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Emerging Perspective-Taking, Persistent Othering: English and Intercultural Development in Japanese Elementary Schools



JULIAN CHAPPLE 

Ryukoku University, Japan
julian@world.ryukoku.ac.jp

Abstract

This study examines how Japanese elementary school students conceptualise English, its users, and cultural difference during the early stages of formal language education. Drawing on questionnaire data from 151 students in Grades 3–6 in a private, urban-area school, the analysis identifies both developmental shifts and ideological stabilities in learners' representations. While perspective-taking and decentering begin to emerge—particularly around Grade 5—English remains consistently positioned as belonging to externalised, predominantly Western others. Students demonstrate increasing social differentiation in their descriptions of English users and a growing ability to recognise themselves as “foreigners” in other contexts. However, this developmental shift does not extend to a reconceptualisation of English as a shared communicative resource or as part of their own linguistic repertoire.

The findings reveal a paradox: while learners' cognitive capacity for intercultural awareness grows, the ideological framing of English as inherently foreign does not loosen. More troublingly, learners appear to be internalising this framing as a natural feature of their linguistic world, rather than recognising it as a social construction that could be otherwise. Situating the analysis within intercultural education and language ideology research, the study argues that developmental maturation alone is insufficient to upset symbolic boundaries towards language ownership, the internalization of which can constrain learners' ability to position themselves as legitimate English users. It concludes that elementary intercultural education in Japan needs to directly address questions of ownership, positionality, and representation if emerging perspective-taking capacities are to lead into future meaningful intercultural participation.

Keywords: Intercultural communicative competence, English Language Ideology, Elementary English curriculum (Japan), Othering, Cultural representation in education

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Introduction

Language education extends beyond the acquisition of grammatical forms and communicative skills; it also transmits cultural meanings, values, and social hierarchies. As Kramsch (1998) observes, language functions as a symbolic system through which social realities are interpreted and given meaning. In the context of English language teaching (ELT), classrooms therefore operate not only as sites of linguistic learning but also as spaces in which learners construct images of English, its users, and the cultural worlds associated with it. Thus, when children encounter English in school, they simultaneously encounter representations of its speakers and the social identities linked to the language (see, for example, Holliday, 2006; Kubota, 1998).

Understanding how such representations develop is particularly important in contemporary intercultural education. Research in developmental social psychology indicates that children begin classifying people into racial, ethnic, and national groups from an early age, with associated attitudes emerging soon thereafter (Barrett, 2007). By the time formal schooling begins, key social categories are already salient, making the elementary years a critical period for the formation of intercultural orientations. Schools therefore play a central role in shaping how young learners perceive cultural others and position themselves in relation to them (Barrett, 2018).

In Japan, English education policy increasingly emphasises intercultural communicative competence and global citizenship (Bradford, 2019; Taguchi, 2026). Yet research has largely focused on policy discourse, curricula, or teacher practice, with less attention paid to how learners themselves conceptualise English and its users. This gap is significant. Language classrooms often prioritise linguistic knowledge and skills, while attitudes and values develop implicitly (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). At the same time, persistent forms of native-speakerism and Western-centric representation continue to shape how English is imagined within Japanese education (Holliday, 2006, 2015). Such ideological framing may influence how learners position English in relation to themselves and others, reinforcing symbolic boundaries around language ownership that developmental maturation alone may be insufficient to disrupt — the internalisation of which can constrain learners' ability to position themselves as legitimate English users.

A core aim of intercultural education in EFL contexts, as understood in this paper, should be to help learners see English not as a foreign language owned by distant others, but as a social practice already present in their own lives — encountered daily through media, music, games, and technology. The goal of elementary English education is therefore not simply to introduce a new linguistic code, but to support learners in imagining themselves as legitimate participants in English-mediated communication rather than distant observers of a foreign practice. Intercultural pedagogical approaches are understood here as those that explicitly engage learners in reflection on cultural difference, linguistic diversity, and their own positionality. Research suggests (Byram, 1997; Ordonez, 2021) that such approaches can support the attitudinal foundations of openness, curiosity, and willingness to engage across difference that Deardorff (2006) identifies as preconditions for intercultural communicative competence.

This study examines how Japanese elementary school students conceptualise English, its users, and cultural difference across Grades 3–6, and the extent to which current educational conditions support or obstruct the development of a participatory orientation toward the language.

Theoretical and Contextual Background

Critical Perspectives on English and Intercultural Positioning

The global spread of English has prompted ongoing scholarly attention to the ideological dimensions of language teaching and learning. Increasingly, researchers have questioned the ontological assumptions

through which English is understood and taught, challenging native-speaker-centred models and emphasising the socially constructed nature of linguistic value (Holliday, 2006, 2015; Kiczowskiak, 2024; Lowe, 2020).

Contemporary work in World Englishes and translingual studies rejects monolithic notions of English in favour of flexible, decentralised models. Canagarajah (2013) conceptualises translingual practice as the creative deployment of linguistic resources across boundaries, challenging the idea of English as a fixed system owned by particular communities. Research on English as a Lingua Franca similarly highlights communication as a process of accommodation and co-construction rather than adherence to native-speaker norms (Jenkins, 2007; Vettorel, 2019). Classroom-based Global Englishes pedagogies have begun to translate these findings into practice, demonstrating shifts in learners' engagement with diverse English varieties and supporting the development of localised linguistic identities (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Matsuda, 2017).

At the same time, English functions in many contexts not only as a communicative resource but also as symbolic capital. In East Asia, English is often associated with mobility, cosmopolitanism, and educational achievement (Park & Wee, 2012; Stanlaw, 2004). In Japan, English carries considerable symbolic weight — linked to examinations, overseas opportunities, and elite positioning — despite remaining largely peripheral to everyday communication (Kubota, 1998; Morita, 2010; Seargeant, 2009). This gap between symbolic value and practical use is as much institutional as it is individual. Kawabata (2024), examining TOEIC scores in corporate hiring and promotion, demonstrates how English proficiency functions as a marker of distinction within Japanese workplaces — privileging certain groups while marginalising others in ways that extend well beyond communicative competence. Such associations align with broader meritocratic and neoliberal educational logics that frame English proficiency as evidence of hard work and future-oriented aspiration.

These dynamics intersect with raciolinguistic hierarchies that link linguistic legitimacy to particular bodies and national identities. Critical scholarship argues that dominant language ideologies frequently position certain speakers as inherently authentic while others remain perpetual learners regardless of proficiency (Rosa & Flores, 2023). In the Japanese ELT context, this phenomenon has long intersected with forms of native-speakerism that privilege Western, often white, embodiment as the natural site of English (Holliday, 2006; Houghton & Hashimoto, 2018). Textbooks, media, and institutional practices have historically reinforced the association of English with Western identities (Šlogar & Chapple, 2022) positioning local users as learners rather than legitimate owners.

