aims and tasks so that they can learn from each other. Whereas the following Pattern F shows no mutual engagement in team-teaching. It is like ALTs and HRTs/JTEs are 'ships that pass in the night.'

[Pattern F: Plausible/mock team-teaching, 'weak' version of team-teaching]

> **At ES, teachers are not really involved in the class. At JHS, it really varies between teachers. To be honest, I don't really work with teachers at all. Either I'm just standing there or they're just standing there. I don't want it to be that way, but I feel like it just is. [Extract 29: Donna (Q2.4)]**

In Donna's case, she articulated her concerns about lack of communication with the local teachers and her extremely weak team-teaching relationship. Like other ALTs pointed out, sometimes the local teachers are too busy to have time to discuss lesson plans with ALTs. Although team-teaching is viewed as the major duty/role for ALTs, not every ALT has opportunities to team-teach with their teachers. In the worst case, one ALT told me that his JTE was sitting at the back of the classroom one day, sleeping and snoring while he taught the class (Appendix G). They are not even a team.

Another ALT experienced downright bullying at school by a JTE, being cut off his access to the Internet in the staff room (Appendix K [B-2] Don). Furthermore, one female ALT expressed her experience of having a similar JTE in in McConnell (2000: 198) who said, "Of course, I didn't tell her (the ALT), but inside I was thinking, 'She's just a young girl, this is such a waste of time.'" (see

Appendix K [B-2] Hanna). It was a surprise to hear the similar story after almost a couple of decades past. However, this is still a part of the realities in Japanese school contexts. These issues of having no/less engagement from the local teachers and having such extremely inadequate teachers should be taken more seriously.

As mentioned earlier, there is a limitation of analysing the ALTs' narratives, especially regarding the team-teaching relationships, without observing their teaching practices. To redeem the weakness of having limited information through interviews, narrative landscapes are illustrated in Chapter 4.3.4. The narrative portfolio analysis displayed in Chapter 5 and 6 also shore up the limitations by configuring the narratives from interviews and reflective journals with the data from observations and fieldnotes.

*Negotiations of meaning: ALTs from the UK asked to use 'American English'*

Another reality in English education in Japan is revealed in the narratives of ALTs from the UK. As Igarashi (2017) points out, English mainly used in North America or 'American English' is considered as the most common 'standard' variety among English learners in Japan. She demonstrates that one of the reasons behind this is because people in Japan have much more opportunities to be exposed to 'American English' through media and the ALTs from North America. Some non-American ALTs explained how they adapt to the American English oriented education in Japan by negotiating their identities as a user of a different variety of English.

> **Not in the ES, but in the JHS, often the teachers ask me to speak in an American accent, which I can't do. For example, the pronunciation of the word 'castle.' Sometimes the students get confused and it causes a bit of disruption but they're getting used to my accent. I've started spelling things in the American way now, like 'color.' [Extract 30: Donna (Q4.2)]**

> **When I first came, I tried to fight against it (American English), a little bit. I still spell in the English form, and with the alphabet, I say /zéd/ not / zíː/. But sometimes I get frustrated by it because some of the sentence pattern is unfamiliar to me, because it's a different version of English. But I honestly believe the American version of English is easier because there're less phonetic sounds. The spelling is simplified compared to (British) English. So, if I say 'soccer' because that's what everybody understands, but I spent at least a year trying to convince everybody to say 'football.' I don't think that is being so important anymore because I think my attitudes changed slightly in that. It's more important that the students can understand and use the English. Even if it's not**

> **my idea of how I would like them to use English. Because the main thing is their learning. So, you have to be willing just to relax and say okay. [Extract 31: John (Q2.1)]**

The ALTs from the UK reacted differently in the process of their negotiations of meaning, but each ALT has been trying to find a happy medium to maximise the students' learning. Such identity transformation/modulation process is one of the most important aspects of the expertise of the language teachers demonstrated in Tsui (2003).

**<u>In Meso CoPs</u>**

The stories presented here relate to meso CoPs, which is based on the school community where the students, ALTs and not only the HRTs and/or JTEs but other local teachers are involved. As well as in micro CoPs, there are stories of marginalisation, participation and adaptation. (see also Appendix K [B-3])

> **There's this feeling like you are an outsider. Especially if you don't speak any Japanese at all. Being in the staff room all day long, the other teachers will be talking to each other, chit-chatting, but I don't understand what they're saying. Nobody talks to me. Some of the other teachers like the home economics teacher or the Spanish teacher who speak a little bit of English try to have conversation with me, but the JTEs don't talk to me at all. Just this feeling of isolation. So, only outlet for me and for most ALTs is the Internet. Just to add to my isolation that I feel in the office, often times the other teachers will bring snacks or treats for the whole office and they will go around and pass out a snack to each of the desks. Every time they will just pass right over me and go to the next desk. The most offensive time was at Halloween, which is an American holiday. The teachers were giving candy to all the other teachers, except for me. That is just the most insulting, the rudest thing that you can do, and they just don't even care. So, I don't feel like I'm a part of them at all. [Extract 32: Peter (Q2.1)]**

> **I go to work social events like *enkai*s (drinking parties). I think it really helps. I'm not currently in any teacher club, but I used to be in the mountain climbing club at the previous school with some of my co-workers. That was a group of people from different department, going to mountain climbing during break or test grading. [Extract 33: Silvia (Q2.4)]**

The stories above are two extreme cases based on the relationships of each ALT and the others in meso CoPs. Peter experienced severe marginalisation, whereas Silvia participated in various

activities outside the school with her colleagues. Such a huge gap between their modes of participation seemed to be created not because of the personality of the ALT but the sociality of the members in each CoP.

**In Macro CoPs**

Some examples related to the macro CoPs have already been presented such as online CoPs among ALTs. Also, some of the meso, micro, and/or nano CoPs above are overlapping with macro CoPs because there are no clear boundaries between CoPs. The following story is an additional example of macro CoPs, which represents a larger scale community including BoEs and people working in different schools (see also Appendix K [B-4]).

> **In our region, there are 14 ALTs and we have regular days where we will meet up and share materials. Also, we share experiences because in my schools, some teachers' conversational English is good, but it's not the same as talking to somebody who has English for his/her first language. Sometimes it's nice just to meet with everybody and speak English and use a wider vocabulary range. It's very important I think for ALTs to support each other because everybody is in the similar situation. [Extract 34: John (Q2.5)]**

John's case suggests that even the same CoP with the same members, sometimes it would function professionally in macro level, but it also works personally as nano CoP among friends from different angle. As previously explained, there is no clear boundaries between CoPs and they are overlapping with each other, sometimes sharing the same definitions of competence.

**In Mega CoPs**

Lastly, an example of CoPs in mega level is demonstrated. In this study, mega CoPs indicate larger scale communities which have nation-wide impact such as MEXT, NPO or associations for language teachers like the JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching).

> **I join the JALT, the professional network. That's also a great way to improve myself. I went to S-university for a forum on listening. It was about the basic bottom-up process in listening activities. I already did some of the ideas and a lot of additional great ideas to use in NS, ES and JHS, which are my teaching contexts. [Extract 35: Gary (Q2.3)]**

Gary is an ALT who has longer years of experience and he is self-motivated to actively engage in the wider community such as forums and conferences held at different universities. Not all ALTs are taking the opportunities of professional development like him. Fortunately, he participated in second phase of the study and I had a chance to follow his practices over a year as well as Amy, Dane, Glen, John, Nash, Tina.

### 4.3.3 Features of apprenticeship in ALTs' learning

As illuminated through narrative analysis, ALTs are recognised as newcomers both professionally and socially/culturally in most cases (Chapter 4.3.1 & 4.3.2). They learn how to teach through their work mainly from apprenticeship. It is true for many ALTs that "[a] newcomer's tasks are short and simple, the costs of errors are small, the apprentice has little responsibility for the activity as a whole" and "learning in practice, apprentice learners know that there is a field for the mature practice of what they are learning to do" (Lave & Wenger, 1991: 110). Here, I examine the features of apprenticeship in the learning of ALTs from two angles: AoO (Lortie, 1975) and craftsmanship model apprenticeship (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Some ALTs mentioned that they have just developed their own teaching style from scratch through trial and error.

> **It's interesting coming here and then looking back on the worksheets I created in the first year. I've learnt quite a bit just through classroom teaching. I'm sure that I still do not know quite a bit. There's no direct supervisor for our language teaching/learning process. So, a lot of it is a trial and error. A lot of it is self-directed learning I feel. [Extract 36: Glen (Q2.3)]**

In Glen's case, there seem to be no experience of apprenticeship in craft model. While others referred to their experiences of learning to teach in indirect ways from fictional characters in a cartoon/film.

> **If you enter this profession, it's going to be partially a reflection of your personal background and what you'd experienced and what you enjoyed as a student. In the movie 'Dead Poets Society', it seemed like John Keating's character genuinely cared, let them live their own life, but tried to guide a little bit and make it not so stoic in the classroom. The sculptor of young minds. I guess that's my role in the classroom as an educator: "Making it interesting, without making it cartoonish." [Extract 37: Dane (Q3.2)]**

As Dane pointed out, sometimes we are not fully aware of the influence from our experiences in our identity formation process, but they certainly have an impact on who we are today. Golombek and Doran (2014: 104) argue that "[n]ovice teachers interact with *scientific concepts* (knowledge based on systematic observations and theoretical investigation) through *spontaneous concepts* (knowledge based on what they have previously observed and experienced as students), and conversely *spontaneous* through *scientific*, in order to move beyond the limitations of their *apprenticeship of observation*" (italics in original). In some cases, ALTs do not have access to the scientific concepts and AoO does not seem to have negative influence and cause any limitations on their work. Rather, AoO can be conceived as an important basis for their teaching practices which helps them to activate their imagination to get legitimate peripheral participation in CoPs. Some ALTs articulated how they perceive their experience of AoO both in frontstage as a student and from backstage observing teachers' practice as a family member.

**AoO in frontstage**

> **I like to do project in my class rather than having one-shot lessons. I prefer to do less speaking as a teacher and more group-based activities or project-based activities and let the students learn on their own and help them with the project. I don't have anyone in particular for the model of that teaching style, but a lot of ideas are drawn from memories of things that I've done in my own classes. Lot of them are from my high school and middle school English classes refurbished or simplified for English as a second language class. [Extract 38: Kate (Q3.2)]**

> **My German teacher. She was a younger teacher who understood jokes and knew a music we're listening to. She conducted her whole lesson in German, she was really passionate about what she did. I think she was very influential. [Extract 39: Nash (Q3.2)]**

These narratives illustrate that AoO in frontstage gave them insights about pedagogical knowledge and skills that would be a basis for their teaching practice as ALTs. Some ALTs seem to have acquired their core beliefs and attitudes as a teacher from their experience as a student in their school days, having teachers who are emotionally and socially intelligent (see also Appendix K [C-1]).

**<u>AoO from backstage</u>**

> **My sister's been in Japan for about 20 years. The first couple of years after I came here, the person who I would ask for advice was definitely my sister. She did an ALT under the JET programme at ES. She runs her own school now, no longer does ALT work, but she's now an LGT, language guest teacher, who visits different schools and comes in the class a couple of times a week. Without her, it would be very tough to do the ALT job. [Extract 40: Gary (Q2.2)]**

Gary's story implies that he has opportunities to learn about language teaching through his sister as a former ALT in Japan. However, as far as I know, this aspect of AoO have not been fully addressed in any research yet. This concept of AoO from backstage will be investigated more through second phase of the study.

**<u>Apprenticeship: ALTs' modes of participation in CoPs</u>**

In the questionnaire answers, many ALTs expressed that ALTs are necessary for the English language education and JTEs are not an ideal model as an English teacher. However, ALTs must work together with the local teachers even though their professional identity do not always harmoniously interface with that of JTEs/HRTs. How do the ALTs accommodate their identity to become a member of the English education contexts in Japan?

> **All the teachers, I have found, have a very specific pattern of how they want to teach their lessons, which they have spent years developing themselves and now comfortable with, so, the ALTs are locked into that. [Extract 41: John (Q2.4)]**

The iridescent identities of ALTs are highlighted throughout the narrative analysis like in John's case. Basically, ALTs are expected to follow the local teachers' lead as assistants. It means that they have to modulate their roles according to the expectations from each teacher. If one ALT has dozens of teachers as his/her teaching partners, he/she needs to accommodate him/herself to dozens of teaching patterns. In general, apprenticeship for ALTs is mainly the process of learning about different teaching styles of their teaching partners. Yet, there are some cases that ALTs act their identity as teachers and offer mentorship to novice teachers including JTEs, HRTs, and fellow ALTs. The following section examines the features of apprenticeship in relationships with other teachers where ALTs could be both a mentor and a mentee.

*ALTs as mentors or 'sempai' (senior/earlier colleagues)*

There are cases that ALTs act as mentors to guide and support JTEs/HRTs. Through giving mentorship, ALTs also learn how to teach. The aspects of ALTs' mentorship include the use of technology in the classroom such as interactive television, not just helping local teachers improve their English language/teaching skills. Such mentorship process also enhances their sense of belonging, increasing their legitimacy/membership in CoPs.

> **With a younger teacher, often I'll help her make a lesson plan. She's more open to making a lesson together. When the new teacher came to my school and I felt like a *sempai*, I think I developed a lot as a teacher. I thought "Oh, maybe my ideas are important." It helped me a lot to see how to teach by helping another teacher. In the beginning, I did most of the teaching actually, because I already knew the students from ES. [Extract 42: Lina (Q3.3)]**

As presented in the survey results (Chapter 4.2.3), some ALTs are involved in the curriculum development process in macro level CoPs. It seems that ALTs who have longer experience are likely to have more opportunities to participate in wider practices like in organisational level.

> **The BoE ask me feedback to know how's everything going, how are the teachers dealing with the new curriculum, who do you want to do your *kenkyu-jyugyo* (open/demonstration lesson for study where other teachers are invited to observe) with. Two years ago, we rebuilt the curriculum for ES in the town. They want my feedback on that. [Extract 43: Gary (Additional question about the difference between the status of T-NET and NET)]**

Here, the local teachers and supervisors at BoE seem to act as apprentices by asking Gary for advice in curriculum development. The features of apprenticeship in the work of ALTs would include such pattern that ALTs as mentors and professional English teachers provide opportunities of apprenticeship to the local teachers.

*ALTs as mentees*

As demonstrated in Chapter 4.3.2, ALTs usually go through apprenticeship in the school-based CoPs to learn how to teach English and how to perform/behave as a teacher in the classroom. ALTs' narratives illustrate the cases that HRTs, JTEs, and predecessor ALTs are regarded as their mentors like in the stories in Appendix K [C-3]. When ALTs regard their HRTs/JTEs as mentors, they refer to dispositions of the teachers and how they approach/support students. While in the

cases that JTEs are involved, ALTs also mentioned the specific ways to teach grammar points, write on the blackboard, use music, and keep lesson speed as well. Although ALTs are supposed to have 'expert' status in English as 'native' speakers, the features of apprenticeship indicate that novice ALTs often find it helpful to observe local teachers' practices in the school contexts in Japan when they start teaching as newcomers.

*'Remote apprenticeship' between predecessor and successor ALTs*

One of the significant findings of this study is 'remote apprenticeship' between predecessor and successor ALTs. They share the same contextual background, working in the same school-based CoPs. Many ALTs start teaching in Japan without taking formal teacher trainings, so this apprenticeship from their predecessors means a lot in their initial work as novice ALTs. As such, they are planning to pass down the teaching materials and other relevant information about the context to their successors in most cases.

> **When I first came here, I used a lot of my predecessor's ideas, she left me a lot of activity suggestions. But her ideas are mainly about reading and writing, and what I want to do with my students is more speaking activities. So, now I work my own.**
> **[Extract 44: Nash (Q3.2)]**

As a SHS JTE, I have not experienced this type of apprenticeship across time with my predecessors/successors. It seems like a unique and effective peer-support system among ALTs.

As Tajino (2002: 40) demonstrates, "[i]t has shown that the native teachers (ALTs) in team teaching may be expected to make a qualitative change and/or a quantitative change, and that their role as expected by the non-native teachers (JTEs) may involve not only pedagogical but also social aspects." The next section delineates the narrative landscapes where ALTs belong and their relations to the social and cultural backgrounds in English education in Japan.

### 4.3.4 Narrative landscapes: challenges for ALTs

The narratives of ALTs exemplify their brittle and iridescent professional identities. There are no clear definitions in their duties and roles at school. They are just labelled the ambiguous status as assistants. Also, there seems to be no specifications for their work and the expectations from

the schools and the local teachers would vary. The situation for each ALT is very much different in the spectrum from a legitimate co-worker who has full access to every resource in the school and the local community to just someone from a foreign country coming into the classroom instead of a tape/CD player or standing at the corner of the classroom like a furniture. Some ALTs are working at many different schools with many teachers who have different teaching styles. Sometimes they only have one or two lessons per term at ES. This educational environment and the ALT system make things more difficult for them. In some cases, team-teaching seems very difficult or nearly impossible. Looking more closely at the questionnaire responses in Table 4.3 and interview data, most of the time ES ALTs make lesson plans and materials by themselves and check them with HRTs when possible, and then lead the lessons. JHS ALTs tend to be more on the subordinate role and they usually do what the JTEs tell them to do. SHS ALTs seem to be in the mixture of both tendencies at ES and JHS, depending on the level and the type of schools.

The quotes in Appendix K [D] display the pieces of narrative landscapes provided from ALTs' 'stories to live by', trying to draw the realities and the contexts where the ALTs live like a mosaic. In some cases, successful and positive language learning experience as a student and AoO would cause the ALT's feelings of resistance towards Japanese style language education because of the conflicting views and beliefs in the language teachers' identity. Lack of chances to develop shared repertoire seems to trigger obstacles to actualise mutual engagement. Sociocultural norms could work negatively in the dynamics of the language classroom, such as heavily utilised exam-oriented grammar translations, conformist environment created by the teachers and students, lack of technology in the classroom, and resistance expressed by some local teachers in employing innovative ideas or something new. For instance, it is not surprising that the use of mobile phones is prohibited at the state schools, even at SHS. The local teachers tend not to change the school rules which were set up decades ago.

The following two chapters investigate more closely about the processes of ALTs' learning as teachers through their experiences of participation in multiple CoPs in narrative portfolios.

# Chapter 5 Narrative portfolios: Gary, Amy, Glen, and John

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 demonstrate the learning of ALTs through narrative portfolio (NP) analysis with the seven ALTs. As presented in Chapter 2, this study is based on the CoPs (Lave & Wenger, 1991) framework, looking into the functions and mechanisms of those communities where the learning experiences are mutually constructed by the participants. Specifically, the mechanisms of CoPs indicate the dynamics between the contextual background and relationships among its members like how each CoP accepts newcomers and gives them legitimate membership, whereas the functions of CoPs determine how these mechanisms interplay to bring learning opportunities to its members. Narrative portfolios of the seven ALTs from the data set in Table 3.6 reveal the processes of their learning as teachers by utilising different modes of participation in multiple CoPs: imagination, alignment and engagement. The narratives of ALTs illuminate the features of teacher learning in CoPs through their life experience including AoO. The researcher/narrator explores their learning as individual, as communities, and as organisations, referring to the five-level model of CoPs demonstrated in Figure 2.1. Hereafter, seven narrative portfolios are shown according to the professional life phases (Day & Gu, 2007) explained in Chapter 2.2.2 (Table 2.1). In Chapter 5, narrative portfolios of Gary who is in the professional life phase of defining work-life balance, and Amy, Glen and John who are in the phase of developing professional identity are presented. Chapter 6 includes narrative portfolios of Nash, Tina, and Dane who are in the professional life phase of learning which builds identity and classroom competence, followed by the findings from cross-case analyses. Each narrative portfolio has a structural framing in common which involves two angles to facilitate 'narrative knowledging' (Barkhuizen, 2011): 1) the ALT's learning from past experience including AoO and apprenticeship in his/her early career; and 2) the ALT's recent learning experience through participation in multiple CoPs, some of which I observed through fieldwork. Each narrative portfolio is opened up with an introductory quote from the participant him/herself and the profile of the ALT adapted from Table 3.2 including his/her employment type and length of experience as an ALT, educational background, and contextual background information such as the numbers of schools/lessons/students to teach as of school year 2015.

## 5.1 Narrative portfolio of Gary

*"I had a lot of real challenges along the way, personally and professionally, and I was able to overcome, and make me who I am today."*

Table 5.1 Profile of Gary

| Participant | Employment type | Education | Languages | Schools | Lessons / week | Students / class | Lesson styles | Extra-curricular activities | Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gary<br>US | NET (CELTA)<br>8 years<br>(T-NET 4 years + NET 4 years) | BA International Studies | English<br>Spanish<br>Japanese | 2 NS,<br>2 ES,<br>2 JHS | 15 | from 8 to 15 | ALT leads | (JALT member) | rural |

Teacher learning for Gary was observed in all five-level CoPs. He experienced AoO from backstage offered by his elder sister in nano CoPs. He went through apprenticeship with the local teachers and the students, building positive mutual learning relationships with them in micro and meso CoPs. The new practice 'Skype interview project' led by Gary connected the school and the BoE in macro level. Also, he has been engaging in professional networking in mega CoPs like the JALT as presented in Chapter 4.3.2.

### 5.1.1 Apprenticeship of learning: Gary's case

Gary is a directly hired NET in a small town, and it is his fourth year. He is working at two schools where each one of his NS, ES and JHS share the same school grounds. There is no SHS in the town, so most of the students have to go to the neighbour city for their study after graduate from JHS. He came to Japan to look for a change in his life. The main reasons for his decision are because it does not require any qualification to become an ALT and his sister is a former ALT who still teaches English in Japan. As illustrated in Chapter 4.3.3 (Extract 40: Gary (Q2.2)), Gary said his initial learning as an ALT was mainly from 'AoO from backstage' provided by his elder sister who used to be a JET ALT. For the first couple of years, he said, "without her, it would be very tough." In addition to his sister's help, he keeps contact with other ALTs, using Facebook group to exchange ideas for lessons.

As the saying goes, 'Rome was not built in a day.' It seems that Gary has been taking inbound trajectory steadily, but it took at least six years to gain core membership in school-based CoPs with a strong sense of professionalism. He started his career in Japan as a T-NET, an ALT

dispatched from a temporary staffing agency. In his early career, he could not act like a professional teacher. He recalled that “the HRTs usually don't say anything, so I just get the kids all lined up. That's how I survived the first two years.” But he has been seeking his professional development as a language teacher which motivated him to join the CELTA course in his third year as a T-NET, to move on from T-NET to full-time NET position, and to become a member of JALT (the Japan Association for Language Teaching). “I really enjoy teaching whether it's Japan or not. So, I did my CELTA certification.” All the teachers in various phases/stages in their career should be always in the state of ‘professionally developing’, he said. “So, I started getting more and more workshops, reading books.” He does not have any formal training opportunities as an ALT. Instead, he has sought other opportunities for his professional development, attending the JALT conferences and forums run by university lecturers as presented in Chapter 4.3.2 (Extract 35: Gary (Q2.3)). He told me about the professional development as a teacher and the participation in the JALT as follows:

> **I joined the JALT and realised I'm actually doing all right about two years ago. That's the stage I can vividly remember. I learned how to better collaborate with other teachers, working with the JALT. [Extract 45: Gary NP1]**

Presumably, not many ALTs have such experience. As far as I know, Gary is the only ALT among the participants who joins the JALT. Gary’s case is a very interesting example where we can see teacher learning for ALTs could happen through the participation in mega CoPs. He pointed out that “almost all the ALTs I know have NOT invested much into their training,” and “they are like “No, I just do what the HRT says,” and they (HRTs) usually don't say anything.” Unfortunately, there are some ALTs who do not take the job seriously, regarding it as holidays in Japan as other ALTs also complained. In the final interview, Gary articulated that:

> **I felt more like an expert. I'm working hard on my own professional development, the same also me developing my Japanese ability better communicate the things that are very important to them (his co-workers and students). [Extract 46: Gary NP2]**

In fact, he has meetings with his colleagues mostly in Japanese. As one of the results of his successful communication and negotiation with other teachers, he initiated the English lessons at NS after having discussions with HRTs, despite there was no fixed English curriculum for that school level. It is his idea that all the NS kids have English lessons once a week in that town.

Gary has experienced many bumps along the way to get legitimate membership in the school-based CoPs. He has good relationships with the local teachers, those who are the “teachers who let me in.” However, this does not happen all the time. He observes students well and tries to

exchange information about the students who need special care by attending the teachers' meetings regularly. Yet, he used to be told to wait outside the staff room during the morning meetings at one school. "The school's talked about how to deal with this one student. Why didn't anyone ever include me?" Finally, he got access to the meetings after the NS, ES and JHS were consolidated into one school the year before. Those meetings are conducted in Japanese and he feels it is a great opportunity for him to test/improve his Japanese ability. Looking back his experience as a NET in the town, he mentioned that:

> **Second and third year, I felt more confident as my Japanese ability developed a lot more, so I could make sure I understood the curriculum what they wanted. I had a year working with the 'Super Teacher' who is not an English teacher but he's fluent in English and led the writing of the curriculum. [Extract 47: Gary NP3]**

They had a good relationship, constantly exchanging ideas "for both of us to grow," he said. It is a part of his apprenticeship experience in meso CoPs. In contrast, he also mentioned the experience of mentoring two new teachers coming to ES from JHS because of the school consolidation: "They don't know what they're doing, specifically with teaching English" at first. He gave them some feedback on their use of language, suggesting to give the students more time to think about how they respond. As a full-time teacher, he is also involved in the classroom management issues. In a journal, he explained one of the situations as follows:

> **I had a great break through with my 5th grade class dealing with social issues. The teacher initiated a short meeting with me. We agreed to change the way the class is being managed. The teacher admitted to needing help. It was very productive!!! Especially working with the same teacher 2 years in a row, dealing with classroom management styles that I disagree with, and never really seeing positive results. There is plenty of room for the two of us to grow. It feels great to know we are going to make those steps to grow! [Extract 48: Gary NP4]**

Gary's stories tell us that sometimes it goes quickly with little effort and sometimes it takes time for us as human beings who have different personalities and backgrounds to come to the point where we can work together in collaboration and learn from each other. The point here would be that the relationships among the member of CoPs could be shifting over time and mutual learning could happen anytime once they are ready.

### 5.1.2 Learning through doing: teacher learning for Gary

Gary has fifteen lessons per week at NS, ES and JHS level. Each class size is small and there are from eight to fifteen students in one class. At one school, there is ‘English room’ where he can store all the materials and books, arranging desks and chairs freely. The students come there with their HRT when they have English lessons. The other school does not have English room, so Gary visits students’ homeroom classes, which is the most common style in Japan. He believes that the most important dispositions for teachers are to be aware of the class culture, observe students well, and cultivate positive atmosphere in the classroom where they can feel safe to make any mistakes. When he creates the lesson plans and prepares materials for his lessons, he always tries to make sure they fulfil three main points, ‘connect, extend, and challenge’, so that the students can learn. He said, “it is important to adjust the students’ level and be flexible about the content of lessons.” When I observed his lessons, he used various materials such as picture cards, songs, charts, copies of a webpage, and games which he got the idea from CELTA course or his sister and modified them to fit in his lessons. During the lesson, he was constantly trying to include HRTs to show students role models, asking them to demonstrate in front of the class with him because “to be a great role model to their students, which is I believe what the job title is.” When I attended some of the pre-lesson meetings of Gary and his HRTs/JTEs, he made a lot of suggestions on how to introduce the topic, which materials to use, and how to modify the activities to fit the students’ levels, etc. Gary seems to take a leading role in the whole process of English education at both schools from planning to giving feedback/evaluations. He often mentioned that he is in the process of professional development and constantly learning through his day-to-day practice.

*Mutually constructed learning with the pupils as old-timers*

Sometimes Gary implements ideas that just come up to his mind during the lesson. He usually puts a word ‘juice’ after the names of fruits when he introduces the vocabulary to preschool kids so that they can remember English words easily. It was inspired by one of the toddlers who suddenly started saying that in his lesson. In Japanese, we use the word ‘juice’ as well. Gary found out that introducing new vocabulary with their familiar word, in this case ‘juice’, could enhance their learning through interaction, seeing the other kids also followed with joy. That happened two years ago, and since then, he has been doing the same when he has the similar lessons. He mentioned how he enjoys teaching kids in NS in his journal:

> **Kindergarten continues to shine. The past success of getting the kindergarten teachers to buy into their lessons, be active, have plenty of say and most of the responsibility worked great and continues to pay dividends. I still need some help with one teacher who is new. However, having our meetings all together provides great modelling for the new to this kindergarten and working with me teacher. [Extract 49: Gary NP5]**

Gary has built a productive learning partnership with NS teachers, having regular meetings and mutually investing in this new attempt to provide English lessons.

*Use of Japanese as a local definition of competence: A role model as a 'language learner'*

As described earlier, Gary often uses Japanese, which is the first language of his students and colleagues. He has a strong belief that teachers should be a role model for their students. To show a successful model of language learner, Gary makes every effort to become a better Japanese speaker/user. He has acquired Spanish as his second language and the positive language learning experience in his childhood seemed to form his beliefs. When he talked about successful students who learn English well, he said, "Their parents have done a great job, like my parents did in that, exposing them to a lot of different words, languages and ideas." Gary seems to feel that his family background and his parents' support helped him to become a successful language learner. "I grew up in a very globally positive home," he mentioned. That leads him to be more confident in his teaching by demonstrating how he has learned languages to his students as a role model. Hence, Gary encourages students to express themselves freely in either English or Japanese, both inside and outside the class. In English room, there are some English posters with his handwritten explanations in Japanese on the wall. Also, he set up 'English Communication Board' in the corridor, putting a weekly question on which students can write their answers either in English or Japanese (Figure 5.1). According to Gary, he borrowed the idea from the Facebook group of ALTs. He described about it in a journal:

> **The "question of the week" clipboard continues to be actively involved in by the students. This week wasn't an easy question. I asked about the win over South Africa in world cup. All the students just copied my answer and there were only 4-5 responses. It's a good sign to still have that many responses when it's a more difficult and less cookie-cutter answer. [Extract 50: Gary NP6]**

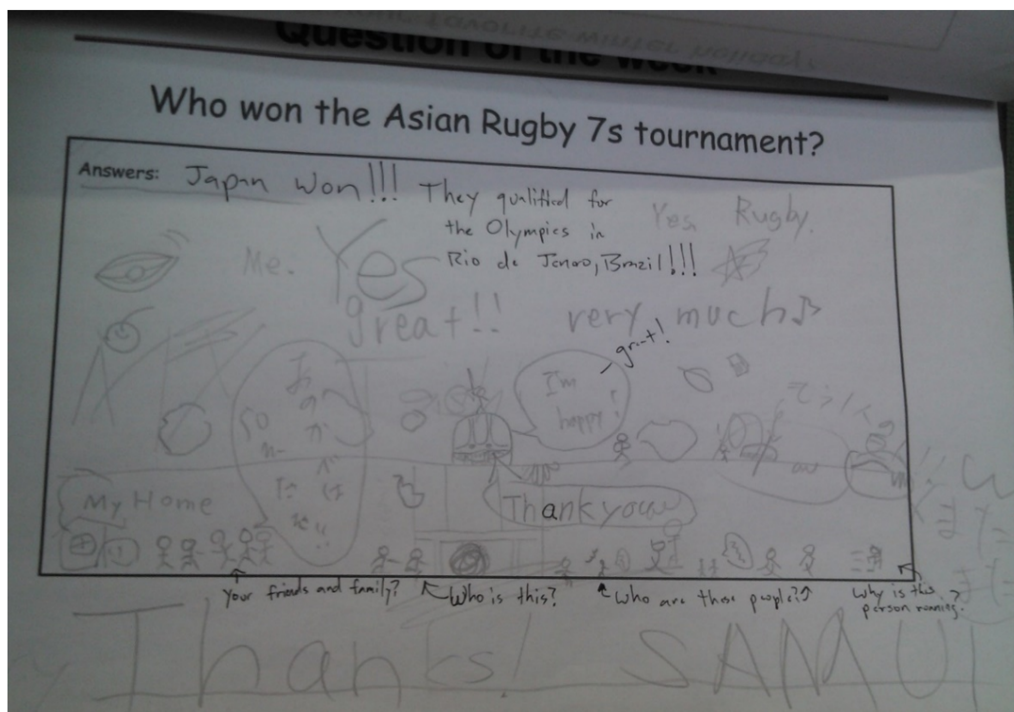


Figure 5.1 “Question of the Week” on English Communication Board [Gary]

Through the communication on the clipboard, the mutuality in their learning has been sustained: Gary could arouse students’ curiosity about a wider world and check the level of their understandings, whereas the students could provide information about their feelings, thoughts and sometimes Japanese expressions which are new to Gary. They all share the same identity as language learners. Indeed, this practice seems to play an important part for his learning as a teacher.

*Negotiations of meaning: Obstacles in team-teaching and an idea to bridge the gap*

Despite his effort, some of his co-teachers have problems in terms of keeping the team-teaching going well. In a journal, he described that:

> **The usual trend of teachers not being prepared despite our meeting continued. It didn’t disrupt the lesson per say but the lessons could have been better. It meant we got a little side-tracked and away from our lesson goals but not necessarily from the over goals of learning. [Extract 51: Gary NP7]**

As for one solution, he started to post a sheet of paper with the aim and timeline of the activities for each lesson on the blackboard (Figure 5.2).

> **Writing the lesson plan on the board or printing it out in minute-by-minute fashion really seems to help the students. Moreover, it helps the team-teaching. It keeps me on track and works like a written contract to keep the HRT/JTE on track. I will start using it every lesson. I had been using it only with 3rd and 4th grade at the smaller school due to team-teaching issues such as teachers not being prepared and following along with the lesson. [Extract 52: Gary NP8]**

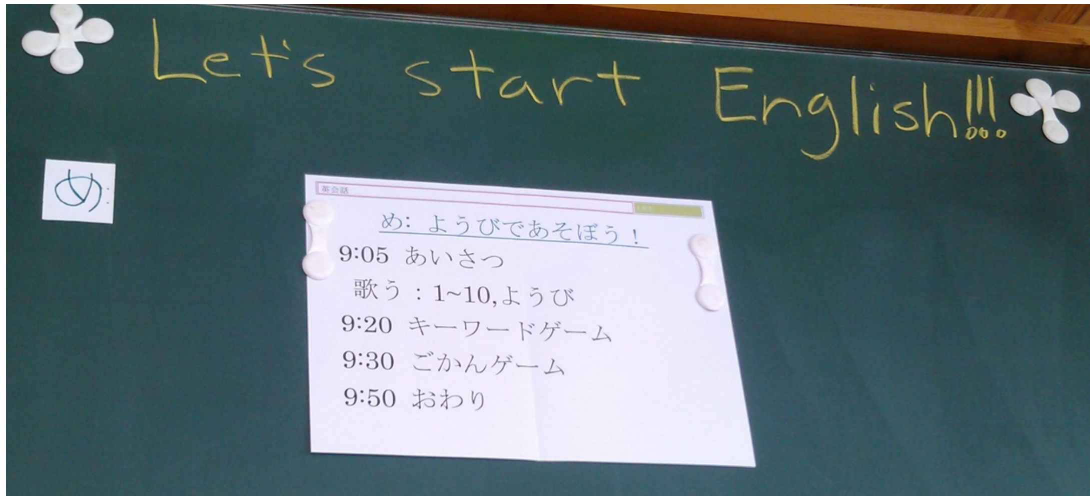


Figure 5.2 The lesson plan on the blackboard written in Japanese [Gary]

As Gary commented, this new idea of showing the lesson plan to everyone in the classroom benefits a lot to enhance their team-learning relationship. It was initially implemented to bridge the gap caused by some HRTs' lack of investment in lesson preparation, but he has extended its positive effects to the other classrooms/micro-CoPs. It is an example of diversion of teacher learning.

*Acting as a broker: introducing a new approach 'Skype interview lessons'*

Gary has a clear vision for being a good teacher: giving students informative lessons and enhancing their learning to make them autonomous learners. He attempted to roll out project-based language learning in his JHS. One of the examples is the Skype interviews with his friends in the US. He described this project was the most memorable experience in the school year 2015. "The students chose what they did and how they approached the topic. They really did a good job of taking ownership of that," he said. One of the most important parts was that Gary not only guided his students and teachers at the school but also succeeded to get people in the local BoE

and his friends in the US involved in the project. He received very positive feedback from all of them. He wrote in a reflection as follows:

> **The interview project using Skype to call the BoE was a big success. The kids really did great and liked using Skype. It was also very positive at the BoE. The teacher supervisor at the BoE wants to do it again!!! Process and concept scaffolding were key components in the success of those mini projects. Both for the students, co-teachers, and BoE. Very natural conversations happened!!! All the conversation skills and strategies we had been working on were used by both the native speaker and the students. It was great. [Extract 53: Gary NP9]**

Also, in the interview he said, "we really had a great multi-cultural, multi-lingual communication activity. That's what I wanted to do a lot in the past 2-3 years." This project seems to be a great mutual learning experience for the members in different CoPs connected by the ALT as a hinge: his friends in the US in nano CoPs, the students and JTEs in micro CoPs, other colleagues in meso CoPs, and the supervisor at BoE in a macro CoP. He added, "if you can get the teachers to do their job, I think it'll happen, no problem. The only thing is holding students back in this context from talking to see each other around the world, one is the teachers." It seems that he intended to provide the opportunity of professional development for JTEs and the supervisor in the local BoE to maximise the students' opportunities for learning.

*Outlook of his learning trajectory*

After the contracted period is over, he is pursuing the career as an English teacher but not as an ALT any longer. In a journal, Gary wrote that "I was hoping for more freedom to deal with students' needs instead of the needs of the curriculum." He is thinking of launching his own language school online so that he will be able to plan everything by himself. He described his feelings about leaving the ALT job that: "I have enjoyed working in public schools. I have learned a lot about teaching and grown immensely as a person. I want to work with more motivated students, interesting topics, people from around the world, and professionals. I will miss recess and the kids. I won't miss team-teaching…" In the final interview, he commented on what he had learned through his work as an ALT:

> **I think I was able to be a lot more patient, how I asking questions is improved, how to be a better manager overall definitely improved, both inter-personally and intra-personally. Managing young kids and adults, too. [Extract 54: Gary NP10]**

He explained the transformation of his identity using a metaphor of a vase with a lot of scratches. "Maybe I'm a little more scattered brain than I used to be." As illuminated in the narratives of ALTs in Chapter 4.3, they tend to be expected to act like chameleons, changing their attitudes/roles in class according to each HRT's/JTE's style. When they work in more than two school levels, of course the students and teachers have different expectations towards ALTs, and they must adapt to each school context. As a newcomer getting into the unfamiliar culture/society, they are in a vulnerable position overcoming a lot of hardships and obstacles where no one can be unhurt. However, these scratches could create complex and beautiful combinations of the multiple colours in prism when you shine a light. It seems that his vase metaphor expresses the iridescent identity of ALTs. Here, 'iridescent' is defined as having "a lustrous rainbowlike play of colour caused by differential refraction of light waves that tends to change as the angle of view changes" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). According to his narratives, professional identity of ALTs could be understood as such.

## 5.2 Narrative portfolio of Amy

*"The students and our co-workers may see some of us as real teachers, but the system doesn't. Some of us NETs feel strongly enough that we are trying to change the system."*

Table 5.2 Profile of Amy

| Participant | Employment type | Education | Languages | Schools | Lessons / week | Students / class | Lesson styles | Extra-curricular activities | Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amy<br>US | NET<br>6 years<br>(JET 4 years + NET 2 years) | BA English<br>MA Library Science | English<br>Spanish<br>Japanese | 5 ES,<br>2 JHS | 20 | from 9 to 70 (usually 20 or 40) | Mixed<br>Team-teaching or ALT leads | (NET Union member) | urban |

Amy experienced closer apprenticeship in micro CoPs with the local teachers in her early career. It might be because Amy was a former JET ALT, while Gary used to be a T-NET. They are both NETs, but their status is different because the town and the city have different ALT system. Teacher learning opportunities are greatly affected by the sociality of the community where they belong to. Amy seems to have a lot more opportunities for networking with other ALTs in a big city, whereas Gary has no such things and it might lead him to join the JALT.

### 5.2.1 Apprenticeship of learning: Amy's case

Amy is a NET directly employed by a city BoE and this is her sixth year as an ALT. When she first came to Japan, she was on the JET programme. She has been working in ES and JHS level, learning how to teach mainly through apprenticeship. Recently she started to mentor some novice HRTs and JTEs like her mentors used to support her. In the interview, she recalled her apprenticeship of learning as a JET ALT:

> **A lot of times ES, they wanted us to go into other classes and just be there. So, like that observing was helpful in terms of being able to hear that type of Japanese (for classroom management) that the teachers use and to remember it. One year, I worked at a small ES and basically ended up being the assistant for the 1st grade class. The 1st grade teacher was my *tanto-sha* (mentor/go-between). She just said, "Come on, and help me!" That was a really big learning experience. [Extract 55: Amy NP1]**

Amy has transferred these in-class experiences to her teaching practice and mentorship. She has been keeping very detailed diaries and kindly shared them with me, so I could see how she has worked with her students, HRTs and JTEs in seven different schools both inside and outside the class. She wrote in journal entries as follows:

> **8th grade: JTE is real young and only started teaching at all in April. Our first class didn't go well because I was exhausted, and she still doesn't know how to lead. She asked advice from other JTEs and apologized profusely to me, to which I just said: "It's your first year. Learn from the other JTEs, cause they're good, but don't expect to be like them in one day." The second class I faked more energy, we both learned from what went wrong the first time and class went better. [Extract 56: Amy NP2]**

> **6th grade: Another lesson only planned by the HRT. Both teachers are having the kids do presentations, today was the rehearsal, but there's too much English that the students still can't read. The kids hadn't practiced any of the phrases they had to present enough. I lost any shyness and gave the HRT a bunch of suggestions on the way out the door. Yes, moving too fast through material is the exact same inexperienced mistake I used to make. [Extract 57: Amy NP3]**

According to her narratives, it seems that the fundamentals of teacher learning for Amy were provided from legitimate participation in the actual classroom offered by one HRT at ES in her early career as a JET ALT. Later, she utilises her own experience of apprenticeship to give advice to the newly qualified inexperienced JTEs and HRTs. Clearly, she was trying to pass down the knowledge and the basic mind set for professional development to the novices/newcomers in the

school-based CoPs. As illustrated through Amy's experience, legitimate participation in the classroom meant a lot to her in developing professional identity as a teacher. There are some local teachers who treat ALTs as a guest/visitor, but such attitudes create marginalisation and keep them away from their professional development.

### 5.2.2 Learning through doing: teacher learning for Amy

Amy has twenty lessons per week at five ES and two JHS (one ES and JHS are the consolidated school sharing the same site). The number of students in her class varies from nine to seventy as each school has different system, although they are all state/public schools. Also, each school is equipped differently in terms of the facilities such as interactive whiteboards, iPads, Internet-connected classrooms, etc. Normally she has around twenty or forty students in one class. At some schools, they divide a class into two groups either based on the students' level of achievement or simply according to the name list, which is called *sho-ninzu* (small-sized) class. The decision to have *sho-ninzu* classes is made by the BoE upon the school's request, but it is not always permitted due to budget constraints.

Amy is working hard to build up mutual learning relationships with other ALTs, local teachers and her students. Although other NETs rarely do, she usually has lunch with her students, joining one class per day in rotation, communicating with them both in English and in Japanese. At most schools, Amy has her own desk in the staff room and attends morning meetings regularly. Her colleagues sometimes share sweets such as cookies and creampuffs with her. Amy described in her journal that she occasionally brought some sweets for her colleagues to ease a feeling of tension and stress. At another time, she wrote about one HRT in her journal that: "She made an English curriculum for grade one to six for her school by herself. That's impressive." Inspired by the HRT, Amy started to write teaching plans, too: "It was definitely the first year I had written out a full *shido-sho* (teaching plans) in Japanese for teachers at the one elementary school." There seems to be certain mutuality in learning of the teachers in the micro and meso level. Keeping a positive work relationship, she attends *nomikai* (drinking party) to socialise with her colleagues outside the school. She described her experience as follows:

> **At the school that I had most problems, the principal, he was not good and disliked by everyone. But I didn't get to know that unfortunately until last weekend when I went out drinking with some teachers at that school. I wish I had known the situation earlier. [Extract 58: Amy NP4]**

Imaginably, socialising at *nomikai/enkai* has important functions for teachers in many cases to enhance knowledge of the contexts and deepen understanding of the complex relationships among the members of CoPs. This is examined in detail in Chapter 7.

*Strategic use of Japanese for classroom management: Modulation process to find a happy medium*

Amy articulated that her job as a NET is in the whole spectrum from working as a fully responsible teacher who plan and do the lessons by herself entire time to just being an assistant to JTEs/HRTs. To handle such a wobbly situation, she said, "I think having a pre-existing knowledge of the Japanese school system is really helpful, and the Japanese." She thinks that strategic use of Japanese in class is very important because her two years being a NET "has been a journey through learning how to discipline students." She had to acquire classroom management skills not just to teach English but to discipline students. Amy sometimes had troubles in team-teaching situation especially when she took a leading role: "Sometimes it's hard for them (HRTs/JTEs) to know, sometimes they zone out and not paying attention, and sometimes they don't know when to jump in." That is why she must use Japanese in her class occasionally. She expressed her thoughts as an English teacher in a journal:

> **The bigshot from the BoE who came to give advice told them (ES teachers) to aim for 100% English which I disagree with. I don't think an ES *tanto* agrees with it either honestly. [Extract 59: Amy NP5]**

Conversely, however, she argued that "I think almost all of the teachers need to use more English basic commands in class (open your textbooks, move your desks, etc.)" so that the students can be exposed to English more. She has shown models in giving instructions in English and some HRTs picked up. While Amy mentioned that it is also one of the challenges for her to reduce the use of Japanese in class. Although it is not always easy to team-teach sharing fifty-fifty responsibilities between the ALT and the local teacher, she told me that they would be able to learn from each other to find out a happy medium through doing the lessons together without relying too much on Japanese.

> **I think I've got better in using more English in class this year, and explaining things using English only, not in any Japanese to help, including in ES. That's partially from watching A-*sensei* (JTE). I feel like my classes ran more smoothly with less confusion this year. [Extract 60: Amy NP6]**

For instance, a classroom management technique that she used at ES was originally introduced by her JTE at JHS.

> **5th grade: While the kids were doing demos of the target dialogue, a couple kids had trouble and others laughed at them. I stopped everyone and decided it was time to teach them "You can do it" to say whenever a classmate is struggling. Wish it was my idea, but it was the 7th grade *tanto* at JHS. [Extract 61: Amy NP7]**

As shown in Amy's narratives, she has been learning from her JTEs as more competent others through doing team-teaching lessons together. Additionally, she demonstrated one of the strengths of the itinerant ALTs: they have opportunities to transfer skills/techniques from different school levels, which the local teachers could rarely do. It could also be a disadvantage because it means they cannot spend much time with the same group of students, and it gets harder to know each other well. Although Amy expresses her struggles to deal with these difficulties as an itinerant ALT, she has successfully created a mediational space for teacher learning by putting her learning experience about phonics from the training seminar into practice and introducing it to the local teachers in different CoPs as presented below.

*Training seminars for NETs and a chain repercussion of teacher learning*

Unlike JET ALTs, NETs do not necessarily have official trainings annually. But in the city where Amy worked, the BoE organises two-day training seminar for NETs. The seminar seemed to be perceived as a positive learning experience by most NETs. Amy looked back her experience of the training seminars and indicated her experience of professional development:

> **Last year, I was exposed to the whole phonics business sweeping the city. I just missed it because the previous workplace as a JET ALT had been all about "Let's not teaching reading and writing. Let's make English fun!" So, I feel like my big changes happened the year before when I started seeing phonics stuff and being able to teach with A-*sensei* (JTE). That was like a research year. I started to put more into practice in my own classes. [Extract 62: Amy NP8]**

The government approved textbooks for ES entitled 'Hi, friends!' have phonics sections. However, like Amy said, it doesn't mean that all the ideas in the textbooks are actually implemented in class. In her case, both getting an inspirational idea from the seminar and working with a JTE who has good chemistry with her seemed to enhance her professional

development as a teacher. She commented in her journal that: "Many students can guess at words now, which is really nice. Phonics is working!"

Furthermore, Amy had a chance to present her phonics practice at *kenkyu-jyugyo* (demonstration lesson), where some JTEs and HRTs came to observe. It is a very common practice especially at ES in Japan where teachers can learn from each other to facilitate the learning of their students. She wrote about it in a journal:

> **Just from my five minutes of phonics, she (a JTE who observed Amy's lesson at ES) said, "I really think we should do phonics at JHS." Cool! I gave her a couple ideas of things I had seen at ES. [Extract 63: Amy NP9]**

This is one of the successful examples of collaborative learning partnership among teachers in different school levels (macro CoPs). It seems that ALTs who work at two or more school levels can exercise their imaginations wider to expect how the students in each level react and respond to the activities that they are going to use, predicting/planning how to facilitate the students' learning when they are in different stages. On another occasion, she got a positive feedback about phonics from one of her colleagues.

> **I also had a teacher at another school told me that a special needs child who really was not interested in English so much became really interested in doing 'Phonics *Taisou*' (physical exercise), so his motivation went up a little bit for English. [Extract 64: Amy NP10]**

It seems that the training seminar was a great opportunity for her to deepen her understanding of the materials and the idea of phonics, and then her positive learning experience rippled out to the other teachers in both ES and JHS and her students. It would be a rare case that the practice introduced in a macro CoP (phonics at NETs' seminar) meshed with the needs of micro CoPs (Amy's classes) and it further fed through to meso (HRTs/JTEs in her schools) and macro CoPs (a JTE at other JHS). The professional development for Amy is based on the mutual investment and engagement with the members of CoPs in different levels.

