A bricolage exploration in genkan space: Tengu and adjunct TEFL in the Japanese university context

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This paper reports on research focusing on a group of adjunct teachers of English employed in Japanese universities. Grounded in interpretive epistemology foregrounding constructionist traditions, this research employed bricolage as a way of inquiring into, then representing, these teachers' experiences utilizing multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approaches. Employing elements of Turnerian liminality and blending these with Japanese cultural mythology, this paper explores participants' experiences, knowledge and identity. Through interviews and focus groups participants (n=43) gave voice to their lived world in Japanese universities, locating their 'place' as simultaneously inside and outside the boundaries of mainstream Japanese society and universities. As 'liminal personas' participants likened themselves to a 'necessary evil' in the context of internationalizing the curriculum. Thus, their condition is understood to be both ambiguous and paradoxical. The Japanese university is likened to genkan space and employing Japanese mythology it is argued these teachers share features attributed to Tengu.

Key words: bricolage, liminality, Japanese university, tengu, genkan, TEFL, internationalization

In knowing the myth one knows the 'origin' of things and is thus able to master things and manipulate them at will' (Bonnefoy, 1993).

Introduction

One noteworthy outcome for Japanese higher education, in the context of the processes of globalization and internationalization, is the way that Japanese universities have increasingly opened up to the world outside. In this structured, academic environment these processes present challenges to Japanese youth because of their potential influence on sense of place and cultural self. One of the significant ways in which this happens is through the employment and pedagogical practices of adjunct teachers of English as a foreign language (TEFL). While ostensibly employed by Japanese universities to help internationalize the curriculum, adjunct TEFL and their practices are both constrained by the system that seeks to homogenize and reproduce cultural uniformity, but also work purposefully to disrupt this unwritten code. Paradoxically, these teachers, employed because of their Western heritage, are also 'othered' and diminished because of it. More specifically, the paper employs a bricolage approach to exemplify this in action. Here the role is not to foreground the empirical component of the research specifically, but rather to show how this complementary approach provides insights beyond more formal methods. In this paper, consistent with indigenous forms of the bricolage tradition we appropriate aspects of Japanese monster mythology and cultural understandings to explore this phenomena drawing on the

1 A common architectural feature in Japanese houses resembling an entrance hall or transitional space between inside and outside worlds.
2 Tengu are goblin-like monsters in Japanese mythology with long noses and bright, red faces who traditional act in mischievous, disruptive ways (see Figure One).
experiences of adjunct TEFL themselves, highlighting the disjuncture between official policy, university practices, and how the adjunct TEFL respond.

First, we sketch the environment in which adjunct TEFL work – namely, the Japanese university context – and the way it contextualises the research. Second, we describe bricolage research and the way it provides an approach to research in a hyper-complex world (Qvortrup, 2003). Third, we propose three organising concepts that enable us to better understand the role of TEFL and the way they speak back to the system that employs them. Drawing on the rich, deep yōkai and bakemono (monster) Japanese folklore tradition and employing the social imaginary of Japanese mythology two organizing concepts: tengu, and genkan, and then a third from the anthropologist Victor Turner, sacra allows us to posit adjunct TEFL as a performance type (Goffman, 1971), symbolically and metaphorically, that is: teacher-as-tengu or teachers-as-monsters, performed in genkan or transitional space, and the sacra, that is, the anti-structural liminal where TEFL ‘educate’ their students through what they show, do, and say (Turner, 1967). We then describe the process of the inquiry.

These three key concepts, blending elements of Turnerian liminality with Japanese cultural anthropology and mythology allow us to explore this group of teachers’ experience, knowledge and identity in enriching ways in order to address the following questions: (a) How can the positioning of adjunct TEFL in the Japanese university context be understood? (b) What role do these teachers play in the Japanese university and experience of undergraduate Japanese students? (c) How does the Japanese university as a liminal space influence these teachers’ identity and performance?

TEFL and the Japanese University

With few career opportunities available to non-Japanese inside Japan, teaching English is generally an attractive profession. There is, however, a perceived hierarchy of status attached to the various types of schools and teaching professions among teachers (Arudou, 2009), and questions of status, power and culture inform this research.

Among native English language teachers in Japan, employment in the university sector is generally regarded as the pinnacle of the profession. This view was widely shared by teachers (Whitsed & Wright, 2013). Generally, this perception of status is indexed to higher salaries, longer holidays, and greater levels of autonomy. Non-Japanese academic staff are generally employed in one of three categories. The fully tenured professor (historically rare, though this is changing), the limited term contract (3-5 years) generally non-renewable ‘Specially appointed professor’, or tokunin-jokyo (an increasing phenomenon), and the hijoukin-koushi (非常勤講師) meaning part-time lecturer or contract teacher), with the contract period being one year renewable or non-renewable3. As adjuncts work across multiple universities, they can observe similarities and differences between them, unlike full-time staff restricted to fewer or a sole university. Adjunct staff are, therefore, afforded considerably different status levels compared to their full-time counterparts, a significant factor and tension when dealing with administrative staff and full-time Japanese academics.

Gaining employment as an adjunct foreign English language teacher in the university sector is not an easy process, and there are ‘pitfalls’ (c.f., Arudou, 2009). For example, while some positions are advertised, those finding employment in the university sector do so through informal networks—or web of relationships—with other adjuncts or full-time foreign

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3 Throughout this paper we employ “adjunct” as a synonym for hijoukin-koushi (part-time, contract lecturer). See Whitsed 2011 for a fuller description of status, terms and conditions of their employment; Kopp, 2013 provides an overview of other employee categories in the Japanese company context.
teachers. This limits opportunities for finding employment to longer-term residents with established networks (see Appendix A), meaning that this community of teachers stays relatively small and stable\(^4\).

Generally, an adjunct position entails minimal responsibilities beyond preparing lessons, teaching classes, and submitting grades. The adjunct goes to the university only on the days they have classes, teaches, and then leaves (Poole, 2010). Therefore, it is possible for an adjunct TEFL to work in up to five different universities in a week depending on his or her schedule.

