



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Asia Institute



Towards greater inclusivity for gender and sexual diversity in JLE

Launch: International Network of Gender, Sexuality & Japanese Language Education (INGS-Japanese)

Invited Talks

"Lift off! But in which direction? Some potential principles to guide the realisation of queer-inclusive Japanese language education"

Ashley R. Moore (University of British Columbia)

The launch of the International Network of Gender, Sexuality & Japanese Language Education (INGS-J) creates a powerful moment in the ongoing development of the discipline, charged with transformative potential. In this address, I will offer several principles that might help to realise the fullness of this potential. Each principle is the product of my own reflection on the strengths and shortcomings of my work on queer inclusion in ESL and JSL to date, reflection spurred by critical questions, such as: How can we bridge the research/practice divide when it comes to queer inclusion?

How can we avoid the ongoing erasure of trans people and their concerns in our shared project? How can we include queer representation in our classrooms without lapsing into essentialism and normativity?

Representations and negotiations of gender and sexuality in classrooms of Japanese as an additional language

Maki Yoshida (RMIT University)

A number of (para-)linguistic features in Japanese are associated with gender. These features provide speakers with resources to negotiate multiple and fluid social identities, including gender and sexual identities. Individual speakers' linguistic practices are discursive and context-dependent, which may or may not fall into the stereotypical framework of gendered Japanese. However, this understanding of fluidity and diversity in identities and linguistic practices has not received adequate attention in the Japanese as an additional language (JAL) practices. In this

presentation, I will first explore the ways in which gender and sexuality are both linguistically and visually represented in textbooks of JAL. I will then discuss how those presentations can affect negotiations of gender and sexual identities in JAL classrooms, drawing on my own teaching experience and research.

Interactive Panel Discussion

Panelists:

Jotaro Arimori (University of Toronto)

It has been about six years since I started working on the issues of gender and sexual diversity in Japanese language education. There are many issues to consider, such as gender binarism and heteronormativity in the classroom and in teaching materials. As a teacher, I have been agonizing over what I can do to improve the situation. Over the past few years, I have begun to work with people who share a similar awareness of these issues and have decided to work collectively to make Japanese language education more inclusive. I am thrilled to be participating in the launch of INGS-J, a key initiative to make this happen. Through

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Panel Discussion: Jotaro Arimori, Megumi Watanabe, Maki Yoshida, Claire Maree

sharing information and exchanging opinions with you, I hope to create an environment in which awareness of gender and sexual diversity is woven into the way we teach and learn Japanese.

Megumi Watanabe (Princeton University)

I became interested in working in the educational field after my experiences of studying in multiple educational environments. Studying in schools in both Japan and the United States made me realize how an educational system or school environment has an impact on our way of thinking and living. I spent most of my school years in Japan. Even as a child, I sometimes felt uncomfortable being in the classroom because it seemed people always expected me to act in a certain way and manner. Even though diversity exists in a Japanese classroom, it seems like people are trying not to notice the variety. That sometimes made me feel out of place. I also had a chance to study in high school in the United States for one year as an exchange student. I had the opposite experience there. People in the US school did not ignore me; however, some of them made fun of me. They saw me as a stereotypical Japanese girl, which I didn't really expect. I felt confused. But I cannot blame any of them, because that is all they knew. I believe a big part of our actions and thoughts come from our experiences. Experiences in schools, especially, have a great impact on us. That's why I think it's important for all of us to think about SOGIESC in a Japanese classroom.

Maki Yoshida (RMIT University)

I have taught Japanese as an additional

language in various educational settings for over 17 years in Australia and Japan. When I first started teaching Japanese in Japan as a novice teacher, I dedicated effort to efficiently and interactively teaching the assigned curriculum as a language teacher. After moving to Australia, I became interested in the relationship between Japanese language, gender and society and explored the way in which L2 learners/speakers of Japanese negotiate (gendered) language and identities in various contexts. Through the research, I became acutely aware of the unequal power relations associated with various social categories inherent in (Japanese) language education. That was when I realised that teachers were not 'neutral' in every aspect of classroom practice. Considering the closely intertwined relationship between gender and sexuality, my current focus has shifted to the representation of and the approach to gender and sexuality in Japanese language education. Gender and sexuality has been a largely underrepresented domain in Japanese language education and studies. I hope to network with many people engaged in (Japanese) language education and explore ways to construct a safe learning space for students of diverse gender and sexuality in pursuit of inclusive education.

Claire Maree (University of Melbourne)

I am delighted to launch the International Network of Gender, Sexuality & Japanese Language Education (INGS-J) in collaboration with co-coordinator Jotaro Arimori. INGS-J aims to build greater inclusivity for gender and sexual diversity in Japanese language education and learning spaces. We aim to foster collaborative

approaches that engage with intersectionality and queer approaches to language pedagogy and classroom practices. We aim to collaborate widely, and internationally to share information and strategies for creating greater inclusivity in Japanese language education for all learners, educators and Japanese language users.

Event Details & Registration

Date:

- 2-4pm AEDT 10 Decemeber, 2021

Online Webinar

- Bookings are necessary. Please register here: <https://events.unimelb.edu.au/event/12720-towards-greater-inclusivity-for-gender-and-sexual>

Contact:

- cmaree@unimelb.edu.au



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