*Legitimate membership in school-based CoPs: to be called 'sensei' as reification*

Amy expressed her frustration not only about the administrations such as the BoE and a school principal but also the colleagues who approached her using informal/non-professional way such as '*anata*' (you) or 'Amy *san*'. Amy wrote in her journal that:

> **The young second grade teacher is calling me –*san* and not –*sensei*. This is *infuriating*. I didn't have the guts to tell him nicely to please call me Ms or *sensei* in front of the children, but I seriously have to. I'm hearing this more at the ES and I don't know who started it. He's younger than me so I just need to suck it up and tell him. [Extract 65: Amy NP11]**

Then, a week later, she described that "2nd grade HRT now appending my name with Ms. or –*sensei* every time and I said nothing to him. Very mysterious." I assume that other teachers advised him to call her *sensei* while she was away. It might not cause a serious problem at schools where the students behave well, but if you are in the school context where you must deal with the students' misbehaviours and classroom discipline, the title '*sensei*' is very important to show them who is in charge. This is regarded as one of the important aspects of professional identity in Japanese school contexts.

Needless to say, showing respect by calling ALTs '*sensei*' is very important to maintain good learning environment and relationship as co-workers. Amy's story implicates that the title '*sensei*' could express and carry important status and legitimate membership of school-based CoPs. In Japanese society, most of the time people tend to show their role identity in their title rather than just calling their names. In addition, not only at work but even among the family members we often use titles/labels such as mom/dad/grandpa/grandma to show their role identity. It is obvious that those titles/labels are playing a crucial role in the culture because they are important part of our identity. Amy recognises the fact as she has acquired the shared repertoire in CoPs through participating in various practices. That is why she felt the behaviour of the young HRT infuriating. The local teachers should not build 'glass walls' between themselves and ALTs by othering them in such a way.

*Outlook of her learning trajectory: brokering in mega CoPs*

After the contracted period is over, Amy is going to become a full-time teacher at a private ES. She gave me chief reasons as follows:

> **Too many schools. I can't do my job deeply or interact with students as much as I want, to the extent that I sometimes can't remember the names of teachers I teach with. And, of course, the BoE being unnecessarily controlling, unhelpful, etc. I want to work at one elementary school every day. I want to teach everybody and know all the teachers and all the kids at the school. I want to be able to team-teach. [Extract 66: Amy NP12]**

Having been through the position as a JET ALT and a NET, she found out that there are many issues in the status of ALTs and the Japanese education system. She thinks that ALTs can potentially become real teachers, but it seems very difficult because they are so entrenched into the system. Under the current legal system, people who are Japanese nationals can be qualified as teachers but "any of us (ALTs) not being able to get licences, and it's just continued because how things are here, once something gets started it just continues and no one never tries to change it even if it doesn't work." She explained that "there's no system and place for us to move up. The motivation is just intrinsic. There's no external motivation really."

Like Amy, many ALTs face such 'glass ceilings' and some are working to break down the legal boundaries as shown in the very first quote. She wrote about the networking of ALTs' union: "several NET groups nationwide have developed union branches – the goal being, we want to be recognized for what we do and be able to have advancement and retention." In many cases, ALTs' limited status circumscribes their learning opportunities as teachers and professional development. However, there are some ALTs trying to become brokers in mega CoPs like Amy. It would be great if I could listen to the sequel of her story.

## 5.3 Narrative portfolio of Glen

*"We're not classroom teachers. It's like being a grandpa. Being a parent, you have to take care of the students, you have to deal with both the good and the bad. Whereas being an ALT, this job itself is just dealing with the good. Basically, we get the students to be always happy and excited."*

Table 5.3 Profile of Glen

| Participant | Employment type | Education | Languages | Schools | Lessons / week | Students / class | Lesson styles | Extra-curricular activities | Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Glen<br>US | JET<br>4 years | BA<br>Japanese Language and Civilisation | English<br>Spanish<br>Japanese | (1 NS),<br>7 ES,<br>2 JHS | 18 | from 6 to 38 | Mixed<br>Team-teaching or ALT/JTE leads | Volunteering at NS | rural |

Glen is an itinerant ALT teaching at nine different schools in the countryside. He has experience of both AoO in frontstage as a student in English-Spanish dual-immersion ES programme and AoO from backstage provided by his mother as a Spanish teacher. He initiated English lessons at NS like Gary, brokering the boundaries between CoPs. Glen is taking similar type of learning

trajectory with two experienced NETs. He is working on exploratory practice in micro and meso CoPs and contributing to the macro CoPs by sharing his learning experiences with HRTs and novice ALTs through workshop presentations.

### 5.3.1 Apprenticeship of learning: Glen's case

Glen has been learning how to teach English through trial and error (Extract 36: Glen (Q2.3)), utilising his experiences of AoO both in frontstage and from backstage. He articulated that his experience at English and Spanish dual-immersion elementary school exerted a large impact on his identity as a language teacher: "I do teach strongly in the immersion style." As an ALT working in ES and JHS, he has been trying to find a nice balance between the use of English and Japanese. In a workshop presentation at the SDC, he put emphasis on the importance of having realistic two-way communication with students in both languages. It is said that 'all English' is ideal, but he does not think that it corresponds to the English learning process of Japanese students. Accommodating the reality, especially at ES, Glen believes that it would be better to employ 'dual-language (English and Japanese) immersion' where students can answer in either English or Japanese so that the communication flows. In a journal, he explained his approach inspired from AoO in frontstage:

> **ES 2$^{nd}$ grade – I would like to focus on getting students accustomed to listening and responding to English. Students should be allowed to respond in Japanese. One recent experience: While we were playing Tag in the gym, I was the *oni* (tagger), and started saying "Come here!" while gesturing for students to come over. When they came near, I would begin chasing them. After the first few times, whenever I said it, they would just shout "*YADA!* (No!)" This is a perfect example of language learning: I would say "Come here!" with the Western gesture. And the students understand it, then respond with their natural "NO!" in Japanese. [Extract 67: Glen NP1]**

During the fieldwork, Glen told me that his mother used to be a Spanish teacher at ES and his aunt also works as a teacher in JHS in the US. He uses many picture books for ES lessons, some of which were brought from the US by his mother. He has a collection of about 90 picture books in total. Additionally, he sometimes gives students stickers as a reward for their participation, which he also received from his mother. She used to give them to her students in class as well. Glen once had tried the pen pal project for his students at JHS with his aunt's students in the US. The project itself was not successful and did not last long, but he tried to make the most of the learning opportunities for his students by utilising the family connection. His family constantly

offer him as much support as possible, sharing the similar beliefs as teachers to benefit their students.

Glen mentioned that he was planning to put some posters in every classroom at ES which have pictures with English vocabulary to show the everyday objects, alphabets, numbers, etc. so that students could be exposed to English more often even when they do not have English lessons with him. This idea is originally from his mother's Spanish classroom at ES. He already tried out the similar attempt at one JHS, putting English names on the signs at the front door of all the different types of rooms along with Japanese. As an experienced language teacher, his mother seems to inspire him a lot, not only how to prepare the materials and use some techniques to motivate students, but also how to act as a teacher and support students' learning in the long run.

> **I want to start having some physical presence in the classroom for English. I also recently bought some of those, large alphabet charts because a lot of times, up until now, English class is one type thing: it's very fun, but once I leave the school, there's no more English anywhere for them. So, I want to keep it more something that sticks in their minds more often. [Extract 68: Glen NP2]**

Figure 5.3 shows the 'English Corner' that Glen set up at his JHS in the corridor, where students can read a poster, post a message to him, and read a picture book that he replaces with another one from his collection after a while.

Figure 5.3 English Corner at JHS [Glen]

His learning as a teacher seems to be rooted in his experience of AoO both in frontstage as a student in dual-language immersion ES and from backstage having teachers in his family, without having any HRTs/JTEs who could be a model of his teaching.

### 5.3.2 Learning through doing: teacher learning for Glen

Glen has eighteen lessons per week in ES and JHS level in the school year 2015. Since he has seven ES to visit, each ES basically has him just once a month. Each JHS and some ES have relatively small numbers of students (around 30 students in one grade), and other ES have only a few students in each grade.

> **I have 1023 students that I teach. I'd like to know them better and to get closer to them, but that's pretty much impossible. Being an effective teacher, you need to know the students well and get closer with them, but just the fact that I have so many students, it's really difficult to do that without a lot of practice and experience with it. [Extract 69: Glen NP3]**

As a coping technique, he made a file of students with their names and photos so that he could remember them along with their personalities and family backgrounds. Like other experienced expert teachers do, he often communicates with his students inside and outside of the class, calling them by their first names, greeting with them in both English and Japanese and sometimes giving high five. He always has lunch with students in class, does cleaning and plays tag/football outside together with them during recess.

*Creating productive learning environment at ES: teacher learning in school-based CoPs*

At ES, Glen usually takes a leading role and has a lot of freedom to decide what to do. Whereas at JHS, in many cases he reads the textbook for five to ten minutes, models the pronunciations and spends most of the time walking around and monitoring students to help them. He described that ALTs' job is broad, ranging from simply teaching English to bringing different perspectives/culture. In his view, it is not a long-term profession. As shown in the very first quote, he feels that ALTs' role is like a grandpa without having real responsibilities. Glen shared his observations about the various team-teaching experience in different ES settings (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Profile of 7 ES in a journal [Glen]

| School | students | visits | 6th Grade | 5th Grade | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 176 | 13 | HRT leads | 50/50 lead | 6th grade: Particularly good cooperation HRT. 4th grade: My "best" class overall. The classes previous HRT was extremely positive towards English, and the students are all very good about trying in class. |
| B | 81 | 14 | HRT leads | ALT leads | 2nd grade: 3 students with behavioral issues that can make keeping control of the class difficult. |
| C | 87 | 14 | ALT leads | ALT leads | ☆This is my "test" school for the year. The teachers at this school have allowed me a large amount of freedom in trying different teaching styles (i.e. introduce optional homework and pronunciation practice, use more video clips and pictures, much less rote memorization). I am currently using this as an opportunity to try a modified curriculum and measuring how much I (and future ALTs) can handle the increased workload. I hope to use what I learn from this year and implement it in all of my schools starting next school year. |
| D | 167 | 8 | 50/50 lead | ALT leads | 6th grade: HRT is very enthusiastic about teaching English, but lacks in language ability. |
| E | 15 | 9 | 50/50 lead | | I know this school well and often go to school festivals and drinking parties with them. |
| F | ~150 | 8 | ALT leads | ALT leads | This is my first year teaching at these two schools. |
| G | 24 | 8 | ALT leads | | |

He considered School-C as the 'test' school. It seems like exploratory practice (Allwright, 2003, 2005), putting 'quality of life' first, working primarily to understand classroom life and mutual development among the members of CoPs including the ALT, students and HRTs, and making the work as a continuous enterprise. Glen utilises his experience from AoO as imagination and tries to modify/arrange the contents of lessons to facilitate the students' learning from constructive criticism. As stated in Table 5.4, he is preparing an original curriculum for ES so that his HRTs and future ALTs can succeed it.

At School-E where he does fifty-fifty team teaching with HRTs, he often goes to school festivals and drinking parties with colleagues. In a reflective journal, Glen demonstrated his engagement in CoPs: "Participated in the school swim competition and went to the after-party with the parents and teachers." His participation in several events including drinking parties would help him to get legitimate membership in CoPs and to build positive relationships with local teachers and people. His narratives suggest that team-teaching patterns either strong or weak might not matter to create productive learning environment for the students. Rather, the level of mutuality and cooperation between team-teachers would be far more important.

*Acting as a broker: implementation of English lessons at NS*

Glen started to visit a preschool in the area once a week, volunteering to teach English after his work hours.

> **I've wanted to do this since last year, because I really feel that children need a "motherly" approach. By that, I mean that being able to sit down with students and teach them individually is a very important part of language learning, which is also greatly lacking from the current English education in Japan. [Extract 70: Glen NP4]**

As well as at ES, he is trying to bring some changes by brokering the boundaries between CoPs. Although his practices might not be inherited by his successor, one of the supervisors at prefectural BoE recognises his effort and its ripple effect on the wider community when I talked with her at the SDC. She said that he is a remarkable and exceptional ALT, thinking of introducing his practices as a model case to other ALTs. It is obvious that Glen's comprehensive approach to the English education helps raise awareness of the sole raison d'etre of English in the school contexts to benefit the local teachers and students on a long-term basis.

*Learning of JET ALTs in macro CoPs: the SDCs and online CoPs*

Glen has a formal training, the SDC, every year as a JET ALT. He felt that they were not necessarily designed for ALTs' professional development as the main aim was to make sure the support network for ALTs in the region was working well. He said that the SDCs were like "Japan types of you're okay?" and a lot of his learning experience as a teacher was self-directed. He is an autonomous reflective practitioner, always trying to find a better way to maximise the learning of his students through acute eyes. Like many other ALTs, he is an active member of online CoPs. He mentioned that:

> **We share ideas of activities on website or through the ALTs' network, which is good, but SDCs or other trainings cannot be the opportunity to acquire teaching style and to learn how to compose lessons or how to create the real-life communication in natural settings. [Extract 71: Glen NP5]**

I joined the two-day SDC with Glen. The extracts from the handout of workshop given by Glen and two fellow ALTs are presented in Appendix L. He wrote about his experience of the SDC in a journal:

**In general, I believe that ALTs need a lot more teacher training. At the SDC, a fairly small portion is focused on training. The greater part of the conference is usually motivational or informational. This excellent for keeping ALTs happy, which honestly is a very good thing, as that general excitement motivates students. But ALTs who want to develop their teaching skills do not have much more than self-study, or online classes. [Extract 72: Glen NP6]**

He evaluated the experience of the SDCs rather critically because their approach did not correspond with his identity as an English teacher seeking further professional development. In my view, the fact that he introduced the strategies for ESL classes in his workshop seemed to come from his experience of AoO both in frontstage and from backstage. Through the presentation, he attempted to offer his fellow ALTs an opportunity to reflect their identity as 'teachers', not just assistants.

*Practicing as 'sempai' ALT: Mentoring newcomer ALTs and old-timer HRTs*

Glen is helping other ALTs in the area as the most experienced ALT. He explained his additional role as a '*sempai*' (senior) to help out newcomer ALTs as follows:

**This year, I have become the eldest of the ALTs (myself a 4th year, two 2nd years, and three 1st years), so I have to take more time to help the new ALTs get accustomed to the area (also help them with necessities like phone and internet contracts, and buying cars). [Extract 73: Glen NP7]**

Like other experienced ALTs, he offers support to the *kōhai* (junior) ALTs in many ways. Furthermore, he is acting as a mentor for HRTs by giving a workshop. The city BoE organises seminars twice a year and Glen gave a phonics workshop for about twenty-five ES teachers. He prepared handouts and PowerPoint slides in Japanese with some English words, contrasting the difference of pronunciations in both languages so that ES teachers can understand the concept well.

**The phonics workshop went fairly well. Some of the teachers were able to understand the differences in pronunciation, while others did not. Foreign pronunciation is unfortunately a skill that does take a long time to develop. We were able to get the main point across, however, that 'perfection' is not necessary, and just that being able to understand or hear different pronunciations is the most important. [Extract 74: Glen NP8]**

As stated above, one of his core beliefs as a teacher is to constantly look for something better, knowing nobody can be perfect. To create opportunities for building mutual learning partnership with the local teachers, Glen plans to set up regular meetings with his HRTs: "I will try to arrange a system for meetings with HRTs at all my schools for the next school year." The local teachers should organise such system, but they seemed to hesitate to initiate the negotiation because they know Glen is busy working at many different schools. Although it must be difficult because of his working condition as an itinerant ALT, Glen aspires for professional development of all the members in micro, meso and macro CoPs.

*Legitimate membership in school-based CoPs: to be called 'sensei' as reification*

ALTs are often called by their first name with a title '*sensei*' like in Amy's case. However, Glen had decided to use his surname plus '*sensei*' like Japanese teachers when he had been asked his preference by his colleagues. Indeed, the local teachers and students regard him as a teacher, not just an assistant as MEXT explained. He clearly shows his identity as a teacher and his legitimate membership in school-based CoPs in this way. Yet, he is sometimes called by his first name at some ES and NS because his surname is a little longer and some teachers prefer to call him 'Glen *sensei*.' He mentioned that:

> **If the students call me just "Johnson," I'll correct them. But when the teachers do the same, just leave it. I changed that in my first year. I gave my students choice which they go for, but for one school, the school principal suggested to be called by my first name because it's easier for kids to remember. So, sometimes it depends on the school/class. [Extract 75: Glen NP9]**

It seems that he has full membership in the CoPs since he is respected by the other ALTs and the local teachers, devoting himself to improve English education by making curriculum for ES, giving workshops, and visiting NS after his working hours, etc. Some of his colleagues complimented him by saying that it is very rare to have an ALT like him. However, he answered 'No' to my question, "Do you feel you have full membership in the teachers' community in Japan?" in the last interview.

> **I'm not qualified to be a teacher. I don't have the knowledge of the school. Even answering phones would be difficult, whereas other teachers in the school would know where the teachers are generally and know the schedule. If there's something special, they're aware of it. But considering that would be my first time in that school in a month, then it's just something that I can't really participate correctly on. I do feel**

**my teachers respect me, which is nice, but if I were to look at it, I don't feel myself that I'm really a teacher in a '*kyoshi*' sense. I do feel they do respect me as '*sensei*' but not as a schoolteacher kind of teacher, which is fine by me. [Extract 76: Glen NP10]**

This narrative links to the metaphor of 'grandpa' he said in the first interview. The HRTs/JTEs are '*kyoshi*' who are like parents for the students because they are always with them, taking responsibility for educating them. Whereas Glen as an ALT who has no teacher qualification is a grandpa-like '*sensei*' and he cannot be a parent-like '*kyoshi*' since he should visit nine schools in turn. His identity as an itinerant teacher seems to prevent him from getting a full membership of the school-based CoPs.

Glen said, "There's not really good definition of what an ALT's duties are. Basically, all of our contract just say that we are there to assist." Through his experience of being an ALT, "It's given me how to self-motivated, how to do the things that I want to do in life. With so few rules for my job, a lot of freedom in my work has given me the ability to grow there and decide what I want to do with it." As such, his learning as a teacher is mostly self-directed through trial and error and it is built upon the core beliefs from his experience of AoO.

## 5.4 Narrative portfolio of John

*"It's funny, I was thinking about the presentation I didn't do at the SDC about gardening and how it's the same as teaching. But I've been thinking about that again recently. How we develop plants, we have to work out the best conditions for them, etc. I think the awareness of students' needs, it's a something that really developed for me during my ALT time. And as a result, people in the wider world as well."*

Table 5.5 Profile of John

| Participant | Employment type | Education | Languages | Schools | Lessons / week | Students / class | Lesson styles | Extra-curricular activities | Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| John<br>UK | JET (TEFL)<br>4 years | MA<br>Landscape Architecture | English<br>German<br>Japanese<br>(Spanish & French) | 4 ES,<br>1 JHS,<br>(1 SHS) | 30 | from 5 to 19 at ES<br>about 25 at JHS | Mixed<br>Team-teaching or<br>ALT/JTE leads | Football club,<br>Speech contest,<br>Gardening,<br>Volunteering at SHS & community English club | rural |

John is a reflective practitioner like other experienced ALTs introduced above, utilising his experience of AoO in frontstage and previous work experience as imagination to align his professional identity with the Japanese school contexts. He took 'remote apprenticeship' from his predecessor ALT. There is an organised peer-support system for ALTs in the area and he is acting as a leader. Like Gary and Glen, he is brokering the boundaries of CoPs by teaching at SHS and community *Eikaiwa* (English conversation class), and coaching football club out of his working hours voluntarily. Teacher learning for John is mostly self-directed as well as in other three cases.

### 5.4.1 Apprenticeship of learning: John's case

John took TEFL course in his third year as an ALT. He said, "One of the reasons I joined the JET programme is because of the perceived job security it provided. I didn't consider other companies, because I didn't want to come to Japan without a support network in place." JET ALTs can take TEFL course if they want, which is partially sponsored by the programme. John looked back his experience and said:

> **Completing a TEFL was a mixed feeling, it gave me confidence, reinforcing my ideas about the way I teach in my lessons, as well as giving justifications to my methods. However, it was also demotivating. I had discovered most of my teaching strategies through experience and common sense. It disappointed me to think that there was little development beyond that. [Extract 77: John NP1]**

John mentioned that he has been learning how to teach through his day-to-day experience. He wrote about his experience in the early stages of his ALT career in a reflection:

> **With little teaching experience or training, I think I acted like 'a sponge' from the start. Trying to gather as much advice and information as possible. My first few classes were very difficult in Japan, because I had no grasp of student levels, personalities or interests. My predecessor left a few notes on teaching and the schools but had a high level of Japanese ability. So, I followed on with a lot of muddling through initially. But soon found a rhythm and have grown into my role in my own way. [Extract 78: John NP2]**

He seemed to have 'remote apprenticeship' from his predecessor. However, it was fairly limited and his learning to teach started with a state like 'a sponge' backed up with a clear image of who

he wanted to become as a teacher from his AoO and his personality. His narratives suggest that he has influence by the teachers he used to have in his school days.

> **I often think about my own teachers from school: how they interacted with me and encouraged me, but also told me when it was time to study, etc. I don't think you can learn a teaching style from a book. Your personality is the most important. So, I've tried to emulate the positive aspects of my own teachers. [Extract 79: John NP3]**

This episode of AoO in frontstage seems to form his core beliefs as a teacher. He has been trying to provide positive learning opportunities for his students at schools. In fact, he constantly supports his students, guiding JTEs and HRTs. During fieldwork, I saw many times John naturally offered help to the students who tended to be left out of the JTEs' attention and they all respected and trusted him. He said with confidence, "I'm here for the students." He has never taken paid holidays or sick leave during the school term in order to spend as much time as possible with the students.

> **I work tirelessly on making activities for lessons, adapting for every class. This is important because all my students are individuals, and I want to be able to reach out to them on some personal level in every class. If they feel valued, they will feel the value of the class. [Extract 80: John NP4]**

His teaching practices are based on the beliefs acquired through AoO and his job experiences. John described the influence of his previous working experience in a journal:

> **I bring my outside experiences in. I have had many work roles in varied fields so can draw on varied experiences. My work in hospitality has really helped with my communication abilities. I am encouraging and positive with students and people around me. It is important to make people feel at ease and this is a key skill I feel I possess. [Extract 81: John NP5]**

Indeed, it is natural to bring previous life experiences into the current circumstances, transforming the identity. However, when it comes to the ALTs, the fact tends to be underestimated and properly examined by the local teachers like John pointed out. As a JTE, I can understand why many JTEs tend to resign themselves to build up collaborative work relationships with ALTs because we know that our teaching/learning partnership would not last long (see Table 3.4). Additionally, the extremely heavy workload usually does not allow us to spare enough time to communicate with ALTs. They take it for granted that teachers work overtime for the sake of the students, but we cannot inflict that deleterious habit on ALTs. Yet, John does not hesitate to work in a similar way with the local teachers, working overtime as a volunteer teacher at SHS and

community English conversation class, coaching football club after school, and spending quite a few amounts out of his own pocket to buy craft materials, stationery and stickers for his students. His colleagues said, “the ALT like him is rare/exceptional.” I heard such a comment by many teachers during my visits. Overall, his previous experiences including job experience in hospitality and AoO having socially and emotionally intelligent teachers seem to affect his professional identity as a teacher, and he came to work in similar conditions as the local teachers.

### 5.4.2 Learning through doing: teacher learning for John

John has about thirty lessons per week at four ES and one JHS. Each grade at ES has around fifteen students and the JHS has about twenty-five students in one class. During fieldwork, I joined the community volunteer with him, planting flower plugs at a station square early in the morning. It seemed that the wider the communities where the ALT participates become, the more the membership of each community is enhanced towards the core. It takes time to get closer to a core of the CoPs, so it seems natural that four-year or more experienced ALTs could show their inbound trajectories more clearly than junior members.

*Collaborative practice in macro CoPs: ‘Enjoy English’ project and ‘Activity Bank’*

John is working as a team leader among fourteen ALTs in the region. They have created short English skit video clips for ES called ‘Enjoy English’ project. The ALTs write the scripts, shoot the clips and edit them by themselves imagining the reactions from their students. They put a lot of humour and make the English conversations in the programme memorable by using the names of their familiar places, people, or local cuisines along with the curriculum guideline consulted with the city BoE. There is an established support system for ALTs initiated by the city BoE so that they can physically and officially meet up during their working hours. John mentioned that there were some changes in the ES teachers’ attitudes after implementing this ‘Enjoy English’ project.

> **At ES, because of the Enjoy English, many teachers are asking many more questions about English sentences and for explanations. I think one is they can see the enthusiasm of students, and students are asking them questions and they want to be sure of that. Also, I think they're gaining in confidence, watching videos as well and feeling more relaxed because they can understand what is happening. I've always had good relationships with most of my teachers, but they seem a lot more curious about**

> **English this year and many seem to want to study English away from school. [Extract 82: John NP6]**

This case seems unique to me as I have never come to know such a project before. ALTs are working as a team, sharing the purpose to improve the whole English education system across the city. One of the reasons might be because they have a former ALT as their supervisor in the city BoE.

At their monthly meetings, they usually exchange ideas to make new lesson plans. I joined their one-day meeting, where seven ALTs discussed the survey questions to get feedback from ES teachers and the topic area of 'Enjoy English' project. Also, they exchanged information about some students and discussed how to modify the contents of the textbooks 'Hi, friends!' to fit their students' levels/needs. They worked in pairs to make new lesson plans for ES, which were put in online 'Activity Bank' so that other ALTs/HRTs could use them freely. It seems that John has established membership in macro CoPs as well through these activities. Not only that, but there is also a virtuous cycle that ALTs' collective teacher learning in macro CoPs brought from the practices of each ALT in different micro and meso CoPs is again brought back to meso and micro CoPs and shared in the forms of video clips and lesson plans, giving further learning opportunities to the local teachers and students.

*Learning partnership in micro and meso CoPs: mentoring HRTs and novice JTEs*

John is trying to develop himself as a teacher through building productive learning partnerships with the local teachers and students. He referred to it in a reflection:

> **Maybe more importantly, I am helping the teacher, which in turn helps the children. I am a tool for the teacher to use, both as a point for information, a member of support staff, to help them with ideas for lessons and assessment. [Extract 83: John NP7]**

He offers help to the HRTs in many ways, encouraging them to take a leading role, giving lots of materials and showing how to use those materials to them because most HRTs have not took enough trainings to teach English as it was newly implemented at the national curriculum reform in 2011. John wrote curriculums for the ES grade one to four both in Japanese and English to ensure that all the teachers could have a better understanding of each lesson. He visits all the ES a week before to talk about the lesson plans outside duty hours so that HRTs can feel more confident to teach English.

**I have implemented curriculums in my schools to simplify communication with teachers, improve the structure of the learning, to compliment the Enjoy English programme and to try and ensure my students are at a similar ability level upon reaching JHS. [Extract 84: John NP8]**

Also, John is negotiating with the BoE to change the schools where he will teach the next school year because six ES feed into one JHS and he currently visits four ES. To give equal opportunities for students and try to maximise their learning, he wants to go to the schools where he has not taught before. His basic stance/identity as a teacher to support students and facilitate their learning is very still. This kind of vision is often missed by the people in administrative position and it is difficult to take up for discussion. However, John can share his thoughts and vision openly with his colleagues and supervisors as he gained a core membership in multiple CoPs. It seems like a good example of well-functioned meso and macro CoPs for teachers' professional development.

Whereas John's role in JHS is different from that in ES. During the observations, he led all the lessons at ES, but never did the same at JHS. He described that "I still consider myself to be mainly an ES teacher, and a JHS assistant, but I am ok with that." John articulated that his feeling of professional development as a teacher came through by mentoring a young JTE at JHS.

**Having a younger teacher at JHS who has needed a lot of support for 2 years has maybe made me more responsible for what's happening in the school, rather than just helping but starring as well. [Extract 85: John NP9]**

As such, he expressed the process of his professional development by mentoring the local teachers and taking responsibilities in micro and meso CoPs.

*Use of Japanese in class to facilitate active participation of HRTs and students at ES*

Like other ALTs, John pointed out that the use of Japanese in the classroom facilitate not only the students' learning, but also the teachers' participation. Japanese language skills are vital to maintain communication to build learning partnership. There are still ongoing debates about the principle of teaching English 'only in English' (MEXT, 2014b). John articulated that:

**The government has a plan for all lessons to be taught for in English, but it's impossible. It's a very nice ideal, but if you want to explain something, you have to use Japanese to help students understand it, especially younger students. You can't**

**teach a foreign language without using the students' own native language, so that certainly was a big shock for me, in terms of skills needed. [Extract 86: John NP10]**

Also, he mentioned that it is important to find a good balance in the use of Japanese, examining the students' needs and giving the HRTs constant support to build up their confidence in teaching English.

**A few schools have said to the BoE they want ALTs to use less Japanese in the classroom. I don't feel it is appropriate everywhere, especially with younger students, so I must find a balance between the schools' wishes and the students' needs. Sometimes it is necessary to communicate using Japanese, especially if the teacher isn't on the same speed or 'wavelength' at that moment. So, I think the ALTs need to identify this balance and find a way to address it. I really feel we still need to facilitate teachers so they can teacher their students, not walk in like a guest lecturer and take over. [Extract 87: John NP11]**

Supporting and mentoring HRTs for more than three years, he is looking for the transitions of their roles in the classroom. As stated above, it does not come true straightforward, but we can see how he approaches the other members of CoPs to create a mediational space for their professional development.

*Acting as 'sempai' ALT: presenting at the SDCs*

John tries to share his experiences of learning with other ALTs at the SDCs. John explained his experience of the trainings he had been through as follows:

**Every year, we have the SDC, where ALTs present for each other to give each other ideas and things for the classroom. Last year, my teacher (JTE) and I presented on getting children to improvise. [Extract 88: John NP12]**

I attended two-day SDC with John. He gave a presentation about the Krashen's theories of language acquisition with a fellow ALT (see Appendix M[B]). The key message in both presentations is that: 'You don't have to be perfect when you speak English for communication. Facilitate students' learning and encourage them to have a real-life communication in English.' Even though John himself did not feel that the SDCs and other formal training opportunities really useful, he has provided many insightful ideas and information about seminal theories in second language acquisition research for the other ALTs for their professional development as teachers, complementing the aspects lacking from the focus of the SDCs like Glen did. Especially, the

presentation in 2014 seems like one of his end products of his teacher learning through apprenticeship (Appendix M[A]).

*Legitimate membership in CoPs: Participation in 'enkais' to build collaborative work relationships*

Presumably, the solid membership of CoPs cannot be gained easily. Interestingly, many ALTs cited joining *nomikai*s/*enkai*s as important opportunities to get legitimacy in CoPs. John said, "There are always teachers' parties, which are supposed to be optional but certainly an element of obligation to attend." He attends these socialising events when possible and wrote about the experience of having a trip with his colleagues in a reflection:

> **The schoolteachers' trip was a good experience. It is always good to see teachers away from the school, to better understand their personalities and build relationships with them, but it would be good if these relationships progressed after dinners or trips, when back in the workplace (good and bad), rather than them not being spoken about again. [Extract 89: John NP13]**

John suggests that the members of CoPs can build their cooperative work relationship through participating in various activities in different occasions, maintaining active communication. When the teachers know each other well, they can create positive learning environment for their students. It sounds tangible but difficult to achieve especially for itinerant ALTs who need to acquire various competences to fit in different school contexts and build mutual learning relationships in multiple CoPs.

*Outlook of his learning trajectory:*

John is planning to renew his contract for one more year. However, he expressed his struggles in the process of professional identity formation as follows:

> **My motivation limits me sometimes. I work very hard to try and achieve the best for my students, often beyond expectations. It is generally well appreciated, but after three years, I feel it is often expected or taken for granted by students, teachers and my BoE alike. I realise the system is different here, but sometimes a lack of regular feedback affects my motivation. [Extract 90: John NP14]**

As a JTE, I have similar experience of emotional distress when I realise that hardworking people tend to have much work than mediocre ones who are good at escaping from taking

responsibilities.  It is a bad climate in Japan, especially in the educational contexts.  Even though there are extremely ineligible teachers, people in the administration sometimes pretend not to know and rarely take action to improve the situation unless it comes out extremely serious.  The BoE seem to show the similar stance to the ALTs according to John.

> **BoEs should be seeking the best for their students.  Schools should want the best for their students.  ALTs should be under pressure to perform well in the workplace, letting a contract roll, because it's easier to do it, is embarrassing to see.  I realise 'sacking' is not a widely used cultural element here, particularly in government organisations.  But ALTs come from cultures where it is common, and subsequently face pressure to do their best.  So, we are ready for it, the BoE should be too.  [Extract 91: John NP15]**

He pointed out the malfunction of mega CoPs, which I feel the same as a JTE.

> **Often the British ALTs have said amongst themselves, "the more you come to understand here, the harder it is to want to be here", sadly I tend to agree with this now.  When you realise just what is happening in the workplace, below the superficial layer, it becomes increasingly harder to tolerate.  Japan is a wonderful country, with many wonderful experiences and elements, however the workplaces are difficult for non-Japanese to adjust and integrate in to.  [Extract 92: John NP16]**

Even though John gained core membership in micro, meso and macro CoPs, the problematic mechanisms of mega CoPs, ''glass walls' and 'glass ceilings' prevent him to remain as an ALT.  He intends to retire the ALT job, although he likes teaching English to children.  "I've been thinking about when to retire.  Not necessarily in a 'I don't want to get out of bed in the morning' because I love being around the children, but I know where I want to be next."  He plans to pursue his career as a garden designer as it is what he is passionate about.  As shown in the very first quote, he has been making links between how to grow plants and how to facilitate student's learning.  This is a part of the process of his identity transformation.

# Chapter 6 Narrative portfolios: Nash, Tina, and Dane and findings from cross-case analyses

As previously introduced, this chapter displays narrative portfolios of three ALTs, Nash, Tina, and Dane, who are in their professional life phase of learning which builds identity and classroom competence (Day & Gu, 2007). In Chapter 6.4, summary of the findings from cross-case analyses of seven narrative portfolios is presented.

## 6.1 Narrative portfolio of Nash

*"The longer I'm here, the more responsibility I take. I'm not a real teacher but have a little bit more quality, which is nice. Obviously, because of the language limitations, you can't have the same level of responsibilities with other teachers, but I feel the longer I'm here, the more I'm integrated."*

Table 6.1 Profile of Nash

| Participant | Employment type | Education | Languages | Schools | Lessons / week | Students / class | Lesson styles | Extra-curricular activities | Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nash<br>NZ | JET<br>3 years | BA<br>Industrial<br>Design | English<br>German<br>Japanese | 1 ES,<br>2 JHS | 20 | from 17 to 34 | Mixed<br>Team-teaching<br>or<br>ALT/JTE leads | Smart club (PC club),<br>Speech contest,<br>Student exchange | rural |

Nash is a JET ALT who experienced 'remote apprenticeship' from his predecessor in his early career. Along the way, he utilises his experience of AoO in frontstage and mutual learning partnership with his JTEs to form his professional identity as a teacher. He is taking inbound trajectory, gaining legitimate membership in school-cased CoPs, participating in socialising events and offering mentorship to bridge the gap between the ES and JHS as an itinerant ALT like experienced ALTs in Chapter 5.

### 6.1.1 Apprenticeship of learning: Nash's case

Nash is one of the ALTs who expressed the experience of AoO in frontstage and apprenticeship in his current workplace. In both modes of apprenticeship, he sympathised with the ways his German teacher and one of his JTEs teach and learn the target language and try to build rapport with their students. Both teachers named as his role models seem to have some personal traits in common such as using the target language as much as possible in the classroom, being self-motivated as language learners and respected by their students, constantly showing empathy for their students and approaching them frankly and openly. His narratives illustrate that these two teachers gave certain influence on the process of his professional identity formation as a language teacher.

> **From learning languages in the past, I feel confident in saying a simple and effective approach is introducing a new piece of information (grammar point, vocab set etc.), and then using this frequently in real-life immersive situations. Drip feeding language to students and shielding them from things that might be too difficult doesn't seem to help. They have to get a realistic idea of the complexities of the language and feel comfortable not understanding everything, with the knowledge they will gradually fill in the gaps as they progress. [Extract 93: Nash NP1]**

Nash is one of the ALTs who experienced 'remote apprenticeship' with his predecessor, utilising the activity suggestions that she left when he started working as an ALT (Extract 44: Nash (Q3.2)). Later, he found out his own teaching style by transforming his experience from AoO in frontstage.

> **At first, I just followed the curriculum, but I saw the problems of students who didn't speak much, so I started to put more speaking activities with the students. Today we did a show and tell activity, which we've been doing in every lesson with my 2nd graders (JHS) since they were in 6th grade in ES. They really can use everything they've learned from the past 2 years because we keep using all the time, so all the grammar is like a toolbox. Whereas in the past, the teachers would teach the things and they would apparently stop using them and forget about them. [Extract 94: Nash NP2]**

He mentioned that the implementation of more speaking activities was inspired by his experience of AoO. He said, "I think that the five minutes conversation at the beginning of the class became a routine and I'm proud of that." He considers it as a great opportunity not only for students to practice conversation in English, but for him to know his students well, such as their

family lives, opinions or thoughts on school events, and their future dreams, etc. Through these activities, Nash is enhancing his membership in CoPs.

> **I feel like as I get to know how the school works and how all the systems work, I feel more useful. I'm able to help with other people and understand them. I think the staff members around you, they've learned to trust you, and they are more willing to help you and talk to you as your relationship's strengthened. [Extract 95: Nash NP3]**

It seems that Nash is taking inbound trajectory by developing his experience from AoO and apprenticeship effectively and aligning his identity as a teacher upon that.

### 6.1.2 Learning through doing: teacher learning for Nash

Nash teaches twenty lessons per week at one ES and two JHS where they have about twenty or thirty students in one class. Like other experienced ALTs in Chapter 5, he has more freedom at ES regarding lesson planning and the choice of materials. Whereas at JHS, he usually follows the JTEs' directions but his style of participation in class varies according to the degree of teaching/learning partnership with each JTE. During observations at JHS, he talked with the students in the corridor and called them by their names, which reminded me of the ways that his model teachers interacted with their students. Also, there was a student who seemed to have some behavioural issues in one class. Nash said, "I don't know how to approach her." Whatever the situation is, he always keeps trying to understand them and empathise with them, finding a way to approach them. I heard one JHS student said to him, "Please become our English teacher at SHS, Nash!" There seemed to be solid rapport between him and his students.

B*ridging the gap between ES and JHS as an itinerant ALT*

I did not have a chance to visit his ES, but Nash shared his teaching practices there in a journal.

> **My current ES 6th graders have a very high ability, as I do a 15-minute conversation review with them every week, where every student has to speak to me, and then to their classmates too, using all the phrases and words we have learned during 5th and 6th grade. When they start 1st grade at JHS, I will speak to the JTEs and request that they use as much English as possible, as I already do the majority of their instruction at ES in English anyway. I think the JTE has to trust the students' ability more, as often they are far more capable than the JTE thinks. [Extract 96: Nash NP4]**

This is an interesting example of mentorship Nash offers to his JTEs. As he belongs to both ES and JHS, he can see the students' English learning trajectories continuously beyond the boundary between the school levels. This is one of the advantages of ALTs who teach at multiple school levels. In many cases, it would be nearly impossible for the JTEs to have such observations about how to approach the students based on their previous English learning at ES. There are some opportunities for the local teachers to learn about the practices in different schools such as *kenkyu-jyugyo*, but they are different from the day-to-day experience that ALTs have through participating in various activities with students. When we consider the continuous learning trajectories of students, ALTs' opinions are very informative and beneficial for the JTEs.

*Japanese language skills to get legitimate membership in school-based CoPs*

Nash expressed his thought about acquiring Japanese language skills as follows:

> **I think that becoming more fluent in Japanese helped me to be more comfortable on the work settings. So, you understand what's happening: you can read the notices and understand what the students are saying when they're joking around with each other and what teachers are saying when there's a meeting going on. I think that's a really big part of feeling more comfortable in the work environment. [Extract 97: Nash NP5]**

He also said, "It might be because of the personality and the level of Japanese each ALT wants to acquire," but whether or not they have a common language for comfortable communication with other members of the CoPs affects a lot in their relationships.

While Nash stated, "I have got into a bad habit of using too much Japanese in class because it's faster and helps the lesson run smoothly if the students understand me quickly. But if I do this a lot, they are not listening to and understanding enough English." Here, we can see how ALTs are shaping their own professional identity as a language teacher and try to deliver the best-self to facilitate their students' learning. Like other ALTs also claim, it is difficult to keep a good balance between the use of Japanese and English in class. I observed a tendency that novice ALTs would come to use more Japanese in class after a year or two, and then they would shift to reduce the amount of Japanese and use more English after getting legitimate membership in school-based CoPs. It seems like a part of the process of negotiations of meaning and their professional identity formation.

*Building learning partnership: participation in enkais*

Nash obtains rapport with the local teachers as well as his students. "If I ask them questions and they'll help you Japanese, and I help answer the questions about English as well." They seem to have mutuality in their learning partnership, which was enhanced by the participation in socialising events together. His learning experience was not limited at the school. Like other ALTs, Nash mentioned that "the *enkai*s are actually very helpful" to get to know his colleagues better. In a journal, he described the story of changes in his relationship with JTEs after joined *enkai*s:

> **We started the semester with an *enkai*. I ended up at the *nijikai* (after-party) seated next to an English teacher who has always been very distant and shy and spoke a lot of Japanese in class. We ended up talking with the other English teacher all night, and I told him quite frankly that I don't care if he makes mistakes in his conversations, as long as he speaks English. We talked about his goals for the future, past travels, etc. After that, our relationship at school transformed drastically and class became much more fun, more exchange between us. This has translated into the classroom – far more banter between us and the students, more conversation, a more relaxed attitude towards mistakes, and English is being used in real life scenarios far more often. [Extract 98: Nash NP6]**

Since many teachers are extremely busy at school, socialising occasions like *enkai*s outside the school often serve as a trigger to boost the communication and improve their working relationships. Nash's inbound trajectory into the micro and meso CoPs seems to be accelerated after participating in *enkai*s. Although he seems to gain more established membership in CoPs, he said that he sometimes feels alienated. "I'm still quite amazed how little the teachers talk, even in Japanese. Some of the teachers will speak to me now because I speak more Japanese." As shown in the very first quote, he recognises the existence of 'glass walls' around him, which are identified as invisible social, cultural, and language boundaries.

*Formal training opportunities in macro CoPs: the SDCs*

In the first interview, Nash commented about the SDCs: "The conferences aren't actually very helpful. They do share ideas, a kind of useful tips though." However, the BoE invited a guest speaker from British Council who talked about Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

for schools at the SDC 2015, and he said that CLIL presentation was useful. He referred to it in his journal that "I was really inspired by the idea of CLIL, which I have been using in class." Nash found a link between his teaching practices and the idea of CLIL. This time the SDC seemed to provide the meaningful backdrop for his teaching practice.

Nash himself gave a workshop presentation at the SDC where he explained some aspects of English teachers' identity and diverse perspectives that need to be considered in the globalised world. He said that JTEs are vital to let their students not only feel the function of English, which is something binds us together as a tool of communication, but to contribute to a wider world by having their own voices. JTEs and ALTs can work in collaboration to encourage students to voice their opinions in English, he alleged.

The SDC 2015 turned out to be a great opportunity for him to get new insights on his practice linked with CLIL, to get new ideas of activities and to share his thoughts about how to motivate students and teach them English and foreign cultures effectively in class based on collaborative learning partnership between ALTs and JTEs.

*Outlook of his learning trajectory*

Being an ALT is rewarding for Nash especially with the students. It is always interesting and challenging, sometimes frustrating. In the final interview, he listed the things that he had learned through his experience as an ALT:

> **Classroom management, reading the mood of the students, reading the air in the classroom, making lesson plans, recording listening test, doing interview practice, how to make photocopies, laminating things, kind of 'teacher life' and all sorts of random little jobs. I wouldn't have thought of doing it before I started teaching. [Extract 99: Nash NP7]**

After the contract period is over, he is planning to look for another English teaching opportunity in a different country. Even though he has decided to take outbound trajectory from current CoPs, "I want to keep them very polished until the last moment," said Nash.

> **I feel like my presence is justified when I see my students and JTEs improving their English over time through conversing with me, and if I was not here, I think there would be very little chance for them to use the language and make it come alive. We also talk about random cultural things, the strange parts of English and Japanese, and**

**much more. So, we are really encouraging intercultural understanding. [Extract 100: Nash NP8]**

This is one of the facets of the ALT system, aiming to encourage and enhance intercultural communication. Throughout these narratives, Nash demonstrates his awareness about the role identity given to ALTs: as a provider of intercultural communication using English as a medium.

## 6.2 Narrative portfolio of Tina

*"Even now, every time I teach a class, I'm changing things. It's a learning process, it doesn't stop. I don't feel I'm qualified. I think I've got good classroom management skills, but I still have a long way to go to actually get students truly absorbed the information. I guess that's a good sign that you're constantly developing and being like "Oh, maybe that doesn't work. How do I fix this?""*

Table 6.2 Profile of Tina

| Participant | Employment type | Education | Languages | Schools | Lessons / week | Students / class | Lesson styles | Extra-curricular activities | Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tina<br>NZ | JET<br>3 years | BA History | English<br>Japanese | 2 SHS | 15 | 28 or about 40 | Team-teaching or ALT leads | ESS (English Speaking Society), Speech contest | urban |

Tina has been through apprenticeship with her JTEs and become an autonomous teacher, displaying transition in their team-teaching relationships. She maintains a fine balance with her JTEs 'without stepping on their toes' in micro CoPs. After three years, she seemed to get legitimacy in the school-based CoPs, involved in speech contest for the first time. In Tina's case, negative influences of her predecessors on the JTEs might constitute a hindrance to get on inbound trajectory in meso CoPs. Although she has gained legitimate membership in micro and meso CoPs, the ALT system and 'glass ceilings' made her balk at staying in Japan.

### 6.2.1 Apprenticeship of learning: Tina's case

Tina said that her identity as a teacher has been formed through apprenticeship with her JTEs combined with her experience of AoO in frontstage. Her JTEs seemed to show both good and bad examples of teaching practices to her. As for a positive learning experience, she picked up from

one JTE's lesson style to keep the classes fast in pace, changing activities every seven minutes to make students stay focused in class. Whereas she observed other JTEs lessons where nearly half of the students fell asleep and learned that their teaching style was not effective. She described her teaching style as follows:

> **I do a lot of encouragement, rounding around the classroom. I don't overcorrect the students and just try to keep the right fine environment so that they feel confident in speaking. I think it's very hard to follow and stick to a plan. I think people are often trying to make the students settle onto a plan, which double a load of work. Every class is different. They all have different dynamics. So, I'm more just ensuring they engage at all time. [Extract 101: Tina NP1]**

Tina regards one JTE as her mentor and she learned how to keep the lesson speed specifically from that JTE who she still teaches with. There is no theory behind the 7-minute rule, but she discovered this technique from observing both productive and unproductive lessons in the Japanese school contexts. In fact, she changed the types of activities regularly in the range from five to ten minutes in her lessons that I observed. Throughout the lesson, Tina was the main teacher and the JTE just did time keeping. It was interesting to see the confidence that Tina displayed after she went through the apprenticeship.

Tina has very good relationships with her colleagues, getting feedback from her JTEs as constructive criticism. However, it took time to build those positive relationships. She recalled and said, "In Western countries, it takes only 2 weeks to build such relationship, but in Japan, it took almost a year." At her base school, she is called Tina-*chan* from her colleagues. The suffix '-*chan*' is commonly used for endearing nicknames mainly for female but also for male to show friendliness in Japanese. (e.g., *Doraemon* is sometimes called *Dora-chan*.) "They call me Tina-*chan*, such a friendly atmosphere. But I also feel respected."

Since most ALTs are new to the school contexts and the culture in Japan, it seems difficult for them to simply transfer their experiences of AoO. It is necessary for ALTs to transform these experiences through apprenticeship to construct their identity as teachers, learning by doing to get legitimate membership in school-based CoPs.

### 6.2.2 Learning through doing: teacher learning for Tina

Tina has fifteen lessons per week at two SHS and teaches first and third grade classes having around forty students in one class. From my personal experience as a SHS JTE, most of the time

ALTs are scheduled to team-teach first grade classes, sometimes join the elective classes for second and/or third graders. This is partially because the design of school curriculum which focus more on the preparation for university/college entrance examinations in the later year, and lessons with ALTs tend to be avoided for third graders because of the uncertainty of the ALT's skills/motivation/personality to teach more tensed classes. Also, many teachers suppose that first graders as newcomers with 'blank canvas' for SHS life can deal with any types of teachers including ALTs who are frequently replaced. Actually, team-taught lessons would become unpredictable depending on the ALT's and the JTEs' personal traits and their pedagogic and language skills. Not only JTEs but also ALTs have different perceptions about their roles in team-teaching. Even if they have pre-lesson meetings, it is difficult to predict what will happen in the team-teaching lessons, unless they have built team-learning partnership and established a certain kind of routine. Hence, having lessons for the final year students means that Tina has a firm membership in the school-based CoPs.

*Team-teaching in micro CoPs: JTEs as mentors*

The JTE called I-*sensei* is one of her mentors who invited her to teach third grade classes. Tina referred to the class as 'oasis' where she can learn not only about teaching but also topics related to science which are new to her. She wrote in a journal as follows:

> **I have taught the 3rd grade class since I arrived at the SHS, and although I have never really been party to teaching *ni-nensei* (2nd grade) or *san-nensei* (3rd grade) classes, I-*sensei* has consistently pulled me in to assist with this class over the years that I have been here. The level of rapport I have with the 3rd grade students mean that this class actually achieves something on a weekly basis, as opposed to *ichi-nensei* (1st grade) classes where you only see them for one period every three weeks. [Extract 102: Tina NP2]**

She also has another mentor JTE at the same SHS. They usually plan lessons together and team-teach the very first lesson so that she can get feedback from him before doing the same lesson with other JTEs. Like other ALTs, Tina said that she joins *enkai*s every time. She also utilises these socialising opportunities to build rapport with her colleagues.