Davidson and Liu (2020) found that Japanese elementary English textbooks tend to be culturally simplistic in their representation of non-Japanese cultures, portraying them in ways that fail to support students' development of global citizenship values. Carroll (2022), analysing a currently used elementary textbook through an anti-oppressive lens, finds that foreign characters are almost exclusively represented as white or light-skinned, with English expertise consistently associated with Western, white embodiment — leaving learners of colour and non-Western English users largely invisible. Igarashi (2023) finds that cultural content in high school Japanese English textbooks tends to be presented descriptively, with limited opportunities for learners to engage critically with cultural differences. Kiczowskiak (2024) extends this critique to the ELT publishing industry more broadly, demonstrating how structural preferences for native-speaker authorship reproduce ideological hierarchies at the level of curriculum materials. The result is an educational environment in which learners consistently encounter English as the property of others unlike themselves — a framing that, as the present data suggest, becomes internalised as a set feature of their world by the end of elementary school. The possibility of English as a socially available means of communication — rather than a language symbolically tied to particular national groups — is precisely what such framings work against, and what intercultural education must therefore confront directly.

Taken together, this scholarship suggests that English may be simultaneously constructed as desirable and externally located: a language associated with mobility and prestige yet symbolically tied to distant others. From an educational perspective, this raises a critical question. How does the emergence of perspective-taking and decentering influence — or fail to influence — how learners position English in relation to questions of ownership and participation?

The present study addresses this question by examining how Japanese elementary school students conceptualise English, its users, and themselves as language users across Grades 3–6. By bringing developmental perspectives on intercultural competence into dialogue with research on language ideology, it explores whether emerging intercultural capacities correspond to a shift in symbolic ownership—or whether English remains persistently external despite cognitive growth and what this means for language teaching and policy.

Developmental Perspectives on Intercultural Competence

Understanding how children's representations of language and cultural others develop requires engagement with both intercultural competence research and developmental social psychology. Barrett (2018) conceptualises intercultural competence as comprising values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals to engage constructively with cultural difference. From a developmental perspective, these capacities do not emerge all at once; rather, they build gradually across childhood and adolescence, shaped by both cognitive maturation and social experience.

Classical developmental research suggested that the cognitive and affective capacities required for reciprocal intercultural understanding emerge relatively late. Piaget and Weil (1951) argued that only around the age of 11–12 do children acquire the ability to understand and positively relate to people from other national groups. More recent studies, however, indicate that aspects of intercultural awareness may develop earlier, particularly in contexts where children encounter cultural diversity in everyday life (Ordonez, 2021). Such findings raise important questions about how young learners in comparatively homogeneous contexts construct their understanding of English, its users, and cultural difference during the early stages of language education. They also suggest that schools have an important role to play in shaping how young learners perceive cultural others and position themselves in relation to them.

Two constructs are central to this study and warrant definition here. *Perspective-taking* refers to the cognitive and affective capacity to recognise and consider viewpoints beyond one's own immediate social position, including an understanding of how situations, relationships, or identity might appear from another person's standpoint (Barrett, 2007; Selman, 1980). In developmental terms, perspective-taking is understood not as a discrete skill but as an emerging capacity that becomes increasingly nuanced through middle childhood and early adolescence. In the present study, it is operationalised specifically through learners' ability to recognise that they themselves would be perceived as "foreigners" in another national context — a concrete, relational measure drawn from the Piaget and Weil (1951) framework.

Decentering, by contrast, refers to a broader cognitive shift away from an egocentric or ethnocentric frame of reference — the capacity to relativise one's own cultural position as one among many, rather than as a neutral or universal default (Byram, 1997; Piaget and Weil, 1951). Where perspective-taking concerns the recognition of specific viewpoints, decentering concerns a more foundational reorientation in how one positions oneself in relation to cultural difference. In practice the two capacities are closely related: perspective-taking is one concrete expression of decentering, and decentering provides the cognitive precondition for sustained perspective-taking. They are analytically distinct, however, and the study examines how their emergence interacts — and, critically, fails to interact — with the symbolic positioning of English.

A further terminological note concerns the study's focus on learners' positioning of *themselves as language users*. This refers specifically to how learners position themselves in relation to English and its users — whether they perceive themselves as potential participants in English-mediated communication, or as observers of a practice that belongs to culturally and geographically distant others. This is a question of social and linguistic identity positioning rather than of linguistic ability, and it is closely related to what Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) describe as the ideal L2 self: the ability to imagine oneself as a future user of the language, which functions as a motivational driver for sustained learning. When this imagined self-position is unavailable, i.e., English is symbolically constructed as belonging to others, the educational consequences may extend beyond attitude formation, potentially shaping learners' trajectories across their entire educational lives.

Intercultural Competence Policy and Practice in Japanese English Education

In recent years, Japanese educational policy has increasingly positioned intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as a central objective of English language education. Curriculum guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2014, 2017) frame English not only as a linguistic skill but also as a means of fostering intercultural understanding and developing globally minded citizens. From the elementary level onward, English education is expected to cultivate communicative ability alongside openness toward cultural difference.

Despite this policy emphasis, classroom practice often remains exam-oriented and linguistically focused (Smith, C., 2025). While this characterisation has been most consistently documented at secondary and tertiary levels (Kikuchi & Browne, 2009), emerging evidence suggests that comparable pressures also shape elementary English education in Japan. Davidson and Liu (2020) note that even at the elementary level, cultural content tends to be subordinated to linguistic objectives, with intercultural understanding treated as a background aim rather than a named pedagogical goal. Further, in contexts where intercultural development might be expected, such as English-medium instruction, linguistic gains often outpace the development of intercultural dispositions such as empathy and problem-solving (Taguchi, 2026). Consequently, a persistent tension remains between policy discourses promoting global citizenship and the institutional treatment of English as an academic subject detached from learners' lived identities.

Most existing research has focused on policy, curricula, or teacher practice. Far less attention has been paid to how young learners *themselves* conceptualise English, its users, and cultural difference during the early stages of formal language education. This gap is significant because how learners imagine English and its speakers shapes whether they see themselves as able to participate in intercultural communication — the disposition to engage described above in relation to Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2009) ideal L2 self. Where this imagined self-position is foreclosed, the consequences may extend well beyond attitude formation, shaping how children approach language use, intercultural communication, and their own linguistic identities throughout their educational lives. Understanding where these frameworks form, and where they might be constructively disrupted, is therefore not merely an academic question but a pedagogical one with direct consequences for practice.

