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専攻科目（言語文化学）	氏 名	

以下のテキストを読み、あなたの考えを述べなさい。ただし、あなたの研究計画、あなたの言語バイオグラフィ、あなたの研究上のポジショナリティと関連づけて述べること。解答は、日本語あるいは英語で書くこと。

Read the text below and state your views. Your response must be discussed in relation to your research plan, your language biography, and your research positionality. Please write your response in either Japanese or English.

Native-like proficiency as a construct: Justice-affirming approaches to language education – Ryuko Kubota

I am a scholar and teacher educator currently working in Canada. I consider myself a pioneer of critical approaches to language education and applied linguistics, working since the 1990s. But what do I mean by “critical”? It’s not about developing “critical thinking” among students and teachers. It’s about questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions and seeking more justice-affirming thinking and doing.

For example, there is a persistent belief that the goal of learning English is to become like a “native speaker” of English. But “becoming like a native speaker” is often an illusion. I spent the first 25 years of my life in a monolingual family and social environment in Japan. My parents lived through World War II without opportunities to obtain higher education, not to mention learning another language. Growing up during the 1960s and 70s, English to me was a foreign language to learn from Grade 7 through my undergraduate study and to teach as a public junior high school in a rural town. To this date, I consider myself a nonnative speaker of English and a native speaker of Japanese.

I came to the United States when I was 30 years old to live permanently to teach Japanese as a foreign language (because I was negatively affected by native speakerism—I was a teacher of English for about six years in Japan but lost confidence in teaching English). Later, after obtaining a PhD in Canada, I became a professor of teacher education and applied linguistics in the United States and Canada. Even after so many years of using English professionally, a nonnative speaker of English is the identifier I chose.

In describing myself in this way, I am aware of the nomenclature debates among scholars. On the one hand, the term “nonnative speaker” has advanced research for highlighting the strengths of nonnative English-speaking teachers. On the other hand, researchers have argued that this identifier reinforces the binary description of individual linguistic profiles by describing either non native or native, perpetuates a deficit perspective attached to the prefix “non,” and overlooks individual speakers’ complex linguistic identities. I remember feeling puzzled by a native English-speaking scholar’s insistence on using “multilingual teachers” rather than “nonnative teachers” in describing linguistic discrimination that they faced in an educational context. While they may have indeed been multilingual, this potentially liberating term may distract attention from the cause of the problem. Personally, I don’t want others to identify me as a “multilingual English user.” Even though I can say “hello” in ten different languages, that alone cannot count as multilingual competency.

Professionals with a normative belief that the goal of learning English is to become like a “native speaker” of English may consider my case a failure. But from a critical perspective, it is not—I have achieved my position as a professor and have been actively publishing my research. I have also been serving professional associations as a leader: I served as a Convention Program Chair of TESOL in 2015 and the President of American Association for Applied Linguistics in 2025–26. I have been using my positionality as a point of departure for advancing criticality in language education, as an East Asian female nonnative speaker of English.

I also recognize my privilege. I grew up in a middle-class family. I have never been hungry or been in a life-threatening situation like what’s happening in places affected by military violence. I belong to the majority group in terms of my physical ability and sexual/gender identity. At the same time, I still suffer from racist harassment at work. The racism I face is not only caused by my East Asian background but also entangled with my gender, nonnative speakerness, and being single, which makes me vulnerable. But my linguistic and racial marginality has driven me to share my lived experiences of struggles so that students and scholars in our field and wider society will raise their awareness of power inequity in social and institutional structures and practices. My dream is to make our spaces—our classroom, school, university, community, and society— better places where the human dignity of every single member is respected and affirmed. This requires the protection of our rights to language, culture, identity, food, clean water, and the pursuit of happiness, all of which will be embraced by the value of diversity, equity, and justice.

本文は、以下の文献からの抜粋である。

This text is an excerpt from the following publication:

Taylor, S. K., Screven, M. R., Kubota, R., Pontier, R., & Schwarzer, D. (2025).
Forging a path for diverse identities and voices: Multilingual educators’ reflective stories.
Current Issues in Education, 26(3).