

## **Interview #1 – Seiko Harumi**

(53:31)

### **KEYWORDS:**

Japan, students, Japanese, silence, classroom, teachers, writing, book, linguistics, people, English, interested, native English, read, eikaiwa, article, problems, question, toilet paper, paper

### **KEY CONCEPTS:**

### **TRANSCRIPT:**

Shachter: Welcome to the very first episode of lost in the citations. My guest today is Dr. Seiko, Harumi. How are you?

Harumi: I'm okay. Hello, Jonathan.

Shachter: And you are you're calling in from London. Is that correct?

Harumi: Yes, that's correct. I'm Tom, I have to

Shachter: What time is it now?

Harumi: It's eight o'clock here. It's very quiet.

Shachter: So it's eight in the morning. There. It's it's 5pm here in Japan. So you just just woke up. You're drinking some coffee?

Harumi: Yes, that's right.

Shachter: Oh, nice. Well, do you normally wake up this early? I appreciate you making?

Harumi: Yeah, actually, I wake up early to go to work. But now I see. No, it's locked down. But stay wake up early.

Shachter: Yeah. So we're recording this on March 25? what's what's going on? What's going on in London as as you know, in Japan, you know, our semesters about ready to start. And at least my school they're planning on starting on time, I think the around April 9. So I see the terms. The terms in in England, do they end? Do they align with the American terms where the spring term ends in in May or something like that?

Harumi: Well, it depends on the institution. But in my school, we ended just last week. So the last week of the time was chaotic. And day by day, the government's change the policies, so we had to switch on to the online teaching next day. So it was very, very chaotic. Yeah.

Shachter: So you finished in March, when does the term start?

Harumi: Ah, that's again in 2012. April, just for two weeks before the exam. Okay, so, yeah, so but, uh, but we still have a lot of things to plan ahead.

Shachter: So I'm still a little bit confused. So Japan, as you know, starts in April, and then goes till July, July, and then we have August off, then we start in September, and go to

Harumi: Well, this this year, we're changing to 14 week term. So this year, it's going to be September to December and will be finished. So we'll have January, February, March off.

Shachter: So can you can you? What's the term? What's the schedule in England schools?

Harumi: I see. What we actually do academically is starts at the end of September or beginning of October, then the and the first time and this finished just before Christmas. And then the second time finish just before Easter, and then they would have another to sort of live each week. Then exam. Yeah.

Shachter: Okay. Were you planning on coming back to Japan? For the

Harumi: I was, but I had to cancel?

Shachter: Oh, no.

Harumi: Yeah, because then the last, especially one month, we didn't know what's happening. So I was examining the stration. But unfortunately, things got worse. So now we even asked to be to remain in the UK, so so there wasn't much choice.

Shachter: Wow, how How's it going? Day by day, I would have to say in Japan, things calm down. About two or three weeks ago, there was a bit of a panic buying with toilet paper. But I heard that was I don't know if you saw but it was more of the fake news where there was a story circulating where the toilet paper companies needed to send their materials to the mask making companies. And that's Yes. And then. And then the toilet paper toilet paper company in Japan posted this picture. No, no, don't worry, everyone. And I swear since that picture was posted, everything calmed down here. And yeah, everything seems to be kind of back to normal from, from what I mean. Well, I live in Kyushu. So I mean, the weather's warmer, we have, you know, very few cases down here. What's it like? What's it like in England now?

Harumi: Wow, we actually have that problem. Now it's very difficult to find the toilet paper. But the end because we have somebody at house who is older than 60 we received an email from supermarket they can offer you the delivery. While the supermarket because they have the you know, data for the customers. They offer you to delivery as a priority for the household who and if you have somebody older than 60

Shachter: very helpful. who's who's who's over over? Who's over 60

Harumi: Oh, it's my husband,

Shachter: Your husband. Okay.

Harumi: Yeah, so I'm the my case. Okay, so we have a bit of a privilege but we actually have the problem of finding certain items like toilet papers and eggs

and other things that essential things. So it's this trade show is very similar to other countries in Europe as well.