The present study addresses this gap by examining Japanese elementary school students' representations of English, its users, and themselves as language users across Grades 3–6. It is guided by three research questions:

1. How do students' representations of English and its users change across grade levels in a Japanese elementary school context?

2. When, and in what forms, do learners demonstrate perspective-taking and decentering in their understanding of *foreigners* and of themselves as potential participants in intercultural communication as language users?
3. How does the emergence of perspective-taking and decentering influence — or fail to influence — how learners position English in relation to questions of ownership and participation?

This third question warrants brief contextualisation. Research in language ideology has established that beliefs about who “owns” or legitimately uses a language are deeply sociocultural rather than merely cognitive (Holliday, 2006; Kramsch, 1998). It is therefore theoretically possible — and, this study attempts to argue, empirically demonstrable — that cognitive decentering (the capacity to relativise one’s own position) and ideological stability (the persistent externalisation of English as belonging to others) can coexist within the same learner. The question of how, and where, this coexistence appears is central to understanding the limits and possibilities of intercultural education at the elementary level.

The study argues that, although perspective-taking appears to emerge for many learners around Grade 5, English continues to be imagined across all grade levels as belonging outside learners’ own social worlds. This pattern points to a structural tension within elementary intercultural education: developmental readiness for decentering does not necessarily translate into a more inclusive understanding of who English belongs to. The following sections explore this disjunction in detail, with implications for how intercultural pedagogies might be designed.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional questionnaire design to examine grade-level tendencies in Japanese elementary school students’ symbolic representations of English, its users, and cultural difference. The aim was to identify developmental patterns across Grades 3–6 rather than to produce statistically generalisable findings. Consistent with research in intercultural education and developmental social psychology, the study prioritises analytic insight into the relationship between cognitive maturation and sociocultural framing.

Cross-sectional designs are common practice in developmental and child language research for identifying age- or grade-related patterns without the logistical and ethical burden of tracking the same cohort of children over several years (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Pinter, 2011). Following Schaie’s (1965) general developmental model, grade-level differences here reflect comparisons between different cohorts of children, not change tracked within the same children over time. Given the practical constraints of longitudinal research with young learners in a single school, a cross-sectional design was the appropriate choice for identifying developmental tendencies across Grades 3–6.

Participants, Context, and Ethical Procedures

Participants were 151 students enrolled in Grades 3–6 at a private elementary school in an urban part of western Japan (Table 1).

The school serves a predominantly middle-class population and follows the national curriculum, making it broadly representative of mainstream private elementary education in urban Japan. English classes are compulsory and team-taught by a Japanese teacher of English and a full-time assistant native English teacher. Students in Grades 3–4 receive two lessons per week, while those in Grades 5–6 receive three.

Table 1 *Number of Participants by Grade*

Grade	N
Grade 3	43
Grade 4	49
Grade 5	37
Grade 6	22
Total	151

Ethical approval was obtained from the author's university (No. 202342), and permission was granted by the school principal. Participation was voluntary and all responses were anonymised. Students were informed that participation was voluntary and unrelated to grades or classroom evaluation. Teachers were not involved in coding or reviewing responses, and students could leave items unanswered. Where individual or country names appear in examples, they have been altered to protect confidentiality.

Instrument

The questionnaire was administered and completed in Japanese. All coding and primary analysis were conducted in Japanese to preserve the original meaning of responses and to avoid the interpretive distortion that can arise when qualitative data are translated prior to analysis (Temple & Young, 2004). The coder — the author — is proficient in both English and Japanese, and the few non-Japanese responses ($n = 3$, in English) were analysed as they were. Representative responses cited in the findings have been translated into English by the author; in each case prioritising functional equivalence over literal rendering.

The questionnaire was adapted from the interview protocol developed by Piaget and Weil (1951) in their foundational study of children's developing capacity for national identity relativisation and intercultural understanding. Their original instrument used semi-structured interview questions to probe children's ability to recognise national identity as relational, including items asking whether they might be perceived as foreign in another country and inviting them to express preferences about nationality and belonging. Ordonez (2021) subsequently adapted this protocol for use in contemporary, culturally diverse contexts; the present instrument draws on both versions. Adaptations were made to ensure age-appropriate comprehensibility for Japanese elementary students (verified through piloting by the researcher and assistance from classroom teachers), to include items relevant to English language specifically, and to convert the interview format into a written questionnaire suitable for group administration. The adapted instrument comprised four item types: open-ended questions about images of English and its users; forced-choice items with optional written justification concerning nationality preference; a perspective-taking scenario asking whether students would be considered foreigners if living in another country; and items probing students' knowledge sources about other cultures and their perceptions of cultural difference. The full adapted instrument is provided in Appendix A.

Analytical Framework and Coding Procedure

Responses were analysed using a theory-informed qualitative content analysis drawing on Mayring's approach (2000, 2014), employing a deductive-inductive procedure. Initial deductive categories were derived from intercultural communicative competence research (Bryam, 1997 [attitudes, knowledge, skills, critical cultural awareness]; Deardorff, 2006 [attitudes, knowledge, internal/external outcomes]), developmental models of intercultural sensitivity (e.g., Bennett, 1993 [ethnocentric vs. ethnorelative

orientation]), and developmental social psychology (Barrett, 2018; Piaget & Weil, 1951 [perspective-taking, decentering]). These categories were refined inductively through close reading of responses, with additional subcategories introduced where necessary. Inductively derived subcategories included appearance-based and racialised representations of English users, associations between English and elite achievement, pronunciation-based evaluations of linguistic legitimacy, and contrasting emotional orientations in nationality justifications (e.g., safety/comfort versus novelty).

Coding was conducted at the level of meaning units, and multiple codes were permitted for open-ended responses. The final coding scheme included categories relating to images of English, representations of English users, sources of cultural knowledge, perceived dimensions of difference, perspective-taking, and nationality choice and justification. Frequencies were calculated by grade level to identify developmental tendencies. Where grade-level comparisons involved categorical response data, chi-square tests of independence were conducted to assess whether observed distributions differed significantly across grades. Effect sizes are reported as Cramér's *V*.

