

Kitakyushu JALT Chapter

Meeting Announcement

Saturday, 11 March 2023

6:15 pm to 7:45 pm

Narrative Inquiry into Language Teacher

Identity: ALTs in the JET Program

Takaaki Hiratsuka



For over three decades, hundreds of thousands of foreign nationals have set foot on Japanese soil as foreign assistant language teachers (ALTs) through the government-sponsored Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program. The job of the ALTs is to teach English in elementary and secondary schools, in tandem with Japanese teachers of English (JTEs). Although there is an apparent need for scrutiny of the lived experiences of ALTs in their situated contexts, empirical discussion and research addressing them have been remarkably insufficient. Against this backdrop, the study on which this presentation is based explored, via narrative interviews, the identities and

their constructions of 25 ALTs in the JET program. It is of critical importance to understand the complexities of ALT identity because how we view ourselves, how we project ourselves to others, and how others perceive us impact all aspects of our professional and private lives, including our beliefs, emotions, development, and practices. The findings revealed that the gestalt of ALT identity is comprised of two primary categories, foreigner identity and dabbler identity, and their six incumbent sub-identities (i.e., celebrity, sojourner, English expert, assistant, greenhorn, and Japanese novice). The presentation concludes with implications for language teacher education and identity research.

Takaaki Hiratsuka is an associate professor at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan, where he teaches a range of applied linguistics courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He currently supervises master's and PhD students in related fields of language teacher education and narrative inquiry. He received his PhD from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. His recent book publications include: *Narrative inquiry into language teacher identity: ALTs in the JET program* (2022, Routledge) and *Team teachers in Japan: Beliefs, identities, and emotions* (in press, Routledge).

The meeting will at our [regular venue](#) in Kokura, Kitakyushu. Doors open from 6:00 pm. Attendance is free for JALT members / ¥1,000 for nonmembers, payable at the door. kitakyushu@jalt.org jalt.org/chapters/kq/

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