There is little empirical research or literature that has explored the conditions and experiences of adjunct TEFL in the Japanese university sector, however, the Internet reveals numerous blogs, forums, and sites that discuss these. In addition, given the well-known employment practices of many Japanese universities there is a union movement that represents the interests of adjunct university teachers national and foreign alike\(^5\). Each Union hosts websites documenting university’s infractions of labor laws. In a 2007 survey on the conditions of part-time lecturers in the Kansai region, for example, of 1011 adjuncts 21% (n=209) of respondents self-identified as not ‘Japanese’. Seventy four percent of respondents also nominated experiences of race related discrimination. The average length of employment for those surveyed was 11 years with 33% indicating they had been employed between 4-9 years, and 33% between 10 and 21 years as adjuncts. The average age of this group was reported to be 45 years old, this average likewise reflected in this research (see Appendix A). Ninety percent of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with employment conditions with principal areas of dissatisfaction including: job security, remuneration, lack of social insurance, status and pedagogical control; these issues also being identified in this research.

More recently, (03/07/2013) the Union of University Part-time Lecturers in Tokyo Area advised adjunct TEFL at Waseda University of new policies to reduce the number of koma (classes) taught by them to four. According to the Union (2013), this move was intended to gloss over Waseda’s glaring violation against Article 20 of the Revised Labor Contract Act, which states that part-time workers shall ‘not be discriminated against in payment, benefits, and others, just because they are temporary workers’. However, the influence of unions in Japan is limited and membership can have negative consequences. For example, one significant theme emerging from participant data was the view that Japanese universities do not tolerate agitators who ‘rock the boat’, ‘make waves’, or are considered ‘high maintenance’ (Fg1)\(^6\), in other words they can be monsters. Therefore, many adjunct TEFL considered disassociation with unions prudent.

While non-Japanese teachers occupy an important place in the Japanese higher education system, many international faculty believe that it is still a system ill-prepared to accept them (Umakoshi, 1997). To illustrate, McNeill (2007) maintains the Japanese government knows universities disenfranchise foreigners, and view them as disposable and discriminate against them with similar observations made by McVeigh (2002, 2006), and Houghton and Rivers (2013). However, it is important to note that universities globally

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\(^4\) It is common practice across Japan to employ adjunct non-Japanese native speakers of English as EFL teachers merely on their being ‘native speakers’ rather than on qualifications or experience. This is reflected in Appendix A Participants’ qualifications and discussed by Whitsed 2011. For a fuller exploration of ‘native speakers’ in the Japanese context see Rivers & Ross (2013).

\(^5\) For example, the University Part-time Lecturer’s Union Kansai (http://www.hijokin.org/) and the Union of University Part-time Lecturers in Tokyo Area (http://hijokin.web.fc2.com/)

\(^6\) Fg #; P# are used to identify focus groups and participants
increasingly rely on casualization as an employment strategy (Mills & Rath, 2012).

The casualization of the higher education workforce in Australia and the United Kingdom has been critiqued for several years (c.f., Husbands & Davies, 2000; Knight 2010). And while one can argue that adjunct teachers in Japan are not treated significantly differently in many facets of their employment to those elsewhere, this adjunct status does however have ‘important implications for subjectivity and identity’ (Garsten, 1999, p. 604). Similarly, there has been a growing body of research and literature exploring the experience of teachers of EFL in other cultural contexts such as, China (c.f., Stanley, 2013).

**Bricolage Research**

Bricolage research is premised on an understanding that there is no single correct way of ‘looking,’ ‘listening’, ‘encountering’, or ‘telling’ (Kincheloe, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In a broad sense, ‘bricolage’ in qualitative research is concerned with ‘multiple methods of inquiry and diverse theoretical and philosophical notions of the various elements encountered in the research act’ (Kincheloe, 2001, pp. 679-692). In simpler terms, ‘bricolage’ is an approach to qualitative inquiry in which researchers employ alternative methodologies to illuminate connections among different modes of communication (Kress, 2003). In this regard bricolage both becomes a metaphor for this research, as well as a methodological approach. There is, for example, a range of ways of exploring the phenomena as well as representing. For example, we conceptualise adjunct TEFL being *tengu* (in the way that they act in transgressive ways), perform in a *genkan* space that is liminal in nature thereby creating possibilities for the new to emerge, by way of *sacra*, that is the embodiment of the symbolic representations that lie at the heart of liminal process through the expression of *tengu*-types. Each of these representations act as metaphors that reflect more contemporary understandings of the world rich in complexity, and qualitative research in particular that seeks complimentary ways of revealing and understanding it.

Rogers (2012) highlights the work that this can do. ‘Generally speaking, when the metaphor is used within the domain of qualitative research it denotes methodological practices explicitly based on notions of eclecticism, emergent design, flexibility, and plurality’ (2012, p. 1). Indeed, as Kincheloe (2004, p. 4) contends, bricolage research attempts to subvert ‘the limitation[s] of monological reductionism’. And further, Deleuze & Guattari (1987) highlight that there are only renderings of perspectives with each shaped through the combinations of properties that come together in the ‘assemblage’ that is the bricolage researcher and the ‘subject’ in becoming. In this understanding empirical research, because it is a human undertaking, is viewed as a subjective mode of enquiry, and therefore not reductionist in nature.

Consequently, this research is premised on a rhizomatic view of social interaction and identity formation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). As a socially constructed space and the product of interaction, it is understood to be at all times open, multiple, relational, unfinished, and always - *becoming* (Massey, 2005, p. 59). Kincheloe and Berry (2004, p. 1) define this as an ‘epistemology of complexity’. Hence, consistent with the bricolage tradition, this research employs critical hermeneutics and multiple-method/interdisciplinary perspectives to reveal how adjunct TEFL in the Japanese university context are situated in this space.