The principal analytical categories applied across the dataset were as follows: images of English (affective, social-symbolic, task-based, neutral/vague); representations of English users (external/national, role-based, appearance-based, inclusive/universal); sources of cultural knowledge (media, school, family/travel, none); perceived dimensions of cultural difference (language, material culture, customs, appearance, systems, values); perspective-taking (recognition of own “foreigner” status, non-recognition, uncertain); nationality choice with justification for Question 8 (comfort/belonging, curiosity/novelty, pragmatic, identity-based); and, coded separately given the conceptual difference between liking a country and identifying with one, country preference and justification for Question 5 (country named: Japan, America, Korea, other; reasons: food/cuisine, peace/safety/kindness, familiarity/home, media/pop-culture exposure, family/personal connection, general interest, vague/no reason). Across these categories, patterns of othering, externalised language ownership, and language ideology emerged as overarching interpretive themes cutting across multiple coding categories. These are treated not as discrete codes but as interpretive constructs that emerged from recurring patterns in the data and form the primary focus of the discussion.

While the coding scheme above was derived from intercultural communicative competence and developmental psychology research, the interpretation of findings in the sections that follow also draws more specifically on Byram's (1997) concept of *savoir se relativiser* — the capacity to step outside one's own cultural position, treated here as a necessary but not sufficient condition for intercultural competence — in relation to the perspective-taking findings. It additionally draws on complementary theoretical perspectives relevant to other themes: constructions of mediated cultural knowledge (Appadurai, 1996; Fairclough, 1992), language ownership and ideology in the Japanese educational context (Kubota, 2019; Rosa & Flores, 2023), and learner orientation toward the international community (Norton, 2013; Yashima, 2002). These perspectives are not part of the coding framework itself but provide interpretive resources for placing the findings within broader sociolinguistic and educational research.

Operationalisation of Key Constructs

To enhance conceptual clarity and analytic transparency, key constructs were operationalised through defined coding criteria applied to students' questionnaire responses.

Although perspective-taking and decentering are treated as analytically distinct in the section on Developmental Perspectives on Intercultural Competence — the former referring to the recognition of specific viewpoints, the latter to a broader reorientation away from an ethnocentric default — they

are operationalised here through a single coding criterion, as the perspective-taking scenario adapted from Piaget and Weil (1951) serves as a concrete expression of the decentering capacity. Both were identified when students demonstrated the ability to recognise viewpoints beyond their own immediate social position.

Othering was identified when students positioned English or its users as external to themselves or to Japanese society. This included references that attributed English exclusively to non-Japanese groups (e.g., “*English is used by Americans*”, “*Foreigners speak English*”) or that implicitly excluded Japanese speakers from legitimate participation.

Language ownership was operationalised through students’ implicit or explicit positioning of who can legitimately use English. Responses suggesting that English belongs primarily to specific national or racialised groups were coded as indicating externalised ownership, whereas responses that included Japanese speakers or “everyone” were coded as more inclusive orientations. This operationalisation is understood as capturing implicit ideological positioning rather than consciously held beliefs; students were not asked directly about ownership, and the coding reflects the researcher’s interpretation of the social logic embedded in their responses. Accordingly, references throughout the paper to language ownership, legitimacy, or participation should be understood as interpretive inferences from students’ representations of English and its users rather than as direct measures of those constructs.

Language ideology was inferred from recurring patterns in how English and its users were described, particularly where responses reflected socially shared assumptions (e.g., associating English with Western countries, travel, or elite professions). These patterns were treated as indicative of broader ideological framing rather than as individually held beliefs.

These operational definitions were refined iteratively during the coding process to ensure consistency and alignment between theoretical constructs and empirical data.

Reliability and Analytical Consistency

Following initial coding, responses were re-coded after an interval of approximately three weeks. Discrepant and ambiguous cases were systematically identified, and category definitions were refined to improve consistency. Intra-rater agreement was assessed on a purposive sample of approximately 20% of responses; the overall agreement rate was 83%, with remaining discrepancies resolved through iterative review of category definitions. This process enhanced category consistency and ensured interpretive consistency across grade levels. Consistent with established practice in qualitative content analysis in intercultural education research, the analysis prioritises interpretive coherence and transparency; frequency counts and statistical comparisons were used cautiously to illustrate relative salience and developmental tendencies rather than to make strong causal or predictive claims.

Methodological Limitations

Because the sample was drawn from a single private elementary school, findings are not intended to be statistically generalisable. Rather, they are analytically illustrative, offering insight into how developmental readiness and sociocultural framing may interact in the early formation of intercultural orientations. In addition, the smaller Grade 6 cohort introduces some asymmetry across grade levels; the patterns identified should therefore be interpreted as indicative tendencies rather than discrete developmental stages.

It should also be noted that since the study was conducted in a private urban elementary school with relatively strong resourcing (including a full-time native-speaker teaching assistant), results may differ

to public school contexts where English instruction is less intensive and staffing resources more limited. Additionally, the survey did not directly examine students' existing exposure to English outside the classroom (through media, music, games, or technology) meaning that the analysis cannot account for how informal contact with English may already be shaping learners' representations. This is a limitation that future studies might address through more targeted means.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings organised around the major themes identified through the qualitative content analysis. The findings are interpreted using the analytical framework described in the Methodology, with particular attention to developmental changes in perspective-taking and the persistence of broader ideological representations of English and its users.

Images of English: From Affective Reaction to Social Meaning

In the lower grades, students predominantly described English in affective terms, most commonly as *muzukashii* (難しい, “difficult”), often accompanied by comments such as “fun but hard.” In Grade 3, “difficult” (A1) was the most frequent response (25), followed by descriptions of English as enjoyable or interesting (16), while only a small number of students referred to English in broader social terms (Table 2). A similar pattern appeared in Grade 4. By Grades 5 and 6, however, students increasingly described English in relation to particular social groups and purposes, referring to “people who work overseas,” “famous people,” or “people involved with other countries,” while purely affective descriptions became less common.

Table 2 *Images of English by Grade*

Code	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
A1 Difficult	25	25	18	8
A2 Fun/Interesting	16	16	4	1
A3 Mixed	3	3	5	0
A4 Negative	2	2	0	1
A5 Neutral/Vague	3	3	4	9
A6 Social-symbolic	1	2	2	8

This pattern suggests a developmental shift in how learners conceptualise English. Rather than viewing it primarily as a classroom subject associated with enjoyment or difficulty, older students increasingly recognise English as carrying social meaning beyond school. Their descriptions become more differentiated and socially situated, indicating a growing awareness of who uses English and in what contexts. This follows Barrett's (2018) account of how intercultural awareness develops from affective reaction toward more socially differentiated understanding — yet without the corresponding shift in self-positioning that Barrett identifies as a marker of more developed intercultural competence. Students see English differently, but they do not yet see themselves differently in relation to it.