Shachter: Wow Well, let's let's jump into the show I, I wanted to let you know, and maybe the future listeners the impetus for the show. So I've started something called a master's in research. Uh huh. I have advisors in Australia, and I'm going to be pursuing a PhD, starting the end of this year. And so yeah, connected program where they said, Well, you know, you're not really quite good enough to jump right into the PhD. So why don't you do this, you know, this Master's is what it's what they gave me credit for the first year. And then I'm doing the second year. And it sort of, you know, get get better at researching, you know, fine tune your ideas, and so forth. So last month, I was writing something called a research frontiers essay. And it was about test anxiety. And I read about 35 to 40 articles. And I have to say, Now, not yours, your article that we're going to get into later that that wasn't involved with with testing. This is yes. But I was, so I was reading about 35 to 40 articles. And there's this one article that just stuck out beyond all the rest. And it was this article. Oh, here it is. This article called Yerkes Dodson law for all seasons by a guy named Carl haulover Keegan. And this was written in 1994. And it was just it was just weird. I mean, I had articles spread all around the apartment, and I'm, you know, reading them all the time. And then there's just one article that was by far the best. And I just thought, you know what it might, it might be nice to just see if this, you know, with the internet, see if this guy's online, so I just googled him, and his email, and I sent him an email. And I said, Look, this is I just wanted to let you know, this is the best paper of all the papers that I've read about this. Yeah. And he actually wrote me back. And I thought it was the coolest thing. I mean, it was just I feel, again, that a lot of us get sort of lost in citations. And then we forget there's real people out there. Yeah, wrote these articles. And, yeah, and they're not just citations in a paper. So that's sort of the impetus for for the show to reach out. And yes, hear from them.

Harumi: Yeah, that's great, I think is I think, even you're interested in the meeting the actual person who written that particular paper, I think you just didn't have the courage to do so. So I think you did the very good progress for that.

Shachter: Well, and the other thing is, you know, researching is a bit lonely as well, right? You know, yes.

Harumi: Yes, I guess.

Shachter: Okay, so let's start. Let's start with the paper. So today's paper that I chose, which is it's everyone that I know that that deals with language learning anxiety has read this paper. It's from 2011. And it's classroom silence voices from Japanese EFL learners. Now, this was a while ago. And you've written? Yeah, I mean, your, I don't know how many papers you've written. And you just wrote a book we can get into later. But yeah, let's start with this paper. So this, this is a paper that I actually read first, a couple years ago, when I was doing some research with language learning anxiety, and I've come back to it. It's one of those papers, that is just it. It'll always be around when I'm working on on things. So first of all, do you remember writing the paper? Is this fresh in your mind? How does it feel, you know, revisiting something you wrote eight years ago,

Harumi: actually, but to me, it's everything I'm enjoying. Now, it's connected to this paper and also to my PhD when I did it, even long, even the 1999. So everything is connected to me, I tries to evolve, what I think about classroom interactions. So to me, of course, it's aged, but I think it's still I get some inspiration from my work.

Shachter: So we're, your timeline there. Let's Yeah, let's work. So where were you in 2011. In your career, two sets, I lepen.

Harumi: Okay, actually was in London already. And after I finished PhD I was teaching at so as where I am, I work now as well. And then the, and after I did my PhD, I also was looking at the silence in the Japanese context, as well. So um, I just carried on what I was doing for a long time.

Shachter: So So that's, that's the University of London.

Harumi: Yes, that's right.

Shachter: What is SOA stand for?

Harumi: Okay. It's queued up Oriental and African Studies. So basically, we teach and the East Asian languages and African languages along with some cultures and some discipline subjects, and so it's a bit like a guy die in Japan and but it's part of universal Brandon. So it's a Small institution but Sandy, it's one of the school within the University of London.

Shachter: So you, you were born in Nagasaki?

Harumi: Yes, that's right. Yeah.

Shachter: Where did you go for your undergraduate?

Harumi: I went to a university in Nagasaki. And also then afterwards, I started working as a teacher at Junior High School in Nagasaki. So, Nagasaki is really the place I really started my career.

Shachter: And then, and then you, you went and got your masters.

Harumi: Yes. And I came to London to do a master's degree. And at Institute of Education, now it's part we use the L. But and the bigger it's because of the thing. So was settled by inspired by students at junior high school, I had lots of questions about the teaching methods. And but I didn't have a chance to study about it in Japan. So I decided to go to UK and to study more.

Shachter: And then and then how soon after that, did you do your PhD,

Harumi: PhD, and after I did a Masters, it's actually only one year he UK. So I wanted to go back to teaching. And so I went back. But then after two years, I came back to UK to the PhD, because the first of all, the one year for masters was very short. And I still wanted to explore the topic of silence for the PhD. And so I came back.

Shachter: Alright, so this issue of silence, I think it's very unique to Japan. Why, why did you feel you wanted to explore it more in England was your advisor as a specialist in this regard.