In this sense, this paper may be viewed as a newly constructed artifact crafted out of the remnants of an original broader research project (Whitsed, 2011) illustrative of how bricolage research denotes ‘crafts-people creatively using materials left over from other projects to construct new artifacts’ (Rogers, 2012, p. 1). What this meant is that this research
drew on a wide range of theoretical perspectives (cultural studies, person-in-context theory, cognitive linguistics, dramaturgy, and Japanese cultural anthropology and mythology) to interrogate participants’ lived world within the Japanese university sector (see, Whitsed & Wright, 2011, 2013). This research could also be understood to be narrative bricolage in that it aims at exploring how ‘ideologies and discourses’ shaped participants’ experience and how their lived world reciprocally shaped their own ideologies and discourses, and how these in turn shaped this research so that the ‘web of relationships’ is foregrounded rather than the ‘thing itself’ (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 323).

Bricolage as a methodology enables one to look through and consider the complexity to reveal hidden ‘artifacts of power and culture’; these having particular salience in the Japanese university sector, and then document their nature and explore their influence (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 2). Because the lived world is a far more complex and considered undertaking (Rogers, 2012) this research endeavors, therefore, to understand participant’s situated ‘meanings and constructions within and amid their specific complex multilayered world of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and other contextual influences’ (Schram, 2003, p. 33). While at the same time acknowledging that cultural beliefs and meanings are negotiated, multi-voiced, and participatory (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 50).

Bricolage also provides a theoretical and interpretive lens through which we can look (Kincheloe, 2005). Anafara and Mertz (2006), for example, argue that theory is a lens ‘framing and shaping what the researcher looks at and includes, how the researcher thinks about the study and its conduct, and in the end, how the researcher conducts the study’ (Anafara & Mertz, 2006, p. 189). Several metaphors have evolved to help better conceptualize the place and role of theory in qualitative research, these include; ‘a sieve’, ‘a roadmap’, and ‘reconstructing a broken mirror’ (Anafara & Mertz, 2006, p. 190). What these metaphors demonstrate is the ‘relationship of theory and research’ and provide ‘insightful “ways of thinking” and “ways of seeing”’ (Anafara & Mertz, 2006, pp. 190-191). Moreover, theoretical frameworks also have the ability to focus a study. A theoretical framework, such as that employed in this bricolage, provides not only concepts but - a lexicon (Anafara & Mertz, 2006) giving us both the ways and means to think and enact the research in richer ways.

The research process

The research was conducted in three phases with two primary methods of data creation employed: focus groups, and in-depth interviewing (Patton, 2002). These research methods were employed to facilitate the capture of the richness, depth and complexity of participants’ experience, and to illuminate issues and understandings in addition to the nature of social interactions that arise out of their ‘lived experience’. We were also conscious that each method employed has strengths and limitations (c.f., Flick, et al., 2007). Data was created over three rounds. Round one utilised two focus groups which were largely exploratory, and served to ‘scope’ and identify issues that had not been foreseen in relation to addressing the aims of the research. Topics discussed included: Japanese higher education, internationalization, Japanese English language education, participants’ status, role, and day-to-day experiences in classes and the university. The second round comprised a series of face-to-face, semi-structured, open-ended interviews that were used to confirm emerging themes and to add depth. The third round comprised two focus groups to close the data collection cycle in a recursive process.
The informants

Forty-three adjunct TEFL informed this research. Typical case sampling (Patton, 2002) was employed to ensure the participants represented a broad spectrum of adjunct TEFL employed across tertiary institutions. Appendix A aggregates in table form their age, gender, nationality, marital status, Japanese proficiency, educational qualification years resident in Japan, years of employment in the Japanese university sector and number of employing universities. All participants self-identified as; American, Australian, Canadian, New Zealanders or from the United Kingdom, reflecting the bias for Anglos in the sector. Additionally, each reported deliberately seeking employment as English foreign language teachers as a matter of choice7. Participants reported working in 63 different universities; almost a third of the total number in the Kansai region. While participants represented the ‘typical’ adjunct, each by virtue of their unique self, brought something distinctive to the research in terms of their experience, motivations, understandings, and beliefs. It is important to note that as Anglos, participants’ world-views and understandings are tacitly shaped through and embedded in the hegemony of western cultural imperialism, indeed all perspectives are culturally bound. These different views combined with the indigenous metaphors selected allow us to make richer observations and comments on the nature of internationalisation within the Japanese higher education sector. The following section outlines the process of the inquiry.

The Key Concepts Explained

The Genkan

Space in Japanese architecture is made up of multiple, fluid transitory units that bridge and link foreground and a deeper interior, especially in relation to interior and external spaces (Nakagawa, 2005). Nakagawa (2005) explains how these are also ambiguous spaces that are neither fully interior nor exterior, but combinations of both. This concept is similar to Turner’s (1967) notion of liminality. In other words, it is ‘space’ between spaces. As a space with special significance in the Japanese psyche the genkan is one example of the interface between the inside and outside. For example, regardless of size, the typical Japanese residence has a small hallway into which one steps when entering. Even the smallest of homes (between 33 - 50 sq. m.) provide no less than 10% of the entire floor area for it (Engel, 1964, p. 242). The Japanese custom of removing shoes before entering the home is one reason why the genkan has retained its place in the modern home. However, the importance of this space is more than the pragmatic functions it affords.

Genkan space is ambiguous (Makino, 2005) and is no mere ‘two-dimensional’ ‘plane through which bodies pass. Rather, genkans have substance, and abstruse ‘things happen there’ (Wetzel, 2004 emphasis added). In addition to its literal purpose, the genkan is an ‘intermediate territory’ between the outer and inner worlds of society, that is, the outside or soto and all that is unclean/defiling and the home or uchi inner sanctum (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). While the religious meanings associated with genkan space(s) have faded over time (Yagi & Hata, 1982), overtones of the sanctity of this space continue to linger in the

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7 Until recently it was common for non-Japanese Anglo European academics with PhDs to be restricted from teaching “content”. However, as Brown (2014) observes with the growth across the Japanese university sector in undergraduate English-medium instruction programmes this practice is changing. For a fuller discussion on native-speaker phenomena and employment practices see Rivers 2013.
psychology of the populous. The *genkan* was traditionally associated with rites of purification to remove the ‘impurities of the world outside’ (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984) and literally means ‘mysterious gate’ (Engel, 1964 p. 241). *Genkan* space also functions as a ‘boundary marker’ (Makino, 2005). Moreover, the territory encompassed in the *genkan* also marks the boundaries between *omote* (the façade, the exterior, for public consumption) and *ura* (hidden from view and public scrutiny) (Lebra, 1992, 2004). Additionally, the *genkan* is also the space where social interactions between hosts and guests are initiated, conducted, and concluded (Black & Murata, 2005) that also mark and reinforce social stratifications. In this sense, the *genkan* reveals the Japanese university as a space wherein adjunct TEFL in-between-ness is salient and social stratification is reinforced by university administrators and students alike.