Importantly, however, this shift does not extend to learners' own positioning in relation to the language. Rather than functioning as a neutral communicative tool, English appears linked to elite, foreign, or globally mobile identities, a pattern consistent with Kubota's (2019) account of how English is constructed as a prestige-bearing foreign commodity in Japanese education, and with

Sergeant's (2009) argument that its symbolic capital derives precisely from its perceived foreignness rather than communicative utility. The data indicate that this symbolic positioning is already well established by the end of elementary school.

Who Uses English? Persistent Othering and the Ideology of Foreignness

Across all grades, English is overwhelmingly attributed to geographically or nationally defined others, particularly “Americans” or *gaikokujin* (外国人, *foreigners*), while references to Japanese users or to “everyone” remain extremely rare. In Grade 5, for example, references to foreigners or specific foreign nationalities total 24 responses, compared with only two references to Japanese users and none to “everyone.” Similar patterns appear across all grades.

This tendency is clearly visible in individual responses. Many students wrote answers such as “*Americans [or other nationalities] use English*”, “*foreigners speak English*”, or simply “*people from other countries*.” References to Japanese users were rare, though a small number of responses included comments such as “*Japanese who have studied use English too*.”

Further examples illustrate the consistency and texture of this pattern across grades. In lower grades, typical responses included: “People from America and England” (Grade 3); “Foreigners” (Grade 3); “People in other countries, not Japan” (Grade 4). By Grade 5, the framing became more socially differentiated but retained the same underlying logic: “People who work in international companies” (Grade 5); “Clever people who have learned English properly” (Grade 5); “Tourists, and people who travel a lot for work” (Grade 6). References to Japanese speakers were rare across all grades; one notable exception was a Grade 6 response — “Japanese people who have studied hard can use it too” — which, through the qualifying clause (*have studied hard*), simultaneously acknowledged while conditionalising Japanese participation. This construction is itself revealing: it frames Japanese English use as exceptional, requiring justification, rather than as a natural or expected possibility. For the student to conceive of themselves as a potential English user, they would apparently need to earn that entitlement through significant effort — a framing entirely absent from how they described the English use of non-Japanese speakers. A further illustration of this pattern is the unprompted appearance of terms like *tensai* (天才, *genius*) ($n = 3$) or “very clever” across grades ($n = 7$): for these students, English use by Japanese people requires not just effort but exceptional ability.

To assess whether the distribution of responses differed significantly across grade levels, a chi-square test of independence was conducted comparing the proportion of students categorising English users as external (foreigners or people in specific roles such as business people and travellers) versus inclusive (Japanese speakers, everyone, or unclear responses). The results were non-significant, $\chi^2(3, N = 211) = 4.93, p = .177, V = .15$, with all expected cell counts meeting the minimum threshold for test reliability (*multiple responses were permitted per student*). The tendency to associate English with non-Japanese speakers was consistently high across all grade levels, ranging from 75% in Grade 3 to 85% in Grade 6. Rather than undermining the argument, this finding strengthens it: the othering of English is not a developmental phenomenon that intensifies with age — it is already fully established by Grade 3 and remains stable throughout primary school.

This distribution indicates a stable process of othering: English is not imagined as a language that “we” use but as one belonging to socially and geographically distant groups. Even as students’ descriptions become more differentiated with age, the fundamental inside/outside dichotomy remains intact. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this reflects symbolic hierarchies that position English as a marker of distinction rather than a language for mutual communication — hierarchies reproduced, as noted above, through the consistent representation of English speakers in Japanese ELT materials as Western and native-speaker-centred (Carroll, 2022; Davidson & Liu, 2020).

Although the core pattern remains stable, the categorisation of English users becomes more socially nuanced across grade levels. References to social roles such as “clever people,” “tourists,” or “people working abroad” increase in the middle grades, while appearance-based categories appear primarily in earlier responses and disappear by Grade 6. Older students more frequently associate English with effort, achievement, and future mobility, describing users as individuals who have studied hard, passed examinations (“*people who pass level 1 of Eiken test*”), or travel internationally (“*working/living abroad*”). This pattern may partly reflect the immediate salience of junior high school entrance examinations at this age, in which Eiken scores are increasingly used for preferential admission or exemption at private schools (Shutoken Moshi Center, 2024) — though it is equally consistent with the broader instrumentalisation of English as symbolic capital discussed above (Kawabata, 2024; Kubota, 1998). References to pronunciation quality (“*those with good pronunciation*”) and “native-like” speech (“*people who speak well*”) also increase, suggesting growing awareness of linguistic performance and evaluation. These patterns indicate that while students’ social understanding of English users becomes more complex, the underlying assumption that English belongs to others remains largely unchanged. Development brings greater differentiation, but not a shift in perceived ownership.

Sources of Cultural Knowledge: Mediated Worlds and Imagined Elsewheres

Students’ knowledge of other countries is derived primarily from indirect sources (Table 3).

Table 3 *Sources of Knowledge about Other Countries*

Source	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
TV (C1)	10	13	15	9
Internet (C2)	10	6	9	8
School/Books (C3)	12	24	18	10
Family/Friends (C4)	13	8	10	3
Travel (C5)	2	9	1	2
None/Unclear (C6)	8	8	4	1

Across all grades, school materials, television, and online media appear far more frequently than direct international experience. References to travel remain relatively rare, even in the upper grades suggesting that learners’ images of the world are largely mediated rather than experiential.

This reliance on indirect sources is developmentally typical (Barrett, 2018), but it also means students’ images of cultural others are almost entirely shaped by media and school materials rather than direct encounter.

It is important not to treat this finding as simply reflecting developmental limitation. For most of these students, media-based and school-based representations are not just the primary source of knowledge about other cultures — they are, practically speaking, the only source available. Very few have travelled internationally — consistent with national survey data indicating that 75.6% of Japanese children of a similar age range have no overseas travel experience (Bandai Co., Ltd., 2018; see also Table 3) — and direct intercultural contact is limited for the majority. This means that the mediated imaginaries students carry into the classroom are not incidental but structural: they are the product of an educational environment that has not yet found ways to supplement or complicate the schematic images of cultural others that circulate through television, textbooks, and online media. The pedagogical implication is significant. If students’ images of English users are almost entirely

media-constructed, and if those media representations are, as Davidson and Liu (2020) document, overwhelmingly Western and native-speaker-centred, then the classroom has both the greatest responsibility and the greatest opportunity to offer something different. Expanding the range of English users in educational materials, and supporting critical reflection on already-absorbed images, are precisely what intercultural pedagogy at this level should provide.

