

Group presentation: Empowering Self Identity in East Asian Language Classrooms (250 words, March 10)

Many East Asian language courses in the U.S. have a large proportion of Asian (heritage or international) students, and it is not uncommon that Asian students predominate. This creates a complex learning environment for both Asian and non-Asian students. Asian students have an advantage due to their preexisting linguistic knowledge. To a varying degree, many heritage students already have oral communication skills from the onset of instruction. Asian international students also have an advantage due to the shared linguistic properties among the East Asian languages (i.e., logogram in Chinese and Japanese, syntactic and morphological similarities between Japanese and Korean, and Chinese-origin cognates in Japanese and Korean). While educators are aware of these disparities and strive to create an environment beneficial to all students, the complexity stemming from students' cultural values or racial profile is often dismissed, if not unnoticed. Students' experiences differ also due to their cultural perceptions and how others perceive them. Our panel addresses issues concerning learners' racial and cultural identity from heritage learners' and non-Asian learners' perspectives. Lu and Yoon examine the intricate relationship between heritage learners' language learning and identity reconstruction. Lu reports a study that investigated heritage Chinese learners' experiences in a study-abroad setting. Yoon demonstrates multiple barriers (logical, socioemotional, and ideological) that demotivate mixed-race Korean heritage learners while studying the language. Nishi discusses how non-Asian students' learning of Japanese is shaped by their cultural perceptions, focusing on gender identity, and explores the ways in which learning Japanese can serve as an opportunity for self-empowerment.

Yuan Lu is Lecturer of Chinese and serves as the interim coordinator of the Chinese program at the University of Iowa, supervising curriculum and instruction. His main research interests involve second language acquisition theories and research methods, language assessment and testing, contextual effects on second language development, and grammar and discourse learning and teaching in Chinese as a second language.

Sang-Seok Yoon is Assistant Professor of Korean Linguistics at the University of Iowa. He has two primary research areas. One is to find effective ways of teaching and learning Korean as a second/foreign language, especially focusing on interlanguage pragmatics. The other is to examine how politeness is expressed in the Korean language.

Yumiko Nishi is Associate Professor of Japanese Linguistics at the University of Iowa. Her research areas are verb semantics and second language acquisition. She is particularly interested in investigating cross-linguistic variations and their significance in second language acquisition. She serves as Linguistics and Pedagogy Editor of *Japanese Language and Literature*.