*The Japanese university as liminal space*

Tsuda (1993) highlighted the importance of the psychosocial functions of the Japanese university experience. He argued (1993, p. 306), for example, that the university experience beyond being *educational*, plays a ‘crucial role in the Japanese psychosocial world’ contributing to individual and collective ‘social maintenance and functioning’. Further, Tsuda (1993) argued that the Japanese university, unlike other social institutions, functions as such a distinctive and effective psychological outlet because in Turnerian terms the Japanese university constitutes, in effect, a *liminal space* where ‘ordinary sociocultural relations’, or social requirements, cultural norms, social rules, and relationships ‘are temporarily suspended’. The university is then in effect Tsuda maintains (1993, p. 310), ‘a cultural *displacement* as well as a *sublimation* mechanism’ with student’s ‘anti-psychological impulses gratified in the cathartic liminal experience’ (Tsuda, 1993, p. 306). This ‘space’ then functions to prepare students both socially and in culturally explicit ways to re-enter society and their ‘restrictive corporate/occupation social roles with vigor’ (Tsuda, 1993, p. 306). Consequently, and linking with our key concepts:

Because of this liminal separation from stilling social constraints and requirements, the student is enabled to behaviorally express certain *ura* (inside, hidden) psychological dispositions, anti-social impulses, and frustrations which do not conform to cultural norms and are thus usually suppressed and prohibited during ordinary social life. (Tsuda, 1993, p. 306)

These twin roles were collaborated by our research participants (c.f. Whitsed, 2011, 2013), and in this way the Japanese university, therefore, affords the time, space, and place in Japanese society where individuals (students) are free to do virtually anything. Thus, suddenly released from the psychological confinement of high school, students at university are free to indulge their personal desires and needs for enjoyment, fun, entertainment, and relaxation strictly proscribed under normal social circumstances. *Genkan* space, like liminality, is therefore a useful conceptual device to consider how the Japanese university functions at the psychological and psychosocial level. To explicate, when in *genkan* space, notionally one may be conceptualized as neither ‘in’ nor ‘out’, but also as both ‘in and out’ simultaneously, or as Turner (1967) would say, ‘betwixt and between’ states.

Metaphorically, the experience of the Japanese university for adjunct TEFL may be likened to that of standing in a *genkan*. For example, they are invited into the house, but are not welcomed into the home or beyond the confines of the *genkan*. As such, they are perpetually socially positioned in a state of flux between states - neither fully ‘in’ nor ‘out’,
‘visible’ nor ‘invisible’, yet paradoxically, ‘in and out’ and ‘visible and invisible’ simultaneously. As ‘liminal personas’, their self is therefore ambiguous and paradoxical (Turner, 1967). Moreover, as Turner observes, ‘liminal personas’ for the ‘non-inoculated’, almost universally are perceived as ‘polluting’, this notion is reinforced in the Japanese context concerning soto space and all things associated with it (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). Adjunct TEFL, are therefore, not afforded the rights of full participation within the cultural context while in the liminal state and genkan space. In other words, ‘[t]hey have physical but not ‘social’ reality, hence they are hidden’ and are very often either partially or completely excluded ‘from the realm of culturally defined and ordered states and statuses’ (Turner, 1967, p. 97). This is now elaborated.

Liminal Personae in genkan space

Through the processes of internationalization the gai koku (外国), in other words, the ‘outside’ world has infiltrated the modern Japanese state psychologically, socially, and culturally (Seargant, 2005). Increasing numbers of international students and academics, for example, are commencing studies or taking up teaching and research appointments (Ninomiya, Knight & Watanabe, 2009). While welcomed on the one hand, the integration and accommodation of international students and academics has and continues to challenge not only Japanese universities, but also Japanese society itself on the other (Whitsed, 2011). In an illustrative way, Kamada’s (2010) study on the hybrid identities of adolescent girls of mixed Japanese and non-Japanese parenthood draws attention to the challenges with these girls voicing a ‘discourse of gaijin8 otherness.’ Where gaijin (外人 ‘outside’ person) is ‘often nuanced as White/Caucasian (or non-Japanese looking) person regardless of nationality or context’ (p. 32), the label conveys a sense of stigma. Gaijin are, therefore, ‘othered’, and are thus, perpetual outsiders (along with other marginalized groups such as the burakumin, Ainu, etc.). In addition, a gaijin is considered inept socially and culturally (Kamada, 2010).

Participants in this research, like those in Kamada’s study, identified themselves as ‘gaijin’ and permanently situated on the periphery in Japanese society and imaginary in an ‘ambiguous state’ (Turner, 1969), not only in terms of the performance of their identities and roles, but within the organizational structures of the university system. In this sense they share many characteristics with temporary workers. For example, Tempest and Starkey (2004, p. 507) observed:

Among temporary employees, liminality is experienced through working for an organization, but not being a permanent part of that organization...
Liminality breeds ambiguity because it offers both risks and opportunities, for individuals and organizations alike.