What Counts as “Difference”? Surface Culture and the Limits of Early Intercultural Awareness

Across all grades, students define difference primarily in terms of language, food, and visible daily-life practices, with only rare references to values, beliefs, or ways of thinking (see Table 4). Even in Grade 6, deeper cultural perspectives remain largely absent from spontaneous responses. This pattern aligns with developmental models of intercultural sensitivity, which suggest that early stages of intercultural awareness tend to focus on visible and concrete differences rather than underlying value systems. Students’ responses often reflected concrete and observable distinctions, such as “*buildings*”, “*different food*,” “*the language is different*,” or “*people look different*.” Only rarely did responses refer to less visible dimensions, such as “ways of thinking,” “values,” “customs,” “culture” or “manners”.

Table 4 *What is Perceived as “Different”?*

Dimension	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
H1 Daily life/Material culture	14	19	18	9
H2 Language/Communication	18	13	19	10
H3 Appearance	4	3	4	0
H4 Customs/Behaviour	7	9	12	10
H5 Systems/School/rules	3	4	4	0
H6 Values/Ways of thinking	1	2	4	1

It is worth noting what these responses looked like in practice. A small but analytically significant number of students ($n = 11$) — appearing across almost all grade levels but most frequently in Grades 3 and 4 — described English users in terms of physical appearance, referring explicitly to skin colour (e.g., references to white ($n = 2$) or black ($n = 5$), whitish ($n = 1$) and yellow ($n = 1$) as characteristic of English speakers) or to bodily traits associated with perceived Western appearance (hair, face) ($n = 2$). The frequency was low (see Table 4, H3), but the pattern is consistent: when appearance-based descriptors appeared, they were associated almost exclusively with the imagined bodies of English speakers, not with Japanese speakers. This asymmetry is itself ideologically significant, suggesting that for a subset of students, language ownership is not merely nationally indexed but mapped onto racialised bodies — a finding consistent with research on raciolinguistic ideologies (Rosa & Flores, 2023) and one that warrants explicit attention in the design of classroom materials.

These patterns indicate that while learners readily identify cultural difference, their understanding remains largely descriptive and surface-oriented. Without guided reflection, representations of other cultures tend to remain schematic rather than interpretive, limiting opportunities for deeper intercultural engagement.

Perspective-Taking and Decentering: A Developmental Turning Point Around Grade 5

Students were asked directly: “If you went to live in another country, do you think people there would see you as a foreigner?” (see Table 5). In Grades 3 and 4, most students responded that they would not

Table 5 *Perspective-Taking by Grade in Response to the Question: “Imagine that you have Grown up and are Living in Italy (or America). Are you Considered a Foreigner there?”*

Response	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Yes, I would be a foreigner (E1)	13	16	23	9
No, I would not (E2)	30	31	13	12
Don't know (E3)	0	3	1	1

be foreigners in another country. In Grade 5, however, this pattern reversed, with a majority recognising that they would indeed be perceived as foreigners. A chi-square test of independence confirmed that this grade-level difference was statistically significant, $\chi^2(3, N = 151) = 11.57, p = .009, V = .28$. The proportion of students recognising they would be perceived as foreigners abroad rose from 27.9% in Grade 3 and 32.0% in Grade 4 to 62.2% in Grade 5, before returning to 40.9% in Grade 6. Given that Grade 6 comprised only 22 students — approximately half the size of the other cohorts — the apparent decline should be treated with caution and interpreted as indicative rather than conclusive. Grade 6 responses show a more mixed but generally more reflexive pattern.

This shift suggests an emerging capacity to relativise one's own position and adopt an external perspective, consistent with developmental models of movement away from ethnocentric assumptions. However, this cognitive shift does not extend to the symbolic positioning of English itself. Students may recognise that they would become “foreigners” abroad, yet they do not reconceptualise English as something they themselves might legitimately claim.

Perspective-taking thus expands horizontally, across multiple cultural viewpoints, without the vertical shift that would fundamentally change how learners relate to English as a symbolic resource. The Grade 5 transition may therefore represent an opportunity for pedagogical intervention, during which learners become increasingly capable of reflecting on their own positionality but have not yet reimagined their relationship to English. Because the study is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, this pattern should be interpreted as a grade-level tendency suggestive of developmental shift rather than as evidence that perspective-taking first emerges in Grade 5. This is consistent with Byram's (1997) account of *savoir se relativiser*: the capacity to step outside one's own cultural position is a necessary but not sufficient condition for intercultural competence — it does not automatically extend to a repositioning of symbolic ownership.

Nationality, Belonging, and Emotional Geography

Students were also asked, as a separate item, whether there was a country they particularly liked and why (あなたには特に好きな国がありますか。なぜその国が好きですか; Question 5). Because liking a country and identifying with a country are conceptually distinct judgements, responses were coded independently using a scheme derived inductively from the data itself, rather than reusing the nationality-choice scheme applied to Question 8 (see Tables 6a & 6b). Japan was the country named most often overall, but the proportion varied by grade: from roughly a third of respondents in Grades 3 and 4 (32.4%, 31.8%) to a majority in Grade 5 (56.2%), before falling back to 35.7% in Grade 6. America was named by 12.5% to 25.0% of students across grades, while mentions of Korea rose steadily with age, from 2.9% in Grade 3 to 25.0% in Grade 6. This grade-level variation in named country approached conventional significance, $\chi^2(9, N = 138) = 16.99, p = .049, V = .19$, though several expected cell counts fell below 5 and the result should be treated cautiously. The reasons given for liking a country shifted more clearly with age: vague or unelaborated answers (e.g., “none”) accounted

for 41.2% of Grade 3 responses but only 7.1% of Grade 6 responses, while reasons grounded in familiarity or already living there increased from 5.9% to 25.0%, and reasons citing media or pop-culture exposure rose from 0% to 17.9%, across the same span. This grade-level variation in justification was also significant, $\chi^2(18, N = 138) = 33.71, p = .014, V = .28$. Food/cuisine and general interest or curiosity (in culture, history, language, sports, or scenery) were the most common reasons given at every grade level, whereas explicitly identity-based reasons were rare, consistent with a “liking” judgement that is more aspirational and exploratory than a claim about the self.