Harumi: It wasn't actually, my supervisor was Dr. Guy Cook, I don't know, Professor Guy Cook, I don't know, he he already retired. But at the time, when I did PhD, or Ma, he was at the Institute of Education, he said, expert for discourse analysis. So he he was interested in this sort of classroom interaction, but he wasn't the sort of sort of expert for the and the silence itself. But he gave me a lot of a lot of, and the sort of inspiration for my writing. And the site's not because of the teacher, but I think it's just because of my topic. And the reason why I was interested in this topic was the I think it's, I think a two p two group of people inspired me at first is a students and I myself as a Japanese English teacher, I come across this problem very often. So I do not because you teach in Japan, you as you said, This issue is a sort of widespread and still sort of some waves going on. And the other group is the ALT teachers, and as a standard English teacher in Japan, because I do a lot of team teaching with them, and then the eye often hurts. The more, the more that isn't so difficult to break the wall of the silence. When you ask questions, there is no answer, and you don't know what to do. And then as a Japanese person, I could sense what students are feeling and thinking, but I couldn't explain. Well, that's why I wanted to find out the reason why this is happening in the Japanese classroom.

Shachter: So your dissertation, did you do data collection in Japan?

Harumi: Yes, I do.

Shachter: See, okay. Okay. So yeah, let's talk. Let's talk about this issue. So I worked before I taught at university I worked in an Eikaiwa. Which is it for people that don't speak Japanese? That's a sort of an English language school. School finger quotes, Oh, my, my sort of opinion about a chi was in Japan are a bit mixed. And maybe that's a content for a different a different show. But anyway, one of one of my jobs was I had to assess student levels when they came to the a chi Wah, so we could put them in a prep class and match them with the next book. And there was a few times so for whatever reason,

there's a quote, a cow had this sort of routine where, you know, you would give the student an assessment and it was very strict and, and, and it was very, you know, supervised, and I think it was 45 minutes. That's what it was, no matter no matter the level, like you had to sit in the room with the student for 45 minutes, which I always thought was strange, because as a beginner, if there's a student that has zero ability, you probably can guess that very soon. You But anyway, yeah, that was there. Did you do that? You had to talk to them. So you I guess it was almost like a script. I mean, you know how it is. It's Yeah, it's very formulaic. And they had this system. And that's the way it was. And it was way for, I guess, students to get a feel for a sort of a mock lesson and for the teachers to do an assessment, and you have to fit it inside the block of time, which was 45 minutes or something. And there was a few times where you would you just start from the script, the very first question, how are you today? Yeah, yeah. Or what's your name? Or Yeah. And then there was a few students who would not speak for upwards of 15 to 20 minutes.

Harumi: Yeah.

Shachter: And I had to sit in the room. And but it was interesting, after 15 or 20 minutes there, there was some improvement. So maybe there was some logic behind that? I'm not really sure. But I guess what you were you were mentioning before about your empathizing with the alts. With this, and it comes up in your paper is sort of the tolerance for silence in the classroom. Yes, a lot of Western Western teachers were not really used to now I read a study where some some some English as a foreign language teachers, maybe our our, our do have some tolerance to silence? Possibly, possibly, okay, you you you asked a certain amount of questions in a class and 40% of the time, you will get silence or something like that. I read some article. But I guess in Japan, it's much higher. What would you say the percentage of times a teacher would ask a question would be greeted with silence in in Japan.

Harumi: Why it's very difficult. It depends on the age group and proficiency level as well. But you know, that so my colleague, Jim can, he also did a similar research, more quantitative research. And he, he did some data, he said more

than 80% 90% is the teachers talking time. But so the students doesn't really take any city response. So it can be 80% 90%.

Shachter: So that's, that's, that that's an interesting point. So the first I guess, the first thing is in fairness to alts and foreign teachers, we do have some tolerance towards silence, but if you're looking at a 40% to an 80% difference, hmm, yes, it can be it can be shocking. Now, I want to jump into some of the the results from your your study here. Now. Again, the the articles name is classroom silence, voices from Japanese EFL learners in 2011. Now, you did an interesting thing, where you you took qualitative data from students from native English teachers and from Japanese English teachers. And, and, and the first the first data you provided the teachers interpretations of silence and there is a there's some big differences between the the native English teachers and the Japanese English teachers the first one, so you broke this up into four categories, linguistic, linguistic problems, problems with time and psychological problems and depends on the situation. So at first, the linguistic problems, so Okay, so teacher asks a question they're greeted by silence. The student does not know the answer. Japanese English teachers had about 29.4 and then then the native English teachers 6.7. And then the other thing was student does not understand the the native English teachers with 33.3 and the Japanese English teachers was 11.8. So that so that is that was just so huge to me. So a Japanese teacher, when they when they when they're greeted by silence, they they assume the student does not know the answer. And then the native English teacher assumes they just don't understand maybe the English being transferred Is that correct?