*Transition from an apprentice to an autonomous teacher*

As gaining knowledge of the contexts and understanding the students well, Tina realised that she did not necessarily agree with the mentor JTE's feedback/input. She feels that it used to be very helpful to have the mentor JTE, but planning lessons with him become constraints recently.

> **This year, I think because the teacher involved, I underestimated the students. This teacher seems to underestimate his students, and it reflects on the fact that I have to teach the same lesson to other classes. So, I've had to be flexible within the class by adding material without stepping on his toes. Things that I found out recently, they're calling him '*dai-sensei*' (great/master teacher) because he's doing everything and doesn't delegate, doesn't have a lot of faith in other people. I don't think he has much faith in his students either. I think he oversimplified things, and you could tell by the way how bored the students were in the class because they didn't feel challenge. I struggled to strike a balance with him this year. [Extract 103: Tina NP3]**

Tina seems to have developed her professional identity as a teacher after these years of practice, getting more confidence and being autonomous in teaching. Furthermore, she found out the complexity in the relationships among the local teachers and got to understand shared norms in CoPs with sharp observation. I have similar experience at SHS, working with some teachers called by the nickname '*dai-sensei*.' The common dispositions of those *dai-sensei*s are being proud of themselves, showing less trust in other people, having less empathy with students, preferring to pursue static/numerical goals, etc. Their colleagues used the nickname in both ironic and respected ways. Indeed, it would be meaningful and beneficial to have teachers with these business-like utilitarianism standpoints in school-based CoPs. As Tina remarked, many teachers work together trying not to step each other's toes and rendering assistance dexterously, sometimes behind the scenes. It is a part of the dynamics of CoPs in school contexts. Her awareness of these dynamics implies that she has full membership in the school-based CoPs.

*Use of Japanese in class: JTEs attitudes to facilitate/hinder students' learning*

Tina is believing in her students' ability and that sometimes conflicts with some JTEs' attitudes in the classroom.

> **I continue to have some frustrations with one or two teachers who shadow me in Japanese. Over the course of the year, I've noticed a difference in the listening abilities of the classes. I feel that a part of me has given up on this front. These are**

**teachers I also struggle to communicate with in English, and often have to resort to some Japanese or oversimplifying my sentences with. I think there is nothing wrong with translating difficult concepts into Japanese. However, "ask your partner" or "move back 2 seats" should not need to be translated. [Extract 104: Tina NP4]**

The use of Japanese in the classroom is a delicate problem also in SHS level. The situation is different from those in ES and JHS and the purpose of its use is usually to make the concepts/messages clear, not much for classroom management. With some JTEs, Tina has good chemistry, and they can put Japanese translations just as much as the students need with the 'breath of *Aun*.' Undoubtedly, those teachers are socially and emotionally intelligent who understand their students well. Tina mentioned that she is trying to help and support students who are missed out from the JTE's attention, changing the ways to approach students depending on each JTE's style to complement each other. When I observed her team-teaching lessons, Tina was the main teacher and the JTEs assisted her, monitoring students to offer support and giving Japanese translations at times. It seems that they fulfil strong version of team-teaching relationships, maintaining mutuality in their teaching practices.

*Potential obstacles to get legitimate membership in CoPs: Negative influences of predecessors*

Tina articulated that it was time-consuming to get on inbound trajectory. She referred to another story of her process of participation in meso CoPs.

**I think I've given a lot more responsibility and the teachers' level of trust me is very high now. It takes so long to build up these relationships here. It's such a struggle because to get to this point took a lot of hard work and a lot of time. [Extract 105: Tina NP5]**

Finally, in her third year, the JTEs asked Tina to be involved in the speech competition for the first time. The students trained by her for around six weeks won the first prise, whereas they were in eighth place in the year before. She questioned, "Why was I not involved previously?" Tina looked back the situation and said:

**They (local teachers) are extremely busy and jaded. They didn't have a lot of patience with me when I arrived. I spoke to my teachers and they were like "Because the two ALTs before you, one girl left within the year, the one after that had so many problems and it's like excellent nightmare. The one before that was really useless." For them,**

> **it's like getting a half-decent ALT is like sticking your hand in a bucket. [Extract 106: Tina NP6]**

Presumably, her predecessors left extremely negative impressions on the JTEs, and it might cause Tina as their successor to experience difficulties of getting legitimate participation in CoPs. Through her narratives, the predecessors seemed to stigmatise ALTs as if they were like a wolf in the tale "The wolf and the seven little goats" that brings a disaster. Due to the fact, her JTEs, except her mentor I-*sensei*, might hesitate to open the door for Tina and let her in on the CoPs at first. Although she did not tie these JTEs' previous experiences of having problematic ALTs to the difficulties that she experienced to get legitimate participation, imaginably the JTEs would have come to adopt extremely cautious attitude toward newcomer ALT after that traumatic experience. Tina's constant hard work was able to break the boundary of preconceptions about ALTs that the JTEs had hold and it resulted in benefiting students to win the speech competition.

*Formal training opportunities in macro CoPs: the SDCs*

Tina commented on her experience at the SDCs that "Often they're not that helpful." Tina said the topics and contents of the SDCs are usually not applicable to her school contexts. Like Glen, she pointed out the issues of their organisations.

> **People giving all the lectures and side tutorials, they are all ALTs. They had some experience but not a lot, really. I don't care about hierarchy, but when you're talking to people who are fully qualified and have been doing this job for years, it needs to be more reflective of the work that they're doing every day, not just like these one of ALT lessons. There needs to be more cooperation to identify what are the problems JTEs facing in terms of implementing the curriculum and bringing it in. It's never done from their perspectives. It's always done from the ALTs' perspectives. So, I think it's just not beneficial. To me, it's a little condescending. [Extract 107: Tina NP7]**

Conversely, however, the trainings/conferences/seminars for JTEs usually lack the perspectives from ALTs. In fact, JTEs have various opportunities for their professional development, but as a JTE, I have never had any chances to attend formal seminars/workshops aiming to enhance/develop/improve team-teaching relationships between ALTs and JTEs. At the organisational level, more effort should be made to establish a better system to implement more inclusive collaboration between ALTs and JTEs/HRTs in team-teaching lessons.

*Outlook of her learning trajectory*

Teacher learning for Tina is not limited inside the classroom but it extends to the ALT system, the education system in Japan and its reform. She always updates her knowledge about the contexts and examines them critically. For instance, she said, "They need to change the ALT system. They're running the same system as it were in the 80s and all they've done is just to decide to throw more of them into Tokyo." Also, she linked her experience of working in the BoE in New Zealand to her observations on that in Japan.

> **People in the BoE, many of whom are ex-principal or teachers, but they forget about the reality and just decide "We do this," but HOW? I had been working in the BoE in NZ for several months and seen the process was never gone back. They do a lot of research to implement new curriculum and assess how it's applied in the school context. It's a huge process of research. Whereas here, they're like living in the fairy-tale land in the BoE. [Extract 108: Tina NP8]**

Having been through the similar experience as a SHS JTE, I have great sympathy for her and would question the system alike. It is understandable that ALTs who have such broader perspectives would not be satisfied with the formal trainings like the SDCs where they merely share successful lesson plans and their concerns with little visions for their professional development.

Through the narratives, Tina demonstrated her deep understanding of the educational contexts in Japan and it led her to gain certain membership in the CoPs. I assume that her colleagues recognise her as a chum and call her Tina-*chan* in a friendly manner with respect.

After the contract period is over, she plans to leave Japan and English teaching job. Like other ALTs stated, it is obvious that the system forces ALTs to take outbound trajectories from CoPs after several years even though they get full membership. The legal boundaries or 'glass ceilings' seem to bring serious damage to the English education in Japan by losing many experienced expert ALTs. Although there are a few months remaining, Tina said that she continues "just to teach improved version of all my best lessons, making sure they're all lively/active/fun/speaking. Hopefully to show the teachers that students are not silly, and their ability is there." As shown in the very first quote, her teacher learning process is never-ending. Her learning trajectory as an ALT, her contributions and collective learning experiences with her students and teachers might influence positively on her successors.

## 6.3 Narrative portfolio of Dane

*"Just by working with the diverse group of teachers, I feel like it's making me more rounded in a way I approach things. A big thing is gaining a new perspective. I'm not sure how much this is going to be transferred when I return to the US and probably pursue a similar career, but so far I work with 10 different teachers and just having those ideas bounce back and forth, and also having my own ideas come into play especially for the younger teachers that I have seen for a year over, that's been very helpful."*

Table 6.3 Profile of Dane

| Participant | Employment type | Education | Languages | Schools | Lessons / week | Students / class | Lesson styles | Extra-curricular activities | Area |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dane<br>US | JET<br>3 years<br>(+ 2 years at JHS in South Korea) | BA English | English<br>Spanish<br>Japanese | 1 SHS | 15 | 20 or about 40 | Team-teaching<br>ALT & JTE lead | ESS, Tea ceremony club,<br>Performing art club | urban |

Dane is the only ALT who has previous teaching experience among the seven participants, majored in English teaching even though it was halfway through his university career. His professional identity as an English teacher has been formed through AoO in frontstage, teacher training experience, and apprenticeship in micro and meso CoPs including 'remote apprenticeship' with his predecessor and mutual learning partnership with his JTEs in team-teaching. He used to work at night school where they have completely different school culture and group dynamics compared to day school. Reflecting these unique teacher learning experiences, he is planning to pursue his career as an English teacher as shown above. Like Gary, Glen and John, Dane also acts as a broker by teaching English conversation lessons for adults as a volunteer.

### 6.3.1 Apprenticeship of learning: Dane's case

Dane is a third year JET ALT who came to Japan after two years of teaching English at JHS in South Korea. He described the process of his identity formation as follows:

> **My perspectives on teaching were different in Korea, it's different when I was studying teaching in university. It's different now that I've been teaching in Japan for a few**

**years. I feel like as a human being, you need to have that dynamic sort of reaction to what's happening around you: the environment of school, the culture at large, and the classroom itself. Education is a living breathing thing, so you need to approach it as such. [Extract 109: Dane NP1]**

Dane drew a comparison between his teaching experience as an ALT in South Korea and in Japan. He stated, "Something I've learned from the experience of being an ALT that wasn't impressed upon me when I was teaching in South Korea" because the ALTs' position there was "just being the authoritative figure that you are the teacher, they are the students, and there's this wall." Through the teaching experience in Japan, especially at night school, he has learned the importance of building rapport with students and having more positive mindset when the class begins.

**If you can talk to them outside of class, maybe they'll be a little more active and pay attention more in class. That's something that wasn't really pushed in South Korea. Whereas here, it's more community building sort of mindset. [Extract 110: Dane NP2]**

It might be because of the differences between the type/level of schools in South Korea and Japan, but he seems to gain different perspectives through working as an ALT in two different countries. ALTs represent many different conceptions in different contexts. Dane said that his experience is "very small finite fragment of the whole of the position."

When Dane started working in Japan, he visited both day school and night school. He said, it was scary to work at night school at first because he did not have training to deal with behavioural issues and the students sometimes got violent in class to an extent. He shared the story with his family in the US and got advice from his father.

**I did contact my father about it because he was asking how the job was going. He taught me that compassion is really integral, especially for you going to be a teacher. If I would see someone acting out in public the ways of my students did, at first, I would think 'What's wrong with that person? Why is he/she yelling like that?' But by working with them, you can understand that some of it is beyond their control because of mental disability/illness. Even though it was a very tiring experience, I think doing that line of work opened my eyes a little bit. [Extract 111: Dane NP3]**

This could be understood as an example of teacher learning in micro and meso CoPs at night school supported by the member in nano CoPs. Also, he explained that his philosophy as a teacher "to be a sculptor of young minds" is also influenced by the character in the film 'Dead Poets Society' as demonstrated in Chapter 4.3.3 (Extract 37: Dane (Q3.2)). Having taught in

significantly different school contexts, he has performed various roles as a teacher and came to gain the core beliefs: having compassion, trying to understand and guide students, and making their learning interesting without making it cartoonish. As he expressed, he has reflected those experiences into his teaching practices.

Dane mentioned that he does not have high level of Japanese but his relationship with JTEs is very positive, giving constrictive criticism to each other. It is maybe because SHS JTEs have relatively higher level of English proficiency. Unlike Tina's case, Dane gained membership in the CoPs smoothly, taking responsibilities from the very beginning and trusted by his JTEs. It might be because his JTEs did not have any negative experiences with ALTs previously. In fact, he referred to the interactions with his predecessor:

> **I was fortunate when I came to Japan, my predecessor was still in the country, so I was able to talk with her about club activities, classroom materials, about co-workers. Of course, I'll pass that information down to the next person so that they're not completely lost when they come to Japan. [Extract 112: Dane NP4]**

Apprenticeship between predecessor and successor ALTs possibly assists the newcomer's legitimate participation in the school-based CoPs and helps moderate the confusions of conflicting identity of novice ALTs. As Dane mentioned, local teachers tend to see ALTs as experts of English language or 'a compendium of knowledge' whether or not they have the background of teaching English. Therefore, handing over the expected roles/duties and basic information about the context is vital for ALTs to learn about their standpoint and possible trajectories in the CoPs.

### 6.3.2 Learning through doing: teacher learning for Dane

Dane has fifteen lessons per week. There are usually about forty students in one class, but some elective classes have around twenty students each. He used to teach at night school concurrently, but he visits only one SHS in the school year 2015. Dane is the only ALT who work at one school among seven participants, which is the same working condition as the local teachers. Along with different modes of apprenticeship, he has learned to teach through his day-to-day practice.

> **Obviously, the biggest aspect of it is just going to work and paying attention: what students do/don't react to, what activities the co-teachers want to use, their level of experience and their openness to have collaborative effort to be really co-teaching as**

**opposed to either as tape-recorder like or as going to be translated immediately. [Extract 113: Dane NP5]**

*Team-learning relationship in micro CoPs*

Since it is his third year at the SHS, Dane has already had a rigid plan for his lessons and established good working relationships with his JTEs.

> **This year it was much more structured, there was a much stricter range of goals for each class. In a sense, I felt like it was more streamlined the entire year. It wasn't diverse as in my previous a year and half. I had to refine how I was approaching it, for example, making vocabulary sheets, explaining in easy English. So that's the skill I had to elaborate upon throughout this year. [Extract 114: Dane NP6]**

He is improvising an opening conversation with his JTEs that is usually related to the lesson. Sometimes they script the conversation, but it is an important opportunity to show the students that the ALT and the JTE can interact in English. Dane is trying to deliver role models of English users together with his JTEs. Their team-teaching can be categorised as the strong version since they plan lessons together taking fifty-fifty responsibility and work in collaboration inside the classroom as well. When I observed his lessons, both Dane and his JTEs took the leading role in turn. Dane uses humour and real-life examples with a lot of gestures and drawings to get his students engage in the class. As demonstrated earlier, he tries not to make a 'wall' between him and students. Rather, he thinks that important dispositions for ALTs are "not being afraid to interact with people, being willing to take whatever extra time you may have just to interact with your co-workers, your community, and your students, and showing support." In fact, he does not go back to the staffroom soon after class is over. He takes time to walk around and chat with students "because there are many of them who won't participate in class, but when I see them outside the class, a lot of it's a simple conversation but you can tell that they want to communicate." There are some students who visit him regularly in staffroom after school to practice conversation in English. Dane has built positive learning relationships with his JTEs and students in the school-based CoPs, cumulating every small window of opportunity.

*Negotiations of meaning: balancing the use of Japanese in class*

As with Tina's case, Dane experienced the issue of immediate translation by some JTEs in class.

> **They do not give the students chance to internalise it or try to figure it out on their own and there's no point in the ALT speaking because it's immediately translated. But that's something you learn as well: that's not so effective, that's not the best most applications. Obviously, like very low-level schools, that might be necessary in some situation, but not always. [Extract 115: Dane NP7]**

When he noticed that they needed to change the approach in class to give students more chances to digest the information in English without Japanese translation, he did not hesitate to talk with his JTEs. It was possible because Dane already had a core membership in the school-based CoPs.

> **I haven't been there for that long and I'm only finishing up my 3rd year, but I feel like the level of communication that I've had with my co-workers throughout my entire time here has made it so that the transition has been made where I am just a regular teacher there. I'm not 'the new guy' so much anymore. I feel like throughout this past year the relationship hasn't changed so much, it was just a matter of working out how to teach with teachers I hadn't worked with before. So, it was just building the teaching/working relationship. [Extract 116: Dane NP8]**

He has been building positive learning partnership with his colleagues through participating in various practices inside and outside of the school as shown below.

*Building learning partnership with the local teachers and other ALTs: Participation in nomikais and other activities*

Dane takes part in various events with his students and colleagues and those activities are not limited inside the school. He is involved in school events such as school festivals, club activities, and *nomikai*s. He mentioned that "there're English staff dinners, *bonenkai* (year-end party) or *nijikai*" and he attends all of them. It indicates that Dane has built close relationships with his colleagues to go to *nijikai* as well as *bonenkai*. Also, he joined formal tea ceremony and visited a shrine with some of his co-workers. These episodes seem to reflect the degree of his participation in the meso CoPs.

> **We're just going out and enjoying being out of the classroom environment. We're not even that close in age, but our personalities go together or so. It's just another to enjoy the experience in Japan with people I know and trust, and work with. [Extract 117: Dane NP9]**

Furthermore, he keeps in touch with other ALTs in the area. He said, "There are plenty of ALTs close enough to contact regularly or even run into on occasion, not all the time because we all work at different schools, but if I want to talk to another ALT, it's just a matter of opening up LINE chat and sending a message to my friends." As Dane works in the urban area, there are many opportunities to meet up with other ALTs, sharing experiences about the life in Japan. "I don't really feel too isolated," he articulated. Other episodes of online CoPs among ALTs including Dane, using Dropbox to exchange ideas of lesson plans are shown in Chapter 4.3.2 and Appendix K [B-1].

*Legitimate membership in multiple CoPs: Acting as a broker*

Like Gary, John and Glen, Dane is working as a volunteer, brokering the boundaries of CoPs.

> **I volunteer monthly at a local university for general conversation practice in small groups (1-5 students). The program, new for this year, has ALTs from the area come to the university and openly chat with those who sign up. Honestly, it was a warm exchanging of ideas revolving around basic communicative topics such as family life, thoughts on travel, and describing pop culture in English. Call it a simple joy. [Extract 118: Dane NP10]**

Dane has actively participated in different levels of CoPs, gaining membership not only for school-based micro and meso CoPs with his students and colleagues but also in macro CoPs including online CoPs. He described how he feels about the membership in the communities as follows:

> **To an extent, I realise that just by not speaking Japanese, that's automatically I'm kind of ostracized on a basic level. But I feel like my contributions, my opinions they matter. I feel like I'm being treated seriously as a professional working adult as opposed to some young ignorant foreigner who's just there for teaching a few classes. I feel like I've met my position as a teacher, as a colleague, as opposed to some outsider. [Extract 119: Dane NP11]**

Although he recognises the existence of boundaries or 'glass walls' caused by his level of proficiency in Japanese like Nash, he is taking insider trajectory in the school-based CoPs and other members are open and welcome his participation. Then, his legitimate membership in micro and meso CoPs might encourage him to act as a broker, reaching out further to macro CoPs.

*Teacher learning opportunities in macro CoPs: The SDCs*

I was not able to attend the SDC with Dane because it was double-booked with another. However, he seemed to have similar impression and experience with other JET ALTs. "The SDCs can be useful, but there is always space for improvement." He stated that:

> **Often, they have workshops where you can brainstorm, interact with other teachers in other situations, both ALTs as well as JTEs. That's in the valuable way of diversifying your skillset because you're hearing/learning from people at so many different types of schools, like top language school, agricultural school, technical school, etc. So, I feel the BoE does its best to let that sort of interaction happen, there's never enough time though. It's always very rushed. But at least it's something. [Extract 120: Dane NP12]**

After the SDC 2015, he cast back that experience and said, "One of the main things that the SDC pushes is active communication between the ALT and the JTE's team, but that hasn't really been much of a problem. We've always been relatively open with each other about what works and what doesn't work." The SDC seemed to provide an opportunity for Dane to broaden his knowledge about different school contexts, but it did not have actual impact on his teaching practices and learning partnerships with his JTEs.

*Outlook of his learning trajectory*

Like other ALTs, Dane pointed out the boundaries which they are facing such as language barriers and the limited contract period and status.

> **I feel like the ALT position is very important. Obviously, I enjoyed the programme, I'm pleased with my position. It's not perfect, there are some things could be changed or better implemented, like different opportunities for learning the Japanese language would be nice, having been seen as more of equivalent to Japanese co-workers.**
> **[Extract 121: Dane NP13]**

As illustrated in the very first quote, he is planning to pursue his teaching career in the US after leaving the ALT job, and these boundaries or 'glass ceiling/walls' do not affect his career path. Still, he thinks that the ALT system should be improved so that they could have more options for career progression.

The learning experiences as an ALT in Japan seem to help him build his professional identity as a teacher and classroom competences. He said in the final interview, "I feel like I have a better

sense of how to approach lessons and what is reasonable to be accomplished within those lessons. Of course, that's going to reset another couple of weeks when the new group of students come in and we have to readjust to what their capabilities are. But I feel like I have more good days than bad days in terms of goal fulfilment." Dane's trajectory in the current CoPs is going outward after several months, but his learning as an English teacher continues.

## 6.4 Findings from cross-case analyses

Seven narrative portfolios presented from Chapter 5.1 to Chapter 6.3 delineate the diverse backgrounds of ALTs and their unique trajectories in various CoPs. Chapter 6.4 illustrates the findings from cross-case analyses. The objective is not to generalise, but to explore the complexities of the process of teacher learning for ALTs and their different modes of participation in multiple CoPs. Following sections illuminate the findings of cross-case analyses based on the structural frame with two angles to compose narrative portfolios which is explained in the introduction of Chapter 5: 1) Apprenticeship in the work and the learning of ALTs, which includes AoO both in frontstage and from backstage that influence ALTs' professional identity construction and apprenticeship from old-timers in CoPs not only from JTEs, HRTs and other ALTs as 'more competent others' but also from students who spent longer time in the CoPs, 2) Issues of identity in different school settings and social contexts (rural/urban) observed in various styles of team-teaching with the local teachers largely owing to ALTs' patience and flexibility, pros and cons in the work of ALTs as itinerant teachers, and differences in status given to ALTs in different employment types, 3) Keys to take inbound trajectories such as Japanese language proficiency, the title '*sensei*' which represents membership/status in CoPs, and participation in the socialising events like *nomikai*s to enhance mutuality in working relationships, and 4) determinant outbound trajectories for ALTs and existence of 'glass walls' as cultural/social boundaries and 'glass ceilings' as legal boundaries that make ALT non-tenured position.

### 6.4.1 Apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs

All the seven ALTs articulated in the interviews that their core beliefs as teachers are somewhat affected by their experience of AoO in frontstage, having taught by the teachers who are socially and emotionally intelligent in some cases (see Extract 39: Nash (Q3.2); Extract 79: John NP3). As shown in the Table 3.2, six ALTs except for Tina have learned Spanish or German at school. Their learning experiences are positive, having teachers who tried to build rapport with students and

fostered them to become active users of the language acquiring the language by making mistakes in class. That might lead them to become the ALTs who take similar approaches to their students in Japanese school contexts. It seems that such AoO from emotionally and socially intelligent teachers can create virtuous cycle in education even in the different contexts. Even though many ALTs have not received formal teacher trainings, they can successfully transfer their experience of AoO into their teaching practices by utilising their imagination. Gary and John took a teacher training course in the middle of their career as ALTs and both mentioned that it would be helpful to gain theoretical backdrops for their teaching practices. However, John pointed out that it brought the feelings of disappointment because he realised that there was not much space for him to professionally grow under the current circumstances. Experienced ALTs (Amy, Gary, Glen and John) implemented new curriculum for their ES and all the ES ALTs modify the contents of government approved textbooks ‘Hi, friends!’. Their positive experience of AoO is also evident in these teachers’ work, examining their students’ needs well and trying to answer them.

Furthermore, the stories of Gary and Glen revealed that AoO from backstage by having teachers among family members also influenced their professional identity formation. I can imagine what it is like because there are several teachers in my family and we often have discussions on the topics such as education reform plans and how to tackle the issues of students’ motivations and behavioural problems, etc. These small teachers’ talks/meetings at home have helped me to develop as a teacher and gain broader insight. Gary has experienced AoO from his sister as a former JET ALT in Japan, and Glen from his mother as a Spanish teacher at ES in the US. They both utilise the ideas of activities and tips to motivate students from backstage AoO in their teaching practices in the classroom. Their narratives demonstrate that their experience of AoO both in frontstage and from backstage has guided them to take inbound trajectories in CoPs in Japanese school contexts.

Meanwhile, six ALTs except for Glen referred to their learning through craft model apprenticeship with the local teachers early in their career as a part of their alignment processes. Not surprisingly, old-timer JTEs are usually regarded as mentors and Amy also named one HRT as her mentor. Those JTEs/HRTs facilitate the ALTs’ legitimate participation in the micro and meso CoPs, which supports their successful adaptation to the Japanese school contexts. The features of apprenticeship include contextual knowledge and competences such as school cultures and classroom management skills with some specific usages of Japanese language in the classroom, not limited to just English teaching. In addition, not only the local teachers but also students are considered as old-timers in CoPs who can provide opportunities for ALTs to learn about teaching through mutual engagement. Gary’s case indicates that even pupils at NS can suggest more effective ways of teaching through the activities that they do together (Chapter 5.1.2).

Also, apprenticeship can be observed in the relationships among ALTs. Six ALTs except for Gary participate in the ALTs' group in the same region because there are only two NETs in Gary's town. They physically meet up occasionally, sharing things about the life in Japan and talking about their lessons. One city BoE in John's case organises the special English project called 'Enjoy English' led by fourteen ALTs and they have official meetings scheduled regularly where they can learn from each other. Moreover, John, Nash and Dane mentioned that they had contacted with their predecessors and got information about the schools, colleagues, worksheets and other materials when they started teaching. The apprenticeship between predecessors and successors who teach in the same school context(s) can be understood as 'remote apprenticeship', which is a unique way of apprenticeship across time. Additionally, ALTs have online CoPs where old-timers or experienced ALTs can help junior ALTs by giving advice on lesson plans and sharing their original activity suggestions and teaching materials. They use social networking platforms such as Facebook, LINE, and Dropbox. Some of the online CoPs are closed where only ALTs with membership can access, and others are open for public where anyone can either post or download their ideas. All the seven ALTs take part in online CoPs among ALTs via several different platforms.

### 6.4.2 Issues of ALTs' professional identity in different school settings and social contexts

*Identity issues of ALTs who work in more than two school levels: itinerant ALTs*

As presented in Table 3.2, five ALTs (Gary, Amy, Glen, John, and Nash) teach at more than two school levels. ALTs who work at both ES and JHS usually visit JHS as their base school(s) for three to four days a week and go to ES irregularly. The number of the schools that they visit varies but normally these ES are fed into their JHS. At ES, ALTs often have more freedom to create/choose materials for the lessons, whereas they tend to be assistants following directions of JTEs and the textbooks at JHS. They said that ES contexts and approach of the lessons such as pedagogy or methods used there are similar to those in Western countries, and ES ALTs seem to feel it easier to transfer their experience of AoO compared to ALTs who are in JHS and SHS contexts where they find many differences in the school culture. The ALTs exercise varieties of team-teaching patterns ranging from almost solo-teach to strong version of team-teaching where the ALT and the local teacher take fifty-fifty responsibilities (see also Chapter 4.3.2). It is not just because of the difference in the school levels, but it largely depends on the personalities/dispositions and skills of the local teachers. English lessons at ES are officially implemented from 2011 and they are still new to the local teachers. Thus, in most cases ALTs take a leading role at ES and many

HRTs regard them as their mentors. This is the background of four experienced ALTs in Chapter 5 who wrote curriculum for ES and implemented it. While at JHS, ALTs should try to find a happy medium with each JTE. Like Glen and John articulated, they experience identity gaps when they are in ES and JHS, acting out different identities depending on the situation to cooperate with each JTE's expectation.

Professional identity of itinerant ALTs seems to be a double-edged sword. They are like in part-time status travelling around different schools, although they are in full-time position. That can be an obstacle for them to get membership in the CoPs and often causes lack of communication with the local teachers on the one hand. On the other, however, it could be beneficial to facilitate continuous learning trajectories for the students because ALTs who work at both ES and JHS can see the development process of their students across school levels and know them better than JTEs/HRTs. It is not easy for the local teachers to go beyond the boundaries between different school levels, but itinerant ALTs have legitimacy to participate in both CoPs. Indeed, there are pros and cons for such allocation system for ALTs. In fact, some ALTs are struggling to get membership in the school-based CoPs when they cannot have enough time and communication with other members, going to so many different schools every day/week. Therefore, ALTs who cannot cope with this unique working condition usually decide to leave the job early. In this sense, the participants of this study are the ALTs who are capable of adapting to multiple CoPs and utilising the advantages of itinerant position which the local teachers cannot have, embracing their legitimate access to many different CoPs, teaching the same group of students and seeing their development across school levels. More importantly, they examine and understand the English education and curriculum in continuity. They are in the position where they would be able to make valuable suggestions for its improvement. That seems to be the mainly reason why Gary, Glen and John initiated teaching at NS/SHS in voluntary basis, brokering the boundaries between CoPs and adding more contributions to the wider community. In my view, the local teachers tend to lack this viewpoint, just focusing on the present situation and missing the connections of their students' past and future learning. It was a very eye-opening experience for me to get to know how ALTs dedicate to bridge the gaps between different school levels. Both ALTs and the local teachers should be more aware of the uniqueness of itinerant ALTs' professional identity and exchange opinions proactively so that ALTs can get going inbound trajectory in the CoPs smoothly.

*Identity issues of ALTs at SHS: novices as teachers but experts of English*

Compared to JHS and ES ALTs, SHS ALTs (Tina and Dane) expressed less confusions in terms of their process of settlement in Japanese school contexts. SHS JTEs have higher level of proficiency

in English and it helps their communication flows and strong version of team-teaching is regarded as default in their contexts. Yet, Tina mentioned that she was surprised at becoming an English expert for everything suddenly after her colleagues got used to her (Extract 13: Tina (Q2.1)). Similarly, Dane has been treated as a compendium of knowledge about English by his JTEs (Chapter 6.3.1). In Tina's case, it took time for her to get on inbound trajectory. This might be because her JTEs had extremely negative experiences with her predecessors, and it made them hesitate to build a relationship with her at the beginning (Chapter 6.2.2). All told, they are highly capable of negotiating meanings with their JTEs. It seems like opportunities for their professional development can be observed in their day-to-day practices, rather in the training seminars.

*Cultural and social boundaries: 'glass walls'*

There are several cultural and social factors considered as hurdles for ALTs that they should find ways to deal with: Japanese language, Japanese work style/culture, and social norms especially in the rural areas.

Since Japanese is used as the first language for their students and the local teachers, ALTs need to understand the language to an extent for classroom management and getting used to the school culture and teachers' work. Among the seven ALTs, Amy and Glen have studied Japanese at university in the US, and Gary also had knowledge about the language before coming to Japan because his family understand Japanese. Other four ALTs started learning Japanese after they arrived, but all of them have acquired basic level of Japanese. ES and JHS ALTs mentioned that they have been familiarising themselves with classroom language, names of the school facilities and equipment, titles of teachers, grammar terms, how to read the schedule, and how to give instructions to their students in Japanese through apprenticeship. Whereas SHS ALTs usually do not use any Japanese in class. In fact, Dane said he had not had many chances to practice his Japanese because he tried to speak English with his students as much as possible and the JTEs usually used English to communicate with him. The limited Japanese language skills sometimes cause ALTs problems such as miscommunication about the schedule or lesson procedures where the local teachers are not confident/proficient in English. Even ALTs who are highly proficient in Japanese cannot be free from language barrier. Glen articulated that he does not feel that he has full membership in the teachers' community because he does not know how to answer the phone in the staff room and his knowledge of the context is still fragmentary and not enough to understand the whole (Extract 76: Glen NP10). It might be largely affected by his identity as an itinerant ALT whose infrequent attendance at each of the schools can limit the opportunities to take inbound trajectories in school-based CoPs. Glen also pointed out tricky aspects of Japanese

in the countryside where people use the local dialect and many students and/or teachers have the same surname. It requires enormous time and effort for ALTs to fully understand the elements of their students' and teachers' first language and that sometimes create boundaries between them. Gary mentioned that he had been excluded from the meetings and conversations among local teachers even though he was there. The major reason was because they were conducted in Japanese (see Chapter 5.1.1).

As introduced in Chapter 3.3.3, the constraints caused by the existing legal boundaries as 'glass ceilings' tend to prevent ALTs from taking inbound trajectories in the school-based CoPs to get full membership in the educational context in Japan. Additionally, Japanese school culture and work style of the teachers would be confusing for ALTs as newcomers to the society and culture. For instance, some ALTs pointed out that they were surprised at the teachers' regular working overtime, school term schedule, school events and rules, and enthusiasm for extra-curricular activities, etc. (see Appendix K [D-2]). Some aspects of these could be got over in due course, but others remain as 'glass walls' that they can observe and understand but cannot get through. The stories from Tina, Nash and John indicate the impenetrable social norms and their spreading defects such as patriarchy or gender segregation, militant aspects in education like Sports Day, and casual sexual harassment in *kawaii* (cute) comments on female appearance (see Appendix N), but they do not have a voice on them because they are ALTs. Nash said that he observed corporal punishment by a local teacher, but even in that case, ALTs cannot take any action because they are told not to deal with students' behavioural issues basically (see also Appendix K [D-2] Jed). It is unacceptable but still these behaviours somehow rooted in the society and school culture, and there are teachers who overlook/disregard these issues intentionally to avoid conflict by saying, "Speech is silver, silence is golden." To be honest, I have experienced similar issues as a JTE. Even though some teachers raised voices to problematise such instances, the school was not able to reach fundamental solution. We have to admit the fact that people who are ineligible to become teachers can be teachers, unfortunately. As such, this kind of glass walls are applicable not only to ALTs but also to some local teachers who question the existing malfunctions in school contexts.

For another, ALTs in rural areas are often seen as distinctive models of people from foreign countries because in most cases they are the only foreigners living there. They tend to face challenges of getting used to their unique position in the closed community and answering expectations from the locals. When I visited John, I noticed that there are some students who collect autographs of ALTs on a plastic folder. He mentioned that the reactions from the local people in the community sometimes confuse him, telling me about the episode at a restaurant where the staff remembered when he came last time and what he ordered. This kind of branded

identity of ALTs as foreigners does not necessarily affect in negative ways, but they cannot free from differentiations due to the fact that ALTs are people from different countries/cultures.

### 6.4.3 Teacher learning for ALTs: keys to get on inbound trajectories from legitimate peripheral participation

During the fieldwork, I had chances to talk with the local teachers who work with seven participants. They often said, "Such an ALT like him/her is *mezurashii* (rare)." It means that the participants of this study are unusual/exceptional ALTs and I agree with them from my personal experience as a JTE. Through narrative portfolio analyses, I found out some affinities in their practices, modes of participation and trajectories in CoPs. As presented earlier, not many ALTs can get on inbound/insider trajectories from legitimate peripheral participation like them. This section examines the keys to take successful learning trajectories for ALTs.

Firstly, it is notable that the seven ALTs shared similar thoughts on important dispositions for ALTs: Being patient, flexible, sociable, and 'reading the air.' They are standing with the students, the teachers, and the school, always turning their thoughts to them and seeking better ways empathetically. The stories told by them represent their trajectories of identity formation. Teacher learning is a social phenomenon, thus, when members of CoPs are highly intelligent both socially and emotionally, learning could be accelerated and enhanced. They all try to take actions proactively since learning opportunities are not always promised and properly arranged for ALTs. Their professional development comes along mainly by taking responsibilities for the contents and delivery of the lessons that they teach and mentoring junior members and newcomers in CoPs.

At ES, for instance, five ALTs (Amy, Gary, Glen, John, and Nash) have created their own curriculum and lesson plans to implement English lessons in lower grades from first to fourth and modified the contents of the lessons in the government approved textbooks for fifth and sixth grade. These practices demonstrate their process of identification through negotiations of meaning by transferring their learning experiences from AoO and apprenticeship. The most significant example would be the Enjoy English project in John's case, where all the ALTs in the region get together and make short video clips about basic use of English in communication (Chapter 5.4.2). Even when such systematic approach cannot be taken by the local BoE, other ALTs also offer something extra such as putting posters and giving stickers to students, etc. They all spend as much time as possible with their students to understand them well and reflect that experience in their teaching, having lunch with them, going out to the playground to play

tag/football/dodgeball during recess, enjoying small talks and/or doing cleaning together. These are considered as non-obligatory work for ALTs, but they proactively participate in daily events with their students and teachers and contribute to the school education in many ways. It indicates that they enhance their knowledgeability and expressibility (Farnsworth, Kleanthous, & Wenger-Trayner, 2016) in meso CoPs as time goes by through participating in various activities.

While at JHS and SHS, ALTs take part in other types of activities such as extra-curricular club activities, *Eiken* interview test practices, preparation for the speech contest or entrance examinations, etc. (see Table 3.2). Sometimes they work overtime voluntarily to support their students and teachers. However, it is not specified in ALTs' duties to engage in the extra-curricular activities or non-teaching activities such as coaching football club (John), participating in tea ceremony (Dane) or taking Karate lesson (Nash) after school. Therefore, it depends on their personal decisions whether they join in these events outside the class. Furthermore, four ALTs (Gary, John, Glen, and Dane) initiated extra lessons in different school levels. Glen and Gary started to implement English lessons at NS. Dane volunteered at a local university to offer English conversation practice. John went to a SHS and a community school to give English lessons as a volunteer teacher and sometimes work together with local people to make gardens.

All seven ALTs seem to put on their teacher's hat, not just assistant's. In fact, they are all called '*sensei*' by their students and colleagues. Some people call them by their first name or nickname with a Japanese suffix '*-chan*' to show more friendliness, but most of them use the title '*sensei*' to show respect. It implies that all the members in the school-based CoPs regard the ALTs as teachers and both the ALTs and the local teachers display higher sense of collegiality in general. All the participants regularly share ideas of lessons and materials that they made with other teachers, both ALTs and the local Japanese teachers, such as laminated picture cards, vocabulary cards, handouts or ideas of games. Interestingly, all the five ES and JHS ALTs referred to the importance of strategic use of Japanese in class to deal with classroom management issues, which is again not listed as ALTs' duties, but it is necessary to work out team-teaching. It suggests that Japanese language skills are considered as one of the key competences for ALTs' successful engagement in CoPs and they have acquired them mainly through apprenticeship. Furthermore, their localised ways of modulation in terms of Japanese use were observed. For instance, Glen who is fluent in Japanese used to put *katakana* with English words on handouts/worksheets, but he has shifted to reduce the amount of Japanese (*katakana*) and introduced phonics instead. Amy and Nash articulated similar approaches with Glen, trying to reduce the use of Japanese in class. While John, who started to learn Japanese after coming to Japan, has added some Japanese translations/instructions on worksheets to support his students' autonomous learning. In either

case, each ALT has been observing their students well and finding a middle ground to maximise their learning opportunities through negotiations of meaning.

To build up and maintain positive working relationships with their colleagues, they join *nomikai*s/*enkai*s even though their participation is not obligatory. At the induction for new JET ALTs, *sempai* (senior) ALTs gave following tips/advice in a workshop presentation: 1) Smile, 2) Buy souvenirs when you go travel, 3) Join *nomikai*s. They also had another workshop for *enkai* manners to explain where/how to sit, how to use chopsticks/dishes, how to pour drink properly, etc. Gary's case is the only exception, and he does not join *enkai*s. But it is a small town in the countryside and all the teachers drive to the school, so it seems inconvenient to have *enkai*s there. Instead, he was invited to the local festival to carry *mikoshi* (a portable shrine). During the fieldwork, I attended *enkai*s with John and Glen, where most of the participants were ALTs with some JTEs. They can speak English without worrying about the speed and vocabulary that they use. It seemed like they were free from the 'English teacher' and 'foreigner' identities, talking like fish in water. Indeed, *enkai*s have different functions with different members. As demonstrated in narrative portfolios, these socialising events outside the school contexts play an important role for ALTs to get on inbound trajectories, enhance the process of identification and develop their localised competences or 'knowledgeability' in 'landscapes of practice' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014).

There are other places where ALTs can utilise for their learning. One example is online CoPs on the Internet applications such as Facebook, LINE or Dropbox. It seems that online CoPs for ALTs are very common and they are especially beneficial for ALTs who work in isolation in a remote area. Unlike John's example, many ALTs do not have opportunities to work together with other ALTs in the same region. Still, they organise meetings or events so that they can share concerns and help each other to maintain their learning as a teacher and support their private lives. Most of the JET ALTs seem to have sufficient mentoring and support system from experienced ALTs and the supervisors/advisors in the local BoE. However, once they start to work at school, it sometimes becomes difficult to physically meet up with other ALTs unless they do not have official meetings/seminars regularly. Therefore, one of the most convenient and useful means of communication would be those social networking services. In Japan, even in the remote island people can use online networking services through the Internet. The infrastructure of information technology supports the functions of online CoPs among ALTs.

As we can see, all the seven participants in this study demonstrated that they actively engage in various practices in different occasions. For the sake of their students, some ALTs even show strong hospitality and sometime sacrifice their private time to devote into the job and dedicate

the wider community. They are exceptional ALTs, as some local teachers said. Indeed, everyone has his/her own rights to choose what to do outside the contract hours, and my intention here is not to discuss if it is good or bad. In the scope of the CoPs framework, however, these activities and their active engagement in those non-obligatory practices both inside and outside of the school contexts appear to be one of the key elements to get legitimacy and a core membership in the CoPs.

Many ALTs are newcomers in the Japanese society and novices as teachers at the same time. They have invested a lot of time and effort and gradually transformed their identities both as a person and an English teacher. Learning happens with mutual engagement of the members in the CoPs, and seven case studies delineate the stories of teacher learning for ALTs where not only the ALTs but also their students and teachers actively engage in the process of their development and knowledge construction. Obviously, it is not easy for ALTs to achieve full membership in CoPs in all the different levels of CoPs. The narratives of the seven ALTs show that the larger the scale of the CoPs become, the more difficult to take inbound trajectories. Social, cultural and legal boundaries would force them to decide to take outbound trajectories from the CoPs. As illuminated in Chapter 6.4.2, I observed some of the existing/possible factors which draw marginalisation of ALTs such as 'glass walls' and 'glass ceilings.'

### 6.4.4 Determinate outbound trajectories of ALTs

As explained in narrative portfolios, all the participants are leaving the current ALT job. Gary and Amy plan to stay in Japan and teach English in different positions. They are leaving the present micro, meso and macro CoPs, but remaining in mega CoPs by maintaining peripheral membership as English teachers in Japan. John is renewing his contract one more year, but he plans to pursue his career as a garden designer thereafter. He will be no longer a member of school-based CoPs where he gained membership as an ALT. Glen and Tina are also moving on to their next career in different domains. Nash and Dane said they might continue teaching English, but in different countries. Taking outbound trajectories is already predetermined as their career plans because it is a determinate route for most of ALTs, except for Amy's case. She is a member of the NETs' union to fight for their rights as educational staffs in Japan. Some union members are trying to change the system, breaking the glass ceilings so that they can settle down properly in the Japanese education system enhancing the legitimacy of their status. In 2014, the eighth MEXT advisory panel of experts regarding English education announced that they would create new guideline to give ALTs special teacher qualification which valid for five years or so (up to ten

years). However, as of 2018, public school sector had only thirty-two English teachers with special teacher qualification that include both Japanese nationals and foreign nationals like former ALTs. In contrast, private school sector accepted ninety-nine English teachers with special teacher qualification in 2018, according to the MEXT report. Still, not many opportunities are available for ALTs to move up in Japanese school education system.

As Tina pointed out, not many things have been changed in the ALT system since it was launched in 1980s, and some ALTs do not take the job seriously, behaving as if they are on holidays. The design of the ALT system seems to be based on the ideology of native-speakerism, bringing 'native speakers' of English who represent 'Western culture' with underlying assumption that they are ideals of English and English teachers (Houghton & Rivers, 2013). ALTs are invited just to jazz up English education in Japan because most of them are young graduates without any teacher qualifications or trainings, Tina mentioned. The main aim is still explained as cultural exchange, and the system itself is not designed to be applicable for improvement of English teaching and education. The fact somehow prevents the ALTs and the local teachers to build sustainable collaborative working relationship. It is not the case of seven ALTs, and they are all regarded as actual teachers in each school context building rapport with their students and teachers. While in other cases presented in Chapter 4.3 (Extract 32: Peter (Q2.1)) and in Appendix K [B-2] (Pam; Don), some ALTs have experienced severe marginalisation. That might be because, for some JTEs who are obsessed by native-speakerism, ALTs can be a threat to their authority/position as English teachers and the fears drive them to rule out ALTs. It seems that in accordance with the legal boundaries and the social/cultural gaps, local teachers with lower emotional and social intelligence can become obstacles for ALTs to get membership in CoPs. I will discuss these in Chapter 7.

# Chapter 7 Discussion

A CoP is understood from its shared histories of learning. Throughout this study, the main focus is to investigate the mechanisms of teacher learning based on the realities of ALTs in Japan through their narratives because “being an active practitioner with an authentic form of participation might be one of the most deeply essential requirements for teaching” (Wenger, 1998: 277). As Wenger (1998: 276) argues, “teachers, parents, and other educators constitute learning resources, not only through their pedagogical or institutional roles, but also (and perhaps primarily) through their own membership in relevant communities of practice.” I have examined the localities of ALTs and the processes of their identity construction and transformation as language teachers through their narratives with ethnographic approach, illustrating the journey of participation, negotiation of meaning and reification in multiple CoPs. “Learning and the negotiation of meaning are ongoing within the various localities of engagement, and this process continually creates locally shared histories” (Wenger, 1998: 125).

This narrative study consists of two consecutive phases. The number of ALTs who took part in the first phase is forty-six for the online questionnaire and twenty for the follow-up interview. Among twenty interviewees, seven ALTs continued to participate in the second phase. The analyses process is like weaving a tapestry where questionnaire answers as written narratives and spoken narratives from follow-up interviews are placed as the warp or backdrop, then stories of seven main characters in narrative portfolios are recognised as the weft delineating their tales. It is more than just a snap-shot, telling one unique collective history of ALTs’ learning in their own ‘landscapes of practice’ (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014). There were 17,007 ALTs working in the school year 2015 at ES, JHS and SHS in public sector in total, and the limited sampling/space of this study cannot tell us the whole stories of ALTs. Of course, this is not a representation of the stories of all the ALTs in Japan. Yet, it attempts to shed light on teacher learning for ALTs and deepen understanding of their realities by exploring their diverse backgrounds and different modes of participations in multiple CoPs in various contexts. ALTs are in different ‘professional life phases’ introduced in Table 2.1 (Day & Gu, 2007) and different employment types (Table 3.3.), working in a particular region in Japan either rural or urban and teaching in different school levels from NS to SHS including vocational and special-needs schools (see Table 4.1). All these personal and contextual variables closely related to the learning of ALTs as language teachers and their practices as newcomers in CoPs. As illuminated in Chapter 6.4, all the seven ALTs in second phase obtained legitimate participation in CoPs successfully despite their diverse backgrounds and working conditions. They are highly intelligent both socially and emotionally (see Gkonou & Mercer, 2017) and have some common dispositions. They are all

patient, flexible, and empathetic in many ways. They all have keen observation eyes on their students, their teachers, and their communities. They proactively engage in various practices not only the regular lessons but also some extra-curricular activities such as sports clubs, local events, volunteer works, etc., maintaining positive learning relationships with their students, local teachers and other ALTs.

The discussions in the following sections are guided by four research questions: 1) professional identities of ALTs (How do ALTs construct their professional identities in Japanese school contexts?); 2) the features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs (What are the features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs?); 3) the mechanisms of CoPs and ALTs' modes of participation (In what ways and to what extent do the CoPs support ALTs' professional development?); and 4) the functions of CoPs and productive teacher learning for ALTs (How does ALTs' participation in CoPs lead to teacher learning?). As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the five-level model regarding the scale of CoPs in different modes of learning is placed as one of the bases of this study. In this chapter, the significant findings are discussed in detail according to the five-level model of CoPs for ALTs in Figure 2.1 from nano to mega level. However, the boundaries of CoPs are blurred and some of them are overlapping. The purpose is not to identify the specific CoP, but to examine the functions and mechanisms of CoPs, looking at how ALTs are learning through their participation in multiple CoPs and how they act and transform their identities as teachers in three different modes of identification: imagination, alignment, and engagement. To be more precise, the mechanisms of CoPs mean the contextual backgrounds and dynamics of the relationships among members of CoPs and how each CoP accepts/rejects ALTs as newcomers and gives them what kind of legitimacy/membership/status as a consequent of reification. Whereas the functions of CoPs indicate the local forms of engagement in practice and definitions of competence including diverse processes and outcomes of negotiations of meaning, which can be understood by exploring how each CoP works to create mediational space for ALTs and facilitates their learning as teachers.