Table 6a *Country Named as Liked (Question 5), by Grade*

Country	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Japan (C1)	11	14	18	10
America (C2)	7	9	4	7
Korea (C3)	1	5	6	7
Other named country (C4)	21	18	8	8

Table 6b *Reasons for Liking the Named Country (Question 5), by Grade*

Reason	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Food/Cuisine (R1)	6	6	8	4
Peace, Safety & Kindness (R2)	1	6	4	5
Familiarity/Home (R3)	2	3	7	7
Media/Pop-Culture (R4)	0	2	4	5
Family/Personal Connection (R5)	4	6	0	4
Interest/Culture/Scenery (R6)	9	12	8	4
Vague/No Reason (R7)	14	10	5	2

Students were separately asked which country's person they would want to be if they could freely choose their own nationality, and why (もしあなたが、どこでも自由に自分の国を選べるとしたら、あなたはどこの国の人になりたいですか。それはどうしてですか; Question 8). Across all grades, a majority of students selected Japan as their preferred nationality, though a substantial minority chose another country (see Tables 7a & 7b). Justifications reveal a consistent emotional geography: Japan is associated with safety, familiarity, and comfort, while other countries are associated with interest, enjoyment, and novelty. Fear-based representations of the outside world are relatively rare, and identity-based justifications for choosing Japan increase with age.

Table 7a *Nationality Choice by Grade*

Response	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Japan (F1)	26	25	26	12
Other country (F2)	18	19	7	9
Conditional/Mixed (F3)	0	1	3	1

Table 7b *Reasons for Nationality Choice*

Reason	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Japan = Safe/Comfortable (G1)	16	10	25	9
Overseas = Interesting (G2)	14	15	7	11
Overseas = Scary (G3)	0	2	0	0
Pragmatic/Instrumental (G4)	3	3	0	0
Identity/Belonging (G5)	6	12	7	3
Vague/None (G6)	4	10	0	1

It is worth distinguishing between what Questions 5/6 and Question 8 each reveal. The former asked which country students *liked* or would like to *live in* — a measure of curiosity and aspiration — while the latter asked which country's *person* they would want to *be*, a more fundamental question of identity and belonging. A student might readily express a desire to live abroad while remaining firmly anchored in Japanese identity, and the data suggest this is the dominant pattern. Students' outward orientation is largely aspirational rather than one of identity: curiosity about other countries does not extend to a reimagining of the self as potentially belonging to — or communicating within — those worlds, a pattern consistent with the broader finding of development without repositioning.

Students' curiosity about other countries, then, appears to be aspirational rather than participatory: interest in the outside world does not extend to a sense of themselves as potential participants within it.

Synthesis: Development Without Repositioning

Taken together, the findings reveal a clear paradox. Across grade levels, students demonstrate increasing representational complexity and, by around Grade 5, emerging perspective-taking and decentering. Yet English itself remains consistently positioned as external. Cognitive development progresses, but the symbolic ownership of English does not shift. This aspirational-but-not-participatory orientation resembles what Yashima (2002) terms international posture, yet remains short of it: affective understandings of “home” and “elsewhere” create an emotional geography (Blunt & Dowling, 2006) in which belonging and mobility become imaginable, but that imagined mobility does not yet extend to English itself as a resource learners see themselves using (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2013).

Students move from affective descriptions of English toward more socially indexed understandings, increasingly associating it with particular kinds of people and social roles. To recall: affective descriptions, predominant in Grades 3 and 4, included responses such as “English is difficult,” “English is fun,” or “English is hard but interesting” — framings that position the language primarily as a school subject experienced by the learner. Socially indexed descriptions, more prevalent in Grades 5 and 6, included responses such as “English is used by people who work overseas,” “famous people speak English,” or “English is for people who have studied hard and passed exams” — framings that position the language as a marker of particular social identities and roles. The shift between these two orientations is significant: it represents a move from English-as-task to English-as-symbol. Yet as the data show, neither orientation positions English as a resource the student themselves might legitimately use. At the same time, the language remains overwhelmingly attributed to geographically or nationally defined others. Even as learners begin to relativise national identity and imagine themselves as foreigners in other contexts, they do not reconceptualise English as a resource they might rightfully claim.

This disjunction suggests that perspective-taking and linguistic ownership operate in distinct social dimensions: students increasingly recognise that they themselves could become “foreigners” abroad, yet do not reconceptualise English as a language they might legitimately use. In the Japanese context, English is institutionally categorised as a foreign language and widely associated with particular national and racialised identities (Kubota, 1998; Rivers, 2021), and developmental readiness alone is insufficient to disrupt this structural positioning. The result is a form of development without repositioning: intercultural awareness expands, but the symbolic boundary between *us* and *English* persists.

This persistent symbolic externalisation has important implications for learners’ developing sense of themselves as potential language users. If English is imagined primarily as belonging to Americans, other foreigners, or internationally mobile people, then increased perspective-taking alone does not necessarily generate a sense of legitimacy in using the language oneself. Although students increasingly recognise by around Grade 5 that they themselves would be perceived as foreigners abroad, this cognitive shift does not appear to extend to a corresponding recognition that English might function as a communicative resource available to them.

This pattern stands in tension with the objectives articulated in MEXT’s curriculum guidelines (2014, 2017), which position English education as fostering intercultural understanding and globally minded citizenship from the elementary level onward. It is also consistent with critiques of the discourse of *kokusairikai* (国際理解, “international understanding”), which has been argued to frame cultural difference in ways that reinforce a sense of distinctive Japanese identity rather than a space of potential belonging (Kubota, 2019). If learners complete elementary school with English still stably positioned as a language belonging to externalised others, then the policy ambition of intercultural communicative competence rests on a cognitive and ideological foundation that current classroom practices may not yet adequately support. From this perspective, the challenge is not simply increasing intercultural awareness, but fostering a participatory orientation toward English in which learners can imagine themselves as genuine users rather than distant observers of intercultural communication.

Implications for Intercultural Education

The findings reported here have implications not only for how intercultural development is understood in early language learning, but also for how intercultural education is designed at the elementary level. Intercultural pedagogy, as defined in the Introduction, refers to practice that explicitly engages learners in reflection on cultural difference, linguistic diversity, and their own positionality — and it is this orientation, rather than any discrete set of activities, that the present findings suggest is most needed at the elementary level. Deardorff (2006) defines intercultural competence as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes, with openness, respect and curiosity positioned as foundational conditions for later development. This framework anchors the pedagogical recommendations here (more recent elaborations e.g. Deardorff, 2019, extend it in ways that warrant attention beyond the scope of the present study). This suggests that many learners already demonstrate such openness by late elementary school. However, this openness does not necessarily translate into a sense of legitimate participation in English-mediated communication. The findings therefore suggest that the primary constraint at this stage may be less developmental than ideological, shaped by how English is positioned within the educational environment.