Harumi: Yeah, I think so. Because in case of a Japanese teacher, they can switch into Japanese so the understanding of question itself cannot be a program as they think but I think for the native English teachers, I think just make the students understand what has been asked is the one big step and so I think and this Yeah, this The result is something interesting to see its absence. Now problems with time they were pretty similar. When they got the psychological problems shyness and boredom were fairly similar. But native English teachers assumed cultural reasons. So I guess you know, these native English teachers did understand that you know, Japanese people are

more shy or, or quiet, but the Japanese English teacher did not see that as a factor. For reasons what how do ya how did how did you interpret that?

Shachter: I was quite interested in the reaction, this huge difference, I think, the maybe cultural reasons for the Japanese teacher, maybe it's too obvious for them. So they might not take it as a real factor. They go impression they don't look into it. But for the native English teachers, they I think that why they communicate and it's very different from the students. And so I think that they don't even though they don't understand exactly what this cultural reasons are, they feel something it's very different. And when you when they interact, yeah, okay, so just think to Yeah, okay. It's interesting how you see this difference as a native English teacher who teach in Japan as well.

Harumi: Yeah, I mean, it is it is interesting. I, I, I will looking at this data, just to recap. So, frankly, when the interpretations of silence So for for native English teachers, number one they thought the student does not understand. Now, is that mean? They don't understand English or they don't understand the question. I guess language, right? They don't understand. Yes,

Shachter: yeah.

Harumi: Yeah. Okay. So number one, they don't understand English or the language. Number two? Yeah. Number two was, students are thinking about how to answer. And number three were cultural reasons. When you go to the Japanese side, number number one, and number two are tied. student does not know the answer. student thinking how to answer. Mm hmm. And then number three was boredom.

Shachter: I think it's true. And I think it's awesome. Even some students and for us live different in the class, or doing something else and not concentrate. I think it's, it's true. And then when you go over to the student side, it's it's, it's much different. The students said is 67% of their problems were with linguistics.

Harumi: Yes. One 1.3 was problem with time. Around 23% were psychological problems. And then around, you know, 9% were problems with taking turns. I'm interested in the psychological problems. So I was assuming that the

psychological problems would be much higher. But from your study, the linguistics problems were almost 70% of the reasons for silence either problems with vocabulary problems, expressing myself in English problems with comprehension and listening. These are all just skills, just that they're not confident in their skills. Which would which would mean that this isn't maybe they're not so different than other EFL learners who aren't, you know, I might be the same way in a Japanese class, if I'm, you know, confident.

Shachter: Yes, I was. I was surprised by that.

Harumi: Yeah, you think I think, yeah, I did the similar and the Saba in the other classes, and I got my class, I now teach Japanese language to the students here. And then I think it depends on the levels of the proficiency, I think the beginners and I think linguistic problems can be a 60%, around 60% 70%. And the source of the problem, not speaking. But all obviously, it's related to psychological problems. So I think if you look into the, the correlation with both links, the problem psychological problems, it might be more interesting. Yeah. So I think our show data, the answer, that the reason behind it, it's more complicated than you see from the data.

Shachter: Yeah, I, I, I think the same thing, because when you're dealing with silence, or even you mentioned, you know, a subtopic of shyness,

Harumi: Mm hmm.

Shachter: So silence and shyness. They're, they kind of go together in some ways, in Japanese culture, where even the word shyness, maybe in English in Japanese has different connotation. Because I was reading an article where they were talking about how Japanese people spend a lot of energy in social situations throughout Japan, not in the classroom just to maintain etiquette or to use the kago. And yeah, and they're, they're afraid to say the wrong word in a social situation. And, and there was this and I think the person was talking about how in Japan there's complimentary relationships, where they need to reinforce status, where Western has symmetrical relationships, where almost we mirror each other. So the point was, possibly Some, some Japanese people consider some consider themselves shy. But in actuality, it's

a fear of saying the wrong thing in social situations. Mm hmm. Yeah. So when you're talking about students say the reason that they're they're silent is because they're shy, could also just be a fear of making mistakes. So these are sort of right.

Harumi: Yes.

Shachter: Yeah. So that's why this this topic is so interesting. Because, yeah, can't really know what a person's thinking when they're silent, right?

Harumi: Yes, that's right. Yes, that's, that's why you need, you need to have a sort of data from different sources and sand to try to find out. I think, in reality, even you asked the reason for being silent. I think, you know, that person cannot be hundred percent sure. What so they are thinking, so I think you you need to be careful about how to sort of make a generalization.