## 7.1 Professional identities of ALTs

The findings of the study illuminate the features of ALTs' professional identities. Many ALTs expressed their struggles in the process of identity formation in Japanese school contexts where they share less pre-existing knowledge with the locals as old-timers. They often say, "Every situation is different." This indicates that ALTs' professional identities can be iridescent, always changing and transformed according to the local teachers and other contextual factors such as

school curriculum, school cultures, or social/cultural norms. They can be understood as such colourful image of their actual-selves with the mixtures/combinations of their ideal-selves and ought-selves, observed differently from divergent angles. Especially, itinerant ALTs who work in more than two school levels tend to face various boundaries across multiple CoPs with different definitions of competence and shared norms. In such cases, they should put themselves in strenuous identification process to get membership in each CoP by negotiating their professional identities. In addition, the ALT system creates confusions in ALTs' professional identities and makes them brittle. For instance, ALTs are given the status of assistants officially but many of them work as teachers in reality. Most of them are novices as English teachers but seen as experts as 'native' English speakers/users. These conflicting aspects of their professional identities can be problematic and sometimes cause marginalisation and/or dis-identification.

In my view, identity could be regarded as shadows changing its shapes, tint and intensity by casting light from different angles at different times in different landscapes. As researchers demonstrate, identity is multidimensional and multifaceted (Beijaard et al., 2004; Edwards, 2009; Gee, 2001; Miller, 2009; Norton Peirce, 1995). According to Rodgers and Scott (2008), there are four basic assumptions which the notion of identity hold:

> "Contemporary conceptions of identity share four basic assumptions: (1) that identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple contexts which bring social, cultural, political, and historical forces to bear upon that formation; (2) that identity is formed in relationship with others and involves emotions; (3) that identity is shifting, unstable, and multiple; and, (4) that identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through stories over time." (Rodgers & Scott, 2008: 733)

In this section, I will discuss three topics: 1) the brittle and iridescent professional identities of ALTs, 2) expertise for ALT job and local definitions of competence, and 3) ALTs as '*sensei*' and their potential as brokers.

### 7.1.1 Brittle and iridescent professional identities of ALTs

Findings from the present research identify some identity issues among ALTs. As shown in Chapter 4, many ALTs consider the job as a wobbly profession without having clear definitions of their roles and career progression. They have the status as 'assistants' but their students and colleagues often see them as 'teachers' and call them with the title '*sensei*'. Most of the time, they must deal with different expectations from the local teachers working with them in various

school contexts. In some cases, their work is limited in the framework of assistant jobs taking subordinate roles like 'a human tape recorder' (Appendix K [A-1] Lina), 'a performing monkey' (Appendix K [A-1] Pam), or 'a clown' (Extract 24: Tina (Q1.3)). The metaphor of 'a human/living tape recorder' for the ALT job is observed in other studies (Allen, 2013; McConnell, 2000; Nambu, 2015; Rutson-Griffiths, 2012; Scully, 2001; Tajino, 2002; Tajino & Tajino, 2000; Tsujino, 2017). The degrees of participation in CoPs affect their professional identities and some ALTs feel marginalised when their claims to competence as newcomers are rejected by the local teachers as old-timers in CoPs and/or the language barrier causes miscommunication/non-communication (see Extract 32: Peter (Q2.1); Appendix K [B-2] Pam, Don). When ALTs act their identities as 'a human tape recorder', 'a child in a police uniform', 'a bird in a cage' (Tsujino, 2017: 26) or 'a piece of educational furniture' (Flynn, 2009: 39), their participation is just peripheral. Whereas some ALTs articulated that they are treated as experts and exercise their legitimate membership as 'a compendium of knowledge' (Dane in 1st interview), 'a door to the world' or 'incredibly useful and necessary tools' (Tsujino, 2017). As such, they cannot predict what kind of professional identity they are supposed to enact until they dive into the CoPs because they have to go through the process of identification, acquiring the localised competences and negotiating their identity with other members of the CoPs. That is why some ALTs pointed out that former experiences as teachers and/or formal teacher training experiences could be a factor of demotivation for them rather than a useful reference (Chapter 4.3.1).

Indeed, itinerant ALTs have a lot more complications in their identification processes in different CoPs, since each CoP has different definitions of competence and expectations for the ALT roles. One ALT commented that "ES and JHS are different beasts" because he is a legitimate 'teacher' at ES but 'a human tape recorder' at JHS. As explained in Chapter 1.4.2, there are many itinerant ALTs (see Table 1.2). Also, as Otani (2007) demonstrated, some itinerant ALTs like Glen and Amy have so many schools to go and there is little time to talk with local teachers and get feedback from them. Therefore, these aspects of ALTs' professional identities can be a constraint on their continuous professional development.

Furthermore, there are cases that ALTs from the UK are asked to change their ways of pronouncing and/or spellings to fit the 'American version' to match up the usages in the government-approved textbooks. In fact, majority of ALTs are from the US and the textbooks and materials for English education in Japan are based on American varieties of English (Igarashi, 2017) and students tend to show preferences on varieties of US English as prestige forms of speech (McKenzie, 2008). The local teachers and students tend to be ignorant about the diverse backgrounds of English users and its function as a global lingua franca because they lack opportunities to be exposed to Englishes other than 'American English.' As demonstrated in

Chapter 4.3.2, Donna, John, and Joan have tried to negotiate their identity as British with a locally defined competence of ALTs as 'American English' speakers/users.

As the official status of ALTs is just assistants, they have to team-teach lessons with local teachers who are Japanese nationals qualified as teachers under the national education law. There is a legal boundary that only qualified teachers can solo-teach lessons at schools. As demonstrated in Chapter 6.4.4, there are some ALTs who got special teacher licence, but still nationality is counted as the first boundary to get a status of officially and legally qualified teachers. We have observed the contradictory situations where ALTs are invited to teach English lessons, but they are not allowed to teach by themselves. Technically speaking, even if ALTs have a TESOL, TEFL, or another teacher qualification, they cannot teach alone because it violates the education law. ALTs should have at least one Japanese teacher beside them, even though the 'qualified' teacher is doing something else during the lesson, such as checking students' homework, marking test papers, or sleeping at the back of the classroom and snoring in the worst-case scenario (Appendix G).

So many different cases were observed in the narratives that I collected: some ALTs enjoy their full membership as teachers on the one hand, others are struggling to participate in CoPs. ALTs' professional development usually comes along with taking responsibilities to plan and lead lessons, observing and knowing their co-workers and students well like the local teachers do. Teacher learning and teachers' sustainable professional development must be underpinned by the legitimate participation in the CoPs in all the different levels. However, the social/cultural and legal boundaries such as 'glass walls' and 'glass ceilings' do not allow ALTs to achieve their professional development fully. As such, the professional identities of ALTs are considered not only as multi-dimensional and multi-faceted, but also as brittle and iridescent. They are unstable and changing fleetingly but colourful enough to jazz up English education in Japan.

### 7.1.2 Expertise for ALT job: local definitions of competence

As researchers demonstrate, distinctiveness of language teachers is socially constructed (S. Borg, 2006) and their characteristics are perceived differently in different cultural contexts (Tsui, 2005). It is true that "in Japan, emotional commitment to students is of paramount importance, particularly at the elementary level. A central concept in the Japanese cultural theory of teaching is 'kizuna' or 'kakawari', close interpersonal relations, which is considered to be a primary condition for teaching and for children to learn from the teacher" (Tsui, 2005: 170-171). The highly ranked items in the survey presented in Table 4.4 suggest that ALTs also stand on this

norm. Many ALTs think being patient, flexible, and empathetic are very important as their dispositions. They feel it is crucial for ALTs to be 'a guide by the side' rather than 'a sage on the stage' as Pam said (Extract 15: Pam (Q2.1)). It seems to reflect their designated identity as assistants and also their experience from AoO in frontstage having taught by emotionally and socially intelligent teachers in many cases. The features of apprenticeship will be discussed in Chapter 7.2 in more detail.

The participant ALTs in the present study named some competences that they regard as the key to participate in school-based CoPs: 1) contextual knowledge such as knowledge about the education system, school curriculum, and social/cultural norms, 2) language skills/knowledge such as knowledge of English grammar, narrating skills in terms of choice of vocabulary and slowing down the speed of speaking according to the interlocutor's proficiency level, Japanese language knowledge/skills, and 3) pedagogic skills/knowledge like classroom management skills and knowledge of different methods. They try to be a postmethod practitioner thinking of practicality, practicality and possibility (Kumaravadivelu, 2012b). Since most of the ALTs work in different CoPs and they tend to have less training opportunities, situated learning is their main source for teacher learning.

Findings from the study mostly follow those in Copland et al. (2016) in terms of the factors for building successful teaching partnership among ALTs and the local teachers and how they utilise Japanese in class. Many ALTs pointed out that strategic use of Japanese is very important especially at ES and/or JHS since all the teaching staffs sometimes have to deal with classroom management and discipline misbehaving students. Often times ALTs gradually pick up the specific Japanese words and phrases for classroom management from their HRTs/JTEs and enhance their pedagogic skills through observations and apprenticeship (e.g. Extract 47: Gary NP3; Extract 55: Amy NP1). They also learn in the relationship with their students about the effective use of Japanese in their teaching practices (see Chapter 5 & 6). As shown in Chapter 6.4, however, they have been modulating the amount of Japanese in class in time after knowing their students and teachers well. In this sense, successful ALTs use Japanese more strategically, managing classroom atmosphere, facilitating students' learning, and disciplining them when necessary.

Regarding English language, the narratives of ALTs revealed that 'native' English is not necessarily welcomed in the school contexts. Interestingly, MEXT (2011: 7) describes that "ALTs are a valuable asset increasing opportunities for students to come across practical English." ALTs are defined as "native speakers" in the same MEXT document, but they do not put their role as providers of 'native English'. As explained earlier, 'British English' is not regarded as 'practical English' in the school contexts and ALTs from the UK are usually asked to use 'American English'

(Extract 30: Donna (Q4.2); Extract 31: John (Q2.1)). As Kubota (2002) illuminates, the phrase 'foreign language' is frequently used as a synonym of 'English' in Japan. Similarly, it seems that 'practical English' in Japan means 'American English'. Therefore, the local definitions of competence suggest ALTs to demonstrate not their 'native' English but 'American English' in most cases because it dominates in English textbooks and other materials used at schools.

Looking into the working conditions, sharing the similar burden and responsibilities with local teachers such as participating in extra-curricular activities along with making materials and lesson plans can be seen as an important repertoire for ALTs to gain legitimate membership in CoPs (Chapter 4.2.2). Some ALTs articulated that it is also important to 'read the air' (see Appendix L) because the local teachers' reticence/unobtrusiveness and hesitance/dither often interfere communication between them. As Otani (2007) reports, the local teachers tend to assume that ALTs would 'read the air' and understand what they want to tell them or hesitate to talk to ALTs because of their lack of time and/or confidence. Also, they feel it is not appropriate to ask ALTs to work overtime as they normally do because they are aware of the unique working culture in Japan (see Appendix K [D-2]). It is not just a matter of competence, and it is about the reciprocal relationships among members of CoPs and personalities of each member in the school contexts. However, it seems that building positive working relationships with the local teachers in Japanese school contexts can be counted as a part of expertise for ALTs.

The above local definitions of competence are identified as expertise for ALTs. However, even though they acquire all these competences, it does not always guarantee their legitimate participation in CoPs. Whether ALTs can get on inbound trajectories and exercise their expertise or not depends on the mechanisms of the CoPs created by its members. For instance, second time JET ALTs (Don and Jed) who already practiced those local definitions of competence still experienced marginalisation in school-based CoPs (Appendix K [B-2] Don; Appendix K [D-2] Jed).

### 7.1.3 ALTs as '*sensei*': potential brokers

Findings from second phase suggest that the title '*sensei'* can be understood as one form of reification of ALTs' professional identity. As introduced in Chapter 2.4.2, being called '*sensei*' is a premise of legitimacy among teaching staffs in Japanese school contexts. Not only students but also coworking teachers often call each other '*sensei*' to show respect and their equal responsibility/status at work. Normally in the school community, there seems to be an unspoken common sense among staff members to express their evenness of the status as teachers and equality by calling each other '*sensei*' in front of the stakeholders such as students and parents

even though each teacher takes different roles and responsibilities. By doing so, both experienced and novice teachers could stand on the same ground, and they are regarded as experts performing their expertise similarly.

The issue of title was problematised at one of the SDCs that I observed. The participant ALTs and some supervisors at the BoE presented some cases that ALTs felt discriminated and differentiated from other colleagues by not being called '*sensei*'. It is not always the case, but we need to be aware that some ALTs feel marginalised in this way. As such, to be called '*sensei*' is an important marker of membership and legitimate participation in the school-based CoPs. As Wenger (1998) demonstrates, however, membership is not just a matter of having a title because it does not assure the mutuality in engagement. The title 'sensei' is a form of reification in shared repertoire from the history of education in Japan, but it cannot simply be regarded as concrete evidence or a precondition of mutual engagement.

Another typical aspect of ALTs' professional identity is their potential of becoming a broker of the boundaries among CoPs. Professional identities of ALTs are considered as unavoidably brittle and iridescent, but they can exert beneficial influence on English education in Japan by bringing colourful innovation to CoPs. Unlike JTEs/HRTs, ALTs can travel across multiple CoPs and bring boundary objects such as "artifacts, documents, terms, concepts, and other forms of reification around which communities of practice can organize their interconnections" to other CoPs as a broker who can make connections in-between CoPs "to introduce elements of one practice into another" (Wenger, 1998: 105). As Wenger explains, "[t]he job of brokering is complex. It involves processes of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives. It requires enough legitimacy to influence the development of a practice, mobilize attention, and address conflicting interests. It also requires the ability to link practices by facilitating transactions between them, and to cause learning by introducing into a practice elements of another" (Wenger, 1998: 109). Despite the difficulties, some ALTs successfully achieved to bring some changes in CoPs as a result of alignment as demonstrated in Chapter 4.3 and Chapter 6.4.3. Understandably, ALTs can potentially become active agents who travel across various boundaries between schools, different societies and cultures legitimately, transferring practices in different CoPs by utilising their diverse backgrounds and experiences. However, multimembership of ALTs could be a disadvantage that causes marginalisation in some cases. Indeed, the CoPs themselves should be more open for newcomers and brokering as a premise.

As some ALTs pointed out, inflexibility in education system, stubborn school cultures/rules, and unmotivated/rebellious teachers and students could be obstacles for ALTs' professional identity formation and prevent ALTs as 'outsiders' or potential brokers who have different perspectives

and backgrounds from bringing changes in the school-based CoPs through negotiations of meaning. I believe that ALTs can be more 'nutritious' for English education in Japan if other members of CoPs, especially JTEs and HRTs would become more aware of these features of ALTs' professional identity and put more effort to develop their emotional and social intelligence, acting out their flexibility, patience and empathy like successful ALTs in Chapter 5 and 6.

## 7.2 The features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs

The findings illuminate a tendency/pattern in ALTs' identification processes in three modes: imagination, alignment, and engagement (Chapter 2.5.4). Many ALTs utilise their experience of AoO as imagination, apprenticeship/mentorship as alignment, and team-teaching/learning as engagement. When ALTs lack opportunities of these processes, their 'knowledgeability' does not develop.

> Knowledgeability is a complex achievement. It combines many relationships of identification and dis-identification through multiple modes. (...) knowledgeability is an improvisational dance in which identification is modulated: in a given context, which sources of accountability to identify with and to what extent are these expressible? (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014: 23-24).

This section discusses features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs according to three modes of their participation in CoPs: AoO, apprenticeship/mentorship and team-teaching.

### 7.2.1 AoO in frontstage and from backstage: imagination

As presented in the review of literatures in Chapter 2.4.1, AoO can be a useful source of teacher learning. The narratives demonstrate that ALTs, who are not necessarily qualified as teachers, often transfer their experience of AoO in frontstage through studenting when they started to teach English in Japan. Through an empirical study, Warford and Reeves (2003) suggest that among pre-service TESOL teachers, 'native English speakers' (NES) expressed a relatively lack of reflection on their experience in the language classroom as a student and 'non-native English speakers' (NNES) who are supposed to teach in EFL context showed more clear evidence of AoO. Unlike their findings, however, the results from the questionnaire survey (Chapter 4.2.2) and interviews (Chapter 4.3.3) clearly show that the ALTs, most of them are NES, who work in Japan also somehow transfer their own language learning experience in their teaching. In my view, the

degree of influence from AoO that teachers recognise themselves is based on their personality and the fact of becoming a language teacher in a different context/country, rather than the dichotomy of NES and NNES. As explained in the introduction (Chapter 1.4.3), the influence of AoO in ALTs' identity construction is still largely unknown. Also, how they reflect their experience of AoO in their actual teaching practices has not been examined well (Chapter 2.4.1). Narrative portfolios in Chapter 5 and 6 would fill these gaps and show how ALTs utilise their experiences of AoO as imagination in their core beliefs as teachers.

Moreover, two ALTs (Gary and Glen) demonstrated their experiences of AoO from backstage. This is one of the unique findings of this study. Generally, the concept of AoO is applied only to the diversion of the experience as a student by observing teachers' practices in frontstage. However, having a parent/sibling as a teacher could also be the source of AoO, learning teachers' work from backstage. In Glen's case, he planned to borrow the idea of putting some posters about basic vocabulary in the classrooms at ES from his mother's practice as a Spanish language teacher (Chapter 5.3.1). While Gary mentioned that his sister as a former ALT gave him a lot of support and insights especially during his first one or two years in Japan. He kept contact with her, getting some ideas for activities in NS and ES lessons (Chapter 5.1.1).

Their stories delineate that ALTs could divert their experience in different modes of AoO: their experiences as a student in frontstage and in their personal lives having seen the work of a language teacher among family members from backstage. There is a tendency that AoO in frontstage is mainly observed in the ALTs' attitudes and beliefs as teachers and it is considered as more abstract frame of reference to boost their imagination because it is based on their past experience. Indeed, each ALT's experience is different, and there are ALTs who implement the activities that they did in their student days into their teaching in Japan (e.g., Extract 38: Kate (Q3.2)). Whereas AoO from backstage can be naturally shifted into apprenticeship in nano CoPs that directly influences in their day-to-day teaching practices after they become ALTs like in Glen's and Gary's cases.

### 7.2.2 Apprenticeship and mentorship in multiple CoPs: alignment

The features of apprenticeship and mentorship in relation to the model of five-level CoPs (Figure 2.1) are discussed in this section. The main purpose of apprenticeship is to understand and acquire the repertoire of CoPs.

> The repertoire of a community of practice includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. (Wenger, 1998: 83)

Wenger (1998) defines a repertoire as a CoP's set of shared resources which "reflects a history of mutual engagement" but "remains inherently ambiguous." When ALTs first came, they need to familiarise themselves with Japanese words such as names of subjects and places/classrooms, grammar terms, etc. Sometimes each school uses special names for the events such as sports day or cultural festival, and these are also a part of localised repertoire. They have different routines/schedule about when to have recess, or where/when to hold assemblies. The style of teachers' meetings, layout of the school facilities and arrangement of the desks in the staff room are all different in each school context where I visited during fieldwork. ALTs as teaching staffs should learn how to make photocopies and set up a projector to show PowerPoint presentations, etc. like Nash mentioned (Extract 99: Nash NP7). Some ALTs articulated their confusions about the different cultural expectations, for instance, what to wear for the graduation ceremony and where to change into slippers. These common practices are too obvious for Japanese people but not straightforward for ALTs as newcomers (see Appendix K & N). The inductions for ALTs often introduce these aspects of localised repertories, but again, 'every situation is different' and each person has to go through apprenticeship.

ALTs usually have a go-between teacher called *tanto*/*tantosha* (mentor) at each school taking care of them as apprentices (e.g., Extract 55: Amy NP1). In addition, students as old-timers sometimes offer ALTs mentorship by informing them about where they should change into indoor shoes and how to use chopsticks, or do the cleaning, etc. Not all ALTs are in such situation to closely interact with students and take apprenticeship from them. However, there were some ALTs told me that they learned these basic knowledge and information from students (Appendix N). As Wenger explains:

> Old-timers do spend energy introducing these newcomers into the actual practice of their community, but there is little official recognition for their efforts and they are under their own production pressures. So it may very well be that recognizing these efforts, encouraging them, and otherwise facilitating the process would be more effective than extending the training. (Wenger, 1998: 100)

ALTs' learning through apprenticeship is not limited to pedagogic knowledge and skills to teach English. It also includes contextual knowledge and sociocultural norms. Indeed, knowledge of context is very important to understand their students and teachers so that ALTs can negotiate

meanings and engage in various practices with them. Hereafter, the features of apprenticeship of ALTs are discussed in relation to the five-level model of CoPs presented in Figure 2.1.

As demonstrated in Chapter 7.2.1, AoO from backstage can be transferred into apprenticeship in nano CoPs where family members provide opportunities for teacher learning. Interestingly, two ALTs named a character in a film/manga as their model of teaching in Chapter 4 (Extract 37: Dane (Q3.2); Appendix K [C] Lina). It could be counted as one aspect of apprenticeship in personal experience although it is not a learning based on CoPs because they do not have mutuality in their learning with fictional models. Broadly speaking, there are cases that ALTs and the local teachers as friends seem to have apprenticeship by sharing social/cultural experiences outside school. Some ALTs mentioned that they had opportunities to learn about the Japanese culture with other teachers as friends away from school (see Appendix G; Extract 33: Silvia (Q2.4); Chapter 6.3.2). In terms of learning about the contexts, such practices are also considered as an aspect of apprenticeship in nano CoPs.

In the present study, among ALTs themselves, apprenticeship relationships are observed in three different modes: 1) online apprenticeship beyond time and space among ALTs in various contexts and in different professional phases (in all 5-level CoPs), 2) remote apprenticeship across time between predecessor and successor ALTs working at the same school(s) (in nano, micro, and/or meso CoPs), and 3) craftsmanship model apprenticeship among old-timer and newcomer ALTs either in the same school contexts (in micro and meso CoPs) or in the neighbouring area where they can physically meet up (in nano and macro CoPs).

Almost every ALT referred to the participation in online CoPs. The online CoPs are difficult to interpret because they are more fluid and tentative than localised CoPs. They can be observed in every level from nano to mega, often overlapping each other, and the members come and go constantly. Typical examples of online CoPs are Facebook groups and Internet forums for ALTs where they can post/download lesson plans or ideas of activities and share information and some concerns about the life in Japan (see Appendix K [B-1]; Extract 22: Silvia (Q2.5); Extract 21: Don (Q2.5); Extract 71: Glen NP5). Many ALTs said that they use social networking platforms such as Facebook, LINE and Skype to communicate with each other, along with emails. These online CoPs are not necessarily used for learning how to teach English, but they play an important role as a part of their life experience that support their processes of alignment in the culture and social contexts in Japan.

Remote apprenticeship is one of the significant findings of this study. This mode of apprenticeship rarely happens among local teachers because normally we just reset everything and start from scratch after being transferred to another school. In my case, I have met my

predecessor/successor JTEs only at farewell/welcome parties and never received any notes/memos/materials from them. Not all but many ALTs said that they had used materials/handouts, activity ideas, and sometimes stationery such as a folder which their predecessors left (Extract 44: Nash (Q3.2); Extract 78: John NP2; Extract 112: Dane NP4). Some ALTs had a chance to talk to their predecessors either face-to-face or via Skype/phone and/or exchange emails (Appendix K [C-3]). In this sense, remote apprenticeship can be provided as a form of online CoPs. Even if it is just a note/memo, all the information from the person who used to be in the same position in the same school contexts could be a guiding light for novice ALTs who just dived into the new world. That is why many ALTs are planning to pass down such information to their successors proactively.

ALTs who are on the JET programme have a regional group that provides supporting system for newcomers/*kohai* where old-timers/*sempai* offer help them to settle down in the community. Many ALTs said that they constantly meet up with each other and support each other (e.g., Extract 73: Glen NP7). They sometimes organise events to go out and destress or have casual meetings to exchange ideas of teaching or materials (Chapter 4.3.2). Normally they are not working in the same school, so their mutual learning relationship tends to be more collective and abstract rather than tackling the specific topics/problems together. Yet, this could be understood as a form of apprenticeship in a broad sense.

JET ALTs and some NETs have official training seminars such as the SDCs. These trainings are also the opportunities for ALTs to take apprenticeship because they can replicate other ALTs' teaching practices introduced in the workshops there. Although it is not very common, some ALTs have official meetings scheduled regularly by the BoE so that they can exchange opinions and work on the original English teaching project together (Chapter 5.4.2). While there are other cases that more than two ALTs teaching at the same school (Appendix K [C-3] Kate). In such situation, newcomer ALTs as apprentices can follow the guidance of old-timer ALTs as their mentors working in the same micro and/or meso CoPs.

As demonstrated in the survey results (Table 4.3), many ALTs do not teach in the same ways as HRTs/JTEs and in most cases they are not expected to do so. Hence, apprenticeship among ALTs could be more useful opportunities for them to learn 'the ALTs' ways of teaching' than apprenticeship with the local teachers. However, ALTs normally do not share the same school context with other ALTs, and in this sense, apprenticeship in the school-based CoPs with the local teachers is meaningful to acquire localised competence, not necessarily about teaching English but teaching in general in the Japanese school contexts. Such school-based apprenticeship learning of ALTs is observed in reciprocal patterns in their relationships with the local Japanese

teachers, both HRTs at ES and JTEs in JHS and SHS: the mentors-apprentices relationship among 1) HRTs/JTEs – ALTs; and 2) ALTs - HRTs/JTEs. In all school levels, local teachers as old-timers seem to provide support for the ALTs as newcomers/apprentices in the CoPs (Chapter 4.3.3). Conversely, narrative portfolios tell us the stories of ALTs who are the experts of English and the skilful users of technology give local teachers opportunities for their professional development. The following section examines the features of team-teaching and team-learning among ALTs and local teachers in micro CoPs in different school levels.

### 7.2.3 Team-teaching and team-learning: engagement

The major role of ALTs is considered to team-teach lessons with the local teachers. As team-teaching was implemented in top-down manner, its inherent problems such as lack of trainings, ambiguities in their duties/roles and challenges in building collaborative relationships between the ALT and the local teachers have been raised by the researchers (Bolstad & Zenuk-Nishide, 2016; Mahoney, 2004; Marchesseau, 2014; McConnell, 2000; Miyazato, 2009; Ohtani, 2010; Otani, 2007; Tajino & Smith, 2016; Voci-Reed, 1994). These problems are considered as intractable and there is no instant solution to facilitate productive and collaborative team-teaching relationships. However, it is meaningful to put much focus on the concept of 'team-learning' (Tajino et al., 2016; Tajino & Tajino, 2000) between ALTs and the local teachers which can be beneficial for their students' learning. When team-learning happens, all the participants in class can work together to construct learning opportunities through mutual engagement. Tajino and Smith (2016) argue that "[a] key challenge in the successful implementation of a system-wide team-teaching policy lies in achieving, and sustaining, effective interpersonal collaboration among a diverse range of co-teachers." This section examines the different versions of team-teaching (Tajino & Tajino, 2000) and their relations to the theory of CoPs. Then, ALTs' experiences of team-teaching and team-learning and their modes of successful engagement in different school levels from NS to SHS will be discussed. According to the MEXT report, the rate of ALTs' participation in English lessons in each school level in the school year 2015 is as follows: 61.7% at ES, 22.1% at JHS, 9.7% at SHS (MEXT, 2015).

As demonstrated in Chapter 4.3.2 and narrative portfolios in Chapter 5 and 6, most of the ALTs in this study have experienced both weak and strong versions of team-teaching in different patterns (Tajino & Tajino, 2000). Their roles vary from like a wallflower/furniture or a human tape recorder/player in weak version to a compendium of knowledge or a broker/groundbreaker proactively guiding local teachers and students in strong version. As Wenger (2010: 194) points

out, “A learning partner is not someone who agrees with you or who even shares your background necessarily. It is someone with whom focusing on practice together creates high learning potential. (…) There is a kind of trust that arises out of this mutual recognition. It is not necessarily a personal kind of trust. (…) It is trust in the learning capability of a partnership.” When ALTs and JTEs/HRTs are in such learning partnership, ‘strong’ version of team-teaching and team-learning happen in micro CoPs (see Chapter 5.2.2 & 6.3.2). The members of a micro CoP usually include an ALT, their partner JTE/HRT, and the students. They have less mobility compared to the larger/higher level CoPs because they are placed in a class as the fixed unit, but their modes of participation are fluid. Micro CoPs are not just limited inside a physical space in the classroom and have complex dynamics among members.

At ES, ALTs are expected to act as a mentor/trainer for HRTs to show them how to teach English. ALTs are considered as experts of English and most of the time they can actively engage in lesson planning and the choice of materials. There are some spaces to modify curriculum and bring some new ideas, topics and materials into the English lessons (Chapter 4.2.2). The textbooks are not rigidly followed by the teachers and many ALTs mentioned that they can add a lot of twists (Chapter 6.4.3). In the team-teaching at ES level, Aline and Hosoda (2006: 8) report that they observed “four ways HRTs participated in the classes: by being (a) a “bystander,” (b) a “translator,” (c) a “co-learner” of English, or (d) a “co-teacher”” and they are changing their modes of participation fluidly during the lesson. In their study, ‘bystander’ is defined more like a ‘guide by side’ or an assistant to support individual students while monitoring their learning who also actively participate in the teaching practice. The findings from this study suggest that HRTs tend to being an assistant/bystander of the ALT (e.g., Extract 52: Gary NP8) but also being as co-teacher for classroom management and co-learner of English (e.g., Extract 82: John NP6) because they are novices to teach English (e.g., Extract 74: Glen NP8). The ways of ALTs’ participation in ES team-teaching lessons observed in this study are: 1) being as a main teacher in most cases; 2) as a bystander when HRTs lead the lesson (e.g., Extract 57: Amy NP3); 3) as a co-teacher in fifty-fifty team-teaching (see Table 5.4); 4) as a learner of pedagogical knowledge/skills from a mentor HRT and/or students (e.g., Extract 55: Amy NP1); 5) as a source of intercultural communication (e.g., Extract 100: Nash NP8); and 6) as a learner of Japanese from students and a HRT (see Chapter 5.1.2 & Appendix K[C-3] Gary). As ALTs usually take a leading role and responsibilities to plan lessons and create materials, it seems to be easier for them to get on inbound trajectories at ES, and team-teaching could be one of the default mechanisms of micro CoPs.

While at JHS, usually there is not much space for ALTs to bring something new by their own choices. JTEs often feel pressure to finish all the contents in the textbook and focus heavily on grammar translations and rote memorisation in exam-oriented curriculum. They do not have

enough time to communicate with ALTs, often ending up by asking them to just read out the sentences on the textbooks as Otani and Tsuido (2009) demonstrate. ALTs who expressed that their job was like a 'human tape recorder/player' were the JHS ALTs. As suggested in other studies, the findings indicate that JHS ALTs' major roles are to "offer English conversation and pronunciation model or talk to students", "share culture" and "motivate/prompt/encourage" students (Mahoney, 2004) as providers of 'real' English (S. Sutherland, 2012). Team-teaching in JHS has a history over several decades, but ALTs seem to be stuck in the role identities as foreign assistants, and 'real/strong' team-teaching and team-learning would be difficult to achieve in many cases. In fact, ALTs participated in only 22% of the whole English lessons at public JHS in the school year 2015 (MEXT, 2015). As demonstrated in Table 1.2, nearly 60% of JHS ALTs are concurrently working at different school levels. The problems of lack of communication between JTEs and ALTs and ALTs' low rate of participation in JHS English classes would be partly caused by such itinerant working conditions. Some ALTs negotiated their roles and displayed the similar ways of participation at JHS lessons as well as at ES (e.g., Extract 96: Nash NP4). Yet, many ALTs seem to stay in peripheral participation at JHS (e.g., Extract 12: Jed (Q1.1)). Unlike ES HRTs, JHS JTEs are qualified to teach English and that might create the power relation between them and ALTs who are mostly unqualified as teachers. Unfortunately, ALTs' non-participation in micro CoPs is often a consequence of being not given legitimacy by the JTEs as old-timers. It is important to note that mutuality is crucial to assure the legitimate participation, and this is the basis for team-learning. In reality, even ALTs with successful teacher learning experience do not always have productive team-teaching/learning relationships with all the teachers who they work with (e.g., Extract 51: Gary NP7). As Otani and Tsuido (2009) and Bolstad and Zenuk-Nishide (2016) argue, the local teachers need to have more training opportunities regarding team-teaching.

At SHS where each school can set original curriculum with some elective subjects, ALTs usually have more flexibility and autonomy in their teaching practices compared to JHS as illustrated in Chapter 6.2 and 6.3. The approach of successful SHS ALTs to their team-teaching lessons is similar to that of ES ALTs: planning lessons, creating materials by themselves, and having constructive criticisms from their JTEs that facilitate their professional development as teachers (see Chapter 6.2.2 & 6.3.2). Yet, ALTs' participation in team-teaching/learning are counted in less than 10% of the total English lessons at SHS (MEXT, 2015). In fact, there are some ALTs who face fierce resistance from their JTEs, given a stigmatised identity as an outsider or a foreigner, not even as an assistant (e.g., Extract 32: Peter (Q2.1); Appendix K [B-2] (Pam; Don)). SHS ALTs are expected to be 'experts' of English language and many of them stated that they do need knowledge of English grammar (e.g., Appendix K [A-3] Emma; Dane; Joan; Silvia). There seems to be a tendency

that SHS ALTs start to participate peripherally as a reference/authority of English grammar, learning how to teach it through apprenticeship with JTEs. Then, after getting legitimate membership as a teacher, they gradually increase opportunities of speaking activities in class (e.g., Extract 101: Tina NP1; Appendix K [B-2] Joan). Such process and transitions of ALTs' roles as time advances could be a key for them to construct productive team-teaching/learning relationships with their JTEs and students who are not confident in speaking English. Gorsuch (2002: 24) reports the positive effect that ALTs have on SHS JTEs as follows: "the presence of an ALT is linked with higher JTE reports of classroom-centered English speaking ability and greater approval of a communicative information gap activity. Clearly, ALTs encourage professional and personal growth in JTEs by helping diversify their instructional practice, and stretching their abilities to communicate in English." However, it often takes time for ALTs to gain legitimate membership and acquire mutual learning relationship as team-teachers.

NS level is a different story because English is not officially implemented there. Therefore, if ALTs have access to NS, they are guaranteed to have a lot of freedom to decide what/how to teach. ALTs who volunteered to teach at NS like Gary and Glen utilise their knowledge and skills about teaching English to young kids that they have acquired through ES teaching. It seems that the accumulation of experience as an English teacher for young learners encourages them to step into a new CoP. These are examples of positive broker trajectories to get additional membership in different CoPs, trying to make a connection between English education in different school levels.

The following section discusses the mechanisms of CoPs where ALTs participate and their different modes of participation.

## 7.3 The mechanisms of CoP and ALTs' modes of participation

The previous section delineates the features of apprenticeship in the work of ALTs and their different modes of participation: imagination, alignment, and engagement. Indeed, the mechanisms of CoPs is partly overlapping with above discussion of AoO, team-teaching, apprenticeship and the diverse features and relationships in these different concepts as the sites/opportunities of teacher learning for ALTs. This section sheds light on the processes of learning in CoPs along with the aspects of narrative inquiry: sociality, temporality and place.

Regarding the mechanisms of CoPs which support ALTs' professional development, it would be possible to nominate four major aspects: 1) AoO with positive team-learning experiences guided

by socially and emotionally intelligent teachers; 2) apprenticeship/mentorship processes with local teachers as 'learning partners' including constructive criticisms; 3) 'strong' version of team-teaching/learning partnership with the students, HRTs and/or JTEs; and 4) ALTs' peer-support system including online CoPs and 'remote apprenticeship' between predecessor and successor ALTs. All the ALTs who demonstrated their successful/positive teacher learning experience in the present study referred to these as premises for their professional development.

As discussed in Chapter 7.2, ALTs' apprenticeship of learning is facilitated by their participation in CoPs. Presumably, not just the dispositions/personality of ALTs but the mechanisms and dynamics of CoPs largely affect their modes of participation. For instance, Nash and Peter seem to have similar dispositions and beliefs/imaginations as teachers from their experience of AoO, taking similar approaches in their teaching practices. However, Peter is severely marginalised in his workplace and limited his opportunities to exercise his identity fully. Among the local definitions of competence for ALTs listed in Chapter 7.1.2, the two ALTs demonstrate significant difference only in their level of proficiency in Japanese language. Yet, Peter mentioned that he gave up learning Japanese after experienced marginalisation/bullying at work (Chapter 4.3.2). His non-participation in the CoPs was caused by its malfunctions. If he worked at a different school where the ALT's participation was carefully supported by other members, he could have engaged in various practices more productively and proactively. Indeed, it is crucial to maintain healthy and productive mechanisms especially in the school-based CoPs so that ALTs are saved from an identity crisis.

> No matter how the peripherality of initial participation is achieved, it must engage newcomers and provide a sense of how the community operates. (…) Teachers, masters, and specific role models can be important, but it is by virtue of their membership in the community as a whole that they can play their roles. (Wenger, 1998: 100)

Hereafter, the social and contextual mechanisms of CoPs are discussed regarding 'landscapes of practices' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014) shown in Appendix N: ALTs' experiences of participation in CoPs and the development of knowledgeability. Due to the limited space, the discussion of their experiences of marginalisation in relation to 'native-speakerism', 'glass walls' and 'glass ceilings' is presented in Appendix O.

### 7.3.1 ALTs' experiences of participation: development of knowledgeability

Despite the actual/potential obstacles such as 'glass ceilings' and 'glass walls' that ALTs encounter (Appendix O), their narratives show that they have been learning through participation in multiple CoPs, negotiating their roles (Chapter 6.4). This section discusses how ALTs accumulate their learning experience as English teachers in their relations with students, the local teachers, and others in the landscapes of practice and how they develop 'knowledgeability' (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014).

As discussed earlier, ALTs have acquired the locally defined regime of competence through engaging in various practices, aligning their identities by utilising their imagination. ALTs are regarded as experts of English language, but at the same time many of them are novices as English teachers and newcomers in Japanese context. Like one ALT wrote in the questionnaire answer (Extract 5), teacher learning in CoPs sometimes happens just by chance, not only in the systematic ways like seminars or training sessions that formally planned.

Throughout the study, I observed a pattern in the transitions of ALTs' professional identities as their knowledgeability in the landscapes of practice has been developed. As shown in Figure 7.1, ALTs start off at Stage0 as newcomers/outsiders/foreigners, then go into Stage1 as novice English teachers/apprentices when gatekeepers/old-timers, most of the time their JTEs, accept their participation in CoPs. After about a year, they step into Stage2 as experienced English teachers who stand on their own feet but still on apprenticeship. After another year or two, they get access to Stage3 and recognised as insiders/old-timers in CoPs. If they continue their journey as ALTs for another year or two, they have chance to reach Stage4 as expert English teachers who can act as mentors for other newcomers and novice teachers. It depends on the mechanisms of each school-based CoP, but it seems that it takes ALTs to go through each stage for approximately one year. Indeed, each ALT's dispositions and his/her life experience before ALT also affects the speed, but the earlier stages are likely to take less time to be gone through to the next. Since the majority of ALTs' career path is limited up to five years because of 'glass ceilings', their professional life phases are shifting more quickly than Day and Gu (2007) present. However, when an ALT goes into another CoP or the relationships of the members of the CoPs changed, he/she might have to step back and start over from Stage0 or Stage1 again. Once a teacher is transferred to another school, even if the new school is in the same school level as previous one, he/she needs to accommodate their professional identity and modulate their practices to fit in the new CoPs. This process of reidentification and renegotiation can be a big challenge in both positive and negative ways. Also, as a SHS JTE who have worked at five different schools, I can imagine how difficult it is for itinerant ALTs to learn all the different regime of competence where

they should do various identity works concurrently. In fact, some of them are in different stages in different CoPs at the same time.

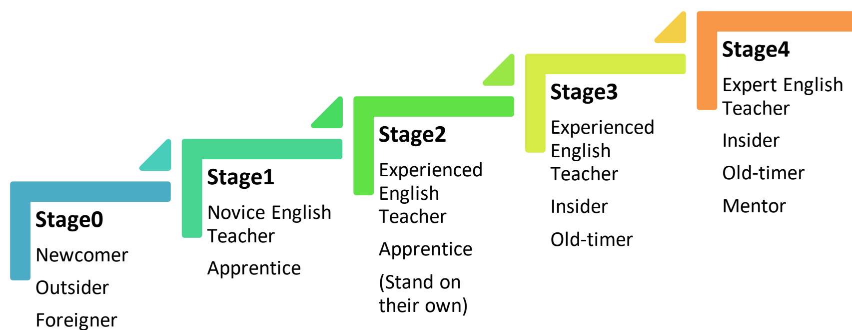


Figure 7.1 ALTs' professional life stages: Shifting professional identities in school-based CoP

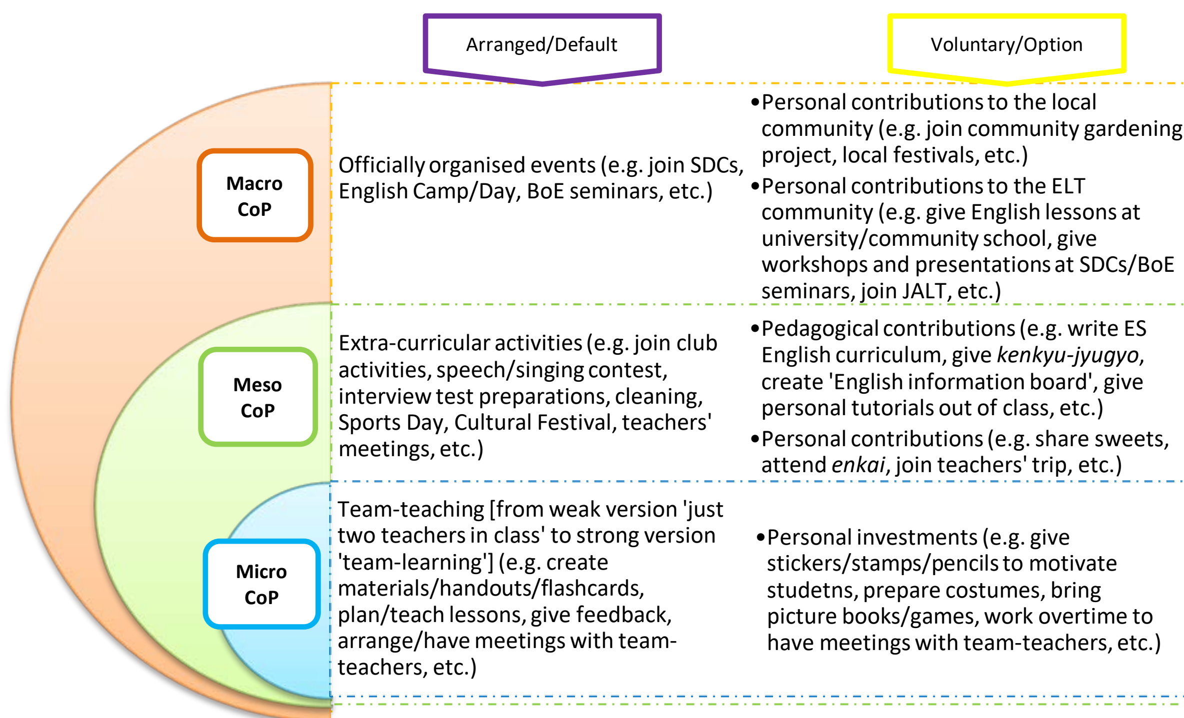


Figure 7.2 ALTs' landscapes of practice in different levels of CoP

Figure 7.2 illustrates the practices in which the ALTs in this study participated in accordance with the different levels of CoPs and the type of practices whether they are arranged or chosen by the ALTs voluntarily. As expected, the types and varieties of practices in which ALTs participate link to their professional life stages. The bottom left practices in Figure 7.2 which are arranged in micro/meso CoPs could be accessible for ALTs in Stage1 and upwards. Strictly speaking, however, 'weak' version of team-teaching is not applicable to the definition of CoPs when we look at the

relationship between the two teachers. But there is still a possibility that one ALT and the students form CoPs. That is why it is also listed as a practice in micro CoPs. Whereas the top right practices indicate the voluntary works initiated by some ALTs who are in Stage3 or Stage4. As they go on to the higher stages, the coverage of the practices is increasing.

Surprisingly, many ALTs in this study referred to the importance of the personal contributions in meso CoPs, especially attending the *enkai*/*nomikai* with their colleagues. As far as I know, there is no study that reports this aspect regarding one of the practices of ALTs. Attending *nomikai* can be considered as one of the key practices among members of school-based CoPs. There are various names and kinds of *nomikai*, such as *enkai*, *nijikai*, *bonenkai*, *kangeikai* (welcome party), *sougeikai* (farewell party), etc. All these *nomikai*s provide a place and time for the members to communicate each other frankly, reward for their hard work, and build positive relationships over food and drinks. As explained in Chapter 6.4.3, many ALTs emphasised the importance of attending those parties because they are very special occasions to exchange information and build a close relationship with other teachers who are often too busy to talk to at school. One of the biggest problems that many ALTs raised is lack of time for communication with their teachers. During observations at SDCs, so many ALTs claimed that it is more serious obstacle for them to overcome than language barrier. Their JTEs/HRTs are too busy with regular teaching work plus club activities, paper works and other responsibilities such as PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) or preparation for school events. Also, they are sometimes too shy to talk with ALTs in workplace in front of other teachers. Hence, 'nominication' at *nomikai* is very powerful and it plays important roles in the professional lives of ALTs. *Nominication* (飲みニケーション) is a term coined to denote communication over drinks, which combines a Japanese word for drinking (*nomi*) with the ending of the English word commu*nication* (Yamauchi & Orr, 2011). Teachers' professional well-being can be assured by personal self-efficacy and coping strategies (Bermejo-Toro, Prieto-Ursúa, & Hernández, 2016). *Nominication* seems to be recognised as one of the coping strategies for ALTs which increase their sense of belonging and lower the work stress and feelings of marginalisation. By engaging in the wider activities with other members of meso CoPs, many ALTs said their job satisfaction was truly increased. Active participation in *nomikai* seems to encourage ALTs to construct their professional identities as teachers and get stronger legitimacy in meso CoPs, which turn out to enhance their sense of self-efficacy and their sense of belonging in the school-based CoPs.

Furthermore, some expert ALTs in Stage4 demonstrated that they proactively implement new mechanisms in CoPs for their own professional development. ALTs like John, Gary and Glen have implemented pre-lesson meeting system with their JTEs and HRTs. Gary also asked his students to write *furikaeri* (reflection) cards at the end of each lesson so that he can constantly monitor

their level of achievement after the lesson. In this kind of reflective practice of in-service teachers, students are the important resource for their professional development. Teacher learning in CoPs based on reflective practice thus indicates that each member's active investment and mutual engagement can lead to create the virtuous cycle of positive learning opportunities for everyone in the community. However, it depends on the teacher's dispositions and capability whether he/she can leverage the strengths of the CoPs and create more productive learning opportunities in CoPs.

The following section examines the functions of CoPs and how ALTs' participation in CoPs leads to their productive teacher learning.

## 7.4 The functions of CoP and productive teacher learning for ALTs

In general, ALTs' presence is nutritious for English education in Japan and their journey of complex equation of identity bring a lot of meaningful learning experiences for the members of various CoPs where they participate. "Becoming productive in a landscape depends on one's ability to leverage the complementarity of these processes," imagination, alignment, and engagement (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014: 22). As Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2014) suggest, not everyone is capable of becoming productive in CoPs, and good interpersonal chemistry in CoPs is not always promised. It is natural providence that we cannot avoid conflicts and issues of power in CoPs. As McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) demonstrate, teacher communities can be categorised in the range from 'typical (weak) community' to 'learning community', depending on their functions and how the members in the community share their repertoires and enact collaboration or mutual engagement. In that sense, 'learning community' in their study can be seen as a good example of successful CoPs in micro and meso level. Similarly, the ALTs who participated in this study demonstrated how they have contributed to the multiple CoPs where they gained legitimate membership. Through the narratives of seven ALTs, I have explored the processes of their teacher learning and how the other members of CoPs support and/or engage in their learning.

Wenger (1998: 77-78) demonstrates "three points about the enterprise that keeps a community of practice together." Standing on this theoretical background, I identified three main conditions and prerequisites to have CoPs where teachers can create more mediational space for their professional learning in Japanese school contexts: 1) the teachers/participants must have key traits in common such as being highly intelligent both emotionally and socially, and inherently self-motivated so that they can achieve self-directed learning and co-construct their learning

opportunities smoothly through proactive mutual engagement in various practices to tackle the educational issues in the context; 2) the members in the community should have intercultural awareness, higher sense of flexibility and openness to the innovations and new ideas/approaches to maximise their students' learning and mutually create teacher learning opportunities; and 3) the organisation must provide appropriate working conditions to the members such as allocating fewer number of schools to ALTs and assuring the local teachers of time to arrange meetings with the ALT.

The ALTs who took part in this study have shown the synergy of their multiple modes of participation and various types of engagement in different levels of CoPs. Most of the time, ALTs and the local teachers have fewer overlapping forms of competence and it seems that they can make complementary contribution for the CoPs through mutual engagement. ALTs as expert users of English language who are from different social and cultural contexts can work together with the local Japanese teachers and bring their unique experience, knowledge and skills to provide innovative ideas to the students in the classroom. The following sections examine some of such practices of ALTs in CoPs, creating opportunities for teacher learning not only for ALTs themselves but also for the local teachers and the students.

### 7.4.1 ALTs as brokers: Initiate changes and bring innovations in English lessons

Each ALT's journey in the landscapes of practice is unique and none of their trajectory is the same. Obviously, ALTs in different professional stages in Figure 7.1 seem to bring different approaches and changes through their identity work as teachers. Among seven ALTs who participated in the second phase of this study, their narratives indicate that five ALTs (Amy, Gary, Glen, John and Dane) are in Stage4 and two (Nash and Tina) are in Stage3, as a whole. However, Glen displays Stage3 identity at JHS with less freedom and responsibilities. At the same time, he is in Stage1 at NS because he has just started to visit there voluntary and still exploring the regime of competence there. John also exercises Stage2 identity at SHS where he occasionally gives lessons as a volunteer after school. When they have less time/chances, it takes longer to move on to the higher stages. Despite the difficulties such as language barriers and their brittle and iridescent identities, they are travelling across the boundaries between different CoPs and bringing in innovations/changes when they find a gap to fill.