The notion of liminal persona provides an alternative way of seeing participants as ‘adjunct’ (neither fully in or out), their environment, and their role. It affords this research a means through which to identify the ‘ambiguities’ of place and performance in that state as adjunct TEFLs perform the role of foreign teachers of English. Adjunct TEFL as ‘threshold people’ not only occupy an ‘ambiguous’ position across multiple levels, betwixt and between the formal organizational structures of Japanese society, but also the university and the

8 Gaijin is a colloquial term (slang) that connotes negative meanings. The accepted term for non-Japanese used by official agencies is gaikokujin. For example, the term gaijin is not permitted on the national broadcaster NHK.
classroom. According to Tempest and Starkey (2004, p. 509), ‘The liminal person [is] capable of upsetting normative orders and of transcending institutional boundaries.’ This is because their ‘in-between-ness’ means that they are not governed by the norms that regulate social behavior, indeed, they exist ‘at the limits of existing social structures’ (Tempest & Starkey, 2004, p. 509).

In the context of this bricolage research TEFL are not only liminal personae, but may also be understood to be performing a role in the ‘esoteric’ instruction of their students in the ritual communication of sacra, or symbolic representations identified by Turner (1967). The sacra Turner reveals (1967), is communicated through what is shown, done, and said and adjunct TEFL function symbolically in ‘non-rational’, ‘non-logical’, transgressive ways with students who may be symbolically likened to neophyte in Tsuda’s (1993) schema of the psychosocial function of the Japanese university experience.

This ability for adjunct TEFL to act in transgressive ways is contextualised by Hashimoto (2002) through a perceived danger in the ‘culture associated with English to ‘transform and empower individuals so that they will not share the assumed values seen in the Japanese tradition and culture’. English, and those teaching it, is perceived to be a ‘threat to be avoided’ (Hashimoto, 2002, p. 49). Consequently, TEFL report, and irrespective of employment status, they may be understood as being potentially socially, culturally, and professionally dangerous, defiling and polluting. A view consistent with Rivers (2013, p. 55) who argues that in certain universities there continues to exist a prevailing, and ‘normative culture of ethnic nepotism’ toward non-Japanese teachers such as adjunct TEFL. The performance notion is significant because it reveals how adjunct TEFL could be considered as monsters or tengu - who are at the heart of the liminal experience - and ergo a ‘perceived danger’. Thus, in metaphoric and symbolic terms adjunct TEFL performativity can be understood through the grotesque.

While it can be argued that adjunct TEFL, or as teacher-as-tengu, are covertly conscripted to promulgate the ‘Japanese government’s agenda of maintaining cultural independence’ or ‘Japanisation’ (Hashimoto, 2002, 2007, 2009), they paradoxically serve universities and administrators alike by functioning as ‘other’, and therein ‘teaching’ precisely what is unique and needs to preserved within the Japanese culture. It is also interesting to note that this ‘conscription’ is not just constrained to the Japanese context alone, but also is noted elsewhere (Stanley, 2013: Wright & Beaumont, 2014).

Tengu

‘Every culture in the world has its supernatural lore’ (Addiss, 1995, p. 7). Japan is no exception and is home to a surprisingly vast array of monsters collectively known as yōkai. Drawing on Bonnefoy (1993), in Japanese mythology such creatures interact with and assert an influence on human beings. They are ubiquitous and are commonly seen across Japan. According to Ashkenazi (2003, p. 270, 271) tengu, a type of yōkai, are ‘shape shifters’ and ‘associated with mysterious events – sudden laughter, unexplained rock falls, and mysterious voices’ and befuddling and confusing ‘people who attract their attention’ and symbolized dissention.
In the Japanese medieval Buddhist cosmology tengu were manifestations of Māra who is ‘the personification of the Buddhist concept of evil symbolizing obstacles to be overcome on the path to enlightenment… [the] temptations of desire and passion that hinder one from attaining enlightenment’ (Wakabayashi, 2012, p. xiv). Ashkenazi (2003, p. 271) writes, ‘for the highly regimented and regulated common people of Japan, the tengu, …represented the potential of freedom and of upsetting the powers that ruled their lives...’.

The Meiji period of the late 1800s and early 1900s saw the beginning of the modernisation of Japan (Figal, 1999). Far from being peripheral in the modernisation of the Japanese state and driven by the incursion of ‘outside’ technologies, education, and structures, these manifestations of Māra - tengu - became an ideological battleground between the fledgling Meiji government and intelligentsia outlawing the old order, and a ‘disparate regional’ populace for whom the leadership considered their enduring belief in the old spirits, such as tengu, would be ‘an obstacle to a modern trajectory anchored by a scientific understanding of the natural world’ (Figal, 1999, p. 7). In the case of efforts by government authorities and leading intellectuals, all sorts of monsters and spirits were redefined as sources of personal and civic evil (Figal, 1999). Tengu were singled out and with other supernatural phenomena rationalized as ‘abnormal psychology’, the result of ‘intentional..."
trickery’, or ‘ephemeral mysteries’ that would one day be revealed (Figal, 1999, p. 86). What teachers-as-tengu does is to show how TEFL both intentionally and unintentionally—simply through their ‘otherness’—can be both a threat, but also work within the system to disrupt patterns of Japanese hegemony.

**Communicating the sacra**

Within the Japanese university context adjunct TEFL as the teacher-as-tengu are implicit in the ‘communication of the sacra’ through the ‘pedagogics of liminality’ (Turner, 1969, p. 105)—both serving and speaking back to ‘Japanisation’. Communication of the sacra takes three forms: (1) ‘exhibition, “what is shown”’; (2) actions, “what is done”; and (3) instructions, “what is said”’ (Turner & Turner, 1982, p. 204). The ‘exhibition’ or performance of sacra can include sacred objects that act as ‘evocative instruments’ with their significance placed not on their aesthetic value, but the interpretations evoked (Turner & Turner, 1982, p. 204). Sacra as ‘action’, through the ‘generative power’ of performance, ‘sacred drama’ and myth performed to convey the essential assumptions and values of the culture. As ‘instruction’ communication of the sacra involves the revelation of the cultures’ most treasured and valued beliefs by distilling and essentialising the essence of the culture and its ‘most cherished beliefs’ (Turner & Turner, 1982, p. 204). Thus, according to Turner (1967, p. 108) ‘the communication of sacra both teaches the neophyte how to think with some degree of abstraction about their cultural milieu and gives them ultimate standards of reference’.