Shachter: And but I think in that sense, I think the multiple data collection is very important, I think, what what are your What are your recommendations for teachers who are teaching Japanese students outside of Japan, inside Japan? Is it the same advice or different advice?

Harumi: Ah, I think I think a strange one, there might be some common things like the communicative startup students themselves must be quite similar in some ways, but I think a student's learning English and outside Japan, they, they try to adapt themselves in the new culture. So I think maybe in some sense, it's much easier to help them to, and to speak out. But in Japan, I think you need more preparation for the, for the students so they can be confident enough to speak out in the classroom.

Shachter: Can you hold on one second, I need to tell my daughter to stop singing. She's just addicted to frozen to it all the time. But I can hear I hear that. Yeah. Hold on one second. Yeah. Anyway, yeah. Yeah. So go ahead.

Harumi: And I think I read through this article after some time, this morning. But I think a lot of things I can still think of, and the, the something, I can look into it. And so I think there are a lot of information in this article, I think.

But I you sit down, you're interested in the psychological aspects of the learners behaviors?

Shachter: Yeah. Um, so my research is more trying to validate self reports with an objective measure. Yeah, so right now I'm working, measuring heart rate. Now I know heart rate isn't isn't always the best example of physiological arousal. But I'm, I'm building a tool where you can collect heart rate via Fitbit smartwatches. So it's sort of non obtrusive in the classroom. And then I'm going to be giving out questionnaires and I want to sort of correlate the self reports with, with the the heart rate in real time. I feel like so getting sort of data in real time, like you said, you know, looking back retrospectively saying, Okay, well, how were you feeling in that moment, the person might not be accurately be able to tell you now, I might not be able to know, I might not be able to know why someone's silent, but I might be able to see an arousal level. And then that way, I could say, Okay, well, this person's nervous, and then maybe you could try to figure out why were they nervous? Were they nervous?

Harumi: And that's just saying, Yeah, psychology and the check in hot lights, and is it something common and things to detect the psychological state of that person?

Shachter: So the physiology, physiological measurements are usually via heart rate, blood pressure, cortisol, sometimes muscle tension, wow, video facial expression. So these are things that aren't really feasible in the cloud. Yeah. So I want to start with heart rate and go from there and see how they correlate. But a real you know, I'm you know, my background is in linguistics, but I couldn't find an advisor in linguistics. So now I'm studying psychology. I have to learn about real psychological studies.

Harumi: Yeah, that's interesting. I think this should be a thing with linguistics and the psychology. So if you if you tried to find the sort of a link through your research would be very interesting.

Shachter: Well, there there is there. There are I'm already finding a lot of links and fear of negative evaluation. That's one of the causes of language learning

anxiety. interactional domains, even shyness has links to psychology. So there's, there's some Yeah, even anxiety vulnerability, some, some people are more vulnerable to anxiety than others. And so one of the, I think there's three main vulnerable vulnerabilities, and one of them is if a parent is overly protective, or, or doesn't, or is sort of the opposite. So there are a lot of Japanese parents that are, you know, or even society that are sort of like very strict on how you should behave. And it can mold people to certain vulnerabilities and anxiety. So I'm sort of seeing those links. Already. It's kind of it's kind of it's kind of interesting. I'm just in the beginning stages.

Harumi: Yes, yes. Yeah. But uh, yeah, it's very interesting. Yeah. Tax read your paper once you find out?

Shachter: Well, um, one thing about I asked you advice for Japanese students learning English outside of Japan or in Japan?

Harumi: Mm hmm.

Shachter: Now, I, I'm sure you know, this, that just the the English proficiency in Japan has been steadily decreasing, since 2011, where other countries in Asia like Singapore, and even Korea are jumping up quite high in the rankings, when we're having this whole. So the world of you know, international commerce and expansion. Now, Japan still has the third largest economy. But it seems like Japan and the population is shrinking. Less, even less university students are interested in studying abroad. There's this concept that I heard at a it wasn't a conference, but it was a speaker. And they talked about this idea of linguistic imperialism. You heard about Have you heard about this concept?

Harumi: Yes. Yeah. That's a factor. Yeah.