The narrative portfolios in Chapter 5 and 6 tell the stories of ALTs' challenges in initiating changes and bringing innovations in their lessons. Their teaching practices and innovative ideas are supported by their imagination acquired from their experiences of AoO, alignment skills

gained by developing their knowledgeability in the CoPs, and mutual engagement with their teachers and students. Interestingly, as shown in Chapter 6.4, when ES ALTs are in Stage1 or Stage2, they tend to increase the use of Japanese in class, but once they get into Stage3 and Stage4, they start to decrease the amount of Japanese and *Katakana* English (English pronounced in Japanese way), trying to offer mentorship to the HRTs so that they can use classroom English with confidence. Their expertise in delivering English lessons would make them feel more confident and less need to relying on Japanese to get a message across in class. Indeed, the process of negotiations of meaning with the students and teachers enables all the members of CoPs to obtain new skillset and it creates new definitions of competence in English lessons. ALTs are not wizards with a magic wand who cast a spell on the students and make them speak English instantly. To create a mediational space for productive learning for all the members of CoPs, everyone must invest themselves to negotiate their identities and maintain positive learning partnerships with each other.

Through the observations and narrative analyses, I found that ALTs in Stage3 and Stage4 who have developed their knowledgeability in the contexts try to put more regional specialities such as popular landmarks or local agricultural products in their lessons. Some are created in collaboration with JTEs, others would come up from the ALTs' personal experience and observations or based on the shared ideas with friends who are also ALTs. They modulate not only their professional identities but also the artefacts such as curriculum and materials through participation in multiple CoPs. All the four ES ALTs in Stage4 (Glen, Gary, John, and Amy) have written the original curriculum for ES English lessons both in English and Japanese. It seems that all of them are on insider trajectories, having certain freedom to enact their professional identities and take responsibilities in the curriculum making, not just leading lessons, creating materials and writing lesson plans. The proactive involvement of these experienced ALTs is backed up by their own experience and learning as a teacher supported by their family members, friends and fellow teachers. As previously explained, ES English does not have a long history in Japan, and it is still in the process of development without having formal assessment as of school year 2015. Maybe that is why the ALTs can get access to the core process of curriculum development at their ES. Personally, I believe that the similar process should be taken for JHS and SHS curriculum reviews. Sometimes ALTs get involved in curriculum adaptation/modulation process at prefectural level (in macro CoP), but it would be a rare case. The MEXT and the government should ask both ALTs' and JTEs' opinions more on English education reform to perform mutuality among all the participants in CoPs properly and to add bottom-up process to it.

Under the current employment system for ALTs, JET ALTs and most of NETs can work in the same position for maximum of five years and most of them have to renew their contract every

year. This lack of continuity in terms of the position and the low status of ALTs cause a serious loss for the English language education in Japan. The contributions of ALTs as brokers who work as active agents to bring different angles/perspectives seem to be overlooked. There are many activities and local projects to bridge the gap in the current English education curriculum both within and across different school levels led by some experienced/expert ALTs. Unfortunately, however, there are not many 'experienced/expert' ALTs in Stage4 since the system does not allow them to stay in the Japanese education system (Chapter 6.4.4). Lack of continuity in professional development for ALTs should be more problematised. Also, the local teachers should be more open and flexible to the new ideas, working collaboratively with ALTs.

### 7.4.2 Teacher learning for ALTs and the local teachers: co-construction of a mediational space

When I visited my participant ALTs to observe their lessons at schools and to attend seminars together, some local teachers told me in Japanese that ALTs who devoted themselves like them were rare/exceptional. A lot of narratives in this study demonstrate the importance of promoting better understanding of the diverse processes of teachers' professional identity formation and their participation in multiple CoPs. The findings advocate that both ALTs and the local teachers need to deepen their consideration of the continuity and consistency of the learning for their students and themselves. All my participants try to understand their students well, observe them very carefully in class to give sufficient support, and maximise the learning opportunities for them. Also, they try to engage in various practices with their students, colleagues and people in the community proactively, building rapport with them and facilitating their learning partnerships. They often display positive learning partnerships with their students both inside and outside of the classroom. There are cases that students as old-timers teach some common practices in the CoPs to their ALTs as newcomers, which are important aspects of teachers' professional identity construction. However, through my experience as a SHS JTE for over a decade, I found out that not all the teachers could reach this level of professionalism.

ALTs are caught in many boundaries such as 'glass walls' and 'glass ceilings' and many of them find it difficult to get legitimacy in CoPs in the first place. Since their position is limited in a short period, they have unique peer-support systems such as 'remote apprenticeship' between predecessor and successor ALTs for their initial learning (Chapter 4.3.3 & 6.4.1), and online CoPs to alleviate a feeling of isolation/desolation and support each other (Chapter 4.3.2 & 6.4.1). Participating in online CoPs, many ALTs contribute to cumulative their learning histories by

sharing materials and ideas of activities. The members of such online CoPs are working in different contexts, having diverse social, cultural and educational backgrounds. For instance, there are some Facebook groups for JET ALTs both in prefectural level and across Japan. Sometimes former ALTs still joined in the Facebook group and they kept engaging in the communication. The boundaries of online CoPs are almost invisible, but thanks to the technology, ALTs who physically away from each other can engage in online CoPs for their personal and professional well-being. Sometimes not only ALTs in Japan but other ESL/EFL teachers in different countries could be included in some online CoPs. I did not have access to the ALTs' online CoPs, but it is possible to assume from their narratives that these online CoPs play an important role in their personal and professional lives. As far as I know, JTEs normally do not have such online CoPs using social networking platforms. Rather, I observed some JTEs who always keep materials and other resources by themselves and never be willing to share them with others. Like some ALTs pointed out, the use of technology in Japanese school contexts has not been fully developed and available yet (Appendix K [D-2]). Implementation of more functional professional learning system would be ideal for the local teachers as well.

Meanwhile, ALTs are also involved in the process of apprenticeship with the local teachers in the school-based CoPs (Chapter 6.4.1). Once an ALT and his/her HRTs and/or JTEs have established learning relationships, their team-teaching flow smoothly even when they do not have pre-lesson meetings. It is a sign that the ALT and the local teachers mesh properly with each other. In their narratives, some ALTs demonstrated such positive partnerships with some of their JTEs saying that even when they do not have much time to talk about the lesson plans in advance, they can have improvised open conversations with their JTEs in class. One thing behind this is that these JTEs are flexible and proficient in English and try to get to know each other with their ALTs outside the class as well. Communication cannot be made in one way, and mutuality is a key in building productive learning partnership. Hence, not only ALTs but JTEs and HRTs have to be open for communication and have positive attitudes toward both languages. As presented earlier, volunteer work and socialising outside school such as *enkai*s and other activities have important functions to develop ALTs' knowledgeability in CoPs and strengthen/solidify their membership to become insiders. The ALTs who have successful/positive teacher learning experience usually attend these opportunities with the local teachers.

As for ALTs' official training opportunities, workshops/seminars are usually arranged by the local BoE. For ALTs on the JET programme, it is a part of their duty to attend the SDC every year. According to the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) website, "Two of the main goals of the ALT SDCs are to facilitate communication between ALT and JTEs and to improve the quality of team teaching. These conferences are a valuable opportunity for ALTs and

JTEs to attend workshops together and openly share their opinions with each other." I attended three SDCs in different prefectures with four of my participants to explore what kind of opportunities they had in order to learn about teaching through the formal training sessions. From my personal observations, the stated aims of the SDCs to facilitate communication between ALTs and JTEs and improve the quality of team teaching are questioned because not all JTEs attend the SDCs, in some cases, none of them are invited. In addition, HRTs are rarely included in these seminars even though they are also supposed to team-teach with ALTs. Like some ALTs articulated, it is more like 'Are you ok?' type of gatherings rather than trainings/seminars (see Chapter 5.3.2). Indeed, the local BoE and supervisors/advisors do their best to provide useful and meaningful learning opportunities for both ALTs and the local teachers, but the major issue is the limitation of the budget.

For another, the education system in Japan has structural rigidities and it tends to lack self-cleaning functions including sacking (see Extract 91: John NP15). Once they are hired, most teachers (either ALTs/JTEs/HRTs) would secure their position unless they break a law, even if they are absolutely ineligible as educators. Most of the time, other colleagues have to clear up the mess left by such 'teachers' and endure until they are transferred to another school or retire.

In sum, the findings indicate that more systematic approach needed in teacher education both for ALTs and the local teachers to provide more effective teacher learning opportunities. It is important to promote better understandings of the realities of ALTs who are minority in CoPs in Japanese education system so that other members will be able to act differently to build more productive learning partnership proactively together with them. The SDCs are good opportunities, but no such things for some NETs and all the T-NETs. Also, JTEs and HRTs should be more included in these professional development opportunities along with sufficient teacher trainings to maintain team-teaching relationships with ALTs. In general, HRTs are less confident in English and working with ALTs. If ALTs have more support in learning Japanese, they might be able to have collaborative work more easily (see Extract 119: Dane NP11). Whereas JTEs are more confident in their English than HRTs, but they tend to be less open and some of them hesitate/reject to share materials with others. Teacher education should put more focus on continuity of professional development and importance of mutuality in learning relationships with students and other teachers, including ALTs. The issues of local teachers' inertia and burnout because of their heavy workload also need to be addressed more seriously. I believe that teacher learning in CoPs and ALTs' active participation is a key to transcend existing boundaries to bring innovations in English education in Japan.

# Chapter 8 Conclusion

## 8.1 Key findings of the research

The focus of this study is teacher learning in CoPs, and I have explored the processes of professional identity construction of ALTs in Japan through their narratives. Narrative portfolio analyses as an approach of multiple case studies delineated the diverse processes of the learning of ALTs based on interpretive paradigm. In this study, 'narrative portfolio' is understood as a form of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) utilising the concept of 'short story approach' (Barkhuizen, 2016), which integrate the participants' spoken, written, and multimodal narratives to look into the complexity of human experiences through 'narrative knowledging' (Barkhuizen, 2011). The researcher's identity is also woven into the narrative portfolios in the process of retelling each ALT's stories.

Throughout the research, the researcher has worked on four research questions (Chapter 1.5) with help from many ALTs and others, investigating 1) the ways of ALTs' professional identity construction; 2) the features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs; 3) the mechanisms of CoPs that support ALTs' professional development; and 4) the functions of CoPs and how ALTs' participation in CoPs lead to teacher learning. Regarding the first question, three key features of ALTs' professional identities are illuminated: 1) brittle status of ALTs and the influence of 'glass ceilings' (legal boundaries) and 'glass walls' (social and cultural boundaries); 2) iridescent roles of itinerant ALTs working in different school contexts and their potential as brokers who bridge the gaps between CoPs; and 3) knowledgeability or localised competences to obtain membership in CoPs such as contextual knowledge, language skills/knowledge, and pedagogic knowledge/skills. There are three major categories in ALTs' employment system in public education: 1) Full-time government-sponsored JET ALTs; 2) full-time locally hired NETs both of whom normally have formal trainings; and 3) part-time T-NETs with no formal trainings but just inductions (Table 3.3). ALTs in different employment system hold different status in terms of their contract period, salary, teacher training and support system (Chapter 6.4.2). All these ALTs are distributed in different school levels ranging from primary to secondary schools. Some ALTs also work at preschool or offer lessons at a university or a community school voluntarily. The official status of ALTs is 'assistants' and they are supposed to teach with the local teachers (HRTs and/or JTEs). In many cases, ALTs work with several HRTs/JTEs at one school, but sometimes with dozens of them in total depending on their working conditions. Many ALTs are working itinerantly, visiting several schools in different levels (Chapter 1.4.2). Hence, they should meet different expectations of different teachers in different school levels with different curriculum.

They need to gain membership of each CoP, acquiring different regime of competence (Chapter 7.1.2). To become successful English teachers with legitimate membership in Japan, it seems to be necessary to have the regime of competence that consists of 1) contextual knowledge (being knowledgeable in social and cultural background of the context including school curriculum/culture); 2) emotional intelligence (being patient and empathetic); 3) social intelligence (being flexible and skilful in modulation by 'reading the air' and 'not stepping on HRTs'/JTEs' toes'); 4) pedagogical knowledge and skills (deepening the understanding of typical teachers' work and education system in the context such as how to deal with a large number of students, motivate young learners, and prepare for entrance examinations, etc.), and 5) English and Japanese language knowledge and skills to maintain communication with students and colleagues for effective classroom management and complementary team-teaching/learning relationship.

Almost every ALT encounter 'glass walls' and 'glass ceilings' at some point in their career (Chapter 6.4.2). Some ALTs told me their stories of severe marginalisation at their schools (Appendix O). They were excluded from school-based CoPs by some of their teachers, mostly JTEs and treated as a 'human tape recorder.' Those ALTs' negative experiences are often observed as a reflection of 'native-speakerism' (Holliday, 2005; Houghton & Rivers, 2013), a widely pervading ideology in English education in Japan, which could cause some local teachers' resistance to 'native' English or the status of 'native' speakers that most ALTs possess. Additionally, ALTs as newcomers to the Japanese society could face language barrier and cultural shock, finding difficulties participating in the unique community and familiarising themselves with its norms. Together with these 'glass walls', legal boundaries create 'glass ceilings' for ALTs that limit their status and opportunities to stay in and move up in the education system in Japan. As such, ALTs' professional identity can be understood as brittle and iridescent, which looks pretty and fancy superficially but is inconsistent and unstable in reality (Chapter 7.1.1). It seems to be extremely difficult for ALTs to get core membership in school-based CoPs, but each ALT shows unique trajectory of their identification process through participating in multiple CoPs. Once they get legitimacy and build a positive learning partnership as a result of modulation and negotiations of meaning, ES and JHS ALTs tend to forge a family-like relationship with other members in micro CoPs. One itinerant ALT (Glen) said that he is like a 'grandpa' for his students who visits them at school occasionally and have a good time together, while his HRTs and JTEs are like a parent, taking more responsibilities for the students' development and spending more time with them. Another ALT (John) mentioned that his effective team-teaching relationship with his JTEs is like parenting: the JTEs take the role of father with more strict approach, whereas the ALT himself takes motherly approach to his students, constantly offering support, caring them by their side

and being more than just an assistant. These grandpa-like and mother-like roles are not necessarily their ideal ALT-selves but definitely their best ALT-selves to create team-learning relationship within the constraints. While SHS ALTs who have a legitimate membership in school-based CoPs seem to perform their professional identity as English teachers differently. The mainstream of team-teaching at academic SHS is likely to be conducted in two patterns: 1) the ALT and his/her JTE share responsibility equally; or 2) the ALT leads the lessons and the JTE assists him/her. In Dane's case, his students regarded one JTE as a motherly figure, but it was not reflected to his role identity. As many ALTs say, "Every situation is different," and there is no specific template in the relationship between the team-teachers. It might be because the differences in the maturity of the students in different school contexts and in the JTEs' beliefs about team-teaching and expectations on the ALT's roles. Therefore, every ALT needs to go through apprenticeship with the local teachers to find out his/her best ALT-self from actual teaching practices.

The features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs are divided in two main categories: 1) apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975); and 2) craftsmanship model apprenticeship (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As stated above, the latter traditional apprenticeship is one of the key elements of ALTs' learning as teachers, and ALTs often utilise their experience of apprenticeship to align themselves in the school-based CoPs (Chapter 7.2.2). When ALTs have chances to communicate with their *sempai*/predecessors, they can take 'remote apprenticeship' by getting information about the context, lesson plans and teaching materials that *sempai* used to use in the same school context. It seems to be a unique apprenticeship system among ALTs across time that helps novice ALTs to start off their career even if they have not experienced formal teacher training. In addition, ALTs in the same region often form their community to support each other, both online and offline. Remote apprenticeship is a short-term or one-shot learning opportunity, but other ALTs' CoPs can provide more sustainable support system in many ways. Whereas the former AoO can boost their imagination, which is one of the important modes of participation in CoPs, to envisage their roles as ALTs at school (Chapter 7.2.1). AoO can be observed from two different angles: 1) in frontstage as a student in the classroom, observing teachers' onstage work at school (the flow of a lesson, use of textbooks and equipment in class, classroom management skills, etc.); and 2) from backstage as a member of family with a teacher or teachers, observing their offstage work at home (lesson planning, preparation of materials and criteria for evaluation, etc.). Both forms of AoO could be influential in constructing basic identities and core beliefs as teachers. Two ALTs in this study (Gary and Glen) demonstrated their learning experience of AoO from backstage in nano CoPs, having had a language teacher among their family members. Through the narratives of ALTs, it seems like the process of their

professional identity formation as a teacher had already started when they first had teachers in their lives. This is one of the significant findings of this study.

From stories in different school levels presented in Chapter 7.2.3, we could have a certain understanding of the functions of apprenticeship in the actual school context through the relationship with ALTs and the local teachers. In ES and JHS level, local teachers would play an important role to give ALTs insights about the basics of teacher's professional identities in the context of Japan such as attitudes towards students and stance as a teacher in the classroom based on the social and cultural norms. Whereas in SHS level where students are more independent and there is less need for discipline and classroom management, it seems like both ALTs and JTEs could focus more on the specific teaching skills that should be acquired as language teachers through apprenticeship and mentorship. Indeed, teacher learning happens not in one way. It does always in two or multiple ways where ALTs and the local teachers mutually involve. It would be possible to say that in most cases ALTs had started to construct their core beliefs as teachers from AoO when they are students and then tried to negotiate them with the local definitions of competence through apprenticeship after becoming ALTs to form their professional identities.

To investigate the mechanisms and functions of CoPs that facilitate teacher learning for ALTs, I presented five levels of CoPs in educational settings (Figure 2.1). As the knowledgeability in landscapes of practice (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014) develops, ALTs' professional identity seems to be shifting in five professional life stages (Figure 7.1). ALTs in higher stages are likely to engage in a wider variety and number of practices listed in Figure 7.2. Needless to say, teacher learning for ALTs is mostly observed in the school contexts in their relationships with the students and the local teachers in micro and meso CoPs. Yet, in order to gain legitimate membership in these school-based CoPs, many ALTs mentioned the importance of participating in socialising events such as *enkai*s outside school along with taking responsibilities in team-teaching relationship in micro level and other activities in meso level CoPs inside school. The functions of *nominication* (communication over drinks) at parties are widely recognised, which can enhance mutual understandings among attendees/co-workers and help them build more positive relationship at work (Yamauchi & Orr, 2011). As far as I know, however, there is no research studies that refer to the effects of *nominication* in relation to ALTs' work. Like in the stories of AoO from backstage in nano CoPs, narratives of ALTs revealed the influence of their life experience through participating in multiple CoPs in the process of their professional identity formation.

Although ALTs have a lot of potential to bring innovations to the English education in Japan as brokers in CoPs, they tend to be overlooked, struggling to get legitimate membership. Also, ALT system itself possesses elements of malfunction as many ALTs pointed out. Like Tajino et al. (2016) argue, all the members should invest themselves to build positive team-learning relationships and facilitate mutuality in their learning process. To do so, it seems that teacher education courses for HRTs and JTEs must include the aspect of team-teaching and team-learning with ALTs as well as making a change in ALTs' employment system and their trainings.

## 8.2 Methodological challenges and limitations

This study is exploring the processes of teacher learning in CoPs, deepening understanding of the realities of ALTs in Japan. I intended to invite ALTs in different school levels, areas/regions, and career stages with diverse personal/educational backgrounds. To investigate the broad pictures and collect their voices from wider contexts, narrative approach was useful. However, I encountered many challenges and limitations in data collection, analyses process, and presentation of the research. Through the snowball sampling, I was fortunate to get respondents/participants in different employment systems from all across Japan. Yet, I had only a small number of T-NETs among three employment categories. Online interviews sometimes had issues of connection and sound quality of audio-recordings which could influence the interpretations of the narratives. In the second phase of the data collection, I visited each participant at least twice, but was not able to get access to all the schools where they taught due to the difficulties of getting permission from some schools. Also, the physical distance to each school, time constraint and limited budget for research trips out of my own pocket impacted on the collected data set. The observation period was relatively short and limited. Thus, the scope of sociality and the relationships among people in school-based CoPs would be narrowed and participants' identity-in-practice is not fully addressed. It would be better to add more focused approach to investigate the complexity of the processes of professional identity formation with more ethnographic and longitudinal data collection methods, interviewing the local teachers and the students as well for further investigations.

The biggest challenge in the analysis process was the composition of 'narrative portfolios' as my 'research texts' (J. D. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Thanks to my participants' contributions, I could have a large data set as my 'field texts' (Table 3.6). The concept of 'narrative portfolio' was introduced to integrate different forms of narratives such as written narratives in questionnaire answers and reflective journals, spoken narratives in interviews, and multimodal narratives like

handouts, posters, photos and other materials. However, because of the limited space, I was not able to present all the interesting episodes in their narratives. Since I had seven cases for the second phase, my limited ability as a novice researcher might lead some misinterpretations, handling such a huge data set. The process to select a few stories to present in the thesis was like identifying specific constellations from thousands of stars in the night sky. I feel that my identity as a SHS JTE with legitimate membership in ELT community in Japan helped me to interpret and identify the significance in the stories of ALTs.

## 8.3 Further research

As we have learned from the narratives of ALTs, teacher learning is multidimensional and multifaceted. It always involves so many different factors, aspects and people in various ways. As such, even if teachers have experienced the same input, each of them could end up having different outcomes. Personally, I believe that more individual and longitudinal approach is needed to examine the mechanisms and functions of CoPs in different levels more closely, not only from ALTs' perspectives but also from JTEs/HRTs perspectives.

As demonstrated in Chapter 1.4.3, there are many issues that ALTs face in the English education system in Japan. ALTs should be considered not as a 'human tape recorder/player' but as a teacher who can bridge the gaps between the boundaries of different school levels to make/design more consistent and sustainable English education/curriculum. To do so, they should be given more legitimate status and career progression for more stable position within the system. During the observations and fieldwork, I have noticed that such advantages of ALTs, especially those who are in itinerant position, are hardly recognised by the local teachers. Even supervisors in the BoE do not often aware of these merits that ALTs have and rarely think of actively utilising these opportunities for future innovation in English education. Together with such malfunction of the CoPs in macro and mega level, we need to examine the teacher education system and the working conditions for the local teachers. Like some ALTs pointed out, most of the local teachers are jaded and they tend to lose their enthusiasm for teaching and their professional development. Teacher learning includes the aspect of their emotional wellbeing. To avoid any kind of marginalisation in school-based CoPs, we need to address more on the teachers' and students' emotional and social intelligence.

Additionally, I found that online CoPs might have a lot of potential to facilitate teacher learning for the local Japanese teachers or language teachers in different contexts through exploring ALTs' practices in their peer-support system. It has not been fully researched yet, but online CoPs

would give a new insight about the teacher learning in CoPs and it could be transferred to support students' learning. Further investigation of teacher learning in different subject areas would also provide deeper understanding of the mechanisms and functions of CoPs in educational contexts, not only in Japan but in other countries.

## 8.4 Personal journey

The whole process of this research was a great learning opportunity for me both as a JTE and a junior researcher. Through this narrative study, I could broaden my horizons by observing the practices in different school levels from NS to SHS in different contexts, attending training seminars/workshops together with my participants and talking to many ALTs and the local teachers. I have been working as a SHS JTE for more than ten years, but I recognised that still I do not know much about English education in Japan. By putting on my researcher's hat, it became possible to observe and understand the contexts from different perspectives. I would like to share my experience of learning with as many JTEs and HRTs as possible so that we can work together to build more healthy and productive learning relationships in our classrooms and the schools. I hope that our positive learning relationships in micro and meso CoPs will be extended to the whole English education community in Japan in macro and mega level.

As mentioned before, I am also a teacher who have experience of AoO from backstage. My parents, paternal grandparents, and one of my uncles used to be a teacher, and some other relatives are working as a teacher. We are family with many teachers working in different school contexts. In a sense, my AoO from backstage started when I was born in this family, and it has been affecting the process of my identity formation as a person and a teacher. I perceive it as a great strength to research about teachers' lives and investigate their learning trajectories. As a JTE, I have worked at five different schools. One is specialised in arts and crafts, one is a college of technology, and others are so-called 'ordinary' SHS, but one has many special-needs students and others are more academic. My teacher learning trajectory is also unique travelling across different CoPs and this whole experience gave me opportunities to grow as a person. I hope that such unique identity of the researcher cast a positive influence on narrating the stories of ALTs.

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# Appendix A Calls for Participation and Cover Letters

<In English for Phase 1>

Dear Colleague,

PROJECT ON CONDUCTING EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

I am conducting a small-scale piece of research into issues facing Assistant Language teachers in English education at elementary and secondary schools in Japan and their perceptions about the work as an ALT. The topic is very much under-researched, and that is why I intend to explore the area.

I am asking you to take part in the project by completing a short research questionnaire. May I invite you to spend a short time in its completion?

If you are willing to be involved, please complete the online questionnaire https://www.isurvey.soton.ac.uk/15938 by the end of July.

The questionnaire will take around fifteen minutes to complete. It employs rating scales and asks for your comments and a few personal details. You do not need to write your name, and you will not be able to identified or traced. ANONYMITY AND NON-TRACEABILITY ARE ASSURED, unless your consent is given and you provide your personal information at the end of the survey for further contribution to this research project. When completed, I intend to publish the results in my thesis and some educational journals.

If you wish to discuss any aspects of the study then please do not hesitate to contact me.

I very much hope that you will feel able to participate. May I thank you, in advance, for your valuable cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Hiroko Tsujino

Postgraduate researcher at University of Southampton

[A candidate for the Ph.D. in Modern Languages, Humanities]

TEL: +44(0)77 1011 2413

Email: ht4g13@soton.ac.uk

Appendix A

<In Japanese for Phase 1>

英語関連科目ご担当の先生方へ

2015 年 4 月 30 日(木)

研究協力に関するお願い

　万緑の候、皆様には益々ご健勝のこととお慶び申しあげます。
大阪府立高等学校所属の辻野裕子と申します。現在長期自主研修制度を通じて英国サウサンプトン大学にて研究活動を進めており、日本の諸校種における ALT 制度についての研究に関連してぜひご協力をお願いしたくご連絡させていただきました。
つきましては、来る５月から７月にかけて日本の学校に勤務する外国語指導助手（総称：ALT）の方々を対象としたアンケート調査を実施し、彼（女）らの英語担当教員としての在り方や学びについて調査したいと考えております。アンケートは無記名で、所要時間は１５分程度です。本研究計画については２月２６日付けでイギリスの研究倫理審査会（ERGO）の許可を得ております（許可番号 13902）。調査はオンラインで実施するため、ALT には別紙の依頼文を通して以下のアンケートフォームへのリンクを周知いただきますよう、何卒ご検討いただき、ご高配を賜りますようお願い申しあげます。

https://www.isurvey.soton.ac.uk/15938

アンケート結果については博士論文及び教育研究関連誌以外への掲載予定はありません。この調査研究は ALT への理解を深めることを第一の目的としております。主旨をご理解いただき、ご協力を賜りますよう重ねてお願い申しあげます。何かご不明な点、ご質問等ございましたら以下の連絡先までご連絡をお願いいたします。
ご多忙中お手数をお掛けして誠に恐縮ではございますが、何卒よろしくお願い申しあげます。

辻野裕子
Hiroko Tsujino

大阪府立高等学校（休職中）
サウサンプトン大学　博士課程所属　現代語学部・応用言語学専攻
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<In Japanese for Phase 2 Observations and School Visits>

学校長様
英語指導・ALT ご担当の先生方

2015 年 6 月 22 日(月)

研究協力に関するお願い

盛夏の候、皆様には益々ご健勝のこととお慶び申しあげます。
大阪府立高等学校（英語科）所属の辻野裕子と申します。現在長期自主研修制度を通じて英国サウサンプトン大学にて研究活動を進めており、この度は日本の諸学校における外国語指導助手（総称:ALT）についての研究に関連してぜひご協力をお願いしたくご連絡させていただきました。
このプロジェクトは ALT の英語担当教員としての在り方や学びについて調査することを目的としており、これまでアンケートやインタビューを通して多くの ALT の方々にご協力をいただいております。つきましては、本年度中に何度か ALT が関わる英語の授業を見学することをご許可いただけませんでしょうか。授業以外でも、行事等に見学という形で参加させていただければ幸いです。見学中、メモをとることはありますが、基本的に録音・録画等の予定はありません。（ご同意を得て録音または録画した場合も、音声を文字に起こして仮名を使用したうえで引用することはありますが、実際の音声や映像は流出することのないよう厳重に保管し、個人が特定されることが一切ないよう細心の注意を払います。）
本研究計画については２月２６日付けでサウサンプトン大学付属の研究倫理審査会（ERGO）の許可を得ております（許可番号 13902）。突然不躾なお願いで恐縮ですが、何卒ご検討いただき、ご高配を賜りますようお願い申しあげます。

学校訪問・授業見学の際に得た知識や研修の内容については、博士論文及び教育研究関連誌以外への掲載予定はありません。記述に際しては、個人名・団体名が特定されることのないよう、全てにおいて仮名を使用します。この調査研究は ALT への理解を深めることを第一の目的としております。主旨をご理解いただき、ご協力を賜りますよう重ねてお願い申しあげます。何かご不明な点、ご質問等ございましたら以下の連絡先までご連絡をお願いいたします。
ご多忙中お手数をお掛けして誠に恐縮ではございますが、何卒よろしくお願い申しあげます。

辻野裕子 [Hiroko Tsujino]

大阪府立高等学校（休職中）
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Appendix A

<In Japanese for Phase 2 Trainings and Seminars>

英語指導・ALT 関連研修ご担当様

2015 年 6 月 22 日(月)

研究協力に関するお願い

盛夏の候、皆様には益々ご健勝のこととお慶び申しあげます。
大阪府立高等学校（英語科）所属の辻野裕子と申します。現在長期自主研修制度を通じて英国サウサンプトン大学にて研究活動を進めており、この度は日本の諸学校における外国語指導助手（総称:ALT）についての研究に関連してぜひご協力をお願いしたくご連絡させていただきました。
このプロジェクトは ALT の英語担当教員としての在り方や学びについて調査することを目的としており、これまでアンケートやインタビューを通して多くの ALT の方々にご協力をいただいております。指導力向上研修等、外国語指導助手の方々を対象とした諸研修が８月以降いくつか企画されているとその方々から伺っておりますが、つきましては、本年度中に開催を予定されているそうした ALT 関連研修への同席をご許可いただけませんでしょうか。見学という形で研修の場に参加させていただければ幸いです。見学中、メモをとることはありますが、録音・録画等の予定はありません。本研究計画については２月２６日付けで大学付属の研究倫理審査会（ERGO）の許可を得ております（許可番号 13902）。突然不躾なお願いで恐縮ですが、何卒ご検討いただき、ご高配を賜りますようお願い申しあげます。

見学の際に得た知識や研修の内容については、博士論文及び教育研究関連誌以外への掲載予定はありません。記述に際しては、個人名・団体名が特定されることのないよう、全てにおいて仮名を使用します。この調査研究は ALT への理解を深めることを第一の目的としております。主旨をご理解いただき、ご協力を賜りますよう重ねてお願い申しあげます。何かご不明な点、ご質問等ございましたら以下の連絡先までご連絡をお願いいたします。
ご多忙中お手数をお掛けして誠に恐縮ではございますが、何卒よろしくお願い申しあげます。

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# Appendix B Summary of Research Design

| Research Questions | Justification | Data sources | Instruments | Data analysis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How do Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) construct their professional identities in Japanese school contexts? | To explore how ALTs feel about and evaluate their readiness for work as 'teachers', I will examine their background (life history) and experience of learning and teaching language(s) and see if they affect their professional identity formation as ALTs. From my own experience, I don't believe ALTs are "just assistants" (MEXT, 2011). Also I will demonstrate that ALTs are the members of multiple 'communities of practice' (CoP), focusing on the functions/characteristics of each community of practice. | Biographical information (previous experiences of ALTs)<br>- Language learning & teaching experiences<br>- Teacher training experiences<br>- Personal evaluation as ALTs (after became ALTs)<br>*What kind of communities of practice are ALTs engaging in which support their learning as a teacher?* | *Questionnaire*<br>(Online: iSurvey)<br><br>*Conceptual & Narrative Interviews*<br>(Online: Skype/LINE) | Analysis of narratives + Narrative analysis<br><br>Narrative portfolios |
| 2. What are the features of apprenticeship in the work and learning of ALTs?<br>[CoP = mainly a school basis] | I intend to explore the complexity of informal accounts of teacher learning through both apprenticeship in communities of practice which ALTs belong to and 'apprenticeship of observation' (AoO), to see how learning relationships are established and developed, and how ALTs utilise their experience as learners into their actual teaching practices. At this point, I cannot find any other research studies focusing this aspects of ALTs. | Experience as language learners<br>- the influence of AoO<br>Experience as ALTs<br>- In relation with JTEs or other teachers<br>- Relationship with other ALTs<br>*ALTs as novices and JTEs as experts or vice versa?*<br>(Mutuality in learning relationships) | *Questionnaire*<br>(Online: iSurvey)<br>*Semi-structured & Narrative Interviews*<br>(Online: Skype/LINE, Face to Face)<br>*Reflective journals*<br>(written) | Analysis of narratives + Narrative analysis<br><br>Narrative portfolios |
| 3. In what ways and to what extent do the Communities of Practice support ALTs' professional development? | I'll explore the mechanisms of CoP among ALTs and see how they participate in each CoP. Not only the CoP as a school basis, I'd like to investigate the invisible (not officially suggested) CoP which support ALTs professional development and show how ALTs build learning partnerships in CoP, focusing on their 'identity-in-discourse'. Because most of the Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) including myself don't know the supporting resource/system for ALTs' professional development. | Self-reflections about their learning as a language teacher in CoP<br>- In 3 modes: engagement, imagination, and alignment<br>Narrative interviews<br>- experience of 'critical incidents'<br>*What makes ALTs feel the changes in their dispositions as a teacher through the participation in CoP?* | *Reflective journals*<br>(written)<br>*Semi-structured & Narrative Interviews*<br>(Online: Skype, Face to Face)<br>*Observations*<br>(Field notes, photos, audio recordings, etc.) | Narrative portfolios |
| 4. How does ALTs' participation in Communities of Practice lead to teacher learning? | To investigate the functions of CoP, what kind of outcomes ALTs gain from participation in CoP and how those have influence on their actual teaching practices, I try to reveal the ongoing process of teacher learning and socially developed knowledge of language teachers by exploring their 'identity-in-practice'. I hope I can suggest some ways to enhance the quality of teacher learning in CoP to support the continuous development of language teachers (not only for ALTs and JTEs but for those who are in other contexts). | Observation notes<br>- actual teaching activities and relationship with others in school<br>- participation in CoP outside the school<br>Narrative interviews<br>- awareness of the influence of teacher learning in CoP on teaching activities<br>*How ALTs reflect their learning in CoP into their actual teaching practices?*<br>(Duality: participation – reification) | *Observations*<br>(Field notes, photos, audio recordings, etc.)<br>*Semi-structured & Narrative Interviews*<br>(Online: Skype, Face to Face)<br>*Reflective journals*<br>(written) | Narrative portfolios |

# Appendix C Participant Information Sheets

## Participant Information Sheet (Face to Face)

**Study Title**: Teacher learning in communities of practice: A case study of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japan

**Researcher**: Hiroko Tsujino **Ethics number**: 13902

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

### What is the research about?

This project is a part of my PhD study at the University of Southampton. This study focuses on teacher learning to explore how language teachers construct their professional identity and to understand how they learn to become teachers through their actual teaching practices and relationship with others. I am going to ask you to tell me the stories based on your experience as a language teacher and how you act as an ALT at schools in Japan. I hope this study will benefit for both current and future ALTs by promoting further understanding of the realities of ALTs.

### Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) or a foreign teacher working at elementary and/or secondary schools in Japan.

### What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to fill out an online questionnaire to find out about your experiences, background and opinions about teaching English as an ALT at schools in Japan. If you provide your contact information to participate in a follow-up interview, you will receive an email from the researcher to arrange an online interview [phase1]. If you agree to keep participating in this research project further, you will be asked to take part in online or face-to-face interviews three or four times once every two months to talk about your experience as an ALT. Each interview will take approximately 40 to 50 minutes. Also, I would like to ask you to send me the stories you feel like sharing with me occasionally. The form of the reflective journal of your experience as an ALT can be emails, audio-recorded narrations, or blogs etc. When possible, the researcher will visit your school(s) several times to understand more about the context you are in and attend seminars and/or training sessions you take to gain knowledge about the opportunities for ALTs' development as teachers. The detailed information is provided in the separate information sheet for phase2.

### Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Your contribution will help to enhance the knowledge in the area of the study and to create the effective teaching environment in Japanese schools and to promote further understandings of ALTs. I will offer some small gifts for those who participate in the second phase of the longitudinal study by taking part in narrative interviews and providing reflective journals.

### Are there any risks involved?

There are no risks involved, besides the ones that may occur in everyday life.

### Will my participation be confidential?

Your personal information will be at all times confidential. Your real names will be replaced by pseudonyms and will not be linked to any research materials in the thesis or any future publication. Your information and the data obtained from you will be kept in a computer locked with a password.

### What happens if I change my mind?

If you change your mind about taking part in this research project at any time during the process, you can choose not to participate and ask me to delete your complete data. Even if you want to continue being part of the study but at any point you feel uncomfortable with the content of given conversation in the interviews or journals, the particular audio file or written data will be deleted upon your request.

### What happens if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, you can contact the Chair of the Faculty Ethics Committee Prof Chris Janaway (+44(0)23 80593424, c.janaway@soton.ac.uk).

### Where can I get more information?

If you would like to get further information, please contact the researcher, Hiroko Tsujino (mobile phone number: +44(0)7710112413 or +81(0)9077693512, email: ht4g13@soton.ac.uk).

Appendix C

## Participant Information Sheet <Phase 2> **Researcher**: Hiroko Tsujino

[**Ethics No**: 13902]

Thank you very much for taking time and participate in my research project! After the questionnaire survey and follow-up interview, I would like to continue the research further with your help to promote better understanding of the realities of the ALTs in Japan. It would be great if you could take part in the second phase of the research through reflective journals, more in-depth interviews and observations. Please read the information below and contact me when you feel you can keep participating in this research project. Anonymity is assured as with the first phase. Even after once you decided to take part in the second phase, you can withdraw from the study at any time during the process without any reasons.

Reflective journals and interviews

In the next phase of this study, I would like to ask you a huge favour, but would it be possible for you to send me some reflections in written texts or voice memos (audio files) via email once or twice in every two weeks until the end of this school year? Those reflections include what you plan to do in the class, comments on how you felt about what you did, what you think about the language teaching in general or in a specific class and the relationship with other teachers etc. Please provide any kind of stories you feel like talking to and sharing with me. As for the example of the topic of your reflections, please see the question list below. I would like to interview you once every two months and ask some questions about the reflections.

Observations

Also, when possible, I would like to visit your school(s) and observe some lessons or other school activities you are engaging in. If I need to talk to the school principle or other teachers to get permission beforehand, I'm happy to contact and talk to them about making appointment for my visits.

**Examples of the topic of reflective journals** [Adapted from J. C. Richards and Farrell (2005: 76-77) originally from Richards & Lockhart (1994: 16-17)]

*Questions about your teaching*

What did you set out to teach?
Were you able to accomplish these goals?
What teaching materials did you use? How effective were they?
What techniques did you use?
What grouping arrangements did you use?
Was your lesson teacher-dominated?
What kind of teacher-student interaction occurred?
Did anything amusing or unusual occur?
Did you have any problems with the lesson?
Did you do anything differently than usual?
What kind of decision making did you employ?
Did you depart from your lesson plan? If so, why? Did the change make things better or worse?
What was the main accomplish of the lesson?
Which part of the lesson were most successful?
Which part of the lesson were least successful?
Would you teach the lesson differently if you taught it again?
Was your philosophy of teaching reflected in the lesson?
Did you discover anything new about your teaching?
What changes do you think you should make in your teaching?

*Questions about the students*

Did you interact with all of the students in the class today?
Did students contribute actively to the lesson?
How did you respond to different students' need?
Were students challenged by the lesson?
What do you think students really learned from the lesson?
What did they like most about the lesson?
What didn't they respond well to?

*Questions about yourself as a language teacher*

What is the source of my ideas about language teaching?
Where am I in my professional development?
How am I developing as a language teacher?
What are my strengths as a language teacher?
What are my limitations at present?
Are there any contradictions in my teaching?
How can I improve my language teaching?
How am I helping my students?
What satisfaction does language teaching give me?

# Appendix D Consent Form

## CONSENT FORM *(FACE TO FACE: Version 2*)

**Study title**: Language teachers' identity construction in communities of practice: A case study of Assistant Language Teachers in Japan

**Researcher name**: Hiroko Tsujino
**Staff/Student number**: 26506025
**ERGO reference number**: 13902

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the information sheet (1/6/2015 version no.2 of participant information sheet) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. ☐

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study ☐

I agree to be interviewed several times and agree all the interview sessions are to be audio recorded. Also I agree to provide relevant information for the research as a form of reflective journals occasionally. ☐

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected ☐

*Data Protection*
*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.*

Name of participant (print name)......................................................

Signature of participant...............................................................

Date.................................................................................

# Appendix E Online Questionnaire Items

**Section 1: Background information**

Please select the appropriate response and/or fill in the blanks below:

1. Gender: Male / Female
2. Age: 20-24 / 25-29 / 30-34 / 35-39 / 40-44 / 45-49 / 50-
3. Nationality: (                    )
4. What is your mother tongue? (                    )
5. How many languages do you speak other than your mother tongue? Please provide the details: (                    )
6. To which of ethnic origins do you feel you belong? White / Black Caribbean / Black African / Other Black / Mixed White and Black / Mixed White and Asian / Other Mixed / Indian / Filipino / Chinese / Other Asian / Any other ethnic group / I don't wish to answer
7. Educational background: Bachelor / Master / PhD / Other (                    )
8. Major (main area/field) of your study: (                    )
9. Do you have any teacher qualifications? Yes / No
   If yes, which certificate do you have? TEFL / CELTA / TESOL / PGCE (subject:          ) / Other(          )
   When were you qualified? (                    )
10. Did you teach English before you came to Japan? If yes, how long (years/months)? (          )years / (          )months
    In which country did you teach? (                    )
    Where did you work? Primary school / Junior high school / High school / College / Other (                    )
11. How long (years/months) have you been in Japan? (          )years / (          )months
12. How long (years/months) have you been teaching English in Japan? (          )years / (          )months
13. Which type of employment are you in? JET programme / NET (Full-time teacher, directly employed by the school/ the board of education) / T-NET (Part-time teacher, dispatched from an outsourcing company) / Other (                    )
14. Where do you work this school year (2015)? Primary school / Junior high school / High school / Other (                    )
15. How many lessons do you teach in a week? (          ) lessons/week
16. Which subjects do you teach this school year (2015)? Please tick the subjects: Foreign Language Activities (Primary schools) / English 1 (Junior high schools) / English 2 (Junior high schools) / English 3 (Junior high schools) / Basic English communication / English Communication I / English Communication II / English Communication III / English Expression I / English Expression II / English Conversation / Comprehensive English / English Comprehension / English Expression / Cross-cultural Understanding / Current English / Other (                    )
17. Are you in charge of any club (extra-curricular) activities or events (i.e. a speech contest, field trip, student exchange program etc.)? Yes / No
    If yes, what kind of activities are you engaging in? (                    )

**Section 2: Language education in Japan**

Please choose the appropriate response that reflects your thought.
[ 0 = I don't know, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree ]

1. I have enough knowledge about the education system in Japan.
2. I know about the new national curriculum, the Courses of Study (2008 revision), fully implemented in 2013.
3. I understand the mission/motto of the school where I work now.
4. I have enough knowledge about the school curriculum.
5. I understand the existing school syllabus.
6. I follow the syllabus when I teach the subjects.
7. I think the government approved textbooks are useful.
8. I follow the principle of "teaching English only in English" when I teach English in class.
9. I think the class size (generally 30-40 students in one class) is appropriate.
10. I think the hours of English lessons in school education are enough.
11. I always work collaboratively with Japanese teachers.
12. I can use technology (interactive whiteboard, web-based materials, mobile electronic devices etc.) in classrooms.
13. I think my students have access to enough resources to study English.
14. I think Japanese people should start learning English from their earlier years.
15. I think ALTs are necessary for the English language education in Japan.
16. I think the ALT system needs to be revised.

**Section 3: Your opinion and experience about the job as an ALT**

Please choose the appropriate response that reflects your thought.
[ 0 = I don't know, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree ]

1. My work as an ALT gives me job satisfaction.
2. I think my own foreign language learning experiences affect my teaching practices as an ALT.
3. Japanese teacher of English (JTE) is an ideal model for my teaching.
4. I always teach lessons with a JTE.
5. I can take a leading role when I teach lessons.
6. I discuss lessons with JTEs at least once a week.
7. I have enough knowledge and skills to be a language teacher.
8. I do not teach English in the same way as the JTE.
9. I teach English as I was trained in my teacher training courses.
10. I cooperate with JTEs only when they invite me to work with them.
11. I have right to choose materials (textbooks, workbooks etc.) without much consultation with other teachers.
12. I have right to create new materials (handouts, homework etc.) for students by myself.
13. I feel I have a reliable source to ask for advice when I need some help as an ALT.
14. I am learning how to teach through in-service work at school.
15. I am learning how to teach through activities outside school (i.e. training sessions, seminars or personal communication with other ALTs).
16. I am improving my teaching skills as I work.
17. Please rate the following descriptions which state some characteristics of English teachers in formal education by putting a number from 1 (less important) to 5 (very important).
    1) Skilled in English in terms of native (like) proficiency
    2) Knowledgeable in English grammar
    3) Good at classroom management
    4) Kind and caring person
    5) Having long experience as a teacher
    6) Skilled in intercultural communication
    7) Academically high achieving

8) Qualified as a teacher
9) Having a loud voice
10) Good handwriting
11) Good at working collaboratively with other teachers
12) Skilled in information technology
13) Knowledgeable in various teaching methods and learning theories
14) Spends long hours making lesson plans
15) Skilled in assessment/evaluation
16) Constantly examines and responds to students' needs
17) Follows the textbooks carefully
18) Open to new ideas and ways of teaching

18. What is your most memorable experience as an ALT in Japan?
19. Are you going to pursue a career as an English teacher after the contract as an ALT finishes? Yes / No
    If no, what kind of career do you envision for yourself?

Thank you very much for your time and help. If you can take part in a follow-up interview and you are interested in participating in this research project further, please provide your contact information below.