This means that adjunct TEFL as teacher-as-tengu—or monster—can be understood in the way that they function to deconstruct and recombine familiar cultural configurations. In other words, adjunct TEFL are ‘familiar’, but ‘presented in distorted, deviant, or grotesque forms’ (Delfem, 1991, p. 14) allowing them to act in transgressive, ‘non-logical’ (Turner, 1967) ways by forcing the neophyte student ‘to think about their society … and reflect on the basic values of their social and cosmological order (Delfem, 1991, p. 14). Throughout the communication of the sacra the teacher-as-tengu is absolutely mysterious with the underlying intention of their performance being symbolically evocative and thought provoking employing multivocal representations intended to force the neophyte student—in the context of internationalization—to reflect on their deep cultural truths and values.

The communication of the sacra as enacted by TEFL is understood to be a self and cultural reflexive, transformative experience through which the neophyte [student] metamorphoses and reintegrates back into society anew. In other words, the teacher-as-tengu not only ‘startle neophyte into thinking about objects, persons, relationships, and features of their environment they have hitherto taken for granted’ (Turner, 1967, p. 105), but through this act transforms and prepares them for reintegrating back into Japanese society.

In this research, while participants are themselves liminal personae, metaphorically and symbolically they play a role in the communication of the sacra for their students. Symbolically then, adjunct TEFL constitute a sacra type. As ‘monsters’ adjunct TEFL ask students to participate in a range of activities not normally asked or required of them in their regular classes. As with their students entry into and exit out of the university, TEFL entry and exit into and out of the English language class is marked by ceremony, such as the sounding of a bell and calling the attendance role. While in the liminal state, the students become liminal personae and are thus destabilized. The participant’s experience, role and place in the Japanese university—performing sacra in genkan space, as teacher-as-tengu is now elaborated.
Performing teacher-as-tengu in genkan space

Participants’ discourse locates their ‘place’ as firmly outside the bounds of mainstream Japanese society and formal institutional structures. As ‘liminal persona’ they liken themselves to a ‘necessary evil’ (Fg1, P1) in society. They rationalize their existence instrumentally arguing the Japanese need a ‘gaijin experience’ to better prepare their students for a globalized economy (Fg1, P.1). While they acknowledge that their explicit role is to teach English, TEFL implicit culturally bound hegemonic Western understandings and subject positionings, see them cast as central figures in a broader ideological agenda of schooling future generations of Japanese. In this ideological battle for national cultural identity, adjunct TEFL are conscripted to entrench particular nationalistic perspectives and orthodoxies (Liddicoat, 2007; Hashimoto, 2009). In this, like tengu, they are ‘celebrated’ in the university sector. However this celebration, TEFL report, is for marketing purposes where participants (Fg1&2) are instrumentalized to domestic students wanting to have a fantasied ‘simulacrum’ international experience (Seargeant, 2005). This was expressed by one TEFL this way, ‘we are just tools, white faces that are to be in a brochure’ (P.7). This view was explored in the second focus group where Fg2 P5 explained, ‘they need a white face for marketing… in order to draw in students’. Hence, an unwritten condition of employment is their ‘genkiness’, that is their ability to entertain – to laugh – a sound associated with the appearance of tengu. Participants, thus, understood part of their role as adjunct TEFL was to provide students with a performatve ‘gaijin experience’ which was at once both exciting and frightening and also to fabricate an ‘exotic ambience’ on campus.

Being evil and transgressive

Simultaneously, like tengu, participants conceived of themselves as a ‘civic evil’ in that they challenged the social/cultural identity of their students. Through their performance as teacher-as-tengu, students were confronted with philosophical and ideological ‘obstacles to overcome’ on the path to full maturity reached at graduation when they reenter mainstream society and life. P12, for example, explained his goal as ‘challenging’ students ‘to broaden their horizons’, be ‘more aware of the outside world’, and ‘more open to different ways of living…’ In other words, to ‘explore their identity’ (P7). He reasoned students should become keener to identify themselves as some kind of international person, as somebody who is not bound by a ‘narrow worldview’.

Such views directly challenge the discourse of preservation of cultural independence identified earlier as a key component in the Government’s English language policies and internationalization ideology (Seargent, 2005; Hashimoto, 2000, 2009), intended to both project and preserve Japanese culture, values and identity in and outside of Japan. Moreover, comments such as these add to concerns raised by Japanese scholars that this type of approach to the teaching of English ‘causes various inequalities and social ills, of “colonization of the [Japanese] mind”’ (Tsuda 2003, p. 30, citied in Hashimoto & Kudo, 2010). Another participant expressed his attempt to create dissonance thus, ‘The first thing I am doing is coming here, and I am not the ambassador of the country in mind, but I am a source of foreign culture and I am trying to show the kids that we do things differently in America and in Western countries in general. I say, ‘I am American’ so that is what I use. I say, ‘In America this is…’ I do this from the first day’ (P20). P7 expressed a similar view when stating, ‘I try to show my students what it is like in the West… so, I teach them about Western culture’. P13 averred;

Historically speaking English has been a language associated with democracy,
freedom of expression, and these things. I mean it is part of the product we are selling and if you teach these students two at the same time and create that association in their mind that English is the language of equality of people speaking to each other on a level playing field, I don’t think that is so bad right!

One reading of these comments is their provocative nature. As understandings like these are contested for their essentialism and linguistic imperialism (see Phillipson 1992, 2009; Canagarajah 1999).

Tengu are identified by their bright red faces and ‘big noses’; a description that Japanese students use (P4). To move beyond the physical description, participants explained wanting students to question aspects of their culture that potentially constrain their interactions with those outside it. This may be understood as transgressive and constitutes a form of interference perhaps not too dissimilar to ‘putting one’s big nose in’ where it is not welcome, and thus a potential source of ideological tension.