Shachter: Can be Yeah, can be I think it's definitely related to the government policy, but how the English to be taught in the classroom is one factor. In the past, I wasn't very interested in the government policy how to how the curriculum is implemented. I didn't see the clear link between the curriculum and also the classroom teaching practices. But now I started thinking it has a big

impact. And the long time ago, it reminds me of the episode when I went to sort of the kenshoo chi in Japan for the teacher things, teachers, and you know that in a really big space, like the take come and, and a teacher, yes, yeah. That teacher was sort of a teaching and to about 30 students, and the everybody was watching, and students are wearing a microphone. And then the, the teacher was teaching, but obviously, they rehearsed beforehand, I think, because not many students and didn't make any mistakes. And of course, there are some but of course, the distraction is also very odd. And after it's finished at the question and answer time, one AR t th asked, actually asked whether they did Hurst and because there was any mistakes, made not not so much mistakes. And so I felt this question is really the the oddity of the Japanese classrooms, because then the, you know, the aim for this kind of training is to learn from each other. But I think they everything was sort of a setup beforehand. So that sort of the surficial, artificial, a sort of the the sort of strategy from the government, you know, which is affected, which affected the classroom teaching, even the training sessions was really striking. I think in nature. I think government policy hasn't changed very much, even the things and you know, it's the sort of the new communicative approach and so far and that a lot of ideas coming in. But that show, the practices hasn't actually changed very much. To me.

Harumi: You might have Yeah,

Shachter: well, no, that that brings back to the a chi Wah discussion. You know, mine is the The only reason why a chi was exist is because the English education system failed. Why else would they Why else would they be there? I mean, if the if the Japanese education system for English is working, Mm hmm. All of these businesses would go bankrupt. Right?

Harumi: Yeah, that's right. How is a covert thing going on? Is it getting better? So what? So?

Shachter: What? What do you mean by getting better?

Harumi: I mean, yeah, is it? Do you think it's a guy with school is helping the student to improve their proficiency?

Shachter: Ah, that's a really good question. I think that they would need to bring in some professional researchers to this to figure that out. I'm not so sure they're interested in in that I'm not I'm not even sure if they have a way to measure that against, you know, something specific, I would, I would say the most important My opinion is the most important goal for an AI was to make money, or at least as I say, business.

Shachter: I see. So that was my impression, it's less of a school than a business. Hmm. And while while there aren't while it's maybe it's one of those things like a gym, so depending on your personality, and depending on your motivations, you can succeed. People are there to help you succeed. But basically, the most important thing is you just keep coming back every month.

Yes, that's right. But how about student's point of view? I think when they come to a eikaiwa, I think some students have very clear aim like you want to study abroad, or that you want to use at workplace? And I don't know what whether the situation has been changed more like most students is going to a guy want to brush up English? Or what do you think there's just a population of the students who go to the A COA? as a sort of supplement to improve the English skills? Is it increasing or decreasing?

Harumi: I'm not sure. I think it also depends on the a chi wah. So I think there there are cases where, you know, I taught there a few years ago, and a chi wah. And they were our students, like you mentioned, maybe even a student from maybe Kyushu University who wants to get better at the TOEFL. Or you have a private lesson, and they and they can get better. But then you also have students that are maybe just looking to be exposed to a native English speaker. And I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I'm sure how well their English is improving. The other thing is expectation wise, from parents, who are

Shachter: putting their children in a chi was who were expecting these magical results with a lesson once a week. So the expectation, I think the expectation level is is is very different to an a chi Wah, maybe just because it's extra money.

Harumi: But, yeah, some of the things that that I've read is that in the schools now, maybe that's changing now, or for a long time, the the English classes were

Shachter: taught mainly in Japanese. Mm hmm. In high schools and junior high schools.

Harumi: Yes. Yeah.

So yeah. I'm not sure what's going on. I'm not sure what's going on with the AI was right now.

You're still around? Yeah. might be interesting to find out. Yeah. What's, uh, in terms of the the role of outside classroom and sort of opportunity to learn English, I think can be quite good point. But as you said, it seems that less students are interested in going abroad now. So I think I don't know stration change from now on.

Shachter: So when, when you were going to university, there was a lot of students that wanted to study abroad?

Harumi: Oh, I taught in Japan. And yes, yeah, I think we have quite a lot of students who want to serve abroad and see something's changed. Something's changed drastically in the past few years. I'm not sure what I'm sure. I'm not sure what's going on. I mean, I think it has something to do with it just seems like Japan is becoming more insulated. where, you know, again, the population is decreasing less people want to travel. I think it's harder for Japanese people to travel outside of Japan than people to travel inside Japan. People really, I mean, Japan's such a clean and safe country, and people are so polite, and the food is amazing. Everywhere you go. I must be hard in some ways for a Japanese person to travel abroad.

Harumi: Yes, that's right. And also some people say that because of the Internet, and you know that you can communicate with somebody easy like this. And you don't really have to go to outside. And so I think, I think social change affects the way people communicate in Japan, even to young people, and their motivation to learn English, I think.