Name / Pseudonym : ____________________ Email : ____________________________

# Appendix F Online Questionnaire Answers

## Section 1: Background information

Question 1.1 Gender

| | |
|---|---|
| Male | 21 |
| Female | 36 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.2 Age group

| | |
|---|---|
| 20-24 | 16 |
| 25-29 | 23 |
| 30-34 | 10 |
| 35-39 | 6 |
| 40-44 | 1 |
| 45-49 | 0 |
| 50- | 1 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.3 Nationality

| | |
|---|---|
| Australia | 6 |
| Belize | 1 |
| Canada | 7 |
| Ireland | 2 |
| New Zealand | 6 |
| Philippines | 1 |
| South Africa | 2 |
| United Kingdom | 7 |
| United States | 25 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.4 What is your mother tongue?

| | |
|---|---|
| English | 50 |
| French | 2 |
| Afrikaans | 1 |
| Bisaya | 1 |
| Spanish | 1 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| Total Responses | 56 |

Question 1.5 How many languages do you speak other than your mother tongue?
Average: 1.7 languages [from 0 to 5] / 56 answers

Appendix F

Details of languages

| | |
|---|---|
| Japanese | 45 |
| French | 11 |
| Spanish | 9 |
| English | 4 |
| German | 3 |
| Arabic | 2 |
| Irish | 1 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| Italian | 1 |
| Turkish | 1 |
| Tagalog | 1 |
| Korean | 1 |
| Setswana | 1 |
| SeXhosa | 1 |
| Afrikaans | 1 |
| Zulu | 1 |
| American Sign Language | 1 |
| Latin | 1 |

Question 1.6 To which of ethnic origins do you feel you belong?

| | |
|---|---|
| White | 42 |
| Black Caribbean | 1 |
| Black African | 1 |
| Other Black | 0 |
| Mixed White and Black | 1 |
| Mixed White and Asian | 4 |
| Other Mixed | 3 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Filipino | 1 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| Other Asian | 0 |
| Any Other ethnic group | 3 |
| I do not wish to answer | 0 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.7 Educational background

| | |
|---|---|
| Bachelor | 46 |
| Master | 9 |
| PhD | 1 |
| Other | 1 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.7a Please provide the detail (Other)
Post Grad Diploma

Question 1.8 Major (main area/field) of your study

| | |
|---|---|
| English/Literature | 11 |
| Biology/Chemistry | 6 |
| Asian/Japanese/International studies | 5 |
| Education | 4 |
| History/Social Science | 4 |
| Anthropology | 3 |
| Linguistics | 3 |
| Architecture | 2 |
| Finance | 2 |
| Music | 2 |
| Politics | 2 |
| Psychology | 2 |
| TESOL | 2 |
| Advertising | 1 |
| Archaeology | 1 |
| Engineering | 1 |
| Industrial Design | 1 |
| Law | 1 |
| Marketing | 1 |
| Media | 1 |
| Speech Therapy | 1 |
| Total Responses | 56 |

Question 1.9 Do you have any teacher qualifications?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 22 |
| No | 35 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.9a What kind of certificate do you have?

| | |
|---|---|
| TEFL | 8 |
| CELTA | 3 |
| TESOL | 4 |
| PGCE | 1 |
| Other | 4 |
| Total Responses | 20 |

Question 1.9b Subject (PGCE)
English

Question 1.9c Please provide the detail (Other)
Bachelor of Education, Texas and Arizona Teaching Certification, Certificate of Teaching English as a Second Language, Arizona state teaching certification

Question 1.9a When were you qualified?

| | |
|---|---|
| 1976 | 1 |
| 2005 | 1 |
| 2010 | 2 |
| 2011 | 3 |
| 2012 | 1 |
| 2013 | 5 |
| 2014 | 7 |

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Question 1.10 Did you teach English before you came to Japan?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 15 |
| No | 42 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.10a How many years/months did you teach English before you came to Japan?
Average: 1 year 10 months [from 2 months to 7 years]

Question 1.10b In which country/countries did you teach?

| | |
|---|---|
| US | 4 |
| Australia | 2 |
| South Korea | 2 |
| Spain | 2 |
| Canada | 1 |
| UK | 1 |
| Italy | 1 |
| Philippines | 1 |
| South Africa | 1 |

Question 1.10c Where did you work?

| | |
|---|---|
| Primary school | 1 |
| Junior high school | 1 |
| Senior high school | 4 |
| College/University | 1 |
| Private language company | 3 |
| Other | 4 |
| Total Responses | 14 |

Question 1.10d Please provide the detail (Other)
Primary School and adult education, Publicly funded eel education for immigrants, Student teaching for my BA, Tutor for ESL university students

Question 1.11 How long have you been in Japan?
Average: 2 years 8 months [from 1 month to 12 years]

Question 1.12 How long have you been teaching English in Japan?
Average: 2 years 8 months [from 1 month to 12 years]

Question 1.13 Which type of employment are you in?

| | |
|---|---|
| JET programme | 44 |
| NET (Full-time teacher, directly employed by the school/ the board of education) | 7 |
| T-NET (Part-time teacher, dispatched from an outsourcing company) | 4 |
| Other | 2 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.13a Please provide the details (Other)
Sister Cities Program. (1 year JET), Teach abroad

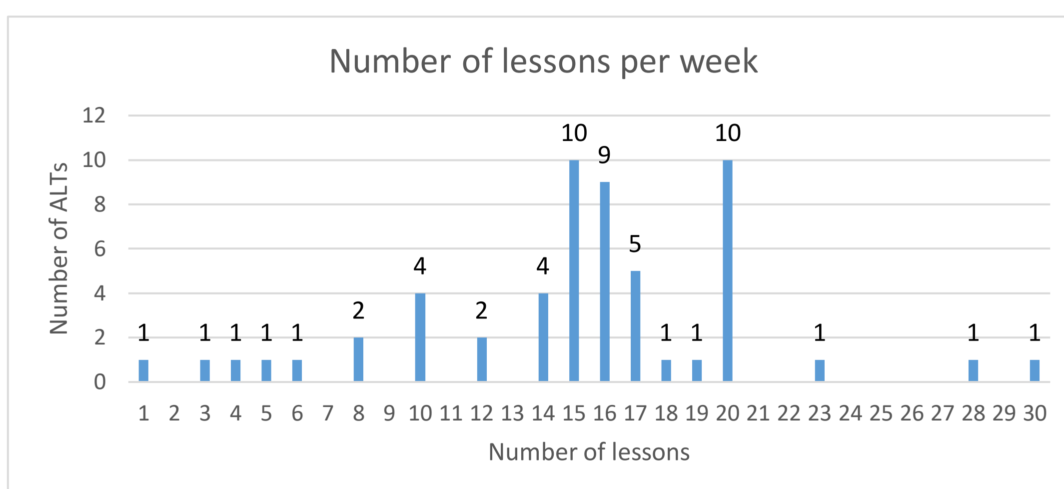
Question 1.14 Where do you work this school year (2015)?

| | |
|---|---|
| Primary school | 24 |
| Junior high school | 27 |
| Senior high school | 27 |
| Other | 11 |

Question 1.14a Please provide the detail (Other)

| | |
|---|---|
| Nursery School (Kindergarten/Preschool: Youchien/Hoikusho) | 5 |
| Special needs school | 3 |
| Adult education classes | 2 |
| Community centre classes | 2 |
| Board of Education | 1 |

Question 1.15 How many lessons do you teach in a week?
Average: 15.2 lessons/week




Question 1.16 Which subjects do you teach this school year (2015)?

| | |
|---|---|
| Foreign Language Activities (Primary schools) | 25 |
| English 1 (Junior high schools) | 27 |
| English 2 (Junior high schools) | 25 |
| English 3 (Junior high schools) | 24 |
| Basic English communication | 5 |
| English Communication I | 18 |
| English Communication II | 15 |
| English Communication III | 8 |
| English Expression I | 12 |
| English Expression II | 9 |
| English Conversation | 9 |
| Comprehensive English | 2 |
| English Comprehension | 3 |
| English Expression | 4 |
| Cross-cultural Understanding | 14 |
| Current English | 6 |
| Other | 7 |

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Question 1.16a Please name the subjects you teach (Other)
Academic Writing Drama Discussion Debate, English for travel, Kindergarten Nursery, English at Hoikusho and Youchien, Special classes for mentally challenged students. Focus is on social interaction through games and music in both English and Japanese., Listening Reading

Question 1.17 Are you in charge of any club (extra-curricular) activities or events (i.e. a speech contest, field trip, student exchange program etc.) this school year 2015?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 28 |
| No | 29 |
| Total Responses | 57 |

Question 1.17a What kind of activities are you engaging in?

| | |
|---|---|
| ESS club | 17 |
| Speech contest | 15 |
| Student exchange program | 5 |
| English camp/festival | 4 |
| Presentation/ English board | 3 |
| *Eiken* interview test preparation | 2 |
| Debate contest | 2 |
| Volunteering | 2 |
| Essay contest | 1 |
| Volleyball club | 1 |
| Football club | 1 |
| Music club | 1 |
| Tea ceremony | 1 |
| E-learning (Moodle) | 1 |
| iPad maintenance | 1 |
| HS entrance exam preparation | 1 |

## Section 2: Language education in Japan

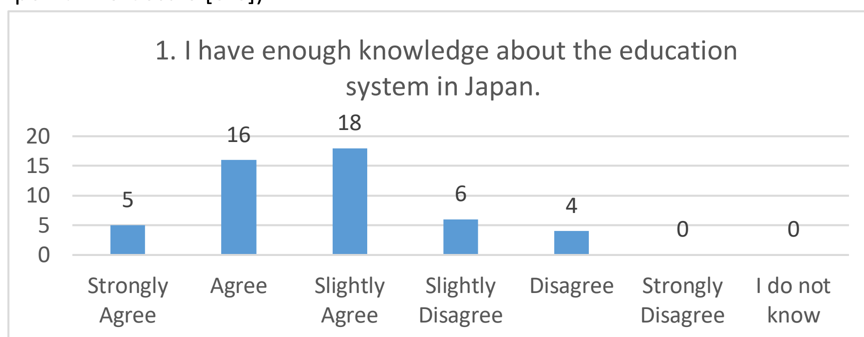
**Question 2.1 Please choose the appropriate response that reflects your thought.**

Question 1.1

I have enough knowledge about the education system in Japan.

Average point: **4.24** (in 7-point Likert scale [0-6])

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 5 |
| Agree | 16 |
| Slightly Agree | 18 |
| Slightly Disagree | 6 |
| Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 49 |

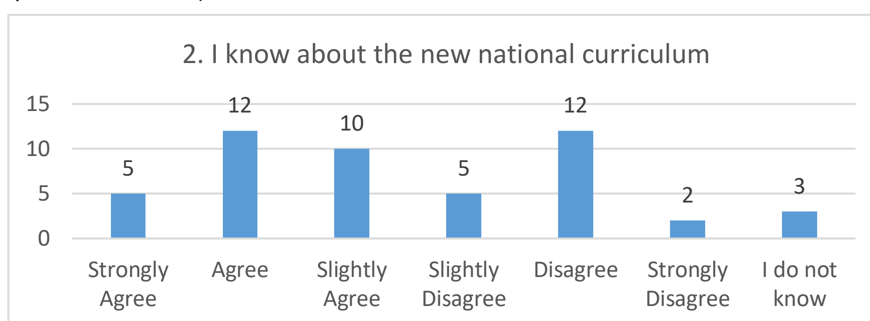



Question 1.2

I know about the new national curriculum, the Courses of Study (2008 revision), fully implemented in 2013.

Average point: **3.49** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 5 |
| Agree | 12 |
| Slightly Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Disagree | 5 |
| Disagree | 12 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 |
| I do not know | 3 |
| Total Responses | 49 |

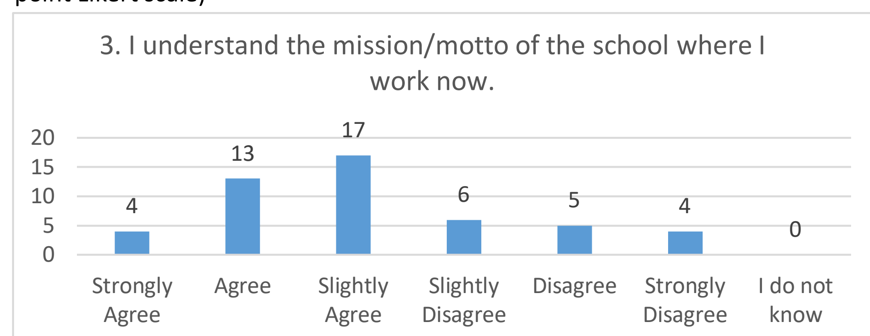



Question 1.3

I understand the mission/motto of the school where I work now.

Average point: **3.86** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4 |
| Agree | 13 |
| Slightly Agree | 17 |
| Slightly Disagree | 6 |
| Disagree | 5 |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 49 |

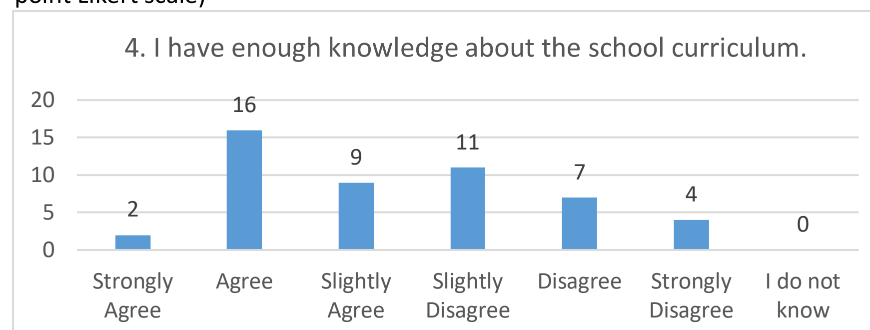



Question 1.4

I have enough knowledge about the school curriculum.

Average point: **3.65** (in 7-point Likert scale)

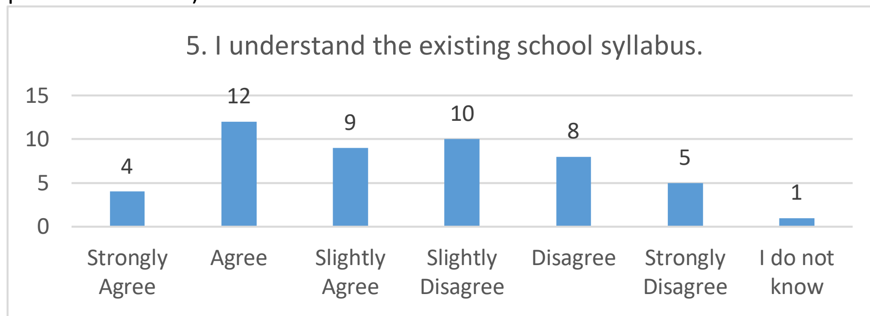
| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 2 |
| Agree | 16 |
| Slightly Agree | 9 |
| Slightly Disagree | 11 |
| Disagree | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



Appendix F

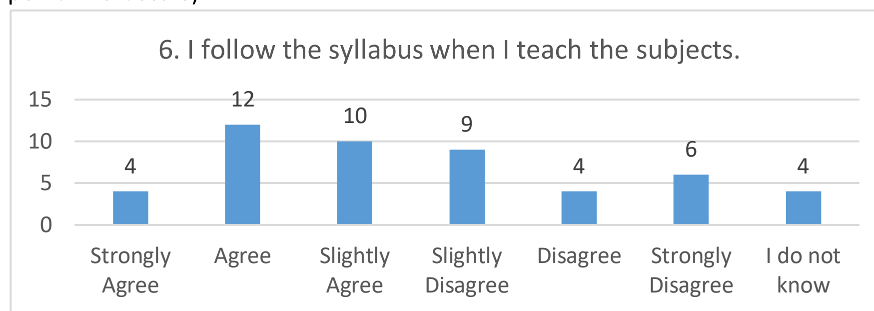
Question 1.5
I understand the existing school syllabus.
Average point: **3.49** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4 |
| Agree | 12 |
| Slightly Agree | 9 |
| Slightly Disagree | 10 |
| Disagree | 8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 5 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



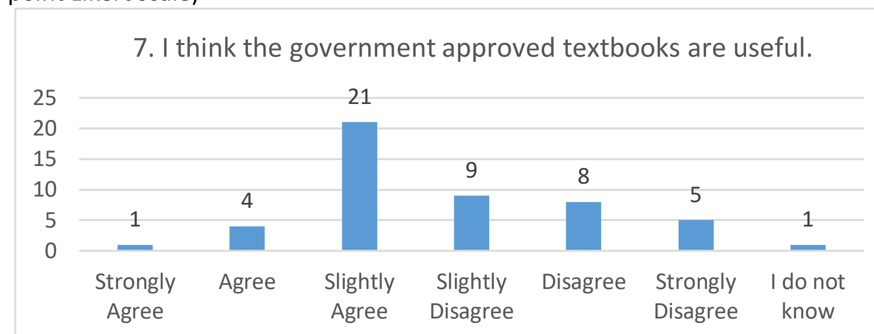

Question 1.6
I follow the syllabus when I teach the subjects.
Average point: **3.37** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4 |
| Agree | 12 |
| Slightly Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Disagree | 9 |
| Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly Disagree | 6 |
| I do not know | 4 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



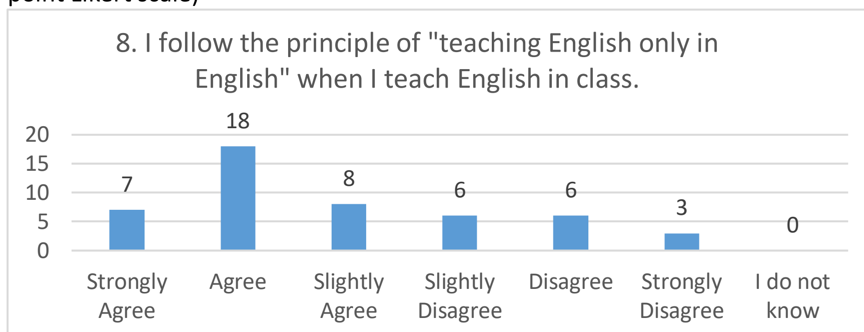

Question 1.7
I think the government approved textbooks are useful.
Average point: **3.22** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 1 |
| Agree | 4 |
| Slightly Agree | 21 |
| Slightly Disagree | 9 |
| Disagree | 8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 5 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



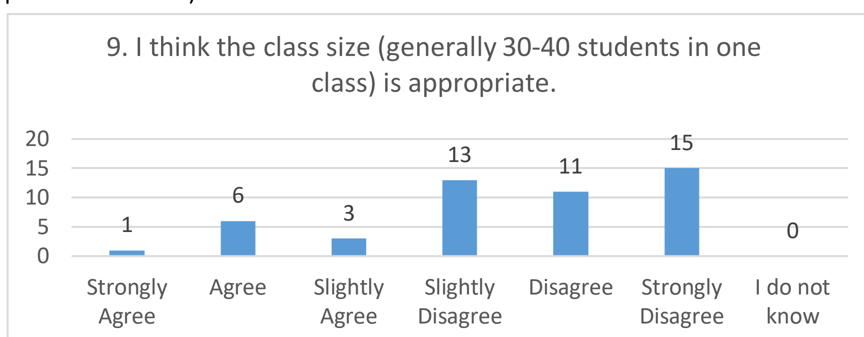

Question 1.8
I follow the principle of "teaching English only in English" when I teach English in class.
Average point: **4.10** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 7 |
| Agree | 18 |
| Slightly Agree | 8 |
| Slightly Disagree | 6 |
| Disagree | 6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 3 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 48 |



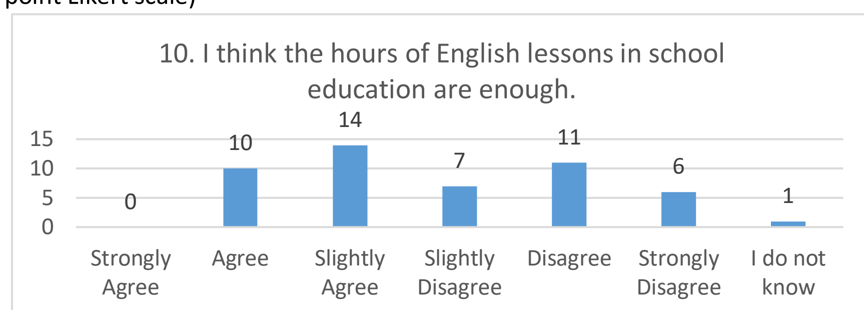
Question 1.9
I think the class size (generally 30-40 students in one class) is appropriate.
Average point: **2.53** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| Strongly Agree | 1 |
|---|---|
| Agree | 6 |
| Slightly Agree | 3 |
| Slightly Disagree | 13 |
| Disagree | 11 |
| Strongly Disagree | 15 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



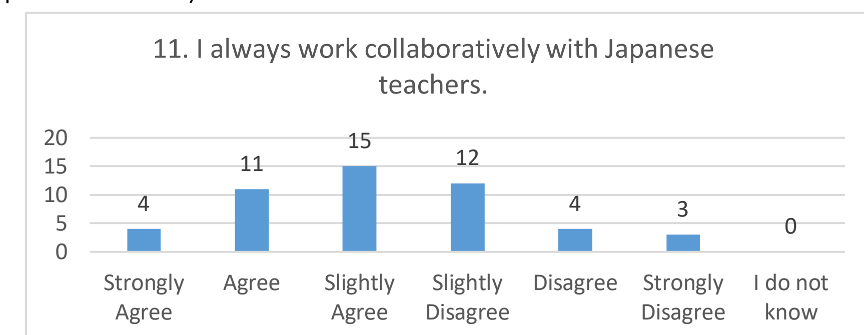

Question 1.10
I think the hours of English lessons in school education are enough.
Average point: **3.16** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| Strongly Agree | 0 |
|---|---|
| Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Agree | 14 |
| Slightly Disagree | 7 |
| Disagree | 11 |
| Strongly Disagree | 6 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



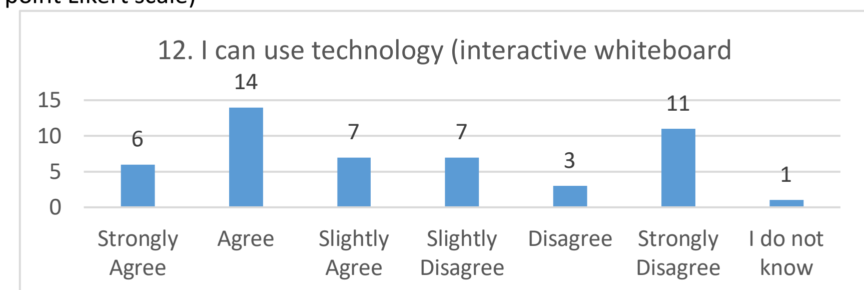

Question 1.11
I always work collaboratively with Japanese teachers.
Average point: **3.80** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| Strongly Agree | 4 |
|---|---|
| Agree | 11 |
| Slightly Agree | 15 |
| Slightly Disagree | 12 |
| Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly Disagree | 3 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 49 |




Question 1.12
I can use technology (interactive whiteboard, web-based materials, mobile electronic devices etc.) in classrooms.
Average point: **3.51** (in 7-point Likert scale)

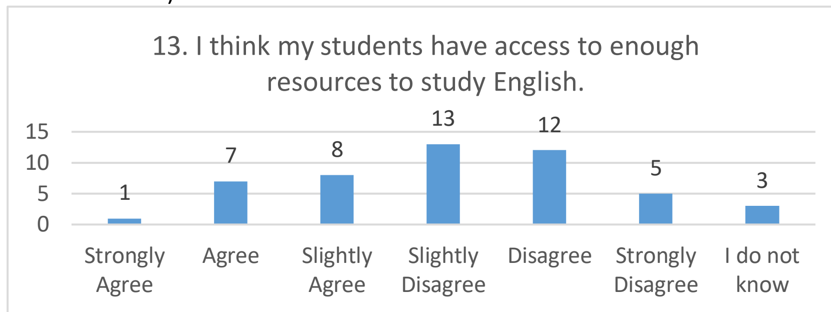
| Strongly Agree | 6 |
|---|---|
| Agree | 14 |
| Slightly Agree | 7 |
| Slightly Disagree | 7 |
| Disagree | 3 |
| Strongly Disagree | 11 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



Appendix F

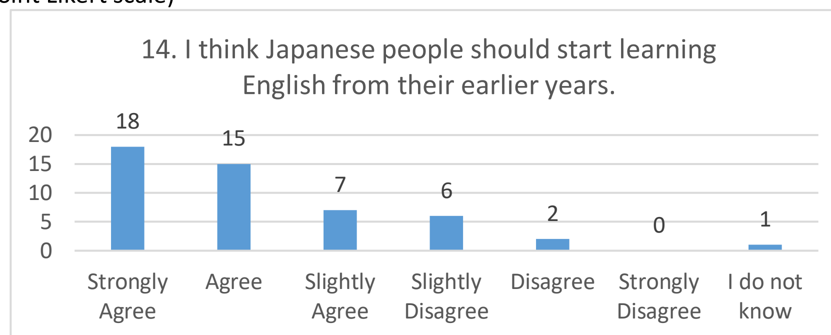
Question 1.13
I think my students have access to enough resources to study English.
Average point: **2.88** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| Strongly Agree | 1 |
|---|---|
| Agree | 7 |
| Slightly Agree | 8 |
| Slightly Disagree | 13 |
| Disagree | 12 |
| Strongly Disagree | 5 |
| I do not know | 3 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



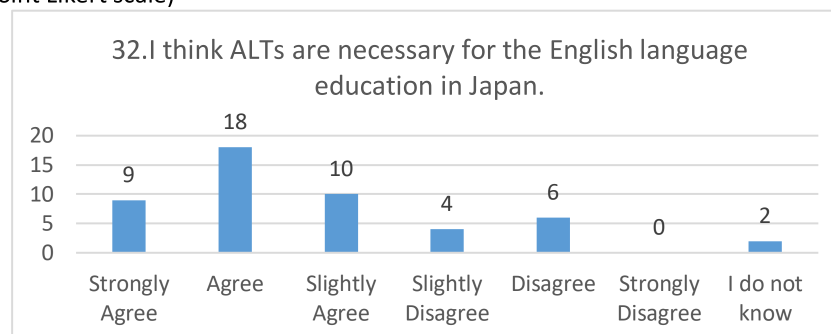

Question 1.14
I think Japanese people should start learning English from their earlier years.
Average point: **4.76** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| Strongly Agree | 18 |
|---|---|
| Agree | 15 |
| Slightly Agree | 7 |
| Slightly Disagree | 6 |
| Disagree | 2 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



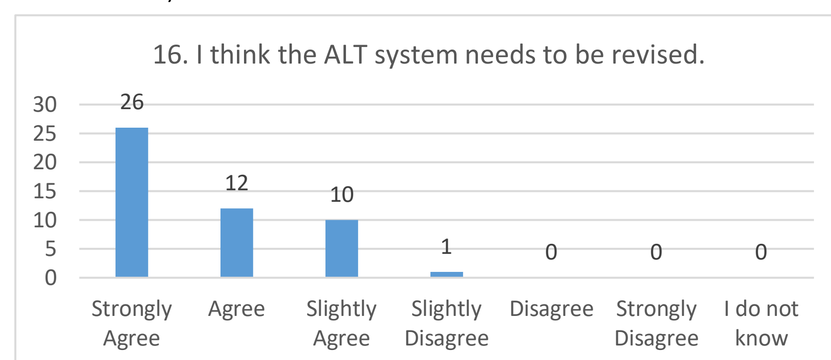

Question 1.15
I think ALTs are necessary for the English language education in Japan.
Average point: **4.24** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| Strongly Agree | 9 |
|---|---|
| Agree | 18 |
| Slightly Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Disagree | 4 |
| Disagree | 6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| I do not know | 2 |
| Total Responses | 49 |




Question 1.16
I think the ALT system needs to be revised.
Average point: **5.29** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| Strongly Agree | 26 |
|---|---|
| Agree | 12 |
| Slightly Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Disagree | 1 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 49 |



## Section3: Your opinion and experience of the job as an ALT

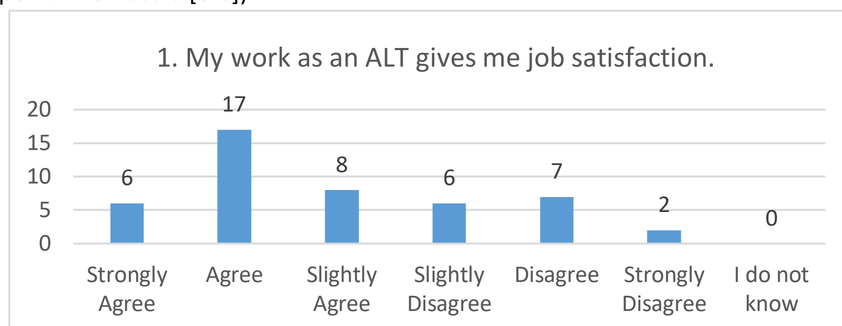
**Question 3.1 Please choose the appropriate response that reflects your thought.**

Question 1.1

My work as an ALT gives me job satisfaction.

Average point: **4.07** (in 7-point Likert scale [0-6])

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 6 |
| Agree | 17 |
| Slightly Agree | 8 |
| Slightly Disagree | 6 |
| Disagree | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |

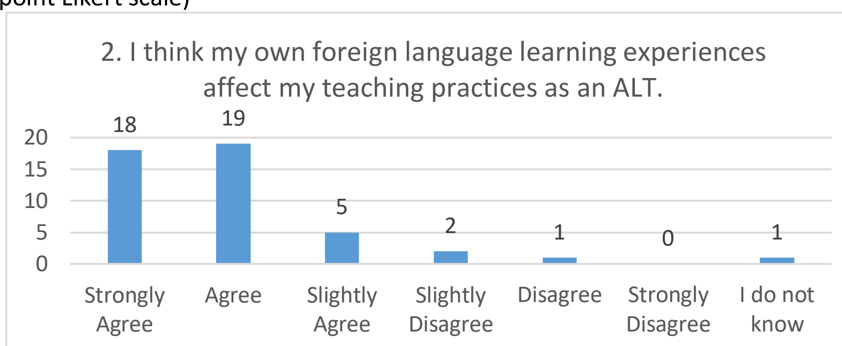



Question 1.2

I think my own foreign language learning experiences affect my teaching practices as an ALT.

Average point: **5.02** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 18 |
| Agree | 19 |
| Slightly Agree | 5 |
| Slightly Disagree | 2 |
| Disagree | 1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 46 |

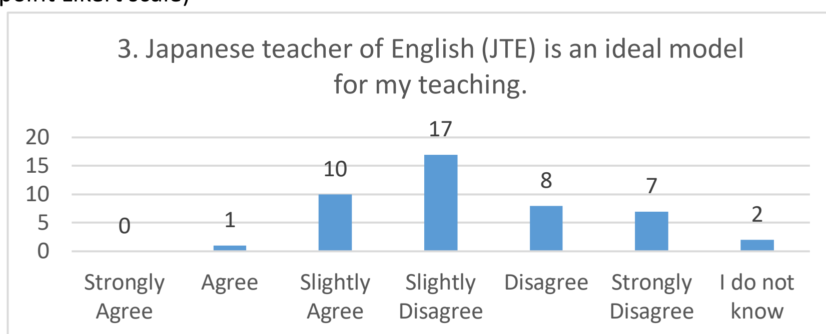



Question 1.3

Japanese teacher of English (JTE) is an ideal model for my teaching.

Average point: **2.64** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 0 |
| Agree | 1 |
| Slightly Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Disagree | 17 |
| Disagree | 8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 7 |
| I do not know | 2 |
| Total Responses | 45 |

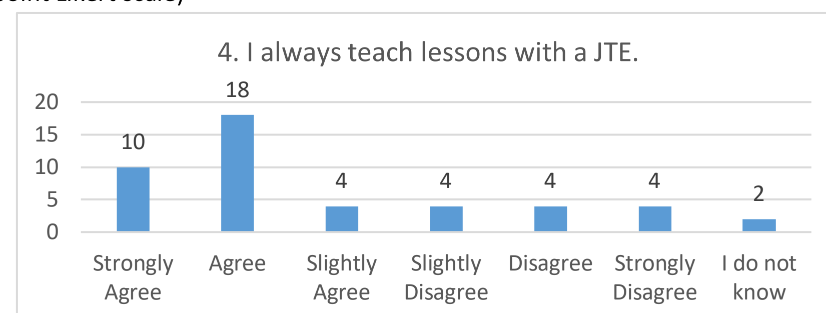



Question 1.4

I always teach lessons with a JTE.

Average point: **4.13**(in 7-point Likert scale)

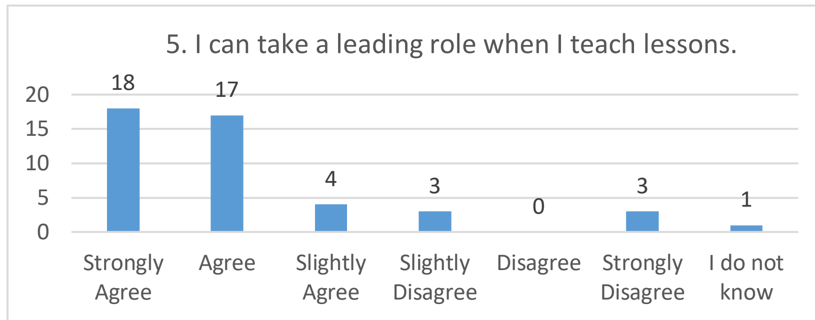
| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 10 |
| Agree | 18 |
| Slightly Agree | 4 |
| Slightly Disagree | 4 |
| Disagree | 4 |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 |
| I do not know | 2 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



Appendix F

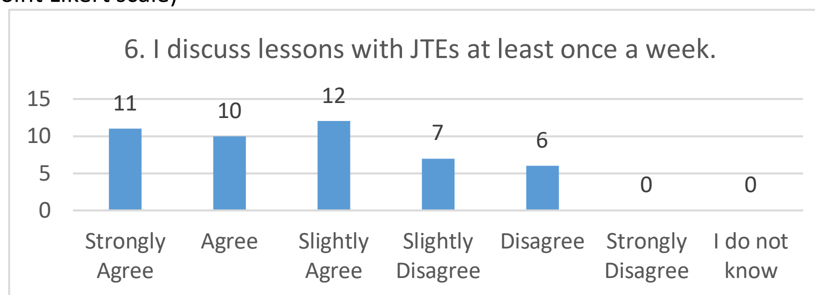
Question 1.5
I can take a leading role when I teach lessons.
Average point: **4.80** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 18 |
| Agree | 17 |
| Slightly Agree | 4 |
| Slightly Disagree | 3 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 3 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



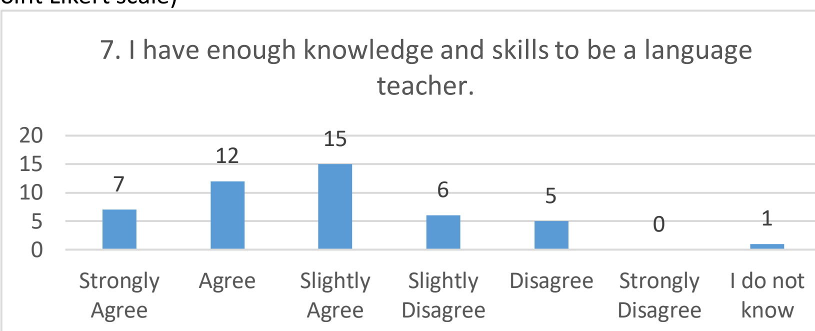

Question 1.6
I discuss lessons with JTEs at least once a week.
Average point: **4.28** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 11 |
| Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Agree | 12 |
| Slightly Disagree | 7 |
| Disagree | 6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



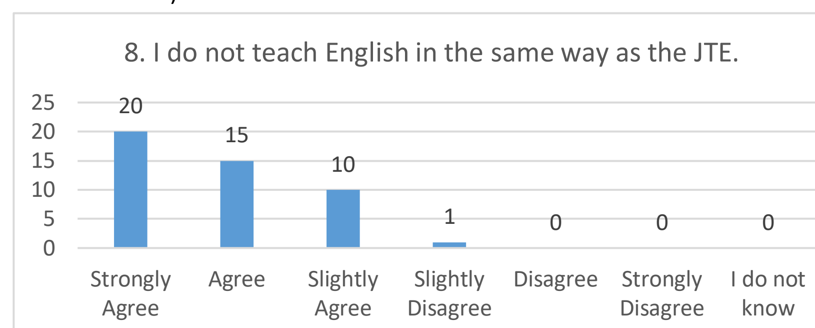

Question 1.7
I have enough knowledge and skills to be a language teacher.
Average point: **4.13** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 7 |
| Agree | 12 |
| Slightly Agree | 15 |
| Slightly Disagree | 6 |
| Disagree | 5 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



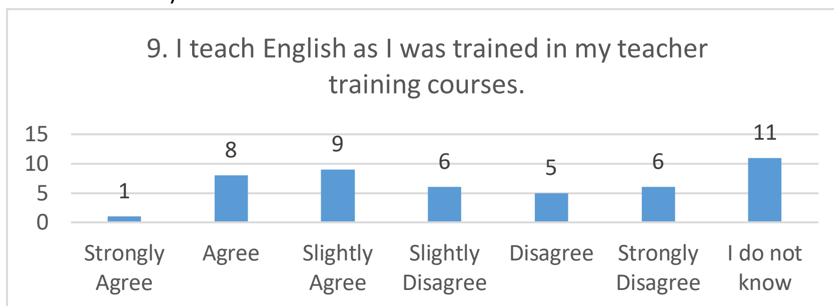

Question 1.8
I do not teach English in the same way as the JTE.
Average point: **5.17** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 20 |
| Agree | 15 |
| Slightly Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Disagree | 1 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



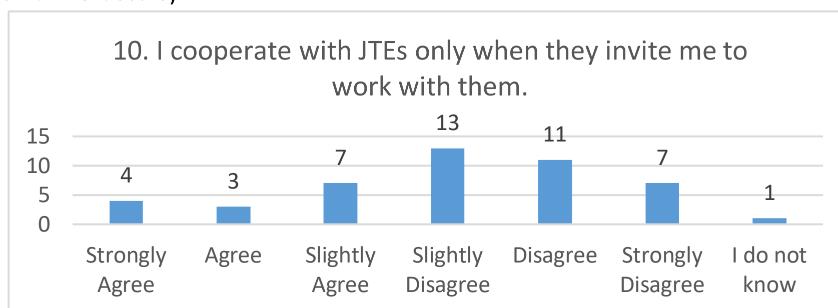
Question 1.9
I teach English as I was trained in my teacher training courses.
Average point: **2.52** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 1 |
| Agree | 8 |
| Slightly Agree | 9 |
| Slightly Disagree | 6 |
| Disagree | 5 |
| Strongly Disagree | 6 |
| I do not know | 11 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



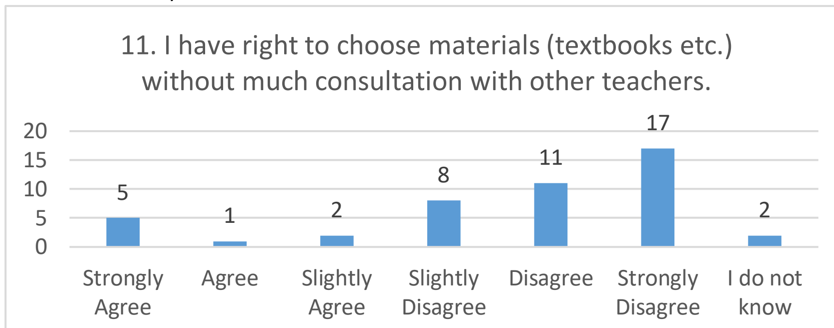

Question 1.10
I cooperate with JTEs only when they invite me to work with them.
Average point: **2.93** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4 |
| Agree | 3 |
| Slightly Agree | 7 |
| Slightly Disagree | 13 |
| Disagree | 11 |
| Strongly Disagree | 7 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



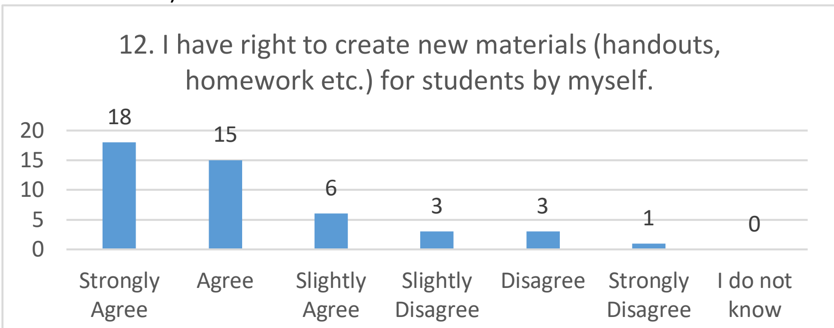

Question 1.11
I have right to choose materials (textbooks, workbooks etc.) without much consultation with other teachers.
Average point: **2.30** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 5 |
| Agree | 1 |
| Slightly Agree | 2 |
| Slightly Disagree | 8 |
| Disagree | 11 |
| Strongly Disagree | 17 |
| I do not know | 2 |
| Total Responses | 46 |




Question 1.12
I have right to create new materials (handouts, homework etc.) for students by myself.
Average point: **4.85** (in 7-point Likert scale)

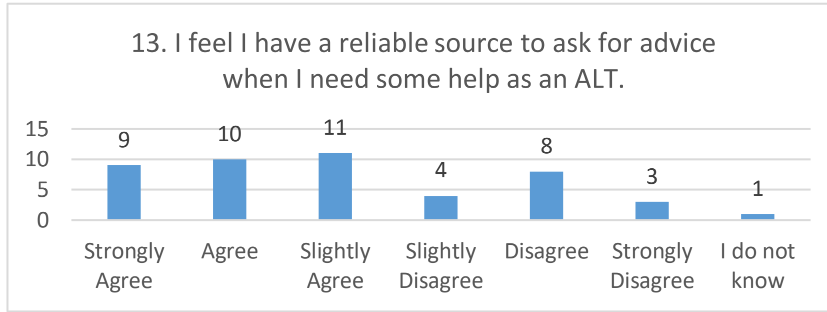
| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 18 |
| Agree | 15 |
| Slightly Agree | 6 |
| Slightly Disagree | 3 |
| Disagree | 3 |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



Appendix F

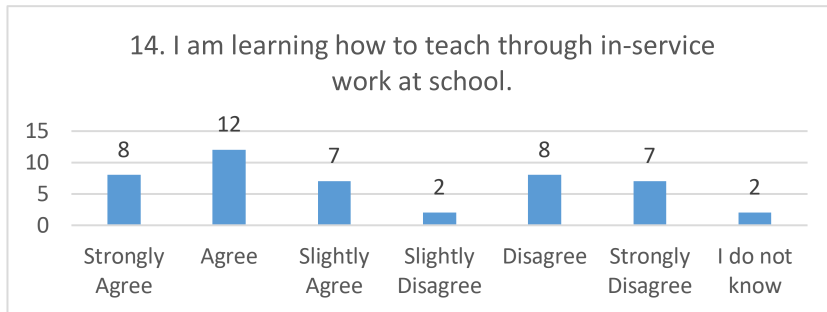
Question 1.13
I feel I have a reliable source to ask for advice when I need some help as an ALT.
Average point: **3.89** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 9 |
| Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Agree | 11 |
| Slightly Disagree | 4 |
| Disagree | 8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 3 |
| I do not know | 1 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



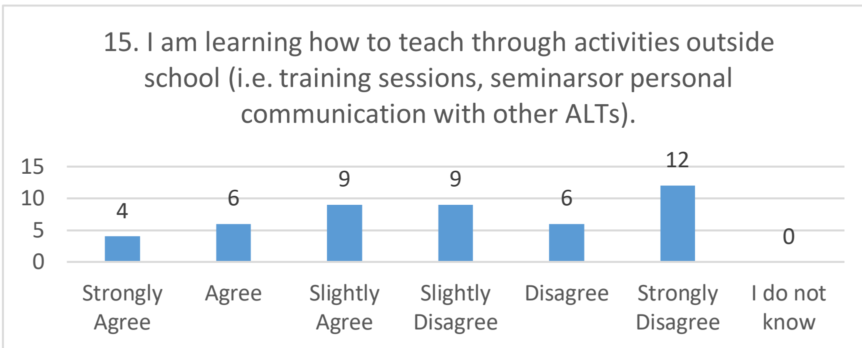

Question 1.14
I am learning how to teach through in-service work at school.
Average point: **3.59** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 8 |
| Agree | 12 |
| Slightly Agree | 7 |
| Slightly Disagree | 2 |
| Disagree | 8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 7 |
| I do not know | 2 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



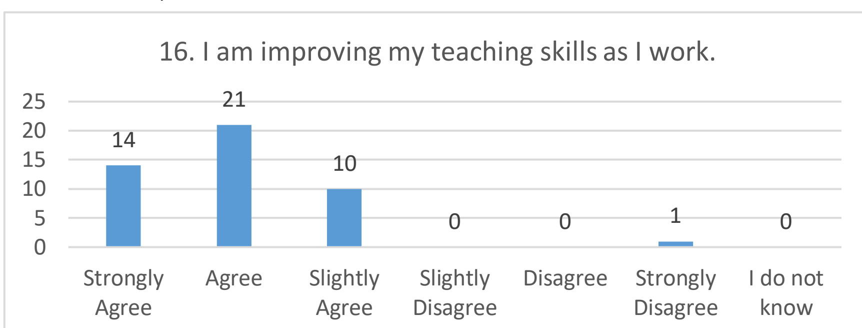

Question 1.15
I am learning how to teach through activities outside school (i.e. training sessions, seminars or personal communication with other ALTs).
Average point: **3.07** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 4 |
| Agree | 6 |
| Slightly Agree | 9 |
| Slightly Disagree | 9 |
| Disagree | 6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 12 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |




Question 1.16
I am improving my teaching skills as I work.
Average point: **5.0** (in 7-point Likert scale)

| | |
|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 14 |
| Agree | 21 |
| Slightly Agree | 10 |
| Slightly Disagree | 0 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 |
| I do not know | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |



**Question 3.2 Please rate the following descriptions which state some characteristics of English teachers in formal education by putting a number from 1 (less important) to 5 (very important).**

Question 2.1
Skilled in English in terms of native (like) proficiency

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 20 |
| 4 | 20 |
| 3 | 6 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 4.30 |

Question 2.2
Knowledgeable in English grammar

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 17 |
| 4 | 24 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 1 | 1 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 4.22 |

Question 2.3
Good at classroom management

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 23 |
| 4 | 19 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 4.41 |

Question 2.4
Kind and caring person

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 21 |
| 4 | 17 |
| 3 | 8 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 4.28 |

Question 2.5
Having long experience as a teacher

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 2 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 3 | 14 |
| 2 | 19 |
| 1 | 7 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 2.46 |

Question 2.6
Skilled in intercultural communication

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 14 |
| 4 | 22 |
| 3 | 7 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 4.02 |

Question 2.7
Academically highly achieving

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 1 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 3 | 20 |
| 2 | 14 |
| 1 | 7 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 2.52 |

Question 2.8
Qualified as a teacher

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 9 |
| 4 | 13 |
| 3 | 13 |
| 2 | 8 |
| 1 | 3 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 3.37 |

Question 2.9
Having a loud voice

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 5 |
| 4 | 14 |
| 3 | 14 |
| 2 | 9 |
| 1 | 4 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 3.15 |

Question 2.10
Good handwriting

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 4 |
| 4 | 15 |
| 3 | 11 |
| 2 | 11 |
| 1 | 5 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 3.04 |

Question 2.11
Good at working collaboratively with other teachers

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 19 |
| 4 | 20 |
| 3 | 5 |
| 2 | 1 |
| 1 | 0 |
| Total Responses | 45 |
| Average | 4.27 |

Question 2.12
Skilled in information technology

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 3 |
| 4 | 14 |
| 3 | 21 |
| 2 | 6 |
| 1 | 2 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 3.22 |

Question 2.13
Knowledgeable in various teaching methods and learning theories

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 22 |
| 4 | 18 |
| 3 | 6 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 4.35 |

Question 2.14
Spends long hours making lesson plans

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 2 |
| 4 | 3 |
| 3 | 18 |
| 2 | 16 |
| 1 | 7 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 2.50 |

Question 2.15
Skilled in assessment/evaluation

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 8 |
| 4 | 21 |
| 3 | 12 |
| 2 | 4 |
| 1 | 1 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 3.67 |

Question 2.16
Constantly examines and responds to students' needs

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 28 |
| 4 | 16 |
| 3 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 |
| 1 | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 4.54 |

Question 2.17
Follows the textbooks carefully

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 |
| 3 | 6 |
| 2 | 21 |
| 1 | 18 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 1.80 |

Question 2.18
Open to new ideas and ways of teaching

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | 34 |
| 4 | 11 |
| 3 | 1 |
| 2 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 |
| Total Responses | 46 |
| Average | 4.72 |

Question 3.3 What is your most memorable experience as an ALT in Japan?

