

## Japanese Women's Desire for English: Subversion of Collectivist Norms and Identity-In-The-Making

The recent decades have seen a great interest in the research on Japanese women's desire for the West, both romantically and professionally (Piller & Takahashi, 2006). It is needed to revisit the research in the current framework of gender-related studies and linguistic anthropology to assess whether Japanese women's existing imagery, as the consumers of Western products, still prevails or differential interpretations of their desire for English emerged. This paper comes from a critical ethnographic study based on the interviews and fieldwork observations of the desire of a group of young Japanese women, whose desires for English subvert the tendencies of the homogenizing social arrangements, depicted through the Japanese concept of *ibasho*. It aims to understand the circumstances these women encounter upon their decisions of not belonging to a specific social grouping, what their pursuit for 'ideal selves' (Dörnyei, 2020) entails, and what the novel forms of desire are that emerge out of their 'rebellion' against the traditional principles of *uchi* (home, in-group). The paper posits that the novel interpretations of desire can be divided into external, internal, and neutral, all of which indicate an assessment of Japanese women's identities as either fluid (Norton, 2013), in-the-making, or conflicted and plastic in that regard.

Keywords: Japanese Women, Language and Desire, ELL, Subjectivity, *Ibasho*.