Shachter: All right, let's, um, let's finish up with I have a couple of like, technical questions. So what's doo doo doo doo? Tell me about your process. As far as

writing do you do you keep a writing schedule where you try to write a little bit every day? I mean, are you working on multiple projects at once? Do you have goals, or how many papers you want to publish every year? planning stages like how what's like for me, you know, I really just do a lot of my work and on, you know, the months I have off, where other people say, Oh, no, you should write a little bit every day even during the school year.

Harumi: And that's really difficult for me. Yeah, what what about what about you your writing, it's same during the time time. It's very, very busy. And I actually have a lot of time to, and to write and the time to concentrate. And so I mainly write during the sort of summer time or the during Easter break. But even though I, of course, I do some of the work academic work day to do some some sort of preparation for writing, like reading. And so yeah, I tried to engage with research all through the year, but it depends what kind of activity you can do at certain time.

Shachter: Do you prefer to work on a project by yourself or collaborate with someone?

Harumi: Ah, I think in the past, I actually was happy to do it on my own everything. But now, was this the book project I just completing? And I collaborated with different people, and I find it quite rewarding. It's it's quite interesting to see one particular think from different perspective. So I think I'm very interested in to a more collaboration with other people.

Shachter: So this book, you're talking about East Asian perspectives on silence in English language education? That one?

Harumi: Yes, that's right.

Shachter: So you wrote it with Jim King, who's Jim king.

Harumi: He is a lecturer at the University of Leicester. He actually used to teach in Japan like me. And so he actually joined the research on silence from psychological perspective. So you might be interested in to reading his work?

Shachter: Yeah. So this, this book has a lot of different has a collection of different articles, which looked at silence from different perspective. And I looked at from the interaction perspective, I did the conversation novices, and to look at the classroom practices, but some teachers or some academics looked at the silence from psychological perspective, like, Are we willing and willingness to communicate and also land it for the language anxiety? And the so you must be interested?

Harumi: Well, it's coming out in June.

Yes, it is. I just actually sent the truth. This morning.

Shachter: I would say, Yeah, well, I I will definitely buy it once April 1 comes because that's when my reasoning kicks in.

Harumi: Oh, yeah. I can send you the 50% of code.

Shachter: No, no, that's okay. Oh, no, I'll take it. I'll take a coat. Yeah.

Harumi: Because it's from the publisher. I can distribute distribute everybody. So yeah. So I can send it to you.

Shachter: Definitely. That would, that would be great. I am interested in the especially the willingness to communicate, there's there's a lot of psychological things in there for sure. Yeah. So how many chapters are in the book?

Harumi: Nine, nine chapters?

Shachter: How long? How long have you been working on this?

Harumi: Actually quite long time. It's about four years. From the beginning, we had a punt. And first of all, we didn't think that we could do it as a book we're trying to do as sort of a special issue for the genre. But then the for some reason didn't work. So and the we change it to the book correction. And so it was a very long process. But the it was really interesting to see that we actually didn't put the call for papers, but we actually contacted some people

who did write something about silence. So but these people from different parts of the world, they they are also interested in this project. So it was very interesting. Yeah.

Shachter: What what people from around the world

Harumi: or the fast and fast one of the one of the Dinos that that I forgot. Isn't that bow. He also written a book about silence. He's saying he based in Monash Ashley. Yeah. In Australia, Monash Yeah, that Bob. Yeah, he actually looked at the saunas in different countries in East Asia. So, okay. He did regard the the role of the tasks Whereas these East Asian students how the task effects affect the students language behavior in a classroom.

Shachter: So there's two authors to the work, but you're saying there's other contributing writers?

Harumi: Yes, that's right. Yeah, we just want two of us and for the a part of it, but the rest of them are from different. And the contributions. So it's, yeah, it's a it's a collection. I would didn't write everything. Yeah. So yeah. So that was one of the aim that we we try to bring out different methodology to look at silence. I think there are some books available already. But I think there aren't any one particular book looking at the site and from different use in different methodologies as a collection. So I think it I hope, it helps for the quite a lot of academics, even the students who are studying in linguistics department.

Shachter: Well, maybe last question, do you have any advice for young researchers or young writers maybe some mistakes that you made that you wish you didn't? Or here's the trick of the trade that that helps you not to get lost in the citations? Or, you know, so? I see are the citations in this?

Harumi: I guess? I mean, how?

Shachter: I times when I'm researching something, I feel like I'm, sometimes I feel like I'm going too deep. And sometimes I feel like I'm not going deep enough. And then you get you get pulled, my supervisor calls it getting lost in the

abyss. Or maybe you go too far down, like do you have any advice for young writers or researchers how to organize, to keep yourself efficient to make sure you're on task? Yes, yeah, sure. You're not going off course too far. Yeah.