| |
|---|
| A group of bad girls at one of the more notoriously difficult JHS in my city had me in tears after offering me a handmade "thank you" gift. It's a frame with pictures of themselves and of me with a small mailbox in which they each wrote (by way of computer assisted translation) a message in English. Those girls were always sleeping in class or talking with their friends. A few of them participated sometimes but only little. No one asked them to make this parting gift but they all agreed that it was necessary. A few vented their frustrations at how boring classes were but that at least I was always positive and funny. I treated them nicely and fairly despite their less than desirable behaviour and for that they were grateful. JHS in Japan is less about educating in academic terms than ensuring "functional" Japanese citizens as per the views of the State. These girls didn't fit and never wanted to fully fit into that model so they responded by rebelling. I have rarely received so much love from people who have known me for only a short time. |
| Working one on one with students who want to improve their English. Supporting students in Speech Comps and English Essay writing comps. \|Feedback from students and staff about my kindness and patience with them. |
| Being able to work directly with teachers and see a variety of teaching methods. Especially being able to see how my special needs team teachers adapt and work with so many different learning methods at once |
| There are many memorable experiences but one is from assisting some junior high school students who were preparing for English speech contest. One of the boys was a student who while he was really enthusiastic was not a particularly good student. On his English tests he would always get lower than 50%. However he wanted to try so his JTE and I supported him. He ended up writing his speech about how English was really difficult for him but speaking English was really fun for him and that he thought that communication was more important than correct grammar. He also said in his speech that he had a new dream. He wanted to become a translator and work in the Tokyo Olympics. Finally he told me that it was talking with ALTs (my predecessor and me) that made him realize how much he loved English and made him want to continue to do his best even if he failed. That student took second place in the contest despite his bad test scores because he showed real passion and dedication. I will never forget that moment where I felt that I had helped him get to this point and helped him nurture a true passion for communication. |
| A student writing in their diary that they were impressed by how hard I was trying to communicate using Japanese despite struggling with it to help students understand materials and how they were going to try much harder to communicate in English to match my efforts. |
| It's hard to say. I have a lot of junior high school I rotate between so since I work with my students so infrequently I'm not utilized to teach new material. When I come I'm reviewing material that the JTEs have already taught with some sort of game or activity. My most memorable experience has been my interactions with students outside of the classroom. There's one group of girls at one of my school that asked me to join them during lunchtime. One of them is the sole special ed student so she has an entire room to herself. Her friends come and hang out with her after they've eaten lunch. She really likes to play English *karuta* so she invited to play with them. So now every time I visit that school I spend time with them at lunch and play English *karuta*. They're the only students that have actually wanted to spend time with me so they're pretty special. |
| Last year in my academic writing class I decided to do a "fun" writing project as the last assignment of the year. I asked my class to write a short story even though I thought they would really struggle with a creative writing assignment. From my past experience I knew my students were very diligent but they didn't seem to embrace the concept of using their imaginations. I didn't have very high expectations so I was happily surprised by the stories that the students handed in. One story in particular about the brief but fulfilling life of a cicada brought me and an ALT coworker to the verge of tears. I was so proud that my students rose far above the expectations I had set for them. |
| Working in primary schools. When I explain something in English although I use easy to understand English it is still at a level above what the students have learned but they still make an effort to understand and CAN understand and make an effort to respond using the English they know. This contrasts with my experiences in JHS where students often immediately respond that they didn't understand me and don't respond at all even though I have used English they have just learned. I believe this is because of a strong emphasis on accuracy rather than fluency and communication. |
| I have worked with lovely supportive teachers and some who made the students hate English. The job in itself is not satisfying so memorable moments include non-classroom experiences. Most students though have been warm and welcoming. |
| Receiving thank you letters from graduates. Taking a leading part in the exchange program with an Australian school and being told to interpret at the Mazda factory on the spot and having to explain what makes a Wankel engine different from a normal six cylinder engine to a bunch of primary school kids. |
| Communicating and collaborating with JTE s to make fairly successful lessons. Earning the trust and respect of some students and feeling that even if they don't like English they are learning that it is not just a school subject but a way in which to communicate with the world through interaction with them. |
| Harboring a curiosity in some students |
| Interacting with students and seeing them grow over the years. |
| Talking to students in a special education class about differences in English *Pokemon* names vs Japanese *Pokemon* names. They weren't interested in learning English at all until this moment when they were incredibly excited to learn. |

| My most memorable experience as an ALT was having students tell me that I was a positive influence in their learning experience. |
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| My most memorable experience is talking to 3 students during recess in the teachers room. The three students came to ask a teacher a question. They stopped to say high. I initiated conversation. One student responded very favorably. The student was able to tell me about being tired because she ran the night before. She saw something in the sky that looked like a UFO. Her mother's cooking is often burnt. She can make hamburgers.. The student removed away from class dynamics and the translation assistance of the JTE showed great communication skills (verbal and nonverbal skills and strategies) in an effort to communicate with me. Since then I've seen similar experiences in my current employment but not as memorable. |
| Students telling me how helpful I've been for them or how their interest in English has increased since meeting me. We rarely get feedback from our Japanese coworkers so this helps me not only feel more confident but also improve my techniques. |
| Being able to interact with students and enjoying themselves when learning English. |
| The first day I had with low level students who cared. Being at a farming school most do not bother trying very hard at learning the English I try to teach them. I am given free reign over the topics for better or worse and sometimes the lessons click sometimes they don't There was one class specifically who tried very hard at all times even when they didn't understand initially. Some lessons were bad because of myself yet they stuck it out and had fun with it. That's the spirit I have been looking for. There is no better synergy than motivated students with a teacher who also cares a lot. They weren't even the (numerically) smartest group they simply gave me a class to always look forward to. |
| Negative unfortunately. I showed a colleague an article about the Board of Education implementing tablets in classrooms in the next few years and his response was to storm to my desk physically rip the article in two throw his hands (literally) into the air and declare that it is "the end of the future!". |
| Being allowed to run my own lessons at my Elementary schools and being able to tailor the lessons to things that they struggle with. I like this because I can make sure the lessons are not just repeat after the ALT or memorize this paragraph |
| I'll share an email that I sent to my family describing an interesting story that happened during my first year teaching in Japan. "Throughout life you learn as you go. In many cases you learn from what others tell you or what you read but in some circumstances the best way to learn is to make a mistake. Well everyone that is the subject of this email. Today my elementary school I experienced one of these learning lessons. It was around 3:00pm and I had just finished a lesson with some of the cutest first and second graders you have ever seen. As the Japanese Teacher of English and I were cleaning up the room we could not locate the light switch to turn the lights off in the room. My colleague was on the other side of the room when I thought that I had located the light switch. Now this did not look like a light switch to me but I thought to myself "Hey everything is different in Japan I will be the hero and turn the light switch off first so my JTE will be proud of how fast I found it." It was an orange button about the size of a light switch with several Kanji written on it. I pushed it. It was a little harder to push than a regular light switch. Just about the time the button was completely pushed I notice that the lights did not go off. Oh no they didn't go off. And it was then that I had realized my mistake. Every speaker in the whole school blasted a heart stopping alarm proceeded by a message in Japanese that I could only think meant "Fire everyone leave the building!!" This was obviously not the case due to the fact that were no little children exiting of the classrooms. There were only three adult male Japanese teachers running full blast towards my location followed by the principal in hot pursuit. When they arrived they realized my mistake and laughed it off. I have never been so embarrassed in my life and I will never randomly push a button in Japan again. To make it worse this was not a fire alarm like I had expected. I was later informed by my JTE that this was an alarm for intruders! None the less it was a very exciting day at my elementary school." |
| My most memorable experience is the feeling I felt when I realized that my JTEs have absolutely NO idea what they are doing and the sickening feeling I got when I realized I have to take backseat to these "teachers". |
| When my JTE fell asleep in the back of the class and started snoring. The students laughed at him. He's a very lazy teacher and hardly ever uses English with the students. He says he's not comfortable speaking English. |
| Having an elementary principal ask me to watch a video of a homeroom teacher's solo English lesson and give the teacher feedback. Afterward that principal asked me about my opinion on the school's English teaching methods and about English in Japan in general. The school closed in March of this year and combined with two other elementaries into an English focus school - he and the other principals were planning the English curriculum of the new school and he wanted my opinion. It was the first time someone who had actual administrative power had asked my opinion on English education here. My students see me as a real teacher as do my colleagues but the system really does not. It meant a lot to be asked for my opinion by an administrator. |
| Planning and executing an English camp for 250 students and 50 teachers from all over my prefecture. |
| I haven't had much experience yet. |
| My mentors. I've had two teachers (JTEs) I regard as mentors. They both retired this year. One has a very open-minded vision about teaching English and believes students should be given opportunities to use the English they know. The other is kind-hearted and taught me a lot about relating with students and helping weaker students. I would not be the same as a teacher without them. |
| The entire school singing a song that I taught them in English. Then having the third year students sing that same song to me 9 months later as a thank you and a goodbye before they graduated. |

| Seeing my students become more confident in English |
|---|
| The lessons where I have spent a long time speaking to all the students asking and answering questions bantering and letting them relax and experience the joys of communication and wordplay without too much structure. They begin to really feel they can utilize and understand things and it is very rewarding to see this. |
| Helping students individually 1-1 in conversation and preparing for University interviews. Getting to know students individually and seeing their personality come through in English. Seeing them achieve their dream of passing the English interview and knowing that I was able to help them in some way. |
| Having teachers at times defer to me. I find this extremely odd as I have absolutely no formal training. They seem to appreciate my ability to have an entire class which revolves around speaking which is something they don't have the opportunity to do due to teaching requirements for the entrance examinations. |
| There have been many smaller positive experiences. For example one student making a pun in English based on a lesson I had just taught (the English level of my students is quite low usually). Another was a student telling me that he was once embarrassed when some tourists asked for directions and he couldn't answer so ever since when he is walking or biking he has pretend conversations with foreigners in his head and now pays more attention in class. Sadly one memorable experience was a student refusing to speak (even to say his name or age) during a one-on-one 5 minute conversation test with me because he clearly hated me/foreigners/English. |
| Most of my most cherished memories have been tutoring dedicated my students outside of the classroom. Doing so allows me to tailor lessons to the student and try new ideas and techniques. In-class my most memorable experience was running a series of conversation lessons at a low-level school. The JTEs were sceptical and to be honest I was uncertain as to how it would work but the lessons went brilliantly. The teachers were very pleased and feedback from the students was almost universally positive. |
| Last year I had a student who was interested in English. To start with she would write a diary hand it to me and then I would respond and return it to her. This progressed into short chats. Eventually she would start coming once a week. We would discuss music films British culture and boys. Our chats usually lasted 1 hour +. Over the course of half a year I watched her English improve significantly. I asked her for feedback and she agreed with my opinion. She was extremely grateful that she had the opportunity to actually speak the language and put it to a use in a way that wasn`t just focused on passing an exam. She said that our chats gave her the confidence to travel to Australia and complete an English course which in turn inspired here to live abroad in the future. Now she works as a tour guide in a larger city and is able to use English every day. I think providing this student with the motivation to learn and study English has been the most memorable experience I have had as an AET. |
| There are too many to choose from: seeing the growth of my students' capabilities and realization of their potential former students visiting for conversation practice having a partially-deaf student feel comfortable talking in English receiving a bouquet of flowers from the tea ceremony club at graduation coaching a student for a university entrance interview (which ended up being entirely in English) who successfully passed and enrolled and so many more. |
| Starting out a class singing a song with the students only to have the entire class dancing and jumping to the song before the end of it. |
| Because I am not used to my full potential in school as an ALT (I teach very few classes because it is an academic school and they focus mainly on grammar classes for entrance exams) I take part in music club. It is always after my contracted hours but I enjoy going because it gives me contact with students. So my most memorable experiences are probably all the memories I have with this club - rehearsals parties performances and study trips. |
| having students completing English projects by themselves at the end of each semester |
| Unfortunately the thing I'll likely remember the most from this experience is the frustratingly difficult times I've had coexisting with some particularly awful JTEs. But if I were to reflect on the good parts of my job here I'd definitely remember how genuinely happy my students are to see me every day whether it be in our classes together or anywhere else in the school. Knowing that my presence at my school motivates them to enjoy their English classes just a *little* bit more is very rewarding and I'll miss their smiling faces once I leave in July. |
| One of my JTEs at a *Chuugakko* I used to work at was very eager to get the students interested in foreign cultures and the different ways of doing things in other countries. In order to do this he always asked me talk about the differences between my home country and Japan and also often used to explain his own foreign experiences. What he did differently to other JTEs though is that he also allowed the students time to teach me about Japanese culture and traditions in our classes which made the exercise of cultural exchange much more two-sided. One of instances was an end of term quiz in English which also featured students teaching me certain Japanese words and explaining them in English as much as they could which all of us really enjoyed. |
| Working individually with motivated students to improve their critical thinking abilities and prepare for essay exams into international universities. |
| I cannot narrow this down to a simple "moment" but as a whole I really enjoy seeing my former students and still happily conversing with them with the English that they know. It is great to see that they still practice it even if their skill levels will vary. Also receiving the thank you/goodbye notes at the end of the year is an indescribable feeling when you read how much fun they had in my classes and how they began to enjoy English. |
| students enjoying my lessons and building a rapport with them usually outside of the classroom in clubs and special events. |

Appendix F

Question 3.4 Are you going to pursue a career as an English teacher after the contract as an ALT finishes?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 22 | 47% |
| No | 25 | 53% |

Question 3.4a What kind of career do you envision for yourself?

| |
|---|
| I will return to Landscape Architecture but using my experiences of Japan and it's people to influence my design philosophy. I will probably remain in Japan to practice Landscape design. |
| I wish I knew. |
| I haven't decided yet but I am considering primary education in my home country the UK. |
| International projects coordinator |
| an academic one in social sciences |
| Although I might later pursue a career in education at this point I'm more interested in the linguistic component of my studies. |
| Science research |
| I don't know yet. |
| I haven't decided yet. That no above is a temporary because I have not cemented yet. I am leaning towards an English career but I am still new to the job and have yet to feel how the atmosphere is after a long period of time. Law enforcement psychological research or English teaching are my big three currently. |
| University Professor, NGO, Department of Education |
| I don't know. |
| I'd like to work in the heritage sector or in an art-related career. |
| Japanese to English Translation. |
| Business owner and return to previous profession of Speech Therapist |
| Civil service likely in policy. History teacher. |
| I want to work in education but more on the side of resource creation or policy. I would consider teaching again but most likely not ESL teaching. |
| I will likely pursue a career in a creative field. |
| Teaching - but music not English. I will be starting a PGCE in secondary music this September. |
| architecture. |
| Before coming here I really enjoyed teaching. But after certain coworkers made a large portion of my time here a soul-crushing experience I'll likely return home to pursue a career in my other great love - technology. |
| Not as a long-term career at least. I would like to apply to the UK Foreign Office after my tenure as an ALT. |
| I don't know. |
| working for myself |

# Appendix G **Analysis of the Open-ended Question and Comments in the Questionnaire**

## What is your most memorable experience as an ALT in Japan?

A group of bad girls at one of the more notoriously difficult JHS in my city had me in tears after offering me a handmade "thank you" gift. It's a frame with pictures of themselves and of me with a small mailbox in which they each wrote (by way of computer assisted translation) a message in English. Those girls were always sleeping in class or talking with their friends. A few of them participated, sometimes, but only little. No one asked them to make this parting gift, but they all agreed that it was necessary. A few vented their frustrations at how boring classes were but that at least I was always positive and funny. I treated them nicely and fairly despite their less than desirable behaviour, and for that they were grateful. JHS in Japan is less about educating in academic terms than ensuring "functional" Japanese citizens as per the views of the State. These girls didn't fit and never wanted to fully fit into that model, so they responded by rebelling. I have rarely received so much love from people who have known me for only a short time.

Last year in my academic writing class, I decided to do a "fun" writing project as the last assignment of the year. I asked my class to write a short story, even though I thought they would really struggle with a creative writing assignment. From my past experience, I knew my students were very diligent, but they didn't seem to embrace the concept of using their imaginations. I didn't have very high expectations, so I was happily surprised by the stories that the students handed in. One story in particular about the brief, but fulfilling life of a cicada brought me and an ALT coworker to the verge of tears. I was so proud that my students rose far above the expectations I had set for them.

There are many memorable experiences, but one is from assisting some junior high school students who were preparing for English speech contest. One of the boys was a student who, while he was really enthusiastic, was not a particularly good student. On his English tests he would always get lower than 50%. However, he wanted to try so his JTE and I supported him. He ended up writing his speech about how English was really difficult for him, but speaking English was really fun for him and that he thought that communication was more important than correct grammar. He also said in his speech that he had a new dream. He wanted to become a translator and work in the Tokyo Olympics. Finally, he told me that it was talking with ALTs (my predecessor and me) that made him realize how much he loved English and made him want to continue to do his best, even if he failed. That student took second place in the contest, despite his bad test scores, because he showed real passion and dedication. I will never forget that moment where I felt that I had helped him get to this point, and helped him nurture a true passion for communication.

"Working one on one with students who want to improve their English. Supporting students in Speech Comps and English Essay writing comps.

Feedback from students and staff about my kindness and patience with them."

Being able to work directly with teachers and see a variety of teaching methods. Especially being able to see how my special needs team teachers adapt and work with so many different learning methods at once

A student writing in their diary that they were impressed by how hard I was trying to communicate using Japanese, despite struggling with it, to help students understand materials, and how they were going to try much harder to communicate in English to match my efforts.

It's hard to say. I have a lot of junior high school I rotate between, so since I work with my students so infrequently I'm not utilized to teach new material. When I come I'm reviewing material that the JTEs have already taught with some sort of game or activity. My most memorable experience has been my interactions with students outside of the classroom. There's one group of girls at one of

**Coloured Themes**

***Where***
*Home*
*Class/ lessons*
*School*
*BoE/other schools*
*Society/ government*

***When***
*Past*
*Present*
*Future*

***Who***
*Students*
*Japanese teachers*
*ALTs*

***What***
*Events*
*Activities*

***How***
*Emotions/ Evaluations*
*Positive*
*Negative*

my school that asked me to join them during lunchtime. One of them is the sole special ed student, so she has an entire room to herself. Her friends come and hang out with her after they've eaten lunch. She really likes to play English karuta, so she invited to play with them. So now, every time I visit that school I spend time with them at lunch and play English karuta. They're the only students that have actually wanted to spend time with me, so they're pretty special.

Working in primary schools. When I explain something in English, although I use easy to understand English, it is still at a level above what the students have learned, but they still make an effort to understand and CAN understand, and make an effort to respond using the English they know. This contrasts with my experiences in JHS, where students often immediately respond that they didn't understand me, and don't respond at all, even though I have used English they have just learned. I believe this is because of a strong emphasis on accuracy rather than fluency and communication.

I have worked with lovely, supportive teachers and some who made the students hate English. The job in itself is not satisfying so memorable moments include non-classroom experiences. Most students, though, have been warm and welcoming.

"Receiving thank you letters from graduates. Taking a leading part in the exchange program with an Australian school and being told to interpret at the Mazda factory on the spot and having to explain what makes a wankel engine different from a normal six cylinder engine to a bunch of primary school kids."

Communicating and collaborating with JTEs to make fairly successful lessons. Earning the trust and respect of some students and feeling that even if they don't like English, they are learning that it is not just a school subject but a way in which to communicate with the world through interaction with them.

Harboring a curiosity in some students

Interacting with students and seeing them grow over the years.

"Talking to students in a special education class about differences in English Pokemon names vs Japanese Pokemon names. They weren't interested in learning English at all until this moment when they were incredibly excited to learn."

My most memorable experience as an ALT was having students tell me that I was a positive influence in their learning experience.

My most memorable experience is talking to 3 students during recess in the teachers room. The three students came to ask a teacher a question. They stopped to say hi. I initiated conversation. One student responded very favorably. The student was able to tell me about being tired because she ran the night before. She saw something in the sky that looked like a UFO. Her mother's cooking is often burnt. She can make hamburgers.. The student, removed away from class dynamics and the translation assistance of the JTE, showed great communication skills (verbal and nonverbal skills and strategies) in an effort to communicate with me. Since then, I've seen similar experiences in my current employment, but not as memorable.

Students telling me how helpful I've been for them or how their interest in English has increased since meeting me. We rarely get feedback from our Japanese coworkers, so this helps me not only feel more confident but also improve my techniques.

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"Having teachers, at times, defer to me. I find this extremely odd as I have absolutely no formal training. They seem to appreciate my ability to have an entire class which revolves around speaking, which is something they don't have the opportunity to do due to teaching requirements for the entrance examinations. "

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Starting out a class singing a song with the students, only to have the entire class dancing and jumping to the song before the end of it.

Because I am not used to my full potential in school as an ALT (I teach very few classes because it is an academic school and they focus mainly on grammar classes for entrance exams), I take part in music club. It is always after my contracted hours, but I enjoy going because it gives me contact with students. So, my most memorable experiences are probably all the memories I have with this club - rehearsals, parties, performances and study trips.

having students completing English projects by themselves at the end of each semester

Unfortunately, the thing I'll likely remember the most from this experience is the frustratingly difficult times I've had coexisting with some particularly awful JTEs. But if I were to reflect on the good parts of my job here, I'd definitely remember how genuinely happy my students are to see me every day, whether it be in our classes together, or anywhere else in the school. Knowing that my presence at my school motivates them to enjoy their English classes just a *little* bit more is very rewarding, and I'll miss their smiling faces once I leave in July.

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Working individually with motivated students to improve their critical thinking abilities and prepare for essay exams into international universities.

I cannot narrow this down to a simple "moment", but as a whole, I really enjoy seeing my former students and still happily conversing with them with the English that they know. It is great to see that they still practice it, even if their skill levels will vary. Also, receiving the thank you/goodbye notes at the end of the year is an indescribable feeling when you read how much fun they had in my classes and how they began to enjoy English.

students enjoying my lessons and building a rapport with them usually outside of the classroom in clubs and special events.

**If you have any questions or further comments, please feel free to express your opinions below.**

"Again, JHS and ES are different beasts. In ES, I lead the class and have (usually) a lot of freedom. In JHS, I mostly read the textbook nowadays. I answered most questions with JHS in mind since I only visit ES once a week (with each ES getting me once a month basically). And also for ""how many classes do you teach"" one should take into consideration that my involvement in class is minor. In many cases I read the textbook for 5-10 minutes and sometimes correct the stunningly bad English of my JTE (as teachers, they should be far more competent).

Furthermore, it should be noted that JTEs seem to have little knowledge/interest in what the course of study suggests - they teach what they are asked to teach (in Japanese) as per the textbooks/school curriculum (when applicable) and that's about it. JET ALTs are usually fairly well versed in the course of study as it is a major point of discussion during the State mandated skills and development conference. I can't recall a single of my five conference participation where the course of study was NOT mentioned and explained to some degree."

I think that some of the qualifications for a good teacher, etc. are subjective and based on the position (for example, I think that it is more important for a high school teacher to have native level fluency than an Elementary school teacher, though both are beneficial.) However, the most important thing is using all of the resources available to you, being willing to change methods if something else will be more effective, trying new things and techniques, and having a passion and dedication to teaching. A lot of the teachers at my schools are very busy, and I worry sometimes that the actual lessons will get pushed to the backburner in favor of club activities and other responsibilities.

Good luck with your research. I believe the Japanese teaching of English needs a major overhaul. ALTs are very much underutilized.

"I am happy to help further if I can. I will remain in Japan on JET for a 4th year, but a remote interview, skype or email is fine by me.

Q15, I regularly have 29-30 classes each week, but the options only seemed to go up to 25?

Beyond this, I visit my Primary schools after my teaching day has finished to discuss subsequent teaching days (Uchiawase). I feel this is a very important aspect of my role which falls outside of the 'contract'. I also assist/teach eikaiwa's in my town, this is on a voluntary basis. I feel this sort of

I feel ALT's are generally viewed as poorly equipped to help their JTE's, by JTE's, and therefore maybe undervalued, this is a major struggle in the workplace."

Research shows that while teachers very much divide the classroom roles into JTE and ALT roles, students do not. Therefore it is imperative that ALTs are competent in grammar teaching, and JTEs need to be able to take a communicative role in front of the teachers. Team-teaching in Japan in its current form is a mess, and it's designed to cover any weaknesses between the two. But students are quick to pick up the insincerity that JTEs have with not actively engaging with the language (as you would know having probably researched these kinds of things before)."

"These questions were a bit vague (understandable considering the scope of the survey), so I'd like to clarify. I work at 9 different schools: 2 junior high schools and 7 elementary schools. In total, that makes for 3 junior high school JTEs, and 66 elementary homeroom teachers that I work with. So many of the questions asked (such as meeting to discuss plans) are both ""agree"" and ""disagree."""

Thank you for conducting this survey. I think the ALT program has the potential to be a much better program and needs this kind of check to know what's wrong and what should be changed.

Good luck! The concept and utilization of an "ALT" really needs to change. Especially in elementary schools.

I really hope your studies help to better the ALT system.

My school lies to the BOE in terms of how many classes I have each week. The BOE thinks I have 16 classes a week. In reality, I have 4 classes a week. So...that's my comment.

Several NET groups nationwide have developed union branches (including mine) - the goal being, we want to be recognized for what we do and be able to have advancement and retention. So the question "do you want to become an English teacher after your ALT contract finishes" is actually a bit leading and deals with what I talked about before. The students and our co-workers may see some of us as real teachers but the system doesn't. Some of us NETs feel strongly enough that we are trying to change the system. (Also, some ALTs may already be accredited teachers in their country.)

"There's always a lot to say around this topic. I work with some fantastic people, with a very high level of English. However, the entrance examination requirements in Japan defeat the purpose of English education. It not only frustrates me, but it frustrates the teachers as well. If the students spent more time speaking and learning grammar instinctively then I think Japan would come a long way. "

"I feel that using ALTs is a good thing- and along the right lines! However, I see two main flaws :

- Academic high schools are so bound by the rigid centre test/entrance exam curriculum that they have very few communication classes (no speaking test in these exams). So in these high schools it seems that the ALT is used for a lot of marking and have few classes of their own.

- In less academic high schools ALTs take on more of a teacher role. However, JET/BOE doesn't always seem to take this into account when placing people. I clearly state that I want to be a teacher/have some teaching experience, yet have been placed in a school where I barely teach!

In my opinion, until exams are changed, the ALT role will stay the same in these academic high schools. These schools are there for students to get into university. Because communication classes do not directly help students pass entrance exams etc. they are deemed inessential and therefore

only happen from time to time. I perfectly understand the reason, but it doesn't stop me feeling underused, and a waste of space! I am sure that if a communication element was included in these entrance exams, schools would have no choice but to implement more communication classes. "

English education in japan definitely needs a complete overhaul."

# Appendix H Interview Prompts for Follow-up Interviews (1st Phase)

**1. ALT as a profession, motivation to become an ALT, ‘furnished imagination’**

1) What do you think about the ALT as a profession?
2) What do you think are the most important characteristic/disposition as an ALT?
3) Is there any discrepancy/contradiction between the ‘ideal’ ALT you want to be and the reality?
4) What motivated you to become an ALT in Japan?
5) Has anything changed within yourself during your work as an ALT?

**2. Legitimate participation in communities of practice: relationship with JTEs, students and others** (mutual engagement, joint enterprise, shared repertoire)

1) What are the challenges for you?
2) Who would you ask for advice or help when you are in trouble at work?
3) What kind of opportunities have you had to learn about language teaching or teaching in general?
4) What kind of activities do you do together with JTEs?
5) Do you have any experience/episodes you were surprised about the school culture? (i.e. the use of special terms/jargons among teachers or students)
6) Do you keep in contact with other ALTs? If yes, how often?

**3. Apprenticeship: language learning experience, craftsmanship model**

1) What are the difference between the foreign language education in Japan and your own language learning experience as a student in your home country?
2) Do you have any personal ‘style’ in teaching? If yes, how did you get it? If no, how do you teach usually and who would be your ideal model?
3) When did you feel you developed as a teacher recently?

**4. Further opinions/comments about the context**

1) Do you have any experience of ‘culture shock’?
2) What surprised you most about Japan?
3) Do you have any vision for the change of ALT system?
4) Is there any advice you can offer for the other ALTs or JTEs?
5) Are you keeping a diary about your teaching? If yes, is it possible to share it with me?

**5. Conclusion**

Thank you very much for your time and contribution. I’m planning to continue my study to promote a better understanding of ALTs, so if you are interested in taking part in the research project further, I’ll explain the details and also email the information to you later.

# Appendix I Interview Prompts for Wrap-up Interviews (2nd Phase)

<For every participant>

What is the most memorable experience in this school year 2015 (either positive or negative)?
What kind of changes did you make in your teaching during this school year? Why?
Do you feel any changes in relationships with other teachers and your roles at school?
When did you feel you developed/changed as a teacher recently? Do you feel any changes in your personal philosophy as a teacher?
What have you learnt through your work as an ALT? (Do you have any experience of epiphanies?)
What do you think you've achieved during your work as an ALT? How would you evaluate yourself?
What kind of feelings do you have about being an ALT?

<For JET ALTs>

Did you put in practice something you've learnt /got from the skills development conference (SDC) or other seminars you attended?

<Individual follow-up questions>

GM8M:
What do you think HRTs (homeroom teachers) want ALTs to know? Did you find any answers?

GM8M & JK4M:
Do you think writing reflective journals had some influence on your teaching activities?

GY4M:
Most of the teachers and students call you by your last name, and what do you think about it?
In your journal, you mentioned that you would like to have more practical training in SDC, so for example, what kind of training do you feel you need?
How's your preschool teaching project going?

JK4M:
Do you have any news about the Enjoy English project?

<For ALTs who stay for the next school year 2016>

JK4M & GY4M:
Do you have any goals or aims to achieve for the next school year?

What kind of missions/project are you going to have for the next school year?

# Appendix J Record of Observations and School Visits

Chronological order
<2015>
AO6F: 15/7, 2 lessons at JHS (junior high school), N
AO6F: 3-4/8, training seminars for ALTs, N
JK4M: 17-19/8, orientation & workshops for new ALTs, N
AO6F: 24/8, preparation for English Day event, N
AO6F: 4/9, 6 lessons at ES (elementary school) & JHS, N
AO6F: 11/9, 6 lessons at ES & JHS, N&R
GY4M: 15/9, 2 lessons at ES, N
GY4M: 16/9, 3 lessons at JHS, N&R

DH3M: 8/10, 1 lesson at SHS (senior high school), N (field note)
GM8M: 13/10, 4 lessons & 2 meetings with HRTs (homeroom teachers) at ES (elementary school), N&R (field note & audio recordings)
GM8M: 14/10, 1 lesson at NS (nursery school) and 1 lesson at ES, N&R
GM8M: 16/10, 1 lesson at NS, N&R

NK3M: 30/10, 4 lessons at JHS, N&R (field note & audio recordings)
JK4M: 4/11, 4 lessons at ES, N&R
JK4M: 5/11, 'Enjoy English' project meeting with 5 other ALTs + supervisor
JK4M: 6/11, 5 lessons at ES and 1 lesson at SHS, N&R
GY4M: 10/11, 3 lessons at JHS, N&R
GY4M: 11/11, 3 lessons at ES, N&R
GY4M: 12-13/11, training seminar (SDC for JET ALTs), N&R (presentation)
AO6F: 14/11, English Day event for ES students, N&P (photos)
NK3M: 17-18/11, training seminar (SDC for JET ALTs), N&R (presentation)
TK3F: 17-18/11, training seminar (SDC for JET ALTs), N
AO6F: 19/11, 1 lessons at JHS, N&R

JK4M: 30/11, 5 lessons at ES, N&R (field note & audio recordings)
JK4M: 1/12, 6 lessons at ES, N&R
JK4M: 2/12, 2 lessons at JHS, N&R
JK4M: 3-4/12, training seminar (SDC for JET ALTs), N&R (field note& audio recordings)
AO6F: 9/12, 4 lessons at ES, N&R
TK3F: 11/12, 3 lessons at SHS, N&R

<2016>
DH3M: 15/1, 2 lessons at SHS, N&R (field note & audio recordings)
NK3M: 19/1, 3 lessons + 1 extra interview training session at JHS, N&R
GM8M: 21/1, 1 lesson at ES & 2 lessons at JHS, N&R
GM8M; 22/1, 1 lesson at ES, 3 lessons at NS, N&R
TK3F: 27/1, 2 lessons at SHS, N&R

Appendix J

Each participant's record

GM8M: 13/10, 4 lessons & 2 meetings with HRTs (homeroom teachers) at ES (elementary school), N&R (field note & audio recordings)
GM8M: 14/10, 1 lesson at NS (nursery school) and 1 lesson at ES, N&R
GM8M: 16/10, 1 lesson at NS, N&R
GM8M: 21/1, 1 lesson at ES & 2 lessons at JHS, N&R
GM8M; 22/1, 1 lesson at ES, 3 lessons at NS, N&R

AO6F: 15/7, 2 lessons at JHS (junior high school), N
AO6F: 3-4/8, training seminars for ALTs, N
AO6F: 24/8, preparation for English Day event, N
AO6F: 4/9, 6 lessons at ES (elementary school) & JHS, N
AO6F: 11/9, 6 lessons at ES & JHS, N&R
AO6F: 14/11, English Day event for ES students, N&P (photos)
AO6F: 19/11, 1 lessons at JHS, N&R
AO6F: 9/12, 4 lessons at ES, N&R

NK3M: 30/10, 4 lessons at JHS, N&R (field note & audio recordings)
NK3M: 17-18/11, training seminar (SDC for JET ALTs), N&R (presentation)
NK3M: 19/1, 3 lessons + 1 extra interview training session at JHS, N&R

JK4M: 17-19/8, orientation & workshops for new ALTs, N
JK4M: 4/11, 4 lessons at ES, N&R
JK4M: 5/11, 'Enjoy English' project meeting with 5 other ALTs + supervisor
JK4M: 6/11, 5 lessons at ES and 1 lesson at SHS, N&R
JK4M: 30/11, 5 lessons at ES, N&R (field note & audio recordings)
JK4M: 1/12, 6 lessons at ES, N&R
JK4M: 2/12, 2 lessons at JHS, N&R
JK4M: 3-4/12, training seminar (SDC for JET ALTs), N&R (field note& audio recordings)

GY4M: 15/9, 2 lessons at ES, N
GY4M: 16/9, 3 lessons at JHS, N&R
GY4M: 10/11, 3 lessons at JHS, N&R
GY4M: 11/11, 3 lessons at ES, N&R
GY4M: 12-13/11, training seminar (SDC for JET ALTs), N&R (presentation)

DH3M: 8/10, 1 lesson at SHS (senior high school), N (field note)
DH3M: 15/1, 2 lessons at SHS, N&R (field note & audio recordings)

TK3F: 17-18/11, training seminar (SDC for JET ALTs), N
TK3F: 11/12, 3 lessons at SHS, N&R
TK3F: 27/1, 2 lessons at SHS, N&R

# Appendix K Interview Excerpts from Follow-up Interviews (1st phase)

Additional stories of:

[A] ALTs' professional identity

A-1) ALT as a brittle profession

You can't go your whole career being somebody's assistant. You need to step up and do your job yourself. We call them [perfect ALTs] 'the performing monkeys.' We're not real people. The ALT job is to be a monkey entertaining the students. [Pam]

It's very good for young students over in Japan. For example, a lot of students in Japan who live in a countryside, they never see anybody from another country. When they get to see an ALT, they get used to seeing different kinds of people, they get to interact and learn about another country and they learn to not be afraid of different kinds of people. So, when they go to another country, if they go to another country, then they can feel like "Oh, I met a person who was like you, so that's fine." [Hanna]

I think every situation is different, so maybe one AET's job would be different quite significantly from another AET's job. It's hard to say whether it's effective or not. Before I came to Japan, maybe I felt I would be used more professionally. I would be like more actual teacher, whereas after living in Japan and teaching it is more like a kind of acting job than actual teacher. I didn't have any teaching experience before I came to Japan. I didn't know much about teaching. So, I didn't really have an idea of the kind of teacher I was going to be. It was like a gamble coming to Japan teaching. [Joan]

In elementary school, I can teach my own classes, but in junior high school, often I'm used as a tape-recorder, so just read the textbook to the students. [Lina]

A-2) Important characteristics for ALTs

Being patient, a good listener, able to make things simple, friendly, a good work colleague, able to adapt to the situation, very flexible, good communication, open and approachable, 'yes' person to opportunities and helping people. [Emma]

Patience to adjust to the situation in Japan. Sometimes when you are trained as a teacher, it takes a lot more time to adjust the situation in Japan, but it depends on the personality. The previous teacher training experience doesn't always helpful because the situation in Japan is too different. [Kate]

In my experience, you just have to be like an entertainer. Just smiling and cheerful all the time and patient. [Donna]

I was told to set your expectations very low. I was told they (students) won't learn. Teachers have no confidence in the students whatsoever. Anytime I would try to suggest different teaching methods to try and help things, I would just be met with resistance, every step of the way. And I've got to the certain point where now I've just given up. What I've ended up doing is I found students who want to learn, who want to come to me. I've taken them under my guidance, so they come to me after school. I just do the best that I can, and I think that's all that any ALT can do. It's up to you whether you give up entirely or find any other ways to meet the students. [Peter]

I noticed a lot of Japanese students are really scared, so when I was an ALT, I had to start really slow, use some Japanese and say things in English then they got used to communicating. So, it's very important for ALTs to be patient also. [Hanna]

Flexibility is also important so the situation can be very different depending on the schools, co-workers, students etc. [Don]

I also think that they should be good listeners, not just like audio listening, but picking up on visual cue and the way that people interact with each other trying to figure out what's this really mean when someone says something to them. [Silvia]

Being able to adapt to situation because you have to work with many different teachers, many different types of students. I teach from kindergarten from 3rd grade JHS, also adult students. I have to teach in many different ways. [Lina]

## A-3) Expertise for ALT job

The method of teaching is different, more Japanese is used than I thought. The reality is different. A lot of grammar in TEFL course is very useful. There's a lot more specialised English knowledge. Because I could speak English well, I thought that would mean I could teach it well. But I think it's been a lot harder because the way the students learn is a lot more specific, like present continuous or whatever tense. And for native speakers, we don't learn that. [Emma]

Having a command of the English language is important for ALTs because you're going to be seen as a compendium of knowledge, whether or not you have the background and doing so. There'll be pressure to have all the answers between students and also colleagues, just being aware that. Even if you don't know the answer, just letting your pride go and say “I don't know the answer of that, let me see if I can find something.” That can explain the best. [Dane]

I'm not an ideal ALT, because I'm difficult, I try to change things and I'll do all my own lessons. In fact, I'm the teacher and JTE is my assistant. I have a very good teaching relationship in that way. It's worked very well. I decide what to teach and how to teach it. I create worksheets myself, all the materials myself. I give the worksheets to the JTE the day before and say, "This is what I'm doing in the class." It's because I've got teaching training in South Africa. I was an English teacher for 3 years before I came to Japan. So that's why I feel confident running the classroom on my own. [Pam]

The government has a plan for all lessons to be taught for in English, but it's impossible. It's a very nice ideal. But, if you want to explain something, you have to use Japanese to help students understand it, especially younger students. I certainly don't feel I have the ability to explain English grammar, for example. I can use it because it is my first language, but as I found when I did my TEFL course, using the terminology to explain grammar was very difficult for me even in English. That aspect of it, I think it's very important for teachers still to use Japanese, and that's where I feel I don't have the skill set for that. In terms of classroom management as well. [John]

I know the board of education really wants English classes to be taught 100% in English. And then when we get back to our schools, the JTEs are like “Yeah, we're not going to do that.” They had absolutely no interest in even in trying to do that. I think it's possible to do it because I was able to do it. There are certain lessons like grammar, which can be very complicated and very confusing and you need a Japanese translation for that. Otherwise it's going to go completely over their heads. But for many lessons, you can teach it 100% in English because I've done it. Because the JTE doesn't help. I'm forced to do it. [Peter]

The biggest challenge is communication not with the students but with the other staff members and getting to the point where you can understand the school, ethics of the school and school events. Also understanding the Japanese is a challenge to maximise the contribution to the school. Especially communication in Japanese reading what is on the white board and what they are talking about in the meeting. Adapting the life in Japan, working with students, how to motivate them is challenging as not everyone has intrinsic motivation. Language ability is sometimes frustrating because there is a discrepancy between what you want to say and what you can say. [Emma]

I think having a pre-existing knowledge of the Japanese school system is really helpful, and the Japanese. [Amy]

I think there needs to be more (trainings). I don't think those are enough. It's difficult because everybody's situation is so different. It's difficult for there to be the topics that relate to everybody's situation. It's difficult to get that balance. I did TEFL course before I came to Japan. When I first came here, I found it's useful because I didn't have any teaching experience. It was to have a base to plan my lessons. But now my lessons are very different from what I got from the TEFL course. I think if you have previous experience teaching that is not necessary, but it's quite a good base. One thing really good is the grammar section, learning about English grammar because my English grammar is not great. In the high school in the UK, we don't get taught English grammar. Sometimes in Japan, teachers ask me grammar questions, like I have no idea and I have to look it up myself. So the grammar section in TEFL was very useful. [Joan]

I did TEFL course last year. It mainly impacted me in the ways that I thought more about breaking down my lesson plans and scaffolding activities. I was used to work in the higher level more academic type of senior high school, but now I'm working with very low-level students. So, I would say that the TEFL course that I took has really helped me think about the very basic of English grammar or the very basic thing that you need to communicate and how you can infill upon that. I would say that it prepared me for thinking more about grammar, which I definitely hadn't done before taking it. [Silvia]

In the basic training in Tokyo and the local prefecture, they gave us a lot of what NOT to do, but not a lot of examples of what to do. Also, a lot of grammar translation methods. Any examples they did give us was grammar translation. I think it comes from the TEFL course, TEFL is also a kind of grammar translation. It's

not English teaching. So, I don't have a lot of respect for TEFL. The PGCE was great, more helpful than the training sessions. I'm very passionate about teaching. And I'm very angry when I see it being done wrong and waste of time, and there's nothing I can do about it. [Pam]

I feel a bit ashamed because I want to do a good job, but I feel like I don't know anything about teaching and no one is giving me anything to learn about teaching. But I'm hoping that will improve. I think there's a training thing in August but aside from that, nothing. Even the actual training itself before I started, I felt that it was not really useful, unfortunately. It was 1 week, but I felt that it was very repetitive. Basically, we just had to do presentations to each other, so you spent most of the time pretending to be a student, which didn't really help that much. We teach our group as if they were students, so they have to respond as if they were students, which seem more of an acting activity than teaching. It was just generic. No one really paid attention. Just get it done and give you some generic advice and that's it. Still I don't really feel like a teacher. I don't feel like a teacher and I feel like I'm not viewed as a teacher. But I'd like to be. But I'm not sure how. [Donna]

## [B] Legitimate participation in CoP in 5-level model

### B-1) Nano CoP

I regularly meet up with other ALTs, 10-15 ALTs around the area, and we usually talk about general things and help each other. [Emma]

About 15 ALTs keep in touch with regularly. One of my friends is organising a 'lesson share night' on Friday. [Kate]

There's a quite few of us within the city. It's secluded from other parts of the prefecture, so we're quite close. There's not much to do here in the countryside, so we always try to organise things and see each other. We meet up normally at weekend do something, or during week, maybe get dinner. [Joan]

There're some events where the other teachers will get together and they'll just brainstorm and usually food is involved. Like having food is a major, major consideration. But there's a programme called Dropbox where if someone has a good idea for a lesson plan, we can share with each other we can let each other know that. Especially if you use the same textbook or if they're covering the same topic, you can say, "Here, this is what I did. If you want to use this idea, that's perfectly fine. If you want to change it, that's fine as well. I'm offering it for the group." [Dane]

### B-2) Micro CoP

Different teachers have different expectations in the role of an ALT. [Sam]

As for the workload, most of the lessons are 50/50. If I have more freedom in class, sometimes some game or role play around the grammar point or I'll create a puzzle or something. Sometimes it's a reading aloud competition, lot of dictation and fill in the blank missing words. For the elective class, I can create most of the things and bring them to the class. [Don]

I have 2 schools and always teach with about 6 teachers a year. In class, so I'm in high school, I make the lessons. I lead the lessons and I try to make sure that the JTE is part of the lesson and included, but sometimes if we don't have time meet or talk, then some teachers will not get very involved. But I really like if we model a dialogue or if we ask each other questions or sometimes a kind of tag team if it's a very low-level class, sometimes the JTE will step in and either explain in a simple English or in Japanese something. I think the balance is important in the class. [Susy]

In class, I'll do a lot of listening activities for the older students. Usually we'll do conversation together, or dictations. I try to do a lot of speaking activities, for example, information gap activities. Usually I make the activity and I'll say "Is this ok?" to the JTE. We don't usually make them together. Usually I get 20 minutes and the JTE teach textbook, check homework the rest of the time. [Lina]

Team teaching is a fairly big task because each teacher has their own styles. I have many many teachers, and it's sometimes difficult to remember which ones are which just because they have the same last name. So, when it comes to the elementary school, it's not so much team teaching or working on the same time it's just more having a one teacher lead at a time. [Glen]

I have one teacher, we're trying to do proper team-teaching model. We've started doing speaking test in our class. I think Japanese students need to speak English more. So, we've tried to incorporate casual speaking English. And we recently did a test, like a speaking test for the students and it was interesting because we discovered they're actually good at speaking. With other JTEs, normally 5 minutes before the lesson I quickly run through what we're going to do. I have a couple of teachers who do speak to me, we discuss what we want to do and sometimes they'll have input as well. I take a leading role, which is great for me. Because it means like more of the teaching experience. But at the same time, it's not really team-teaching. It's not really what I've meant to be doing. I do enjoy taking the lead, but I feel sometimes if I actually did team-teaching properly, it might be more effective in the classroom. I'm able to adapt my English level to the level of students, so it doesn't matter how little they know. I always seem to manage to get them to understand. So, in my ideal world, the class would be entirely in English. And it very much depends on the JTE. I have some JTEs, I'll say something in English and even if the students understand, they automatically translate into Japanese, which is kind of a problem. You don't need to do that. Sometimes I have the opposite problem when the students aren't getting it or just aren't paying attention, and the JTE just stands there and won't translate. [Joan]

I think the main challenge is that even the English teachers don't really speak English. If I'm playing a game, often the kids will understand before the teacher what they've got to do. But if the kids don't understand, I can't rely on the teacher to help. Sometimes we end up wasting a bit of time just trying to get the message across. But it’s not always like that. Some teachers are very organised, and they talk to me. [Donna]

It's always my responsibility to ask JTEs whether they want me to come to the class or not. No JTEs come to me and talk about the lesson plans, etc. I work with 44 teachers. Japanese teachers are great but the system and how to react it makes it seem like they don't care the ALT, *Mendokusai* [it’s too much hassle for them] to have to deal with ALTs. JTEs just follow textbooks in the exam-oriented education. [Jed]

Some JTEs I've had very good relationships with, they respect me professionally very much. Some JTEs hate me with a vengeance. English is my second language too, but I speak it so fluently that you wouldn't know. And I'm trying to change things in the classroom telling them that the way they're doing things against the

rules and wrong because it doesn't work. So, they hate hate hate hate me so they don't want to work with me at all. I had no classes for 9 months. I had no classes because they just hated me that much. And they're trying to get me to quit. I'm supposed to have 15 lessons a week, which is a good number, but effectively right now I do 5. [Pam]

My other teachers, they were supportive but, I don't know why but I think it's because they were new teachers, they didn't know what to do with an ALT. And they were very busy. I think the both of them were homeroom teachers. So, I said "What will be the lesson today or tomorrow?" And they said, "I don't have time to talk, I'm sorry. I have a homeroom, I have club. Bye-bye!" and they would leave, so. It's not that they weren't supportive, but they were very busy so it was *Shouganai* (nothing I could do). I got along with almost every teacher except the one. But I know that being an English teacher, they have their own plan and so to include me only some days is very difficult for them. But they made it hard because there's very little communication, but I liked them, even still they're good people. Only in one ES and a couple of classes, I took the main role. JTEs were always the main teacher and I had to wait for their direction, but they sometimes just forgot I was in the class. They said, "Oh, right. Hanna's here today. Hanna, read this!" So, I said, "Oh, ok... Hi, everyone!" [Hanna]

You're at the mercy of the expectations of the JTE and the school. You come here with these 'Oh my gosh, I'm gonna make them love English!' attitudes, and then sooner or later you realise "Oh, oh." I've learned to reconcile my expectations with the reality and just find out a happy medium. One of the JTEs really wanted to cause some trouble with me. She thought that using the Internet to exchange some ideas with other ALTs was inexcusable in any case. When I explained how I use it and even show her how I use it, she just said, "No, unacceptable." And she would go to many other teachers and say that I'm lazy because I talk to other ALTs. She would go to the vice-principal and tried to make it an issue and the vice-principal called me over and he would be like "Well, I don't really care. But just let you know she's cranky about it, so maybe don't let her see you using it." Oh, they moved her right next to me this last school year. She was very very militant and actually without the vice-principal's concern, she went to the guy that is in charge of the IT networking and just told him to cut off my internet one day. She's made my life a lot more difficult in many many ways since I've been here these last two years whether it'd be downright bullying at some points. My previous experience (as a JET ALT in other region), they treated me as a rock star almost. At least 50% of the office spoke very good English and we had a really good rapport. I went out with coworkers for drinks or whatever sometimes. This time, not so much. It depends on the teachers, some ignore me, but others try to talk to me even though they're not good at English. [Don]

There was a bad turning point when I realised that my teachers would not, one teacher, he didn't like me because I was a girl. So, he told my predecessor, he said "Oh, the next ALT is a girl? I don't like working with women." So, he was very mean to me. But I tried to just be very patient with him because he's an old gentleman. But there was one point where he kept giving me only a little bit of time before class, he said, "Ok, you're doing this this this today. Can you make this?" I was very surprised and had to work very hard, and then when I showed it to him, he said, "Hmm, I don't want to do this. We're going to do my idea." So, at that point I realised "Oh well, with this teacher, there's no point. *Shouganai* (There's nothing I can do)." So, at that point I was just like "Well, I have everything, at least I know my students like me because many students they don't like that English teacher but they like ME." So, in a way, it was a bad realisation, a bad turning point as a team-teaching. But at the same time, it was a good turning point because I got to be closer to my students because they said to me, "Oh, T-sensei was very mean to you." And I said, "Oh, it's ok,

you know." And then they said, "Yeah, but I really like when you're in class because you make things fun." And I said, "Oh, thank you!" So, I got to be very close to my students. [Hanna]

I'm not sure what the school want but I've adapted to myself like writing in American English or using American words. Pronouncing, no. Pronouncing I would keep the same, but in terms of spelling, I keep it to what students already know because it's in their textbooks as well, so. I feel like it would just be extra confusing if they're trying to figure out. Sometimes if I write the English in the British way, then I'll explain to them that is different. But normally I would just write it in American English. For the vocabulary, I use American version. It's really weird because I've been here for almost 2 years and all my friends in this area are American. I use the American vocabulary anyway. Sometimes, I don't even notice when I use American. Like the spelling, I notice because I still spell using British English because I'm not spelling like with my American friends. Because I speak with them, I just use the American words, like 'cell phone.' When I went back home, I was speaking to my friends back home and they were asking me, "Why are you using all these American words?" I don't even notice, just natural. So, I use the American words in the classroom. [Joan]

## B-3) Meso CoP

I actually tend to speak to the Art teacher who's a good friend of mine. We socialise outside of work, so usually, if it's a non-work-related problem, I consult her. If it's a work-related problem, I consult most of the English department I think they can, generally. I've got very very good co-workers. [Tina]

Basically, you have to go from this transition from trying really hard and really care about my job to 'I don't care.' Just help prepare the lesson when asked. It's not my career, so I leave early like 4:15 or 4:30. [Jed]

For a lot of people (ALTs), I think they're quite busy, but for me often lessons are cancelled or I go to school and there's only one lesson. So, I feel at the moment I'm just not needed. I haven't done enough. [Donna]

There were a few times that you were told like, "Oh, please wait outside the staff room." I was like "What? Is this, there's like secret things going on?" They said "Oh, no. It's just a teachers' meeting." That's all. I used to have that every Wednesday morning. [Gary]

I think many of my schools they didn't understand that I understood Japanese, so they would just forget to tell me things and like there would be a meeting and they said "Oh, you shouldn't come because you won't understand." So, trying to fit in with the school was difficult. Because I thought "Oh well, I have something to say." But they maybe thought it would be difficult to understand or something. I made a mistake one time and I asked somebody higher up, and that was a mistake. I maybe asked *kyoto-sensei* (vice-principal) for help, and then he got mad at the English teacher. So after that, I didn't ask him for help anymore. But one of the schools, I talked to the school nurses, they really cared about my well-being because I got kind of lonely, because I was very very far away from other ALTs. So, they said "Oh, are you ok? Is everything fine? Do you want to go out to eat?" [Hanna]

I just feel like a complete outsider. My ambition is much lower now, I don't try as hard, but I've learned to work around it. When I was told that no student would ever win at the speech contest at my school, I thought I took it on as a mission to prove my school wrong. While I'm so limited to what I can do in the classrooms, I've worked around it by developing an English club with these 2 students who come to see me

after school. One of the students said to me she had no confidence at all before she had started working with me, but now she believes in herself. I've seen her grow so much since I've started working with her and that has made me feel very good, to make me feel like I've made a difference in someone's life. [Peter]