In this context, intercultural education may need to support learners in developing a more participatory orientation toward English: a sense of themselves as bona fide users of English as a communicative resource rather than as perpetual learners of a language imagined to belong primarily to others. The Grade 5 turning point identified in this study suggests a particularly important window for intervention, as learners appear increasingly capable of perspective-taking and reflection on their own positionality.

One implication concerns how English users are represented in classroom materials. The hitherto dominant image of Western native-speaker models in Japanese ELT materials (Davidson & Liu, 2020) may reinforce the perception that English belongs primarily to people unlike the learners themselves. Including a greater number of multilingual speakers, Asian English users, and Japanese figures who use English in international or everyday contexts could help reposition English as a resource with diverse and legitimate users. Importantly, questions of legitimacy here are not purely linguistic: the data suggest that who counts as an English user is also shaped by racialised assumptions about embodiment, making the diversification of classroom representations all the more important.

A second implication involves creating opportunities for learners to reflect on their own existing encounters with English through media, games, music, technology, and popular culture. These encounters function as what Appadurai (1996) terms *mediascapes* — social imaginaries constructed through circulating images rather than direct experience — and, from a Critical Language Awareness perspective (Fairclough, 1992), such representations are never ideologically neutral: they carry assumptions about who English belongs to that learners absorb without the critical distance direct intercultural contact might otherwise provide. Research associated with Global Englishes pedagogy suggests that recognising these existing relationships with English can support learners in identifying themselves as English users (Canagarajah, 2013). Such activities may help reposition English from an external school subject to a social practice already present within learners' lived environments.

More broadly, the findings raise questions not only for individual teachers or classroom practices, but for the wider structure of elementary English education in Japan. Current policy discourse emphasises intercultural understanding and global engagement, yet English often continues to be framed as symbolically external to learners' present identities and social realities. The evidence presented here suggests important limitations in how far current approaches create the conditions necessary for intercultural competence to meaningfully develop. If English remains positioned primarily as the language of distant others, advances in perspective-taking may continue to coexist with stable forms of linguistic othering. Intercultural competence, therefore, may require not only exposure to cultural difference and developmental maturation, but also opportunities to reconsider how linguistic legitimacy and identity are constructed within schooling.

Conclusion

This study examined how Japanese elementary school students conceptualise English, its users, and cultural difference during a formative period of cognitive and social development. The findings reveal a clear developmental shift: perspective-taking and decentering begin to emerge—particularly around Grade 5—yet the symbolic positioning of English as inherently foreign remains remarkably stable.

Across grade levels, English is consistently attributed to socially distant others, with little evidence that students imagine themselves as credible or entitled participants in English-mediated communication, despite increasing cognitive capacity for relativizing identity. Developmental progress thus emerges without linguistic repositioning. Perspective-taking expands, but the ideological boundary between “us” and “English” persists.

These findings suggest that the primary constraint on intercultural development in this context lies less in developmental limitation than in the way schools socially frame English. Without explicit engagement with questions of ownership and representation, emerging capacities for decentering may coexist with stable forms of othering rather than transform them. Examining learners' symbolic representations in the early stages of language education is therefore essential for understanding how meaningful intercultural participation can be fostered. More broadly, the findings raise a critical question for

intercultural education in Japan: not whether young learners are capable of intercultural competence, but whether the educational system itself is capable of creating the ideological conditions necessary for such competence to develop meaningfully.

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Questionnaire Instrument (English Translation with Japanese Original)

Instructions to students:

Please answer the following questions honestly. There are no right or wrong answers.

以下の質問に正直に答えてください。正解も不正解もありません。

Question 1

Please tell us about the language(s) you use every day.

あなたがいつも使っている言葉について教えてください。

Which language(s) do you use at home? Circle the number that applies. If you circle (2) or (3), please write the name of the language in the brackets.

あなたがいつもおうちで使っている言葉は何ですか。あてはまる番号に○をつけてください。(2)(3)に○をした人は()の中に言葉の名前を書いてください。

- (1) Japanese only 日本語だけ
- (2) Japanese and () language 日本語と () 語
- (3) () language only () 語だけ

Question 2

When you hear the word “English,” what image or feeling comes to mind?

「英語」と聞いて、どんなイメージを持ちますか。どんな感じがしますか。

[Open-ended response] 自由記述

Question 3

What kind of person do you think speaks English? Who do you think mainly uses English?

英語を話す人はどんな人だと思いますか。主にどんな人が英語を使っていると思いますか。

[Open-ended response] 自由記述

Question 4

Do you know about any countries other than Japan? Circle the number that applies.

あなたは日本のほかに国を知っていますか。どちらかの番号に○をつけてください。

(1) Yes, I know about other countries.

(2) No, I do not.

(1) はい、知っています。

(2) いいえ、知りません。

↓ If (1):

Where did you learn about those countries?

その国をどこで知りましたか。

[Open-ended response] 自由記述

↓ If (2):

→ Please go to Question 7

→ 問題「7」へ

In what ways do you think those countries are very different from Japan?

あなたの知っているそれらの国と日本で、とても違うところはどこだと思いますか。

[Open-ended response] 自由記述

Question 5

Is there a country you particularly like? Why do you like that country?

あなたには特に好きな国がありますか。なぜその国が好きですか。

[Open-ended response] 自由記述

Question 6

Among countries other than Japan, is there a country where you would like to live? Circle the number that applies.

日本の他の国の中で「住んでみたいな」と思う国はありますか。どちらかの番号に○をしてください。

(1) Yes, there is.

(2) No, there is not.

(1) はい、あります。

(2) いいえ、ありません。

↓ If (1):

Which country? Why do you think so?

それはどこですか。なぜそう思いますか。

[Open-ended response] 自由記述

↓ If (2):

→ Please go to Question 7

→ 問題「7」へ

Question 7

Imagine that you have grown up and are now living in Italy (or America). Would you be considered a “foreigner” there?

あなたが大人になって、イタリア（またはアメリカ）に住むことになったと考えてください。そこではあなたは「外国人」ですか。

(1) Yes, I would be a foreigner.

(2) No, I would not.

(1) はい、そうです。

(2) いいえ、ちがいます。

Question 8

If you could freely choose which country to belong to, which country's person would you want to be? Why?

もしあなたが、どこでも自由に自分の国を選べるとしたら、あなたはどこの国の人になりたいですか。それはどうしてですか。

[Open-ended response] 自由記述