Harumi: Yeah, in case of something like a thesis, like PhD, I think you in some ways, you need to explore quite a lot. So I actually did read the book saying anthropology, Thea. And the the difference, because your interest just glows, and you want to you want to know, and the whether there is any connection with linguistics, psychology, anthropology, cultural studies. So I did read a lot of books. And I didn't regret with that with PhD thesis. But if you come to the writing article, I think you need to believe the forecast with a particular theme. And you have to be knee detective about what which citation is most effective to support your argument. So I think I learned that by writing different kind of things, I think if you just go bits and pieces from different the resource, without forecast, I think it can end up it's you cannot really finish as a concrete, complete piece of paper. Yeah, that's fun. One suggestion.

Shachter: Wow. Well, when you when you're reading all these books, did you were you keeping a schedule? Or were you reading like binge reading? How? How? Yeah. How do you how do you find the time?

Harumi: I actually interested even when you're busy actually reading, actually, I can enjoy it. Unless you you don't have any, any minutes to spend. If you're too busy. So I think I just I like planning things. And so I think a planning helps me. I don't know other people have about you?

Shachter: Yeah, I mean, I I like to plan and make goals. But I don't. I wouldn't say I enjoy reading maybe maybe I haven't been maybe I haven't been exposed to the right books. I would say the one of the again, one of the motivations doing this podcast is there are very few articles that I actually find easy to read clear. I can get something out of it. Boy, sometimes articles are very poorly written or overly complicated. And I and I just don't even know what they're, I mean for you, you're you're bilingual you speak Japanese and English. I mean, I I'm, I'm a native English speaker, I should be able to

understand what someone's saying in English and sometimes I can't. that's frustrating.

Harumi: overly complicated. I see. Yeah, yeah. Well, I did for me and I am using it at work but still it's I'm not a native speaker. So I of course have a problem with the the language but still, I think I feel if I tried to communicate a waste ideas written in the article and I think I find it very, very rewarding to do the reading. And so I think it depends what your interests are. I think I feel that, you know, doing research on silence is a bit like a hobby. For me. It's like, it's just something you like it. And I think when I, let's start with this morning, I just saw at about what I was thinking that time. And I think I just simply was very interested in this topic. So it's just that it's motivates in that way.

Shachter: What do you what are you working on now, now that the books done

Harumi: now, I'm actually now I'm interested in the code switching, I actually did quite a bit of analysis of code switching Japanese learners. So I hope I can bring out that one sometime soon. I still working on it. So code switching of Japanese.

Shachter: Yeah. learners. How's your Japan? How's your? How's your Japanese? Do you have Japanese friends? Do you? Do you find your Japanese is getting worse? overseas?

Harumi: Oh, because I have to teach Japanese, Japanese to students here. I have to brush up but I think I'm sure there are aspects, which is deteriorating, like a kanji writing, and I teach countries sometimes. But I think when you're asked to write it on the board, I think sometimes you're not sure how you start the strokes. I think, of course, I have to study. Well prepare beforehand. Yeah. But it's interesting, just the, the, I think teaching Japanese to the students from non Japanese students. I don't see this exactly. Same problem with silence of silence with these group of students. So I think the silence in Japan is a sort of something very special.

Shachter: Yeah, I agree. I think it's more of a cultural, a cultural issue, then maybe a language learning issue. That's my opinion.

Harumi: Yeah.

Shachter: on it.

Harumi: Yes. Oh, I think so.

Shachter: Alright, so it's um, Dr. Seiko, Harumi at the University of London? And is there anything else you'd like to promote again, but I guess the book, the book, again, it's called East Asian perspectives on silence in English language education. And that's going to be published by multilingual matters. Is that correct?

Harumi: Yes, that's right. Yeah. And

Shachter: if people email you, then you'll give them 50% off as either say,

Harumi: yes. Or just me.

Shachter: Default default?

Harumi: No, no, no, before Se Chan will be 50% off. So you can get it about 1314 pounds. So I think it's quite reasonable. I think otherwise, you have to spend more so if you're interested, I think the reason why we written this book is that to have to have access to these teachers, not only the academics but teachers who are actually teaching in classroom get some ideas about what's going on in the classroom. And so yeah, I hope this book which many people Yeah,

Shachter: all right, well, um, stay on the line if you don't mind. But thank you for coming on the podcast and good luck with with the toilet paper and and everything in England.

Harumi: Okay, thank you very much. Same to you. Bye.