New *kyoto-sensei* (vice-principal), she is very approachable, even though her English is not so good. Once she found out that the teachers (JTEs) were not using me in their classes, she's starting to change that and starting to talk to the teachers. She gets angry with them for not using me. [Pam]

I'm actually attached to the *Ninensei* (2nd graders) homeroom last year. So, every morning I do their homeroom in English, and then I go on the *Ensoku* (school excursion) to do their track. I do have a lot of extra-curricular, and quite involved in the school community now, in comparison to my first year, definitely. [Tina]

### B-4) Macro CoP

In Japan, MEXT implemented top-down approaches for the English education, including that English classes in high school should be taught in English in principle. It was really interesting as an ALT to watch how the teachers around me were interpreting that. My prefecture specifically was interpreting that as 'students need more chances to speak in class.' Not the teacher has to speak English, but the students have to speak more amongst themselves. So, the ALT classes usually have a lot of communicative language activities. We're really pushing the ALTs in our prefecture that we should create more chances for the students to speak with each other. I think that would be the major change from when I first came 5 years ago. More teachers are trying to create projects and activities so they can speak. [Silvia]

## [C] Features of apprenticeship in learning of ALTs

My biggest thing is I try to find things the students like to talk to them more, so they want to speak English. Because even if the student doesn't like English, if they like my class, then maybe they will try. I often speak to the students in the hallways to try to find out what they like. My model is *Yan-kumi* in *Gokusen* (manga). [Lina]

### C-1) AoO in frontstage

As for the model of this teaching style, it's partly from my friend who was my Japanese teacher, worked as an ALT and passed away because of the tsunami in 2011. She was very very excited all the time, and I thought she was the best. Because I was very nervous about my Japanese ability because I knew a few words. She let me borrow some Japanese books, talking about anime and tried to make me feel comfortable about it. Also, my experience being a swimming coach a long time ago for young children. In order to get children to swim, you have to encourage them and help them and be very hands-on. So, kind of a combination of those two. [Hanna]

When I was in elementary school, I was in a dual language immersion programme [English and Spanish]. So, at the very minimum I try to do about half and half. In class, depending on the lesson, depending on what I want to teach them, I try to find what could be most appropriate. But how it usually works out is in class, I will try to use as much, maybe up to 90 percent English. And then, once we break out of classroom like during recess time or the lunch period, I usually break a lot more into Japanese, just so I can ask them questions that are super basic. Honestly, just coming from my bilingual elementary school, it's difficult to say how it has affected me, but I just feel that. When I look at things, I can take different perspectives. I was looking back on it, I learnt most of my Spanish through that program. And throughout elementary school, I didn't have a Spanish class per se. It was, we had language arts which would focus on both English and Spanish though. But for the most part it was just interaction through Spanish say, "Let me speak Spanish." Definitely the experiences I had in elementary school were enough to really teach me the very fundamentals of the language. [Glen]

## C-2) Apprenticeship: ALTs as mentors/*sempai*

At elementary school, the grade 5 and 6 have textbooks, but also have interactive televisions for teaching English. So, in grade 5 and 6, I try to encourage the teachers to take the lead role and I support them. That's not always the case. Some teachers are happy for me to come and take over the class and then in their own teaching time, they will use the interactive board and CDs and thing like that. Also, I give a lot of materials to teachers so they can extend their own lessons anyway. I go to all my elementary schools a week before teaching to plan lessons with them and to talk about the ideas and to split the role up for their class as well. So, everybody is more comfortable beforehand. But it's a two-way discussion because the teacher must be comfortable with what is being taught as well. [John]

There's a lot of sitting around doing nothing. There's the summer holiday, where you just sit in the office all day doing nothing. I thought like a prisoner. So, 6-week summer holiday plus 16, that's 24 weeks that's the half the year at least they're just sitting around doing nothing. I tried to use my time meaningfully, I invited my colleagues to have coffee and English conversation with me for free because I know a lot of Japanese people pay for having coffee with *Gaijin* (foreigners). I also wanted to improve their English in the whole school, but they're too busy. They have a lot of club activities and marking and paperwork. They just have unnecessary huge amount of work to do and they don't apply for professional development. So, the quality of education suffers. My colleagues, sometimes they stay at school until 10 o'clock at night. [Pam]

## C-3) Apprenticeship: ALTs as mentees

### *Fellow ALTs as a model*

My school has 4 full-time ALTs and one part-time. We're helping each other, planning together, these ALTs can be my model of teaching and planning lessons. We work in collaboration. [Kate]

### *HRTs as a model*

I would say the HRTs' that influenced me a quite bit. I've actually learned a lot from them, both what to do and also what not to do. A lot of real positive experiences there. A homeroom teacher I worked with for a few years, I've never met somebody who's a speaker of foreign language, or who was willing to try to use English usually. I think there was real positive influence on the kids. He also showed me how to help some challenging kids and you need to choose better activities to engage them. [Gary]

### *JTEs as a model*

Also, one of my English teachers. My last year at pilot school, he was passionate, good really, inspiring and memorable. He's fantastic with the students, he has a really good relationship with them, he jokes with them, he knows all their names, he speaks students about dislikes and likes and the bobbies and things. He's really sociable and he speaks in and outside of class. He's also a little bit strict, which is good. So, when the students are going too loud, he can shut that down, and they really respect him. He's English ability is very high. He makes mistakes but he's always like "Tell me if I make a mistake," which is really inevitable, because I don't expect that. I think that his attitude of continuously wanting to that kind of base up is very admirable. He's always improving and improving, and he always writes down examples and come and ask me about how to say certain things and what works. Since I've started teaching with him, his vocabulary was expanded pretty much. Every lesson we have together he asks me to teach them something new. So, he's really inspired me to learn Japanese but also become that kind of teacher. [Nash]

I have an ideal model for teaching - one JTE. At the JHS, one of the teachers, she can speak English very well and I think she just finished her master's in Education or something and I like the way she teaches. She really like engages the kids, and she seems like she cares whereas sometimes the other teachers don't seem so much they care. So, that's I would like to be like her. [Donna]

One of my old JTEs, he did something creative and he would play music at the beginning of class and it would be like a Taylor Swift song. And he would give the lyrics, I thought that was amazing because it was something to get students very interested. I tried to tell the other JTEs that and they said, "It's a waste of time" or "Students don't care." So, it was kind of depending on the teacher, they either were 'very just book' or 'just book plus some.' [Hanna]

I guess one of my teachers (JTEs) last year, I thought the way she taught the students was very concise and quite effective, like the way she wrote it on the board and the way she explained it to the students. So, if I have to teach a grammar point, which is so difficult to do in the target language trying to teach a grammar point is so difficult. But I try to use like the way she writes on the board in the way she underlines or marks certain parts of the text, I try to cope with that into my lesson. It's been fairly successful. The students seem to understand the grammar points more than if I wasn't doing that. [Joan]

I was very lucky and my relationship with my first school teachers was very open and they were really good at giving me feedback. Especially after I learned specifically asked for feedback, I was able to get a lot of good advice which helped me connect more with the students or to know what questions to ask or to know what topic students didn't know anything about. So, I would say that having other teachers around me and even other ALTs around me helped me in the ideas and has maybe pushed me in certain ways as an ALT. [Silvia]

I think it's been affected by seeing the way the lecture style of Japanese teachers which I don't think work at all. For some students maybe it does, but for a lot it doesn't. But I did have one particular teacher that I worked with in that sense. He loved quite to change and complement going, so I think I learned my lesson speed. I probably picked up from him, definitely. He's a Japanese teacher of English, probably my model of teaching, I still teach with him. [Tina]

### 'Remote apprenticeship'

I talked with my predecessor via Skype a few times, but I didn't know what kind of questions I should ask because it was before I came to Japan. Once I arrived, she was on vacation and I had no chance to talk to her. [Pam]

In my first year, I used a lot of resources my predecessor left as well as a lot of online resources. Now I will never use the resource that I haven't at least edited carefully. I've started out thinking that and I realised that just using all language activities as they were is really not true. We really need to adapt things specifically for the class that we're working. [Silvia]

I keep all the worksheets I used. My successor can have a folder full of worksheets. My predecessor had a ONE PIECE (a manga/anime) file folder in my desk in the office and I was using that to put my worksheets. When I first came over here, I didn't know anything about the anime ONE PIECE. But I told the students that I did. So, I walk to class and all of the students see me with this ONE PIECE folder, and they think I'm a fan of ONE PIECE. I'm like "Yeah, I love ONE PIECE." Actually, I started watching the anime and learning about it so that I could have conversations with the students, and I would say "Who is your favourite ONE PIECE character?" The student said, "Oh, I like Sanji." And I would be like "I like Sanji, too." I was lying in the beginning, but then I actually became a fan. I will do anything to try and relate to the students. Whatever they like, I like. Anything to have a conversation. [Peter]

## [D] Narrative landscapes: challenges for ALTs

### D-1) Issues of identity

One of my personal challenges, probably advised many ALTs, is to know when to step in for classroom management and being able to rely on my team-teaching partner, my JTE for classroom management specifically. And some of my team-teaching partners are really good, really interactive and they want me a part of my lesson. And others will go to the back of the room or leave the classroom. Others will just let me and students do whatever we feel like, and I don't really think that's appropriate for students to sing in the middle of the class at the low level school that has been the challenge this year. I had one student that has lovely singing voice, but English class is not a time for it. So, knowing when to step in is kind of really a big challenge. I know different ALTs struggling with their roles in the classroom. I think that those problems and expectations really come from not understanding what the job is. I think a lot of ALTs become frustrated with the assistant in our job title, but no one is asking them to be a full-time language teacher. So, I think that when ALTs have that type of problem, we kind of bring it on ourselves. I think there are a lot of educational professionals who have been stuck in the ALT role because there's not many other opportunities within the Japanese public-school system for foreign educators. I think sometimes foreign

educators who want to be actual teachers are sometimes put into ALT role, and they don't do very well because they're actual teachers, they're not assistants. [Silvia]

Here, we're so limited to what we can actually do in the classrooms. It all depends on the JTE that you're with. Some ALTs might be in the situations where they can do whatever they want because JTEs let them to do, but it's not my case. Every time I would like to do something, like presentations or something like that, I'm told there's no time. They have to do textbook work to be prepared for the examinations. So, the amount of time I have to do anything creative to get them motivated is hacked down so much. [Peter]

## D-2) Issues of contexts

### *Tendency in English education in Japan: exam-oriented, grammar translation and rote memorisations, lack of speaking and communication in class*

In Japan, it's very much focused on reading writing, listening. It's all about for passing entrance exams. There's no creativity. It's almost taking a foreign language and made it into a subject like math. It's almost like if you know the formula, like the grammar point, then you're fine. [Joan]

In Japan, the teachers give students answers soon when they can't answer, just saying 'repeat after me'. Regional JET ALTs have new representative working with CLAIR, he's trying to listen to the opinions from ALTs and bring them to the discussion to make some changes. This has been done for several years, they are talking about training ALTs and see them as team-teachers, etc. But this is not going to change because of Japanese teachers. Japanese teachers are too busy and occupied with so many things other than teaching, they are not trained as teacher properly. Quality of the teacher training has to be questioned. There seems to be no one take it seriously, so I don't think anything going to change. [Sam]

ES level is about the same for me, a lot of vocabulary, set phrases and not like grammar, and playing games a lot and singing. JHS, the focus is a lot more on tests. [Lina]

The biggest difference is the students are taught the answers to the test. It seems to me in Japan there's so much focus on memorising. But they are not taught to learn how to apply that to conversation or anything practical. When I first got here, my first day walking home from school, I got lost. And my instinct was to go to a young person who look like they either just got out of school or they were still in high school because I know they study English. But nobody spoke any English here. There's nobody could use any English to help me at all. So, that just tells me that their system for teaching this language is not working. There's something wrong here and I think it's because they don't teach them to speak. They don't have them speak in a conversation or have them do anything practical or useful. When the students' test scores are low, the teachers blame it on the students. But from what I've seen, the quality of the teachers is very low as well. They really need to stop putting all the blame on the students and start taking a look at themselves. If I was the primary teacher, I would be asking myself what I'd been doing wrong in this class. But they never ask that question. They never think that they could do any improving about themselves. [Peter]

I studied 2 different languages formally at university. I did French and Latin. My French was very communicative and the Latin was grammar translation, strict, and it's exactly like the Japanese way of teaching English. So, I'm used to grammar translation. I know why it doesn't work. Like, for example, today

a teacher came to me with a sentence that a student had written, and the sentence was grammatically correct, and it made sense. But it didn't mean what the student wanted it to mean. And the only way to fix that is through exposure to lots and lots and lots of English and the way that Japanese students get English in little paragraphs in their textbooks for an hour every day. Nowhere near enough. But I think Japanese people are kind of scared of English. They think it's difficult and they don't really need English. You don't need English to live in Japan. [Pam]

### *Attitudes of students*

Outside of the classroom, the students love to talk to me. Some students come to me to talk during the break, and I had one student came to me during summer vacation and we talked for about 2 hours. But inside of the classroom, they all shut down and they don't want to talk, they don't want to raise their hands and it's because of that fear of making mistakes in front of the Japanese teachers. But outside of the class, they talked me in the hallways, they shout at me and waved hello. [Peter]

At the visit school, kids are fantastic and the teachers are fantastic but the standard is very low and the students, even though they are in SHS, are not quite sure about the alphabet. So, I have to teach them the alphabet in SHS. Their standard is very low, but they're more willing to learn, more willing to engage in the classroom. At the base school, it's just the wall. I ask questions, (silence), nothing. I saw my students and I did a PowerPoint presentation about my country. I had no idea how much what I was saying they understood. I literally felt like I was talking to a room for statues. Exhausting and emotionally draining because no questions, no looker recognition, nothing. No reaction. It's because of shame culture. In shame culture it's worse to make a mistake than to do nothing. So, it's safer to do nothing. That intercultural difference makes teaching very difficult. [Pam]

I keep stressing all the time to my classes your grammar does not have to be perfect the most important part is your ability to communicate your ideas. My Japanese is nowhere near perfect, but if I were to say something to you still understand just what I'm trying to say to you. You can do that in English too. You can have a conversation without being perfect. When I was a student, we had a lot more participation in our classes. We had free thinkers and people would just raise your hands and ask questions about the material. That never happens at any of my schools. There's one student asked question about the expression in the textbook last week and that was the first time. That's wonderful. Generally, students don't want to stand out. They don't want to even raise your hand and try to answer because then the other students would look at them and “Oh, you're trying.” ‘The nail that sticks that out the most gets hammered down.’ Is that the expression? I don't know, it's such a very conformist environment that is really really hard to get participation out of curiosity about the material. They just accept what are told without questioning anything. [Don]

### *Technology in class*

Technology in the classroom is a big challenge to me. In South Africa, even in the public schools there's a smart board in every classroom, every classroom is Internet enabled. The students use Twitter to

communicate with the teacher while the lesson is going on. They're encouraging that in South Africa. In Japan, I was told not to take my smart phone into the classroom. Smart phones are banned from the classroom. It's like “Hello! We're in the 21st century here.” Your classroom literally has not changed since the 19th century. [Pam]

One of the biggest challenges for me is that my classrooms don't have any technology in them. So, I can't show PowerPoint lessons. I can't show them anything are on the Internet. I can't show them videos. Teaching English is a lot easier when you have visual aids and I can't do that. So sometimes I'll take my laptop in the classroom and I'll tell them to gather around, but otherwise it's just too difficult. It's really tough teaching a language without any technology. [Peter]

### *Unique and sometimes problematic school culture*

I hadn't really heard a lot about cleaning. The cleaning time, I was surprised about it at the beginning. The dedication to the clubs. The clubs are very very involved. They take so much time for many students' lives. It's not the same in Canada. The level of hierarchy. Everyone must greet each other, it's kind of rude if you don't. I notice greetings and a very quiet language sometimes. *Sempai-Kohai* (senior-junior) relationship is not so strong in Canada. [Susy]

I'm also shocked by how long teachers work for, which the number of hours or days at school. Some of the teachers, they have club activities or they're in charge of PTA (parents and teachers association) or whatever they've got. They're at school from 6 am till 9 pm. I feel really sorry for them. That is probably the biggest thing that I'm still not culturally adapted to. I would like to go home by 6 pm. [Silvia]

The thing that surprises me most in terms of difference is the responsibility for children. In England, the responsibility is very much on parents to get their children to school, and to be well behaved. But I feel in Japan, the school is the substitute parents, and often the school is apologising to parents for misbehaviour and things like this, which I find very strange. [John]

Constantly changing schedule. Nobody told me there's a meeting/assembly and suddenly all the teachers and students were gone somewhere. This happened so many times. I know at some schools there's very nice vice-principals and teachers who help out, but not my case. Usually no one talk to me, sometimes have small talks in class, but that's it. I really feel like I'm a nuisance a lot of times in the school for the teachers because they're just so busy. A lot of times they say, “I'm sorry we're too busy so cancel the class.” It's really hard to sit and do the job. Eighty percent of job satisfaction comes from relationship with students. [Jed]

Segregation by gender was the first thing I was surprised at. Male and female are strictly segregated. Teachers use so much Japanese, it’s very very surprising. The level of the JTEs' English is very low, maybe something wrong in university education. For example, students teachers in practicum came to my school, they just did a few lessons and JTEs didn't give them sufficient feedback or evaluation as professional teachers. Also, moral education putting too much emphasis on ‘nature/essence’ as a Japanese person. “They (foreign people) are okay, you're okay. But you can't be like them.” “You have to be true to your nature as a Japanese.” Every teacher has moral obligation, and so on. [Sam]

Teachers in Japan teach the subject and maybe they belong to a club and maybe they have extra responsibility on top of that like PTA or timetable. Whereas in the UK, it's not like that. Teachers teach, that's it. Also, the length of the school days for the teachers and the students, like from 7 in the morning to for the baseball team like 9 at night, which to me is crazy. And then maybe the students and teachers are going in the weekends. In the UK, that just doesn't happen. Also holidays, like teachers almost being afraid to take holidays. In Japan, I feel taking holidays is seen as a bad thing, you shouldn't do it. Whereas in the UK, it's almost opposite. [Joan]

I helped to watch the ESS club on Saturday, without getting paid even for the transport. It's a different culture, because I know the Japanese culture is work work work and your work is more important than family sometimes. In practice, work becomes more important than family. But my culture says family is more important than work. [Pam]

The fact that the students spend time together in the same homeroom class the whole year, which is very different compared to America. I saw people who are friends constantly always together, the display of teamwork constantly such as *Undokai* or *Taiiku taikai* (Sports Day). The group attitude, it was nice to see, and I understand this is how the Japanese education system work, but also it could be one of the reasons why I felt being left out because teachers said, “Oh, you're different.” I tried to understand these differences about school culture, but even though I tried to understand it, I couldn’t be a part of it very well. It was very interesting to learn about everything. [Hanna]

I found that there are some unspoken rules such as ‘Don't assign any homework to the elective classes.” I've broken that rule. [Kate]

My school now is extremely strict. Teachers sometimes hit kids. One boy was hit 30 times. Teachers say they hit/kick students for love, but I don't think so. Teachers are assholes. *Mokusou* (silent meditation), marching, yelling at students, very militaristic. Stereotypes of 'rough' school. My honeymoon period is just over. Most people I know can't stand more than 3 years. I think with any job you have, throughout your life, there's a point where you want to cry. But I don't think I've been in that point more than when I've been an ALT in Japan. It's just extremely frustrating. [Jed]

The teachers, how late they stay at school and how they do *Bukatsu* (club activities) in the morning and after school. Everyone is always at school until like 8 o'clock, that really surprised me. [Lina]

### *Difficulties caused by social and/or cultural norms*

Obedience such as ‘rule is a rule,’ even if it's strange or not logical. A lot of paradoxes, Japan is a place of rituals, there's always ceremonies. Not so much efficiency, lack of flexibility. People work hard but not efficient, quantity rather than quality. Things must look very appealing, appearance is important. Japanese people are honest, trusting, but easy to pickpocket. You're constantly watched and have to be on the desk at work to show that you do the work, maybe not trusting that person really. Interesting to see the paradox. [Sam]

There is something I'll never do or I think it's very rude, but it's not rude in Japan, like gaining comments about appearance. Sometimes they will make a comment like "Oh, you've lost your weight" or "You gained weight" or something. I think in the US it's very rude. So that was the challenge. [Lina]

Parents are upset because I coloured my hair, because it's against the rules. I said, "Ok, show me, show me the rules." "No, no, there's nothing on paper. It's just rule, because it's a rule. But the students aren't allowed to colour their hair," they said to me. I said, "Yeah, ok. The students aren't allowed to colour their hair. But the students wear uniforms and the students aren't allowed to drink, and the students aren't allowed to vote, and the students aren't allowed to smoke, and the students aren't allowed to get married. I'm allowed to do all those things and colour my hair." That was too much. [Pam]

Probably, casual sexual harassment in the workplace is very common here. Comments on females' appearance, seem to be very common. Just little comments on your clothes, your weight, and you know, casual *Kawaii* comments. That'd probably be the most surprising. [Tina]

Some other things that teachers say, especially the male teachers talk about the female teachers like sexist comments, or even to the female students about being overweight or things like that, I was found very shocking. There's a lot of patriarchy. [Nash]

In terms of Japan, the culture is so different. In Japan, it's very much about being a team. Everyone tries to be the same in Japan, whereas everything is just to be individual in the UK. It takes time to get used to it. [Joan]

Certainly, in this part of Japan, there is still a very male dominated society, a culture in the society. So, I've experienced a lot of boys, in particular, being quite disrespectful to female members of staff, which I was shocked by. [John]

### *ALT system itself: issues and malfunction*

ALT system and English education in Japan, so much need to be overhauled. Japan is very very resistant to even small changes, so a large overhaul would seem like a miracle. [Don]

I would like to see the ALT system sort of stratified so that you do have a place for foreign educators in Japan. I would like to see that system work in appropriately with the Japanese system. I would like to see more than specifically to help ALTs get feedback and help them become better at their jobs to have more reviews to make sure they're being effective and actually is. I think if there were more people like the teacher consultant, if there was more awareness among the ALTs and if there was a person who specifically assigned to helping them, having a person go around and visit, and help us with lesson plans, I think that will be a really good system. I think it's really really valuable for students to have ALTs around. I think it's valuable for English staff to have ALTs around. I do think there's a place for foreign visitors to Japan who are also able to teach. I don't think that everyone who is an ALT should be an educator. I've met some really really good ALTs who aren't teachers and they won't be teachers after they leave, and I think that's ok. But I would like to see a place for teachers as well. [Silvia]

More ALTs coming in my prefecture every year, and it's very good for students. Recently the government was taking away some of the support for ALTs, so I think that they shouldn't do that because it's really difficult living in a foreign country. I was lucky because I can speak some Japanese, but not everyone can. So, it's really difficult if you don't speak the language. [Lina]

To be honest, I think they need to bring qualified teachers. Recently I've noticed there're a lot of new ALTs from Jamaica and a couple from America. They are older, they have experience, and it makes a huge difference. I think that Japan is bringing new graduates with no life experience. They struggle to adjust to live in here in the first instance. If they can't adjust, they leave after one year. So, it's completely waste of money. They don't do anything, really. Also, I think there's a lot of pressure on the Japanese teachers trying to train someone who has no teaching experience, has no idea what's happening in the classroom, and has no Japanese language ability. [Tina]

In my situation, for an ALT to be effective, there needs to be at least one AET per school. I work at 2 different schools and I have a branch school I go to once or twice a month. For the ALT to be effective, I need to work at one school and I should be teaching only one year, like at the moment I teach every year, 1st, 2nd and 3rd year/grade so I see each class maybe once a month. I can't make a plan for each class because I see them so irregularly. They basically don't remember me every time I see them. So, I feel I need to see the same class more often and actually being cooperated into what they're learning or what their goals are rather than just being a fun random class. I think for the ALT to be effective, you really need, either need to teach one year/grade or almost have 3 ALTs per school. If you have an ALT for 1st year/grade, 2nd year/grade, and 3rd year/grade to be most effective. [Joan]

I think the ALT programme has a lot of potential. The ALT programme has to be maybe more regulated because it's like teachers don't know what to do with ALTs. It's not that they don't like them or don't want them, but it's just that they get an ALT and they think “Oh, I have 3 classes a week with this ALT, but I have 4 classes total. What do I do? I have to change my schedule for this extra person.” And for teachers if they don't know what to do, it's very difficult for them. So, there should be just one ALT per school. Some ALTs they go to one school, but some ALTs go to several different schools and see the students like once every 3 months. That's very sad because having the connection is very important, but they can't remember each other’s names. To be more like the teacher of the school and be regulars there might help. Or if the JTEs find it difficult to have an ALT in class, maybe ALT can be in charge of and lead the special advanced class or English club. It's not necessarily, I don't want ALT to take the job of the JTE, because that's a job that the JTEs they work very hard to get. But having the ALTs, their ability to speak, they know about the world a little bit differently, that's very important for the kids to have. To just have ALT in the corner of the classroom, waiting to repeat words is not a good use for that person. If they can find a way to just use the ALT better in class or just use the ALT better in school, that would be great, I think. For the future ALTs, I would say, "Don't think that you're going to, even though you might be a native English speaker, that doesn't mean that you have the qualifications to be an English teacher in Japan. Basically, you're not the boss. You're a guest of the country, so be polite, be nice, be helpful, be courteous. But don't forget to just be yourself also. Because that's what people want to see. That's why you're hired. You're supposed to have fun and students need you there to have fun because if the ALTs aren't there, English classes might not have any fun. Just enjoy Japan life because it's great. [Hanna]

I think the ALT role will have to change as well. I see the ALT role becoming more community centred as well. So, it's very important for the ALT not just to be somebody who goes to school, but engages with the community, helps teach English in the community on a voluntary basis. [John]

### *Professional development and participation in CoP*

I think the big one was becoming more fluent in Japanese. That helped me to feel more at home here or to be more comfortable on the work settings. So, you understand what's happening, you can read the notices, and you can understand what the students are saying when they're joking around with each other and what teachers are saying when there's a meeting going on. I think that's a really really big part of feeling more comfortable in the work environment. It's helped me to understand how to teach them English well. [Nash]

I would say, I'm always developing. I don't think I'm fully developed yet. I would say I became really good at being an ALT, probably after my second year. My third year was really busy but after I had gone through two years, I was familiar with the school schedule I was more familiar with school system, I was more familiar with my students' needs and my coworkers' needs. And I was able to say, “Ok, these are the things that will work for me and work for my students. And these are the things that will work in this situation.” So, I think I was fully able to understand my specific teaching situation, not all of my school, not all of Japanese style or anything, just my specific teaching situation, probably after 2 years. [Silvia]

# Appendix L Extracts from the Handout of the SDC Workshop (Glen)

## Teaching Strategies for Elementary School
SDC 2016

# P.A.C.E. Yourself!

**Tips for Working with Elementary School Teachers**

## Be Proactive

**Volunteer yourself! Always keep an eye out for ways that you can help your fellow teachers, even outside of the classroom.**

## Be Ambitious

**Use your down time wisely. Plan schoolwide projects, research new teaching methods, shadow popular teachers to learn their techniques, etc.**

## Be Clear

**Communicate plainly. Don't be afraid to try various methods (analogies, gestures, pictures, etc.) to get your point across.**

## Be Empathetic

**Try to look at things from a variety of perspectives. Don't be so quick to judge things in a negative light.**

# Some advice to find your place in the classroom...

## ES vs. JHS

Remember to consider the differences in...
-teacher qualification and experience
-teaching and learning priorities (ex. Emphasis on speaking in ES and reading and writing in JHS)
-time commitment (teacher preparation and frequency of classes, lack of a routine)
-teaching approach (emphasis on fun at ES and tests at JHS)

## Cultural things to keep in mind...

**"Read the air"**

| Body language | Indirect criticism | Cultural differences in common sense |
|---|---|---|

**Your Place in the Classroom**

| ALT vs HRT teaching personality | Perception of roles | Adjust to promote harmony |
|---|---|---|

*Be mindful of the differences between eastern and western teaching styles.*

## Dealing with Positive and Negative

| NEGATIVE | POSITIVE |
|---|---|
| Don't jump to conclusions | Be sensitive and aware |
| Assessthe situation | Follow the leader |
| Be diplomatic | Assess and re-assess |
| Be flexible | Be open and communicative |
| Be proactive | Be supportive |
| Pick your battles | Let the little things go |

*Remember, befriending HRTs is like befriending cats. Be kind, be patient and let them come to you.*

On a side note: Interestingly, they suggested 'read the air' as one of the important communication strategies based on the cultural norms in Japan. This phrase is commonly referred among Japanese people, which means 'you should observe people and things around you to understand the situation and act proactively without having direct/verbal communication,' and most importantly, 'do not stand out.' Also, it is interesting to see they perceive to 'be flexible' as negative. As shown in Chapter 4.2, one of the most important dispositions that many ALTs think that they must have is flexibility, and this seems to against the finding. Here, they meant that it is not good to be too flexible (or lazy) by just following the orders/directions and taking no actions.

## SDAIE

## (Strategies for ESL classes in American schools, some points need adaptation for the Japanese classroom)

- **Increase wait time, be patient.** Give your students time to think and process the information before you provide answers. A student may know the answers but need more processing time in order to say it in English.
- **Respond to the student's message, don't correct errors (Expansion).** If a student has the correct answer and it is understandable, don't correct his or her grammar. The exact word and correct grammatical response will develop with time. Instead, repeat his or her answer, putting it into standard English, use positive reinforcement techniques.
- **Simplify teacher language.** Speak directly to the student, emphasizing important nouns and verbs, using as few extra words as possible. Repetition and speaking louder doesn't help; rephrasing, and body language does.
- **Don't force oral production.** Instead, give the student an opportunity to demonstrate his or her comprehension and knowledge through body actions, drawing pictures, manipulating objects, or pointing. Speech will emerge.
- **Demonstrate, use visuals and manipulatives.** Whenever possible, accompany your message with gestures, pictures, and objects that help get the meaning across. Use a variety of different pictures or objects for the same idea. Give an immediate context for new words. Understanding input is the key to language acquisition.
- **Make lessons sensory activities.** Give students a chance to touch, listen, smell and taste when possible. Talk about the words that describe these senses as students physically experiences lesson. Write new words as well as say them.
- **Pair or group students with native speakers.** Much of a student's language acquisition comes from interacting with peers. Give students tasks to complete that require interaction of each member of the group, but arrange it so that the student has linguistically easier tasks. Utilize cooperative learning techniques in a student-centered classroom.
- **Adapt the materials to student's language level, maintain content integrity.** Don't "water down" the content. Rather, make the concepts more accessible and comprehensible by adding pictures, charts, maps, time-lines, and diagrams, in addition to simplifying the language.
- **Increase your knowledge.** Learn as much as you can about the language and culture of your students. Go to movies, read books, look at pictures of the countries. Keep the similarities and differences in mind and then check your knowledge by asking your students whether they agree with your impressions. Learn as much of the student's language as you can; even a few words help.
- **Build on the student's prior knowledge.** Find out as much as you can about how and what a student learned in his or her country. Then try to make a connection between the ideas and concepts you are teaching and the student's previous knowledge or previous way of being taught. Encourage the students to point out differences and connect similarities.
- **Support the student's home language and culture; bring it into the classroom.** An important goal should be to encourage the students to keep their home languages as they also acquire English. Let students help bring about a multicultural perspective to the subjects you are teaching. Encourage students to bring in pictures, poems, dances, proverbs, or games. Encourage students to bring these items in as part of the subject you are teaching, not just as a separate activity. Do whatever you can to help your fluent English-speaking students see all students as knowledgeable persons from a respected culture.

Google "SDAIE" to find the full article.

# Appendix M Extracts from the SDC handbooks (John)

[A] Extract from workshop presentation at the SDC 2014

## Students making skits?

## …… Why bother?

Have their place…. But Skits….

**It improves real communication skills, remember the New Horizon Home Stay Advice!**

**"You have to speak English here, but you don't have to speak perfect English. Communication is important."**

*By improvising dialogue (within a framework,) the communication is more like real world communication. We converse using a topic and responding to others.*

Character creation and projection can reduce the focus on students and allow them to 'step out' of their comfort zone.

**Confidence is built by speaking in front of peers. Every one gets nervous, but practice helps…**

*They create something themselves, allowing individual expression.*

**Creativity!**

**If we stifle the individuality and interests of students they will never enjoy English.**

***IT'S FUN!***

*(Shhh… It's a student led activity!)*

**With practice, the students can become familiar with the creation lesson format and begin presenting their work within 1 class.**

**Yes, 1 Class!**

***Write the scripts after performing, the writing becomes a review exercise. Write scripts before and it becomes a reading and memorisation exercise, (this is not the intention.) It is not about reading or rote memorisation, it is about adapting language and responding to changes while communicating.***

Once a system is set up, the teachers can demonstrate then support. Reducing their talk time.

Students can demonstrate their understanding, ability and attainment levels.

Teachers can lead, monitor, advise, assess, feedback and review material in subsequent lessons based on what they observe.

[B] Extract from workshop presentation at the SDC 2015

As our students grow, they may become more 'shy' in our lessons. The more structure that is introduced in to their first and second languages, the more concern they have about getting it 'right'.

By the time they reach Junior High School, and beyond, the pressure to not make mistakes may override the willingness to try to communicate.

This is what we are trying to work against.

We need to be fostering an environment or opportunity for students to communicate effectively in conversation, maybe not grammatically perfectly, but enough to make themselves understood.

We need to identify our students needs, help them realise when the time for 'perfect' English use is, and when the time for good communication is.

As native speakers we often use imperfect English when communicating, much like we would probably use polite language in a work environment, and follow conventions when writing a letter.

The time for applying different English is difficult to identify in secondary users. We have to show them, with encouragement, correction where appropriate, and correction to the appropriate level.

This means we need to think more about our interactions with the students, in and out of the classroom, make them feel at ease, identify their level and communicate to them or in front of them, at their comprehensible level +1.

If we can maintain their interest by challenging without alienating them, then their interest in communicating in English may flourish. We maybe the only first language speaker they have chance to communicate with. So we may be the only direct opportunity for language learning through language acquisition that they have.

No pressure...

*"In the real world, conversations with sympathetic native speakers who are willing to help the acquirer understand are very helpful."* Stephen Krashen

References

Krashen, Stephen D. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Prentice-Hall International, 1987.

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# Appendix N Landscapes of practice: school-based CoP and beyond

At the public/state schools in Japan, normally each school has one ALT, but it does not mean that the ALT is stationed there 5 days a week. At some academic SHS with special curriculum for international exchange and/or science, they have one or more regular full-time ALTs. Whereas many ES just have an ALT's visit once/twice a month or only for one school term (usually 1 term lasts for 3-4 months). The frequency of ALTs' lessons varies according to the social and contextual factors such as regional characteristics (i.e. geographical, climatic differences), the level/type of the school, the local teachers' readiness and competence, and the education policy and the local BoE's budget. In most cases, ALTs are basically working alone without having another ALT as a colleague in the same workplace. In such working environment, some ALTs make friends with the local teachers and participate in CoP through these Japanese friends. By enhancing friendship, they gain learning partnership to acquire not only the subject matter knowledge, but both pedagogical and contextual knowledge/skills from JTEs and other teachers who specialised in various subject areas such as art, music, history or mathematics.

All the schools are supposed to follow the national curriculum guideline called the Courses of Study and the teachers and the students use the government-approved textbooks. All the teachers including ALTs should work within the constraints and the frame of reference given by MEXT and the local BoE. As demonstrated earlier, however, ES English lessons officially started from 2011 and ALTs have a lot of freedom in terms of how/what to teach compared to JHS where many JTEs regard textbooks as absolute bibles. Since ALTs are not necessarily qualified as teachers, they are to take training seminars and workshops in some degree. According to the employment types, ALTs have different training opportunities such as SDCs for JET ALTs. Yet, the effectiveness of these trainings is questioned by many ALTs because every situation is different and there is no one-size-fits-all solution/answer for their day-to-day practices in diverse school contexts. In fact, most of them utilise their experience of AoO to form their core beliefs as teachers and go through apprenticeship with the local teachers to acquire contextual and pedagogic knowledge/skills. The ALT system is inflexible because of the legal boundaries and the ALTs' non-tenured position itself often limits their professional development as illustrated in Chapter 6.4.4.

At school, usually teachers have their own desks and shelves in the same room called *shokuin-shitsu* (staff room) where they have meetings, make photocopies, and store their textbooks, materials and papers. Many of the ES HRTs spend most of their time in the classroom, but they come back to the staff room occasionally to do the paper works and have a chat to exchange various information with colleagues before, in-between, and after the lessons. In secondary schools, sometimes teachers have different staff rooms according to their subject areas or the grade to teach. Yet, in either case, several teachers work together in the same room when they do not have class and other duties. Desks in the staff room are often placed in quadrilateral arrangement or in U-shape, sometimes facing two desks in a row and making small islands,

depending of the number of teachers. Daily conversations and communication in the staff room play a crucial role to check the students' conditions or their level of achievement, to solve the problems and plan school events such as cultural festival, sports day, cleaning campaigns, annual medical check-ups, fire and/or earthquake drills, and so on. Most of the ALTs have their own desk at the staff room and share everyday occurrence with the local teachers. If they have a good working relationship and higher sense of collegiality, they sometimes enjoy chatting over a cup of tea/coffee with some sweets during a recess. Not surprisingly, sharing something, especially something to eat, can be a useful occasion to build up a good relationship. For example, food/sweets and drinks sometimes act as a glue among members of CoPs to initiate and sustain communication. These activities also have therapeutic meaning and it is considered as a part of human nature. You do not always have to share sweets in the staff room to build a good relationship with colleagues, but it seems one of the strategies to get legitimacy in school-based CoPs. In fact, it was suggested in the induction for JET ALTs as one of the tips for success. In addition, attending the other off-school socialising events such as seasonal parties or drinking parties (*nomikais/enkais*) could be an important place to fulfil membership. Some episodes of both marginalisation and participation are presented in the following sections.

Communication with the students outside the class is also very fruitful for ALTs. Especially for ALTs who are new to Japanese culture, students can be a sufficient provider of knowledge and information about it, including the modern use of Japanese and the local dialects. In many cases, students can unconsciously teach ALTs some usages of Japanese either in local variation or newly invented jargons and terms in their everyday communication. Through those experience, ALTs can activate schema for classroom management and become skilful in strategic use of Japanese. They would become able to use some jokes and improvise the introduction dialogues with their team-teachers based on this repertoire to motivate students' active participation. This process of language exchange seems to be very effective to create mediational space for learning for both students and ALTs.

ALTs have to align themselves in the landscapes of practice in Japanese school contexts, where they tend to face issues such as 1) tendencies of English education: heavily exam-oriented, focus on grammar translations and rote memorisations, lack of speaking/communication activities in class, 2) attitude of students: most of them are shy, having a fear of making mistakes in class, some are de/unmotivated to learn English, 3) technology in class: no Internet, limited use of digital equipment (cf. the use of smartphones is banned at ES, JHS and some SHS), 4) unique/problematic school culture: militant, rule-oriented, gender segregation, dedication to club activities, hierarchical sempai-kohai relationships, 5) social and cultural norms: obedience to 'rules', patriarchy, frequent casual sexual harassment (especially comments on women's appearances), growing stress on 'team-work' or forced volunteer work, working conditions of local teachers (constantly work overtime, feeling guilty to take holidays), different expectations from people in rural and urban society (see Appendix K for more detail). They need to recognise these norms inherent in CoPs and modulate their identities through negotiations of meaning in order to participate in landscapes of practice.

As stated on the website of the JET programme, its primarily aim is "to promote grass-roots internationalisation at the local level." Thus, ALTs are expected to encourage intercultural communication and facilitate mutual understanding between Japanese and non-Japanese people. It is believed that the existence of ALTs in the local community can enhance the intercultural understandings for the wider community, especially in the rural areas where there are few foreign people. In fact, ALTs are the only foreign nationals in some hamlets/villages/towns in Japan. Thus, ALTs are seen not only as language educators but also as representatives of cultural exchange and internationalisation. That is why some ALTs are invited to give lessons in community schools for senior residents or sometimes asked to join the local events and festivals (Chapter 5 and 6).

Meanwhile, ALTs' identity issues are observed not only in the school contexts but also in the wider community. Some ALTs told me that they are still treated as foreigners/strangers after several years in Japan, expressing their complicated feelings of not having a sense of belonging to the society. Through the fieldwork, I observed the differences in the behaviours of local residents and their sense of membership in the local community. In rural areas, people tend to have closer relationship with each other, but this sometimes turns out to self-enclosed or isolated society where people would lose flexibility and have difficulties to accept newcomers or any changes. Whereas in urban cities, where people from different backgrounds live in the same neighbourhood, community members tend to be more open to mobility and socio-economic diversity, but somehow indifferent about others at the same time. When we see ALTs in macro/mega CoPs, their identity as foreigners stands out a little more especially in the small villages/towns where not many foreigners live. According to the document issued by the Statistics Bureau of Japan, the average rate of foreign nationals living in the rural area where John, Gary and Glen worked (3 different prefectures) was 0.37% in 2015, whereas that in the urban area where Amy, Tina, and Dane were (3 different prefectures) was 1.6%. Simply speaking, those who are living in the urban area have 4 times more chances to meet foreign nationals. As a minority in the local community, ALTs in the rural areas are sometimes seen as if they are Hollywood movie stars. John told me about his experiences of being asked for an autograph several times and remembered the previous visits at some local restaurants. They tend to face inconveniences in their private lives, but there are some challenges in their professional lives as well. Glen and Nash said they felt difficulties in motivating and convincing students to learn English in rural area because they often feel no or less necessity to learn English. The students do not seem to fully understand the values and benefits of international communication or cross-cultural exchange without having such experience in a real-life situation. Therefore, many ALTs think that ALTs are necessary for the English language education in Japan (Chapter 4).

Either in a big city or in a small town, the local teachers as insiders of the community tend not to problematise or tackle these issues because they are too familiar with them. Knowing different cultures and understanding different perspectives are the important aims for the education in general. However, the social rules of 'follow the majority' and peer pressure for being like everyone else plus the local teachers' heavy workloads often cloud their judgements. I think it is important to raise awareness that the local teachers are not just as old-timers but gatekeepers for ALTs as newcomers to get on inbound

trajectories in school-based CoPs. To create a mediational space for productive teacher learning where all the members of the CoPs can perform their identities freely and create a virtuous cycle in education system, the local teachers should be more aware of their roles as gatekeepers and facilitators for ALTs' participation.

# Appendix O ALTs' experiences of marginalisation: Native-speakerism, 'glass walls' and 'glass ceilings'

Officially, the status of ALTs is authorised by the government and their legitimate peripheral participation in school-based CoPs is promised. ALTs negotiate their identities differently from time to time, enhancing their membership through the participation in multiple CoPs. However, sometimes JTEs as gatekeepers hinder ALTs' participation and marginalise them (Chapter 4.3.2). The narratives of ALTs indicate that 'native-speakerism' induced the JTEs in question to lose their confidence in English competence or sense of professionalism then turned into aggression towards ALTs in some cases. In other cases, the local teachers' low sense of conscience and humanity generate discrimination against ALTs. It is shameful but we have to admit the fact that there are some incompetents who are not socially and emotionally intelligent working at schools as teachers. Also, local teachers'/old-timers' preconceptions or negative experiences with predecessor ALT(s) can be a fortress for ALTs/newcomers to participate in CoPs (Chapter 6.2.2). Unfortunately, even ALTs with previous teaching experience and/or established professional identity as a language teacher cannot be free from marginalisation by encountering invisible hurdles or 'glass walls' as linguistic and cultural barriers and 'glass ceilings' as the legal boundaries built in the ALT system to lower/limit the status of ALTs in order to equalise the power balance between them and the local teachers (Chapter 6.4.4).

*Native-speakerism*

Miyazato (2009) reports that Japanese people support the supremacy of 'native' English and this ideology of native-speakerism causes SHS JTEs' sense of inferiority in their competence. She points out that such power imbalances between ALTs and JTEs and authority of ALTs as 'native' English speakers tend to dismay JTEs, and dispirited JTEs' participation in team-teaching could be peripheral. Conversely, however, JTEs have status of 'native' in the Japanese contexts, language and culture and this could hinder ALTs' participation in turn. In fact, an ALT used a metaphor of 'a child in a police uniform' (Tsujino, 2017) for their position, expressing their contradictory status of being forced to put 'native' speaker authority (a police uniform), but they actually have no power (a child) to exercise any authority. In the questionnaire survey presented in Chapter 4.2.2, most of the ALTs answered that it is important to be skilled in English in terms of native(like) proficiency (Table 4.4). However, it does not mean that ALTs support the notion of native-speakerism. Their narratives show that many ALTs recognise 'native speaker fallacy' (Phillipson, 1992) and they try to construct/negotiate their professional identities as English teachers in Japan through their in-service work. Therefore, they try to get sufficient skills and knowledge in Japanese and the contexts, and more than half of the respondents said they use/speak Japanese. Also, in most cases ALTs do not usually use their 'native' English when they teach English. It is carefully modulated to meet/fit the needs and levels of their students and teachers. The findings seem to indicate that native-speakerism is a matter/fortress on JTEs' side, which sometimes cause their resistance/discrimination against ALTs.

Not only the JTEs but also students sometimes show unwilling attitudes to the ALTs (Appendix K [D-2]). Many Japanese people/students say that they are 'allergic' to English. This 'English allergy' is an example of reverse native-speakerism. Most of the Japanese people think it is cool to use English like 'native' speakers and set their goals in 'native speaker' proficiency. They admire it, but at the same time, they are afraid of it because the English curriculum for JHS and SHS put too much emphasis on accuracy. There is a tendency among students who keep distance from English and set boundaries: they usually say, "English is not necessary for us living in Japan." It is like they are building a fortress and staying inside their comfort zone. 'English allergy' is often used as an excuse for such attitudes. Most of them like English, but when they try to digest/acquire it, they tend to face difficulties caused by the social and educational settings where they have little opportunities to use English, especially in the rural area. The public education must take action to overcome these obstacles and negative influence caused by 'native-speakerism' and envision the possibilities for the future.

*'Glass walls'*

ALTs are not expected to totally assimilate themselves in the Japanese contexts because the government want to have '*gaijin*' (foreigners) in educational settings (see Extract 16: Pam (Q1.2)). The presence of ALTs can add a different/unique/fancy aspect in English education in Japan like 'the sprinkles on a cupcake' (Tsujino, 2017). Thus, professional identities of ALTs can be explained as iridescent (Chapter 7.1.1). That is maybe the reason why they have no/little support for Japanese learning and no application requirements about Japanese proficiency for ALT job. However, ALTs must have some knowledge and skills in Japanese to engage in school-based CoPs (Chapter 7.1.2). Many ALTs articulated that they experienced difficulties to understand what was going on because the information was provided only in Japanese. Typically, information about when you have assemblies or special events, where to go and what to wear in which occasions, tend to be forgotten to pass onto ALTs properly (e.g. Appendix K [D-2] Jed). It might be because local Japanese teachers are too used to the school culture and these events, sharing common sense and unspoken rules within themselves. These incidents causing the feeling of marginalisation would be avoidable if ALTs and local teachers have enough communication in the staff room or if ALTs had contextual knowledge and some Japanese. To avoid such embarrassing situation and marginalisation, ALTs often say it is very important to 'read the air' (see Appendix L).

As repeatedly demonstrated, mutual engagement is necessary to build team-learning relationship among students, JTEs/HRTs, and ALTs. The findings from this study indicate the importance of active participation from both parties by being proficient in English/Japanese as the means of communication. It is ideal for JTEs and HRTs to have better English skills, while ALTs need better Japanese skills to facilitate communication between them. As many ALTs expressed, ALT system needs to be revised further together with the teacher training courses for HRTs and JTEs. Some ALTs said in the interview, "*Shouganai* (There's nothing I can/could do)" (e.g. Appendix K [B-2] Hanna). It is a phrase they used to convince themselves and reduce a feeling of isolation/helplessness/marginalisation. I hope we will be able to lessen the chances of

hearing this phrase from ALTs in the future by promoting better understanding of their realities and bringing changes to teacher education in Japan. As Bolstad and Zenuk-Nishide (2016) point out, the current formal teacher training often fails to introduce the concept/elements of team-teaching and many local teachers do not know how to conduct/approach it and maintain productive learning relationships with their teaching partners. Hence, more research should be done to explore the collaborative work between ALTs and HRTs/JTEs and how they facilitate positive learning partnership so that those experiences can be shared/reflected in the teacher education courses.

*'Glass ceilings'*

As shown in narrative portfolios, some ALTs have put a lot of energy and effort to melt 'glass walls' down to get on inbound trajectories in CoPs in Japan, but it can hardly happen because their outbound trajectories are determinate (Chapter 6.4.4).

In 'Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication' (MEXT, 2011), the government recognised the need to revise the ALT system in Japan. Since then, they have started to hire more NETs, but other than that, still no other positive changes happen until 2020. To let ALTs bring out their real strengths in the English education in Japan, they should be given more legitimacy to participate in CoPs in all levels. In fact, when the scale of the CoPs become larger, it gets more difficult for ALTs to maintain their legitimate peripheral participation. Even though the ALTs are on the inbound trajectories in micro CoPs and meso CoP, their limited status and legal constraints force them to take outbound trajectories once their contract period is over. Some ALTs decide to remain in macro CoPs and mega CoPs peripherally and start working in other schools or launching their own language school in a private sector in Japan. ALTs in dispatched contract are not fully included in this study, but from my own experience as a SHS JTE, T-NETs are possibly more marginalised in terms of their status since the salary is lower than other ALTs, having no job security, less contract hours and less chances for their professional development (Chapter 3.3.3). ALTs' issues of marginalisation are not only within the schools but also observed in the education system in the country. Under the current system, there is no space for ALTs to move up and pursue their career in Japanese education system. As many ALTs answered in the questionnaire, the ALT system needs to be revised (Chapter 4.2.2).