Enthralling and frightening students

Like tengu, participants reported both ‘bewitching’ and ‘frightening’ students by their presence. One participant explained this phenomena in the following terms, ‘Japanese love the idea of the lively foreigner, you know, the gesturing around the classroom, but they cringe at the thought of one of those lively foreigners walking up to them individually with a loud voice, staring them in the eyes’ (P7). The capacity of participants to enthrall students is reflected in comments by P2 who observed:

Japanese students are somewhat somnambulant through [Japanese taught] lectures where they sleep most of the day and they come into a room with a foreign teacher who is interesting like they have never seen interesting before in a class. This can be marvelous. This can wake them up and not just physically, but figuratively.

Equally, the capacity to instill fear is reflected in the observations of P1 who explained when her students first encounter her they exhibit fear. She said, ‘they do get scared. You see the fear in them… they are afraid of me!’

Participants in the second focus group explained this phenomenon more broadly relating this to a form of xenophobia thus, Fg2. P1 commented, ‘they are scared of foreigners in general’. Fg2 P5 responds ‘I think it is true of most societies’. Other participants also expressed the view that the fear exhibited by students in their time teaching in the university sector had abated considerably.

As adjunct TEFL, participants seemingly ‘appear and disappear’ in a tengu like manner. They are not fixed spatially or temporally within any particular institution, they have assigned places and times, but are ephemeral. They are only perceptible when teaching classes and then they are gone – out of sight and out of mind. In this way TEFL are not a conscious part of the student’s day-to-day world, they are intangible, opaque entities relegated to fantasy worlds manufactured in the fertile imaginings of their students, and thus, are visible and invisible simultaneously. Furthermore, participants conceive of themselves, like tengu, as being both ‘good’ and ‘bad’.

Doing good and being bad

Adjunct TEFL are not expected to conform to the norms governing university/Japanese behavior pedagogically on the one hand, but are expected to be manageable and compliant on the other. To illustrate, one full-time informant with twenty years experience commented in a discussion on what his university want in terms of adjunct
TEFL, ‘they want a Japanized foreigner. They don’t want a real foreigner… They want somebody who embodies the values of the Japanese… report for work everyday, no questioning and just follow the rules’\(^9\).

Good *tengu* make themselves known to people, assist and sometimes transfer supernatural abilities to them (Bonnefoy, 1993). Likewise, good adjunct TEFL, assist and transfer their ability to communicate in English they inspire and make language learning fun. These teachers transcend the more pecuniary motivations of bad *tengu* to maintain employment in the Japanese higher education sector and have a genuine interest in their students as individuals and learners. P20 articulated the difference between the two accordingly:

> the Japanese university as a system is different things to different people. To the administration it is money-making, job creating machine. To teachers depending on their attitude and level of mercenary attitude they have it is a way to make a good living and not have to work too much. They are there only for the money and they are not, [pause] their interest isn’t in the students.

*Playing tricks and ‘devouring children’*

Like *tengu* many of the participants have ‘a mischievous sense of humor’. They love playing tricks on their ‘unsuspecting students’ whom they might figuratively regard as being culturally ‘pretentious and arrogant’, in other words, students whom they consider buy into what P11 labeled as ‘the Japanese myth’ of cultural homogeny and uniqueness (see Befu, 2001). P11 explained the mechanisms for this in the context of English education in the following way:

> Japanese teachers of English spend so much time and money and effort focusing on different pronunciations and grammatical points in effect on the differences of English and Japanese. If you focus on that consistently then naturally you’re creating an *us/them* situation. So, the most racist people I have found in Japan are Japanese English language teachers. Not from their own fault, but because they cannot see what they’re doing. They’re dismantling communicative language into all it’s prime parts then comparing this with Japanese in Japanese. Of course they end up with that’s the way *gaijins* use it and this is the way we use it.

Another participant reflecting on their own experience, and revealing a Western cultural hegemonic perspective, explained in the second focus group:

> Coming to Japan I noticed a lot of things about Japanese people and the way they interact with the world, and it is exactly the same as if you would from inside a cult… And if you are Japanese any kind of interaction with the outside world is a betrayal of religion, your Japaneseness. So, I try to bring them out of that (Fg2 P6).

A common approach to achieve this goal, across the interviews and focus groups, was to; ‘have fun in class’ (P3), to try and make classes ‘exciting’ (P1), ‘engaging’ (P23),

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\(^9\) It is important to note that while some universities want compliant non-Japanese faculty as Houghton (cited in Johnston, 2004) notes, and a view expressed by participants in this study and reported by Whitsed 2011, there exists a practice among some universities of hiring young staff and then replacing them once they have lost their youthful appeal with another young teacher. This practice is referred to by Houghton as a form of Peter Pan syndrome.
‘entertaining’ (Fg3 P4), to entice (an act redolent of medieval tengu) students to treat the English language, and by extension those that speak it, with less contempt, to value its acquisition and to visualize a productive and rewarding place for it in their future socially and professionally. This view was encapsulated in the following exchange in Fg2, ‘what we try to do in the classroom is outside of the system… in terms of developing their comfort with the language…’ (Fg2 P5) ‘To not hate it, to have it mean something’ (Fg2 P6).

There are further parallels between tengu and participants as adjunct TEFL. For example, a perceived fear among Japanese, voiced by participants, is that just as tengu once ‘carried off’ children to devour, exchange students while abroad are exposed and vulnerable to foreigners who might have a diluting effect on their sense of Japanese identity, values and culture. A view discussed in FG2, and encapsulated by P12 in the following thus, ‘returnees… have such social problems when they come back. They don’t fit in with the other Japanese’ and they struggle to reintegrate with their peers and society.

In the university context mysterious happenings such as, moving furniture, excessive photocopying, arriving late, and finishing classes early are understood to be the province of adjunct TEFL. Such mysterious things would not generally be attributed to Japanese teachers. In a sea of sameness, adjunct TEFL like tengu, stand out physically, pedagogically and in the psychosocial/cultural domain.

**Betwixt worlds and necessary evils: Purification, temptation and seduction**

Genkan space bridges the interior and external worlds. Beyond its literal function as a boundary marker genkan space is imbued with properties reinforced by ancient traditions of ritual purification wherein the defiling ‘outside’ space is purified before entry to the inside. As a ‘mysterious gate’ (Engel, 1964 p. 241) genkan space has ‘taboos’, which echoing Turner (1974, p. 14), serve to ‘hedge in and constrain those on whom the normative structure loses its grip’. In genkan space, at the interface of outside inside, there are boundaries that inhibit full accesses into the interior spaces of the psychosocial and cultural world of participants’ students, in this way being an ‘abstract cultural domain’ wherein ‘paradigms are formulated, established and come into conflict’, and transformed into metaphor and symbols.

As tengu participants are symbolically imbued with all the qualities associated with soto (outside) space and by extension the grotesque. As such, their identity and performance align and share features with tengu as manifestation of the Māra, the ‘evil symbolizing obstacles to be overcome on the path to enlightenment’ (Wakabayashi, 2012, p xv). Adjunct TEFL, like tengu, through their temptations, seductions or provocations, disrupt the established ‘social order’. While they may be caste as archetypal tengu, participants’ identity is reflected self-referentially as; ‘I am a gaijin’, ‘I am a foreigner’, ‘I am a source of foreign culture’, ‘I am a Westerner’, ‘I am a part-timer’, ‘I am a guest’, in other words, ‘I am outside inside, betwixt and between, visible and invisible’ and ‘a necessary evil’ in Japanese society.

**Conclusion**

In this article we have drawn on three cultural artifacts as an example of bricolage research. Each of these helps us to more fully understand the role of TEFL in the Japanese university context, enriching the meaning given to them and following the constructive forms of bricolage tradition, in a way that is resonant with indigenous bricolage traditions through the authentic nature of the metaphors chosen. More specifically, we highlight the genkan as a place of undetermined meaning and how adjunct TEFL are in this liminal space both ‘betwixt and between’ the West – as desired – and the West – as rejected in practice. The second key
layering conceptualised that of the *sacra* and how adjunct TEFL perform as agents of provocation. Finally, adjunct TEFL can be understood as monsters – or teachers-as-*tengu* challenging established cultural mores and values by virtue of their being liminal *persona* positioned between the organizational structures of society and the university.

Consistent with other minority groups in Japan, adjunct TEFL are not afforded the social capital and cultural currency to influence or shape Japanese society, yet their influence on Japanese young people is not unsubstantial. Moreover, to demonstrate the veracity of this claim we likened adjunct TEFL to *sacra*, and in particular the *tengu* and noted several parallels. In *genkan* space adjunct TEFL as teacher-as-*tengu* sacra types are ‘transgressive’ provocateurs challenging their students’ axiomatic, culturally bound cosmological assumptions. In other words, this is what adjunct TEFL do as a response to the mismatch they perceive between official rhetoric and practice.

Returning to the research question, ‘How can the positioning of native teachers of English in the Japanese university context be conceptualized?’ we argue, from the bricolage perspective, there are countless possibilities for interrogating experience, meaning making and representing the key research outcomes. Furthermore, it is through the lens of liminality and *genkan space*, specifically, that we see participants performing the teacher-as-*tengu*. In this way, participants as teacher-as-*tengu* as a *sacra* type through the confluence of the familiar and unfamiliar force their students to think about their society. Hence, students reflect on their societies basic values and are coerced to think about objects, persons and relationships potentially taken for granted. Adjunct TEFL through their interactions with their students in the *genkan* space challenge them to be somewhat more self-reflexive about their ‘cultural truths and secrets’ (Turner, 1967). As such, adjunct TEFL are symbolically paradigms of both stability and instability in the betwixt and between of Japanese university and social structures.

Addressing the second question, ‘What role do these teachers play in the Japanese university and the experience of undergraduate Japanese students?’ we have shown that through bricolage epistemologies, a phenomenon of interest can be addressed from variety of coetaneous, intersecting and diverging discourses. For example, the participants in this paper however, have been cast in the role of ‘provocateur’ through their performance of the teacher-as-*tengu* on the one hand, while on the other, as were *tengu* during the Meiji era, characterized and catalogued to prevent the fracturing of society by dismantling the myth of the romanticized foreigner and worlds beyond through their *being* and *teaching*.

Through our examination of teacher-as-*tengu*, we come closer to an understanding of how such teachers are implicitly mobilized in internationalization and language policy. Thus, participants’ role and generalizing to the broader population of adjunct TEFL in the Japanese university context may be construed as *propagandized* (Dower, 1986) and argue the teacher-as-*tengu* is deployed in a covert ideological battle for the preservation of the ‘Japanese Spirit’ in the maelstrom of modern globalization.

Responding to the final question, ‘How does the Japanese university as a liminal space influence these teachers’ identity and performance?’ we have demonstrated that the Japanese university is a liminal - *genkan space* – in the way adjunct TEFL function in ‘anti-structural’ ways (Turner, 1974). Adjunct TEFL agency is demonstrated though the construction of their teaching in the spaces betwixt and between the formal structures of the Japanese university. As such, the Japanese university constitutes a space were all the performers are ‘liberated from the normative demands’ imposed by definable ‘cultural scripts’ and that in ‘this gap between ordered worlds almost anything can happen’ and does (Turner, 1974, p. 13).
Finally, as a new artifact born out of the remnants of a broader project this research has shown that tengu — Japanese mythological monsters — exist, and demonstrates the utility of a bricolage approach to explore complex lived worlds by extending previous renderings of the lived world of adjunct TEFL in the Japanese university context highlighting both process and products. Consistent with bricolage, and the constructs of genkan space employed herein, we consider this account unfinished and still yet ripe with potential for further explorations. This research revealed previously unexplored artifacts of power and culture and discussed ideologies and discourses that shaped participants experience and in this our own.

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### Appendix A

#### Focus group 1 (Foc.1) Participants

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